The good of the people must be the great purpose of government. By the laws of nature and of reason, the governors are invested with power to that end. And the greatest good of the people is liberty. It is to the state what health is to the individual.

Diderot, Encyclopedia.

Whatever I feel to be right is right, what I feel to be wrong is wrong; the best of all casuists is the conscience… Reason deceives us only too often and we have earned all too well the right to reject it, but conscience never deceives.


I love the cause of liberty, but the madness of the multitude is but one degree better than submission to the Tea Act.

James Allen of Philadelphia.

As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths.

Isaiah 3.12

By God’s dispensation it has fallen to me to correct both the state and the clergy; I am to them both sovereign and patriarch; they have forgotten that in [pagan] antiquity these [roles] were combined… I have conquered an empire, but have never been able to conquer myself.

Tsar Peter the Great.

Of course, I recognize that my famous ancestor had many merits, but I must admit that I would be insincere if I repeated your raptures. This is the ancestor whom I love less than others because of his obsession with western culture and his trampling on all purely Russian customs. One must not impose foreign things immediately, without reworking them. Perhaps this time it was necessary as a transitional period, but I do not sympathize with it.

Tsar Nicholas II on Peter the Great.

The State, it seems to me, is not made for religion, but religion for the State.

Abbé Guillaume Raynal (1780).

In a democratic state, one must be continually on guard against the desire for popularity. It leads to aping the behaviour of the worst. And soon people come to think that it is of no use – indeed, it is dangerous – to show too plain a superiority over the multitude which one wants to win over.


The majority does not confirm the truth, but only indicates the wishes of the majority.

Empress Catherine the Great to Sumarokov.

Monarchies conform best to human nature, and therefore constitute the most durable form of state.

Gianbattista Vico.
### III. The Age of Enlightenment (1660-1789)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37. The Sun King</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. The Restoration of the Monarchy</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. The Anglo-Dutch Wars</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Religion in Restoration England</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. The Newtonian Revolution</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Capitalism and the Jews</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. The Idea of Religious Toleration</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. The Peace of Utrecht and the Rise of Prussia</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. England’s Conservative Enlightenment</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. France’s Radical Enlightenment</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Rousseau: From Liberal to Socialist Humanism</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Hume: The Irrationality of Rationalism</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Kant: The Reaffirmation of Will</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Hamann and Herder: The Denial of Universalism</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Two Concepts of Freedom</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. The Origins of Freemasonry</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. The Grand Orient</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Freemasonry and the Jews</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. The American Revolution</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Religion in the American Revolution</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Saudi Wahhabism</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. The Dark Heart of the Enlightenment</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. East Meets West</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. The St. Petersburg Autocracy (1660-1789)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61. The Rebellion of the Old Ritualists</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. From Holy Rus’ to Great Russia</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>PETER THE GREAT AND THE WEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>PETER THE GREAT AND THE RUSSIAN CHURCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>THE DEGRADATION OF THE RUSSIAN AUTOCRACY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>THE GERMAN PERSECUTION OF ORTHODOXY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>TSARITSA ELIZABETH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>ORTHODOXY UNDER THE AUSTRIAN YOKE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>CATHERINE THE GREAT, THE NOBILITY AND THE CHURCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>CATHERINE AND THE POLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>CATHERINE AND THE JEWS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>CATHERINE AND THE WEST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT (1660-1789)
37. THE SUN KING

If the liberalism of Northern Europe and North America was the wave of the future, and would in time conquer almost the whole world, nevertheless the seventeenth century was, in political and cultural terms, the century of French absolutism... If we compare the English monarchy in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries with the French one in the same period, we see a striking contrast. In England a powerful monarchy becomes steadily stronger, defeating the most powerful despotism of the day in the Spanish Armada, only to be gradually overcome by the wealthier classes and reduced, finally, to the position of symbolic head of an essentially aristocratic society. The vital changes here, as we have seen, were the rejection of the papacy and the dissolution of the monasteries, which caused both the temporary increase in the monarchy’s power and its longer-term descent into impotence, especially after Charles I’s loss of the power of taxation. In France, on the other hand, the reverse took place: a weak monarchy besieged by a semi-independent nobility within and the united Hapsburg domains of Germany, Italy and Spain from without, gradually recovered to reach a pinnacle of fame and power under the sun king, Louis XIV. The vital factors here were: (i) the invocation of the Divine Right of kings1, (ii) the retention of Catholicism as the official religion, (ii) the monarchy’s retention, in accordance with its Concordat with the Vatican, of control of the Church’s appointments and lands, and (iii), last but not least, the monarchy’s retention of the power of general taxation – although its venal and unjust use of it contributed greatly to the regime’s ultimate fall in 1789.2

Both England and France had consolidated their internal unity by the end of the period, but in different ways that gave to each the complex character of the modern nation-state. In England, the monarchy adopted the Anglican middle ground. In France, on the other hand, the monarchy took the Catholic side (Paris, as Henry IV said when he converted to Catholicism, was worth a mass), from which it did not waver until the revolution of 1789. In England, the Protestant aristocracy first persecuted and then tolerated the diminished and tamed Catholic minority; but the latter’s eventual absorption within the State left a permanent traditionalist stamp on the English national character. In France, on the other hand, while the Catholic monarchy first tolerated and then expelled the Protestant (Huguenot) minority, the latter’s cultural heritage left a permanent rationalist stamp on the French national character.

*

The fruit of Bodin’s absolutist theories and Richelieu’s nationalist politics was the reign of the Sun King, Louis XIV, a true despot in that, like every despot, he tried to gain control of the Church and the nobility.

“The position of the French nobility,” writes Jasper Ridley, “had greatly changed during the previous hundred years. In the sixteenth century the great noble houses of Guise and Bourbon, with their power bases in eastern and south-west France, had torn the kingdom apart by thirty years of civil war; and the fighting between the nobility and the State had started up again in the days of the Fronde, when Louis XIV was a child. But when he came of age, and established his absolute royal authority, he destroyed the political power of the nobles by bribing them to renounce it. He encouraged them to come to his court at Versailles, to hold honorific and well-paid sinecure offices – to carve for the King at dinner, or to attend his petit levée when he dressed in the morning, and hand him his shirt, his coat and his wig. He hoped that when the nobles were not engaged in these duties at court, they would be staying in their great mansions in Paris. He wished to prevent them as far as possible from living on their lands in the country, where they could enrol their tenants in a private army and begin a new civil war.

“The King governed France through middle-class civil servants, who were mostly lawyers. The provincial Parlements had limited powers, most of which were judicial rather than legislative; but the King could veto all their decrees. The government was administered by the intendants, who had absolute authority in their districts, and were subject only to the directives of their superiors, the surintendants, who were themselves subject only to the King’s Council, where the King presided in person, and might either accept or reject the advice given to him by his councillors.

“The nobles had the privilege of having their seigneurial courts in which they exercised a civil and a criminal jurisdiction over their tenants; but the presiding judges in the seigneurial courts were the same middle-class lawyers who presided in the King’s courts, which could on appeal override the decisions of the seigneurial courts.”

As for the lower nobility, their energies were channelled into army service, in accordance with their medieval conception of themselves as the warrior class. War was a constant feature of Louis’ reign, together with the crippling burden of taxation that war entails. But this did not disturb the nobility, who paid no taxes... Nor did they collect the taxes: this was entrusted to a brilliant finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the son of a provincial draper, who “was charged with unifying the tax administration and financing constant war. The memoirs of Saint-Simon, a duke by inheritance and man of letters, bear witness to the social transformation:

“... He [Louis] was well aware that though he might crush a nobleman with the weight of his displeasure, he could not destroy him or his line, whereas a secretary of state or other such minister could be reduced together with his whole family to those depths of nothingness from he had been elevated. No

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amount of wealth or possessions would avail him then. That was one reason why he like to give his authority over the highest in the Land, even over the Princes of the Blood.”

And so, knowing that they would not be reduced “to the depths of nothingness”, “the nobility developed a growing confidence that their needs were best served within rather than against the state. This compact would survive for as long as the élites remained sure that the monarchy was protecting their vital interests.”

*  

The other major estate of the land that needed to be controlled for real despotism to be established was the Church. A parish priest of St. Sulpice said that Louis “was so absolute that he passed above all the laws to do his will. The priests and nobility were oppressed; the parlements had no more power. The clergy were shamefully servile in doing the king’s will.”

Here Louis had two aims: to make the Catholic Church in France a national, Gallican Church under his dominion, and not the Pope’s; and to destroy the protected state within the state that the Edict of Nantes (1594) had created for the Protestant Huguenots. In this way he would have “one faith, one king, one law”.

“For thirty years,” writes Norman Davies, “Louis was a true Gallican – packing the French bishoprics with the relatives of his ministers, authorising the Declaration of the Four Articles (1682), and provoking in 1687-8 an open rupture with the Papacy. The Four Articles, the purest formulation of Gallican doctrine, were ordered to be taught in all the seminaries and faculties of France:

1. The authority of the Holy See is limited to spiritual matters.
2. The decisions of Church Councils are superior to those of the Pope.
3. Gallican customs are independent of Rome.
4. The Pope is not infallible, except by consent of the universal Church.

But then, distressed by his isolation from the Catholic powers, Louis turned tail. In 1693 he retracted the Four Articles, and for the rest of his life gave unstinting support to the ultramontane [extreme papist] faction…

“In his policy towards the Protestants, Louis passed from passive discrimination through petty harassment to violent persecution… [In 1685] the King revoked the edict of toleration. Bishop Bossuet awarded him the

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4 Kissinger, op. cit., pp. 33-34.
7 This, it will be recalled, was also the aim of William the Bastard after his conquest of England in 1066.
epithet of the ‘New Constantine’. Up to a million of France’s most worthy citizens were forced to submit or to flee amidst a veritable reign of terror."

Nevertheless, write Baigent and Leigh, “through the ensuing vicissitudes of French history, ‘Gallicanism’, with its adherence to ‘Conciliar’ authority, was to characterise the Church in France. By its very nature, it was potentially inimical to the Papacy. Pursued to its logical conclusion, ‘Gallicanism’ would effectively demote the Pope to what he had originally been – merely the Bishop of Rome, one among numerous bishops, enjoying some kind of nominal or symbolic leadership, but not any actual primacy or power. In short, the Church was decentralised.

“The opposing position, which advocated the Pope’s supremacy over bishops and councils, became known as ‘Ultramontane’, because it regarded authority as residing with the Papacy in Rome, ‘on the other side of the mountains’ from France…”

Absolutism reached its height under Louis XIV, who famously stated: “L’état, c’est moi”, “I am the State”. If the Italian Renaissance princes had created states separate from themselves in order to wage war more effectively, then Louis reunited the State with himself in order to wage still greater wars – his reign was almost completely filled with foreign wars. For “once Louis was secure from internal challenges,… he began to make war on the settlements of Westphalia in order that he might become the arbiter of Europe… Louis’s domination of Europe was largely based on the fact that by 1666 he was able to maintain a force of almost 100,000 men, which he would soon triple. This, however, would have been fruitless without the centralized civilian structure put into place during this period by Louis’s ministers.”

So unremitting was the aggression of Louis against neighbouring states that he must be considered the forerunner of Napoleon and Hitler (Napoleon considered him “the only King of France worthy of the name”). As his most determined opponent, the Dutch King William, said, Louis’ aim in Europe was to establish “a universal monarch and a universal religion”.

However, as a future Prime Minister of France, François Guizot, wrote: “By the very fact that this government had no other principle than absolute power, and reposed upon no other base than this, its decline became sudden and well merited. What France, under Louis XIV, essentially wanted, was political institutions and forces, independent, subsisting of themselves, and, in a word, capable of spontaneous action… The ancient French institutions, if they merited that name, no longer existed: Louis XIV completed their ruin. He took no care to endeavour to replace them by new institutions, they would have

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8 Davies, op. cit., pp. 620, 621. However, as Jean Comby writes, “the next generation rebelled in the Cévennes (the Camisards, 1702) and organized a desert church (Antoine Court, 1715)” (How to Read Church History, London: SCM Press, 1989, p. 42).


10 Bobbitt, op. cit., p. 123.

cramped him, and he did not choose to be cramped. All that appeared conspicuous at that period was will, and the action of central power. The government of Louis XIV was a great fact, a fact powerful and splendid, but without roots... No system can exist except by means of institutions. When absolute power has endured, it has been supported by true institutions, sometimes by the division of society into strongly distinct castes, sometimes by a system of religious institutions. Under the reign of Louis XIV institutions were wanting to power as well as to liberty... Thus we see the government helping on its own decay. It was not Louis XIV alone who was becoming aged and weak at the end of his reign: it was the whole absolute power. Pure monarchy was as much worn out in 1712 as was the monarch himself: and the evil was so much the more grave, as Louis XIV had abolished political morals as well as political institutions...”

The difference between Orthodox autocracy and Catholic absolutism of the French kind is that while the former welcomes the existence of independent institutions, such as the Church, and institutions with limited powers of self-government, such as provincial councils or guilds, the latter distrusts all other power bases and tries to destroy them. The result is that, as the absolutism weakens (as weaken it must), institutions spring up to fill the power vacuum which are necessarily opposed to the absolutist power and try to weaken it further, leading to revolution. The art of true monarchical government consists, not in ruling without support from other institutions, but in ruling simultaneously with their support and with their full and voluntary submission to the monarchy. Moreover, the supremacy of the monarchy must be recognised de jure, and not merely de facto. When the majority of the people ceases to believe that their monarch has the right to rule them, or when he believes that his right to rule is limited by nothing except his own will, then his regime is doomed, whatever the external trappings of its power.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\text{Guizot, op. cit, pp. 140-141.}\]
38. THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY

The English revolution gradually ran out of steam. It was not only that a nation as convivial and traditionalist as the English could not live forever without Christmas revels and the “smells and bells” of traditional religion. “As the millenium failed to arrive,” writes Christopher Hill, “and taxation was not reduced, as division and feuds rent the revolutionaries, so the image of his sacred majesty loomed larger over the quarrelsome, unsatisfactory scene... The mass of ordinary people came to long for a return to ‘normality’, to the known, the familiar, the traditional. Victims of scrofula who could afford it went abroad to be touched by the king [Charles II] over the water: after 1660 he was back, sacred and symbolic. Eikonoklastes was burnt by the common hangman together with The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates... The men of property in 1659-60 longed for ‘a king with plenty of holy oil about him’...”\(^{13}\)

The men of property may have wanted a king with plenty of holy oil about him. And the great joy and ceremony with which Charles was greeted and enthroned by the people showed that they well understood the difference between a usurper and a true king... And yet the king’s legitimacy was a secondary consideration for the men of property. Their first priority was that he should suppress the radicals, preserve order and let them make money in peace. A Divine Right ruler was not suitable because he might choose to touch their financial interests, as Charles I had done. A constitutional ruler was the answer – that is, a ruler who would rule within limitations imposed by the men of property and drawn up in a constitution. Now Charles II was not, of course, a constitutional monarch de jure; he admired the absolutism of his cousin, Louis XIV, and he converted to Catholicism on his deathbed. But he did provide the necessary transition to a constitutional monarchy because he did the will of the landowning aristocrats in most things.

He did this partly because his years of wandering as a fugitive in Europe and England (including even hiding in a famous oak from his pursuers) had taught him caution and a flexibility and capacity for compromise that his father had lacked. And partly because he perceived, rightly, that the country had changed irrevocably in the last twenty years, and that any attempt to turn the clock back to 1640 would simply result in another civil war with a similar outcome to the last one. For, as Hill writes, “the seventeenth was the decisive century in English history”\(^ {14}\); and the vital decisions of that decisive century had been made by Oliver Cromwell and the English Parliament, not by the Stuart kings.

\(^{13}\) Hill, Milton and the English Revolution, p. 181.
“Once it seemed likely that Charles would return, most of those who had fought against his father hastened to show their loyalty to the son. Not only the King came back but the House of Lords and ultimately the bishops too. Sectaries and Presbyterians were excluded from the church and persecuted at the instance of the House of Commons. Regicides were hanged, drawn and quartered. Milton barely escaped with his life. Oliver’s corpse was dug up and hanged at Tyburn. Godliness was at a discount at the court of the merry monarch, but the cult of Charles the Martyr prospered. Defeat for everything that Cromwell stood for could hardly have been more complete.

“But the appearances were deceptive, the cheering which greeted Charles II was fictitious. Within a few years not only Bristol Baptists were looking back nostalgically to ‘those halcyon days of prosperity, liberty and peace… those Oliverian days of liberty’. An unsentimental civil servant like Samuel Pepys, soon to be accused of papist leanings, recorded in July 1667 that: ‘Everybody do now-a-days reflect upon Oliver and commend him, what brave things he did and made all the neighbour princes fear him.’ Cromwell’s former ambassador in France, Lockhart, whom Charles II also employed, ‘found he had nothing of that regard that was paid him in Cromwell’s time’. George Downing made a similar remark about the attitude of the Dutch to him, and the Ambassador of the Netherlands in 1672 told Charles II to his face that of course his country treated him differently from the Protector, for ‘Cromwell was a great man, who made himself feared by land and by sea’. The common people were muttering similar things. ‘Was not Oliver’s name dreadful to neighbour nations?’ Lodowick Muggleton asked in 1665. Four years later an apothecary of Wolverhampton was in trouble for contrasting Cromwell’s successful Dutch policy with Charles II’s bungling. Nor was it only in foreign affairs that such contrasts could be made, Roger Boyle’s biographer point out that ‘despite the king’s frequent efforts to reward him, Orrery was a richer man in the service of Cromwell than in the service of Charles II’. It is the sort of thing men notice. The odious comparisons had become so frequent that French and Italian visitors commented on them.

“And if we look on another 20 years, it becomes clear that the reigns of Charles II and James II were only an interlude. In 1660 the old order had not been restored: neither prerogative courts nor the Court of Wards nor feudal tenures. Royal interference in economic affairs did not return, nor (despite James II’s attempts) royal interference with control of their localities by the ‘natural rulers’. After 1668 the policies of the 1650s were picked up again. The revolution of 1688 itself was so easily successful because James II remembered all too clearly that he had a joint in his neck. The lesson of January 1649 for the kings of Europe did not need repeating for another 144 years. The follies of James, and William III’s own semi-legitimate claim to royalist loyalty, meant that the Liberator did not need to retain the large army which brought him to power: a settlement very like that which Oliver sought in vain was arrived at, with a strong executive but ultimate control by Parliament and the taxpayers. Parliament became again a permanent part of the constitution. Taxes could not be levied without the approval of the representatives of the men of
property in the House of Commons; they could not be anticipated without the goodwill of bankers and the moneyed interest. All attempts to build up an independent executive, with its own judicial system or subservient judges, strong enough to coerce the ‘natural rulers’ had failed – Laud’s and James II’s no less than the Major-Generals’. In 1649 and again in 1653 London juries acquitted John Lilburne against all the authority of the central government: in 1656 the republican Bradshaw demanded trial by a jury of ‘men of value’, and Cromwell, ‘seeming to slight that’, spoke against juries. By the end of the century juries were no longer accountable to the government for their verdicts; judges had become independent of the crown, dependent on Parliament. There was to be no administrative law in England, no more torture. The gentry and town oligarchies henceforth dominated local government, Parliamentary elections and juries.

“For James I customs had been one of many sources of revenue: by the end of the century customs duties were raised or lowered in the interests of the national economic policy which the commercial classes now dictated. At the restoration the Navigation Act had been re-enacted, and the power of the East India Company confirmed: imperial trade, and especially re-exports, were expanding rapidly. Sprat in 1667 could assume as a truism learnt in the preceding twenty years that ‘the English greatness will never be supported or increased… by any other wars but those at sea’. But it was only after 1688 that governments came to assume that ‘trade must be the principal interest of England’…

“Parliament now determined foreign policy, and used the newly mobilized financial resources of the country, through an aggressive use of sea power, to protect and expand the trade of a unified empire. England itself had by then been united under the dominance of the London market; separate courts no longer governed Wales and the North, ‘canonization’ was no longer a danger. William III’s political and economic subjugation of Ireland was thoroughly Cromwellian: the Union with Scotland in 1707 was on the same lines as that of 1652-60. By the end of the century industrial freedom had been won, monopolies had been overthrown, government interference with the market, including the labour market, had ended. The anti-Dutch policy was sponsored by the Stuart Kings, who had their own reasons for disliking the Dutch republic. The policy of colonial expansion into the western hemisphere, first against Spain, then against France, enjoyed more support among the gentry, and gradually won over a majority in the House of Commons as Dutch and Spanish power declined and French increased. After 1688 there was no opposition between the two policies, for the Netherlands had been effectively subordinated to England, and all the power of the English state could be concentrated on the battle with France for the Spanish empire and the trade of the world. The two foreign policies fused as the landed and moneyed interests fused. England emerged from the seventeenth-century crisis geared to the new world of capitalism and colonial empire.”

Let us look more closely at the struggle with the Netherlands... Hill writes: “In his essay Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates, Francis Bacon had prophetically written: ‘The wealth of both Indies seems in great part an accessory to the command of the seas.’ English strategy after the Revolution was based on a conscious use of sea power on a world scale that was new in execution if not in conception. In 1649-50 Ireland was kept free from foreign intervention, and Blake blockaded Prince Rupert’s fleet in Kinsale. In March 1650 Blake followed Rupert to Portugal and shut him up in the Tagus for six months, finally capturing or destroying most of his ships. In September 1652 Blake’s victory over a French fleet ensured the Spanish capture of Dunkirk. In 1654-5 – performing the unique feat of keeping at sea throughout the winter – the English admiral frustrated French designs on Naples, and brought Portugal to accept a virtual English protectorate. The forcing of treaties on Tetuan and Tunis introduced a new type of gunboat diplomacy, of which the next three centuries were to see a great deal. In 1656-7 Spain was effectively blockaded. The English navy cleaned up privateering, from Algiers to Dunkirk, in a way that no other power could: Blake in the Mediterranean, Penn in the Caribbean, Goodson in the Baltic, were phenomena hitherto unknown, presaging Britain’s future. English merchants were now protected in the Mediterranean and Baltic in a way that would have been quite impossible for early Stuart governments...”

The foundations of the British empire had indeed laid. And it is significant that they were laid during Cromwell’s Protectorate, when men of property and commerce were in control of the country for the first time. However, the English had a rival, another Calvinist and mercantile nation: the Dutch, who were more advanced then they in the practice of capitalism. The war between the Netherlands and Britain in the 1660s may be called the first purely trade war in history. It was a direct result of the creation of modern capitalism by the Dutch, and its eager imitation by the English (who later caught up with them in political power, if not in per capita economic productivity). For its causes were not the traditional ones of dynastic rivalry or religion, nor even of piracy in the simple sense: it was rather a question of which global corporation would become dominant in this or that part of the world – or throughout the whole world. For, as Peter Ackroyd writes, “When parliament resumed once more in the spring of 1664 one of its first measures was a declaration or ‘trade resolution’ against the Dutch, complaining that ‘the subjects of the United Provinces’ had invaded the king’s rights in India, Africa and elsewhere by attacking English merchants and had committed ‘damages, affronts and injuries’ closer to home. It was believed that the Dutch wished to establish a trade monopoly throughout the known world, which was as dangerous as the ‘universal monarchy’ sought by Louis XIV.

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16 Hill, God’s Englishman, p. 161.
“The republic was therefore seen as a threat to English ships and to English commerce, but of course its very existence as a republic could be interpreted as an essential menace to the kingdom of England. The religion of the enemy was Calvinist in temper, and it was feared that the Dutch would support the cause of their co-religionists in England; they could thereby sow dissension against the king and the national faith. The ‘trade resolution’ was an aspect of the Anglican royalism asserted both by Lords and Commons. The fervour of the Commons, in particular, was matched by their actions. They agreed to raise the unprecedented sum of £2.5 million to assist the king in his persecution of hostilities.

“The formal declaration of war came, in February 1665, after months of preparation. The cause seems to have been largely popular, as far as such matters can be ascertained, particularly among those merchants and speculators who would benefit from the embarrassment of Dutch trade; one of these was the king's brother, James, duke of York. He led the Royal Africa Company that specialized in the business of slavery, and he invested in other commercial ventures. The conflict has therefore been described as the first purely commercial war in English history. As one hemp merchant, Captain Cocke, put it, ‘the trade of the world is too little for us two, therefore one must go down’.”

The war went badly for the English. “Overseas trade had been seriously set back by the war on the high sea, and the Baltic trade shrunk away almost to nothing; woollen manufacture, the staple of England’s exports, was similarly depressed. A war fought for trade had become a war fatal to trade.”

Then came two unprecedented disasters: the Great Plague of 1665, which killed about 100,000 Londoners, and then, after another defeat at the hands of the Dutch, the Great Fire of London of 1666, which destroyed five-sixths of the city. Was the cause God’s wrath on the inordinate commercial ambitions of the English, and especially on their slave-trading, or on their sexual morals, which had markedly deteriorated since the restoration of the monarchy? In any case, after a failed peace conference between the warring sides at Breda in 1667, the Dutch resumed their winning ways: in June, “they launched a raid into the Thames estuary; they broke the defences of the harbour at Chatham and proceeded to burn four ships before towing away the largest ship of the fleet, the Royal Charles, and returning with it undamaged…

“As a result, England lost much of the West Indies to France and the invaluable island of nutmeg, Run, part of Indonesia, to the Dutch. In return, however, it retained New Netherlands; this was the colonial province of the Netherlands that included the future states of New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Connecticut…”

18 Ackroyd, op. cit., p. 393.
19 Ackroyd, op. cit., p. 398.
The Third Anglo-Dutch war of 1672-74 was as unsuccessful for the English as the Second had been, and so parliament forced the king to end it. Logic, as well as commercial considerations, now dictated that the English and the Dutch should join forces against the rising Catholic power of France under Louis XIV. This is what eventually happened in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which “ended the 17th century conflict by placing William of Orange on the English throne as co-ruler with his wife Mary [the niece of Charles II]. This proved to be a pyrrhic victory for the Dutch cause. William's main concern had been getting the English on the same side as the Dutch in their competition against France. After becoming King of England, he granted many privileges to the Royal Navy in order to ensure their loyalty and cooperation. William ordered that any Anglo-Dutch fleet be under English command, with the Dutch navy having 60% of the strength of the English.”

The end of war was, as usual, good for commerce, and “the excise returns after [1674] rose markedly in such staple items as beer, ale, tea and coffee, which in turn indicates a sharp rise in consumption. The increase in revenue had a significant effect upon royal income, too, which began to rise. Contemporary reports also suggest that the ‘middling classes’ were now indulging their taste for imported ‘luxuries’ and that the labouring poor were purchasing such items as knitted stockings, earthenware dishes and brass pots. The ‘commercial revolution’ of the eighteenth century had its origins three or four decades earlier. The successful colonization of portions of North America and of the West Indies, undertaken in the reigns of the early Stuart kings and under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, now found its fruit in the ever-increasing rate of trade. By 1685 the English had the largest merchant fleet in the world, and their vessels were filled with the merchandise of sugar, tobacco and cotton on their way to the great emporium of London.

“Other evidence supports this picture of material advantage. By 1672, for example, stagecoaches ran between London and all the principal towns of the kingdom; it was reported that ‘every little town within twenty miles of London swarms with them’. The ubiquity of the stagecoach is the harbinger of the reforms of transport in the next century, with the further development of turnpike roads and canals; the country was slowly quickening its pace while at the same time finding its unity.

“It is now a commonplace of economic history that the ‘agricultural revolution’ of the eighteenth century in face began in the middle of the seventeenth century. The introduction of new crops, and the steady spread of ‘enclosures’ designed to achieve cohesion and efficiency of farming land, were already changing the landscape of England. The abundance of grain, for example, was such that in 1670 cereal farmers were allowed to export their crop without any regard to its price in the domestic market.”

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20 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Dutch Wars
40. RELIGION IN RESTORATION ENGLAND

While to be welcomed as restoring the monarchical principle and in restraining the more extreme aspects of the revolution, the reign of Charles II saw a lamentable decline in religion. Such a decline is often to be observed in history at times of increased wealth and prosperity. And the Laodicean, docile, materialistic Anglicanism that came to dominate England’s religious life for the next three centuries and more was in disappointing contrast with the more vibrant (although still, of course, heretical) Anglicanism of the earlier period. Although quarrels between the Protestant (Anglican) parliament and the Catholic-leaning monarchy continued in imitation of the similar quarrels in the reign of Charles I, and there was much talk of “popish plots”, there was no real threat of civil war. Not least because the radicals were out of it...

“The Presbyterians,” writes Peter Ackroyd, “were in a small minority, and were in no position to check or obstruct what might be described as the conservative tide. In a series of Acts, over a period of five years, parliament enforced Anglican supremacy upon the nation. Two weeks after it met the ‘solemn league and covenant’, which had pledged the nation to a Presbyterian settlement with Scotland, was summarily burned by the common hangman at Westminster and other places in the city. John Evelyn remarked, ‘Oh, prodigious change!’

“By the Corporation Act of 1661, the municipal leaders of town or city were confined to those who received communion by the rites of the Church of England; the mayors and aldermen were also obliged to take an oath of allegiance and affirm that it was not lawful to take up arms against the king. The Act was designed to remove those of a nonconformist persuasion whose loyalty might be suspect.

“An Act of Uniformity was passed in the following year which restricted the ministry to those who had been ordained by a bishop and who accepted the provisions of the Book of Common Prayer. These conditions effectively disqualified 1,700 puritan clergy, who were therefore ejected from their livings. It was the most sudden alteration in the religious history of the nation. Some said that it was an act of revenge by the Anglicans after their persecution during the days of the commonwealth, but it may also have been a means whereby the royalist gentry regained control of their parishes.

“Some of the ejected clergy were reduced to poverty and the utmost distress. One of their number, Richard Baxter, recalled that ‘their congregations had enough to do... to help them out of prisons, or to maintain them there’. John Bunyan, for example, was imprisoned in Bedford Prison for nonconformist preaching. He wrote that ‘the parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me as the pulling of the flesh from the bones’; yet in his prison cell he dreamed of eternity.
“Much popular derision was directed at the godly ministers. The dissenting preachers were mocked and hooted at in the street. Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*, in which puritans were roundly scorned, was revived with great popular success. The Quakers in particular were badly treated and, during the reign of Charles, 4000 were consigned to prison; Clarendon had said that they were ‘a sort of people upon whom tenderness and lenity do not at all prevail’…

“In two further Acts of subsequent years the attendance of religious assemblies, other than those of the official Church, was punished by imprisonment; no puritan clergyman or schoolmaster could come within 5 miles of a town or city. These measures did not reflect the king’s promise of toleration for all honest Christians, as he had announced in the ‘declaration’ of Breda before sailing to England, but it is likely that he was pressed by the young men of parliament; he acceded to their demands because he did not wish to lose their support in the funding of his revenues.

“It would in the end prove impossible to subdue the whole body of nonconformist worshippers, but, by attempting to impose Anglican worship, the members of the ‘Cavalier Parliament’ opened up the great fissure between Anglicanism and dissenting faiths that would never be resolved. An informal network of meetings brought together Independents, Baptists and Presbyterians in sharp distinction to the established Church. No national religious settlement had been achieved. The days of the disputes between church and chapel would soon come…

“The Anglican Church was now supreme under the leadership of the cleric who in 1663 was consecrated as archbishop of Canterbury; Gilbert Burnet wrote of Archbishop Sheldon that ‘he seemed not to have a deep sense of religion, if any at all, and spoke of it most commonly as of an engine of government and a matter of policy’. The bishops, for example, had been returned to their seats in the House of Lords where they could exert a strong influence upon national legislation; yet it was also true that parliament, and not the Church, had taken control of the nature and direction of the national religion.”

The monarchy, too, in spite of some scares, was supreme by the end of Charles’ reign. “An entry from Evelyn’s diaries conveys the mood and atmosphere of the triumphant court with its ‘inexpressible luxury, and prophanesse, gaming and all dissolution, and as if it were total forgetfulness of God’. The king was ‘sitting and toying with his concubines’, among them the duchess of Portsmouth, with a ‘French boy singing love-songs, in that glorious gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset found a large table, a bank of at least two thousand in gold before them’…”

41. THE NEWTONIAN REVOLUTION

“The Royal Society,” writes Ackroyd, “may be deemed the jewel of Charles II’s reign. At the end of November 1660, a group of physicians and natural scientists announced the formation of a ‘college for the promoting of physic-mathematical experimental learning’; they were in part inspired by Francis Bacon’s vision of ‘Solomon’s House’ in The New Atlantis, and they shared Bacon’s passion for experimental and inductive science. They were men of a practical and pragmatic temper, with a concomitant interest in agriculture as well as navigation, manufactures as well as medicine. All questions of politics or religion were excluded from the deliberations of the Fellows, and indeed their pursuit of practical enquiry was in part designed to quell the ‘enthusiasm’ and to quieten the spiritual debates that had helped to foment the late civil wars. They met each week, at Gresham College in Bishopsgate, where papers were read on the latest invention or experiment. It was in their company that Sir Isaac Newton first propounded his revolutionary theories of light.

“The last four decades of the seventeenth century in fact witnessed an extraordinary growth in scientific experiment to the extent that, in 1667, the historian of the Royal Society, Thomas Sprat, could already celebrate the fact that ‘an universal zeal towards the advancement of such designs has not only overspread our court and universities, but the shops of our mechanicks, the fields of our gentlemen, the cottages of our farmers, and the ships of our merchants’.

“And inquiring and inventive temper was now more widely shared, whereby the whole field of human knowledge became the subject of speculation. The Fellows of the Royal Society debated a method of producing wind by means of falling water; they explored the sting of a bee and the feet of flies; they were shown a baroscope that measured changes in the pressure of the air and a hygroscope for detecting water in the atmosphere; they set up an enquiry into the state of English agriculture and surveyed the methods of tin-mining in Cornwall. They conducted experiments on steam, on ventilation, on gases and on magnetism, thermometers, pumps and perpetual motion machines were brought before them. The origins of the industrial and agricultural ‘revolutions’, conventionally located in the eighteenth century, are to be found in the previous age. In the seventeenth century, providentially blessed by the genius of Francis Bacon at its beginning, we find a general desire for what Sprat described as ‘the true knowledge of things’.”

Why at that time? Ackroyd hints that the scientific revolution was partly a reaction to the “enthusiasm” of the preceding religious and political revolutions. Perhaps… Another hypothesis is that the killing of the king in 1649 broke a certain psychological barrier.

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It was a kind of “liberation”, writes Melvyn Bragg, that let loose a great wave of scientific inquiry. “After all, if you could kill a king, one who had ruled by Divine Right, the representative of God on earth, then all things were possible. The new knowledge suggested by Francis Bacon and spurred by many thinkers in Europe burst out in force in the seventeenth century, with the language to service it and the confidence to overthrow the old order and argue for the new. Most of all, it set out to discover by experiments the secrets of that other great book – Nature.”

A striking fact about these early trail-blazers was that they did not divide religion and science into hermetically sealed compartments in accordance with the modern scientistic world-view, Though Newton was perhaps the greatest scientist of all time, was, in Michael White’s words, “interested in a synthesis of all knowledge and was a devout seeker of some form of unified theory of the principles of the universe. Along with many intellectuals before him, Newton believed that this synthesis – the fabled prisca sapientia – had once been in the possession of mankind.” “Newton saw God as the direct cause of gravity. And he said of space that it was ‘as it were, God’s sensorium’ – seeing space as the realm of divine ideas.”

Of course, there was a large element of hubris in this programme, a hubris that Newton shared, vaingloriously giving himself the pseudonym “‘Jeova Sanctus Unus’ – One Holy God – based upon an anagram of the Latinised version of his name, Isaacus Neuutonus”. However, the pride of the programme is not the point here. The important point is that the greatest scientist in history refused to see religious truth as sharply segregated from scientific truth, still less that religious truth needed to be “verified” by science. So far was Newton from segregating the two that he spent – to the puzzlement of his admirers ever since – many years studying alchemy and the Holy Scriptures. For “they who search after the Philosophers’ Stone,” he wrote, “[are] by their own rules obliged to strict & religious life. That study [is] fruitful of experiments.” Indeed, so assiduous was he in his search for the Philosophers’ Stone that Keynes considered him to have been not so much the first of the men of the Age of Reason as the last of the magicians...

“A strict and religious life” “fruitful of experiments”? Considering that no one was more fruitful in scientific experimentation and theorizing than Newton, one might have expected many modern scientists to have followed his advice. But they have not, because, while admiring his science, they have rejected his philosophy of science, preferring instead their own atheist, reductionist scientific outlook.

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28 White, op. cit., p. 140.
29 White, op. cit., p. 121.
Although many of his religious ideas were heretical, Newton at least did not share in the dominant heresy of early eighteenth century England, Deism. Thus he did not believe that God had created the universe and then simply allowed it to continue working according to the laws of nature without any further intervention from Himself. He believed that God periodically intervened in the workings of nature. For, as his disciple Samuel Clarke wrote to Leibniz, “the notion of the world’s being a great machine, going on without the interposition of God, as a clock continues to go without the assistance of a clock-maker, is the notion of materialism and fate, and tends… to exclude providence and God’s government in reality out of the world.”

Newton’s philosophy of science was based on the fact that, as Maynard Keynes said, “He regarded the universe as a cryptogram set by the Almighty”. If the Almighty set the cryptogram, then only one who was pleasing to the Almighty could be expected to understand it. Hence “his belief that the emotional and spiritual state of the individual experimenter was involved intimately with the success or failure of the experiment.”

And hence his quoting of Hermes Trismegistus: “I had this art and science by the sole inspiration of God who has vouchsafed to reveal it to his servant. Who gives those that know how to use their reason the means of knowing the truth, but is never the cause that any man follows error & falsehood.”

Now if the universe is a cryptogram written by God, there should be no conflict between the universe and the prophetic writings of the Old and New Testaments. And so Newton set about studying the Holy Scriptures, especially Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation. “He reasoned that because God’s work and God’s word came from the same Creator, then Nature and Scripture were also one and the same. Scripture was a communicable manifestation or interpretation of Nature, and as such could be viewed as a blueprint for life – a key to all meaning.”

In accordance with this principle, Newton set about interpreting the prophecies, concluding, for example, that the plan of the Temple of Solomon (Ezekiel 40-48) was a paradigm for the entire future of the world. Evidently he was less inspired as an interpreter of Scripture than as a scientist, and we know that he was far from Orthodox in his theology. However, it is not as a

31 White, *op. cit.*, p. 122
32 White, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
33 White, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
34 White, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
35 White, *op. cit.*, pp. 157, 158. It has been claimed that in a manuscript of Newton’s now in Jerusalem he calculated that the end of the world would come in the year 2060.
36 He was probably an Arian and certainly a Unitarian, a fact which he carefully concealed until he was dying. As Armstrong writes, in his treatise entitled *The Philosophical Origins of Gentile Theology*, he “argued that Noah had founded a superstition-free religion in which there were no revealed scriptures, no mysteries, but only a Deity which could be known through the rational contemplation of the natural world. Later generations had corrupted this pure faith; the spurious doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity had been added to the creed by unscrupulous theologians in the fourth century. Indeed, the Book of Revelation had
religious thinker that his example is important, but as showing that great science, far from being incompatible with religious “fundamentalism” (Newton believed in the literal truth of the Creation story, rejecting the idea that living creatures came into being by chance) and the belief that the true science comes from Divine inspiration, may actually be nourished by it.

But such examples become increasingly rare after Newton’s death. For he lived just as the “Age of Enlightenment” began to radically change the way men thought; and it changed it, first of all, by making scientific reasoning and the scientific method the measure of all things. The difference is illustrated by a remark of Bertrand Russell: "Almost everything that distinguishes the modern world from earlier centuries is attributable to science, which achieved its most spectacular triumphs in the seventeenth century."

Michael Polanyi confirms this judgement: "Just as the three centuries following on the calling of the Apostles sufficed to establish Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire, so the three centuries after the founding of the Royal Society sufficed for science to establish itself as the supreme intellectual authority of the post-Christian age. 'It is contrary to religion!' - the objection ruled supreme in the seventeenth century. 'It is unscientific!' is its equivalent in the twentieth."

After Newton’s death, scientific doubt would no longer be simply one tool among others to probe the mysteries of God’s universe. It would be the tool used to “demonstrate” that the universe is neither mysterious, nor God’s... And so in the eighteenth century, writes Gabriel Simonov, “science in Western Europe after Newton moved quickly forward. Under the influence of the encyclopaedists, rationalism rose up against Descartes, replacing innate ideas with empiricism and clarity of thought with reliability of facts.

“Relying on the successes of scientific determinism, some thinkers and scientists dared to foretell that in the future science would be able to explain everything, and then it would be in a position to foresee everything. From there it was one step not only to criticism of the book of Genesis and the Bible in general, but also to the rejection of God. This step was taken by the major French mathematician and physicist Laplace (1749-1827), who in a conversation with Napoleon Bonaparte, on whom he exerted influence, said: ‘Citizen First Consul, the hypothesis of God is not necessary for me.’"

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prophesied the rise of Trinitarianism - ‘this strange religion of ye West’, ‘the cult of three equal gods’ – as the abomination of desolation” (op. cit., p. 69).

This is one of the reasons, argues John Darwin, why such advanced pagan societies as Ming China, which had a tradition of empirical research and technical inventiveness, nevertheless failed before the onslaught of Christian Europe. In China, he writes, “for reasons that historians have debated at length, the tradition of scientific experimentation had faded away, perhaps as early as 1400. Part of the reason may lie in the striking absence in Confucian thought of the ‘celestial lawgiver’ – a god who had prescribed the laws of nature. In Europe, belief in such a providential figure, and the quest for ‘his’ purposes and grand design, had been a (perhaps the) central motive for scientific inquiry. But the fundamental assumption that the universe was governed by a coherent system of physical laws that could be verified empirically was lacking in China...”

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Not only in England with the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II, but also in other countries there was something of a recovery of traditional Christian forms of government in the seventeenth century. In Russia, the autocracy recovered from the Time of Troubles. Monarchs still ruled in most western countries, even in formally Calvinist countries such as Holland. And absolutist monarchies still ruled in Persia, India and China. In Western Europe, the emergence of relatively homogeneous nation-states, with their need for a unifying symbol and centre of political power, saved monarchism for the time being. Even Germany and Italy, though not unified nation-states, retained feudal, absolutist structures in their constituent parts...

At the same time the acid of anti-monarchism did not cease to eat away at the foundations of states. While the English Revolution did not succeed in finally abolishing the monarchy, it undoubtedly weakened it (Charles II was much more cautious in his treatment of dissenters than his father) – and it weakened absolutist France, too, by scattering the seeds of liberalism there. In Russia the Old Ritualists with their anti-monarchism and “theocratic democratism” bore striking resemblances to the contemporary self-governing communities of the American Puritans...

A critical point was reached in the years 1685-88, as Catholic absolutism and religious intolerance staged a defiant come-back. In 1685 Louis XIV of France repealed the Edict of Nantes, which had given toleration to the Protestants. And in the same year Charles II of England, a fervent admirer of Louis, died, having converted to Catholicism on his deathbed; he was succeeded by his brother, James II, a Catholic.

Charles, write David Starkey and Katie Greening, “had been acutely aware of the rumblings of anti-Catholic sentiment in England, and he had prophesied that his younger brother, James, would last no longer than three years on the throne. But James II acceded surprisingly smoothly: there were no riots in the streets, no rebellions or resistance...

“[However,] James II was a man on a mission: inspired by the successes of his Catholic ancestor Mary Tudor, he was determined to convert the nation back to what he considered to be the ‘true faith’. Moreover, he felt that his ambition was bolstered by divine right; an open Catholic had acceded to the throne in a nation with an inbred hostility to Catholicism – what clearer sign could there be from God that He supported the Catholic cause!...

“As James made conspicuous moves to ease the burdens on English Catholics – opening monastic houses, filling official positions with popish candidates – he became increasingly unpopular. In 1688 he issued a ‘Declaration of Indulgence’ which proposed universal religious toleration,
arguing that it was a guarantee of economic prosperity, as opposed to persecution, which spoiled trade, depopulated countries and discouraged strangers; and, in the process, suspended the ban on Catholics from holding public office. On 27 April of that year, James ordered that the clergy read the Declaration from their pulpits; seven prominent bishops refused, amid a wave of public sympathy and popular demonstrations of support for their cause...”

Seven leading Whig parliamentarians invited the Protestant Dutch King William of Orange to rule over them together with his wife, James' Protestant daughter Mary – but on their terms. William accepted these terms, since he needed English arms and money in his struggle against French absolutism. And so the revolution of 1688 took place; William invaded, James fled, and then William and Mary were crowned as equal monarchs in a constitutional monarchy. Before the coronation, in accordance with the terms agreed beforehand, they were read a Declaration of Rights which guaranteed the rights of Protestants, banned a Catholic monarchy, and gave parliament sovereign power. Later historians, such as Lord Macaulay in his History of England (1848) saw this “glorious” and “bloodless” revolution (although it was far from that in Ireland) as the key event making possible Britain’s ascent to super-power status and her avoidance of the bloody revolutions that took place in nineteenth-century Europe.

‘The events of 1688-89,” writes Edward Vallance, “became the cornerstone of the Whig interpretation of English history. According to this tradition, the members of the Convention parliaments who voted the crown to William and Mary were not constitutional innovators, but defenders of England’s ‘ancient constitution’ (the body of fundamental laws which were held to guarantee the rights and liberties of the English) from the absolutist designs of James.

“In the words of Edmund Burke in his Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), the revolutionaries ‘regenerated the deficient part of the old constitution through the parts which were not impaired’. In contrast to the violence and terror engulfing revolutionary France at the time Burke was writing, this earlier English revolution was ‘glorious’ because it was carried out by parliament. Above all, 1688-89 was to be celebrated because it was, according to the Whig interpretation, a bloodless revolution…”

The revolution was not bloodless. Nor was it glorious from a monarchist point of view, for it represented the emasculation of the English monarchy and its enslavement to parliament. Would it have been different if the Stuarts had returned to power? Perhaps... But the Stuarts were Catholics, and the masses rejected Catholicism. This was made clear when the Young Pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie, failed in his invasion of England in 1745...

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What cannot be denied, however, is that the revolution of 1688 represents the beginning of the ascent of England as a world power, in effect the foundation-stone of the British empire...

“In the 1690s,” writes Bernard Simms, “the English, partly drawing on imported Dutch ideas, established the strongest and most ‘modern’ state in Europe. A funded national debt was created, supported by the new Bank of England (1694) and a sophisticated stock and money market. An East India company was established as a semi-state body. Underpinning it all was a broad political consensus in favour of parliamentary government, and resisting tyranny at home and abroad. The Triennial Act of 1694 stipulated that parliamentary elections were to take place very three years, and the abandonment of censorship allowed political and commercial matters to be discussed freely inside and outside parliament... William III and his parliaments were able to raise the staggering sums needed to fight Louis, and managed to fund a huge proportion of the war, at least a third, out of long-term loans rather than income. Englishmen thus lived not only in the freest European state, but also the strongest in relation to its size and population.”43

But why did England from 1689 become such a successful state, triumphing eventually over states with greater resources and much bigger populations such as France and Spain?

One interesting idea is that parliament was able to raise money more easily than the absolute monarchies. Niall Ferguson writes: “In a seminal article published in 1989, North and Weingast argued that the real significance of the Glorious Revolution lay in the credibility that it gave the English state as a sovereign borrower. From 1689, Parliament controlled and improved taxation, audited royal expenditure, protected private property rights and effectively prohibited debt default. This arrangement, they argued, was ‘self-enforcing’, not least because property owners were overwhelmingly the class represented in Parliament. As a result, the English state was able to borrow money on a scale that had previously been impossible because of the sovereign’s habit of defaulting or arbitrarily taxing or expropriating. The late seventeenth and early eighteenth century thus inaugurated a period of rapid accumulation of public debt without any rise in borrowing costs – rather the reverse.

“This was in fact a benign development. Not only did it enable England to become Great Britain and, indeed, the British Empire, by giving the English state unrivalled financial resources for making – and winning – war. By accustoming the wealthy to investment in paper securities, it also paved the way for a financial revolution that would channel English savings into everything from canals to railways, commerce to colonization, ironworks to

43 Simms, op. cit., p. 62.
textile mills. Though the national debt grew enormously in the course of England’s many wars with France, reaching a peak of more than 260 per cent of GDP in the decade after 1815, this leverage earned a handsome return, because on the other side of the balance sheet, acquired largely with a debt-financed navy, was a global empire. Moreover, in the century after Waterloo, the debt was successfully reduced with a combination of sustained growth and primary budget surpluses. There was no default. There was no inflation. And Britannia bestrode the globe…”

However, the more usual explanation attributed Britain’s success to the difference between absolutism and representative government. Thus according to this (Whig) theory, whereas France and Spain were unwieldy, corrupt absolutist monarchies, England by 1689 had developed a powerful Parliament, whose members, held together by a common commitment to local government, the Common Law and an adherence to Protestantism, was able to limit the power of the king and make him accountable to them.

However, it is not immediately obvious why making the king accountable to a group of extremely rich landowners should have made the difference. After all, other states, such as Hungary and Poland, also muzzled their monarchy – but much less successfully than England. “It is not sufficient,” writes Francis Fukuyama, “to explain why the English Parliament was strong enough to force the monarchy into a constitutional settlement. The Hungarian nobility represented to the diet what was also very powerful and well organized. Like the English barons at Runnymede, the lesser Hungarian nobility forced their monarch into a constitutional compromise in the thirteenth century, the Golden Bull, and in subsequent years kept the central state on a very short lease. After the death of Matyas Hunyadi in 1490, the noble estate reversed the centralizing reforms that the monarchy had put into place in the previous generation and returned power to themselves.

“But the Hungarian noble estate did not use their power to strengthen the country as a whole; rather, they sought to lower taxes on themselves and guard their own narrow privileges at the expense of the country’s ability to defend itself. In England, by contrast, the constitutional settlement coming out of the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689 vastly strengthened the state, to the point that it became, over the next century, the dominant power in Europe. So if the English Parliament was strong enough to constrain a predatory monarch, we need to ask why that Parliament did not itself evolve into a rent-seeking coalition and turn against itself like the Hungarian Diet.

“There are at least two reasons why accountable government in England did not degenerate into rapacious oligarchy. The first has to do with England’s social structure compared to that of Hungary. While the groups represented in the English Parliament were an oligarchy, they sat at the top of a society that was much more mobile and open to non-elites that was

Hungary’s. In Hungary, the gentry had been absorbed into a narrow aristocracy, whereas in England they represented a large and cohesive social group, more powerful in certain ways than the aristocracy. England, unlike Hungary, had a tradition of grassroots political participation in the form of the hundred and county courts and other institutions of local governance. English lords were accustomed to sitting in assemblies on equal terms with their vassals and tenants to decide issues of common interest. Hungary, furthermore, had no equivalent of the English yeomanry, relatively prosperous farmers who owned their own land and could participate in local political life. And cities in Hungary were strictly controlled by the noble estate and did not generate a rich and powerful bourgeoisie the way that English ones did.

“Second, despite English traditions of individual liberty, the centralized English state was both powerful and well regarded through much of the society. It was one of the first states to develop a uniform system of justice, it protected property rights, and it acquired substantial naval capabilities in its struggles with various Continental powers. The English experiment with republican government after the beheading of Charles I in 1649 and the establishment of Cromwell’s Protectorate was not a happy one. The regicide itself seemed, even to the supporters of Parliament, an unjust and illegal act. The English Civil War witnessed the same sort of progressive radicalization experienced later during the French, Bolshevik, and Chinese revolutions. The more extreme anti-Royalist groups like the Levellers and the Diggers seemed to want not just political accountability but also a much broader social revolution, which frightened the property-owning classes represented in Parliament. It was thus with a great deal of relief that the monarchy was restored in 1660 with the accession of Charles II. After the Restoration, the issues of political accountability reappeared under the Catholic James II, whose machinations again aroused suspicions and opposition from Parliament and ultimately led to the Glorious Revolution. But this time around, no one wanted to dismantle the monarchy or the state; they only wanted a king who would be accountable to them. They got one in William of Orange.

“Ideas were again important. By the late seventeenth century, thinkers like Hobbes and Locke had broken free of concepts of a feudal social order based on classes and estates, and argued in favour of a social contract between state and citizen. Hobbes argued in *Leviathan* that human beings are fundamentally equal both in their passions and in their ability to inflict violence on one another, and that they have rights merely by virtue of the fact that they are human beings. Locke accepted these premises as well and attacked the notion that legitimate rule could arise from anything other than consent of the governed. One could overthrow a king, but only in the name of the principle of consent. Rights, according to these early liberals, were abstract and universal, and could not be legitimately appropriated by powerful individuals. Hungary had succumbed to the Turks and the Austrians long before ideas like these could spread there.
“There is one simple lesson to be drawn from this comparison. Political liberty – that is, the ability of societies to rule themselves – does not depend only on the degree to which a society can mobilize opposition to centralized power and impose constitutional constraints on the state. It must also have a state that is strong enough to act when action is require. Accountability does not run in just one direction, from the state to the society. If the government cannot act cohesively, if there is no broader sense of public purpose, then one will not have laid the basis for true political liberty. In contrast to Hungary after the death of Matyas Hunyadi, the English state after 1689 remained strong and cohesive, with a Parliament willing to tax itself and make sacrifices in the prolonged foreign struggles of the eighteenth century. A political system that is all checks and balances is potentially no more successful than one with no checks, because governments periodically need strong and decisive action. The stability of an accountable political system thus rests on a broad balance of power between the state and its underlying society.”45

“Consent” would be a better term than “balance of power” here. As has been argued, and will continue to be argued in this series, there can be no equality of power between the government and the governed, and ultimately, if it is not the king who holds sway over the people, then it is the people who holds sway over the king – they are the ultimate sovereign. That is why English political history continued to develop in the direction of increasing power to the people until we can no longer speak of a “balance” today.

Nevertheless, this much is true: a king (or parliament, or whatever executive is in place) cannot act effectively without the consent of the people, without their acceptance of his legitimacy and his ability to carry out important decisions without the people’s day-to-day control over them. When the king is perceived, whether justly or unjustly, to have lost that legitimacy, then he can only continue to rule by absolutist methods, whose end, sooner or later, is revolution and the overthrow of the state...

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Now the idea of consent is close to that of the social contract. This idea was developed by John Locke, who set out to prove that James II had broken some kind of agreement with the people, and so had been rightly overthrown, whereas William was abiding by its terms and so should be obeyed. Locke retained Hobbes’ idea that the state had been founded in the beginning by a social contract. But he reworked it so as to bring the monarch within rather than above the contract, making parliament the real sovereign, and bringing God back into the picture, if only for decency’s sake.

Like Hobbes, Locke began his argument by positing an original State of Nature in which all men were equal and free. But, unlike Hobbes, he

considered that this original state was not one of total anarchy and vicious egoism, but rather of social cohesion, with men “living together according to reason, without a common superior on earth”.

“Though this (State of Nature) be a state of liberty,” he wrote, “yet it is not a state of licence.” For, in addition to the State of Nature, Locke also posited a “Law of Nature” inspired by “the infinitely wise Maker” and identifiable with “reason”, which instructed men not to infringe on the freedom of other men. Thus “the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.”

In the State of Nature every man owns the land that he tills and the product of that labour: “Though the earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The Labour of his Body, and the Work of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his Labour with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his Property.” The critical words here are “property” and “possessions”. For Locke’s second aim, after the justification of the overthrow of James II and enthronement of William III, was to make sure that the constitutional monarchy was in the hands of the men of property, the aristocratic landowning class. And so those who signed the original social contract, in his view, were not all the men of the kingdom, but only those who had substantial property and therefore the right to vote for members of parliament in elections. For “the great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealths is the preservation of their property.”

The Natural Rights, as Locke calls them, are based on God’s own word. For, writes J.S. McClelland, interpreting Locke, He “means us to live at his pleasure, not another’s, therefore no-one may kill me (except in self-defence, which includes war); God commands me to labour in order to sustain and live my life, therefore I have the right to the liberty to do so; and God must mean what I take out of mere nature to be mine, therefore a natural right to property originates in the command to labour: the land I plough, and its fruits are mine. Man, being made in God’s image and therefore endowed with natural reason, could easily work out that this was so, and they have Holy Writ to help them.

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48 Locke, Second Treatise of Civil Government, chapter 13, section 149.
“Men’s natural reason also tells them two other very important things. First, it tells each man that all other men have the same rights as he. All rights have duties attached to them (a right without a corresponding duty, or set of duties, is a privilege, not a right, a sinecure for instance, which carries with it the right to a salary without the duty to work for it). Rational men are capable of working this out for themselves, and they easily recognise that claiming Natural Rights requires that they respect the exercise of those same rights in others, and it is this reciprocity which makes the State of Nature social. If everybody recognises naturally that Natural Rights are universal or they cease to be natural, then plainly this implies that men could live together without government. That is what Locke really means when he says that the State of Nature is a state of liberty, not licence.

“However, the State of Nature is still the state of fallen man. Sinful men, alas, will sometimes invade the Natural Rights of others. From this it follows that men have another Natural Right, the right of judgement (and punishment) when they think their Natural Rights have been violated by others. This right is not a substantive right, a right to something; rather it is an energising right, or a right which gives life to the other Natural Rights. Rights are useless unless there is a right to judge when rights have been violated, and so the right to judgement completes the package of Natural Rights.”

The purpose of the state is to protect Natural Rights. It follows that “society is natural while the state is artificial. Human nature being composed as it is of certain Natural Rights which rational men recognise that they and others possess, society arises spontaneously. It follows that, because society is prior to the state, both logically and as a matter of history, it is up to society to decide what the state shall be like, and not the state which shall decided what society shall be like. This insistence [on] the separation of society from the state, and a society’s priority over the state, was to become the bedrock of the doctrine which came to be known as liberalism. Put another way, Locke thinks that what the state is like is a matter (within limits) of rational reflection and choice, but society is a given about which men have no choice. Society is what God meant it to be, capitalist and naturally harmonious, except that in the real world societies tend to become a bit ragged at the edges. Offences against Natural and positive law, murder, theft, fraud and riot for instance, happen from time to time, and men need the special agency of the state to cope with them.”

The social contract consists in men giving up “to the state their right to judgement when their Natural Rights have been violated. Of course, a Natural Right being God’s gift, part of what it is to be a human being, it is impossible to alienate it completely. At the moment of contract, Locke’s men give up the absolute minimum for the maximum gain: they entrust the state with their right to judgement on the condition that the state uses the right to

50 McClelland, op. cit., p. 234.
51 McClelland, op. cit., p. 236.
judge when Natural Rights have been violated in order to allow men to enjoy their other Natural Rights, to life, liberty and property, more abundantly.

“.... Men are capable of making a collective agreement with their rulers in the State of Nature, either in the very beginning or in some future, imaginable emergency when government has collapsed. In Locke’s account of the matter it is easy to see when and why government would in fact collapse: when it violates, or is seen to violate, enough [of] men’s Natural Rights for them justifiably to rebel by taking back to themselves the right of judgement because government has betrayed its trust and misused it. Men therefore have a right of rebellion, and perhaps even a moral duty to rebel, if government begins to frustrate God’s purpose for the world. The moment for rebellion happens when enough men are prepared to repudiate their contract with their rulers and fall back on the original contract of society. In all events, the Lockean Sovereign is party to the contract to set up government. The king is king on terms.”

Locke was scornful of Hobbes’ idea that despotism was necessary to preserve peace. To think that men should seek a peaceful life by surrendering all their power (and property) to an absolute sovereign, he wrote, “is to think that Men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischiefs may be done them by Pole-Cats, or Foxes, but are content, nay think it Safety, to be devoured by Lions.” Therefore government should not be concentrated in the hands of one man or institution; it should be composed of a legislative power – parliament, elected every few years by the property-owning people, and an executive power – the monarchy. The executive and legislative powers, according to Locke, must be kept separate, as a check on each other, to prevent the abuse of power.

Locke’s disciple Montesquieu developed this idea in his famous Spirit of the Laws: “Constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go... To prevent this abuse, it is necessary from the very nature of things that power should be a check to power. A government may be so constituted, as no man shall be compelled to do things to which the law does not oblige him, nor forced to abstain from things which the law permits.” Thus in order to preserve liberty, said Montesquieu, it is necessary to separate and balance the three arms of government, the executive, the legislative and the judicial.

52 McClelland, op. cit., p. 237.
55 However, as Held writes, “a fundamental difficulty lay at the very heart of his conception of liberty. Liberty, he wrote, ‘is the right of doing whatever the law permits’. People are free to pursue their activities within the framework of the law. But if freedom is defined in direct relation to the law, there is no possibility of arguing coherently that freedom might depend on altering the law or that the law itself might under certain circumstances articulate tyranny” (op. cit., pp. 59-60).
The monarchy is necessary because only such a power can make laws valid and effective. But the king is not above the laws passed by parliament, and is to that extent subject to parliament. If the king transgresses the laws by, for example, failing to summon the legislators at the proper times, or by setting up “his own arbitrary authority in place of the laws”, then he can be resisted by force. As A.L. Smith writes, “Locke put government in its proper position as a trustee for the ends for which society exists; now a trustee has great discretionary powers and great freedom from interference, but is also held strictly accountable, and under a properly drawn deed nothing is simpler than the appointment of new trustees. For after all, the ultimate trust remains in the people, in Locke’s words; and this is the sovereign people, the irrevocable depository of all powers.” 56 Even the legislative power of parliament could rule only by “promulgating standing laws” and not “extemporary arbitrary decrees”.

This would appear to allow the people to rebel not only against the king, but also against parliament. The problem is: where to draw the line? When is the use of force against the government just and lawful?

This vital question has never received a satisfactory answer in western political theory. Locke’s answer was: when “estates, liberties, lives are in danger, and perhaps religion too”. For “the end of government is the good of mankind, and which is best for mankind, that the people should always exposed to the boundless will of tyranny or that the rulers should be sometimes liable to be opposed? Upon the forfeiture of their rulers, [power] reverts to the society and the people have a right to act as supreme and place it in a new form or new hands, as they think good.” 57

In other words, if the people feel that their Natural Rights have been violated by king or parliament, then in theory they should be able to declare the contract broken and take power back from their representatives – by force, if need be. For “the Community may be said in this respect to be always the Supreme Power”. 58 Thus if the prince seeks to “enslave, or destroy them”, the people are entitled to “appeal to heaven”. But “since Heaven does not make explicit pronouncements,” writes Russell, “this means, in effect, that a decision can only be reached by fighting, since it is assumed that Heaven will give the victory to the better cause.” 59

However, the experience of the English revolution and Locke’s own conservative instincts led him to countenance revolution only in extreme cases. Otherwise the right to rebel would “lay a perpetual foundation for disorder”. “Great mistakes in the ruling part… will be born by the People

57 Locke, An Essay concerning the true, original, extent, and end of Civil Government (1690).
58 Locke, Second Treatise of Civil Government, chapter 13, section 149.
without muting or murmur”, and recourse would be had to force only after “a long train of Abuses, Prevarications, and Artifices”. In general, therefore, Locke’s system represents an uneasy compromise between older, religious ways of thinking and the new rationalism. On the one hand, he wanted the authority that an established church and an anointed king gives in order to protect property and prevent the revolution that had so nearly destroyed everything a generation before. On the other hand, he wanted to give the people the right to overthrow a tyrant. But it is clearly the secular interests of his class, rather than religious feeling, that motivates his thinking. And it was those secular interests that triumphed in the end. By the time William and Mary had died, in 1714, and the German Hanoverian dynasty was in its place, the character of the English monarchy had been changed for good, if not for the better. England was a constitutional monarchy ruled by king and parliament together, but with the landed aristocracy firmly in charge.

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“In all its forms,” writes Roger Scruton, “the social contract enshrines a fundamental liberal principle, namely, that, deep down, our obligations are self-created and self-imposed. I cannot be bound by the law, or legitimately constrained by the sovereign, if I never chose to be under the obligation to obey. Legitimacy is conferred by the citizen, and not by the sovereign, still less by the sovereign’s usurping ancestors. If we cannot discover a contract to be bound by the law, then the law is not binding.”

However, as Hegel pointed out, this original premise, that “our obligations are self-created and self-imposed”, is false. We do not choose the family we are born in, or the state to which we belong, and yet have obligations to both. Of course, we can rebel against such obligations; the son can choose to say that he owes nothing to his father. And yet he would not even exist without his father; and without his father’s upbringing he would not even be capable of making choices. Thus we are “hereditary bondsmen”, to use Byron’s phrase. In this sense we live in a cycle of freedom and necessity: the free choices of our ancestors limit our own freedom, while our choices limit those of our children. The idea of a social contract entered into in a single generation is therefore not only a historical myth; it is also a dangerous myth. It is a myth that distorts the very nature of society, which cannot be conceived as existing except over several generations.

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60 Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, treatise 2, chapter 14, section 168. “‘Overturning the constitution and frame of any just government’ is ‘the greatest crime a man is capable of’, but ‘either ruler or subject’ who forcibly invades ‘the rights of either prince or people’ is guilty of it. ‘Whosoever uses force without right, as everyone does in society who does it without law, puts himself into a state of war with those against whom he so uses it... every one has a right to defend himself and to resist the aggressor.” (J.R. Western, *Monarchy and Revolution*, London: Blandford Press, 1972, p. 25)

61 Scruton, *op. cit.*, p. 416. As Andrzej Walicki writes: “The argument that society was founded on reason and self-interest could of course be used to sanction rebellion against any forms of social relations that could not prove their rationality or utility.” (*A History of Russian Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, p. 39)
But if society exists over several generations, all generations should be taken into account in drawing up the contract. Why should only one generation’s interests be respected? For, as Scruton continues, interpreting the thought of Edmund Burke, “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.”  

“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.”

As Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow writes: “It is obligatory, say the wise men of this world, to submit to social authorities on the basis of a social contract, by which people were united into society, by a general agreement founding government and submission to it for the general good. If they think that it is impossible to found society otherwise than on a social contract, - then why is it that the societies of the bees and ants are not founded on it? And is it not right that those who break open honeycombs and destroy ant-hills should be entrusted with finding in them... a charter of bees and ants? And until such a thing is done, nothing prevents us from thinking that bees and ants create their societies, not by contract, but by nature, by an idea of community implanted in their nature, which the Creator of the world willed to be realised even at the lowest level of His creatures. What if an example of the creation of a human society by nature were found? What, then, is the use of the fantasy of a social contract? No one can argue against the fact that the original form of society is the society of the family. Thus does not the child obey the mother, and the mother have power over the child, not by contract, but by nature, by an idea of community implanted in their nature, which the Creator of the world willed to be realised even at the lowest level of His creatures. What if an example of the creation of a human society by nature were found? What, then, is the use of the fantasy of a social contract? No one can argue against the fact that the original form of society is the society of the family. Thus does not the child obey the mother, and the mother have power over the child, not because they have contracted between themselves that she should feed him at the breast, and that he should shout as little as possible when he is swaddled? What if the mother should

62 Scruton, op. cit., p. 417.
suggest too harsh conditions to the child? Will not the inventors of the social contract tell him to go to another mother and make a contract with her about his upbringing? The application of the social contract in this case is as fitting as it is fitting in other cases for every person, from the child to the old man, from the first to the last. Every human contract can have force only when it is entered into with consciousness and good will. Are there many people in society who have heard of the social contract? And of those few who have heard of it, are there many who have a clear conception of it? Ask, I will not say the simple citizen, but the wise man of contracts: when and how did he enter into the social contract? When he was an adult? But who defined this time? And was he outside society before he became an adult? By means of birth? This is excellent. I like this thought, and I congratulate every Russian that he was able – I don’t know whether it was from his parents or from Russia herself, - to agree that he be born in powerful Russia... The only thing that we must worry about is that neither he who was born nor his parents thought about this contract in their time, and so does not referring to it mean fabricating it? And consequently is not better, as well as simpler, both in submission and in other relationships towards society, to study the rights and obligations of a real birth instead of an invented contract – that pipe-dream of social life, which, being recounted at the wrong time, has produced and continues to produce material woes for human society. ‘Transgressors have told me fables, but they are not like Thy law, O Lord’ (Psalm 118.85).”

In spite of these contradictions, social contract theory has remained the dominant model of society in Anglo-Saxon countries to this day. Thus probably the most influential contemporary work of political philosophy, John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice*, is in essence a variation on Lockean social contract theory with one or two original twists. One of these is the idea that people enter into the social contract from a so-called “original position” in which they are covered with a “veil of ignorance”. That is, the people “are denied knowledge of everything which makes them who they are: their class, skills, age, gender, sexuality, religious views and conceptions of the good life. Rawls argues that the principles which these people would choose to regulate their relations with one another are definitive of justice... The veil of ignorance is meant to ensure that our views on justice are not distorted by our own interests. ’If a man knew that he was wealthy, he might find it rational to advance the principle that various taxes for welfare measures be counted unjust; if he knew that he was poor, he would most likely propose the contrary principle...’”

This theory escapes the objection that people entering into a social contract are simply choosing their self-interest by completely abstracting from the real man with his concrete desires, interests and beliefs. Thus not only is the original social contract a historical myth in the strictest sense of the word: the

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65 Ben Rogers, “Portrait: John Rawls”, *Prospect*, June, 1999, p. 51
“conception of the good” of those who enter into it is not allowed to intrude into political life in any way. As Scruton notes, Rawls’s social contract aims to remove “from the legal order all reference to the sources of division and conflict between human groups, so as to create a society in which no question can arise that does not have a solution acceptable to everyone. If religion, culture, sex, race, and even ‘conceptions of the good’ have all been relegated to the private sphere, and set outside the scope of jurisdiction, then the resulting public law will be an effective instrument for the government of a multicultural society, forbidding citizens to make exceptions in favor of their preferred group, sex, culture, faith, or lifestyle…. This simply reinforces the status of the theory as the theology of a post-religious society.”

Locke had argued that religion was a private matter, and that people should be made as far as possible to mind their own business; but he drew the line at Catholics and atheists. Rawls goes further in making the State completely value-free (or value-less) – and Catholics and atheists are equally welcome! Thus the theory, while not explicitly anti-religious, actually leads, in its modern variants, to the purest secularism: the original social contract must be postulated to be between irreligious people and to lead to a state that is strictly irreligious, relegating religion entirely to the private sphere.

But such a state will be accepted only by a society for which religion has ceased to be the primary focus of life, and has become merely one “interest” or “need” among many others. Such a society was England after the Glorious Revolution. And such a society has the whole of the West become since then insofar as the Glorious Revolution has become the model for “democratic” regime-change throughout the world, while its attendant theories of the social contract and human rights have become the dominant orthodoxy in all states that aspire to become part of the “international community”.

We come to the perhaps shocking conclusion that the “glorious” and “bloodless” revolution of 1688, together with its attendant theory of the social contract, was built on crypto-atheist foundations that logically lead, in the fullness of time, to the purest atheism. It follows that for a truly religious believer – whether he be Christian, Hindu, Jewish or Muslim – for whom the truth of his faith is the first value, and who longs, as every truly religious believer must long, for the triumph of his faith throughout society and the spread of its influence into every social and political institution, social contract theory is unacceptable. He cannot sign up to such a “contract” (assuming, for the sake of argument, that such a thing exists). And if he is forced to sign, and even if he is coerced or re-educated into renouncing his faith, he will at best be an unenthusiastic, inwardly grumbling citizen and at worst a potential revolutionary. Therefore if we accept that religious belief is a permanent feature of human society, we must also accept that social contract theory and the liberal theory of government can never be a stable, long-term

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foundation for that society – although it may well be a temporary restraint on, and container of, civil war in a religiously divided nation...
The Jews have influenced modern Europe through three major channels: economic, religious and political... Economically, the Jews played a decisive part in the development of capitalism in Europe, and in the breaking down of the Christian beliefs, especially concerning usury, that hindered its full emergence. In the religious sphere, Cabbalistic Judaism greatly influenced a whole series of heretical sects and magical practices that flooded Western Europe from the time of the Templars. From the beginning of the eighteenth century these sects and practices began to converge into the movement known as Freemasonry. Politically, from the second half of the eighteenth century the Jews began to harness the economic power they wielded through the banks, and the religious power they wielded through the masonic lodges, to assist that vast phenomenon which we shall simply call the Revolution.

Capitalism on the grand scale is the product of avarice, the love of money, which St. Paul called “the root of all kinds of evil” (I Timothy 6.10). Of course, avarice was not invented by the Jews or the modern capitalists, but has been a trait of fallen man since the beginning. However, in most historical societies, while many men might dream of great wealth, only very few could have a realistic hope of acquiring it. Or rather, those few who had great wealth did not acquire it so much as inherit it. For they were the sons of the great landowning aristocratic families. Most ordinary people, on the other hand, were born as peasants. A peasant might dream of wealth, but his bondage to his landowning master and the necessity of spending all his time tilling the soil and bringing in the harvest, condemned his dreams to remain no more than that - dreams. This was especially the case in the feudal society of the medieval West – and indeed in almost all societies before the sixteenth century, insofar as almost all societies were based on a rural economy. However, the growth of towns in the Renaissance, and especially the growth of capitalism and banking, made a certain measure of wealth a real possibility for a rapidly increasing proportion of the population. And it was the Jews who very quickly came to dominate the burgeoning capitalism of the West. The reason for this was that the Talmud has a specific economic doctrine that favours the most ruthless kind of capitalist exploitation.

According to Oleg Platonov, the Talmud “teaches the Jew to consider the property of all non-Jews as ‘gefker’, which means free, belonging to no one. ‘The property of all non-Jews has the same significance as if it had been found in the desert: it belongs to the first who seizes it’. In the Talmud there is a decree according to which open theft and stealing are forbidden, but anything can be acquired by deceit or cunning...”

“From this it follows that all the resources and wealth of the non-Jews must belong to representatives of the ‘chosen people’. ‘According to the Talmud,’ wrote the Russian historian S.S. Gromeka, “God gave all the peoples into the hands of the Jews” (Baba-Katta, 38); “the whole of Israel are children of kings; those who offend a Jew offend God himself” (Sikhab 67, 1) and “are subject to
execution, as for lèse-majesté” (Sanhedrin 58, 2); pious people of other nations, who are counted worthy of participating in the kingdom of the Messiah, will take the role of slaves to the Jews’ (Sanhedrin 91, 21, 1051). From this point of view, … all the property in the world belongs to the Jews, and the Christians who possess it are only temporary, ‘unlawful’ possessors, usurpers, and this property will be confiscated by the Jews from them sooner or later. When the Jews are exalted above all the other peoples, God will hand over all the nations to the Jews for final extermination.’

“The historian of Judaism I. Lyutostansky cites examples from the ancient editions of the Talmud, which teaches the Jews that it is pleasing to God that they appropriate the property of the goyim. In particular, he expounds the teaching of Samuel that deceiving a goy is not a sin…

“Rabbi Moses said: ‘If a goy makes a mistake in counting, then the Jew, noticing this, must say that he knows nothing about it.’ Rabbi Brentz says: ‘If some Jews, after exhausting themselves by running around all week to deceive Christians in various places, come together at the Sabbath and boast of their deceptions to each other, they say: “We must take the hearts out of the goyim and kill even the best of them.”’ of course, if they succeed in doing this.’ Rabbi Moses teaches: ‘Jews sin when they return lost things to apostates and pagans, or anyone who doesn’t reverence the Sabbath.’…

“To attain the final goal laid down in the Talmud for Jews – to become masters of the property of the goyim – one of the best means, in the opinion of the rabbis, is usury. According to the Talmud, ‘God ordered that money be lent to the goyim, but only on interest; consequently, instead of helping them in this way, we must harm them, even if they can be useful for us.’ The tract Baba Metsiya insists on the necessity of lending money on interest and advises Jews to teach their children to lend money on interest, ‘so that they can from childhood taste the sweetness of usury and learn to use it in good time.’”

Now the Old Testament forbids the lending of money for interest to brothers, but allows it to strangers (Exodus 22.25; Leviticus 25.36; Deuteronomy 23.24). This provided the Jews’ practice of usury with a certain justification according to the letter of the law. However, as the above quotations make clear, the Talmud exploited the letter of the law to make it a justification for outright exploitation of the Christians and Muslims.

Johnson, while admitting that some Talmudic texts encouraged exploitation of Gentiles, nevertheless argues that the Jews had no choice: “A midrash on the Deuteronomy text [about usury], probably written by the nationalistic Rabbi Akiva, seemed to say that Jews were obliged to charge interest to foreigners. The fourteenth-century French Jew Levi ben Gershom agreed: it was a positive commandment to burden the gentile with interest

‘because one should not benefit an idolater... and cause him as much damage as possible without deviating from righteousness’; others took this line. But the most common justification was economic necessity:

“‘If we nowadays allow interest to be taken from non-Jews it is because there is no end of the yoke and the burden kings and ministers impose upon us, and everything we take is the minimum for our subsistence; and anyhow we are condemned to live in the midst of the nations and cannot earn our living in any other manner except by money dealings with them; therefore the taking of interest is not to be prohibited.’

“This was the most dangerous argument of all because financial oppression of Jews tended to occur in areas where they were most disliked, and if Jews reacted by concentrating on moneylending to gentiles, the unpopularity – and so, of course, the pressure – would increase. Thus the Jews became an element in a vicious circle. The Christians, on the basis of the Biblical rulings, condemned interest-taking absolutely, and from 1179 those who practised it were excommunicated. But the Christians also imposed the harshest financial burdens on the Jews. The Jews reacted by engaging in the one business where Christian laws actually discriminated in their favour, and so became identified with the hated trade of moneylending. Rabbi Joseph Colon, who knew both France and Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century, wrote that the Jews of both countries hardly engaged in any other profession...”68

Whichever was the original cause – the Talmud’s encouragement of usury, or the Christians’ financial restrictions on the Jews – the fact was that it was through usury that the Jews came to dominate the Christians economically. “Therefore,” writes Platonov, “already in the Middle Ages the Jews, using the Christians’ prejudice against profit, the amassing of wealth and usury, seized many of the most important positions in the trade and industry of Europe. Practising trade and usury and exploiting the simple people, they amassed huge wealth, which allowed them to become the richest stratum of medieval society. The main object of the trade of Jewish merchants was slave-trading. Slaves were acquired mainly in the Slavic lands69, whence they were exported to Spain and the countries of the East. On the borders between the Germanic and Slavic lands, in Meysen, Magdeburg and Prague, Jewish settlements were formed, which were constantly occupied in the slave trade. In Spain Jewish merchants organized hunts for Andalusian girls, selling them into slavery into the harems of the East. The slave markets of the Crimea were served, as a rule, by Jews. With the opening of America and the penetration into the depths of Africa it was precisely the Jews who became suppliers of black slaves to the New World.

69 Hence the English word “slave”, and the French “esclave”, come from “Slav”. (V.M.)
“From commercial operations, the Jews passed to financial ones, to mortgages and usury, often all of these at once. Already from the 15th century very large Jewish fortunes were being formed. We can judge how big their resources were from the fact that in Spain merchants kept almost a whole army of mercenaries who protected their dubious operations – 25,000 horsemen and 20,000 infantry.

“The great universal historical event,’ wrote the Jewish historian V. Zombardt, author of the book The Jews and Economic Life, ‘was the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal (1492 and 1497). It must not be forgotten that on the very day that Columbus sailed from Palos to discover America (August 3, 1492), 300,000 Jews were expelled to Navarra, France, Portugal and the East\(^{70}\), and that in the years in which Vasco da Gama was discovering the sea route to East India, the Jews were also being expelled from other parts of the Pyrenean peninsula.’ According to Zombardt’s calculations, already in the 15th century the Jews constituted one third of the numbers of the world’s bourgeoisie and capitalists.

“In the 16th to 18th centuries the centre of Jewish economics became Amsterdam, which the Jews called ‘the new, great Jerusalem’... In Holland, the Jews became key figures in government finance. The significance of the Jewish financial world in this country went beyond its borders, for during the 17th and 18th centuries it was the main reservoir out of which all monarchs drew when they needed money...”\(^{71}\)

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The migration of the Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal to Holland and England marked the beginning both of the ascent of these latter states to the status of world powers, and of the decline of Spain and Portugal. For, as R.H. Tawney writes: ‘Portugal and Spain held the keys of the treasure house of the east and the west. But it was neither Portugal with her tiny population, and her empire that was little more than a line of forts and factories 10,000 miles long, nor Spain, for centuries an army on the march and now staggering beneath the responsibilities of her vast and scattered empire, devout to the point of fanaticism, and with an incapacity for economic affairs which seemed almost inspired, which reaped the material harvest of the empires into which they had stepped, the one by patient toil, the other by luck. Gathering spoils which they could not retain, and amassing wealth which slipped through their fingers, they were little more than the political agents of minds more astute and characters better versed in the arts of peace... The economic capital of the new civilization was Antwerp... its typical figure, the paymaster of princes, was the international financier”\(^{72}\) – that is, the Jew.

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\(^{70}\) These figures are considered vastly exaggerated by Cantor, op.cit., p. 189 (V.M.)

\(^{71}\) Platonov, op.cit., pp. 148-149, 154.

And when the Jews began to move from Antwerp to London, whence they had been banished in 1290, the economic leadership of the world moved to England…

Thus in September, 1653 Menasseh Ben Israel came to London from Amsterdam to plead the case for Jewish readmission to England. At that time, writes Rabbi Jeremy Gordon, “England was in the grip of Messianic excitement. Cromwell had opened Parliament that July with the announcement that ‘this may be the door to usher in the things that God has promised… You are at the edge of the promises and prophecies.’

“Ben Israel lost no time stoking the messianic fervour for his own purposes. In ‘A Humble Address to the Lord Protector’ he notes: ‘The opinion of many Christians and mine doe concurre herin, in that we both believe the restoring time of our Nation into their Native Country is very near at hand; I believing that this restauration cannot be before the words of Daniel be first accomplished, And when the dispersion of the Holy people shall be completed in all places, then shall all these things be completed. Signifying therewith, that all be fulfilled, the People of God must be first dispersed into all places of the World. Now we know how our Nation is spread all about, and hath its seat and dwellings in the most flourishing Kindgdomes of the World except only this considerable and mighty Island [Britain]. And therefore this remains onely in my judgements before the MESSIA come.’

“It is fascinating to observe Ben Israel’s theological partnering with the Puritans. He is tempting Christians to let Jews into Britain in order to bring the second coming of Jesus! The ‘Address’ is a masterful work of flattery, requestiong a ‘free and publick Synagogue’ in order that Jews may, ‘sue also for a blessing upon this [British] Nation and People of England for receiving us into their bosoms and comforting Sion in her distresse.’ But it also reminded Cromwell that no ruler, ‘hath ever afflicted [the Jews] who hath not been, by some ominous Exit, most heavily punished of God Almighty; as is manifest from the Histories of the Kings; Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezer & others.’

“Ben Israel also marshals less spiritual arguments, devoting several pages to a survey of the profitability of ‘The Nation of Jewes’ in a range of states that have seen fit to let in Jews. This might have been particularly interesting to Cromwell, seeking to find ways to keep Britain ahead of the Dutch economy.

“Suitably inspired, Cromwell called a conference of merchants and clergymen but didn’t get the support he was looking for. Admitting the Jews would be a blasphemy, some claimed. Others spread rumours of child murder… There were also fears, if re-admission were formalised, that ‘every Vagabond Jew may purchase the Liberties and Immunities of free-born Englishmen’.
“Not everyone, and least of all the guilds, were anxious to see the Jews’ economic nous and power in competition with the existing British mercantile classes. Perhaps in the face of such opposition, Cromwell disbanded the conference before it could report.”

The Venetian ambassador to England, Giovanni Sagredo describes these events as follows: “A Jew came from Antwerp and... when introduced to his highness [Oliver Cromwell] he began not only to kiss but to press his hands and touch... his whole body with the most exact care. When asked why he behaved so, he replied that he had come from Antwerp solely to see if his highness was of flesh and blood, since his superhuman deeds indicated that he was more than a man... The Protector ordered [i.e. set up] a congregation of divines, who discussed in the presence of himself and his council whether a Christian country could receive the Jews. Opinions were very divided. Some thought they might be received under various restrictions and very strict obligations. Others, including some of the leading ministers of the laws, maintained that under no circumstances and in no manner could they receive the Jewish sect in a Christian kingdom without very grave sin. After long disputes and late at night the meeting dissolved without any conclusion...”

Eventually, in 1656, the Jews got their way. Their success, continues Gordon, “owes its origin to the imprisonment of a converso merchant, Antonio Rodrigues Robles, on the charge of being a papist. Robles was threatened with sequestration of his assets and escaped punishment only when he claimed that, rather than being a papist, he was Jewish. Cromwell intervened, Robles escaped punishment and, as the historian Heinrich Graetz remarked, Jews ‘made no mistake over the significance of this ruling, [and threw] off the mask of Christianity.’

“It was, in Cromwell’s England, far safer to be an avowed Jew than a closeted pseudo-Puritan who might harbour papist tendencies. Devoid of constitutional upheaval, legislation or fanfare, the Jews got on with the day-to-day business of establishing a community on this ‘considerable and mighty Island’.”

Jewish influence now increased on the political and religious, no less than the economic life of England. Eliane Glaser writes: “In 1653... the radical Fifth

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75 Another reason for this, as R.A. York points out, is that “quite a strong philo-semitic tendency was developing in English Puritanism at this time. Puritanism encouraged the return to the text of the Bible, in particular to the Old Testament. This in turn encouraged greater interest in the study of Hebrew and the Jews themselves.

76 Gordon, op. cit., p. 38.
Monarchist preacher John Rogers suggested a plan to model the new parliament on the Sanhedrin. Rogers, like other members of the millenarian sect, believed that this would hasten Christ’s coming, and the idea appeared in the manifesto of the Fifth Monarchy rebels in 1657. In fact the use of the Jewish court as a template for the English religious and political constitution is one of the most startling aspects of Christian discourse in the 17th century.

“In 1653, the legal scholar John Selden wrote a lengthy tract on the Sanhedrin; and Selden’s Jewish ideas greatly influenced John Milton. Utopian visions of the English constitution, such as James Harrington’s The Commonwealth of Oceana (1656) and Thomas Hobbes’s Leviathan (1656), contain numerous references to ancient Israel. The Sanhedrin was at the centre of debates about the place of religious minorities and the relationship between religious and civil law, because Christian commentaries could never agree on whether the Sanhedrin had arbitrated in secular as well as sacred affairs…”

The position of the Jews in England was confirmed and consolidated a generation later, when William of Orange became king of England. William, notes Johnson, let an anti-French coalition from 1672 to 1702. This coalition “was financed and provisioned by a group of Dutch Sephardic Jews operating chiefly from the Hague.” They were led by Samuel Oppenheimer.

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It was a similar situation throughout Western Europe. Thus Jews also became influential in Germany, in spite of Luther’s strong opposition to Judaism. “In the seventeenth century,” writes Dan Cohn-Sherbok, “the court Jew came to play a crucial role in state affairs. Each royal or princely court had its own Jewish auxiliary. Throughout the country court Jews administered finances, provisioned armies, raised money, provided textiles and precious stones to the court... Such court Jews stood at the pinnacle of the social scale, forming an elite class.”

From the 17th century, banking at the Viennese court was dominated by Jews, and during the Austrian wars against France and then Turkey, Samuel Oppenheimer was again prominent, being the Imperial War Purveyor to the Austrians... Thus “by 1694 the Austrian state debt to Oppenheimer alone amounted to no less than 3 million florins. At his death, by Emmanuel’s estimate, it had reached double that figure.”

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79 Johnson, op. cit., pp. 256-258.
80 Cohn-Sherbok, op. cit., p. 115.
In France under Louis XIV and XV the leading position in the financial world was occupied by the Jewish banker Samuel Bernard, about whose help to France contemporaries said that ‘his whole merit consisted in the fact that he supported the State, as a string supports that which hangs on it.’”

In fact, the Jews served all sides in the Gentile wars...

But there was a price to be paid... In the 18th century the Jewish banker Jean Lo (Levi) founded a huge “Mississippi company” in Paris, which gave him monopoly rights to trade with China, India, the islands of the southern seas, Canada and all the colonies of France in America, and which “guaranteed” dividends of 120% a year to investors. However, the paper he issued was founded on nothing, the company collapsed, “millions of Frenchmen were ruined and for many years the finances of the country were hopelessly disordered. At the same time many representatives of the Jewish community of Paris amassed huge fortunes on this misery.”

However, the really significant development again took place in England... N. Bogoliubov writes: “With the help of the agent William Paterson [the king] succeeded in persuading the British Treasury to borrow 1.25 million British pounds from Jewish bankers. This strengthened his position. Insofar as the state debt had already, even without this, attained improbable heights, the government could do nothing but agree to the conditions presented:

“1. The name of the creditor will remain in secret: he is allowed to found ‘The Bank of England’ (a Central Bank).

“2. The directors of the above-mentioned bank are given the right to establish the gold support of paper money.

“3. They are given the right to give credits to the extent of ten pounds in paper money to every pound kept in gold.

“4. They are given the right to accumulate a national debt and collect the necessary sum by means of direct taxation of the people.

“Thus there appeared the first private central bank – ‘the Bank of England’. By means of these operations banking procedures were able to produce a 50% profit on the Bank’s capital deposits at 5%. It was the English people who had to pay for this. The creditors were not concerned that the debt should be paid, since in conditions of indebtedness they were able to exert influence also on the political processes in the country. The national debt of England rose from £1,250,000 in 1694 to £16,000,000 in 1698…”

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82 Platonov, op. cit., p. 155.
The increased power of the Jews naturally aroused suspicion and opposition. However, in 1732, as Johnson writes, “a judgement gave Jews, in effect, legal protection against generic libels which might endanger life. Hence... England became the first place in which it was possible for a modern Jewish community to emerge".85

Indeed, when the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa expelled the Jews from Prague in 1744, the British government intervened, “with the Secretary of State, Lord Harrington, condemning the expulsions to her ambassador as ‘detrimental and prejudicial to the true interest of the common cause’ against France. These pleas initially fell on deaf ears, but Maria Theresa soon relented and the Jews ultimately returned home...”86

“By the end of the eighteenth century,” writes Vital, “the Jews of England had little to complain of...”87

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Thus, as the well-known Jewish publicist Hannah Arendt writes, with the rise of capitalism, “Jewish banking capital became international. It was united by means of cross-marriages, and a truly international caste arose,” the consciousness of which engendered “a feeling of power and pride”.88 After centuries of exile, the Jews were back at the heart of the Gentile world, a position they have not surrendered to the present day...

Nor was it only in the West that Jewish money ruled. In the sixteenth century, a French diplomat who lived in Constantinople under Suleyman the Magnificent, Nicolas de Nicolay, wrote: “They now have in their hands the most and greatest traffic of merchandise and ready money that is conducted in all the Levant. The shops and stalls best stocked with all the varieties of goods which can be found in Constantinople are those of the Jews. They also have among them very excellent practitioners of all the arts and manufactures, especially the Marranos not long since banished and expelled from Spain and Portugal who to the great detriment and injury of Christianity have taught the Turks several inventions, artifices and machines of war such as how to make artillery, arquebuses, gunpower, cannon-balls and other arms.”89

Protected by the Ottoman Turks from the attacks of the Christians, the Constantinopolitan Jews intrigued against the West European States. Thus Joseph Nasi, a banker and entrepreneur, through contacts in Western Europe was able, according to Philip Mansel, “to maintain an international network

85 Johnson, op. cit., p. 278.
88 Arendt, “On Totalitarianism”, in Mikhail Nazarov, Tajna Rossii (The Mystery of Russia), Moscow: “Russkaia idea”, 1999, p. 394
which helped him obtain revenge on Spain and France. It is possible that, from the banks of the Bosphorus, he encouraged the revolt of the Netherlands against Philip II of Spain. An envoy from the rebel leader, the Prince of Orange, came to see him in 1569. The historian Famianus Strada wrote: ‘As regards the Flemings, Miches’s [i.e. Nasi’s] letters and persuasions had no little influence on them.’ However no letters have come to light.”

A more pro-semitic interpretation is given to Jewish economic success by Paul Johnson, who writes: “The dynamic impulse to national economies, especially in England and the Netherlands, and later in North America and Germany, was provided not only by Calvinists, but by Lutherans, Catholics from north Italy and, not least, by Jews.

“What these moving communities shared was not theology but an unwillingness to live under the state regimentation of religious and moral ideas at the behest of the clerical establishments. All of them repudiated clerical hierarchies, favouring religious government by the congregation and the private conscience. In all these respects the Jews were the most characteristic of the various denominations of emigrants…

“Capitalism, at all its stages of development, has advanced by rationalizing and so improving the chaos of existing methods. The Jews could do this because, while intensely conservative (as a rule) within their own narrow and isolated world, they had no share in or emotional commitment to society as a whole and so could watch its old traditions, methods and institutions being demolished without a pang – could, indeed, play a leading role in the process of destruction. They were thus natural capitalist entrepreneurs…

“It was the unconscious collective instinct of the Jews both to depersonalize finance and to rationalize the general economic process. Any property known to be Jewish, or clearly identifiable as such, was always at risk in medieval and early modern times, especially in the Mediterranean, which was then the chief international trading area. As the Spanish navy and the Knights of Malta treated Jewish-chartered ships and goods as legitimate booty, fictitious Christian names were used in the paperwork of international transactions, including marine insurance. These developed into impersonal formulae. As well as developing letters of credit, the Jews invented bearer-bonds, another impersonal way of moving money. For an underprivileged community whose property was always under threat, and who might be forced to move at short notice, the emergence of reliable, impersonal paper money, whether bills of exchange or, above all, valid banknotes, was an enormous blessing.

“Hence the whole thrust of Jewish activity in the early modern period was to refine these devices and bring them into universal use. They strongly supported the emergence of the institutions which promoted paper values:

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90 Mansel, op. cit., p. 126.
the central banks, led by the Bank of England (1694) with its statutory right to issue notes, and the stock exchanges...

“In general, financial innovations which Jews pioneered in the eighteenth century, and which aroused much criticism then, became acceptable in the nineteenth.

“...Jews were in the vanguard in stressing the importance of the selling function... [and] were among the leaders in display, advertising and promotion...

“They aimed for the widest possible market. They appreciated the importance of economies of scale...

“Above all, Jews were more inclined than others in commerce to accept that businesses flourished by serving consumer interests rather than guild interests. The customer was always right. The market was the final judge. These axioms were not necessarily coined by Jews or exclusively observed by Jews, but Jews were quicker than most to apply them.

“Finally, Jews were exceptionally adept at gathering and making use of commercial intelligence. As the market became the dominant factor in all kinds of trading, and as it expanded into a series of global systems, news became of prime importance. This was perhaps the biggest single factor in Jewish trading and financial success...”91

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In the early sixteenth century, in the wake of the resurrection of the old pagan ideas of the dignity of man, the pagan idea of religious toleration also revived. We say “pagan”, because the justification adduced for religious toleration was not truly Christian, but what we would now call ecumenist and pragmatic: a belief that religious differences are not worth fighting and dying over. This humanist attitude would not survive the appearance of Protestantism in the 1520s and the religious wars that followed. But it revived as the era of the wars of religion was coming to an end. Of course, some relaxation of religious persecution was only to be expected, when in Germany, for example, as a result of the Thirty Years War, between a third and a half of the population lay dead. No society can continue to take such losses without disappearing altogether. Believers on both sides of the conflict were exhausted. They longed for a rest from religious passions and the opportunity to rebuild their shattered economies in peace. It was as a result of this cooling of religious passions, and rekindling of commercial ones, that the idea of religious toleration was born. Or rather, reborn. For even the fiercest of ancient despotisms of the past had gone through phases of religious toleration – for example, the Roman empire in the late third century.

We find the idea well expressed in Sir Thomas More’s fantasy-manifesto, *Utopia: the Best State of the Commonwealth* (1516), where King Utopus has introduced a social system characterized by common ownership of property and religious toleration, with no official church or religion. “King Utopus, even at the first beginning hearing that the inhabitants of the land were before his coming thither at continual dissension and strife among themselves for their religions, perceiving also that this common dissension (whiles every several sect took several parts in fighting for his country) was the only occasion of his conquest over them all, as soon as he had gotten the victory, first of all made a decree that it should be lawful for every man to favour and follow what religion he would, and that he might do the best he could to bring other to his opinion, so that he did it peaceably, gently, quietly, and soberly, without hasty and contentious rebuking and inveighing against others. If he could not by fair and gentle speech induce them unto his opinion, yet he should use no kind of violence, and refrain from unpleasant and seditious words. To him that would vehemently and fervently in this cause strive and contend was decreed banishment or bondage.

“This law did King Utopus make, not only for the maintenance of peace, which he saw through continual contention and mortal hatred utterly extinguished, but also because he thought this decree should make for the furtherance of religion... Furthermore, though there be one religion which alone is true, and all other vain and superstitious, yet did he well foresee (so that the matter were handled with reason and sober modesty) that the truth of its own power would at the last issue out and come to light. But if contention

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92 Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 568.
and debate in that behalf should continually be used, as the worst men be most obstinate and stubborn and in their evil opinion most constant, he perceived that then the best and holiest religion would be trodden underfoot and destroyed by most vain superstitions, even as good corn is by thorns and weeds overgrown and choked.”

More seems to be hovering here between two contrary propositions: that free debate will ultimately lead to the triumph of truth (“the truth of its own power would at the last issue out and come to light”), and that this freedom will used by the worst men for the triumph of heresy (“then the best and holiest religion would be trodden underfoot”). For nearly two hundred years, it would be the second that would be believed by the majority of men.

However, religious passions began to cool after the terrible bloodshed of the Thirty Years’ war, and the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 acknowledged that “subjects whose religion differs from that of their prince are to have equal rights with his other subjects” (V. 35). This was a landmark in political history. The goal was no longer unanimity, but unity under the sovereign, an agreement to “live and let live” so long as the power of the sovereign was not contested.

And yet the idea of religious toleration had not yet penetrated the popular consciousness. Calvinism was not an inherently tolerant creed, insofar as “the Calvinist dogma of predestination,” as Porter points out, “had bred ‘enthusiasm’, that awesome, irresistible and unfalsifiable conviction of personal infallibility”. As late as 1646 Thomas Edwards wrote: “Religious toleration is the greatest of all evils; it will bring in first scepticism in doctrine and looseness of life, then atheism”. As we have seen, the Puritan colonies of New England, in spite of their love of freedom, abhorred religious toleration….

* It was the English Revolution and the triumph of Cromwell that finally pushed the idea into the forefront of political debate. For, as Winstanley wrote in *The Law of Freedom* (1651), Cromwell “became the main stickler for liberty of conscience without any limitation. This toleration became his masterpiece in politics; for it procured him a party that stuck close in all cases of necessity.”

Cromwell’s supporter, Milton, produced a whole tract, *Areopagitica* (1646) in favour of freedom of speech and the abolition of censorship. “Let her [Truth] and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?” Besides, “how”, he asked ironically, “shall the

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95 Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
licensors themselves be confided in, unless we can confer upon them, or they assume to themselves above all others in the Land, the grace of infallibility and uncorruptedness?"  

As Peter Ackroyd writes, Milton “railed against those with closed minds, of which the Presbyterians were the largest number. Censorship and licensing would be ‘the stop of truth’. The people of England would suffer from the change, when ‘dull ease and cessation of our knowledge’ would inevitably lead to ‘obedient conformity’ or to ‘rigid external formality’...

“What did the censors and opponents of freedom have to fear? ‘He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, there that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.’...

“He writes of London as a beacon of that cause. ‘Behold now this vast City, a City of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded by His protection… Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this City.’”

It was noble-sounding ideal, but it did not survive the reality of Cromwell’s rule, as we have seen. For, as Jacques Barzun writes, “Cromwell’s toleration was of course not complete – nobody’s has ever been or ought to be: the most tolerant mind cannot tolerate cruelty, the most liberal state punishes incitement to riot or treason. To all but the Catholic minority in England, the church of Rome was intolerable.”

Hobbes’ *Leviathan* (1651), published during Cromwell’s Protectorate, seems to provide a powerful argument for intolerance – indeed, the most complete tyranny of the State over the religious beliefs of its citizens. For religious truth, according to Hobbes, was nothing other than that which the sovereign ruler declared it to be: “An opinion publicly appointed to be taught cannot be heresy; nor the Sovereign Princes that authorise them heretics.” Being in favour of the absolute power of the sovereign, Hobbes was fiercely opposed to the other major power in traditional societies, religion, which he relegated to an instrument of government; so that the power of censorship passed, in his theory, entirely from the Church to the State. His strong views on the necessity of obeying the ruler in all circumstances relegated religious faith to a

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97 Milton, *Areopagitica*.
private sphere that was not allowed to impinge on public life. However, Hobbes was not opposed to dissent so long as it did not lead to anarchy, “for such truth as opposeth no man’s profit nor pleasure, is to all men welcome.” In fact, he did not believe in objective Truth, but only in “appetites and aversions, hopes and fears”, and in the power of human reason to regulate them towards the desired end of public tranquillity. He was not anti-religious so much as a-religious... But it cannot be denied that his position is one of secularist caesaropapism. And in the hands of atheist rulers, his arguments could be used to justify the suppression of all religion.

It was Locke, according to Roy Porter, who became the real “high priest of toleration”. “In an essay of 1667, which spelt out the key principles expressed in his later Letters on Toleration, Locke denied the prince’s right to enforce religious orthodoxy, reasoning that the ‘trust, power and authority’ of the civil magistrate were vested in him solely to secure ‘the good preservation and peace of men in that society’. Hence princely powers extended solely to externals, not to faith, which was a matter of conscience. Any state intervention in faith was ‘meddling’.

“To elucidate the limits of those civil powers, Locke divided religious opinions and actions into three. First, there were speculative views and modes of divine worship. These had ‘an absolute and universal right to toleration’, since they did not affect society, being either private or God’s business alone. Second, there were those – beliefs about marriage and divorce, for instance – which impinged upon others and hence were of public concern. These ‘have a title also to toleration, but only so far as they do not tend to the disturbance of the State’. The magistrate might thus prohibit publication of such convictions if they would disturb the public good, but no one ought to be forced to forswear his opinion, for coercion bred hypocrisy. Third, there were actions good or bad in themselves. Respecting these, Locke held that civil rulers should have ‘nothing to do with the good of men’s soul or their concerns in another life’ – it was for God to reward virtue and punish vice, and the magistrate’s job simply to keep the peace. Applying such principles to contemporary realities, Locke advocated toleration, but with limits: Papists should not be tolerated, because their beliefs were ‘absolutely destructive of all governments except the Pope’s’; nor should atheists, since any oaths they took would be in bad faith.

“As a radical Whig in political exile in the Dutch republic, Locke wrote the first Letter on Toleration, which was published, initially in Latin, in 1689. Echoing the 1667 arguments, this denied that Christianity could be furthered by force. Christ was the Prince of Peace, his gospel was love, his means persuasion; persecution could not save souls. Civil and ecclesiastical government had contrary ends; the magistrate’s business lay in securing life, liberty and possessions, whereas faith was about the salvation of souls. A church should be a voluntary society, like a ‘club for claret’; it should be shorn

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of all sacerdotal pretensions. While Locke’s views were contested – Bishop Stillingfleet, for example, deemed them a ‘Trojan Horse’ – they nevertheless won favour in an age inclined, or resigned, to freedom of thought and expression in general.”

“Since you are pleased to enquire,” wrote Locke, “what are my thoughts about the mutual toleration of Christians in their different professions of religion, I must needs answer you freely, that I esteem that toleration to be the chief characteristical mark of the true church.”

Smith develops Locke’s idea as follows: “Religion is a man’s private concern, his belief is part of himself, and he is the sole judge of the means to his own salvation. Persecution only creates hypocrites, while free opinion is the best guarantee of truth. Most ceremonies are indifferent; Christianity is simple; it is only theologians who have encrusted it with dogma. Sacerdotalism, ritual, orthodoxy, do not constitute Christianity if they are divorced from charity. Our attempts to express the truth of religion must always be imperfect and relative, and cannot amount to certainty… Church and State can be united if the Church is made broad enough and simple enough, and the State accepts the Christian basis. Thus religion and morality might be reunited, sectarianism would disappear with sacerdotalism; the Church would become the nation organised for goodness…”

The idea that tolerance is the chief characteristic of the True Church would have amazed the Holy Fathers, but has become the chief dogma of Anglicanism… Ironically, however, it was the Catholic King James II, who first bestowed freedom of religion on Catholics, Anglicans and Non-Conformists in his Declaration of Indulgence (1688), declaring: “We cannot but heartily wish, as it will easily be believed, that all the people of our dominions were members of the Catholic Church; yet we humbly thank Almighty God, it is and has of long time been our constant sense and opinion (which upon divers occasions we have declared) that conscience ought not to be constrained nor people forced in matters of mere religion: it has ever been directly contrary to our inclination, as we think it is to the interest of government, which it destroys by spoiling trade, depopulating countries, and discouraging strangers, and finally, that it never obtained the end for which it was employed…”

The generosity shown by James to non-Catholics was not reciprocated by his Protestant successors, who, through the Toleration Act (1689) and Declaration of Indulgence (1690), re-imposed restrictions on the Catholics while removing them from the Protestants. (And Locke’s Letter on Toleration, published in the same year as the Toleration Act, did not extend its argument for toleration to atheists and Catholics.)

103 Locke, A Letter concerning Toleration.
104 Smith, op. cit., p. 813.
105 Bettenson & Maunder, op. cit., p. 342.
106 As Jean Bethke Elshtain interprets his thought: “Atheists are untrustworthy because they do not take an oath on the Bible, not believing in Divine action; and they deny the divine
The justification given for this far-from-universal tolerance was purely secular: “Some ease to scrupulous consciences in the exercise of religion” was to be granted, since this “united their Majesties’ Protestant subjects in interest and affection...” In other words, tolerance was necessary in order to avoid the possibility of civil war between the Anglicans and the Non-Conformist Protestants.

For, as Porter goes on, “the so-called Toleration Act of 1689 had an eye first and foremost to practical politics, and did not grant toleration. Officially an ‘Act for Exempting their Majesties’ Protestant Subjects, Dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of Certain Laws’, it stated that Trinitarian Protestant Nonconformists who swore the oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance and accepted thirty-six of the Thirty-nine Articles [the official confession of the Anglican Church] could obtain licences as ministers or teachers. Catholics and non-Christians did not enjoy the rights of public worship under the Act – and non-Trinitarians were left subject to the old penal laws. Unitarians, indeed, were further singled out by the Blasphemy Act of 1697, which made it an offence to ‘deny any one of the persons in the holy Trinity to be God’. There was no official Toleration Act for them until 1813, and in Scotland the death penalty could still be imposed – as it was in 1697 – for denying the Trinity.

“Scope for prosecution remained. Ecclesiastical courts still had the power of imprisoning for atheism, blasphemy and heresy (maximum term: six months). Occasional indictments continued under the common law, and Parliament could order books to be burned. Even so, patriots justly proclaimed that England was, alongside the United Provinces, the first nation to have embraced religious toleration – a fact that became a matter of national pride. ‘My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in subjects; and it was a merry reflection which I frequently made, how like a king I looked,’ remarked Defoe’s castaway hero, Robinson Crusoe; ‘we had but three subjects, and they were of different religions. My man Friday was a pagan and a cannibal, and the Spaniard was a Papist: however, I allowed liberty of conscience throughout my dominions’.

“Two developments made toleration a fait accompli: the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, and the fact that England had already been sliced up into sects. It was, quipped Voltaire, a nation of many faiths but only one sauce, a recipe for confessional tranquillity if culinary tedium: ‘If there were only one religion in England, there would be danger of despotism, if there were only two they would cut each other’s throats; but there are thirty, and they live in peace’ [Letters concerning the English Nation].”

origin of fundamental truths necessary to underwrite decent government. Catholics are (or may be) civically unreliable because of their allegiance to an external power” (Sovereignty, New York: Basic Books, 2008, p. 121).

107 Porter, op. cit., p. 108.
The Licensing Act ended pre-publication censorship. From now on, “though laws against blasphemy, obscenity and seditious libel remained on the statute book, and offensive publications could still be presented before the courts, the situation was light years away from that obtaining in France, Spain or almost anywhere else in ancien régime Europe.”

The more religious justifications of tolerance offered in, for example, More’s *Utopia* or Milton’s *Areopagitica*, were no longer in fashion. In the modern age that was beginning, religious tolerance was advocated, not because it ensured the eventual triumph of the true religion, but because it prevented war. And war, of course, “spoiled trade”…

“To enlightened minds,” writes Porter, “the past was a nightmare of barbarism and bigotry: fanaticism had precipitated bloody civil war and the axing of Charles Stuart, that man of blood, in 1649. Enlightened opinion repudiated old militancy for modern civility. But how could people adjust to each other? Sectarianism, that sword of the saints which had divided brother from brother, must cease; rudeness had to yield to refinement. Voltaire saw this happening before his very eyes in England’s ‘free and peaceful assemblies’: ‘Take a view of the Royal Exchange in London, a place more venerable than many courts of justice, where the representatives of all nations meet for the benefit of mankind. There the Jew, the Mahometan, and the Christian transact together as tho’ they all profess’d the same religion, and give the name of Infidel to none but bankrupts. There the Presbyterian confides in the Anabaptist, and the Churchman depends on the Quaker’s word. And all are satisfied’. [Letters concerning the English Nation]. This passage squares with the enlightened belief that commerce would unite those whom creeds rent asunder. Moreover, by depicting men content, and content to be content – differing, but agreeing to differ – the philosophes pointed towards a rethinking of the summum bonum, a shift from God-fearingness to a selfhood more psychologically oriented. The Enlightenment thus translated the ultimate question ‘How can I be saved?’ into the pragmatic ‘How can I be happy?’”

In America, meanwhile, tolerance began to replace the original intolerant attitudes of the Puritans. For uniformity was not a practical possibility in a nation that combined the Puritanism of New England with the Anglicanism of Virginia, the Roman Catholicism of Maryland with the Quakerism of Pennsylvania. So a broad measure of tolerance, and a strict separation of Church and State, became a necessity if the country was not to fall apart along confessional lines.

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The first State to be founded on the principle of religious tolerance was Maryland, designed as a refuge for Roman Catholics persecuted elsewhere. And then there was Rhode Island, founded by refugees fleeing from intolerant Massachusetts. Its early code of laws defined it as a place “where all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every man in the name of his God”. As a consequence, the State was described by its opponents as “the sink into which all the rest of the colonies empty their heretics”, “the receptacle of all sorts of riff-raff people, and nothing else than the sewer or latrina of New England”. New York was even more raffish: it accommodated a small population of Jews. “In fact, New York had a synagogue before it had a purpose-built Anglican church.”

And then there was Pennsylvania, conceived by William Penn as a refuge first of all for Quakers, but then for all persecuted people. The basic laws he wrote for residence in Philadelphia, the city of Brotherly Love, “allowed freedom of worship to all ‘who confess and acknowledge the one almighty and eternal God to be the creator, upholder, and ruler of the world, and that hold themselves in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society.’ The right to vote and to hold office were open to ‘such as profess faith in Jesus Christ, and that are not convinced of ill fame or unsober and dishonest conversation, and that are of one and twenty years at least.’ Penn never thought to say here that, of course, he was referring only to men: female politicians and votes for women were totally outside even his worldview.”

This tendency towards tolerance was reinforced by the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, with the result that America was to move away from its “democratic totalitarian” beginnings to complete separation of Church and State and liberty of conscience. Thus “the first article of the Bill of Rights states that: ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.’ This was affirmed in 1791 a time when Britain still barred Catholics, Nonconformists and Jews from political office. In 1797 the United States government signed a treaty with the Muslim state of Tripoli containing this striking statement: ‘As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion… it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquillity of Musselmen.”

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110 Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 154.
111 Reynolds, op. cit., p. 39.
112 Reynolds, op. cit., p. 41.
113 Reynolds, op. cit., p. xxiii.
The eighteenth century began with the Sun King, Louis XIV, attempting to attain hegemony over Europe in defiance of the Westphalian system of international relations in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13). “In 1700,” as Simon Sebag Montefiore writes, “the Spanish King Carlos II died, leaving the Spanish empire to Louis XIV’s grandson Philipp of Anjou, a succession that, if accepted, would give the Sun King virtual dominion over not only much of Europe but of the Americas too. It was a step too far for Louis who – after decades of triumph and magnificence – was old, arrogant, and perhaps exhausted. Certainly France was over-extended. Louis was faced with a difficult choice but ultimately he accepted the inheritance and his grandson became king of Spain. In 1702 William III of England along with his native Holland, the Habsburg emperor and others put together another Grand Alliance against Louis, His ambitions and absolutist Catholic vision cost France dear. As Louis aged, as his heirs died, as France suffered poverty and hunger, his armies were humiliated by the outstanding commanders the duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy in a trans-European conflict known as the War of the Spanish Succession. Louis lived too long: he saw France defeated and the deaths of his sons and grandsons. French invincibility was broken…”

In 1713 Louis signed the Treaty of Utrecht. The eleven bilateral treaties constituting the Treaty were the result of general exhaustion rather than the decisive victory of one side or the other. France was still the most powerful state in Europe, even if she had failed to impose her will on the others. From now on, there were three kinds of state in Western Europe: old-style absolutism, represented by Spain, in which Church and feudalism still exerted their old power; new-style absolutism, represented by France, in which the Church and feudalism, while still strong, were increasingly subject to the law of the king; and constitutional monarchy, represented by Britain and Holland, in which the king, while still strong, was increasingly subject to the law of parliament and, behind parliament, of mammon.

Utrecht, writes Philip Bobbitt, “is the first European treaty that explicitly establishes a balance of power as the objective of the treaty regime. The letters patent that accompanied Article VI of the treaty between England, France, and the king of Spain whose dynastic rights were being set aside acknowledged the ‘Maxim of securing for ever the universal Good and Quiet of Europe, by an equal weight of Power, so that many being united in one, the Balance of the Equality desired, might not turn to the Advantage of one, and the Danger and Hazard of the Rest’.

“This treaty permitted adjustments at the margin, but not the wholesale annexation of a national state; inhabitants now cared whether they were

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French, German, or Austrian. More importantly, securing the territorial state system had now become an important diplomatic objective; after Utrecht, the recognition of any state required its assurance to an international society that the system generally was not thereby jeopardized. That meant that ‘hereditary right and the endorsement of the constituent local authorities were no longer sufficient by themselves to secure sovereignty over a territory’.  

Utrecht “subordinated the traditional criteria of inheritance and hierarchical allegiance (religious or political). In their place was a unity of strategic approach – a judgement by the society of states as to what was an appropriate strategic goal and what constitutional forms were legitimate. This is how it looked to Voltaire, writing in about 1750: ‘For some time now it has been possible to consider Christian Europe, give or take Russia [a significant exception!] as “une espèce de grande république” – a sort of great commonwealth – partitioned into several states, some monarchic, the others mixed, some aristocratic, others popular, but all dealing with one another; all having the same principles of public and political law unknown in the other parts of the world. Because of these principles the European [states] never enslave their prisoners, they respect the ambassadors of their enemies, they jointly acknowledge the pre-eminence and various rights of [legitimate rulers], and above all they agree on the wise policy of maintaining an equal balance of power between themselves so far as they can, conducting continuous negotiations even in times of war, and exchanging resident ambassadors or less honourable spies, who can warn all the courts of Europe of the designs of any one, give the alarm at the same time and protect the weaker…”  

The Peace of Utrecht represents a point of multilateral equilibrium, when the dominance of the continent by the empires of Philip V and Louis XIV was declining, and that of Napoleon was still to come. At this time, writes Stella Ghervas, “we find that there existed already a common agreement in the Law of Nations that no single power should ever extend a universal monarchy (hence, a continental empire) over Europe. Preventing such a thing from occurring was precisely the purpose of the balance of power, the principle of multilateral equilibrium included in the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713…”  

The consensus created by Utrecht constitutes the first recognizably modern system of international relations. Democracy was not yet part of the consensus, as it is now. But all agreed that states were no longer the scattered dynastic possessions of kings or princes, but should be relatively compact and territorial.  

Moreover, the territorial state then emerging almost everywhere “was characterized by a shift from the monarch-as-embodiment of sovereignty”, in  

the manner of Louis XIV’s *l’état, c’est moi*, “to the monarch as minister of sovereignty”\(^{118}\), in the manner of modern constitutional monarchy.

Bobbitt continues: “In his correspondence during the treaty process, [the British Foreign Secretary] Bolingbroke repeatedly referred to negotiations about the ‘*système des affaires de l’Europe*’ and to a ‘system for a future settlement of Europe’. In fact, in the eighth of his ‘Letters on History’, which deals with Utrecht, he writes that the object of the congress was to achieve a ‘constitution of Europe’…

“…. The language of this new consensus was reflected in four striking contrasts with the idiom it superseded.

“First, the language of ‘interests’ replaced that of ‘rights’. ‘Rights’ were something that kings might assert against each other; ‘interests’ were something that states might have in common. Whereas the Westphalian monarchs had been concerned to establish the rights of the kingly states – the legal status of dynastic descent; the absolute right of the king over the subjects, including especially control over the religious liberties of the persons within his realm; and the perfect sovereignty of each kingly state unfettered by any external authority – the society of territorial states was concerned instead with the mutual relationships among states, specifically with maintaining a balance of power within that society itself. At one point Bolingbroke observed explicitly that ‘enough has been said concerning right, which was in truth little regarded by any of the parties concerned… in the whole course of the proceedings. Particular interests alone were regarded.’

“Second, aggrandizement – so integral to the structure of the kingly state – was replaced by the goal of secure ‘barriers’ to such a degree that claims for new accessions were universally clothed in the language of defensive barriers. Aggrandizement *per se* was frowned up and even regarded as illegitimate.

“Third, the word *state* underwent a change. A ‘state’ became the name of a territory, not a people, as would occur later when state-nations began to appear, not a dynastic house, as was the case at Westphalia…

“Fourth, whereas the kingly state had seen a balance of power as little more than a temptation for hegemonic ambition to upset, the territorial states viewed the balance of power as the fundamental structure of the constitutional system itself…

“*Territorial* states are so named owing to their preoccupation with the territory of the state. As part of the Treaty of Utrecht, the first agreements were introduced fixing customs duties levied at the state frontier and diminishing the role of internal customs duties. The ‘most favoured nation’ clause makes its appearance at Utrecht. This attentiveness to commercial

\(^{118}\) Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
matters – the peace was accompanied by an extensive series of commercial treaties among the signatories – is also characteristic of the territorial states. Rather than focusing on the communities and towns that defined the boundaries of the kingly state, the territorial state attempts to fix a frontier boundary, a line, that marks the jurisdiction of the state. These boundaries are crucial if bartering is to take place, and dynastic rights to be ignored, in maintaining the balance of power, so we may say that for this reason also the territorialism of the eighteenth century state favoured a system of perfecting the balance of power among states – but why did these states seek such a system in the first place?

“The territorial state aggrandizes itself by means of peace because peace is the most propitious climate for the growth of commerce…”\textsuperscript{119}

Here we come to the nub of the matter. The medieval system, imperfect though it was, had restrained both religious sectarianism and the ambitions of rulers and the growth of laissez-faire capitalism. In the early modern period the first two of these restraints had been removed, leading to savage wars of religion and absolutist ambition (the two usually went together). Then, towards the end of the seventeenth century, as religious passions cooled, and the ambitions of the greatest despots such as Louis XIV were checked, a new passion came to the fore in the minds of the propertied classes – commerce.

The rise of laissez-faire capitalism was aided by the reinvention of paper money (it had previously been invented in China), by the introduction of private banking on a larger scale, and by the invention of the stock market. The latter produced the first massive financial speculations, such as the South Sea Bubble in England and the Mississippi Company in France. The most important men now, as Jonathan Swift noted in 1710, were “quite different from any that were ever known before the Revolution [of 1688]; consisting of those… whose whole fortunes lie in funds and stocks; so that power, which… used to follow land, is now gone over into money…”\textsuperscript{120}

Since one cannot serve both God and mammon, this trend inevitably meant that religion weakened. Already in 1668 in Samuel Butler’s \textit{Hudibras} we can see a revulsion from the methods of the wars of religion:

\begin{quote}
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery…
As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.
\end{quote}

And the rise of another, no less pernicious tendency:

\textsuperscript{119} Bobbitt, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 522-523, 527.
\textsuperscript{120} Barzun, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 322.
What makes all doctrines plain and clear? About two hundred poundes a year. And that which was true before Proved false again? Two hundred more…

The leader of this brave new world of commerce and balance-of-power politics was England. Her revolution had removed the last vestiges of feudalism and absolutism, and she had now had a banking system and a powerful fleet with which to trade with the world and interfere in continental Europe. And she interfered to limit the power of potential European hegemons – first Louis XIV, later Napoleon and the Tsars.

Britain now, as Davies writes, “emerged as the foremost maritime power, as the leading diplomatic broker, and as the principal opponent of French supremacy...” The word now is “Britain” rather than England, because England and Scotland had become a single state. They had joined forces since they were both fighting the same enemy, Catholic France, and the war effort “required ever greater coordination north and south. It made no sense at all to have two separate commercial and colonial policies, for example. Whig elites on both sides of the border agreed that whatever their differences, the containment of Louis XIV came first. So, in 1707, they concluded an Act of Union, in which Scotland received generous representation at Westminster, and retained its legal and educational system, but gave up its separate foreign and security policy. And as the Union was made in order to prosecute the war, so did the war make the Union. The common cause against popery and Universal Monarchy welded together the two halves more efficiently than bribery, intimidation or crude commercial advantage ever could have done.” Moreover, the Union was soon producing important intellectual fruits; for it would be English and Scottish thinkers, from Locke and Newton to Hume and Adam Smith, who gave to this new world the first sketch of that new philosophy of life known as the Enlightenment...

Another power on the rise in the eighteenth century was Prussia. Henry Kissinger writes: “Where Louis had fought wars to translate power into hegemony, Prussia’s Frederick II went to war to transmute latent weakness into great power status. Sitting on the harsh North German plain and extending from the Vistula across Germany, Prussia cultivated discipline and public service to substitute for the larger population and greater resources of better-endowed countries. Split into two non-contiguous pieces, it jutted precariously into the Austrian, Swedish, Russian, and Polish spheres of

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122 Bernard Simms, Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 71. A more immediate reason for the Union was a failed Scottish colonial venture in New Caledonia. English cash was needed to prevent the ruin of the Scottish finances...
influence. It was relatively sparsely populated; its strength was the discipline with which it marshalled its limited resources. Its greatest assets were civic-mindedness, an efficient bureaucracy, and a well-trained army.

“When Frederick II ascended the throne in 1740, he seemed an unlikely contender for the greatness history has vouchsafed him. Finding the dour discipline of the position of Crown Prince oppressive, he had attempted to flee to England accompanied by a friend, Hans Hermann von Katte. They were apprehended. The King ordered von Katte decapitated in front of Frederick, whom he submitted to a court-martial headed by himself. He cross-examined his son with 178 questions, which Frederick answered so deftly that he was reinstated.

“Surviving this searing experience was possible only adopting his father’s austere sense of duty and developing a general misanthropic attitude towards his fellow man. Frederick saw his personal authority as absolute but his policies as limited rigidly by the principles of *raison d’état* Richelieu had put forward a century earlier. ‘Rulers are the slaves of their resources,’ his credo held, ‘the interest of the State is their law, and this law may not be infringed.’ Courageous and cosmopolitan (Frederick spoke and wrote French and composed sentimental French poetry even on military campaigns, subtitling one of his literary efforts ‘Pas trop mal pour la veille d’une grande bataille’), he embodied the new era of Enlightenment governance by benevolent despotism, which was legitimizied by its effectiveness, not ideology.

“Frederick concluded that great-power status required territorial contiguity for Prussia, hence expansion. There was no need for any other political or moral justification. ‘The superiority of our troops, the promptitude with which we can set them in motion, in a word the clear advantage we have over our neighbors’ was all the justification Frederick required to seize the wealthy and traditionally Austrian province of Silesia in 1740. Treating the issue as geopolitical, not a legal or moral one, Frederick aligned himself with France (which saw in Prussia a counter to Austria) and retained Silesia in the peace settlement of 1742, nearly doubling Prussia’s territory and population.

“In the process, Frederick brought war back to the European system, which had been at peace since 1713 when the Treaty of Utrecht had put an end to the ambition of Louis XIV. The challenge to the established balance of power caused the Westphalian system to begin to function. The price for being admitted as a new member to the European order turned out to be seven years of near-disastrous battle. Now the alliances were reversed, as Frederick’s previous allies sought to quash his operations and their rivals tried to harness Prussia’s disciplined fighting force for their own aims. Russia, remote and mysterious, for the first time entered a contest over the European balance of power. At the edge of defeat, with Russian armies at the gates of Berlin, Frederick was saved by the sudden death of Czarina Elizabeth. The new Czar [Peter III], a longtime admirer of Frederick, withdrew from the war. (Hitler, besieged in encircled Berlin in April 1945, waited for an event
comparable to the so-called Miracle of the House of Brandenburg and was told by Joseph Goebbels that it had happened when President Franklin D. Roosevelt died.

“The Holy Roman Emperor had become a façade; no rival claimant to universal authority had arisen. Almost all rulers asserted that they ruled by divine right – a claim not challenged by any major power – but they accepted that God had similarly endowed many other monarchs. Wars were therefore fought for limited territorial objectives, not to overthrow existing governments and institutions, nor to impose a new system of relations between states. Tradition prevented rules from conscripting their subjects and severely constrained their ability to raise taxes. The impact of wars on civilian populations was in no way comparable to the horrors of the Thirty Years’ War or what technology and ideology would produce two centuries later. In the eighteenth century, the balance of power operated as a theatre in which ‘lives and values were put on display, amid splendour, polish, gallantry, and shows of utter self-assurance’. The exercise of that power was constrained by the recognition that the system would not tolerate hegemonic aspirations.

“International orders that have been the most stable have had the advantage of uniform perceptions. The statesmen who operated the eighteenth-century European order were aristocrats who interpreted intangibles like honor and duty in the same way and agreed on fundamentals. They represented a single elite society that spoke the same language (French), frequented the same salons, and pursued romantic liaisons in each other’s capitals. National interests of course varied, but in a world where a foreign minister could serve a monarch of another nationality (every Russian foreign minister until 1820 was recruited abroad), or when a territory could change its national affiliation as the result of a marriage pact or a fortuitous inheritance, a sense of overarching common purpose was inherent. Power calculations in the eighteenth century took place against this ameliorating background of a shared sense of legitimacy and unspoken rules of international conduct.

“This consensus was not only a matter of decorum; it reflected the moral convictions of a common European outlook. Europe was never more united or spontaneous than during what came to be perceived as the age of enlightenment. New triumphs in science and philosophy began to displace the fracturing European certainties of tradition and faith. The swift advance of the mind on multiple fronts – physics, chemistry, astronomy, history, archaeology, cartography, rationality – bolstered a new spirit of secular illumination auguring that the revelation of all nature’s hidden mechanisms was only a question of time. ‘The true system of the world has been recognized, developed, and perfected,’ wrote the brilliant French polymath Jean Le Rond d’Alembert in 1759, embodying the spirit of the age…”

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46. ENGLAND’S CONSERVATIVE ENLIGHTENMENT

H.M.V. Temperley writes: “The earlier half of the eighteenth century in England is an age of materialism, a period of dim ideals, of expiring hopes... We can recognise in English institutions, in English ideals, in the English philosophy of this age, the same practical materialism, the same hard rationalism, the same unreasonable self-complacency. Reason dominated alike the intellect, the will, and the passions; politics were self-interested, poetry didactic, philosophy critical and objective... Even the most abstract of thinkers and the most unworldly of clerics have a mundane and secular stamp upon them.”124

The “enthusiasm” of the lower classes was rejected by the upper classes. As the Duchess of Buckingham said of the Methodist George Whitefield: “His doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinctured with impertinence and disrespect towards his superiors. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth...”125

A depressing picture; and yet it was precisely in this dull, snobbish, self-satisfied England of the early 18th century that the foundations of the contemporary world were laid. Moreover, the leading intellects of the time looked on it as by no means dull. Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, wrote to a comrade in the Netherlands: “There is a mighty Light which spreads its self over the world especially in those two free Nations of England and Holland; on whom the Affairs of Europe now turn; and if Heaven sends us soon a peace suitable to the great Socrates we have had, it is impossible but Letters and Knowledge must advance in greater Proportion than ever... I am far from thinking that the cause of Theisme will lose anything by fair Dispute. I can never... wish better for it when I wish the Establishment of an entire Philosophical Liberty.”126

This quotation combines many of the characteristic themes of the Enlightenment: first, the image of light itself; then the optimism, the belief that knowledge and education will sweep all before it; the belief in free speech, which, it was felt then, would not damage faith; above all, the belief in liberty. And indeed, with the English Enlightenment there came a tolerance that went far beyond the bounds of what had been considered tolerable in the past. Thus Catholicism was still banned, because that was considered a political threat; but the Earl of Shaftesbury was allowed “to print his scandalous view that religion should be optional and atheism considered a possible form of belief”...127

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“The Enlightenment was not a crusade,” writes Mark Goldie, “but a tone of voice, a sensibility.” Nevertheless, underlying the sensibility there was an Enlightenment world-view, which can be summarised as follows: “All men are by nature equal; all have the same natural rights to strive after happiness, to self-preservation, to the free control of their persons and property, to resist oppression, to hold and express whatever opinions they please. The people is sovereign; it cannot alienate its sovereignty; and every government not established by the free consent of the community is a usurpation. The title-deeds of man’s rights, as Sieyès said, are not lost. They are preserved in his reason. Reason is infallible and omnipotent. It can discover truth and compel conviction. Rightly consulted, it will reveal to us that code of nature which should be recognised and enforced by the civil law. No evil enactment which violates natural law is valid. Nature meant man to be virtuous and happy. He is vicious and miserable, because he transgresses her laws and despises her teaching.

“The essence of these doctrines is that man should reject every institution and creed which cannot approve itself to pure reason, the reason of the individual. It is true that if reason is to be thus trusted it must be unclouded by prejudice and superstition. These are at once the cause and effect of the defective and mischievous social, political and religious institutions, which have perverted man’s nature, inflamed his passions, and distorted his judgement. Therefore to overthrow prejudice and superstition should be the first effort of those who would restore to man his natural rights.”

The English Enlightenment rested especially on the achievements of Sir Isaac Newton, whose *Principia* astonished the world, and whose *Opticks*, by explicating the nature of light, provided the Enlightenment thinkers with the perfect image of their programme of intellectual enlightenment.

As Alexander Pope put it,

*Nature, and Nature’s Laws lay Hid from Sight;*  
*God said, ‘Let Newton be!’ and all was Light.*

Voltaire so admired Newton that he called his mistress “Venus-Newton”. Newtonian physics appeared to promise the unlocking of all Nature’s secrets by the use of reason alone – although it must be remembered that Newton believed in revelation as well as reason and wrote many commentaries on the Scriptures.

Roy Porter writes: “Newton was the god who put English science on the map, an intellectual colossus, flanked by Bacon and Locke.

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Let Newton, Pure Intelligence, whom God
to mortals lent to trace His boundless works
from laws sublimely simple, speak thy fame
in all philosophy.

Sang James Thomson in his ‘Ode on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton’ (1727). Wordsworth was later more Romantic:

Newton with his prism and silent face,
... a mind for ever,
Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone.

‘Newton’ the icon proved crucial to the British Enlightenment, universally praised except by a few obdurate outsiders, notably William Blake, who detested him and all his works.

“What was crucial about Newton – apart from the fact that, so far as his supporters were concerned, he was a Briton blessed with omniscience – was that he put forward a vision of Nature which, whilst revolutionary, reinforced latitudinarian Christianity. For all but a few diehards, Newtonianism was an invincible weapon against atheism, upholding no mere First Cause but an actively intervening personal Creator who continually sustained Nature and, once in a while, applied a rectifying touch. Like Locke, furthermore, the public Newton radiated intellectual humility. Repudiating the a priori speculations of Descartes and later rationalists, he preferred empiricism: he would ‘frame no hypotheses’ (hypotheses non fingo), and neither would he pry into God’s secrets. Thus, while he had elucidated the law of gravity, he did not pretend to divine its causes. Not least, in best enlightened fashion, Newtonian science set plain facts above mystifying metaphysics. In Newtonianism, British scientific culture found its enduring rhetoric: humble, empirical, co-operative, pious, useful. ‘I don’t know what I may seem to the world, but, as to myself,’ he recalled, in his supreme soundbite, ‘I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me’....

“The affinities between the Newtonian cosmos and the post-1688 polity were played up. In the year after the master’s death, his disciple J.T. Desaguliers produced an explicit application of physics to politics in The Newtonian System of the World: The Best Model of Government, an Allegorical Poem (1728), where the British monarchy was celebrated as the guarantor of liberty and rights: ‘attracting is now as universal in the political, as the philosophical world’.

What made the Planets in such Order move,
He said, was Harmony and mutual Love.

God himself was commended as a kind of constitutional monarch:
The *Principia* thus provided an atomic exploratory model not just for Nature but for society too (freely moving individuals governed by law)...

“This enthronement of the mechanical philosophy, the key paradigm switch of the ‘scientific revolution’, in turn sanctioned the new assertions of man’s rights over Nature so salient to enlightened thought... No longer alive or occult but rather composed of largely inert matter, Nature could be weighted, measured – and mastered. The mechanical philosophy fostered belief that man was permitted, indeed duty-bound, to apply himself to Nature for (in Bacon’s words) the ‘glory of God and the relief of man’s estate’. Since Nature was not, after all, sacred or ‘ensouled’, there could be nothing impious about utilizing and dominating it. The progressiveness of science thus became pivotal to enlightened propaganda. The world was now well-lit, as bright as light itself.”

But the light in question was a light that cast much of reality into the shadows. For “with the Newtonian mechanistic synthesis,” writes Philip Sherrard, “…the world-picture, with man in it, is flattened and neutralized, stripped of all sacred or spiritual qualities, of all hierarchical differentiation, and spread out before the human observer like a blank chart on which nothing can be registered except what is capable of being measured.”

Locke’s philosophy also began with a *tabula rasa*, the mind of man before empirical sensations have been imprinted upon it. The development of the mind then depends on the movement and association and ordering of sensations and the concepts that arise from them, rather like the atoms of Newton’s universe. And the laws of physical motion and attraction correspond to the laws of mental inference and deduction, the product of the true deus ex machina of the Newtonian-Lockean universe – Reason. Locke’s political and psychological treatises promised that all the problems of human existence could be amicably settled by reason rather than revelation, and reasonableness rather than passion. Traditional religion was not to be discarded, but purified of irrational elements, placed on a firmer, more rational foundation; for, as Benjamin Whichcote said, with Locke’s agreement, “there is nothing so intrinsically rational as religion”. Hence the title of another of Locke’s works: *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), in which only one key dogma was proclaimed as necessary: that Jesus was the Messiah, proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom. Reason, for Locke, was “the candle of the Lord”, “a natural revelation, whereby the eternal Father of light, and Fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth

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which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties”. Armed with reason, and even without Christ, one can know what is the just life lived in accordance with natural law.

“Locke,” writes Roy Porter, “had no truck with the fideist line that reason and faith were at odds; for the latter was properly ‘nothing but a firm assent of the mind: which… cannot be accorded to anything but upon good reason’. Gullibility was not piety. To accept a book, for instance, as revelation without checking out the author was gross superstition – how could it honour God to suppose that faith overrode reason, for was not reason no less God-given?

“In a typically enlightened move, Locke restricted the kinds of truths which God might reveal: revelation could not be admitted contrary to reason, and ‘faith can never convince us of anything that contradicts our knowledge’. Yet there remained matters on which hard facts were unobtainable, as, for instance, Heaven or the resurrection of the dead: ‘being beyond the discovery or reason’, such issues were ‘purely matters for faith’.

“In short, Locke raised no objections to revealed truth as such, but whether something ‘be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge – it was the constant court of appeal. The credo, quia impossible est of the early Church fathers might seem the acme of devotion, but it ‘would prove a very ill rule for men to choose their opinions or religion by’. Unless false prophets were strenuously avoided, the mind would fall prey to ‘enthusiasm’, that eruption of the ‘ungrounded fancies of a man’s own brain’. Doubtless, God might speak directly to holy men, but Locke feared the exploitation of popular credulity, and urged extreme caution.”

Lockean rationalism led to Deism, which sought to confine God’s activity in the world to the original act of creation. Thus the Deists’ understanding of God was closely modelled on the English monarchy: “‘God is a monarch’, opined Viscount Bolingbroke, ‘yet not an arbitrary but a limited monarch’: His power was limited by His reason”. All history since the creation could be understood by reason alone without recourse to Divine Revelation or Divine intervention. Thus in 1730 Matthew Tyndal published his Christianity as Old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature. In it he declared: “If nothing but Reasoning can improve Reason, and no Book can improve my Reason in any Point, but as it gives me convincing Proofs of its Reasonableness; a Revelation, that will not suffer us to judge of its Dictates by our Reason, is so far from improving Reason, that it forbids the Use of it… Understanding… can only be improv’d by studying the Nature and Reason of things: ‘I applied my Heart’ (says the wisest of Men) ‘to know, and to search, and to seek out Wisdom and the Reason of Things’ (Ecclesiastes 7.25)...”

134 Porter, op. cit., p. 62.
135 Porter, op. cit., p. 100.
Of course, the word “Reason” has a long and honourable history in Christian theology; Christ Himself is the Logos, and “Logos” can be translated by “Reason”. But what the Deists were proposing was no God-enlightened use of human reason. Reason for them was something divorced from Revelation and therefore from Christ; it was something purely ratiocinative, rationalist, not the grace-filled, revelation-oriented reason of the Christian theologians. “Reason is for the philosopher what Grace is for the Christian”, wrote Diderot.136

It followed from this Deistic concept of God and Divine Providence that all the complicated theological speculation and argument of earlier centuries was as superfluous as revelation itself. The calm, lucid religion of nature practised by philosopher-scientists would replace the arid, tortured religion of the theologians. And such a religion, as well as being simpler, would be much more joyful that the old. No more need to worry about sin, or the wrath of God, or hell. No more odium theologicum, just gaudium naturale.

As Porter writes, “rejecting the bogeyman of a vengeful Jehovah blasting wicked sinners, enlightened divines instated a more optimistic (pelagian) theology, proclaiming the benevolence of the Supreme Being and man’s capacity to fulfil his duties through his God-given faculties, the chief of these being reason, that candle of the Lord.”137

This Deist, man-centred view of the universe was sometimes seen as being summed up in Alexander Pope’s verse:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man.  

However, Pope, a Roman Catholic and therefore a member of a persecuted minority, also expressed a scepticism about the limits of human knowledge that provided a necessary counter-balance to the prevailing optimism:

Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic’s pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;
In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer,
Born but to die, and reas’ning but to err. 139

137 Porter, op. cit., p. 100.
139 Pope, An Essay on Man, ii, 3-10.
But for the Deists this was too sceptical; they believed in this world with its delightfully harmonious laws, reflecting a wise, benevolent Creator and completely comprehensible to the human mind. Not for them the traditional awareness of the Fall. They knew nothing of the pessimism of Rousseau: “How blind are we in the midst of so much enlightenment!” [140] For them, religion had to be happy and reasonable. “Religion is a cheerful thing,” Lord Halifax explained to his daughter. And Lord Shaftesbury enlarged: ‘Good Humour is not only the best Security against Enthusiasm: Good Humour is also the best Foundation of Piety and True Religion.’ For the proof of that religion, you had only to look about you. It was perfectly evident to anyone standing in the grounds of any English stately home that a discriminating gentleman had created them: how much more overwhelming evidence of that even greater Gentleman above, who had so recently revealed to Sir Isaac Newton that his Estate too was run along rational lines…” [141]

Porter writes: “The Ancients taught: ‘be virtuous’, and Christianity: ‘have faith’; but the Moderns proclaimed: ‘be happy’. Replacing the holiness preached by the Church, the great ideal of the modern world has been happiness, and it was the thinkers of the 18th century who first insisted upon that value shift.

Oh Happiness! Our being’s end and aim!
Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! Whate’er thy name…

sang poet Alexander Pope. ‘Happiness is the only thing of real value in existence’, proclaimed the essayist Soame Jenyns. ‘Pleasure is now the principal remaining part of your education,’ Lord Chesterfield instructed his son.

“And if phrases like ‘pleasure-loving’ always hinted at the unacceptable face of hedonism, it would be hard to deny that the quest for happiness – indeed the right to happiness – became a commonplace of Enlightenment thinking, even before it was codified into Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarian ‘greatest happiness of the greatest number’ definition. That formula was itself a variant upon phrases earlier developed by the moral philosopher Francis Hutcheson, and by the Unitarian polymath, Joseph Priestley, who deemed that ‘the good and happiness of the members, that is, the majority of the members of any state, is the great standard by which everything related to that state must finally be determined.’

“The quest for happiness became central to enlightened thinking throughout Europe, and it would be foolish to imply that British thinkers had any monopoly of the idea. Nevertheless, it was a notion which found many of its earliest champions in this country. ‘I will faithfully pursue that happiness I

propose to myself,’… had insisted at the end of the 17th century. And English thinkers were to the fore in justifying happiness as a goal.

“What changes of mind made hedonism acceptable to the Enlightenment? In part, a new turn in theology itself. By 1700 rational Anglicanism was picturing God as the benign Architect of a well-designed universe. The Earth was a law-governed habitat meant for mankind’s use; man could garner the fruits of the soil, tame the animals and quarry the crust. Paralleling this new Christian optimism ran lines of moral philosophy and aesthetics espoused by the Third Earl of Shaftesbury and his admirer, Francis Hutcheson. Scorning gravity and the grave, Shaftesbury’s rhapsodies to the pleasures of virtue pointed the way for those who would champion the virtues of pleasure.

“Early Enlightenment philosophers like Locke gave ethics a new basis in psychology. It was emphasized that, contrary to Augustinian rigour, human nature was not hopelessly depraved; rather the passions were naturally benign – and in any case pleasure was to be derived from ‘sympathy’ with them. Virtue was, in short, part and parcel of a true psychology of pleasure and was its own reward. Good taste and good morals fused in an aesthetic of virtue.

“Like Nature at large, man became viewed as a machine made up of parts, open to scientific study through the techniques of a ‘moral anatomy’ which would unveil psychological no less than physical laws of motion. Building on such natural scientific postulates, thinkers championed individualism and the right to self-improvement. It became common, as in Bernard Mandeville’s Fable of the Bees, to represent society as a hive made up of individuals, each pulsating with needs, desires and drives which hopefully would work for the best: private vices, public benefits. ‘The wants of the mind are infinite,’ asserted the property developer and physician Nicholas Barbon, expressing views which pointed towards Adam Smith’s celebration of ‘the uniform, constant and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition’. ‘Self love’, asserted Joseph Tucker, Dean of Gloucester Cathedral, ‘is the great Mover in human Nature’.”

Self-love was also the prime mover in capitalist economics, the “hidden hand” which, like Divine Providence, led everyone to better themselves and each other. According to Adam Smith, one of the bright lights of the Scottish Enlightenment, “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, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.”

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143 Smith, The Wealth of Nations, Book 1, chapter 2.
So the common interest is best served by everyone being made free to pursue his own self-interest with as little interference from the State or other bodies as possible. The “hidden hand” – the economists’ equivalent of Divine Providence – would see to it that greed and selfishness would be rewarded as unerringly in this life as unacquisitiveness and selflessness, according to the old dispensation, was held to be in the next. Here we see the doctrine of laissez-faire economics that has become one of the corner-stones of the modern world-view.

Garnished with a touch of German moral earnestness, this English concept of Enlightenment was well summed up by the philosopher Immanuel Kant in the words: “Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-induced immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-induced if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: Sapere aude! Have courage to use your own understanding!”

The English Enlightenment, while theologically and philosophically radical, was politically conservative. For the revolution – “glorious” and “bloodless” - had already taken place in England, and by 1700 the essential freedoms, especially the freedom of the press, which the Enlightenment thinkers so valued, had already been won. “In these circumstances,” writes Porter, “enlightened ideologies were to assume a unique inflection in England: one less concerned to lambast the status quo than to vindicate it against adversaries left and right, high and low. Poachers were turning gamekeepers; implacable critics of princes now became something more like apologists for them; those who had held that power corrupted now found themselves, with the advent of political stabilisation, praising the Whig regime as the bulwark of Protestant liberties….

“The English, in [Pocock’s] view, were uniquely able to enjoy an enlightenment without philosophes precisely because, at least after 1714, there was no longer any infâme to be crushed…

“There was no further need to contemplate regicide because Great Britain was already a mixed monarchy, with inbuilt constitutional checks on the royal will; nor would radicals howl to string up the nobility, since they had abandoned feudalism for finance. What Pocock tentatively calls the ‘conservative enlightenment’ was thus a holding operation, rationalizing the post-1688 settlement, pathologizing its enemies and dangling seductive prospects of future security and prosperity. The Enlightenment became established and the established became enlightened.”

145 Porter, The Enlightenment, pp. 31, 32.
As so often in history, movements of ideas in one direction are often accompanied (or followed, at a short distance) by movements in the opposite direction. So it was in eighteenth-century England. The main tendency of the English Enlightenment, as we have seen, was towards universalism, science and a liberalism that tended to undermine faith in God, king and country. The monarchy, from the time of George I, was German; the language of the court was French; the main artistic models and influences in music and architecture were Italian. Specifically English traditions in the arts (which had reached a high level in the previous century under the architect Sir Christopher Wren and the great composer Henry Purcell) fell into decay.

However, the crushing victories of the Duke of Marlborough over the French in the War of the Spanish Succession, followed, a half-century later, by the still greater triumphs over the French in the Seven Years War (which laid the foundations of the British Empire), stimulated a not unnatural feeling of patriotic pride in the English, together with the feeling that the English were in some sense God’s people with a mission to bring faith and civilization to other peoples beyond the ocean. This revived patriotism and religiosity required artistic expression and confirmation. And providentially it received it by the arrival on English shores of the greatest and most popular composer ever to grace them – Georg Friedrich Handel.

Handel was, of course, a German by birth, who came to England originally in the service of a very German employer, King George I; and his early compositions were by no means English in style or inspiration. Thus he made his reputation with Italian-style operas such as Rinaldo (1711), and imported large numbers of Italian and German singers and musicians into London to perform his works. However, in 1727 Handel applied for, and received, British citizenship; and in October of that year, at the coronation of King George II, he embarked on a new and extraordinarily successful career as the English composer par excellence by composing, for unprecedentedly vast vocal and orchestral resources, four coronation anthems in the English language.

“English Protestantism” write David Starkey and Katie Greening, “– with its single-minded emphasis on the pure, unadulterated word of God – had historically been a great enemy of music. But Handel responded more imaginatively than any Englishman to the power and poetry of the English of the King James Bible and Prayer Book, to create a new musical language. In the coronation anthems he put the new language at the service of the Hanoverian monarchy, and the anthems were an instant hit – in particular ‘Zadok the Priest’, which remains the most celebrated and most frequently played of the four... The text it uses is a biblical passage describing the anointing of King Solomon, which has been used at coronations since Anglo-Saxon times [and to the present day]...”146

So at a time of unprecedented change in a secular and modernist direction, England through the genius of Handel and his English-speaking religious oratorios received a conservative, traditionalist stimulus that placed a permanent seal on the English soul – at least until the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. If “Zadok the Priest” harked back to Anglo-Saxon times, when England was Orthodox, and reinforced the innate monarchism of the English, his most famous composition, the glorious oratorio *The Messiah* (1741), has probably done more than any other single piece of art or literature to preserve the remnants of Christian faith in the English-speaking peoples worldwide. Mozart re-orchestrated the work, but insisted that any alteration to Handel’s score should not be interpreted as an effort to improve the music. No less was the praise from Ludwig Van Beethoven, who said of Handel’s works: "Go to him to learn how to achieve great effects, by such simple means."147

And so, at the very moment that England was plunging herself into the darkness of the all-too-human “Enlightenment”, God in His great mercy reminded us through Handel’s works that there is another, true and Divine Enlightenment which no darkness can ever quench.

In 1745, the Stuart pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie, unsuccessfully invaded England from Scotland. To stir up patriotic resistance to the invader, the native English composer Thomas Arne, Handel’s only real rival, composed “God save the king!”, which became the national anthem of several countries.148 Not to be outdone in patriotic zeal, in the next year Handel composed *Judas Maccabaeus*. “At each performance,” write Starkey and Greening, the audience “were given a booklet containing all the words so they could read along to the singing. Thus they would also have understood the obvious parallels between the Israelites and the modern English nation: these were a nationalistic people who regarded themselves under the special protection of God, and the ‘just wars’ Israelites waged with their enemies would have immediately chimed with English audiences…

“In the years that followed, Handel would write a series of oratorios that would each present a new instalment of the ancient story of God’s chosen people – the story of ancient Israel. But it was also the story of God’s new chosen people in a new Holy Land named Great Britain. The idea of a divinely ordained monarchy no longer held sway in Hanoverian England: instead, it had been replaced by the idea of a ‘divinely ordained’ nation. Oratorio was the soundtrack for this new ideology, combining religious zeal with a strident national pride…”149

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47. FRANCE’S RADICAL ENLIGHTENMENT

The French Enlightenment was very different from the English one. The French had not yet beheaded their king; and their Protestants and intellectuals were not free. Therefore the ideas of the English Enlightenment, popularized for a French audience by Voltaire in his *Letters on the English* and *Elements of Newton’s Physics*, and by Montesquieu in his *The Spirit of the Laws*, acquired an altogether sharper, more revolutionary edge. The tolerant English empiricism became the French cult of reason, a fiercely intolerant revolt against all revealed religion. For, as Sir Isaiah Berlin writes, the French philosophes were perceived to be “the first organised adversaries of dogmatism, traditionalism, religion, superstition, ignorance, oppression.”

Reason for the French philosophes, as for the English thinkers, was something down-to-earth and utilitarian – “not man’s mind as such,” writes Gerald Cragg, “but the way in which his rational faculties could be used to achieve certain specific ends. Descartes had relied on deduction; Newton had used inductive analysis in penetrating to the great secret of nature’s marvellous laws, and the spirit and method of Newtonian physics ruled the eighteenth century. Nature was invested with unparalleled authority, and it was assumed that natural law ruled every area into which the mind of man could penetrate. Nature was the test of truth. Man’s ideas and his institutions were judged by their conformity with those laws which, said Voltaire, ‘nature reveals at all times, to all men’. The principles which Newton had found in the physical universe could surely be applied in every field of inquiry. The age was enchanted with the orderly and rational structure of nature; by an easy transition that the reasonable and the natural must be synonymous. Nature was everywhere supreme, and virtue, truth, and reason were her ‘adorable daughters’. The effect of this approach was apparent in every sphere. In France history, politics, and economics became a kind of ‘social physics’. The new outlook can be seen in Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws*; thenceforth the study of man’s institutions became a prolongation of natural science. The emphasis fell increasingly on the practical consequences of knowledge: man is endowed with reason, said Voltaire, ‘not that he may penetrate the divine essence but that he may live well in this world’.

As important as Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* was Claude Helvétius’ *On the Spirit* (1758). “It is known”, writes Richard Pipes, “that Helvétius studied intensely the philosophical writings of Locke and was deeply affected by them. He accepted as proven Locke’s contention that all ideas were the product of sensations and all knowledge the result of man’s ability, through reflection on sensory data, to grasp the differences and similarities that are the basis of thought. He denied as categorically as did Locke man’s ability to direct thinking or the actions resulting from it: for Helvétius, his biographer [Keim] says, ‘a philosophical treatise on liberty [was] a treatise on effects

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without a cause.’ Moral notions derived exclusively from man’s experience with the sensations of pain and pleasure. People thus were neither ‘good’ nor ‘bad’: they merely acted, involuntarily and mechanically, in their self-interest, which dictated the avoidance of pain and the enhancement of pleasure.

“Up to this point Helvétius said nothing that had not been said previously by Locke and his French followers. But then he made a startling leap from philosophy into politics. From the premise that all knowledge and all values were by-products of sensory experience he drew the inference that by controlling the data that the senses fed to the mind – that is, by appropriately shaping man’s environment – it was possible to determine what he thought and how he behaved. Since, according to Locke, the formulation of idea was wholly involuntary and entirely shaped by physical sensations, it followed that if man were subjected to impressions that made for virtue, he could be made virtuous through no act of his own will.

“This idea provides the key to the creation of perfectly virtuous human beings – required are only appropriate external influences. Helvétius called the process of educating man ‘education’, by which he meant much more than formal schooling. When he wrote ‘l’éducation peut tout’ – ‘education can do anything’ – he meant by education everything that surrounds man and affects his thinking, everything which furnishes his mind with sensations and generates ideas. First and foremost, it meant legislation: ‘It is... only by good laws that we can form virtuous men’. From which it followed that morality and legislation were ‘one and the same science’. In the concluding chapter of L’Esprit, Helvétius spoke of the desirability of reforming society through legislation for the purpose of making men ‘virtuous’.

“This is one of the most revolutionary ideas in the history of political thought: by extrapolation from an esoteric theory of knowledge, a new political theory is born with the most momentous practical implications. Its central thesis holds that the task of politics is to make men ‘virtuous’, and that the means to that end is the manipulation of man’s social and political environment, to be accomplished mainly by means of legislation, that is, by the state. Helvétius elevates the legislator to the status of the supreme moralist. He must have been aware of the implications of his theory for he spoke of the ‘art of forming man’ as intimately connected with the ‘form of government’. Man no longer is God’s creation: he is his own product. Society, too, is a ‘product’ rather than a given or ‘datum’. Good government not only ensures ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’ (a formula which Helvétius seems to have devised), but it literally refashions man. The logic of Helvétius’s ideas inexorably leads to the conclusion that in the course of learning about human nature man ‘acquires an unlimited power of transforming and reshaping man’. This unprecedented proposition constitutes the premise of both liberal and radical ideologies of modern times. It provides the theoretical justification for using politics to create a ‘new order’...
“Helvétius’s theory can be applied in two ways. One may interpret it to mean that the change in man’s social and political environment ought to be accomplished peacefully and gradually, through the reform of institutions and enlightenment. One can also conclude from it that this end is best attained by a violent destruction of the existing order.

“Which approach – the evolutionary or revolutionary – prevails seems to be in large measure determined by a country’s political system and the opportunities it provides for intellectuals to participate in public life.

“In societies which make it possible through democratic institutions and freedom of speech to influence policy, intellectuals are likely to follow the more moderate alternative. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and the United States, intellectuals were deeply involved in political life. The men who shaped the American republic and those who led Victorian England along the path of reform were men of affairs with deep intellectual interests: of some of them it would be difficult to say whether they were philosophers engaged in statesmanship or statesmen whose true vocation was philosophy. Even the pragmatists among them kept their minds open to the ideas of the age. This interplay of ideas and politics lent political life in Anglo-Saxon countries their well-known spirit of compromise. Here the intellectuals had no need to withdraw and form an isolated caste. They acted on public opinion, which, through democratic institutions, sooner or later affected legislation.

“In England and, through England, in the United States, the ideas of Helvétius gained popularity mainly from the writings of Jeremy Bentham and the utilitarians. It was to Helvétius that Bentham owed the ideas that morality and legislation were ‘one and the same science’, that man could attain virtue only through ‘good laws’, and that, consequently, legislation had a ‘pedagogic’ function. On these foundations, Bentham constructed his theory of philosophical radicalism, which greatly affected the movement for parliamentary reform and liberal economics. The preoccupation of modern Anglo-Saxon countries with legislation as a device for human betterment is directly traceable to Bentham, and, through him, to Helvétius. In the speculations of Bentham and the English liberals, there was no place for violence: the transformation of man and society was to be accomplished entirely by laws and enlightenment. But even under this reform-minded theory lay the tacit premise that man could and ought to be remade. This premise links liberalism and radicalism and helps explain why, for all their rejection of the violent methods employed by revolutionaries, when forced to choose they throw their lot in with the revolutionaries. For what separates liberals from the extreme left is disagreement over the means employed, whereas they differ from the right in the fundamental perception of what man is and what society ought to be…”152

There were some real abuses – for example, judicial torture – that the Enlightenment philosophers rightly opposed. In general, however, the French philosophers were more radical and less reasonable than they seemed at first.

Thus on the one hand, Voltaire said, “I am not an atheist, nor a superstitious person; I stand for common sense and the golden mean”. “I believe in God, not the God of the mystics and the theologians, but the God of nature, the great geometrician, the architect of the universe, the prime mover, unalterable, transcendental, everlasting.”\(^{153}\) So far, so English. But on the other hand Voltaire was also the anti-religious zealot who said: “Écrasez l’infâme” – that is, “Destroy the infamy” – of Christianity. As he wrote to Frederick the Great: “Your majesty will do the human race an eternal service in extirping this infamous superstition, I do not say among the rabble, who are not worthy of being enlightened and who are apt for every yoke; I say among the well-bred, among those who wish to think.”\(^{154}\)

Let us take the quintessentially Enlightenment project of the *Encyclopédie*, written in twenty-eight volumes by D’Alembert and Diderot between 1751 and 1772. Its aim was to collect and systematize all knowledge attained to that time, all, as Diderot wrote, with a “zeal for the best interests of the human race”. All very fine and incontestable. And when Diderot went on to write that “the good of the people must be the great purpose of government. By the laws of nature and of reason, the governors are invested with power to that end. And the greatest good of the people is liberty. It is to the state what health is to the individual,” no English Enlightenment thinker would have disagreed with him too seriously. But it was a different matter when he declared that the aim of philosophy was “to enlarge and liberate God”! No Englishman, however free-thinking would have supposed that not only man, but even God was in chains, and was just waiting to be liberated and “enlarged” by the French philosophers!

And so, in keeping with their aim of “liberating” God, the philosophers set about undermining the foundations of Christianity. They denied original sin and attacked the Church. But the reaction of the Catholic Church in France was firmer than might have been expected. Thus Archbishop Beaumont of Paris wrote: “In order to appeal to all classes and characters, Disbelief has in our time adopted a light, pleasant, frivolous style, with the aim of diverting the imagination, seducing the mind, and corrupting the heart. It puts on an air of profundity and sublimity and professes to rise to the first principles of knowledge so as to throw off a yoke it considers shameful to mankind and to the Deity itself. Now it declaims with fury against religious zeal yet preaches toleration for all; now it offers a brew of serious ideas with badinage, of pure moral advice with obscenities, of great truths with great errors, of faith with blasphemy. In a word, it undertakes to reconcile Jesus Christ with Belial.”\(^{155}\)

\(^{153}\) Cragg, *op. cit.*, pp. 239, 237.
The next target was the State. The Enlightenment’s political creed was summed up by Barzun as follows: “Divine right is a dogma without basis; government grew out of nature itself, from reasonable motives and for the good of the people; certain fundamental rights cannot be abolished, including property and the right of revolution”. However, the philosophers did not at first attack the State so fiercely, hoping that their own programme would be implemented by the “enlightened despots” of the time. Moreover, until Rousseau’s theory of the General Will appeared, the philosophers were wary of the destructive impact a direct attack on the State could have. They preferred Montesquieu’s idea of a “free” state in which the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government exercised restraint on each other – an idea that became very influential in the Anglo-Saxon world.

What, then, was their constructive programme? With what did they plan to replace the Church and State? Surprisingly, perhaps, there were very few planned utopias in this period. It was simply assumed that with the passing of prejudice, and the spread of enlightenment, a golden age would ensue automatically. So there was great emphasis on the future, but not in the form of blueprints of a future society, but rather in the form of rhapsodies on the theme of how posterity, seeing the world changed through education and reason and law (“Legislation will accomplish everything”, said Helvétius), would praise the enlightened men of the present generation. “God had been dethroned as judge, and posterity was exalted in its stead. It would be more than a time of fulfilment; it would provide the true vindication of the aspirations and endeavours of all enlightened men. ‘Posterity,’ wrote Diderot, ‘is for the philosopher what the other world is for the religious man.’”

Thus the Age of Reason created its own mythology of the Golden Age. Only it was to be in the future, not in the past. And in this world, not the next. “The Golden Age, so fam’d by Men of Yore, shall soon be counted fabulous no more”, said Tom Paine. And “the Golden Age of Humanity is not behind us”, said Saint Simon; “it lies ahead, in the perfection of the social order”. Indeed, wrote Condorcet, “no bounds have been fixed to the improvement of the human race. The perfectibility of man is absolutely infinite.” And so, writes Fr. Michael Azkoul, “if the Enlightenment repudiated ‘supernatural, other-worldly, organized Christianity’, “it believed in its own brave new world. The ‘great book of Nature’ had recorded the means by which it was to be achieved. Professor Carl Becker shows in his Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers that nature was in fact not ‘the great book’ for them, but Augustine’s City of God torn down and rebuilt with ‘up-to-date’ materials.’

157 In chapter 6 of The Spirit of the Laws, Montesquieu “defined the freedom of states by the relationship between three powers, legislative, executive and judicial. If all are in the same hands, the State is a despotism; if one of them is independent, it is a ‘moderate’ state; if all are separate, it is a free state” (in Robert and Isabelle Toms, That Sweet Enemy, London: Pimlico, 2007, p. 62).
158 Cragg, op. cit., p. 245.
For example, Eden was replaced with ‘the golden age of Greek mythology,’ the love of God with the love of humanity, the saving work of Christ with the creative genius of great men, grace with the goodness of man, immortality by posterity or the veneration of future generations... The vision of the Enlightenment, as Becker affirms, was a secular copy, a distorted copy, of Christianity...”\[159\]

We see here a continuation of that chiliastic, Utopian trend of thought that is already evident in the pseudo-scientific utopias of Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), Tommaso Campanella’s *City of the Sun* (1601), and Francis Bacon’s *The New Atlantis*. The Renaissance utopias contain astonishingly modern visions of society – but secular, this-worldly visions. Thus Jacques Barzun writes: “To make existence better, which for these three Humanists means not more godly, but happier, each drives at a main goal. More wants justice through democratic equality; Bacon wants progress through scientific research; Campanello wants permanent peace, health, and plenty through rational thought, brotherly love, and eugenics. All agree on a principle that the West adopted late: everybody must work.” \[160\] The eighteenth-century Enlightenment did not add anything essentially new to this: paradise is to be achieved by reason, science, eugenics, education and work...

The problem for all secular utopias is how to control the fallen nature of man. From the Christian point of view there is only one solution: the acceptance of the Grace and Truth that is in Christ, which alone can tame and transform the passions. But the Utopians thought differently: “The great argument used to sustain right conduct is: ‘Live according to Nature. Nature is never wrong and we err by forgetting it.’ Nature here replaces God’s commandments, but although Nature is His handiwork, His commandments are a good deal cleaner than Her dictates...”\[161\]

However, Nature needed some assistance – from an authoritarian, even communistic State. And so, as Robert Service writes, “More could not imagine that the common man, still less the common woman, might independently attain the perfection of society without orders from above. Campanella’s tract depicted a society which instituted universal fairness by means of gross intrusion into private life. More and Campanella advocated thorough indoctrination of their people...”\[162\]

The kinship between the Renaissance and Enlightenment utopias, on the one hand, and those of twentieth-century socialism, on the other, was pointed out by Fr. Sergius Bulgakov: “Parallel with the religious individualism of the Reformation a neo-pagan individualism became stronger. It magnified the natural, unregenerated man. According to this viewpoint, man is good and

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\[160\] Barzun, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.


beautiful by nature, which beauty is distorted only by external conditions; it is enough to restore the natural condition of man, and everything will be attained. Here is the root of the various natural law theories, and also of the newest teachings on progress and the supreme power of external reforms alone to resolve the human tragedy, and consequently of the most recent humanism and socialism. The external, superficial closeness of religious and pagan individualism does not remove their deep inner difference, and for that reason we observe in recent history not only a parallel development, but also a struggle between these two tendencies. A strengthening of the themes of humanistic individualism in the history of thought characterizes the epoch of the so-called ‘Enlightenment’ (Aufklärung) in the 17th, 18th and partly the 19th centuries. The Enlightenment drew more radical negative conclusions from the postulates of humanism: in the sphere of religion, by means of Deism, it came to scepticism and atheism; in the sphere of philosophy, through rationalism and empiricism – to positivism and materialism; in the sphere of morality, through ‘natural’ morality – to utilitarianism and hedonism. Materialist socialism can also be seen as the latest and ripest fruit of the Enlightenment…”\textsuperscript{163}

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But let us turn now to the period of “enlightened despotism”, when the ideals of the Enlightenment appeared to work together with traditional forms of government. The combination of the words “enlightened” and “despotism” is paradoxical, for the whole thrust of the Enlightenment, as we have seen, was anti-authoritarian. And yet at precisely this time there came to power in continental Europe a series of rulers who were infected with the cult of reason and democratism, on the one hand, but who ruled as despots, on the other.

Enlightened despotism was made possible because the official Churches – still the main “check” on government - had grown weak. In earlier times, even the most despotic of rulers had made concessions to the power of the Church. For example, Louis XIV’s rejection of Gallicanism and revocation of the Edict of Nantes giving protection to the Huguenots (1685) was elicited by his need to retain the support of the still-powerful Papacy. In France, the Catholic Church, if not the Papacy as such, continued to be strong, which is one reason why the struggle between the old and the new ideas and régimes was so intense there, spilling over into the revolution of 1789. In other continental countries, however, despotic rulers did not have to take such account of ecclesiastical opposition to their ideas. Their success was furthered by the demise of their main rivals, the Jesuits. Like the Jews, the Jesuits were a kind of state within the state. In Paraguay they created a hierocratic society under their control among the Indians.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{163} Bulgakov, “Geroizm i Podvizhnichestvo” (Heroism and Asceticism), in Vekhi (Signposts), Moscow, 1909, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{164} See I.R. Shafarevich, Sotsializm kak yavlenie mirovoy istorii (Socialism as a Phenomenon of World History), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, pp. 194-204.
Rich, powerful and well-educated, the Jesuits were a threat to all despotic rulers. And so, under pressure from rulers, “Benedict XIV (1740-58), whose moderation won him the unusual accolade of praise from Voltaire, initiated an inquiry into their affairs. They were accused of running large-scale money-making operations, also of adopting native cults to win converts at any price. In 1759 they were banished from Portugal, in 1764 from France, and in 1767 from Spain and Naples. Clement XIII (1758-69) stood by the Society with the words Sint ut sunt, aut non sint (may they be as they are, or cease to be). But Clement XIV (1769-74), who was elected under the shadow of a formal demand by the Catholic powers for abolition, finally acquiesced. The brief Dominus ac Redemptor noster of 16 August 1773 abolished the Society of Jesus, on the grounds that it was no longer pursuing its founder’s objectives. It took effect in all European countries except for Russia.”

The downfall of the Jesuit order, that fierce persecutor of Orthodoxy, would appear to be something to be welcomed. And indeed it was for those who were being persecuted. But Jesuitism was about to be replaced by something still more destructive of Orthodoxy: the French revolution. And in relation to the revolution the Jesuits constituted a restraining power, whose abolition undoubtedly brought the revolution closer. This illustrates a principle that we find throughout modern history: that that which is the primary evil in one era may become a restraining power against the primary evil of the succeeding era. This explains what may otherwise seem inexplicable in the behaviour of some Orthodox rulers. Thus the toleration of, and even support given by Tsars Paul I and Nicholas I to Catholicism and Jesuitism, is explained by the fact that these institutions, inimical though they were to Orthodoxy, nevertheless opposed the greater evil of the revolution...

Having removed the priests who would be kings, the kings could now rule without any priestly limitations on their power. Perhaps the first to begin this trend was the adolescent King Charles XII of Sweden, who demonstrated that he was king whatever the Church might do or not do about it. Thus at his coronation in 1697, writes Robert Massie, Charles “refused to be crowned as previous kings had been: by having someone else place the crown on his head. Instead, he declared that, as he had been born to the crown and not elected to it, the actual act of coronation was irrelevant. The statesmen of Sweden, both liberal and conservative, and even his own grandmother were aghast. Charles was put under intense pressure, but he did not give way on the essential point. He agreed only to allow himself to be consecrated by an archbishop, in order to accede to the Biblical injunction that a monarch be the Lord’s Anointed, but he insisted that the entire ceremony be called a consecration,

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165 However, according to Montefiore, “The atheist Frederick [the Great]’s religious tolerance extended to welcoming the Jesuits to Prussia” (Titans in History, p. 281).
166 This refers to their toleration of the cult of ancestors during their missionary work in China. The Pope eventually banned this toleration, which led to the collapse of the mission. (V.M.)
167 Davies, op. cit., pp. 593-594.
not a coronation. Fifteen-year-old Charles rode to the church with his crown already on his head.

"Those who looked for omens found many in the ceremony... The King slipped while mounting his horse with his crown on his head; the crown fell off and was caught by a chamberlain before it hit the ground. During the service, the archbishop dropped the horn of anointing oil. Charles refused to give the traditional royal oath and then, in the moment of climax, he placed the crown on his own head..." 168

Charles was not an enlightened despot. But his successor, Gustavus Adolphus III, was. And consequently, in 1792 he was killed by nobles "outraged at a programme of democratic despotism... [which] made the popular gestures constantly being pressed upon Louis XVI by his secret advisers seem tame." 169

In neighbouring Germany the princes, being in effect also first ministers of their Churches 170, were more influenced by the French Enlightenment. Thus Frederick of Prussia dispensed with any religious sanction for his rule and took the Enlightenment philosophers for his guides. "I was born too soon," he said, "but I have seen Voltaire..." 171

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How could despotism co-exist with the caustic anti-authoritarianism of Voltaire and the other philosophes? It was a question of means and ends. If the aims of the philosophes were "democratic" in the sense that they wished the abolition of "superstition" and increased happiness for everybody through education, the best – indeed the only – means to that end at that time was the enlightened despot.

But there is no question that they preferred republicanism to despotism, enlightened or otherwise. Thus Voltaire said: "The most tolerable government of all is no doubt a republic, because it brings men closest to natural equality." And yet, he added wisely, "there has never been a perfect government because men have passions".

Indeed; and it was that insight, and the realization that republican or democratic government often stimulated those passions to the detriment of the people, which led even the more liberal governments to seek checks on

170 As in Portugal, where "John V (r. 1706-50), known as 'The Faithful', was a priest-king, one of whose sons by an abbess became Inquisitor-General" (Davies, op. cit., p. 638).
171 Voltaire, in Davies, op. cit., p. 648. He also gave refuge to Rousseau. But Voltaire fell out with Frederick after he called him a miser and a tyrant and a "likeable whore". Frederick called Voltaire a "monkey" (Montefiore, Titans in History, pp. 276-277).
democratism. Thus even in Britain “the parliamentary system was under increasing scrutiny. Ministers, or their spokesmen, argued that frequent elections gave ‘a handle to the cabals and intrigues of foreign princes’, and encouraged playing fast and loose with allies. For this reason, in mid-1716 the government pushed through the Septennial Act, which increased the interval between general elections from three to seven years.”

It was not only the philosophes who looked to the enlightened despots: as Eric Hobsbawn writes, “the middle and educated classes and those committed to progress often looked to the powerful central apparatus of an ‘enlightened’ monarchy to realize their hopes. A prince needed a middle class and its ideas to modernize his state; a weak middle class needed a prince to batter down the resistance of entrenched aristocratic and clerical interests to progress.” So the philosophes went to the kings – Voltaire to Frederick of Prussia, Diderot to Catherine of Russia – and tried to make them into philosopher-kings, as Plato had once tried with Dionysius of Syracuse. And the kings were flattered to think of themselves in this light.

But neither the kings nor their philosopher advisers ever aimed to create democratic republics, as opposed to more efficient monarchies. The philosophers “never made their prime demand the maximisation of personal freedom and the reciprocal attenuation of the state, in the manner of later English laissez-faire liberalism. For one thing, a strong executive would be needed to maintain the freedom of subjects against the encroachments of the Church and the privileges of the nobles. Physiocrats such as Quesnay championed an economic policy of free trade, but recognised that only a determined, dirigiste administration would prove capable of upholding market freedoms against encroached vested interests. No continental thinkers were attracted to the ideal of the ‘nightwatchman’ state so beloved of the English radicals…

“It was the thinkers of Germanic and Central Europe above all who looked to powerful, ‘enlightened’ rulers to preside over a ‘well-policed’ state. By this was meant a regime in which an efficient, professional career bureaucracy comprehensively regulated civic life, trade, occupations, morals and health, often down to quite minute details.”

Cragg writes: “Certain characteristics were common to all the enlightened despotisms, but each of the continental countries had its own particular pattern of development. By the middle of the century, Frederick the Great had achieved a pre-eminent position, and his brilliance as a military leader had fixed the eyes of Europe on his kingdom. Prussia appeared to be the supreme example of the benefits of absolute rule. But appearances were deceptive. Frederick had indeed brought the civil service to a high degree of efficiency

172 Simms, op. cit., p. 91.
174 Porter, op. cit., p. 29.
and had organized the life of the country in a way congenial to a military martinet. Though he was anxious to improve the peasants’ lot, he could not translate his theories into facts. His reign resulted in an actual increase of serfdom. His rule rested on assumptions that were already obsolete long before the advent of the French Revolution. It is true that by illiberal means he achieved certain liberal ends. He abolished torture; he promoted education; in the fields of politics and economics he applied the principles of the Enlightenment. He had no sympathy with Christianity and little patience with its devotees. He regarded the service of the state as an adequate substitute for Christian faith and life. He advocated toleration on the ground that all religious beliefs were equally absurd…”

Thus toleration for all faiths, so long as they accepted “the service of the state” as the supreme cult. Such a religion perfectly suited Frederick, who, like Napoleon after him, could only understand religion in terms of its usefulness to the State. But was this really an adequate substitute for Christianity? Why should the people serve the state? For material gain? But Frederick gave them only war and serfdom...

In any case, man cannot live by bread alone, and states cannot survive through the provision of material benefits alone. The people need a faith that justifies the state and the dominion of some men over others. Christianity provided such a justification as long as the people believed in it, and as long as the ruler could make himself out to be “the defender of the faith”. But if neither the people nor the ruler believe in Christianity, what can take its place? One alternative is the deification of the nation or state itself, and this was the path Frederick’s successors took. But between Frederick’s enlightened despotism and the Prussian nationalism of the nineteenth century there was a logical and chronological gap. That gap was filled by the teaching of Kant and Herder and Rousseau, the French revolution and Napoleon...

We have said that the philosophes like Voltaire and Diderot were happy to work with the enlightened despots. However, this was a purely transitional phase, a tactical ploy that could not last long. For the principles of the philosophes, carried to their logical conclusion, led to the destruction of all monarchies. This was clearest in the case of Rousseau, as we shall see; but even in Diderot, the friend of Catherine the Great, we find the following: “The arbitrary government of a just and enlightened prince is always bad. His virtues are the most dangerous and the most surely seductive: they insensibly accustom a people to love, respect and serve his successor, however wicked or stupid he might be. He takes away from the people the right of deliberating, of willing or not willing, of opposing even its own will when it ordains the good. However, this right of opposition, mad though it is, is sacred… What is it that characterises the despot? Is it kindness or ill-will? Not at all: these two notions enter not at all into the definition. It is the extent of the authority he arrogates to himself, not its application. One of the greatest evils that could

175 Cragg, op. cit., p. 218.
befall a nation would be two or three reigns by a just, gentle, enlightened, but arbitrary power: the peoples would be led by happiness to complete forgetfulness of their privileges, to the most perfect slavery…”

“The right of opposition, mad though it is, is sacred”… Here we find the true voice of the revolution, which welcomes madness, horror, misery, bloodshed on an unprecedented scale, so long as it is the expression of the right of opposition, that is, of satanic rebelliousness. And that madness, that irrationality, that satanism, it must not be forgotten, was begotten in the Age of Reason, the age of sophisticated, elegant courtiers speaking the voice of sweet reason and universal happiness…

One of the greatest figures of the Enlightenment was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a man who also prefigured the Romantic Counter-Enlightenment. On the one hand, he was a social contract theorist, a man of reason and science. On the other hand, he was a prophet of the Romantic Will in its collective, national form – what he called the General Will.

We have seen that while the French Enlightenment philosophers were admirers of English liberalism, they still believed in relatively unfettered state power concentrated in the person of the monarch. That way, they believed, the light of reason and reasonableness would spread most effectively downward and outward to the rest of the population. Thus their outlook was still essentially aristocratic; for all their love of freedom, they still believed in restraint and good manners, hierarchy and privilege. Perhaps their Catholic education had something to do with it. Certainly, however much they railed against the despotism of the Catholic Church, they were still deeply imbued with the Catholic ideals of order and hierarchy.

However, Rousseau was different; he believed in power coming from below rather than above. Perhaps his Swiss Calvinist upbringing had something to do with that; for, as he wrote, “I was born a citizen of a free State, and a member of the Sovereign [i.e. the Conseil Général] of Geneva, which was considered sovereign by some”.177 Certainly, the mutual hatred between Voltaire and Rousseau reflected to some degree the differences between the (lapsed) Catholic and the (lapsed) Calvinist, between the city fop and the peasant countryman178, between the civilized reformer and the uncouth revolutionary.

Rousseau set out to inquire “if, in the civil order, there can be any sure and legitimate rule of administration”.179 He quickly rejected Filmer’s patriarchal justification of monarchy based on the institution of the family: “The most ancient of all societies, and the only one that is natural, is the family: and even so the children remain attached to the father only so long as they need him for their preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond is dissolved. The children, released from the obedience they owed, and the father released from the care he owed his children, return equally to independence. If they remain united, they continue so no longer naturally, but voluntarily; and the family itself is then maintained only by convention... The family then may be called the first model of political societies: the ruler corresponds to the father, and the people to the children; and all, being born free and equal, alienate their liberty only to their own advantage.”180

178 Barzun, op. cit., p. 384.
179 Rousseau, op. cit., I, introduction; p. 181.
180 Rousseau, op. cit., I, 2, p. 182.
This argument is not convincing. First, a child is neither free at birth, nor equal to his father. Secondly, the bond between the father and the son continues to be natural and indissoluble even after the child has grown up.\textsuperscript{181}

Next, Rousseau disposes of the argument that might is right. “To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will – at the most, an act of prudence. In what sense can it be a duty?... What kind of right is that which perishes when force fails? If we must obey perforce, there is no need to obey because we ought; and if we are not forced to obey, we are under no obligation to do so... Obey the powers that be. If this means yield to force, it is a good precept, but superfluous: I can answer for its never being violated. All power comes from God, I admit; but so does all sickness: does that mean that we are forbidden to call in the doctor?... Let us then admit that force does not create right, and that we are obliged to obey only legitimate powers.

“Since no man has a natural authority over his fellow, and force creates no right, we must conclude that conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority among men.”\textsuperscript{182}

Here we find the social contract. But Rousseau quickly disposes of the form of contract proposed by Hobbes, namely, that men originally contracted to alienate their liberty to a king. This is an illegitimate argument, says Rousseau, because: (a) it is madness for a whole people to place itself in slavery to a king, “and madness creates no right”; (b) the only possible advantage would be a certain tranquillity, “but tranquillity is found also in dungeons; but is that enough to make them desirable”\textsuperscript{183}; and (c) “if each man could alienate himself, he could not alienate his children: they are born men and free.”

In any case, “to renounce liberty is to renounce being a man, to surrender the rights of humanity and even its duties... Such a renunciation is incompatible with man’s nature; to remove all liberty from his will is to remove all morality from his acts... so, from whatever aspect we regard the question, the right of slavery is null and void, not only as being illegitimate, but also because it is absurd and meaningless. The words slave and right contradict each other, and are mutually exclusive. It will always be equally

\textsuperscript{181} Rousseau has another, more facetious argument against Filmer: “I have said nothing of King Adam, or Emperor Noah, father of the three great monarchs who shared out the universe, like the children of Saturn, whom some scholars have recognized in them. I trust to getting thanks for my moderation; for, being a direct descendant of one of these princes, perhaps of the eldest branch, how do I know that a verification of titles might not leave me the legitimate king of the human race? In any case, there can be no doubt that Adam was sovereign of the world, as Robinson Crusoe was of his island, as long as he was its only inhabitant; and this empire had the advantage that the monarch, safe on his throne, had no rebellions, wars, or conspirators to fear” (op. cit., I, 2, pp. 183-184).

\textsuperscript{182} Rousseau, op. cit., I, 3, 4; pp. 184, 185.

\textsuperscript{183} By contrast, the French Prime Minister after the Restoration, François Guizot, placed “the great tranquillity” at the core of his vision of the good society. See George L. Mosse, The Culture of Western Europe, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988, p. 144.
foolish for a man to say to a man or to a people: ‘I make with you a convention wholly at your expense and wholly to my advantage; I shall keep it as long as I like, and you will keep it as long as I like.’”  

We may interrupt Rousseau at this point to note that his concept of freedom, being “positive” rather than “negative”, led to very different consequences from that of the English empiricists or French philosophes. Freedom was for Rousseau, as for Kant, the categorical imperative, and the foundation of all morality. “Both Rousseau and Kant,” writes Norman Hampson, “aspired to regenerate humanity by the free action of the self-disciplined individual conscience”. Rousseau’s concept of freedom “rested, not on any logical demonstration, but on each man’s immediate recognition of the moral imperative of his own conscience. ‘I hear much argument against man’s freedom and I despise such sophistry. One of these arguers [Helvétius?] can prove to me as much as he likes that I am not free; inner feeling, more powerful than all his arguments, refutes them all the time.’”

Rousseau’s conscience was to him both Pope and Church: “Whatever I feel to be right is right, what I feel to be wrong is wrong; the best of all casuists is the conscience... Reason deceives us only too often and we have earned all too well the right to reject it, but conscience never deceives... Conscience, conscience, divine instinct, immortal and heavenly voice, sure guide to men who, ignorant and blinkered, are still intelligent and free; infallible judge of good and ill who shapes men in the image of God, it is you who form the excellence of man’s nature and the morality of his actions; without you, I feel nothing within that raises me above the beasts, nothing but the melancholy privilege of straying from error to error, relying on an understanding without rule and a reason without principle.”

Now conscience, according to Rousseau, was likely to be stifled by too much education and sophistication. So he went back to the idea of the state of nature as expounded in Hobbes and Locke, but invested it with the optimistic, revolutionary spirit of the Levellers and Diggers. Whereas Hobbes and Locke considered the state of nature as an anarchic condition which civilization as founded on the social contract transcended and immeasurably improved on, for Rousseau the state of nature was “the noble savage”, who, as the term implied, had many good qualities.

184 Rousseau, op. cit., I, 4; pp. 186, 189.
186 Rousseau, in Hampson, op. cit., pp. 32, 34.
187 The term “noble savage” first appears in 1672 in John Dryden’s The Conquest of Granada (Act 1, scene 1):

I am as free as Nature first made man
'Ere the base Laws of servitude began
When wild in woods the noble Savage ran.
Indeed, man in the original state of nature was in many ways better and happier than man as civilized through the social contract. In particular, he was freer and more equal. It was the institutions of civilization that destroyed man’s original innocence and freedom. As Rousseau famously thundered: “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains!”

This idea did not stand the test of experience. “Among those who believed in Rousseau’s ideas,” writes Fr. Alexey Young, “was the French painter Gaughin (1848-1903). So intent was his commitment that he abandoned his family and went to Tahiti to find Rousseau’s ‘noble savage’. But, to his great dismay, he discovered that Rousseau’s conception was an illusion. ‘Primitive’ man could be just as cruel, immoral and heartless as men under the influence of the civilized world. Seeing this, Gaughin was driven to despair…”

Since man is born free, according to Rousseau, and his conscience is infallible, the common man is fully equal as a moral agent to his educated social superiors and should be entrusted with full political power. Thus the social contract should be rewritten to keep sovereignty with the ruled rather than the rulers. For Hobbes, the people had transferred sovereignty irrevocably to their rulers; for Locke, the transfer was more conditional, but revocable only in exceptional circumstances. For Rousseau, sovereignty was never really transferred from the people.

Rousseau rejected the idea that the people could have “representatives” who exerted sovereignty in their name. “Sovereignty cannot be represented, for the same reason that it cannot be alienated... the people’s deputies are not, and could not be, its representatives; they are merely its agents; and they cannot decide anything finally. Any law which the people has not ratified in person is void; it is not law at all. The English people believes itself to be free; it is gravely mistaken; it is free only during the election of Members of Parliament; as soon as the Members are elected, the people is enslaved; it is nothing.” Thus representative government is “elective autocracy”.

Essentially Rousseau wanted to abolish the distinction between rulers and ruled, to give everyone power through direct democracy. The citizen can exercise this power only if he himself makes every decision affecting himself. But the participation of all the citizens in every decision is possible only in a small city-state like Classical Athens, not in modern states. Thus Rousseau represents a modern, more mystical version of the direct democratism of the Greek philosophers. He echoes Aristotle’s Politics: “If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.” But the emphasis now is on equality rather than liberty...

188 Rousseau, op. cit., I, 1; p. 181.
190 Rousseau, op. cit., III, 15; p. 266.
Now there was a modern state that seemed to promise the kind of mystical, direct democracy that Rousseau pined for – Corsica, which in 1755 threw off the centuries-old yoke of Genoa and created its own constitution. In Corsica,” writes Adam Zamoyski, “Rousseau believed he had found a society untainted by the original sin of civilization. In his *Project de constitution pour la Corse*, written in 1765, he suggested ways of keeping it so. ‘I do not want to give you artificial and systematic laws, invented by man; only to bring you back under the unique laws of nature and order, which command to the heart and do not tyrannize the free will,’ he cajoled them. But the enterprise demanded an act of will, summed up in the oath to be taken simultaneously by the whole nation: ‘In the name of Almighty God and on the Holy Gospels, by this irrevocable and sacred oath I unite myself in body, in goods, in will and in my whole potential to the Corsican Nation, in such a way that I myself and everything that belongs to me shall belong to it without redemption. I swear to live and to die for it, to observe all its laws and to obey its legitimate rulers and magistrates in everything that is in conformity with the law.’”

Now one of the problems of democracy lies in the transition from the multiple wills of the individual citizens to the single will of the state: how was this transition to be effected without violating the will of the individual? Rousseau recognised this problem: “The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem of which the social contract provides the solution.”

This is a major, indeed insuperable problem for most liberal theorists insofar as they recognize that individuals have different interests and wills. So any single decision expressing the collective will of the state will inevitably be in the interests of some and not of others. For Rousseau, however, it is less of a problem insofar as he holds a more optimistic view of human nature. For him, since each individual has an infallible conscience, if he finds and expresses that infallible conscience, his will will be found to coincide with the will of every other individual. This general will will then express the will of every citizen individually while being common to all. “Each of us comes together to place his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will, and we in a body admit each member as an indivisible part of the whole. This act of association produces a moral and collective entity... As for the associates, they all take on the name of the people when they participate in the sovereign authority, and call themselves specifically citizens and subjects when they are placed under the laws of the State.”

192 Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 6, p. 191.
On which Voltaire commented: “All that is wrong. I am certainly not prepared to hand myself over to my fellow-citizens unreservedly. I am not going to give them the power to kill me and rob me by majority vote…”

The transition from Voltaire to Rousseau, from the worship of the individual will to the collective, or general will of mankind, is also the transition from liberal humanism to socialist humanism. As Yuval Noah Harari writes, “Socialists believe that ‘humanity’ is collective rather than individualistic. They hold as sacred not the inner voice of each individual, but the species Homo Sapiens as a whole. Whereas liberal humanism seeks as much freedom as possible for individual humans, socialist humanism seeks equality between all humans. According to socialists, inequality is the worst blasphemy against the sanctity of humanity, because it privileges qualities of humans over their universal essence. For example, when the rich are privileged over the poor, it means that we value money more than the universal essence of all humans, which is the same for rich and poor alike.”

Rousseau’s general will, being a kind of universal essence, is not the will of the majority; for that will is by definition not the will of the minority, and the general will must embrace all. Nor, more surprisingly, is it the will of all when all agree; for the will of all is sometimes wrong, whereas the general will is always right. “The general will is always upright and always tends to the public advantage; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people always have the same rectitude. Our will is always for our own good, but we do not always see what that is; the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived, and on such occasions only does it seem to will what is bad. There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private interest into account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills: but take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another, and the general will remains as the sum of the differences.”

The general will is a mysterious entity which reveals itself in certain special conditions: “If, when the people, being furnished with adequate information, held its deliberations, the citizens had no communication one with another, the grand total of the small differences would always give the general will, and the decision would always be good.” In other words, when the self-interest of each citizen is allowed to express itself in an unforced manner, without external pressures, a certain highest common denominator of self-interest, what Russell calls “the largest collective satisfaction of self-interest possible to the community”, reveals itself. Thus the general will is the wholly infallible revealed truth and morality of the secular religion of the revolution.

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197 Russell, op. cit., p. 725.
What are the conditions for the appearance of the general will? The fundamental condition is true equality among the citizenry, especially economic equality. For where there is no equality, the self-interest of some carries greater weight than the self-interest of others. This is another major difference between Rousseau and the English and French liberals. They did not seek to destroy property and privilege, but only to prevent despotism; whereas he is a much more thorough-going egalitarian.

This first condition is linked to a second condition, which is the absence of “partial associations” or parties. For the wills of partial associations, which come together as expressing some common economic or class interest, conflict with the will of the community as a whole. For “when intrigues arise, and partial associations are formed at the expense of the great association, the will of each of these associations becomes general in relation to its members, while it remains particular in relation to the State: it may then be said that there are no longer as many votes as there are men, but only as many as there are associations. The differences become less numerous and give a less general result. Lastly, when one of these associations is so great as to prevail over all the rest, the result is no longer a sum of small differences, but a single difference; in this case there is no longer a general will, and the opinion which prevails is purely particular. It is therefore essential, if the general will is to be able to make itself known, that there should be no partial society in the state and that each citizen should express only his own opinion.”

A third condition (here Rousseau harks back again to Athens) is that the citizen body should consist only of men. For women, according to Rousseau, are swayed by “immoderate passions” and require men to protect and guide them.

Such a system appears at first sight libertarian and egalitarian (except in regard to women). Unfortunately, however, the other side of its coin is that when the general will has been revealed – and in practice this means when the will of the majority has been determined, for “the votes of the greatest number always bind the rest”, – there is no room for dissent. For in joining the social contract, each associate alienates himself, “together with all his rights, to the whole community; for, in the first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all; and, this being so, no one has any interest in making them burdensome to others. Moreover, the alienation being without reserve, the unions is as perfect as it can be, and no associate has anything more to demand: for, if the individuals retained certain rights, as there would be no common superior to decided between them and the public, each, being on one point his own judge, would ask to be so on all; the state of nature would thus continue, and the association would necessarily become inoperative or tyrannical. Finally, each man, in giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody; and as there is no associate over which he does not acquire

198 Rousseau, op. cit., II, 3, pp. 203-204.
199 Helm, op. cit., p. 78.
the same right as he yields over himself, he gains an equivalent for everything he loses, and an increase of force for the preservation of what he has...”

“In order then that the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking, which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free...”

Forced to be free – here the totalitarian potentialities of Rousseau’s concept of positive freedom become painfully clear. Thus of all the eighteenth-century philosophers, Rousseau is the real prophet of the revolution. The others, especially Voltaire, paved the way for it, but it was Rousseau who gave it its justification, its metaphysical, quasi-mystical first principle.

But the most striking characteristic of this principle, considering it was proclaimed in “the Age of Reason”, was its irrationality. For the general will was not to be deduced or induced by any logical or empirical reasoning, nor identified with any specific empirical phenomenon or phenomena. It was not the concrete will of any particular man, or collection of men, but a quasi-mystical entity that welled up within a particular society and propelled it towards truth and righteousness.

This accorded with the anti-rational, passionate nature of the whole of Rousseau’s life and work. As Hume said of him: “He has only felt during the whole course of his life.” Thus while the other philosophers of the Age of Reason believed, or did not believe, in God or the soul or the Divine Right of kings, because they had reasons for their belief or unbelief, for Rousseau, on the other hand, religion was just a feeling; and as befitted the prophet of the coming Age of Unreason, he believed or disbelieved for no reason whatsoever. So religious belief, or the lack of it, was not something that could be objectively established or argued about.

True, in his ideal political structure, Rousseau insisted that his subjects should believe in a “civil religion” that combined belief in “the existence of an omnipotent, benevolent divinity that foresees and provides; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the punishment of sinners; the sanctity of the social contract and the law”. If any citizen accepted these beliefs, but then “behaved as if he did not believe in them”, the punishment was death. However, the only article of this faith he argued for was the social contract...

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201 Rousseau, op. cit., I, 7; p. 195. More gently put, the people must be trained “to bear with docility the yoke of public happiness”.
203 Rousseau, op. cit., p. 286; quoted in Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 214.
204 Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 214.
As Barzun writes: “Rousseau reminds the reader that two-thirds of mankind are neither Christians nor Jews, nor Mohammedans, from which it follows that God cannot be the exclusive possession of any sect or people; all their ideas as to His demands and His judgements are imaginings. He asks only that we love Him and pursue the good. All else we know nothing about. That there should be quarrels and bloodshed about what we can never know is the greatest impiety.”

Superficially, this irrationalist attitude seems like that of Pascal, who said: “The heart has its reasons, of which reason is ignorant”. But Pascal, while pointing to the limits of reason, did not abandon reason; he sought the truth with every fibre of his being. Rousseau, on the other hand, in both his life and his work, appeared quite deliberately to abandon reason and surrender himself to irrational forces. In these forces he saw freedom and nobility, while others saw only slavery to the basest instincts. The revolution would soon allow the world to judge the truth for itself...

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Eighteenth-century ideas about society, wrote L.A. Tikhomirov, though pagan and materialist in essence, can nevertheless not be understood except in the context of the Christian society that Western Europe still was – or, more precisely, “a Christian society, but one that has renounced Christ”, to use Aksakov’s phrase. This is especially true of the idea of the general will. Thus “in the very concept of the 18th century about society there is a clearly materialised reminiscence of the Church. From the Church was copied the idea of society as a certain collectivity defined exclusively by the spiritual nature of man. The cosmopolitanism of the new society, its mysterious people’s will, which as it were saturates it completely, which in some incomprehensible way rules all while remaining infallible in all its private mistakes, - all these are echoes of the Christian Church. They are in all points ‘the Kingdom that is not of this world’, which is squeezed into, without being contained in, the bounds precisely of ‘this world’...

“Contemporary society, torn apart by this basic contradiction, is not conscious of it intellectually and even denies it. The materialist understanding of life is so strongly rooted that people for the most part are simply incapable of seriously paying attention to the action of the spiritual element. ‘What contradiction is here?’ they say. ‘In truth, the valuable element of Christianity is constituted by its moral concepts and its lofty conception of personality. And it is this that the new era has held onto. It has cast out only the outdated, mystical element of Christianity. Isn’t that natural? Isn’t that how all progress comes about in the world, holding on to everything valuable from the past and throwing out the unnecessary old rags?’ In this, however, the present age is mistaken. It doesn’t understand that it is impossible to throw out the mystical principles from Christianity without thereby destroying the social

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205 Barzun, op. cit., p. 387.
significance of the personality created by it. Historically Christian moral concepts have to the highest degree exerted a positive influence on earthly, social life. However this takes place only when the Christian remains completely a Christian, that is, when he lives not for this earthly life, and does not seek the realisation of his ideals in this life, does not put his soul into it. It turns out completely differently if the Christian remains without guidance by Divine authority, without a spiritual life on earth and without this spiritual activity of his having its final ends beyond the grave. Then he remains with infinite demands before an extremely finite world, which is unable to satisfy them. He remains without discipline, because he knows nothing in the world higher than his own personality, and he bows before nothing if for him there is no God. He is not capable of venerating society as a material phenomenon, nor bow down even before a majority of personalities like his, because from their sum there still emerges no personality more lofty than his own. The lot and social role of such a person is extremely unhappy and harmful. He is either an eternal denier of real social life, or he will seek to satisfy his strivings for infinity in infinite pleasures, infinite love of honour, in a striving for the grandiose which so characterises the sick 18th and 19th centuries. The Christian without God is completely reminiscent of Satan. Not in vain did the image of unrestrained pride so seduce the poets of the 18th century. We all – believers or non-believers in God – are so created by Him, so incapable of ripping out of ourselves the Divine fire planted by Him, that we involuntarily love this spiritual, immeasurably lofty personality. But let us look with the cold attention of reason. If we need only to construct well our earthly, social life, if nothing else exists, then why call those qualities and strivings lofty and elevated which from an earthly point of view are only fantastic, unhealthy, having nothing in common with earthly reality? These are the qualities of an abnormal person. He is useful, they will say, for his eternal disquietude, his striving for something different, something other than that which is. But this striving would be useful only if his ideals were basically real. But the disquietude of the Christian deprived of God knocks the world out of the status quo only in order to drag it every time towards the materially impossible.

“They err who see in the 18th and 19th centuries the regeneration of ancient ideas of the State. The pagan was practical. His ideals were not complicated by Christian strivings for the absolute. His society could develop calmly. But the lot of a society that is Christian in its moral type of personality, but has renounced Christ in the application of its moral forces, according to the just expression of A.S. Aksakov, will be reduced to eternal revolution.

“This is what the 18th century’s attempt to create a new society also came to. Philosophy succeeded in postulating an ideal of society such as a personality forged by eighteen centuries of Christian influence could agree to bow down to. But what was this society? A pure mirage. It was constructed not on the real laws and foundations of social life, but on fictions logically deduced from the spiritual nature of man. Immediately they tried to construct such a society, it turned out that the undertaking was senseless. True, they
did succeed in destroying the old historical order and creating a new one. But how? It turned out that this new society lives and is maintained in existence only because it does not realise its illusory bases, but acts in spite of them and only reproduces in a new form the bases of the old society.

“It is worth comparing the factual foundations of the liberal-democratic order with those which are ascribed to it by its political philosophy. The most complete contradiction!

“Rousseau, of course, was fantasising when he spoke of the people’s will as supposedly one and always wants only the good and never goes wrong. But one must not forget that he was not speaking of that people’s will which our deputies, voters and journalists talk about. Rousseau himself grew up in a republic and he did not fall into such traps. He carefully qualified himself, saying that ‘there is often a difference between the will of all (volonté de tous) and the general will (volonté générale).

“Rousseau sincerely despised the will of all, on which our liberal democratism is raised. Order and administration are perfect, he taught, only when they are defined by the general will, and not by the egoistic, easily frightened and bribed will of all. For the creation of the new, perfect society it is necessary to attain the discovery and activity precisely of the general will.

“But how are we to attain to it? Here Rousseau is again in radical contradiction with the practice of his disciples. He demands first of all the annihilation of private circles and parties. ‘For the correct expression of the general will it is necessary that there should be no private societies in the State and that every citizen should express only his own personal opinion’ (n’opine que d’après lui). Only in this case does one receive a certain sediment of general will from the multitude of individual deviations and the conversation always turns out well. With the appearance of parties everything is confused, and the citizen no longer expresses his own will, but the will of a given circle. When such individual interests begin to be felt and ‘small societies (circles, parties) begin to exert influence on the large (the State), the general will is no longer expressed by the will of all’. Rousseau therefore demands the annihilation of parties or at least their numerical weakening. As the most extreme condition, already unquestionably necessary, it is necessary that there should exist no party which would be noticeably stronger than the rest. If even this is not attained, if ‘one of these associations (parties) is so great as to dominate all the others, then the general will no longer exists and the only opinion that is realisable is the individual opinion.’

“In other words, democracy, the rule of the people’s will, no longer exists.

“Just as decisively and insistently does Rousseau demonstrate that the people’s will is not expressed by any representation. As a sincere and logical democrat, he simply hates representation, he cannot denounce it enough.
When the citizens are corrupted, he says, they establish a standing army so as to enslave society, and they appoint representatives so as to betray it.

“He also reasons about representative rule in the section on the death of the political organism. Neither the people’s autocracy, he says, nor the people’s will can be either handed over or represented by the very nature of things.

“It is not difficult to imagine what Rousseau would have said about our republics and constitutional monarchies, about the whole order of liberal democratism, which is maintained in existence exclusively by that which its prophet cursed. This order is wholly based on representation, it is unquestionably unthinkable without parties, and, finally, the administration of the country is based unfailingly on the dominance of one or another party in parliament. When there is no such dominance, administration is ready to come to a stop and it is necessary to dissolve parliament in the hope that the country will give the kind of representation in which, in the terminology of Rousseau, there exists no people’s will, but only ‘individual opinion’.

“And this political system, as the height of logicality, is consecrated by the all-supporting fiction of the people’s will!…”

Thus Rousseauism is not democratic in the usual sense. “Properly speaking, the principle of the people’s will requires direct rule by the people. Even on this condition the principle would not produce any good results. In Switzerland there is the right of appeal to the people’s vote (referendum) and the presentation of the basic laws for confirmation to the direct vote of the people. No useful results proceed from this for the reasonableness of the law; moreover, the practice of such luxury of democratism is possible only in very unusual circumstances. In essence this is a system of ‘self-indulgence’, and not a serious resource of legislative construction.

“But the most important question is: what is this ‘people’s will’? Where, and in what, does it really exist? The people firmly wants one thing: that things should go well. A people with a history, which constitutes something united in distinction from its neighbours, which has not yet been shattered into insuperably hostile groups, has another will; that affairs in the country should go in a familiar spirit to which it is historically accustomed and which it trusts.

“And then in the innumerable individual cases from the solution of which the government is formed, the people has no will except in extreme cases – such as war or peace or the handing over of its salvation to such-and-such a popular person.... But in the everyday questions of government there is no people’s will. How can I have a will in relation to that of which I have no comprehension? In every question a few think well, a few think something, and 99 out a hundred – exactly nothing. Ivan has some understanding of one question, but Theodore not, while on another Theodore has some ideas, but
Ivan not. But in each case there is the huge majority that understands nothing and has no other will except that everything should go well.

“It is from this majority that they demand that it should express its own opinion and its own will! But, you know, it’s simply comical, and besides harmful. Let us suppose that there are a hundred people who understand the given question, and several million who do not. To demand a decision from the majority means only to drown the hundred knowing voices in the hundreds of thousands who have no thoughts on the matter!

“The people, they say, can listen to those who know; after all, it wants the best for itself. Of course. But the people who are knowledgeable are, in the first place, occupied with their work, which is precisely why they are familiar with the question; secondly, they by no means exercise their capabilities in oratory or the technique of agitation. In connection with the art of stultifying the crowd, flattering it, threatening it, attracting – this disastrous, poisonous art of agitation – people will always be beaten down by those who have specially devoted themselves to political intrigue. And people are specially chosen to be intriguers, they are suitable for this trade because of their innate capabilities; they then exercise their capabilities; and then finally they are shaped into a party… But how is the man of action to fight against them? This is quite impossible, and in fact the people that is placed in this situation always goes, not for those who know, but for those who are skilled in political intrigue. It plays a most stupid role and cannot get out of it, even if they are completely aware of their stupid situation. I, for example, completely understand the role of the political intriguer and despise it, but if they were to force me to give my vote for measures which I am personally unable to weigh up myself, then of course I have not the slightest doubt that I would be fooled, and crafty people would shield me from the people who know and are honourable.

“Such is the reality of the people’s will. It is a toy of crafty people even if we have unmediated rule by the people. But unmediated rule by the people is practically impossible. It is impossible to collect, and it is impossible to turn the whole people into legislators. Somebody has to sow the bread and work in the factories. Finally, everyone has his own private life, which is dearer to him than politics. In generally, one has to resort to representation.

“Theoretically this is senseless. One can hand over one’s right as a citizen. But one cannot hand over one’s will. After all, I’m handing it over for future time, for future decisions, on questions that have not yet arisen. Therefore in choosing a deputy, I give him the right to express that will of mine that I do not yet myself know. Electing representatives would have a realisable meaning only if I were to hand over my right as a citizen, that is, if I simply said that I entrust the given person to carry out my political affairs and that I will not quarrel with or contradict whatever he does lawfully until the end of his term of office. But such a handing over of the very right of the people’s autocracy is the idea of Caesarism, and not parliamentarism...
“...A parliamentary deputy is obliged to express another person’s will. For a man with his own ideas this is not at all enticing, quite the opposite. He will enter a Constitutive Assembly, but not a parliament. He will rather remain at his own work and with his own ideas... Generally speaking, for a person who is able to make his own way in something more useful, the significance of being a deputy is not enticing. Moreover, it requires such external capacities as most of the best people do not have. Glibness of speech, pushiness, a capacity for intrigue, superficial convictions. Such are the people elected for the trade of representation... 206

“In general, in laying claim to the deputyship, I must join some party. I will be pushed forward not by the people, but by the party. I will be obliged to it for everything, I will depend on it, I will have to take it into account. The people is – for him who is being elected – the last thing to worry about. It has to be incited to give its vote, but it is not at all necessary to learn what its vote is. The election campaign is a hunt for votes, but in no way a poll of the people. Hares are not asked whether they want to land up on the table, they are caught; their own desires are interesting only in order to clarify how precisely they can best be caught. That is exactly how interested they are in the people during elections.

“And so the candidacies are put forward. Noise, fuss, walls plastered with proclamations and names, journeys, conferences, false rumours, mutual slanders, loud words, avaricious promises, promises that are consciously false, bribes, etc. The people goes crazy: before it knew little, now it cannot make out anything at all. The greatest art of this hunt does not consist in a preliminary preparation of the people, but in some concluding surprise, which will snatch away votes at the last minute without giving time to think again. Finally the triumphant moment has arrived, the votes have been collected and counted, the ‘will of the people’ ‘has said its word’, and the representatives of the nation gather in the Palais Bourbon.

“What happens then? During the elections they still had to reckon with the voters. But having received the votes and gathered in the palace, the representatives of the people can completely forget about it right until the approach of the following elections. During this period they live exclusively their own party’s life, developing all the qualities of cliquishness. The deputy, who in theory represents the will of the voters, has real obligations only in relation to his party... “ 207

206 Cf. Madame Germaine de Stael: “In a democratic state, one must be continually on guard against the desire for popularity. It leads to aping the behaviour of the worst. And soon people come to think that it is of no use – indeed, it is dangerous – to show too plain a superiority over the multitude which one wants to win over” (On Literature and Society (1800), in Barzun, op. cit., p. 451). (V.M.)

For, as Benjamin Disraeli said: “Damn your principles. Stick to your party...”
The Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776), writes Sir Alistair MacFarlane, “is usually represented as completing an ‘empiricist’ movement started by John Locke (1632-1704) and continued by George Berkeley (1685-1753), but their approaches were very different. Locke made a valiant attempt to establish that all knowledge derived from experience. He regarded the mind as a ‘blank slate’ on which experience somehow inscribed knowledge. To articulate this idea, Locke differentiated between the primary qualities of objects, such as their solidity, shape and extension, and their secondary qualities, such as colour, taste, or other sensations they induce. Berkeley went further, claiming that there was no need to invoke the existence of matter at all, only experiences and the minds that perceived them. Finally Hume, the supreme sceptic, argued that we had no more warrant for believing in the existence of matter than for believing in the existence of matter. From this intellectual ferment and upheaval, modern philosophy began to emerge via the work of Immanuel Kant…”

Hume was unique among the rationalist philosophers of the eighteenth-century in claiming to prove, by the method of “experimental philosophy”, or reductionism, the irrationality of reason itself – that is, considered on its own and without any other support. His conclusion was that in real life reason is always buttressed and supplemented by faith. But then he went on to try and “demonstrate” that faith – faith not only in God, but in any enduring, objective reality – is itself irrational…

Hume’s A Treatise of Human Nature was written in 1739-40, shortly after he had had a nervous breakdown. It was subtitled ‘An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects’. This indicated the final end of the Enlightenment Programme: to subdue absolutely everything, even religion and morality, to the “experimental method”.

Hume first disposes of the idea of substance. Since our idea of the external world is derived entirely from impressions of sensation, and since we can never derive from sensation alone the idea of an object existing independently of our sensations, such an idea does not really exist at all. Instead, “the idea of a substance… is nothing but a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination and have a particular name assigned to them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection.”

Following the same reasoning, Hume also disposes of the idea of the soul or self. There is no sense-impression which corresponds to the idea of a permanently existing self. For “self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ides are supposed to have a

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reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable... and consequently there is no such idea.”

The most famous example of Hume’s method of reductive method is his analysis of causation. When we say that A causes B, the word “causes” does not correspond to any impression of sensation. All that we actually see is that events of the class A are constantly followed by events of the class B. This constant conjunction of A and B predisposes the mind, on seeing A, to think of B. Thus a cause in nature “is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other.”

Russell has analysed Hume’s teaching into two parts: “(1) When we say ‘A caused B’, all that we have a right to say is that, in part experience, A and B have frequently appeared together or in rapid succession, and no instance has been observed of A not followed or accompanied by B. (2) However many instances we may have observed of the conjunction of A and B, that give no reason for expecting them to be conjoined on a future occasion, though it is a cause of this expectation, i.e. it has been frequently observed to be conjoined with such an expectation. These two parts of the doctrine may be stated as follows: (1) in causation there is no indefinable relation except conjunction or succession; (2) induction by simple enumeration is not a valid argument...

“If the first half of Hume’s doctrine is admitted, the rejection of induction makes all expectation as to the future irrational, even the expectation that we shall continue to feel expectations. I do not mean merely that our expectations may be mistaken; that, in any case, must be admitted. I mean that, taking even our firmest expectations, such as that the sun will rise to-morrow, there is not a shadow of a reason for supposing them more likely to be verified than not...”

Thus empiricism is shown to be irrational. As Copleston writes, “the uniformity of nature is not demonstrable by reason. It is the object of belief rather than of intuition or demonstration.” We cannot help having such beliefs; for “whatever may be the reader’s opinion at this present moment,... an hour hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and internal world.” However, such belief cannot be justified by reason; for it “is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures.”

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210 Copleston, op. cit., p. 106.
211 Copleston, op. cit., p. 88.
212 Russell, op. cit., p. 693.
213 Copleston, op. cit., p. 92.
214 Russell, op. cit., p. 697.
Hume’s attitude to belief in God was predictably agnostic, if not strictly atheistic. We cannot say that God is the cause of nature because we have never seen a constant conjunction of God, on the one hand, and nature, on the other. Also, “I much doubt,” he says, “that a cause can be known only by its effect.” At most, Hume concedes, “the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence.”

In *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, published posthumously in 1779, Hume wrote: “For aught we know *a priori*, matter may contain the source, or spring, of order originally, within itself, as well as the mind does.”

As Edward Skidelsky points out, “This is the seed from which the various 19th-century theories of evolution – of which Darwin’s is only the most famous – spring... After Hume, it is only a matter of time before agnosticism reigns supreme. The perseverance of belief is attributed to mere ignorance or else to a wilful ‘sacrifice of the intellect’. Unbelievers, on the other hand, are congratulated for their disinterested pursuit of truth ‘wherever it may lead’.”

Morality is disposed of as thoroughly as the idea of God. “Reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will”; it “can never oppose passion in the direction of the will”. For “‘Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger.” And “the life of a man is of no greater important to the universe than that of an oyster.”

Reason can oppose a passion only by directing the mind to other passions tending in the opposite direction. For “it is from the prospect of pain or pleasure that the aversion or propensity arises towards any object.” Hume’s conclusion is that “reason is, and ought to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.”

Nor is this necessarily a bad thing, according to Hume... “In delineating the workings of propensities integral to human existence, Hume noted that Christian theologians and Platonists alike had condemned the appetites, the former deploring them as sinful, the latter demanding their mastery by reason. For Hume, by contrast, feelings were the true springs of such vital social traits as the love of family, attachment to property and the desire for reputation. Pilloried passions like pride were the very cement of society. Dubbing its denigrators ‘monkish’, Hume defended pride when well regulated; indeed, magnanimity, that quality attributed to all the greatest heroes, was ‘either

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216 Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
220 Hume, *Of Suicide*.
221 Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
nothing but a steady and well-establish’d pride and self-esteem, or partakes largely of that passion’. Besides, ‘hearty pride’ was essential to society, whose hierarchy of ranks, fixed by ‘our birth, fortune, employments, talents or reputation’, had to be maintained if it were to function smoothly. A person needed pride to acquit himself well in his station – indiscriminate humility would reduce social life to chaos. Much that had traditionally been reproved as egoistically immoral he reinstated as beneficial.”

Hume’s essential idea was that, in Edwin Burt’s words, “Reason is a subjective faculty which has no necessary relation with the ‘facts’ we seek to know. It is limited to tracing the relations of our ideas, which themselves are already twice removed from ‘reality’. And our senses are equally subjective, for they can never know the ‘thing in itself’, but only an image of it which has in it no element of necessity and certainty – ‘the contrary of every matter of fact is still possible’.

Hume’s significance lies in his rational demonstration of the impotence of reason, of the fact that it can prove the existence of nothing – not only of God, Providence and the immortal soul, but even of material objects and causality, the bedrock of empirical explanation. But a dead-end for rationalism can only mean an opening for irrationalism. If reason can only serve passion rather than rule it, then the last moral barrier to the overturning of all traditional values is removed. And indeed, in Paris, where Hume was fêted much more than in his native Scotland, the revolution against eighteenth-century rationalism was only a few years away.

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Hume’s hard-headed empiricism extended also to his political philosophy, which at least had the virtue of exposing the weak foundations on which the theory of the social contract was based. Thus for Hume there never was any such thing as a “state of nature” – “men are necessarily born in a family-society at least.” The initial bonds between men are not contractual, but sexual and parental: “Natural appetite draws members of the two sexes together and preserves their union until a new bond arises, their common concern for their offspring. ‘In a little time, custom and habit operating on the tender minds of the children makes them sensible of the advantages which they reap from society, as well as fashions them by degrees for it, by rubbing off those rough corners and untoward affections which prevent their coalition.’ The family, therefore (or, more accurately, the natural appetite between the sexes), is ‘the first and original principle of human society’. The transition to a wider society is effected principally by the felt need for stabilizing the possession of external goods.”

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223 Porter, op. cit., p. 178.
226 Copleston, op. cit., p. 147.
Men could continue living in primitive societies like those of the American Indians without the formal structure of government if it were not that quarrels over property led to the need for the administration of justice. “The state of society without government is one of the most natural states of men, and must subsist with the conjunction of many families, and long after the first generation. Nothing but an increase of riches and possessions could oblige men to quit it.”

Later, quarrels between tribes lead to the emergence of war leaders. Then, during the peace, the war leader continues to lead. And so an ad hoc arrangement dictated by necessity and the need to survive would generate a permanent government. This is a gradual, organic process propelled by “necessity, inclination and habit” rather than an explicit, rational agreement.

Indeed, not only are governments not formed on the basis of consent: “almost all the governments which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in story, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest or both, without any pretence of a fair consent or voluntary subjection of the people... The face of the earth is continually changing, by the increase of small kingdoms into great empires, by the dissolution of great empires into smaller kingdoms, by the planting of colonies, by the migration of tribes. Is there anything discernible in all these events but force and violence? Where is the mutual agreement or voluntary association so much talked of? Even when elections take the place of force, what does it amount to? It may be election by a few powerful and influential men. Or it may take the form of popular sedition, the people following a ringleader who owes his advancement to his own impudence or to the momentary caprice of the crowd, most of whom have little of no knowledge of him and his capacities. In neither case is there a real rational agreement by the people.”

English political liberalism, we may recall, arose from the need to justify the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the Protestant William of Orange usurped the throne. William’s rule was tacitly consented to as being more in accord with natural law and reason than the despotism of James II, who was deemed to have broken some kind of contract with his citizens. But Hume undermines both the contractual and the rational elements in this justification, reducing the whole duty of allegiance to naked self-interest. In this way he is closer to Hobbes than to Locke – and to Marx than to J.S. Mills....

“Granted that there is a duty of political allegiance, it is obviously idle to look for its foundation in popular consent and in promises if there is little or no evidence that popular consent was ever asked or given. As for Locke’s idea of tacit consent, ‘it may be answered that such an implied consent can only have place where a man imagines that the matter depends on his choice’. But anyone who is born under an established government thinks that he owes

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227 Copleston, op. cit., p. 149.
228 Copleston, op. cit., pp. 150-151.
allegiance to the sovereign by the very fact that he is by birth a citizen of the political society in question. And to suggest with Locke that every man is free to leave the society to which he belongs by birth is unreal. ‘Can we seriously say that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners and lives from day to day by the small wages which he acquires?’

“The obligation of allegiance to civil government, therefore, ‘is not derived from any promise of the subjects’. Even if promises were made at some time in the remote past, the present duty of allegiance cannot rest on them. ‘It being certain that there is a moral obligation to submit to government, because everyone thinks so, it must be as certain that this obligation arises not from a promise, since no one whose judgement has not been led astray by too strict adherence to a system of philosophy has ever yet dreamt of ascribing it to that origin.’ The real foundation of the duty of allegiance is utility or interest.

‘This interest I find to consist in the security and protection which we can enjoy in political society, and which we can never attain when perfectly free and independent.’ This holds good both of natural and of moral obligation. ‘It is evident that, if government were totally useless, it never could have a place, and that the sole foundation of the duty of allegiance is the advantage which it procures to society by preserving peace and order among mankind.’ Similarly, in the essay Of the Original Contract Hume observes: ‘If the reason be asked of that obedience which we are bound to pay to government, I readily answer, Because society could not otherwise subsist; and this answer is clear and intelligible to all mankind.’

“The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this view is that when the advantage ceases, the obligation to allegiance ceases. ‘As interest, therefore, is the immediate sanction of government, the one can have no longer being than the other; and whenever the civil magistrate carries his oppression so far as to render his authority perfectly intolerable, we are no longer bound to submit to it. The cause ceases; the effect must also cease.’ It is obvious, however, that the evils and dangers attending rebellion are such that it can be legitimately attempted only in cases of real tyranny and oppression and when the advantages of acting in this way are judged to outweigh the disadvantages.

“But to whom is allegiance due? In other words, whom are we to regard as legitimate rulers? Originally, Hume thought or inclined to think, government was established by voluntary convention. ‘The same promise, then, which binds them (the subjects) to obedience, ties them down to a particular person and makes him the object of their allegiance.’ But once government has been established and allegiance no longer rests upon a promise but upon advantage or utility, we cannot have recourse to the original promise to determine who is the legitimate ruler. The fact that some tribe in remote times voluntarily subjected itself to a leader is no guide to determining whether William of Orange or James II is the legitimate monarch.
“One foundation of legitimate authority is long possession of the sovereign power: ‘I mean, long possession in any form of government, or succession of princes’. Generally speaking, there are no governments or royal houses which do not owe the origin of their power to usurpation or rebellion and whose original title to authority was not ‘worse than doubtful and uncertain’. In this case ‘time alone gives solidity to their right and, operating gradually on the minds of men, reconciles them to any authority and makes it seem just and reasonable’. The second source of public authority is present possession, which can legitimize the possession of power even when there is no question of its having been acquired a long time ago. ‘Right to authority is nothing but the constant possession of authority, maintained by the laws of society and the interests of mankind.’ A third source of legitimate political authority is the right of conquest. As fourth and fifth sources can be added the right of succession and positive laws, when the legislature establishes a certain form of government. When all these titles to authority are found together, we have the surest sign of legitimate sovereignty, unless the public good clearly demands a change. But if, says Hume, we consider the actual course of history, we shall soon learn to treat lightly all disputes about the rights of princes. We cannot decide all disputes in accordance with fixed, general rules. Speaking of this matter in the essay Of the Original Contract, Hume remarks that ‘though an appeal to general opinion may justly, in the speculative sciences of metaphysics, natural philosophy or astronomy, be deemed unfair and inconclusive, yet in all questions with regard to morals, as well as criticism, there is really no other standard by which any controversy can ever be decided. To say, for example, with Locke that absolute government is not really civil government at all is pointless if absolute government is in fact accepted as a recognized political institution. Again, it is useless to dispute whether the succession of the Prince of Orange to the throne was legitimate or not. It may not have been legitimate at the time. And Locke, who wished to justify the revolution of 1688, could not possibly do so on his theory of legitimate government being founded on the consent of the subjects. For the people of England were not asked for their opinion. But in point of fact William of Orange was accepted, and the doubts about the legitimacy of his accession are nullified by the fact that his successors have been accepted. It may perhaps seem to be an unreasonable way of thinking, but ‘princes often seem to acquire a right from their successors as well as from their ancestors.”’

Thus just as Hume had argued that there was no rational reason for believing in the existence of objects, or causative forces, or the soul, or God, or morality, so he argued that there was no rational reason for believing that a given government was legitimate. Or rather, governments are legitimate for no other reason than that they survive, whether by force or the acquiescence of public opinion. Legitimacy, according to Hume, is a matter of what the people, whether individually or collectively, consider to be in their self-

interest. But since there is no objective way of measuring self-interest, it comes down in the end to a matter of taste, of feeling. And since there is no arguing about tastes, there is also by implication no arguing with a revolutionary who wishes to destroy society to its foundations…
50. KANT: THE REAFFIRMATION OF WILL

Hume’s demonstration of the irrationality of rationalism had one very important result: it aroused the greatest philosopher of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant, from what he called his “dogmatic slumbers”. Kant sought to re-establish some of the beliefs or prejudices that Hume’s thorough-going scepticism had undermined.

To that end, he determined to subject “pure reason itself to critical investigation”, answering the question: “what and how much can understanding and reason know, apart from all experience?” 230 He established that empirical reason can indeed know certain things, but that the use of reason itself presupposes the existence of other things which transcend reason. Thus “I think” must accompany all our experiences if they are to be qualified as ours, so that there must be what Kant calls a “transcendental unity of apperception” which unifies experience while being at the same time beyond it. And so, apart from the “phenomenal” realm of nature, which the mind can understand only by imposing upon it the categories of substance, causality and mutual interaction, there is also the “noumenal” realm of spirit and freedom, which transcends nature and causality. “There is thus a being above the world, namely the spirit of man”. 231

Man himself is noumenally free while being at the same time empirically (phenomenally) determined. His spirit is not a substance in the empirical sense, nor subject to the empirical causal nexus. But it is the seat of that which is greatest and truly rational in man, indeed the whole world: his sense of duty, his will to do good. Hence the famous words: “It is impossible to conceive of anything in the world, or indeed out of it, which can be called good without qualification, save only a good will.” 232 A good will acts neither out of some psychological sympathy or passion pushing it from behind, nor in order to attain some end or goal in front of it. It acts out of a pure duty, in answer to a “categorical imperative”. The criterion of whether an act is truly good and moral in this sense is the following: I am never to act otherwise than so that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law, in other words, that every other rational being in the same circumstances should make the same decision. An important corollary of this criterion is that all men should be treated, not as means, but as ends. Indeed, it is from the existence of a “kingdom of ends”, of men who ideally treat each other as rational beings and ends in themselves, that Kant derives, if not the existence of God and immortality, at any rate the possibility and reasonableness of their existence: for a kingdom of ends encourages belief in a rational being who legislates for all other rational beings while not having any limitations on his will, and who, in the life to come, brings virtue its due reward in happiness…

230 Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, first edition, XVII.
231 Kant, Opus Postumum, XXI.
232 Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals.
In this way, Kant seeks to restore faith in those objects of belief – God, the soul and immortality – which Hume’s scepticism tended to undermine. We may also see in his idea of the individual will acting in such a way that his maxim should become a universal law an attempt to give a rational basis to Rousseau’s essentially irrational idea of the general will. But from our point of view it is his arguments in favour of man’s freedom that are particularly important…

We have seen how the whole development of western thought from the Renaissance onwards centres on the idea of freedom, of human autonomy and especially the autonomy of human reason. However, this development has led, by the second half of the eighteenth century, to a most paradoxical dead-end: to the conclusion that man, being a part of nature, is not free, but determined, and that the exercise of human reason is based on the most irrational leap of blind faith in substance and causality, without which we could not be assured of the existence of anything external to our own mind – which is in any case just a bundle of sensations. Kant, by a supreme exercise of that same free reasoning faculty, stanches the flow of irrationalism. But at a price: the price of making man a schizoid creature living on a razor between the noumenal and phenomenal realms. Yes, he says, man is a part of nature and determined, otherwise the science of man and the whole Enlightenment project would be impossible (and Kant remains an Enlightenment figure to the end). And yes, he says, man is free and uncaused, otherwise Christianity and morality would be impossible (and Kant remains a devout Lutheran to the end). But the balance and synthesis he achieves between the two is hard to express and difficult to maintain. And succeeding generations preferred to go in one direction or the other: some down the Enlightenment path of seeking a Utopia on earth through science and rational social organisation, and others down the Romantic path of irrational, unfettered self-expression in both the private and the public spheres.

Thus “in his moral philosophy,” writes Berlin, Kant lifted “the lid of a Pandora’s box, which released tendencies which he was among the first, with perfect honesty and consistency, to disown and condemn. He maintained, as every German schoolboy used to know, that the moral worth of an act depended on its being freely chosen by the agent; that if a man acted under the influence of causes which he could not and did not control, whether external, such as physical compulsion, or internal, such as instincts or desires or passions, then the act, whatever its consequences, whether they were good or bad, advantageous or harmful to men, had no moral value, for the act had not been freely chosen, but was simply the effect of mechanical causes, an event in nature, no more capable of being judged in ethical terms than the behaviour of an animal or plant. If the determinism that reigns in nature – on which, indeed, the whole of natural science is based – determines the acts of a human agent, he is not truly an agent, for to act is to be capable of free choice between alternatives; and free will must in that case be an illusion. Kant is certain that freedom of the will is not illusory but real. Hence the immense emphasis that he places on human autonomy – on the capacity for
free commitment to rationally chosen ends. The self, Kant tells us, must be ‘raised above natural necessity’, for if men are ruled by the same laws as those which govern the material world ‘freedom cannot be saved’, and without freedom there is no morality.

“Kant insists over and over again that what distinguishes man is his moral autonomy as against his physical heteronomy – for his body is governed by natural laws, not issuing from his own inner self. No doubt this doctrine owes a great deal to Rousseau, for whom all dignity, all pride rest upon independence. To be manipulated is to be enslaved. A world in which one man depends upon the favour of another is a world of masters and slaves, of bullying and condescension and patronage at one end, and obsequiousness, servility, duplicity and patronage at the other. But whereas Rousseau supposes that only dependence on other men is degrading, for no one resents the laws of nature, only ill will, the Germans went further. For Kant, total dependence on non-human nature – heteronomy – was incompatible with choice, freedom, morality. This exhibits a new attitude to nature, or at least the revival of an ancient [supposedly] Christian antagonism to it. The thinkers of the Enlightenment and their predecessors in the Renaissance (save for isolated antinomian mystics) tended to look upon nature as divine harmony, or as a great organic or artistic unity, or as an exquisite mechanism created by the divine watchmaker, or else as uncreated and eternal, but always as a model from which men depart at their cost. The principal need of man is to understand the external world and himself and the place that he occupies in the scheme of things: if he grasps this, he will not seek after goals incompatible with the needs of his nature, goals which he can follow only through some mistaken conception of what he is in himself, or of his relations to other men or the external world....

“Man is subject to the same kind of causal laws as animals and plants and the inanimate world, physical and biological laws, and in the case of men psychological and economic too, established by observation and experiment, measurement and verification. Such notions as the immortal soul, a personal God, freedom of the will, are for them metaphysical fictions and illusions. But they are not so for Kant.

“The German revolt against France and French materialism has social as well as intellectual roots. Germany in the first half of the eighteenth century, and for more than a century before, even before the devastation of the Thirty Years War, had little share in the great renaissance of the West – her cultural achievement after the Reformation is not comparable to that of the Italians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of Spain and England in the age of Shakespeare and Cervantes, of the Low Countries in the seventeenth century, least of all of France, the France of poets, soldiers, statesmen, thinkers, which in the seventeenth century dominated Europe both culturally and politically, with only England and Holland as her rivals. What had the provincial German courts and cities, what had even Imperial Vienna, to offer?
This sense of relative backwardness, of being an object of patronage or scorn to the French with their overweening sense of national and cultural superiority, created a sense of collective humiliation, later to turn into indignation and hostility, that sprang from wounded pride. The German reaction at first is to imitate French models, then to turn against them. Let the vain but godless French cultivate their ephemeral world, their material gains, their pursuit of glory, luxury, ostentation, the witty trivial chatter of the salons of Paris and the subservient court of Versailles. What is the worth of the philosophy of atheists or smooth, worldly abbés who do not begin to understand the true nature, the real purpose of men, their inner life, man’s deepest concerns – his relation to the soul within him, to his brothers, above all to God – the deep, the agonising questions of man’s being and vocation? Inward-looking German pietists abandoned French and Latin, turned to their native tongue, and spoke with scorn and horror of the glittering generalities of French civilisation, the blasphemous epigrams of Voltaire and his imitators. Still more contemptible were the feeble imitators of French culture, the caricature of French customs and taste in the little German principalities. German men of letters rebelled violently against the social oppression and stifling atmosphere of German society, of the despotic and often stupid and cruel German princes and princelings and their officials, who crushed or degraded the humbly born, particularly the most honest and gifted men among them, in the three hundred courts and governments into which Germany was then divided.

This surge of indignation formed the heart of the movement that, after the name of a play by one of its members, was called Sturm und Drang. Their plays were filled with cries of despair or savage indignation, titanic explosions of rage or hatred, vast destructive passions, unimaginable crimes which dwarf the scenes of violence even in Elizabethan drama; they celebrate passion, individuality, strength, genius, self-expression at whatever cost, against whatever odds, and usually end in blood and crime, their only form of protest against a grotesque and odious social order. Hence all these violent heroes – the Kraftmenschen, Kraftschreiber, Kraftkersl, Kraftknaben – who march hystERICally through the pages of Klinger, Schubart, Leisewitz, Lenz, Heine and even the gentle Carl Philipp Moritz; until life began to imitate art, and the Swiss adventurer Christoph Kaufmann, a self-proclaimed follower of Christ and Rousseau, who so impressed Herder, Goethe, Hamann, Wieland, Lavater, swept through the German lands with a band of unkempt followers, denouncing polite culture, and celebrating anarchic freedom, transported by wild and mystical public exaltation of the flesh and the spirit.

Kant abhorred this kind of disordered imagination, and, still more, emotional exhibitionism and barbarous conduct. Although he too denounced the mechanistic psychology of the French Encyclopaedists as destructive of morality, his notion of the will is that of reason in action. He saves himself from subjectivism, and indeed irrationalism, by insisting that the will is truly free only so far as it wills the dictates of reason, which generate general rules binding on all rational men. It is when the concept of reason becomes obscure
(and Kant never succeeded in formulating convincingly what this signified in practice), and only the independent will remains man’s unique possession whereby he is distinguished from nature, that the new doctrine becomes infected by the ‘stürmerisch’ mood. In Kant’s disciple, the dramatist and poet Schiller, the notion of freedom begins to move beyond the bounds of reason. Freedom is the central concept of Schiller’s early works. He speaks of ‘the legislator himself, the God within us’, of ‘high, demonic freedom’, ‘the pure demon within the man’. Man is most sublime when he resists the pressure of nature, when he exhibits ‘moral independence of natural laws in a condition of emotional stress’. It is will, not reason – certainly not feeling, which he shares with animals – that raises him above nature, and the very disharmony which may arise between nature and the tragic hero is not entirely to be deplored, for it awakens man’s of his independence.”

Thus to the thesis of the godless worship of reason was opposed the antithesis of the demonic worship of will. Dissatisfied with the dry soullessness of the Enlightenment, western man would not go back to the sources of his civilization in Orthodoxy, but forward to – the Revolution, and the hellish torments of the Romantic hero. For, as Francisco Goya said, “the sleep of Reason engenders monsters”…

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51. HAMANN AND HERDER: THE DENIAL OF UNIVERSALISM

“Nowhere was German amour propre more deeply wounded,” continues Berlin, “than in East Prussia, still semi-feudal and deeply traditionalist; nowhere was there deeper resentment of the policy of modernisation which Frederick the Great conducted by importing French officials who treated his simple and backward subjects with impatience and open disdain. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most gifted and sensitive sons of this province, Hamman, Herder, and Kant too, are particularly vehement in opposing the levelling activities of these morally blind imposers of alien methods on a pious, inward-looking culture.”

Hamann and Herder were the first thinkers explicitly to attack the whole Enlightenment enterprise. This attack was perhaps the first sign of that great cleavage within western culture that was to take the place of the Catholic/Protestant cleavage: the cleavage between the classical, rationalist and universalist spirit of the Latin lands, and the romantic, irrational and particularist spirit of the Germanic lands. (England with its dual Roman and Germanic inheritance stood somewhere in the middle).

“Hamann,” writes Berlin, “was brought up as a pietist, a member of the most introspective and self-absorbed of all the Lutheran sects, intent upon the direct communion of the individual soul with God, bitterly anti-rationalist, liable to emotional excess, preoccupied with the stern demands of moral obligation and the need for severe self-discipline. The attempt of Frederick the Great in the middle years of the eighteenth century to introduce French culture and a degree of rationalisation, economic and social as well as military, into East Prussia, the most backward of his provinces, provoked a peculiarly violent reaction in this pious, semi-feudal, traditional Protestant society (which also gave birth to Herder and Kant). Hamann began as a disciple of the Enlightenment, but, after a profound spiritual crisis, turned against it, and published a series of polemical attacks written in a highly idiosyncratic, perversely allusive, contorted, deliberately obscure style, as remote as he could make it from the, to him, detestable elegance, clarity and smooth superficiality of the bland and arrogant French dictators of taste and thought. Hamann’s theses rested on the conviction that all truth is particular, never general: that reason is impotent to demonstrate the existence of anything and is an instrument only for conveniently classifying and arranging data in patterns to which nothing in reality corresponds; that to understand is to be communicated with, by men or by God. The universe for him, as for the older German mystical tradition, is itself a kind of language. Things and plants and animals are themselves symbols with which God communicates with his creatures. Everything rests on faith; faith is as basic an organ of acquaintance with reality as the senses. To read the Bible is to hear the voice of God, who speaks in a language which he has given man the grace to understand. Some men are endowed with the gift of understanding his ways, of looking at the

universe, which is his book no less than the revelations of the Bible and the fathers and saints of the Church. Only love – for a person or an object – can reveal the true nature of anything. It is not possible to love formulae, general propositions, laws, the abstractions of science, the vast system of concepts and categories – symbols too general to be close to reality – with which the French lumières have blinded themselves to the real experiences which only direct acquaintance, especially by the senses, provides.

“Hamann glories in the fact that Hume had successfully destroyed the rationalist claim that there is an a priori route to reality, insisting that all knowledge and belief ultimately rest on acquaintance with the date of direct perception. Hume rightly supposes that he could not eat an egg or drink a glass of water if he did not believe in their existence; the date of belief – what Hamann prefers to call faith – rest on grounds and require evidence as little as taste or any other sensation. True knowledge is direct perception of individual entities, and concepts are never, no matter how specific they may be, wholly adequate to the fullness of the individual experience. ‘Individuum est ineffabile’, wrote Goethe to Lavater in the spirit of Hamann, whom Goethe profoundly admired. The sciences may be of use in practical matters; but no concatenation of concepts will give an understanding of a man, of a work of art, of what is conveyed by gestures, symbols, verbal and non-verbal, of the style, the spiritual essence, of a human being, a movement, a culture; nor for that matter of the Deity, which speaks to one everywhere if only one has ears to hear and eyes to see.” 235

Following up on these insights, Herder “believed that to understand anything was to understand it in its individuality and development, and that this required the capacity of Einfühling (‘feeling into’) the outlook, the individual character of an artistic tradition, a literature, a social organisation, a people, a culture, a period of history. To understand the actions of individuals, we must understand the ‘organic’ structure of the society in terms of which alone the minds and activities and habits of its members can be understood. Like Vico, he believed that to understand a religion, or a work of art, or a national character, one must ‘enter into’ the unique conditions of its life... To grade the merits of cultural wholes, of the legacy of entire traditions, by applying a collection of dogmatic rules claiming universal validity, enunciated by the Parisian arbiters of taste, is vanity and blindness. Every culture has its own unique Schwerpunkt (‘centre of gravity’), and unless we grasp it we cannot understand its character or value...” 236

As he wrote in Auch eine Philosophie: “How unspeakably difficult it is to convey the particular quality of an individual human being and how impossible it is to say precisely what distinguishes an individual, his way of feeling and living; how different and how individual [anders und eigen]

everything becomes once his eyes see it, once his soul grasps it, his heart feels it. How much depth there is in the character of a single people, which, no matter how often observed, and gazed at with curiosity and wonder, nevertheless escapes the word which attempts to capture it, and, even with the word to catch it, is seldom so recognizable as to be universally understood and felt. If this is so, what happens when one tries to master an entire ocean of peoples, times, cultures, countries with one glance, one sentiment, by means of one single word!”

This admirable sensitivity to the unique and unrepeatable was undoubtedly a needed corrective to the over-generalising and over-rationalising approach of the French philosophes. And in general Herder’s emphasis on warm, subjective feeling and the intuition of quality - “Heart! Warmth! Blood! Humanity! Life!” “I feel! I am!” - was a needed corrective to the whole rationalist emphasis on cold clarity, objectivity and the measurement of quantity that had come to dominate western thought since Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am”. From now on, owing in part to Herder, western thought would become more sensitive to the aesthetically intuited, as opposed to the scientifically analysed aspects of reality, to organic, living, historical wholes as well as to inorganic, dead, ahistorical parts.

Nevertheless, Herder was as unbalanced in his way as the philosophes were in theirs. This is particularly evident in his relativism, his idea that every nation and culture was not only unique, but also incommensurable – that is, it could not be measured by universal standards of truth and falsehood, right and wrong. As he wrote: “Not one man, country, people, national history, or State, is like another. Hence the True, the Beautiful, the Good in them are not similar either.”

If Herder has been unjustly accused of being an ancestor of German fascist nationalism, he cannot so easily be absolved of being one of the fathers of the modern denial of universal truths and values that has so eaten into and corroded modern western civilization.

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52. TWO CONCEPTS OF FREEDOM

We have noted Pipes’ important observation that liberals and revolutionaries differ only with regard to means, not ends, and that whether a state develops along the peaceful, liberal path or the violent, revolutionary one depends on the degree to which intellectuals gain access to the levers of power. However, the two traditions also differ, according to Sir Isaiah Berlin, in their concepts of freedom. The English liberal tradition, which emerged in part as the continuance of, and in part as a reaction against, the English revolution, defined freedom in a negative way, as freedom from certain restraints on, and violence to, the individual. Thus “liberty,” writes Locke, “is to be free from restraint and violence from others”.240

But this freedom from restraint, paradoxically, was to be attained only by submitting to restraint in the form of law: “Where there is no law, there is no freedom.”241 But since right laws can be framed only through the use of reason, man’s freedom “is grounded on his having reason, which is able to instruct him in that law he is to govern himself by and make him know how far he is left to the freedom of his own will.”242 The necessity for reason implies at least a minimal degree of tolerance, for reason cannot operate in a climate of compulsion.

This tradition, summed up in the four words: freedom, law, reason and tolerance, dominated the first half of the eighteenth-century, and continues to dominate political thinking in the Anglo-Saxon countries to this day.

However, from the time of Rousseau another, positive definition of freedom gained currency - the freedom to do what you like and be what you want. This concept of freedom scorned every notion of restraint as foreign to the very idea of liberty; it emphasised lawlessness (freedom from law) as opposed to law, emotion as opposed to reason, the people as a single mystical organism having one will as opposed to the people as individuals having many wills. And even when it admitted the need for laws, it vehemently rejected the idea of the superiority of the lawgiver; for, as Demoulins put it, “My motto is that of every honourable man – no superior”.

The transition between the two concepts of liberty can be seen in the following passage from Rousseau, which begins with an “English”, negative, law-abiding definition of liberty, but goes on to a revolutionary definition which recognizes laws only insofar as they are an expression of “natural law”, i.e. the general will of the people: “Liberty consists less in doing one’s will than in not being submitted to the will of others... There is no liberty without laws, nor where there is someone above the laws: even in the state of nature man is free only by virtue of the natural law which commands everyone. A

240 Locke, Second Treatise on Government, 57.
241 Locke, op. cit., 57.
242 Locke, op. cit., 63.
free people obeys, but does not serve; it has leaders, but not masters; it obeys the laws, but it obeys only the laws, and it is by dint of the laws that it does not obey men... A people is free, whatever form its government may have, when he who governs there is not a man, but an organ of the law.”

The difference between the concepts of freedom, freedom from and freedom to, was illuminatingly explored in a famous essay by Sir Isaiah Berlin entitled Two Concepts of Freedom... Concerning negative freedom, freedom from, Berlin writes: ‘I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no human being interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can do what he wants. If I am prevented by other persons from doing what I want I am to that degree unfree; and if the area within which I can do what I want is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can be described as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved. Coercion is not, however, a term that covers every form of inability. If I say that I am unable to jump more than 10 feet in the air, or cannot read because I am blind, or cannot understand the darker pages of Hegel, it would be eccentric to say that I am to that degree enslaved or coerced. Coercion implies the deliberate interference of other human beings within the area in which I wish to act. You lack political liberty or freedom only if you are prevented from attaining your goal by human beings. Mere incapacity to attain your goal is not lack of political freedom... ‘The nature of things does not madden us, only ill will does’, said Rousseau. The criterion of oppression is the part that I believe to be played by other human beings, directly or indirectly, in frustrating my wishes. By being free in this sense I mean not being interfered with by others. The wider the area of non-interference the wider my freedom.

“This is certainly what the classical English political philosophers meant when they used this word. They disagreed about how wide the area could or should be. They supposed that it could not, as things were, be unlimited, because if it were, it would entail a state in which all men could boundlessly interfere with all other men; and this kind of ‘natural’ freedom would lead to social chaos in which men’s minimum needs would not be satisfied; or else the liberties of the weak would be suppressed by the strong. Because they perceived that human purposes and activities do not automatically harmonize with one another; and, because (whatever their official doctrines) they put high value on other goals, such as justice, or happiness, or security, or varying degrees of equality, they were prepared to curtail freedom in the interests of other values and, indeed, of freedom itself. For, without this, it was

244 “All his life,” writes Berlin’s biographer, Michael Ignatieff, “he attributed to Englishness nearly all the propositional content of his liberalism: ‘that decent respect for others and the toleration of dissent is better than pride and a sense of national mission; that liberty may be incompatible with, and better than, too much efficiency; that pluralism and untidiness are, to those who value freedom, better than the rigorous imposition of all-embracing systems, no matter how rational and disinterested, better than the rule of majorities against which there is no appeal’. All of this, he insisted, was ‘deeply and uniquely English’ (A Life of Isaiah Berlin, p. 36).
impossible to create the kind of association that they thought desirable. Consequently, it is assumed by these thinkers that the area of men’s free action must be limited by law. But equally it is assumed, especially by such libertarians as Locke and Mill in England, and Constant and Tocqueville in France, that there ought to exist a certain minimum area of personal freedom which must on no account be violated, for if it is overstepped, the individual will find himself in an area too narrow for even that minimum development of his natural faculties which alone makes it possible to pursue, and even to conceive, the various ends which men hold good or right or sacred. It follows that a frontier must be drawn between the area of private life and that of public authority. Where it is to be drawn is a matter of argument, indeed of haggling. Men are largely interdependent, and no man’s activity is so completely private as never to obstruct the lives of others in any way. ‘Freedom for the pike is death for the minnows’; the liberty of some must depend on the restraints of others. Still, a practical compromise has to be found.

“Philosophers with an optimistic view of human nature, and a belief in the possibility of harmonizing human interests, such as Locke or Adam Smith and, in some moods, Mill, believed that social harmony and progress were compatible with reserving a large area for private life over which neither the state nor any other authority must be allowed to trespass. Hobbes, and those who agreed with him, especially conservative or reactionary thinkers, argued that if men were to be prevented from destroying one another, and making social life a jungle or a wilderness, greater safeguards must be instituted to keep them in their places, and wished correspondingly to increase the area of centralized control, and decrease that of the individual. But both sides agreed that some portion of human existence must remain independent of the sphere of social control. To invade that preserve, however small, would be despotism. The most eloquent of all defenders of freedom and privacy, Benjamin Constant, who had not forgotten the Jacobin dictatorship, declared that at the very least the liberty of religion, opinion, expression, property, must be guaranteed against arbitrary invasion. Jefferson, Burke, Paine, Mill, compiled different catalogues of individual liberties, but the argument for keeping at authority at bay is always substantially the same. We must preserve a minimum area of personal freedom if we are not to ‘degrade or deny our nature’. We cannot remain absolutely free, and must give up some of our liberty to preserve the rest. But total self-surrender is self-defeating. What then must the minimum be? That which a man cannot give up without offending against the essence of his human nature. What is this essence? What are the standards which it entails? This has been, and perhaps always will be, a matter of infinite debate. But whatever the principle in terms of which the area of non-interference is to be drawn, whether it is that of natural law or natural rights, or of utility or the pronouncements of a categorical imperative, or the sanctity of the social contract, or any other concept with which men have sought to clarify and justify their convictions, liberty in this sense means liberty from; absence of interference beyond the shifting, but always recognizable, frontier. ‘The only freedom which deserves the name is that of
pursuing our own good in our own way’, said the most celebrated of its champions. If this is so, is compulsion ever justified? Mill had no doubt that it was. Since justice demands that all individuals be entitled to a minimum of freedom, all other individuals were of necessity to be restrained, if need be by force, from depriving anyone of it. Indeed, the whole function of law was the prevention of just such collisions: the state was reduced to what Lassalle contemptuously described as the functions of a nightwatchman or traffic policeman.”

Berlin goes on to make the important observation that “liberty in this sense is not incompatible with some kinds of autocracy, or at any rate with the absence of self-government. Liberty in this sense is principally concerned with the area of control, not with its source. Just as a democracy may, in fact, deprive the individual citizen of a great many liberties which he might have in some other form of society, so it is perfectly conceivable that a liberal-minded despot would allow his subjects a large measure of personal freedom. The despot who leaves his subjects a wide area of liberty may be unjust, or encourage the wildest inequalities, care little for order, or virtue, or knowledge; but provided that he does not curb their liberty, or at least curb’s it less than many other régimes, he meets with Mill’s specification. Freedom in this sense is not, at any rate logically, connected with democracy or self-government. Self-government may, on the whole, provide a better guarantee of the preservation of civil liberties than other régimes, and has been defended as such by libertarians. But there is no necessary connexion between individual liberty and democratic rule. The answer to the question ‘Who governs me?’ is logically distinct from the question ‘How far does government interfere with me?’ It is in this difference that the great contrast between the two concepts of negative and positive liberty, in the end, consists. For the ‘positive’ sense of liberty comes to light if we try to answer the question, not ‘What am I free to do or be?’, but ‘By whom am I ruled?’ or ‘Who is to say what I am, and what I am not, to be or do?’ The connexion between democracy and individual liberty is a good deal more tenuous than it seemed to many advocates of both. The desire to be governed by myself, or at any rate to participate in the process by which my life is to be controlled, may be as deep as that of a free area for action, and perhaps historically older. But it is not a desire for the same thing. So different is it, indeed, as to have led in the end to the great clash of ideologies that dominates our world. For it is this – the ‘positive’ conception of liberty: not freedom from, but freedom to – which the adherents of the ‘negative’ notion represent as being, at times, no better than a specious disguise for brutal tyranny.”

246 Indeed, it is arguable that in the Prussia of Frederick the Great or in the Austria of Josef II, men of imagination, originality, and creative genius, and, indeed, minorities of all kinds, were less persecuted and felt the pressure, both of institutions and customs, less heavy upon them than in many an earlier or later democracy. (Berlin’s note)
Berlin now passes from the “negative” to the “positive” concept of liberty, freedom to: “The ‘positive’ sense of the word ‘liberty’ derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master. I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men’s, acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside. I wish to be somebody, not nobody; a doer – deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted upon by external nature or by other men as if I were a thing, or an animal, or a slave incapable of playing a human role, that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realizing them. This is at least part of what I mean when I say that I am rational, and that it is my reason that distinguishes me as a human being from the rest of the world. I wish, above all, to be conscious of myself as a thinking, willing, active being, bearing responsibility for his choices and able to explain them by reference to his own ideas and purposes. I feel free to the degree that I believe this to be true, and enslaved to the degree that I am made to realize that it is not.

“The freedom which consists in being one’s own master, and the freedom which consists in not being prevented from choosing as I do by other men, may, on the face of it, seem concepts at no great logical distance from each other – no more than negative and positive ways of saying the same thing. Yet the ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ notions of freedom developed in divergent directions until, in the end, they came into direct conflict with each other.

“One way of making this clear is in terms of the independent momentum which the metaphor of self-mastery acquired. ‘I am my own master’; ‘I am slave to no man’; but may I not (as, for instance, T.H. Green is always saying) be a slave to nature? Or to my own ‘unbridled’ passions? Are these not so many species of the identical genus ‘slave’ – some political or legal, others moral or spiritual? Have not men had the experience of liberating themselves from spiritual slavery, or slavery to nature, and do they not in the course of it become aware, on the one hand, of a self which dominates, and, on the other, of something in them which is brought to heel? This dominant self is then variously identified with reason, with my ‘higher nature’, with the self which calculates and aims at what will satisfy it in the long run, with my ‘real’, or ‘ideal’, or ‘autonomous’ self, or with my self ‘at its best’; which is then contrasted with irrational impulse, uncontrolled desires, my ‘lower’ nature, the pursuit of immediate pleasures, my ‘empirical’ or ‘heteronomous’ self, swept by every gust of desire and passion, needing to be rigidly disciplined if it is ever to rise to the full height of its ‘real’ nature. Presently the two natures may be represented as something wider than the individual (as the term is normally understood), as a social ‘whole’ of which the individual is an element or aspect: a tribe, a race, a church, a state, the great society of the living and the dead and the yet unborn. This entity is then identified as being the ‘true’ self which, by imposing its collective, or ‘organic’, single will upon its recalcitrant ‘members’, achieves its own, and, therefore, their, ‘higher’ freedom. The perils of using organic metaphors to justify the coercion of some
men by others in order to raise them to a ‘higher’ level of freedom have often been pointed out. But what gives such plausibility as it has to this kind of language is that we recognize that it is possible, and at times justifiable, to coerce men in the name of some goal (let us say, justice or public health) which they would, if they were more enlightened, themselves pursue, but do not, because they are blind or ignorant or corrupt. This renders it easy for me to conceive of myself as coercing others for their own sake, in their, not my, interest. I am then claiming that I know what they truly need better than they know it themselves. What, at most, this entails is that they would not resist me if they were rational, and as wise as I, and understood their interests as I do. But I may go on to claim a good deal more than this. I may declare that they are actually aiming at what in their benighted state they consciously resist, because there exists within them an occult entity – their latent rational will, or their ‘true’ purpose – and that this entity, although it is belied by all that they overtly feel and do and say, is their ‘real’ self, of which the poor empirical self in space and time may know nothing or little; and that this self in space and time is the only self that deserves to have its wishes taken into account. Once I take this view, I am in a position to ignore the actual wishes or men or societies, to bully, oppress, torture them in the name, and on behalf, of their ‘real’ selves, in the secure knowledge that whatever is the true goal of man (happiness, fulfilment of duty, wisdom, a just society, self-fulfilment) must be identical with his freedom – the free choice of his ‘true’, albeit submerged and inarticulate, self.

“This paradox has often been exposed. It is one thing to say that I know what is good for X, while he himself does not; and even to ignore his wishes for its – and his – sake; and a very different one to say that he has eo ipso chosen it, not indeed consciously, not as he seems in everyday life, but in his role as a rational self which his empirical self may not know – the ‘real’ self which discerns the good, and cannot help choosing it once it is revealed. This monstrous impersonation, which consists in equating what X would choose if he were something he is not, or at least is not yet, with what X actually seeks and chooses, is at the heart of all political theories of self-realization. It is one thing to say that I may be coerced for my own good which I am too blind to see: and another that if it is my good, I am not being coerced, for I have willed it, whether I know this or not, and am freed even while my poor earthly body and foolish mind bitterly reject it, and struggle against those who seek to impose it, with the greatest desperation.

“This magical transformation, or sleight of hand (for which William James so justly mocked the Hegelians), can no doubt be perpetrated just as easily with the ‘negative’ concept of freedom, where the self that should not be interfered with is no longer the individual with his actual wishes and needs as they are normally conceived, but the ‘real’ man within, identified with the pursuit of some ideal purpose not dreamed of by his empirical self. And, as in the case of the ‘positively’ free self, this entity may be inflated into some super-personal entity – a state, a class, a nation, or the march of history itself, regarded as a more ‘real’ subject of attributes than the empirical self. But the
‘positive’ conception of freedom as self-mastery, with its suggestion of a man divided against himself, lends itself more easily to this splitting of personality into two: the transcendent, dominant controller, and the empirical bundle of desires and passions to be disciplined and brought to heel. This demonstrates (if demonstration of so obvious a truth is needed) that the conception of freedom directly derives from the view that is taken of what constitutes a self, a person, a man. Enough manipulation with the definitions of man, and freedom can be made to mean whatever the manipulator wishes. Recent history has made it only too clear that the issue is not merely academic..."248

53. THE ORIGINS OF FREEMASONRY

By the time of the death of Rousseau in 1774 all the essential elements of the antichristian system that was about to burst upon the world with unparalleled savagery in the French revolution had already appeared in embryonic form. And by the time the American revolution had triumphed in 1781 it was clear that the world could be turned upside down. However, the old despotic order still reigned in Europe; and with rulers such as Frederick the Great in Prussia and Catherine the Great in Russia turning in practice against the Enlightenment ideas they embraced in theory it was clear that the “mystery of iniquity” needed a new stimulus to recover its momentum and propel it towards its goal. That stimulus came in the form of an element that was already well known to European history, but which only now began to acquire a dominant position in politics - Jewish power. One major channel of Jewish influence was finance; a second was Freemasonry, which because of its close links with Jewry and Judaism is often called “Judaeo-Masonry”.

Now since belief in the existence of a Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy against civilization is often taken as evidence of madness, or at any rate of political incorrectness, it is necessary to assert from the beginning that, as L.A. Tikhomirov rightly says, “it is strange to attribute to the Masons the whole complexity of the evolution of human societies. One must not have the idea that people lived happily and in a healthy state, but then the Masonic organization appeared and corrupted them all. It is necessary to know the laws of the development of societies, which would be such as they are if the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem had never taken place. In general the study of Masonry can be fruitful only on condition that it is conducted scientifically. Only such a study is capable of clarifying the true level of influence of this or that secret society on the evolution of peoples and states.”

While Tikhomirov has no doubts about the existence of the Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy, he nevertheless insists that the blame for the destruction of modern society lies “most of all not on some premeditatedly evil influence of the Masons or whatever other organisation, but on the false direction of our own constructive activities.” For “there has never been a man or a society which has not been corrupted through his or its own free will.” In other words, the Masons would have no power over society if society had not voluntarily abandoned its own defensive principles and institutions.

249 Tikhomirov, “K voprosu o masonakh” (“Towards the Question on the Masons”), Khristianstvo i Politika (Christianity and Politics), in Kritika Demokratii (A Criticism of Democracy), Moscow, 1997 pp. 330-331.
250 Tikhomirov, “V chem nasha opasnost?” (“In What does the Danger to Us Consist?”), Khristianstvo i Politika (Christianity and Politics), op. cit., p. 333.
251 Tikhomirov, “Bor’ba s Masonstvom” (“The Struggle with Masonry”), Khristianstvo i Politika (Christianity and Politics), op. cit., p. 336.
As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: “In evaluating the role of the Jewish core of World Masonry, two extremes are possible: the complete denial of any Judaeo-Masonic secret plot and secret leadership of world processes, and the extreme exaggeration of the degree and size of this leadership (when it seems that ‘they’ are everywhere and everything is ruled by ‘them’)... In fact, it is all not like that. The life of the world, even the development of its scientific-technical and industrial civilization is a very weird and changeable combination of elemental, ungovernable processes and planned, governable processes. In the final analysis everything is truly ruled by the Providence of God, but in such a way that the free will of man is not abolished. For that reason in their successful moments it can seem, and seems, to the Judaeo-Masons, who really are striving for ever greater subjection of the processes of global life to themselves, that to an ever greater degree it is by their own, human powers that everything is achieved...”  

In the late eighteenth century, these principles and institutions were: the hierarchical principle, respect for tradition, the Church and the Monarchy. The Masons did not originate the attack on these - the roots of anti-authoritarianism in both Church and State go back at least to the eleventh-century Papacy. What they did was to use an already existing sceptical and rationalist climate of opinion to intensify and give direction to the revolutionary movement, “the mystery of iniquity”.

Some have seen the origins of Freemasonry as far back as the Babylonian Exile, when the Pharisees were forced to use what came to be called Masonic symbols, gestures and handshakes in order to communicate with each other. Since there is next to no hard evidence for this, we shall not discuss it, nor any of the other theories of the very early origins of Freemasonry...

According to Masonic theory, “Free”, “Speculative” or “Symbolic” Masonry began when the meeting-places, or lodges, of the “Operative” Masons, the stonemasons who built the medieval cathedrals, gradually began to decline in importance with the decline in their craft, and they were joined by intellectuals who used the lodges for their own intellectual, and often heretical or occult, activities. One of the first modern “speculative” Masons was the English antiquarian and astrologer, Elias Ashmole, who was initiated in 1646 and died in 1692. Another early Mason was Sir Christopher Wren. Christopher Hodapp, a Mason, writes: “The Great London Fire had destroyed much of the city [of London] in 1666, and rebuilding it took decades. Freemason Christopher Wren had designed an astonishing number of the new buildings, and construction projects were everywhere. One of the biggest was the rebuilding of St. Paul’s Cathedral. It started in 1673 and took almost 40 years to complete. Operative Masons came from all over England to work on the project, and many joined the Lodge of St. Paul. By 1710, the great

252 Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 407.  
cathedral was complete, and many lodges disbanded as Masons returned to their hometowns. By 1715, there were just four London city lodges left.”  

Even at this very early stage, Masonry aroused suspicion. Thus in 1698 a certain Mr. Winter circulated a leaflet in London warning “all godly people in the City of London of the Mischiefs and Evils practised in the Sight of God by those called Freed Masons... For this devilish Sect of Men are Meeters in secret which swear against all without their Following, They are the Anti Christ which was to come, leading Men from fear of God.”

The traditional official birthday of Masonry is July 24, 1717, when the four remaining London lodges met in a pub in St. Paul’s churchyard and created a Great Lodge as their ruling centre. The first grandmaster was a nobleman, and the leaders of English Masonry to the present day have tended to be members of the royal family. Consonant with this royal connection, there was nothing revolutionary in a political sense in early English Masonry. Thus when Dr. James Anderson, a Presbyterian minister and master of Lodge number 17 of London, drew up the Constitutions of Masonry in 1723, great emphasis was laid on the Masons’ loyalty to King and country: “A mason is a peaceable subject to the civil powers, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against the peace and welfare of the nation. If a brother should be a rebel against the state, he is not to be countenanced in his rebellion, however he may be pitied as an unhappy man; and if convicted of not other crime, though the brotherhood must and ought to dismiss his rebellion, and give no umbrage or ground of political jealousy to the government for the time being; they cannot expel him from the lodge, and his relation to it remains indefeasible.”

The Masons, writes O.F. Soloviev, called themselves “men of good will, peace-lovers, builders of the future just construction of society and at the same time patriots of their own fatherlands, law-abiding subjects and citizens, as is emphasized in all the constitutional documents. They went towards the highest ideals not through the preaching of abstract truths, but by serving their own peoples. They did not wall themselves off by an invisible wall from their compatriots, but completely shared their destiny with all their woes and sufferings. They were distinguished by a striving to help those around them, to draw a middle line between extremes and introduce at any rate a little humanism into the bonds of war that have been inevitable up to now.”

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255 Ridley, op. cit., p. 32.
256 The original lodges were numbers 1 to 4. However, in Scotland, the Kilwinning Lodge, which called itself “the Mother Lodge of Scotland” and claimed to go back to 1140, rejected the claims of the English Grand Lodge and called itself Lodge no. 0 (Hodapp, op. cit., p. 26).
257 Ridley, op. cit., p. 40.
That was the theory. But in the order’s secrecy, in the religiosity of its three degrees, and in its subversive political influence, a great danger to the powers that be was discerned; and in 1736 Pope Clement XII anathematized it. Moreover, “it was gradually revealed that the ritual humility of Symbolical Masonry had ceased to satisfy the leaders of the ‘obediences’, scions of the ruling dynasties and nobility, who strove to elaborate the inner decoration of the lodges and especially the rituals. The desired basis for reform was found in the specially transformed legend of the fate of the knightly order of the Templars, whose leader de Molay and his fellows had perished on the gallows in Paris in 1517 in accordance with the inquisitors’ false [?] accusations of terrible heresies. The Templars began to be portrayed as the immediate forerunners of the ‘free Masons’, which required the introduction of several higher degrees into their order, to signify the special merits and great knowledge of individually chosen adepts. One of the initiators of the reform, the Scottish nobleman A. Ramsay, declared in 1737: ‘Our forefathers the crusaders wanted to unite into one brotherhood the subjects of all states’, so as in time to create ‘a new people, which, representing many nations, would unite them in the bonds of virtue and science’. After the introduction of several higher degrees with luxurious rituals, a series of associations formed several systems, including the highly centralized system ‘of strict observance’ with rigorous discipline for its adepts, that was significantly developed in the German lands, in Russia and in Sweden.”

And so, within twenty years of its official birthday, Masonry had developed from a talking-shop for liberal intellectuals into a new religion tracing its roots to the Templars and beyond. This reinforced suspicions about its antichristian nature. At this point, however, the noble membership of the order proved useful. The Masons were saved from persecution by their success in recruiting members from the aristocracy, whose names were

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259 Soloviev, op. cit., p. 17. Thus Piers Paul Read writes: “Andrew Ramsay, a Scottish Jacobite exiled in France who was Chancellor of the French Grand Lodge in the 1730s, claimed that the first Free Masons had been stone Masons in the crusader states who had learned the secret rituals and gained the special wisdom of the ancient world. Ramsay made no specific claim for the Templars, probably because he did not wish to antagonise his host, the King of France; but in Germany another Scottish exile, George Frederick Johnson, concocted a myth that transformed ‘the Templars... from their ostensible status of unlearned and fanatical soldier-monks to that of enlightened and wise knightly seers, who had used their sojourn in the East to recover its profoundest secrets, and to emancipate themselves from medieval Catholic credulity’.

“According to the German Free Masons, the Grand Masters of the Order had learned the secrets and acquired the treasure of the Jewish Essenes which were handed down from one to the other. James of Molay [the last Grand Master of the Order], on the night of his execution, had sent the Count of Beaulieu to the crypt of the Temple Church in Paris to recover this treasure which included the seven-branched candelabra seized by the Emperor Titus, the crown of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and a shroud. It is undisputed that in evidence given at the trial of the Templars, a sergeant, John of Châlons, maintained that Gérard of Villiers, the Preceptor of France, had been tipped off about his imminent arrest and so had escaped on eighteen galleys with the Templars’ treasure. If this were so, what happened to this treasure? George Frederick Johnson said that it had been taken to Scotland, one of his followers specifying the Isle of Mull.” (The Templars, London: Phoenix Press, 2001, pp. 303-304)
immediately published to show how “respectable” Masonry was. Moreover, a ban was placed on political discussions in the English lodges.

But if English Masonry by and large respected this ban, this was certainly not to be the case with its daughter lodges in Europe and America. Moreover, the Constitutions clearly witnessed both to Masonry’s revolutionary potential and to its religious nature. This is particularly obvious when in one and the same breath they both disclaim any interest in religion and then claim to profess “the best [religion] that ever was, or will or can be… the true primitive, catholic and universal religion agreed to be so in all times and ages.”

What was this religion? In some formulations it is like the Deism that was becoming fashionable in England, in which God, “the Great Architect of the Universe”, is seen as creating and activating the laws of nature, and then playing no further part in history. In others it is closer to Pantheism. Thus the Constitutions speak of “the law of Nature, which is the law of God, for God is Nature. It is to love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourse...”

Closer examination reveals Masonry in its developed form to be a kind of Manichaean dualism. There are gods, Christ and Satan, of whom the one, Christ, is hated, and the other, Satan, is adored. As the famous American Mason, Albert Pike, wrote: “To the crowd we must say: we worship a God, but it is the God one adores without superstition. To you, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, we say this, that you may repeat it to the brethren of the 32nd, 31st and 30th degrees: all of us initiates of the high degrees should maintain the Masonic religion in the purity of the Luciferian doctrine. If Lucifer were not God, would Adonai, the God of the Christians, whose deeds prove his cruelty, perfidy and hatred of man, his barbarism and repulsion for science, would Adonai and his priests calumniate him? Yes, Lucifer is God, and unfortunately Adonai is also God… religious philosophy in its purity and youth consists in the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonai.”

“We have the testimony of Copin Albancelli, whom we can in no way suspect of making up things, when he declares positively that he had genuine documents about this in his hands. I, he says, had the opportunity several years ago to find a proof that there exist certain Masonic societies which are satanic societies, not in the sense that the devil used to come personally to preside at their meetings, as that charlatan Leo Taxil says, but in the sense that their members confess the cult of Satan. They adore Lucifer as being supposedly the true God and are inspired by an irreconcilable hatred against the Christian God.’ They even have a special formula casting ‘curses’ on Him and proclaiming the glory of and love for Lucifer…”

260 Ridley, op. cit., p. 41.
261 Ridley, op. cit., p. 41.
262 Pike, in A.C. de la Rive, La Femme et l’Enfant dans la Franc-Maçonnerie Universelle (The Woman and the Child in Universal Freemasonry), p. 588.
Of course, the Masons did not advertise their Satanism. Instead, they attached themselves to the contemporary Zeitgeist, which was ecumenism. As religious passions cooled in Europe after the end of the religious wars, the Masons took the lead in preaching religious tolerance.

The origins of ecumenism go back to Apelles, a disciple of the heretic Marcion in the second century. As the Athonite Elder Augustine writes: “Apelles, the head of the numerous sect, venerable both for his life and for his age, wanted to undertake the pacification and unification of all the shoots of the heretic Marcion under a single rule and authority. With this aim he exerted all his powers to come into contact with all the leaders of the sects, but had to admit that it was impossible to persuade each sect to abandon its unreasonable dogmatic teaching and accept that of another. Having come away from his attempts at mediation with no fruit, he decided a bridge had to be built, a way of living together peaceably, or a mutual tolerance of each other, with a single variety of ‘faith’…

“Starting from this point of view, he established an atheist dogma of unity, which has been called, after him, ‘the atheist dogma of Apelles’, with the notorious slogan: ‘... We don’t have to examine the matter thoroughly, everyone can remain in his faith; for those who hope on the Crucified One,’ he declared, ‘will be saved so long as they are found to have good works.’ Or, to put it more simply: ‘it is not at all necessary to examine the matter – the differences between us – but everyone should retain his convictions, because,’ he declared, ‘those who hope on the Crucified One will be saved so long as they are found to practise good works!... ’ It would be superfluous to explain that this atheist dogma of Apelles was first formulated by the heretic Marcion himself (whom St. Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John, called ‘the first-born of Satan’) and is entirely alien to the Christians. We Christians love the heterodox and we long for a real and holy union with them – when they become sober and believe in an Orthodox manner in our Lord Jesus Christ, abandoning their heretical and mistaken beliefs and ‘their distorted image of Christ’ (see Eusebius, History, bk. 5, 13-15; Dositheus of Jerusalem, Dodecabiblon, bk. 2, chapter 13, para. 3).”

Apelles’ dogma was condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, but reappeared at a later date. Thus in the year 384, Symmachus, the pagan leader of the Roman Senate, wrote to the Emperor Theodosius the Great, appealing to him to be tolerant towards the pagans because, as he said, many paths led to God… Again, the twelfth-century Arab philosopher and doctor Avveroes pleaded for a kind of union between Christians, Jews, Muslims and pagans that was avidly discussed in western scholastic circles.265

264 Monk Augustine, “To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou”, Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites, 120, July-August, 1990, pp. 21-21
The variant of Apelleanism known as uniatism – that is, the union between Roman Catholicism and other religions – appeared after the schism of 1054. As Elder Augustine explains: “After the canonical cutting off of the Latins from the Church as a whole in 1054, that is, after their definitive schism and anathematisation, there was also the acceptance, or rather the application, of the atheist dogma of Apelles. The Catholic (=Orthodox) Church of Christ condemned the heresies of the Nestorians, Monophysites and Monothelites in the (Third, Fourth and Sixth) Ecumenical Councils. It anathematised the heretics and their heretical teachings and declared those who remained in the above-mentioned heresies to be excommunicate. The apostate ‘church’ of Rome took no account of the decisions of these Ecumenical Councils, but received into communion the unrepentant and condemned Nestorian, Monophysite and Monothelite heretics without any formality, with only the recognition of the Pope as Monarch of the Church. And not only the heretics, but also many others after this, were received into communion with only the recognition of the Monarchy of the blood-stained beast that presided in it.”

However, Apelleanism in its modern, ecumenist variety is a product of the Protestant Reformation. Thus the Anglican Settlement of the mid-sixteenth century was a kind of Protestant Unia, the Anglican Church being allowed to retain some of the outward trappings of Catholicism – but without its central pivot, the papacy, which was replaced by obedience to the secular monarch as head of the Church. Being a politically motivated compromise from the beginning, Anglicanism has always been partial to ever more comprehensive schemes of inter-Church and inter-faith union, and many leaders of the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century were Anglicans.

In 1614 there appeared the first modern ecumenist, George Kalixtos, a man famous, according to Elder Augustine, “for the breadth of his knowledge and his ‘eirenic’ spirit in tackling various questions, including ecclesiastical ones. Propelled by this spirit, he declared that there was no need of, nor did he even seek, the union of the various Churches… Nevertheless, he did demand their mutual recognition and the retaining of reciprocal ‘love’ through the reciprocal tolerance of the manifold differences of each ‘Church’…”

The ecumenism of Masonry was linked to the crisis of faith in the Anglican church in the early eighteenth century, and in particular to the loss of faith in the unique truth and saving power of Christianity. Thus “in 1717,” wrote William Palmer, “a controversy arose on occasion of the writings of Hoadly, bishop of Bangor, in which he maintained that it was needless to believe in any particular creed, or to be united to any particular Church; and that

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sincerity, or our own persuasion of the correctness of our opinions (whether well or ill founded) is sufficient. These doctrines were evidently calculated to subvert the necessity of believing the articles of the Christian faith, and to justify all classes of schismatics or separatists from the Church. The convocation deemed these opinions so mischievous, that a committee was appointed to select propositions from Hoadly’s books, and to procure their censure; but before his trial could take place, the convocation was prorogued by an arbitrary exercise of the royal authority...

Hardly coincidentally, 1717, the year in which Hoadly’s heretical views were published, was the same year in which the Grand Lodge of England was founded. And we find a very similar doctrine enshrined in Dr. Anderson’s *Constitutions*: “Let a man’s religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the order, provided he believe in the glorious architect of heaven and earth.”

But English Masonry went further than English ecumenism in positing that underlying all religions there was a “true, primitive, universal religion”, a religion “in which all men agree: “A Mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charged in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet, ‘tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is to be good Men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, but whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish’d; whereby Masonry becomes the Centre of Union and the Means of Conciliating true Friendships among Persons that must have remained at a perpetual Distance.”

A new and extremely deceptive concept was here introduced into the bloodstream of European thought: “that Religion in which all men agree”. There is no such thing... Even if we exclude the “stupid Atheists” and “irreligious Libertines” (of whom there are very many), we still find men disagreeing radically about the most fundamental doctrines: whether God is one, or one-in-three, or more than three, whether He is to be identified with nature or distinguished from it, whether He is evolving or unchanging, whether or not He became incarnate in Jesus Christ, whether or not He spoke to Mohammed, whether or not He is coming to judge the world, etc. Upon the answers to these questions depend our whole concept of right and wrong, of what it is “to be good Men and true”. Far from there being unanimity among “religious” people about this, there is bound to be most radical disagreement...

270 In accordance with this principle, Jews were admitted to the Masonic lodges as early as 1724 (Ridley, op. cit., p. 40).
54. THE GRAND ORIENT

Ecumenism may be described as religious egalitarianism, the doctrine that one religion is as good as any other. When combined, as it was in the lodges of Europe and America, with political and social egalitarianism, the doctrine that one person is as good as any other, it made for an explosive mixture – not just a philosophy, but a programme for revolutionary action. And this revolutionary potential of Masonry became evident very soon after it spread from England to the Continent...

Now 1717, the year of the foundation of the Great Lodge of England, was also important as being the date of an Anglo-French treaty by which the Catholic Stuart pretender to the English throne was expelled from France and the Protestant Hanoverian dynasty was recognized by the French government. This facilitated the spread of Freemasonry to France and the Continent. As a result, writes Viscount Leon de Poncins, it “evolved in a distinctly revolutionary and anti-religious sense. The Grand Orient of France led this movement, followed, with some reserve, by the Grand Lodge of France, and became the guide of the Grand Orients of Europe and South America. Freemasonry in the United States, while maintaining its union and friendly relations with the Grand Lodge of England, occupies an intermediate position between English Freemasonry and the Grand Orients of Europe. Some of its branches are nearer the English conception, and others the European...

“English Freemasonry in 1723 was in no way Christian; it was rationalist, vaguely deistic and secretly gnostic. The latter source of inspiration is still active, but it had encountered the conservative, traditional spirit of England. Most English Freemasons were men who were scarcely concerned with philosophical or metaphysical preoccupations. The revolutionary and anti-Christian inspiration which constituted the essence of contemporary Freemasonry everywhere, encountered a veiled and instinctive resistance in English Masons. The pact which Freemasonry tacitly concluded with the Protestant monarchy, to fight against Catholicism [and the Catholic Stuart pretenders to the English monarchy], which it considered its principal enemy, contributed to restrain the revolutionary tendencies of English Freemasonry, whereas they developed freely in Europe and South America, and rather more timidly in the United States. In short, the revolutionary virus in Freemasonry is more or less inactive in England, where Freemasonry is more an excuse for social reunion than an organisation claiming to remake the world.” 271

This difference between English and Continental Masonry has been denied by some writers. And of course, from a religious point of view, at least until Grand Orient Masonry officially adopted atheism in 1877 and was “excommunicated” by the Grand Lodge of England, there was little

significant difference between the two. Nevertheless, from a *political* point of view the distinction is both valid and important; for English Masonry, linked as it was with the nobility and the monarchy from the beginning, dissociated itself from the revolutionary activities of its brother lodges on the Continent, and as late as 1929 reaffirmed the ban on discussion of politics and religion within the lodge.

It was Continental Masonry, springing from the Grand Orient of France, that was the real revolutionary force in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe and beyond, as we see especially in the 30th degree of the Scottish rite, the Kadosch degree. Here the myth that forms the core of the earlier degrees, the murder of Hiram or Adoniram, the supposed architect of Solomon’s Temple, is replaced by the myth of Jacques de Molay, the last great master of the order of the Templars, who was burned alive on the orders of King Philippe the Fair of France and Pope Clement V in 1314, and who was supposed to have founded four Masonic lodges on his deathbed. The initiates of the Kadosch degree avenge the death of the Templars’ leader by acting out the murder of the French king and the Pope.

“The Kadosch adept,” writes V.F. Ivanov, “tramples on a crown as a symbol of tyranny in general, and then tramples on the papal tiara as a symbol of violence over the free human conscience.

“The king and the pope are symbols, and by these symbols we are given to understand the struggle to the death against ‘civil and ecclesiastical despotism’.”

This vengeful rite was not just theatre, but a preparation for real revolutionary action. Thus in 1784 in Wilhemsbad a pan-European congress of Masons in which the mysterious proto-communist sect of the “Illuminati” took a leading role, decided on the murder of Louis XVI of France and Gustavus Adolphus III of Sweden. Both sentences were carried out…

The Illuminati were founded by Adam Weishaupt, a law professor at Ingolstadt University. According to Mike Hanson, he “recruited five freemasons from prestigious Masonic lodges to form the Order of Perfectibilists, commonly known as the Bavarian Illuminati, on May 1, 1776. The recruitment of Baron Knigge (a.k.a Adolf Francis), a major player in the European Masonic scene, is considered to be his greatest coup; under Knigge’s guidance, the ranks of the Illuminati grew to over 3,000. At this point, however (1785), it was declared an outlaw conspiracy by the Bavarian government, and Weishaupt quickly disappeared. According to John Robison’s *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, the Illuminati organization survived in a somewhat altered form and was the driving force behind the French Revolution.

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272 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. 64.
“According to Neil Wilgus in *The Illuminati*, George Washington had read *Proofs* and felt that the allegations contained therein deserved further investigation. Washington’s own correspondence with fellow Masons clearly indicates that he was well aware of subversive forces at work within rival branches of masonic lodges in Europe, and expressed concern that the curse had spread to American lodges. Wilgus also writes that Thomas Jefferson was at least somewhat familiar with Weishaupt’s works and felt an admiration for him. It appears Jefferson disagreed with Washington’s point of view that the Illuminati had infiltrated American Freemasonry; Jefferson believed that such a thing could no possibly happen in America, since our freedom of speech would have made secrecy unnecessary. Obviously, Jefferson was either a member of the secret brotherhood, or else he was just painfully misguided in this belief, for the Illuminati continues to secretly guide American foreign and domestic policy to this very day…”

However, the Continental Masons managed to conceal their murderous intentions under a cover of good works and conviviality. This was enough to fool even those who should have been best informed. Thus Louis XVI’s queen, Marie Antoinette, wrote to her sister Maria Christina in 1781: “It seems to me that you attach too much significance to Masonry in France; it has by no means played the same role in France as in other countries, thanks to the fact that here everybody belongs to it and so we know everything that goes on there. What danger do you see in it? I understand that it would be possible to fear the spread of Masonry if it were a secret political society, but, you know, this society exists only for good works and for entertainments; there they do a lot of eating, drinking, discussing and singing, and the king says that people who drink and sing cannot be conspirators. Thus it is impossible to call Masonry a society of convinced atheists, for, as I have heard, they constantly speak about God there. And besides, they give a lot of alms, educate the children of the poor or dead members of the brotherhood, give their daughters in marriage – I truly see nothing in bad in all this. The other day the Princess de Lambal was elected great mistress of one lodge; she told me how nice they are to her there, but she said that more was drunk than sung; the other day they offered to give dowries to two girls. True, it seems to me that it would be possible to do good without all these ceremonies, but, you know, everyone has his own way of enjoying himself; as long as they do good, what has the rest to do with us?”

However, she soon learned otherwise. On August 17, 1790 she wrote to her brother, the Austrian Emperor Leopold II: “Forgive me, dear brother, believe in the tender sentiments of your unhappy sister. The main thing is, keep away from every Masonic society. In this way all the horrors that are taking place here are striving to attain one and the same end in all countries.”

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274 Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
55. FREEMASONRY AND THE JEWS

To what extent is the term “Judaeo-Masonry” appropriate? The characteristics of Masonry that we have examined so far are purely western in origin. However, when we examine the rites and religious practices of Masonry, and especially of its higher degrees, a strongly Jewish element is immediately apparent. As an example, let us take the Masonic practice of wearing aprons. Michael Hoffman, following John L. Brooke, writes: “The Babylonian Talmud claims that the forbidden tree in the Garden, from which Adam ate was a fig; ‘Rabbi Nehemiah holds that the tree of which Adam ate was the fig tree’ (BT Berakoth 40a). The Kabbalah teaches that the leaves of this fig tree conveyed powers of sorcery and magic (Zohar 1:56b Bereshit). Consequently, in the rabbinic mind, the aprons worn by Adam and Eve, being made from the leaves of the fig tree, were garments that gave the wearers magic powers. These aprons made from fig leaves had the power to give the bearer to enjoy ‘the fruits of the world-to-come’ (BT Bava Metzia 114b). It is with this rabbinic understanding that Freemasons and Mormons wear these aprons in their own rituals.”

Moreover, there is a significant personal input of Jewry into Masonry, especially at the highest levels. For the three symbolical degrees of Masonry are supplemented by thirty higher levels, which in turn are crowned by what has been called “invisible Masonry”. And “all this impenetrably dark power is crowned, according to the conviction and affirmation of [the former Mason and investigator of Masonry] Copin Albancelli, by still another level: the Jewish centre, which pursues the aims of the universal lordship of Israel and holds in its hands both visible Masonry with its 33 degrees and the invisible degrees of invisible Masonry or ‘Illuminism’…”

“It is true, of course,” writes Bernard Lazare, “that there were Jews connected with Freemasonry from its birth, students of the Kabbala, as is shown by certain rites which survive. It is very probable, too, that in the years preceding the outbreak of the French Revolution, they entered in greater numbers than ever into the councils of the secret societies, becoming indeed the founders of secret associations. There were Jews in the circle around Weishaupt, and a Jew of Portuguese origin, Martinez de Pasquales, established numerous groups of Illuminati in France and gathered around him a large number of disciples whom he instructed in the doctrines of re-integration. The lodges which Martinez founded were mystic in character, whereas the other orders of Freemasonry were, on the whole, rationalistic in their teachings…. There would be little difficulty in showing how these two tendencies worked in harmony; how Cazotte, Cagliostro, Martinez, Saint-Martin, the Comte de Saint Germain and Eckartshausen were practically in alliance with the Encyclopaedists and Jacobins, and how both, in spite of their

276 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 443.
seeming hostility, succeeded in arriving at the same end, the undermining, namely, of Christianity.

“This, too, then, would tend to show that though the Jews might very well have been active participants in the agitation carried on by the secret societies, it was not because they were the founders of such associations, but merely because the doctrines of the secret societies agreed so well with their own.”

Thus Freemasonry was not controlled by the Jews, according to Lazare, but Judaism and Masonry had a great deal in common: Anti-Christianity, a taste for a Kabbalistic type of mysticism, revolutionary politics and many members of Jewish blood. But this is only the beginning. It is when one enters into the details of the rites, especially the rites of the higher degrees, that the resemblances become really striking. “The connections are more intimate,” wrote a Parisian Jewish review, “than one would imagine. Judaism should maintain a lively and profound sympathy for Freemasonry in general, and no matter concerning this powerful institution should be a question of indifference to it…

“The spirit of Freemasonry is that of Judaism in its most fundamental beliefs; its ideas are Judaic, its language is Judaic, its very organisation, almost, is Judaic. Whenever I approach the sanctuary where the Masonic order accomplishes its works, I hear the name of Solomon ringing everywhere, and echoes of Israel. Those symbolic columns are the columns of the Temple where each Hiram’s workmen received their wages; they enshrine his revered name. The whole Masonic tradition takes me back to that great epoch when the Jewish monarch, fulfilling David’s promises, raised up to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a religious monument worthy of the creator of Heaven and earth – a tradition symbolised by powerful images which have spread outside the limits of Palestine to the whole world, but which still bear the indelible imprint of their origin.

“That Temple which must be built, since the sanctuary in Jerusalem has perished, the secret edifice at which all Masons on earth labour with one mind, with a word of command and secret rallying-points – it is the moral sanctuary, the divine asylum wherein all men who have been reconciled will re-unite one day in holy and fraternal Agapes; it is the social order which shall no longer know fratricidal wars, nor castes, nor pariahs, and where the human race will recognise and proclaim anew its original oneness. That is the work on which every initiate pledges his devotion and undertakes to lay his stone, a sublime work which has been carried on for centuries.”

This talk of universal fraternity in the rebuilding of the Temple is deception. “As for the final result of the messianic revolution,” writes Batault, “it will always be the same: God will overthrow the nations and the kings and

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277 Lazare, _Antisemitisme_ (Antisemitism), pp. 308-309; De Poncins, _op. cit._, pp. 71-72.
278 _La Vérité Israélite_ (The Israelite Truth), 1861, vol. 5, p. 74; De Poncins, _op. cit._, pp. 75-76.
will cause Israel and her king to triumph; the nations will be converted to Judaism and will obey the Law or else they will be destroyed and the Jews will be the masters of the world. The Jews’ international dream is to unite the world with the Jewish law, under the direction and domination of the priestly people—a general form... of imperialism...”

However, it remains true that the main aim of Freemasonry, as of Judaism, is to rebuild the Temple of Solomon. And this alone should be enough to warn us of its Antichristianity, insofar the Lord decreed that “not one stone [of it] shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24.2). Moreover, every attempt to rebuild it has been destroyed by the Lord, as happened when Julian the Apostate tried to rebuild it in the fourth century.

The rites of Freemasonry themselves declare that the secret aim of the rebuilding of the Temple is to undo the work of Christ on the Cross. Thus the 18th or Rosicrucian Degree speaks of the ninth hour of the day as “the hour when the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain and darkness overspread the earth, when the true Light departed from us, the Altar was thrown down, the Blazing Star was eclipsed, the Cubic Stone poured forth Blood and Water, the Word was lost, and despair and tribulation sat heavily upon us. It goes on to exhort the Masons: “Since Masonry has experienced such dire calamities it is our duty, Princes, by renewed labours, to retrieve our loss.”

The Reverend Walter Hannah justly comments: “For any Christian to declare that Masonry experienced ‘a dire calamity’ at the Crucifixion, or that Masons suffered a ‘loss’ at the triumphant death of our Saviour on the Cross which the Excellent and Perfect Princes of the Rose Croix of Heredom can by their own labour ‘retrieve’ seems not only heretical but actually blasphemous. The only interpretation which makes sense of this passage would appear to be that it is not the death of our Lord which is mourned, but the defeat of Satan.” Indeed, for “the eclipse of the Blazing Star” can only mean the defeat of Satan, while the Cubic Stone pouring forth Blood and Water can only mean the triumph of Christ on the Cross—Christ, Who is “the Stone that the builders rejected” which became “the chief Corner-Stone” of the New Testament Church (Matthew 21.42), having been rejected as “the wrong shape” by the leaders of Old Israel. As the Apostle Peter said to the Sanhedrin: “This [Christ] is the Stone which was rejected by you builders [Jews, Masons], which has become the chief Corner-Stone” (Acts 4.11). Any Temple which does not have Christ as the chief Corner-Stone is an abomination to God and will be destroyed by Him just as the Old Testament Temple was destroyed; for “whoever falls on this Stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to power” (Matthew 21.44). It is in the same Rosicrucian Degree that initiates are told to walk over the Cross of Christ...282

279 G. Batault, Le Problème Juif (The Jewish Problem); De Poncins, op. cit., pp. 77-78.
280 Rosicrucianism was founded as a separate order in Masonry in 1757 in Frankfurt, and counted among its leading adepts the charlatans Saint-Germain and Caliostro.
And so Masonry is revealed as a web of deceit whose outer layers are liberalism, scientism, and rationalism; whose inner layers are the overthrow of the existing world order in both Church and State; and whose innermost sanctum is the most explicit Antichristianity.

The first power in the West clearly to see the threat of Masonry to both Church and State was the Vatican – which, of course, had little influence in America. Catholicism made no radical distinction between English and French Masonry. In 1738 Masonry of all kinds was condemned by Pope Clement XII, in 1751 - by Benedict XIV, in 1821 - by Pius VII, in 1825 – by Leo XII, in 1829 – by Pius VIII, in 1832 and 1839 – by Gregory XVI, in 1846, 1864, 1865, 1873 and 1876 – by Pius IX, and in 1884 – by Leo XIII. The latter’s bull, Humanum Genus, declared of the Freemasons: “Their ultimate aim is to uproot completely the whole religious and political order of the world... This will mean that the foundation and the laws of the new structure of society will be drawn from pure Naturalism.”

The Popes were right. And yet the papacy was powerless to stem the tide of naturalism and unbelief that was sweeping Europe on the eve of the French Revolution. Nor could the revolution planned by the Grand Orient of Paris be prevented by the intrigues of the Great Whore of Babylon, for the simple reason that she had started the whole long process of apostasy herself: from Papism to Humanism to Protestantism, from Deism to the Enlightenment and Freemasonry, and on into the still more bloody and blasphemous future – it had all begun in Rome, when the first heretical Popes broke away from the Orthodox Church and the Byzantine Autocracy. The Papacy was therefore compromised; and if deliverance from the rapid growth of Masonry was to come it could only come from the Orthodox Church and that Autocracy that now stood in the place of Byzantium – the Third Rome of Russia...

283 De Poncins, op. cit., p. 31. The bull went on: “In the sphere of politics, the Naturalists lay down that all men have the same rights and that all are equal and alike in every respect; that everyone is by nature free and independent; that no one has the right to exercise authority over another; that it is an act of violence to demand of men obedience to any authority not emanating from themselves. All power is, therefore, in the free people. Those who exercise authority do so either by the mandate or the permission of the people, so that, when the popular will changes, rulers of States may lawfully be deposed even against their will. The source of all rights and civic duties is held to reside either in the multitude or in the ruling power in the State, provided that it has been constituted according to the new principles. They hold also that the State should not acknowledge God and that, out of the various forms of religion, there is no reason why one should be preferred to another. According to them, all should be on the same level...”
In a materialist age such as the eighteenth century, it was inevitable that the motivation for the first major revolution in the century should be materialist. The American revolution was elicited by the mother nation, Britain, trying “to make the vast new empire pay for itself, provoking a backlash to defend popular rights. In 1776 the Declaration of Independence summed up those rights, purporting to show how they had been undermined by the British Crown, and justified the creation of a new government in order to preserve them.”

The basic “right” insisted on by the Americans was: no taxation without representation. This was rejected by the British, who affirmed that “the British Parliament had full authority to make laws ‘to bind the colonies and people of America in all cases whatsoever’. So the underlying issue became clear: Britain wanted more revenue from America to pay for defence [of the Americans against the French and the Indians], and claimed that she had the right to enforce such a tax, whereas the colonists claimed that this could be raised only with the consent of their legislatures.”

Niall Ferguson writes: “The war [of Independence] is at the very heart of Americans’ conception of themselves: the idea of a struggle for liberty against an evil empire is the country’s creation myth. But it is the great paradox of the American Revolution… that the ones who revolted against British rule were the best-off of all Britain’s colonial subjects. There is good reason to think that, by the 1770s, New Englanders were about the wealthiest people in the world. Per capita income was at least equal to that in the United Kingdom and was far more evenly distributed. The New Englanders had bigger farms, bigger families and better education than the Old Englanders back home. And, crucially, they paid far less tax. In 1763 the average Briton paid 26 shillings a year in taxes. The equivalent figure for a Massachusetts taxpayer was just one shilling. To say that being British subjects had been good for these people would be an understatement. And yet it was they, not the indentured labourers of Virginia or the slaves of Jamaica, who first threw off the yoke of imperial authority.”

The American revolution developed no radically new ideas. Thus Jacques Barzun writes: “No new Idea entailing a shift in forms of power – the mark of revolutions – was proclaimed. The 28 offences that King George was accused of had long been familiar in England. The language of the Declaration is that of protest against abuses of power, not of proposals for recasting the government on new principles.”

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287 Barzun, From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 397.
At the same time, it was important for the development of political thought, because, just as Hume took the principles of Lockean liberalism, made them self-consistent and thereby showed their absurdity, so the American revolutionaries took the principles of the English "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, applied them more generally and in a Rousseauist spirit, and thereby showed that English liberalism was dangerously open-ended, tending to its own destruction. More precisely, the revolution showed that if parliament placed limits on the king in the name of the people and natural law, there was no reason why limits should not also be placed on parliament in turn by other estates of the realm, even colonials, in the name of the same principles. Thus the American revolution showed, as Barbara Tuchman has put it, that "parliamentary supremacy", no less than monarchy, "was vulnerable to riot, agitation and boycott..." 288

Moreover, the process of rebellion could go on forever; for there were always people who did not feel that they belonged to this people, and therefore felt the right to rebel against it. Thus Noam Chomsky points out that many American loyalists fled to Canada "because they didn't like the doctrinaire, kind of fanatic environment that took hold in the colonies. The percentage of colonists who fled in the American Revolution was actually about 4 percent, it was probably higher than the percentage of Vietnamese who fled Vietnam after the Vietnam War. And remember, they were fleeing from one of the richest places in the world – these were boat-people who fled in terror from Boston Harbor in the middle of winter to Nova Scotia, where they died in the snow trying to get away from all of these crazies here. The numbers are supposed to have been in the neighbourhood of maybe a hundred thousand out of a total population of about two and a half million – so it was a substantial part of the population. And among them were people from groups who knew they were going to get it in the neck if the colonists won – blacks and Native Americans, for example. And they were right: in the case of the Native Americans, it was genocide; in the case of the blacks, it was slavery." 289

"And that," writes Adam Zamoyski, "still left a considerable proportion of the population out of sympathy with the state of affairs in 1783. The unassimilated communities of Germans, Swiss, Dutch and Finns, and the religious settlements of Quakers, Shakers, Dunkers, Mennonites, Schwenkenfelders and others carried on as before – oblivious to government and resistant to national inclusion. The settlers of what later became Kentucky and Tennessie debated the possibility of switching to Spanish sovereignty. In 1784 the western counties of North Carolina attempted to go their own way. Three years later the Wyoming Valley tried to secede from Pennsylvania. There was opposition, rioting and even revolt against the Congress, just as there had been against Westminster. One reason was that the tax burden had increased dramatically. In the last years of British rule, the colonies enjoyed

lower taxation than any people in the Western world except for the Poles. By the late 1780s the Massachusetts per capita tax burden of one shilling had gone up to eighteen shillings; the rise in Virginia was from five pence to ten shillings. And it is worth remembering that tax was what had sparked off the revolution in the first place...”

However, all this was not foreseen when Thomas Jefferson presented a doctrine of “self-evident” natural rights known as the Declaration of Independence to the Second Continental Congress in 1776: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it...”

Norman Stone writes: “'The pursuit of happiness', in the foundation charter of the United States, has always struck foreigners as funny. That is a misunderstanding of the original, which was just a polite way of saying 'money'.” Indeed, when he was ambassador in Paris, Jefferson was asked why he had substituted “happiness” for the traditional Lockean emphasis on “property”, he replied that since the secure possession of property was an important condition of happiness, there was no real contradiction. However, this was the first time in history that “the pursuit of happiness” had been taken to be one of the purposes of the State, and the failure to achieve this end as a justification for revolution.

“This was not, of course,” writes J.S. McClelland, “to say that it was government’s business to regulate the details of people’s lives to make sure that they were cheerful, but it did mean that a very exact sense emerged of government’s duty to provide those conditions in which rational men could pursue happiness, that is further their own interests, without being hindered unnecessarily either by government or by their fellow men. This was more radical than it sounds, because in eighteenth-century political thought it meant that government’s capacity to promote the happiness of its subjects, however negatively, was connected with the vital question of the legitimacy of government. No political theory ever invented, and no actual government since the Flood, had ever had as its proclaimed intention the idea of making men miserable. All governments more or less claim that they have their subjects’ happiness at heart, but most governments have not based their claims to be entitled to rule directly on their happiness-creating function. The reason why governments do not typically base their claim to rule on their capacity to increase happiness is obvious enough, because to do so would be to invite their subjects to judge whether their governments are competent or not. Indeed, it could be argued that most of the justifications for forms of rule

290 Zamoyski, Holy Madness, p. 38.
which have been on offer since Plato are all careful to distinguish between questions about legitimacy and questions about happiness..."292

Mark Almond writes: “The Declaration, approved by congress on 4 July 1776 and signed by its members on 2 August, was greeted with incredulity by the British. The British Gentleman’s Magazine for September, 1776 ridiculed the idea of equality: ‘We hold, they say, these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal. In what are they created equal? Is it in size, strength, understanding, figure, civil or moral accomplishments, or situation of life?’293

The British had a point: the equality of men is far from self-evident from a humanist point of view. In fact, the only real justification for it is religious: that all men are made in the image of God, and that Christ died for all men equally. But, having been the leaders in political thought, the British were now behind the times. Rousseau had preached the general will and the nobility of the common man, and it was now the Americans with their “We, the People” Declaration who were more in tune with the latest political ideas.

In any case, was it not a British philosopher, John Locke, who had spoken of an original state of human equality, and had even looked across the Atlantic to the primitive societies there for its incarnation, saying: “In the beginning all the world was America”? And were not the Americans simply applying the same principle in opposing parliament as the English had in opposing King James II nearly a century before?294 However, while Locke had invoked the sovereign power of the people in order to place limits on the king, he never dreamed that any but the landowning gentry, should qualify as “the people” and do the limiting. But the Americans claimed that “the people” included even unrepresented colonials, and that “the will of the people” had a wider meaning than “the will of parliament”. The uncomfortable fact for the British was that, however little basis the doctrine of equality had in empirical fact, it was in the air of public debate, while the Americans’ feeling that they should be treated equally, that is, on equal terms with Britons of similar wealth and breeding, was a very powerful force that brooked no resistance...

In 1778 France entered the war on the American side – hardly a wise move for a state that was more absolutist than Britain and more vulnerable to the propaganda of revolution. Indeed, “French assistance to the rebel Americans helped to bankrupt the royal regime in France and create the conditions for revolution in 1789.”295 But the assistance given to the Americans was decisive in turning the tide of war: on October 19, 1781 the British marched out of Yorktown to surrender to the Americans with their bands very appropriately playing the old song, “The World Turned Upside Down”...

294 Thus Edmund Burke “considered the Americans as standing at that time and in that controversy, as England did to King James II in 1688” (Almond, op. cit., p. 63). Cf. Russell Kirk, “A Revolution not Made but Prevented”, The Intelligent Conservative, August, 2012.
295 Almond, op. cit., p. 69.
In 1783 a Treaty was signed between Great Britain, the United States and France. In Article 1 we read: “His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States, viz., New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, to be free sovereign and independent states, that he treats with them as such, and for himself, his heirs, and successors, relinquishes all claims to the government, propriety, and territorial rights of the same and every part thereof.”

In 1787 delegates from the Thirteen States assembled at Philadelphia to draft a new Constitution. Their major motivation was fear of despotism and distrust of big government; they wanted a government which would interfere as little as possible in the private lives of the citizens. Thus the 9th and 10th Amendments reserved spheres not explicitly given to the central government to the States and the People. James Madison said: “Wherever the real power in government lies, there is the danger of oppression. In our government the real power lies in the majority of the community, and the invasion of private rights is chiefly to be apprehended, not from acts of government contrary to the sense of its constituents, but from acts in which the government is the mere instrument of the major number of the constituents. This is a truth of great importance, but not yet sufficiently attended to.”

* *

But how were the sovereign State to relate to each other? Did they form a unity, and if so of what kind was it? Here, apart from their European heritage and the Old Testament, we should not forget another influence on the political thought of the early Americans – the Native Indians, and in particular the Confederacy of Iroquois Five Nations. This was especially important with regard to the federal idea, the relations between the independent states. G.K. Ballatore writes: “It is not widely known that the advice originally came from the Mohawk Chief Canassatego, who, in the early 1740s, told Franklin to unify the colonies, counselling:

“Our wise forefathers established union between the Five Nations. This has made us formidable; this has given us great weight and authority with our neighbouring nations. We are a powerful confederacy, and by your observing the same methods our wise forefathers have taken you will acquire such strength and power. Therefore, whatever befalls you, never fall out with one another.

“Arguably, federalism has been the United States’ foremost political contribution. The pattern of states within a nation held together not by clannishness or geography but by shared values mimics the structure of the

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296 Madison, in James M. Rafferty, Prophetic Insights into the New World Order, Malo, WA: Light Bearers Ministry, 1992, p. 73.
Iroquois Confederacy. Since most of the colonies had more contact and trade with the Indians than they did with one another, the Iroquois preference for local government made sense.

"The Iroquois Confederacy was the only living, breathing democracy the founders had witnessed when the time came to declare independence and, later, cobble together the Constitution when the Articles of Confederation were found wanting. Although Franklin and Jefferson were acquainted with the ideas of Locke and Rousseau, there were no current examples in Europe of democracy in action. In contrast, colonists imagined that the American Indians lived in a perfect state of nature and were somehow descended from the Ancient Romans. As early as 1580, Michel de Montaigne wrote admiringly of the natives of the New World in his essay, *On Cannibals…* Later, in the late 1600s, the first colonial historian of the Indians, Cadwallader Colden, wrote that without 'Men of experience among the Five Nations to advise and direct them on all emergencies of importance', the British colonies would be sunk. Colden even attributed French dominance in early colonial America to their ties with the Five Nations.

"By the mid-1700s, this sense of respect and curiosity filtered down to the Founding Fathers, many of whom studied Colden’s work. During this time, Franklin, Conrad Weiser, Thomas Paine, William Johnson, James Madison and John Adams all visited the Iroquois for extended periods to study their government and organisation. The Indians’ proximity to the eastern colonies enabled these frequent visits. Adams even included a survey of Iroquois government in his *Defence of the Constitution of the United States*, published on the eve of the Constitutional Convention, in which he favourably compared the unicameral governing body of the United States to that of the Five Nations.

"The colonists’ first attempt to organise as a cohesive state at the Albany Conference in 1754, where representatives from each of the colonies attended, as well as many Iroquois Indians, including the Mohawk chief Canassatego, Franklin named the organising body the Great Council, after the Grand Council of the Iroquois. In the Iroquois tradition, the Grand Council does not interfere with local tribal matters. Each tribe has its own ‘constitution’ that governs the laws of their land, independent of the other tribes. In addition, they convene regularly with the other tribes to discuss matters that affect all of them, especially the decision to wage war. Otherwise, each tribe’s and each individual’s autonomy is recognised and respected as long as it does not hurt another. Franklin greatly admired this system of government and chastised the other colonists when they failed to cohere:

"'It would be a very strange thing if six nations of ignorant savages should be capable of forming a scheme for such an Union and be able to execute it in such a manner, as that it has subsisted Ages, and appears indissoluble, and yet a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a dozen English colonies.'
“The notion of personal freedom and liberty also descended from the Iroquois and, most notably, from the Mohawks, who had the most contact with the British colonists. Many colonists, in keeping with Montaigne, saw the Indian way of life as a ‘recapitulation of Eden’. When the founders tried to capture this in the laws of the New World, they aimed at describing a way of life akin to a state of nature as they observed in the Indians. Hence, Jefferson replaced the right of property that was safeguarded in European constitutions with the right to happiness.

“While the Magna Carta also treated the question of inalienable rights (in a more limited way), the last thing Jefferson and other founders wanted was an imitation of the world from which they had escaped. They did not want to go back to the European way of life, but to form a new society that was neither civilised nor savage...”\(^{297}\)

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The success of the American revolution provided an inspiration for the French revolution in its first phase; and the French revolution in its turn influenced the further development of the American. The debate between the conservative Edmund Burke and the radical Tom Paine over the French revolution had its analogues in the controversies among the Founding Fathers over the American. Some, such as Alexander Hamilton and George Washington, still looked towards the more conservative and authoritarian British model of democracy, in spite of the experience of the War of Independence. Thus Hamilton said to the Constitutional Convention in 1787: “I believe the British government forms the best model the world ever produced... All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well born, the other the mass of the people... The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second... Nothing but a permanent body can check the impudence of democracy.”\(^{298}\)

Others, however, such as Thomas Jefferson, drew inspiration from the French revolution; he had an almost anarchical drive to “rekindle the old spirit of 1776”. Thus he believed that a rebellion every twenty years or so was necessary to stop the arteries of freedom from becoming sclerotic. As he wrote in 1787: “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots & tyrants. It is its natural manure.”\(^{299}\) And to James Madison he wrote in the same year: “A little rebellion now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical... It is a medicine for the sound health of government...”\(^{300}\)

\(^{300}\) Jefferson, in Almond, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 69.
This recipe for permanent revolution was taken up by none other than Abraham Lincoln in 1861: “This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it...”\(^{301}\) There is a rich irony in the fact that the State which after 1917 became the main bulwark of ordered government against the revolution should have been the most revolutionary State prior to 1789...

These different understandings of democracy were reflected in different views on the two most important issues of the day: the relative powers of the central government and the states, and slavery. With regard to the first issue, the champions of a strong central government, the federalists, believed that such a government was necessary – subject to the 9\(^{th}\) and 10\(^{th}\) Amendments being observed - in order to preserve the gains of the revolution, to guarantee taxation income, and to preserve law and order. As George Washington put it: “Let then the reins of government be braced and held with a steady hand, and every violation of the Constitution be reprehended. If defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled on whilst it has an existence.”\(^{302}\) Not surprisingly, many of the anti-federalists thought that Washington himself was substituting his own style of monarchy for the British monarchy. As Joseph J. Ellis writes, they were haunted by “the ideological fear, so effective as a weapon against the taxes imposed by Parliament and decrees of George III, that once arbitrary power was acknowledged to reside elsewhere [than in the states], all liberty was lost. And at a primal level it suggested the unconscious fear of being completely consumed, eaten alive.”\(^{303}\)

One potential danger of American democracy – as of every revolution that acts in the name of freedom - was that demands for equal rights on the part of any number of truly or supposedly oppressed minorities - permanent revolution in the name of equality - were theoretically endless, and could lead in the end to complete anarchy, which in its turn would lead to the imposition of old-style Cromwellian dictatorship. This was seen even by one of the architects of the revolution, Benjamin Franklin. He was prepared to support the constitution of 1787 “with all its faults – if they are such - because I think a general government necessary for us, and there is no form of government but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered”. But this good administration, he believed, could only go on for a few years, after which it “can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other...”\(^{304}\)

\(^{301}\) Almond, op. cit., p. 69.
The Constitution included elements that were familiar from Montesquieu, such as the separation of the powers of the executive (the President), the legislature (the two houses of Congress) and the judiciary (the Supreme Court). However, the Americans went a significant step further in granting individual citizens the right to bear arms in defence of their rights. Such an innovation was perhaps possible only in America, whose distance from her most powerful rivals, a decentralised system of semi-sovereign states and ever-expanding frontiers made strong central government less essential and gave unparalleled freedom to the individualist farmer-settlers.

With regard to the issue of slavery, it must be remembered that slavery had been part of the social fabric in the South (and in the British West Indies) since the beginning. This is said not in order to excuse its existence, but in partial explanation of why the southerners fought so hard to retain it. There is no doubt that conditions for black slaves were harsh, harsher than in New Spain. According to the Virginia slave code of 1705 all servants imported into the State “who were not Christians in their native country… shall be accounted and be slaves, and such be here bought and sold notwithstanding a conversion to Christianity afterwards…” Whites could not marry blacks or those of mixed race. And if a master killed a slave in the course of correcting him, “he shall be free of all punishment... as if such accident had never happened”. Slaves were vital for the economy because many of them came from the so-called Rice Coast, present-day Ghana, where they had learned how to separate rice grains from their husks – a skill vital in making rice cultivation a success in the South. Free white workers were less skilled and more expensive. That was the main reason – apart from simple racism – why the slave-owners resisted emancipation so fiercely, and why there were periodic slave uprisings. An attempt to create a new colony without slavery was made in Georgia in 1732, but it failed; and in 1752 Georgia became a crown colony, and thereafter a plantation society like South Carolina…

The Declaration of Independence famously declared all men (if not women) to be equal, and even declared that it was “not possible that one man should have property in person of another”.

However, as Ellis writes, “removing slavery was not like removing British officials or revising constitutions. In isolated pockets of New York and New Jersey, and more panoramically in the entire region south of the Potomac, slavery was woven into the fabric of American society in ways that defied appeals to logic and morality. It also enjoyed the protection of one of the Revolution’s most potent legacies, the right to dispose of one’s property without arbitrary interference from others, especially when the others resided far away or claimed the authority of some distant government. There were, to be sure, radical implications latent in the ‘principles of ‘76’ capable of challenging privileged appeals to property rights, but the secret of their

success lay in their latency – that is, the gradual and surreptitious ways they revealed their egalitarian implications over the course of the nineteenth century. If slavery’s cancerous growth was to be arrested and the dangerous malignancy removed, it demanded immediate surgery. The radical implications of the revolutionary legacy were no help at all so long as they remained only implications.

“The depth and apparent intractability of the problem became much clearer during the debates surrounding the drafting and ratification of the Constitution. Although the final draft of the document was conspicuously silent on slavery, the subject itself haunted the closed-door debates. No less a source than Madison believed that slavery was the central cause of the most elemental division in the Constitutional Convention: ‘the States were divided into different interests not by their difference of size,’ Madison observed, ‘but principally from their having or not having slaves... It did not lie between the large and small States: it lay between the Northern and Southern.’

“The delegates from New England and most of the Middle Atlantic states drew directly on the inspirational rhetoric of the revolutionary legacy to argue that slavery was inherently incompatible with the republican values on which the American Republic had been based. They wanted an immediate end to the slave trade, an explicit statement prohibiting the expansion of slavery into the western territories as a condition for admission into the union, and the adoption of a national plan for gradual emancipation analogous to those state plans already adopted in the North...

“The southern position might more accurately be described as ‘deep southern’, since it did not include Virginia. Its major advocates were South Carolina and Georgia, and the chief burden for making the case in the Constitutional Convention fell almost entirely on the South Carolina delegation. The underlying assumption of this position was most openly acknowledged by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina – namely, that ‘South Carolina and Georgia cannot do without slaves’. What those from the Deep South wanted was open-ended access to African imports to stock their plantations. They also wanted equivalently open access to western lands, meaning no federal legislation restricting the property rights of slave owners...

“Neither side got what it wanted at Philadelphia in 1787. The Constitution contained no provision that committed the newly created federal government to a policy of gradual emancipation, or in any clear sense placed slavery on the road to ultimate extinction. On the other hand, the Constitution contained no provisions that specifically sanctioned slavery as a permanent and protected institution south of the Potomac or anywhere else. The distinguishing feature of the document when it came to slavery was its evasiveness. It was neither a ‘contract with abolition’ nor a ‘covenant with death’, but rather a prudent exercise in ambiguity. The circumlocutions required to place a chronological limit on the slave trade or to count slaves as
three-fifths of a person for purposes of representation in the House, all without ever using the forbidden word, capture the intentionally elusive ethos of the Constitution. The underlying reason for this calculated orchestration of non-commitment was obvious: Any clear resolution of the slavery question one way or the other rendered ratification of the Constitution virtually impossible...”

Several of the Founding Fathers themselves owned slaves. Jefferson owned 200, only seven of whom he ever freed. But this did not prevent him from moving to include a clause condemning George III for the slave trade. But the delegates from South Carolina and Georgia succeeded in having it deleted. George Washington also owned slaves. But this was not the primary reason why he was silent about slavery when he came to make his retirement address in 1796. “His silence on the slavery question was strategic, believing as he did that slavery was a cancer on the body politic of America that could not at present be removed without killing the patient...” And with reason; for by 1790 the slave population was 700,000, up from about 500,000 in 1776. This, and the threat that South Carolina and Georgia would secede from the Union if slavery were outlawed, made it clear that abolition was impractical as politics (but not on a personal level – Washington decreed in his will that all his slaves should be freed after his wife’s death).

Nevertheless, the revolutionary demand for equality in general could not fail to arouse great expectations in the black population. Thus in 1776 Benjamin Franklin admitted “that our struggle has loosened the bonds of government everywhere; that children and apprentices were disobedient; that schools and colleges were grown turbulent; that Indians slighted their guardians, and negroes grew more insolent to their masters...”

“The irony is,” writes Ferguson, “that having won their independence in the name of liberty, the American colonists went on to perpetuate slavery in the southern states. As Samuel Johnson acidly asked in his anti-American pamphlet Taxation No Tyranny: ‘How is it that the loudest YELPS for liberty come from the drivers of Negroses?’ By contrast, within a few decades of having lost the American colonies, the British abolished first the slave trade and then slavery itself throughout their Empire. Indeed, as early as 1775 the British Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, had offered emancipation to slaves who rallied to the British cause. This was not entirely opportunistic: Lord Mansfield’s famous judgement in Somersett’s case had pronounced slavery illegal in England three years before. From the point of view of most African-Americans, American independence postponed emancipation by at least a generation. Although slavery was gradually abolished in northern

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306 Ellis, op. cit., pp. 91-92, 93.
307 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 100.
308 Ellis, op. cit., p. 158.
309 And so “the effort to make the Revolution truly complete seemed diametrically opposed to remaining a united nation” (Ellis, op. cit., p. 108).
310 Almond, op. cit., p. 63.
states like Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island, it remained firmly entrenched in the South, where most slaves lived.

“Nor was independence good news for the native Americans. During the Seven Years War the British government had shown itself anxious to conciliate the Indian tribes, if only to try to lure them away from their alliance with the French. Treaties had been signed which established the Appalachian mountains as the limit of British settlement, leaving the land west of it, including the Ohio Valley, to the Indians. Admittedly, these treaties were not strictly adhered to when peace came, sparking the war known as Pontiac’s Uprising in 1763. But the fact remains that the distant imperial authority in London was more inclined to recognize the rights of the native Americans than the land-hungry colonists on the spot.”311

In fact, Bernard Simms has argued that it was differences over what to do with the peoples west of the Appalachians that caused the revolution. Pontiac’s Indian revolt had “exposed colonial defence structures”. Therefore the British “moved swiftly to put imperial defence on a stable footing. First, in October 1763 it issued a proclamation that there should be no settlement west of the Appalachians. This measure was designed to conciliate the Indians living there; to allay Franco-Spanish fears of untrammelled British colonial expansion; and to reduce the perimeter to be defended by the already overstretched crown forces…”312

Thus Sir Winston Churchill wrote: “Vast territories had fallen to the Crown on the conclusion of the Seven Years War. From the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico the entire hinterland of the American colonies became British soil, and the parcelling out of these new lands led to further trouble with the colonists. Many of them, like George Washington, had formed companies to buy these frontier tracts from the Indians, but a royal proclamation [of 1763] restrained any purchasing and prohibited their settlement. Washington, among others, ignored the ban and wrote to his land agent ordering him ‘to secure some of the most valuable lands in the King’s part [on the Ohio], which I think may be accomplished after a while, notwithstanding the proclamation that restrains it at present, and prohibits the settling of them at all; for I can never look upon that proclamation in any other light (but this I must say between ourselves) than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians.’ (italics – WSC). This attempt by the British government to regulate the new lands caused much discontent among the planters, particularly in the Middle and Southern colonies.”313

The colonists were in any case unimpressed by the efforts of the British redcoats to protect them. They “expected to be awarded the Ohio Valley as the fruit of their struggles. No man or ministry, they felt, should set limits to

the march of an empire. An ‘expansionist’ lobby now began to make its presence felt in the colonial assemblies of North America. They articulated a vision not just of territorial growth but of greatness: a single unified British geopolitical space on the continent, from sea to shining sea, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. Imperialist aggrandizement was thus part of the American project well before independence. It was in fact the reason why the Revolution took place…”

“Historians disagree,” writes Norman Cantor, “on whether the French doctrines of republicanism and the universal rights of man played an important role in shaping the ideas of the American Revolution of 1776, the Constitution of 1787, and the Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution), or whether the American political culture was a direct offshoot of English law and politics. However derived, the American idea was that of a ‘New Order of the World’ in which the privileges, discriminations, and prejudices of Europe were to be superseded (so said the American Revolution of 1776) by a new era of freedom in human history. This does sound like English common law filtered through the prism of French ideological enthusiasm.”

Certainly, it was an Englishman, Thomas Paine, who made the most important single contribution to the separation of the American colonies from the British crown. His revolutionary pamphlets, Common Sense (1976) and The American Crisis (1776-83) were probably, to that time, the most widely read works ever to appear in the English language after the Bible. And among the most influential; for as John Adams said, “Without the pen of the author of Common Sense, the sword of Washington would have been raised in vain”…

314 Simms, op. cit., p. 123.
57. RELIGION IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

We should also not ignore the important of religious factors in the American revolution. Although the revolution was essentially secular in nature, it was undoubtedly profoundly influenced by the highly religious temper of the American people. This religiosity was, of course, Protestant in nature.

Thus Edmund Burke pointed to the indomitably Protestant temper of the Americans: “The people are Protestants, and of the kind which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. All Protestantism is a sort of dissent. But the religion in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance. It is the dissidence of dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion.” 317

There were essentially two kinds of American religion: on the one hand, the Masonry of the cultured leaders of the Revolution, who usually belonged to some institutional church but whose real temple was the lodge, and who, as Karen Armstrong writes, “experienced the revolution as a secular event” 318, and on the other, the Protestantism of the lower classes.

Now American Protestantism of the Puritan type that had dominated New England in the seventeenth century had metamorphosed into something different in the eighteenth century. For, as Reynolds writes, “the Puritans were a dead-end, historically: their attempt to impose a church-dominated uniformity was short-lived. The religious groups who shaped America more profoundly were the Baptists, Methodists and other sects, whose roving preachers set off a series of religious revivals that sparked and crackled across the country from the mid-eighteenth century right up to the Civil War. For these preachers and their followers, religion was an affair of the heart, rooted in a conversion experience, and expressed in a rich, vibrant community of the faithful. These evangelicals broke the stranglehold of the older churches – Anglicans in the South, Congregationalists in New England – and made the United States a nation of sects rather than churches. They also generated much of the fervour behind causes like anti-slavery and later women’s suffrage. America’s religion was a product of evangelicalism more than Puritanism.” 319

A revival of religious enthusiasm in the lower classes is discernible already in the early eighteenth century. This movement had its roots in similar European movements: the German Pietism of Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760) and the British Methodism of John Wesley (1703-1791). The fiery preaching of George Whitefield (1714-1770) was instrumental in bringing this wave of Protestant revivalism to America.

“However,” writes Jean Comby, “there was also a distinctive American dimension: the colonies’ roots in Puritan dreams of a new godly Commonwealth which would remedy the corruption of Old England. By the end of the seventeenth century these dreams had come to seem very threadbare, and many felt that the Calvinist Congregationalist establishments of New England had lost their way. Nevertheless, from the 1720s the same Calvinist impulse which had so inspired the early colonists was beginning to produce fresh energy: and frequently fresh quarrels! A group of Presbyterian ministers in the Middle Colonies led by Gilbert Tennent (1703-64) caused controversy by insisting on the importance of individual conversion in church life, in reaction to what they saw as the formalism of much contemporary religion; they found a powerful if unlooked for ally in George Whitefield when he began a series of spectacular preaching tours in 1739, often reaching great crowds by speaking to them in the open air.

“The scenes of wild enthusiasm which Whitfield’s sermons generated (although he did not encourage such outbursts) set a tone of emotionalism which was to remain characteristic of ‘Revivalism’ in American Protestant religion: and even during the eighteenth century, the gulf between this religious style and a more restrained, reflective strain in American Protestantism became obvious…”

This Revivalist movement was called the First Great Awakening. As Peter Watson writes, it “swept through the northeast and 250 new emotionalist churches were established outside the Calvinist faith.” These were increasingly outlandish and eccentric: “Such groups as those of Conrad Beissel and the Ephrata Mystics, the Shakers and other visionary communities, the Swedenborgians, with their concept of ‘correspondence’, that God speaks to man through Nature; and the Transcendentalists, who also believed that understanding could come through the contemplation of Nature – all of these shared the view that intuition was a higher faculty than reason…”

Revivalism and Irrationalism now interacted with the discontent preceding the American revolution... For, as Armstrong writes, “The Founding Fathers of the American republic were an aristocratic elite and their ideas were not typical. The vast majority of Americans were Calvinists, and they could not relate to this rationalist ethos. Initially, most of the colonists were just as reluctant to break with England as their leaders were. Not all joined the revolutionary struggle. Some 30,000 fought on the British side, and after the war between 80,000 and 100,000 left the new states and migrated to Canada, the West Indies, or Britain. Those who elected to fight for independence would be as much motivated by the old myths and millenial dreams of Christianity as by the secularist ideals of the Founders...
“During the first decade of the revolutionary struggle, people were loath to make a radical break with the past. Severing relations with Britain seemed unthinkable, and many still hoped that the British government would change its policies. Nobody was straining forward excitedly to the future or dreaming of a new world order. Most Americans still instinctively responded to the crisis in the old, premodern way; they looked back to an idealized past to sustain them in their position. The revolutionary leaders and those who embraced the more secular Radical Whig ideology drew inspiration from the struggle of the Saxons against the invading Normans in 1066, or the more recent struggle of the Puritan Parliamentarians during the English Civil War. The Calvinists harked back to their own Golden Age in New England, recalling the struggle of the Puritans against the tyrannical Anglican establishment in Old England; they had sought liberty and freedom from oppression in the New World, creating a godly society in the American wilderness. The emphasis in the sermons and revolutionary rhetoric of this period (1763-73) was on the desire to conserve the precious achievements of the past. The notion of radical change inspired fears of decline and ruin. The colonists were seeking to preserve their heritage, according to the old conservative spirit. The past was presented as idyllic, the future as potentially horrific. The revolutionary leaders declared that their actions were designed to keep at bay the catastrophe that would inevitably ensue if there was a radical severance from tradition. They spoke of the possible consequences of British policy with fear, using the apocalyptic language of the Bible.

“But this changed. As the British clung obstinately to their controversial imperial policies, the colonists burned their boats. After the Boston Tea Party (1773) and the Battles of Lexington and Concord (1775) there could be no going back. The Declaration of Independence expressed a new and courageous determination to break away from the old order and go forward to an unprecedented future. In this respect, the Declaration was a modernizing document, which articulated in political terms the intellectual independence and iconoclasm that had characterized the scientific revolution in Europe. But the majority of the colonists were more inspired by the myths of Christian prophecy than by John Locke…

“… The Great Awakening had already made New Light Calvinists wary of the establishment and confident of their ability to effect major change. When revolutionary leaders spoke of ‘liberty’, they used a term that was already saturated with religious meaning: it carried associations of grace, of the freedom of the Gospel and the Sons of God. It was linked with such themes as the Kingdom of God, in which all oppression would end, and the myth [sic] of the Chosen People who would become God’s instrument in the transformation of the world. Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), president of Yale University, spoke enthusiastically of the revolution ushering in ‘Immanuel’s Land’, and of America becoming ‘the principal seat of that new, that peculiar Kingdom which shall be given to the saints of the Most High’. In 1775, the Connecticut preacher Ebenezer Baldwin insisted that the calamities of the war could only hasten God’s plans for the New World. Jesus would establish his
glorious Kingdom in America: liberty, religion and learning had been driven out of Europe and had moved westward, across the Atlantic. The present crisis was preparing the way for the Last Days of the present corrupt order. For Provost William Smith of Philadelphia, the colonies were God’s ‘chosen seat of Freedom, Arts and Heavenly Knowledge’.

“But if churchmen were sacralizing politics, secularist leaders also used the language of Christian utopianism. John Adams looked back on the settlement of America as God’s plan for the enlightenment of the whole of humanity. Thomas Paine was convinced that ‘we have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation such as the present hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand’. The rational pragmatism of the leaders would not itself have been sufficient to help people make the fearsome journey to an unknown future and break with the motherland. The enthusiasm, imagery, and mythology of Christian eschatology gave meaning to the revolutionary struggle and helped secularism and Calvinists alike to make the decisive, dislocating severance from tradition.”

Also important among the religious currents that inspired the revolution, especially among the élites, was Masonry... The first lodges had been established in Boston and Philadelphia by 1730. And several of the leaders of the American revolution were Masons, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Hancock, James Madison, James Monrose, Paul Revere, John Paul Jones and La Fayette. However, many of the leaders of the British forces were also Freemasons, and “of the 7 Provincial Grand Masters [in America], 5 supported George III, and condemned revolutionary agitation against the established authority.”

This confirms the point that English Masonry was not as revolutionary in character as the continental variety; while American Masonry, being a mixture of the two (Lafayette represented French Masonry, and Franklin was also influenced by the French), had leading representatives on both sides of the conflict. But it was not simply a question of English versus Continental Masonry: the movement had the unexpected property of spawning, as well as most of the leaders of the revolution, several of the leaders of the counter-revolution. Hence the paradox that Tom Paine, one of the leading apologists of the revolution, was not a Freemason, while his reactionary opponent, Edmund Burke, was; that the anti-revolutionary Comte d’Artois and King Gustavus Adolphus III of Sweden were Freemasons, while the ultra-revolutionary Danton and Robespierre were not; that Napoleon was not a Freemason (although he protected it), while the reactionary generals who defeated him – Wellington, Blücher and Kutuzov - were.

322 Armstrong, op. cit., pp. 80, 82-84.
325 Ridley, op. cit., p. 100.
One reason for this paradoxical phenomenon was the distinction, discussed above, between two concepts of freedom prevailing in eighteenth-century thought: freedom as a negative concept, freedom from restrictions of various kinds, and freedom as a positive concept, freedom to do certain things. English liberalism and the English Enlightenment, following Locke, understood freedom in the negative sense; whereas the French Enlightenment, as well as Counter-Enlightenment writers such as Rousseau, tended to understand it in the positive sense – which was also the more revolutionary idea. Those who joined the ranks of the Masons were lovers of freedom in a general sense; but when some of them saw how the Rousseauist, positive concept of freedom led to Jacobinism and all the horrors of the French revolution, they turned sharply against it. Some still remained members of the lodge, but others broke all links with it.326

Another reason had to do with the decentralised, diffuse organisation of Masonry, and its very broad criteria of membership. This meant that a very wide range of people could enter its ranks, and precluded the degree of control and discipline that was essential for the attainment and, still more important, the retention of supreme political power. Masonry was therefore the ideal kind of organization for the first stage in the revolutionary process, the dissemination of revolutionary ideas as quickly as possible through as large a proportion of the population as possible.

But if “the mystery of iniquity” was to achieve real political power, this first stage has to be succeeded by a second in which a more highly disciplined and ruthless, Communist-style party took over the leadership. Such a takeover is discernible in both the French and the Russian revolutions. In France the Masonic constitutionalists, such as Mirabeau and Lafayette, were pushed aside by the anti-democratic, anti-constitutionalist Jacobins or “Illuminati”, while in Russia the Masonic constitutionalists, such as Kerensky and Lvov, were pushed aside by Lenin and Stalin...

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The American revolution was unique in that the first stage has not been succeeded by the second – yet...

However, we noted above George Washington's fear that Illuminism may have penetrated America, and the possibility that Thomas Jefferson was a member of the sect. According to Mike Hanson, “many believe that a powerful group of Illuminati Freemasons manipulated and won the War of Independence in 1776 and then took control of the new United States of America. They believe that this Secret Brotherhood has never conceded that

326 Thus Wellington never entered a lodge after his membership lapsed in 1795, and in 1851 wrote that he “had no recollection of having been admitted a Freemason…” (Ridley, op. cit., p. 161)
control to this day. It is interesting to note the design for the Great Seal of the United States, which contains magical symbols dating to ancient Egypt and beyond, including the pyramid and all-seeing eye of Horus. Above and below this symbol are two Latin phrases, *Annuit Coeptis* and *Novus Ordo Seclorum*. These translate as ‘Announcing the birth, creation, or arrival’ of ‘A Secular [Non-Religious] New Order of Ages’. In other words, they were announcing the creation of the New World Order.

“The founding of the United States was a massive step in the plan for centralized global power. Today, this part of the Great Seal can be found on the back of every US dollar bill, which seems appropriate, given that the Secret Brotherhood controls the American economy. The decision to put the Pyramid and *Novus Ordo Seculorum* symbol on the dollar was made by the 33rd degree Freemason, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1935, with the full support and encouragement of his vice president, Henry Wallace, another 33rd degree Mason. The American flag was also designed to reflect Brotherhood symbolism, and the Statue of Liberty [representing Isis] was given to American Freemasons by a French Grand Orient (Illuminati) Masonic Order.

“Today, the Secret Brotherhood’s conspiratorial network includes the mysterious Bilderberg Group; Yale University’s prestigious Skull & Bones Society, the clandestine Black Lodges of Freemasonry, and the secretive Knights of Malta. Its diabolical influence reaches into the corridors of power at the White House, the CIA, the Federal Reserve, even the Vatican...”

As we have seen, the early Americans were extremely religious. Moreover, their religiosity went with an extreme religious intolerance. Thus in 1645 Thomas Shepard of Newtown said to Hugh Peter of Salem (where the famous witches’ trial took place): “Toleration of all upon pretence of conscience – I thank God my soul abhors it. The godly in former times never fought for the liberty of consciences by pleading for liberty for all.”

“Most of the Bay colonists agreed with the sixteenth-century French theologian Theodore Beza that full liberty of religion was ‘a most diabolical doctrine because it means that every one should be left to go to hell in his own way’.”

“After the Revolution, however,” writes Armstrong, “when the newly independent states drew up their constitutions, God was mentioned in them only in the most perfunctory manner. In 1786, Thomas Jefferson disestablished the Anglican church in Virginia; his bill declared that coercion in matters of faith was ‘sinfull and tyrannical’, that truth would prevail if people were allowed their own opinions, and that there should be a ‘wall of separation’ between religion and politics. The bill was supported by the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians of Virginia, who resented the privileged position of the Church of England in the state. Later the other

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327 Hanson, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
328 Shepard, in Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
329 Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
states followed Virginia’s lead, and disestablished their own churches, Massachusetts being the last one to do so, in 1833. In 1787, when the federal Constitution was drafted at the Philadelphia Convention, God was not mentioned at all, and in the Bill of Rights (1789), the First Amendment of the Constitution formally separated religion from the state: ‘Congress shall make no laws respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof’. Henceforth faith would be a private and voluntary affair in the United States. This was a revolutionary step and has been hailed as one of the great achievements of the Age of Reason. The thinking behind it was indeed inspired by the tolerant philosophy of the Enlightenment, but the Founding Fathers were also moved by more pragmatic considerations. They knew that the federal Constitution was essential to preserve the unity of the states, but they also realized that if the federal government established any single one of the Protestant denominations and made it the official faith of the United States, the Constitution would not be approved. Congregationalist Massachusetts, for example, would never ratify a Constitution that established the Anglican Church. This was also the reason why Article VI, Section 3, of the Constitution abolished religious tests for office in the federal government. There was idealism in the Founders’ decision to disestablish religion and to secularize politics, but the new nation could not base its identity on any one sectarian option and retain the loyalty of all its subjects. The needs of the modern state demanded that it be tolerant and, therefore, secular.”

Rhode Island was the first State to proclaim religious freedom, under the leadership of Roger Williams in 1636; it was followed by Connecticut in 1636 and Pennsylvania in 1682. These colonies became sanctuaries for persecuted religious minorities fleeing more authoritarian States such as Massachusetts. Hardly coincidentally, Rhode Island was the first State to renounce allegiance to the British Crown in 1776. As Patrick Henry, “the firebrand of the American revolution”, wrote in 1776: It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religion, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For that reason alone, people of other faiths have been afforded freedom of worship here.”

Already in Europe the notion of toleration had undergone a subtle but important change, the change from toleration as “a utilitarian expedient to avoid destructive strife” to toleration as “an intrinsic value”. It became a

An example of toleration as a utilitarian expedient is provided by England’s attitude to Roman Catholics before the twentieth century. As Joseph Sobran writes: “For centuries England tolerated Roman Catholics, who were regarded as heretics owing their chief loyalty to a foreign power (the papacy). But Roman Catholics were also barred from public offices, universities, and other positions of influence. Toleration wasn’t considered a virtue: it was only a policy, based on the assumption that ideally there should be no Roman Catholics in England. The policy was to allow Roman Catholicism to exist (in private), while discouraging people from embracing it” (The Wanderer, July 1, 1999). In the twentieth century, however,
dogma of the Enlightenment and Masonry that a ruler could not impose his religion on his subjects.\textsuperscript{332} Certain rulers, such as the Mason Frederick the Great, took religious toleration to the point of almost complete indifference.

However, the complete separation of Church and State, religion and politics, was still unheard-of in Europe. This idea was first put into practice in the United States, a land founded mainly by Calvinist refugees fleeing from the State’s persecution of their religion. What the Calvinist refugees valued above all was the freedom to practice their religion free from any interference from the State.

For, as K.N. Leontiev writes: “The people who left Old England and laid the foundations of the States of America were all extremely religious people who did not want to make any concessions with regard to their burning personal faith and had not submitted to the State Church of Episcopal Anglicanism, not out of progressive indifference, but out of godliness.

“The Catholics, Puritans, Quakers, all were agreed about one thing – that there should be mutual tolerance, not out of coldness, but out of necessity. And so the State created by them for the reconciliation of all these burning religious extremes found its centre of gravity outside religion. Tolerance was imposed by circumstances, there was no inner indifferentism.”\textsuperscript{333}

The new doctrine, as we have seen, was enshrined in the Constitution’s First Amendment (1791): “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”\textsuperscript{334}

tolerations of Catholics has been seen as a positive virtue, and the only remnant of the old, utilitarian attitude is the ban on a Roman Catholic becoming king or queen of England.

\textsuperscript{332} According to Enlightenment philosophers, “physical matter in identical circumstances would always behave in the same way: all stones dropped from a great height fall to the ground. What applied to the physical world applied to the human world too. All human beings in human circumstances other than their own would act in very different ways. How human beings conducted themselves was not accidental, but the accident of birth into particular societies at particular moments in those societies’ development determined what kinds of people they would eventually turn out to be. The implications of this view were clear: if you were born in Persia, instead of France, you would have been a Muslim, not a Catholic; if you had been born poor and brought up in bad company you would probably end up a thief; if you had been born a Protestant in northern Europe, rather than a Catholic in southern England, then you would be tolerant and love liberty, whereas southerners tended to be intolerant and to put up with autocratic government. If what human beings were like was the necessary effect of the circumstances they were born to, then nobody had a right to be too censorious about anybody else. A certain toleration of other ways of doing things, and a certain moderation in the criticism of social and political habits, customs and institutions, seemed the natural corollary of the materialistic view of mankind” (McClelland, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 297).

\textsuperscript{333} Leontiev, “Vizantizm i Slavianstvo” (“Byzantinism and Slavism”), in \textit{Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo} (The East, Russia and Slavism), Moscow, 1996, p. 124
\textsuperscript{334} Rafferty, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 54.
The religious toleration of America has been a precious boon for the immigrants from many countries and of many faiths who fleeing persecution. The assumption underlying it was well expressed thus: “If... the attitude of the law both civil and criminal towards all religions depends fundamentally on the safety of the State and not on the doctrines or metaphysics of those who profess them, it is not necessary to consider whether or why any given body was relieved by the law at one time or frowned on at another, or to analyse creeds and tenets, Christian and other.”

However, the idea that the safety of the State is completely independent of the religion (or lack of it) confessed by its citizens is false. The history of the people of God demonstrates that their prosperity depended crucially on their fulfilling of the commandments of God. For, as Solomon says: “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” (Proverbs 14.34). The idea that the religion of a State has no bearing on its prosperity could occur only to a person who has not studied history or believes in a Deist God Who created the world but does not interfere in its history thereafter.

Also false is the idea that anyone worshipping “according to the dictates of his own conscience” is for that reason alone worthy of protection. “Conscience” very often refers, not to the real voice of God speaking in the soul of man, but any voice, however demonic, that a man thinks or pretends is the voice of God. It is therefore inherently dangerous to consider a religion worthy of protection, not because it is objectively true, but because the believers are sincere in their beliefs, whether these are in fact true or false, profitable to society or profoundly harmful to it. False religion is always harmful, both for its adherents, and for those right-believers who are tempted away from the right path by them. We would never accept the argument that a poison can be sold freely so long as its traders sincerely believe it to be harmless or because the traders “are accountable to God alone” for the harm they cause. And the spiritual poison of heresy is far more harmful than material poison, in that it leads, not simply to the temporal dissolution of the body, but to the eternal damnation of the soul. Of course, it is another question how a false religion is to be combatted. Crude forms of persecution are often counter-productive in that they strengthen the fanaticism of the persecuted. Persuasion and education that respects the freewill of the heretic is without question the best means of combatting false belief. The free will of the heretic is not violated, and he is able to come freely, by the free exercise of his reasoning power, to a knowledge of the truth.

However, what about those who are too young to reason for themselves or for some other reason unable to exercise their reasoning powers? Should they not be protected from the influence of heretics? If allowed to live in a truly Christian atmosphere, these weak members of society may become stronger.

in faith and have less need of the protection of the State. But while they are still weak, the influence of heretics, if unchecked, could well lead them astray. It is a generally accepted principle that the young and the weak, who are not yet fully independent spiritually, are entitled to the protection of the State against those who would exploit their weakness to their destruction. So in cases where the heretic is himself stubbornly impenitent, and is leading others astray, physical forms of oppression may be justified. The spiritually strong may refuse to offer physical resistance to religious evil, choosing instead the path of voluntary martyrdom. But the spiritually weak cannot choose this path, and must be protected from the evil, if necessary by physical means. Indeed, one could argue that the government that does not protect the weak in this way is itself persecuting them, laying them open to the most evil and destructive influences. For, as Sir Thomas More’s King Utopus understood, “the worst men be most obstinate and stubborn and in their evil opinion most constant”, so that without some restraint on them “the best and holiest religion would be trodden underfoot by most vain superstitions, even as good corn is by thorns and weeds overgrown and choked.”

Lev Tikhomirov writes: “Man is a bodily being. Moral ‘persuasion’ is inseparable from moral ‘coercion’, and in certain cases also from physical ‘violence’. If one says: ‘Act through moral persuasion, but do not dare to resort to physical violence’, this is either absurdity or hypocrisy. Every conviction sooner or later unfailingly finds its expression in forms of physical action for the simple reason that man is not [only] spirit and lives in a physical form. All our acts represent a union of spiritual and physical acts. If a man does something, it is unfailingly accompanied by physical actions. This relates both to good and to evil. One can oppose evil sometimes by moral persuasions, but at other times it is impossible to resist it otherwise than physically, and then ‘resistance’ and ‘violence’ are morally obligatory.”

Moreover, the State needs religion even more than religion needs the State. For “the legislative mind cannot fail to value the religious spirit of a people in view of the unbreakable bond between religion and morality…

“State order and the energetic pursuit of the aims of the public good are attained by a good organisation of the governmental mechanism, by the establishment of rational laws, and by a series of measures of observation, coercion, punishment, encouragement, etc. But however well worked-out the laws may be, and however perfected may be the governmental mechanism, courts and administration, this still will not lead to the attainment of the good ends of the state if citizens do not strive on their own initiative to live in accordance with justice and their own moral duty. A living, self-dependent feeling of moral duty in the souls of citizens is the foundation of the public good: when this is present, the very oversights of the law and the authorities

336 More, Utopia, book II, pp. 119-120.
do not become particularly fatal, for the citizens will not hurry to exploit the possibility of abuse, and by their own self-dependent moral acts will significantly correct the evil permitted by the imperfection of the law or the governmental mechanism. On the contrary, however, in the absence of a self-dependent striving of the citizens to act in accordance with righteousness, there will be no question of the State keeping track of everyone, and there will be nobody to keeping an eye on them, for the State’s agents themselves, as products of society, will always have the same character and the same level of morality as exists in the people.

“Thus a living moral feeling constitutes the foundation for the success of the State’s actions. But the State does not of itself have the means to generate this feeling that is necessary to it. The State can take measures that the moral feeling should not be undermined by the spread of immoral teachings or the demoralising spectacle of vice triumphant, etc. By a firm insistence on the fulfilment of the prescribed norms of life and by the systematic punishment of crime the State can ‘drill’ the citizens, make the observance of righteousness into a habit. But all this has a useful significance only if the moral feeling is somehow ‘generated’ in souls, that is, when the ‘material’ by which the mechanical measures can operate already exists.

“Whence is this necessary material to be taken? By what is the moral feeling ‘generated’?

“... In itself, by its very nature, the moral feeling is not social, but religious...

“The moral feeling of man is the demand that his feelings and actions should be in harmony with a ‘higher’ power of the world’s life... Man wishes to be in union with this higher power, leaving aside all calculations of benefit or non-benefit. Out of all that life can give him, he finds the greatest joy in the consciousness of his union with the very foundation of the world’s powers...

“Man impresses his idea of what is the main, highest world power, and his striving to be in harmony with it, in all spheres of his creativity, including Statehood.

“Therefore the State has all the more to protect and support everything in which the very generation of the moral feeling takes place.

“In the vast majority of cases – this is a general fact of history – people themselves directly link the source of their moral feeling with the Divinity. It is precisely in God that they see that higher power, harmony with which constitutes their morality. Morality flows from religion, religion interprets and confirms morality.

“Besides, it is a general historical fact that people unite into special societies in order to live together in accordance with their religious-moral
tasks. These religious organisations interweave with social and political organisations, but they are never completely merged with them, even in the most theocratic States. In the Christian world this collective religious life is carried out, as we know, in the Church...

“In this way the demand to preserve and develop social morality naturally leads the State to a union with the Church. In trying to help the Church make society as moral as possible, the State aims to use in its own work that moral capital which it [the Church] builds up in people....

“Autonomous morality, on the contrary, is founded on the premise that the innate moral feeling guides man by itself. We do not know from where this feeling, this ‘altruism’, comes from, but it rules our moral acts just as the force of gravity rules the movement of the heavenly lights. The religious principle, qua impulse, is quite unnecessary. To clarify what must and what must not be done, we need only enlightenment, knowledge of the needs of man and society, an understanding of the solidarity of human interests, etc.

“From this point of view, the work of the State in the development of morality comes down to the development of the school and the multiplication of other means of the development of enlightenment, perhaps with the teaching of ‘courses of morality’....

“The tendency to substitute the school for the Church is now [in 1903] very strong, and in general the State and the law of contemporary countries have to all practical purposes already done much for the triumph of the idea of autonomous morality in place of religious morality....

“‘Autonomous’ morality leads to an endless diversity of moral rules, and to the disappearance of any generally accepted line of behaviour.

“Moreover, the right of the person to have his ‘autonomous’ morality annihilates the possibility of public moral discipline. Whatever foulness a man may have committed, he can always declare that according to ‘his’ morality this act is permissible or even very lofty. Society has no criterion by which to reproach the lie contained in such a declaration. It can kill such a person, but it cannot morally judge him or despise him. But this ‘moral’ condemnation is society’s most powerful weapon for the education of the person, beginning from childhood and throughout almost the whole course of a man’s life...

“All in all, therefore, the autonomy of morality leads to moral chaos, in which neither law nor custom nor public opinion are possible – that is, no social or political discipline in general...

“Even leaving aside plain debauchery, which unbridles predatory instincts and similar phenomena, developing autonomy under its all-permissive protection, and taking into consideration only chosen natures that are truly
endowed with a subtle moral feeling, we nevertheless find in them an extremely harmful, fruitlessly revolutionary type of character, an element that is forever striving to destroy social-political forms, but which is satisfied with no new constructions. In the cultured world we have already been observing such a picture for more than one hundred years now...”

And yet the autonomy of morality from religion was never preached by America’s Founding Fathers. Thus John Adams, the second president and also chairman of the American Bible Society, said in an address to military leaders: “We have no government armed with the power capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and true religion. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

Again, his son, John Quincy Adams, the sixth president and also chairman of the American Bible Society, said on July 4, 1821: “The highest glory of the American revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.” The great tragedy of modern America is that this “indissoluble bond” has now been broken. “Freedom” has been taken to such extremes of licence that it has ceased to signify a positive virtue. We are reminded that the Statue of Liberty at the entrance to New York harbour looks almost exactly like antique statues of Hecate, the goddess of the underworld...

While Christians were becoming more tolerant of “Musselmen”, the reverse was not the case. In 1689, the same year in which the Toleration Act was passed in England, the Turks were defeated outside the walls of Vienna. This important battle on the one hand removed a great threat to Christian civilization, but on the other hand engendered a new one. For many Muslims “blamed Ottoman reverses on a lack of true piety, and the emergence of religious heresies right in the heart of the Dar al Islam itself. The answer, these critics argued, was more Islam. For this reason the eighteenth century central Arabian preacher Muhammed ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-92) called for an Islamic reformation, a return to the uncorrupted principles of medieval Islam. By the end of the century he had joined forces with the local tribal chief Muhammed ibn Saud, and raised most of the Arabian peninsula in revolt against the Ottomans. The religious radicalization of the Arab world, in other words, began in central Europe, before the walls of Vienna…”

We see the first impact of Wahhabism on the western world in 1785, when Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were informed by Tripoli’s envoy to London that “all nations which did not acknowledge the authority of the Koran ‘were sinners, [and] that it was their right and duty to make war upon whoever they could find and to make slaves of all they could take as prisoners…”

Wahhabism became the official faith of Saudi Arabia in the 1920s under King Abd-al Aziz, who then began to export it as a kind of “cultural revolution” throughout the Muslim world.

However, as Alastair Crooke writes, “this ‘cultural revolution’ was no docile reformism. It was a revolution based on Abd al-Wahhab’s Jacobin-like hatred for the putrescence and deviationism that he perceived all about him -- hence his call to purge Islam of all its heresies and idolatries.

“The American author and journalist, Steven Coll, has written how this austere and censorious disciple of the 14th century scholar Ibn Taymiyyah, Abd al-Wahhab, despaired ‘the decorous, arty, tobacco smoking, hashish imbibing, drum pounding Egyptian and Ottoman nobility who travelled across Arabia to pray at Mecca.’

“In Abd al-Wahhab’s view, these were not Muslims; they were imposters masquerading as Muslims. Nor, indeed, did he find the behavior of local Bedouin Arabs much better. They aggravated Abd al-Wahhab by their honoring of saints, by their erecting of tombstones, and their "superstition" (e.g. revering graves or places that were deemed particularly imbued with the divine).

339 Simms, op. cit., p. 92.
“All this behavior, Abd al-Wahhab denounced as bida -- forbidden by God. Like Taymiyyah before him, Abd al-Wahhab believed that the period of the Prophet Muhammad's stay in Medina was the ideal of Muslim society (the "best of times"), to which all Muslims should aspire to emulate (this, essentially, is Salafism).

“Taymiyyah had declared war on Shi’ism, Sufism and Greek philosophy. He spoke out, too against visiting the grave of the prophet and the celebration of his birthday, declaring that all such behavior represented mere imitation of the Christian worship of Jesus as God (i.e. idolatry). Abd al-Wahhab assimilated all this earlier teaching, stating that "any doubt or hesitation" on the part of a believer in respect to his or her acknowledging this particular interpretation of Islam should ‘deprive a man of immunity of his property and his life’.

“One of the main tenets of Abd al-Wahhab’s doctrine has become the key idea of takfir. Under the takfiiri doctrine, Abd al-Wahhab and his followers could deem fellow Muslims infidels should they engage in activities that in any way could be said to encroach on the sovereignty of the absolute Authority (that is, the King). Abd al-Wahhab denounced all Muslims who honored the dead, saints, or angels. He held that such sentiments detracted from the complete subservience one must feel towards God, and only God. Wahhabi Islam thus bans any prayer to saints and dead loved ones, pilgrimages to tombs and special mosques, religious festivals celebrating saints, the honoring of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad's birthday, and even prohibits the use of gravestones when burying the dead.

"’Those who would not conform to this view should be killed, their wives and daughters violated, and their possessions confiscated, he wrote.’

“Abd al-Wahhab demanded conformity -- a conformity that was to be demonstrated in physical and tangible ways. He argued that all Muslims must individually pledge their allegiance to a single Muslim leader (a Caliph, if there were one). Those who would not conform to this view should be killed, their wives and daughters violated, and their possessions confiscated, he wrote. The list of apostates meriting death included the Shiite, Sufis and other Muslim denominations, whom Abd al-Wahhab did not consider to be Muslim at all…

“Abd al-Wahhab's advocacy of these ultra radical views inevitably led to his expulsion from his own town -- and in 1741, after some wanderings, he found refuge under the protection of Ibn Saud and his tribe. What Ibn Saud perceived in Abd al-Wahhab's novel teaching was the means to overturn Arab tradition and convention. It was a path to seizing power.

”’Their strategy -- like that of ISIS today -- was to bring the peoples whom they conquered into submission. They aimed to instill fear.’

169
“Ibn Saud's clan, seizing on Abd al-Wahhab's doctrine, now could do what they always did, which was raiding neighboring villages and robbing them of their possessions. Only now they were doing it not within the ambit of Arab tradition, but rather under the banner of jihad. Ibn Saud and Abd al-Wahhab also reintroduced the idea of martyrdom in the name of jihad, as it granted those martyred immediate entry into paradise.

“In the beginning, they conquered a few local communities and imposed their rule over them. (The conquered inhabitants were given a limited choice: conversion to Wahhabism or death.) By 1790, the Alliance controlled most of the Arabian Peninsula and repeatedly raided Medina, Syria and Iraq.

“Their strategy -- like that of ISIS today -- was to bring the peoples whom they conquered into submission. They aimed to instill fear. In 1801, the Allies attacked the Holy City of Karbala in Iraq. They massacred thousands of Shiites, including women and children. Many Shiite shrines were destroyed, including the shrine of Imam Hussein, the murdered grandson of Prophet Muhammad.

“A British official, Lieutenant Francis Warden, observing the situation at the time, wrote: ‘They pillaged the whole of it [Karbala], and plundered the Tomb of Hussein... slaying in the course of the day, with circumstances of peculiar cruelty, above five thousand of the inhabitants...’

“Osman Ibn Bishr Najdi, the historian of the first Saudi state, wrote that Ibn Saud committed a massacre in Karbala in 1801. He proudly documented that massacre saying, ‘we took Karbala and slaughtered and took its people (as slaves), then praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and we do not apologize for that and say: 'And to the unbelievers: the same treatment.'

“In 1803, Abdul Aziz then entered the Holy City of Mecca, which surrendered under the impact of terror and panic (the same fate was to befall Medina, too). Abd al-Wahhab's followers demolished historical monuments and all the tombs and shrines in their midst. By the end, they had destroyed centuries of Islamic architecture near the Grand Mosque.

“But in November of 1803, a Shiite assassin killed King Abdul Aziz (taking revenge for the massacre at Karbala). His son, Saud bin Abd al Aziz, succeeded him and continued the conquest of Arabia. Ottoman rulers, however, could no longer just sit back and watch as their empire was devoured piece by piece. In 1812, the Ottoman army, composed of Egyptians, pushed the Alliance out from Medina, Jeddah and Mecca. In 1814, Saud bin Abd al Aziz died of fever. His unfortunate son Abdullah bin Saud, however, was taken by the Ottomans to Istanbul, where he was gruesomely executed (a visitor to Istanbul reported seeing him having been humiliated in the streets of Istanbul for three days, then hanged and beheaded, his severed head fired from a cannon, and his heart cut out and impaled on his body).
“In 1815, Wahhabi forces were crushed by the Egyptians (acting on the Ottoman’s behalf) in a decisive battle. In 1818, the Ottomans captured and destroyed the Wahhabi capital of Dariyah. The first Saudi state was no more. The few remaining Wahhabis withdrew into the desert to regroup, and there they remained, quiescent for most of the 19th century…”

59. THE DARK HEART OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

There were obvious deficiencies in the optimistic view of the world presented by the philosophers of the French Enlightenment. In the first place, it failed to explain the existence of evil - prejudice and bad education could hardly account for all evil. Again, if this was the best of all possible worlds, as Leibniz claimed, why did the terrible earthquake of Lisbon in 1755 take place? Some fault in the harmony of God’s laws? Or a deliberate irruption of God’s wrath into a sinful world? In either case one had to admit, with Voltaire himself, that “the world does, after all, contain evil”, and that either nature was not harmonious and perfect, or that God did intervene in its workings – postulates that were both contrary to the Enlightenment creed.

There was another serious problem: the Enlightenment failed to satisfy the cravings of the religious man; for man is not only a rational animal, but also a religious animal. And when his religious nature is denied, there is always a reaction. For, as Roger Scruton writes, “Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists, Hume, Smith, and the Scottish Enlightenment, the Kant of Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone – such thinkers and movements had collectively remade the God of Christianity as a creature of the head rather than the heart. God retreated from the world to the far reaches of infinite space, where only vertiginous thoughts could capture him. Daily life is of little concern to such a God, who demands no form of obedience except to the universal precepts of morality… As God retreated from the world, people reached out for a rival source of membership, and national identity seemed to answer to the need…” 342

The cult of the nation did not really get underway until the nineteenth century. But already in the first half of the eighteenth century the religious cravings suppressed by Enlightenment rationalism were seeking outlets in more emotional forms of religion, the very opposite of enlightened calm. Such were Methodism in England and Pietism in Germany, Revivalism and the Great Awakening in America and “Convulsionarism” in France.

In some ways, however, these very emotional, passionate forms of religion worked in the same direction as the cult of reason. They, too, tended to minimise the importance of theology and dogma, and to maximise the importance of man and human activity and human passion. Thus in American Revivalism, writes Cragg, “conversion was described in terms of how a man felt, the new life was defined in terms of how he acted. This was more than an emphasis on the moral consequences of obedience to God; it was a preoccupation with man, and it became absorbed in what he did and in the degree to which he promoted righteousness. In a curious way man’s activity was obscuring the cardinal fact of God’s rule.” 343

343 Cragg, op. cit., p. 181.
The French revolution was to bring together the streams of Enlightenment rationalism and irrational religion in a single, torrential rebellion against God...

The rationalists became adept at explaining religion in naturalistic terms. Religion was simply a “need”, no different in principle from other needs, as Freud later tried to demonstrate. Of course, no religious person will find such explanations even remotely convincing. But it must be admitted that, unconvincing though their explanations might be, the Enlightenment philosophers managed to convince enough people to create whole generations of men possessing not even a spark of that religious “enthusiasm” which they so despised.

Were they happier for it? Hardly. Condorcet wrote: “The time will come when the sun will shine only upon a world of free men who recognise no master except their reason, when tyrants and slaves, priests, and their stupid or hypocritical tools will no longer exist except in history or on the stage”. That time has not yet come. Most men do indeed “recognise no master except their reason”. But there are still tyrants and slaves (and priests) – and no discernible decrease in human misery.

Moreover, there was not just unhappiness – the accompaniment of most ages of human history: there was something deeper and darker, a madness underlying the urbane and sophisticated surface of Enlightenment Europe. The greatest thinkers and artists of the age could not fail to be sensitive to this madness, just waiting to break out in the horrors of the French revolution. We sense it, for example, in Mozart’s Don Giovanni, where the Don is dragged screaming into the fire of hell by demons.

Still more horrifying, because happening in real life to the most famous and typical representative of the age, was the death of Voltaire: “When Voltaire felt the stroke that he realized must terminate in death, he was overpowered with remorse. He at once sent for the priest, and wanted to be ‘reconciled with the church.’ His infidel flatterers hastened to his chamber to prevent his recantation; but it was only to witness his ignominy and their own. He cursed them to their faces; and, as his distress was increased by their presence, he repeatedly and loudly exclaimed, ‘Begone! It is you that have brought me to my present condition. Leave me, I say; begone! What a wretched glory is this which you have produced to me!’

“Hoping to allay his anguish by a written recantation, he had it prepared, signed it, and saw it witnessed. But it was all unavailing. For two months he was tortured with such an agony as led him at times to gnash his teeth in impotent rage against God and man. At other times in plaintive accents, he would plead, ‘O, Christ! O, Lord Jesus!’ Then, turning his face, he would cry out, ‘I must die - abandoned of God and of men!’
“As his end drew near, his condition became so frightful that his infidel associates were afraid to approach his beside. Still they guarded the door, that others might not know how awfully an infidel was compelled to die. Even his nurse repeatedly said, ‘For all the wealth of Europe I would never see another infidel die.’ It was a scene of horror that lies beyond all exaggeration. Such is the well-attested end of the one who had a natural sovereignty of intellect, excellent education, great wealth, and much earthly honor.”

The immediate result of the Enlightenment was the French revolution and all the revolutions that took their inspiration from it, with all their attendant bloodshed and misery, destroying both the bodies and souls of men on a hitherto unprecedented scale. Science and education have indeed spread throughout the world, but poverty has not been abolished, nor war nor disease nor crime. If it were possible to measure “happiness” scientifically, then it is highly doubtful whether the majority of men are any happier now than they were before the bright beams of the Enlightenment began to dawn on the world.

It is especially the savagery of the twentieth century that has convinced us of this. As Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer write: “In the most general sense of progressive thought the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant.” And as Nadezhda Mandelstam writes: “We have seen the triumph of evil after the values of humanism have been vilified and trampled on. The reason these values succumbed was probably that they were based on nothing except boundless confidence in the human intellect.”

And the reason why “boundless confidence in the human intellect” has brought us to this pass is that, as L.A. Tikhomirov writes, the cult of reason “very much wants to establish worldly prosperity, it very much wants to make people happy, but it will achieve nothing, because it approaches the problem from the wrong end.

“It may appear strange that people who think only of earthly prosperity, and who put their whole soul into realising it, attain only disillusionment and exhaustion. People who, on the contrary, are immersed in cares about the invisible life beyond the grave, attain here, on earth, results constituting the highest examples yet known on earth of personal and social development! However, this strangeness is self-explanatory. The point is that man is by his nature precisely the kind of being that Christianity understands him to be by faith; the aims of life that are indicated to him by faith are precisely the kind of aims that he has in reality, and not the kind that reason divorced from faith

344 Rev. S.B. Shaw, Dying Testimonies of Saved and Unsaved, pp. 49-50.
346 Nadezhda Mandelstam, Hope against Hope.
delineates. Therefore in educating a man in accordance with the Orthodox world-view, we conduct his education correctly, and thence we get results that are good not only in that which is most important [salvation] (which unbelievers do not worry about), but also in that which is secondary (which is the only thing they set their heart on). In losing faith, and therefore ceasing to worry about the most important thing, people lost the possibility of developing man in accordance with his true nature, and so they get distorted results in earthly life, too.”

The problem is that “reason is a subordinate capacity. If it is not directed by the lofty single organ of religion perception – the feeling of faith, it will be directed by the lower strivings, which are infinitely numerous. Hence all the heresies, all the ‘fractions’, all contemporary reasonings, too. This is a path of seeking which we can beforehand predict will lead to endless disintegration, splintering and barrenness in all its manifestations, and so in the end it will only exhaust people and lead them to a false conviction that in essence religious truth does not exist.”

And yet such a conclusion will be reached only if the concept of reason is limited in a completely arbitrary manner. For, as Copleston points out, the idea of reason of the Enlightenment philosophers “was limited and narrow. To exercise reason meant for them pretty well to think as les philosophes thought; whereas to anyone who believes that God has revealed Himself it is rational to accept this revelation and irrational to reject it.”

But the Enlightenment philosophers not only limited and narrowed the concept of reason: they deified it, thereby reducing it to absurdity. This has been well demonstrated by C.S. Lewis in relation to Marxism and Freudianism. But it applies in a general way to all attempts to enthrone reason above everything else:-

“It is a disastrous discovery, as Emerson says somewhere, that we exist. I mean, it is disastrous when instead of merely attending to a rose we are forced to think of ourselves looking at the rose, with a certain type of mind and a certain type of eyes. It is disastrous because, if you are not very careful, the colour of the rose gets attributed to our optic nerves and is scent to our noses, and in the end there is no rose left. The professional philosophers have been bothered about this universal black-out for over two hundred years, and the world has not much listened to them. But the same disaster is now occurring on a level we can all understand.

348 Tikhomirov, “Dukhovenstvo i obshchestvo…”, op. cit., p. 32.
“We have recently ‘discovered that we exist’ in two new senses. The Freudians have discovered that we exist as bundles of complexes. The Marxians have discovered that we exist as members of some economic class. In the old days, it was supposed that if a thing seemed obviously true to a hundred men, then it was probably true in fact. Nowadays the Freiduan will tell you to go and analyze the hundred: you will find that they all think Elizabeth [I] a great queen because they have a mother-complex. Their thoughts are psychologically tainted at the source. And the Marxist will tell you to go and examine the economic interests of the hundred; you will find that they all think freedom a good thing because they are all members of the bourgeoisie whose prosperity is increased by a policy of laissez-faire. Their thoughts are ‘ideologically tainted’ at the source.

“Now this is obviously great fun; but it has not always been noticed that there is a bill to pay for it. There are two questions that people who say this kind of things ought to be asked. The first is, Are all thoughts thus tainted at the source, or only some? The second is, Does the taint invalidate the tainted thought – in the sense of making it untrue – or not?

“If they say that all thoughts are thus tainted, then, of course, we must remind them that Freudianism and Marxism are as much systems of thought as Christian theology or philosophical idealism. The Freudian and the Marxist are in the same boat with all the rest of us, and cannot criticize us from outside. They have sawn off the branch they were sitting on. If, on the other hand, they say that the taint need not invalidate their thinking, then neither need it invalidate ours. In which case they have saved their own branch, but also saved ours along with it.

“The only line they can really take is to say that some thoughts are tainted and others are not – which has the advantage (if Freudians and Marxians regard it as an advantage) of being what every sane man has always believed. But if that is so, then we must ask how you find out which are tainted and which are not. It is no earthly use saying that those are tainted which agree with the secret wishes of the thinker. Some of the things I should like to believe must in fact be true; it is impossible to arrange a universe which contradicts everyone’s wishes, in every respect, at every moment. Suppose I think, after doing my accounts, that I have a large balance at the bank. And suppose you want to find out whether this belief of mine is ‘wishful thinking’. You can never come to any conclusion by examining my psychological condition. Your only chance of finding out is to sit down and work through the sum yourself. When you have checked my figures, then, and then only, will you know whether I have that balance or not. If you find my arithmetic correct, then no amount of vapouring about my psychological condition can be anything but a waste of time. If you find my arithmetic wrong, then it may be relevant to explain psychologically how I came to be so bad at my arithmetic, and the doctrine of the concealed wish will become relevant – but only after you have yourself done the sum and discovered me to be wrong on purely arithmetical grounds. It is the same with thinking and all systems of
thought. If you try to find out which are tainted by speculating about the
wishes of the thinkers, you are merely making a fool of yourself. You must
find out on purely logical grounds which of them do, in fact, break down as
arguments. Afterwards, if you like, go on and discover the psychological
causes of the error.

“In other words, you must show that a man is wrong before you start
explaining why he is wrong. The modern method is to assume without
discussion that he is wrong and then distract his attention from this (the only
real issue) by busily explaining how he became so silly. In the course of the
last fifteen years I have found this vice so common that I have had to invent a
name for it. I call it Bulverism. Some day I am going to write the biography of
its imaginary inventor, Ezekiel Bulver, whose destiny was determined at the
age of five when he heard his mother say to his father – who had been
maintaining that two sides of a triangle were together greater than the third –
‘Oh you say that because you are a man.’ ‘At that moment,’ E. Bulver assures us,
‘there flashed across my opening mind the great truth that refutation is no
necessary part of argument. Assume that your opponent is wrong, and then
explain his error, and the world will be at your feet. Attempt to prove that he
is wrong or (worse still) try to find out whether he is wrong or right, and the
national dynamism of our age will thrust you to the wall.’ This is how Bulver
became one of the makers of the Twentieth Century.

“I find the fruits of his discovery almost everywhere. Thus I see my
religion dismissed on the grounds that ‘the comfortable parson had every
reason for assuring the nineteenth century worker that poverty would be
rewarded in another world’. Well, no doubt he had. On the assumption that
Christianity is an error, I can see early enough that some people would still
have a motive for inculcating it. I see it so easily that I can, of course, play the
game the other way round, by saying that ‘the modern man has every reason
for trying to convince himself that there are no eternal sanctions behind the
morality he is rejecting’. For Bulverism is a truly democratic game in the sense
that all can play it all day long, and that it gives no unfair privilege to the
small and offensive minority who reason. But of course it gets us not one inch
nearer to deciding whether, as a matter of fact, the Christian religion is true or
false. That question remains to be discussed on quite different grounds – a
matter of philosophical and historical argument. However it were decided,
the improper motives of some people, both for believing it and for
disbelieving it, would remain just as they are.

“I see Bulverism at work in every political argument. The capitalists
must be bad economists because we know why they want capitalism, and equally
the Communists must be bad economists because we know why they want
Communism. Thus, the Bulverists on both sides. In reality, of course, either
the doctrines of the capitalists are false, or the doctrines of the Communists,
or both; but you can only find out the rights and wrongs by reasoning – never
by being rude about your opponent’s psychology.
“Until Bulverism is crushed, reason can play no effective part in human affairs. Each side snatches it early as a weapon against the other; but between the two reason itself is discredited. And why should reason not be discredited? It would be easy, in answer, to point to the present state of the world, but the real answer is even more immediate. The forces discrediting reason, themselves depend on reasoning. You must reason even to Bulverize. You are trying to prove that all proofs are invalid. If you fail, you fail. If you succeed, then you fail even more – for the proof that all proofs are invalid must be invalid itself.

“The alternative is either self-contradicting idiocy or else some tenacious belief in our power of reasoning, held in the teeth of all the evidence that Bulverists can bring for a ‘taint’ in this or that human reasoner. I am ready to admit, if you like, that this tenacious belief has something transcendental or mystical about it. What then? Would you rather be a lunatic than a mystic?

“So we see there is a justification for holding on to our belief in Reason. But can this be done without theism? Does ‘I know’ involve that God exists? Everything I know is an inference from sensation (except the present moment). All our knowledge of the universe beyond our immediate experiences depends on inferences from these experiences. If our inferences do not give a genuine insight into reality, then we can know nothing. A theory cannot be accepted if it does not allow our thinking to be a genuine insight, nor if the fact of our knowledge is not explicable in terms of that theory.

“But our thoughts can only be accepted as a genuine insight under certain conditions. All beliefs have causes but a distinction must be drawn between (1) ordinary causes and (2) a special kind of cause called ‘a reason’. Causes are mindless events which can produce other results than belief. Reasons arise from axioms and inferences and affect only beliefs. Bulverism tries to show that the other man has causes and not reasons and that we have reasons and not causes. A belief which can be accounted for entirely in terms of causes is worthless. This principle must not be abandoned when we consider the beliefs which are the basis of others. Our knowledge depends on the certainty about axioms and inferences. If these are the result of causes, then there is no possibility of knowledge. Either we can know nothing or thought has reasons only, and no causes...

“It is admitted that the mind is affected by physical events; a wireless set is influenced by atmospherics, but it does not originate its deliverances – we’d take notice of it if we thought it did. Natural events we can relate to another until we can trace them finally to the space-time continuum. But thought has no father but thought. It is conditioned, yes, not caused...

“The same argument applies to our values, which are affected by social factors, but if they are caused by them we cannot know that they are right. One can reject morality as an illusion, but the man who does so often tacitly
excepts his own ethical motive: for instance the duty of freeing morality from superstition and of spreading enlightenment.

“Neither Will nor Reason is the product of Nature. Therefore either I am self-existent (a belief which no one can accept) or I am a colony of some Thought or Will that are self-existent. Such reason and goodness as we can attain must be derived from a self-existent Reason and Goodness outside ourselves, in fact, a Supernatural…”

Thus Lewis does not decry Reason, but vindicates it; but only by showing that *Reason is independent of Nature*. However, in doing this he shatters the foundations of Enlightenment thinking, and therefore also of the modern world-view, which is based on the Enlightenment. This world-view is based on the following axioms, which Lewis has shown to be false: (a) Truth and Goodness are attainable by Reason alone, without the need for Divine Revelation; and (b) Reason, as a function of Man, and not of God, is entirely a product of Nature. Lewis demonstrates that even if (a) were true, which it is not, it could only be true if (b) were false. But the Enlightenment insisted that both were true, and therefore condemned the whole movement of western thought founded upon it to sterility and degeneration and, ultimately, nihilism.

The whole tragedy of western man since the Enlightenment – which, through European colonization and globalization has become the tragedy of the whole world - is that in exalting himself and the single, fallen faculty of his mind to a position of infallibility, he has denied himself his true dignity and rationality, making him a function of irrational nature – in effect, sub-human. But man is great, not because he can reason in the sense of ratiocinate, that is, make deductions and inferences from axioms and empirical evidence, but because he can reason in accordance with the Reason that created and sustains all things, that is, in accordance with the Word and Wisdom of God in Whose image he was made. It is when man tries to make his reason autonomous, independent of its origin and inspiration in the Divine Reason, that he falls to the level of irrationality. For *Man, being in honour, did not understand; he is compared to the mindless cattle, and is become like unto them* (Psalm 48.12).

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60. EAST MEETS WEST

In the midst of the enormous changes taking place in the West in the early modern period, it is important to remember that ancient and great civilizations of the Far East were continuing to flourish largely unaffected. The Chinese “Middle Kingdom” always considered itself to be at the apex of humanity, to which all other kingdoms owed tribute. The Japanese had a similar conception.

Henry Kissinger writes: “Japan for centuries existed at the fringe of the Chinese world, borrowing heavily from Sinic religion and culture. But unlike most societies in the Chinese cultural sphere, it transformed the borrowed forms into Japanese patterns and never conflated them with a hierarchical obligation to China. Japan’s resilient position was at times a source of consternation for the Chinese court. Other Asian peoples accepted the premises and protocol of the tribute system – a symbolic subordination to the Chinese Emperor by which Chinese protocol ordered the universe – labelling their trade as ‘tribute’ to gain access to Chinese markets. They respected (at least in their exchanges with the Chinese court) the Confucian concept of international order as a familial hierarchy with China as the patriarch. Japan was geographically close enough to understand this vocabulary intimately and generally made tacit allowance for the Chinese world order as a regional reality. In quest of trade or cultural exchange, Japanese missions followed etiquette close enough to established forms that Chinese officials could interpret it as evidence of Japan’s aspiration to membership in a common hierarchy. Yet in a region carefully attuned to the gradations of status implied in minute protocol decisions – such as the single word used to refer to a ruler, the mode in which a formal letter was delivered, or the style of calendar date on a formal document – Japan consistently refused to take up a formal role in the Sinocentric tribute system. It hovered at the edge of the Chinese hierarchical world order, periodically insisting on its equality and, at some points, its own superiority.

“At the apex of Japanese society and its own view of world order stood the Japanese Emperor, a figure conceived, like the Chinese Emperor, as the Son of Heaven, an intermediary between the human and the divine. This title – insistently displayed on Japanese diplomatic dispatches to the Chinese court – was a direct challenge to the cosmology of the Chinese world order, which posited China’s Emperor as the single pinnacle of human hierarchy. In addition to this status (which carried a transcendent import above and beyond what would have been claimed by any Holy Roman Emperor in Europe), Japan’s traditional political philosophy posited another distinction, that Japanese emperors were deities descended from the Sun Goddess, who gave birth to the first Emperor and endowed his successors with an eternal right to rule. According to the fourteenth-century ‘Records of the Legitimate Succession of the Divine Sovereigns:
“Japan is the divine country. The heavenly ancestor it was who first laid its foundations, and the Sun Goddess left her descendants to reign over it forever and ever. This is true only of our country, and nothing similar may be found in foreign lands. That is why it is called the divine country.”351

Nevertheless, from the twelfth century, while the emperor reigned, the real ruler was the shogun – that is, the most powerful warrior lord. Thus W.H. Spellman writes: "During the Kamakura period (1192-1333) when the Minamoto clan dominated the scene from their military base on the Kanto plain, the Japanese emperor was no more than a symbolic figurehead performing ceremonial and religious functions while banditry and general lawlessness became the norm throughout the islands; even Buddhist monasteries employed armed bands for protection in a strife-torn society. By the eleventh century, private rights had clearly superseded public obligations and localism usurped the prerogatives of central authority. For the next 800 years, Japanese monarchs reigned but did not rule. The fact that outright usurpation of the throne did not occur, however, is testimony to the strength of the royal claim to hereditary priestly leadership within the island kingdom. Indeed unlike the Chinese model, where usurpation was interpreted as the legitimate transfer of the Mandate of Heaven to a more worthy leader, in Japan belief in the divine descent of the emperor and the importance of unbroken succession guaranteed the survival of the monarchy throughout the difficult medieval centuries."352

Kissinger continues: “Japan’s insular position allowed it wide latitude about whether to participate in international affairs at all. For many centuries, it remained on the outer boundaries of Asian affairs, cultivating its military traditions through internal contests and admitting foreign trade and culture at its discretion. At the close of the seventeenth century, Japan attempted to recast its role with an abruptness and sweep of ambition that its neighbors at first dismissed as implausible. The result was one of Asia’s major military conflicts – whose regional legacies remain the subject of vivid remembrance and dispute and whose lessons, if heeded, might have changed America’s conduct in the twentieth-century Korean War.

“In 1590, the warrior Toyotomi Hideyoshi – having bested his rivals, unified Japan, and brought more than a century of civil conflict to an close – announced a grander vision: he would raise the world’s largest army, march it up the Korean Peninsula, conquer China, and subdue the world. He dispatched a letter to the Korean King announcing his intent to ‘proceed to the country of the Great Ming and compel the people there to adopt our customs and manners’ and inviting his assistance. After the King demurred and warned him against the endeavor (citing an ‘inseparable relationship between the Middle Kingdom and our kingdom’ and the Confucian principle that ‘to invade another state is an act of which men of culture and

intellectual attainments should feel ashamed’), Hideyoshi launched an invasion of 160,000 men and roughly seven hundred ships. This massive force overwhelmed initial defences and at first marched swiftly up the peninsula. Its progress slowed as Korea’s Admiral Yi Sun-sin organized a determined naval resistance, harrying Hideyoshi’s supply lines and deflecting the invading armies to battles along the coast. When Japanese forces reached Pyongyang, near the narrow northern neck of the peninsula (and now North Korea’s capital), China intervened in force, unwilling to allow its tribute state to be overrun. A Chinese expeditionary army estimated between 40,000 and 100,000 strong crossed the Yalu River and pushed Japanese forces back as far as Seoul. After five years of inconclusive negotiations and devastating combat, Hideyoshi died, the invasion force withdrew, and the status quo ante was restored. Those who argue that history never repeats itself should ponder the comparability of China’s resistance to Hideyoshi’s enterprise with that encountered by America in the Korean War nearly four hundred years later.

“On the failure of this venture, Japan changed course, turning to ever-increasing isolation. Under the ‘locked country’ policy lasting over two centuries, Japan all but absented itself from participating in any world order. Comprehensive state-to-state relations on conditions of strict diplomatic equality existed only with Korea. Chinese traders were permitted to operate in select locations, though no official Sino-Japanese relations existed because no protocol could be worked out that satisfied both sides’ amour proper. Foreign trade with European countries was restricted to a few specified coastal cities; by 1673, all but the Dutch had been expelled, and they were confined to a single artificial island off the port of Nagasaki…”

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The Chinese followed a similar course of initial expansion towards the West followed by withdrawal and self-isolation.

In the Middle Ages, China had suffered from a foreign Mongol dynasty (the Yuan) and a massive population loss from 100 to 60 million as a result of the Black Death. However, towards the end of the fourteenth century the Ming emperors restored the unity of the Chinese world, and led the country on a remarkable course of economic development and expansion. As John Darwin writes: “Around 1400, it might have seemed to any well-informed observer that China’s pre-eminence in the Old World was not only secure but likely to grow stronger. Under Ming rule, China’s subordination to the Mongols and their imperial ambitions all across Eurasia had been definitively broken. Ming government reinforced the authority of the emperor over his provincial officials. The use of eunuchs at the imperial court was designed to strengthen the emperor against the intrigues of his scholar-gentry advisers (as well as protect the virtue of his concubines). Great efforts were made to

improve the agrarian economy and its waterway network. Then, between 1405 and 1431, the emperors dispatched the eunuch admiral Cheng-ho on seven remarkable voyages into the Indian Ocean to assert China’s maritime power. Commanding fleets carrying over twenty thousand men, Cheng-ho cruised as far as Jeddah in the Red Sea and the East African coast, and made China’s presence felt in Sri Lanka, whose recalcitrant ruler was carried off to Peking. Before the Europeans had gained the navigational know-how needed to find their way into the South Atlantic (and back) China was poised to assert its maritime supremacy in the eastern seas.”

But then mysteriously the Ming Empire retreated within itself. The Great Wall was completed, the great voyages westwards stopped, and contacts with other cultures were cut short. “The greatest puzzle in Chinese history is why the extraordinary dynamism that had created the largest and richest commercial economy in the world seemed to dribble away after 1400. China’s lead in technical ingenuity and in the social innovations required for a market economy was lost. It was not China that accelerated towards, and through, an industrial revolution, but the West…”

And yet, even as late as 1750, it was not at all clear why the West should have taken the lead over China in industry, rather than the other way round. “Kiangnan (the Yangtze delta) was a great manufacturing region, producing cotton cloth for ‘export’ to the rest of China. With a dense population (a thousand people to the square mile) of over 30 million, numerous cities, and a thick web of water communications connecting it with the middle and upper Yangtze (a colossal hinterland), as well as the rest of China (via the Grand Canal), Kiangnan was comparable to Europe’s commercial heartland. A powerful case can be made that as a market economy it was as wealthy and productive as North West Europe. Textile production was similar, while the consumption of items like sugar and tea may well have been higher. Technical ingenuity was widespread. Moreover, China benefited from laws that made buying and selling land easier than in Europe, and from a labour market in which serfdom had practically vanished (unlike in Europe). In an orderly, well-regulated society, with low levels of taxation and a state that actively promoted better practice (usually in agriculture), there seemed no obvious reason why material progress along Adam Smith’s lines (what economists call ‘Smithian growth’) should not continue indefinitely, on a scale comparable with Europe…

“The question becomes: why did Kiangnan (and China) fail to match the economic expansion of Europe, and check the emergence of a Europe-centred world economy? The best answer we have is that it could not surmount the classic constraints of pre-industrial growth. By the late eighteenth century it faced steeply rising costs for food, fuel and raw materials. Increasing

population and expanding output competed for the produce of a more or less fixed land area. The demand for food throttled the increase in raw cotton production. Raw cotton prices probably doubled in the Yangtze delta between 1750 and 1800. The demand for fuel (in the form of wood) brought deforestation and a degraded environment. The escape route from this trap existed in theory, Kiangnan should have drawn its supplies from further away. It should have cut the costs of production by mechanization, enlarging its market and thus its source of supply. It should have turned to coal to meet the need for fuel. In practice there was little chance for change along such lines. It faced competition from many inland centres where food and raw materials were cheaper, and which could also exploit China’s well-developed system of waterway transport. The very perfection of China’s commercial economy allowed new producers to enter the market with comparative ease at the same technological level. Under these conditions, mechanization – even if technologically practical – might have been stymied at birth. And, though China had coal, it was far from Kiangnan and could not be transported there cheaply. Thus, for China as a whole, both the incentive and the means to take the industrial ‘high road’ were meager or absent.

“The most developed parts of Europe did not face these constraints…”356

According to Niall Ferguson, another important reason for China’s backwardness was financial. “For one thing, the unitary character of the Empire precluded that fiscal competition which proved such a driver of financial innovation in Renaissance Europe and subsequently. For another, the ease with which the Empire could finance its deficits by printing money discouraged the emergence of European-style capital markets. Coinage, too, was more readily available than in Europe because of China’s trade surplus with the West. In short, the Middle Kingdom had far fewer incentives to develop commercial bills, bonds and equities…”357

But these economic factors, though important, were not the decisive ones. Still more important were cultural and institutional factors, and in particular the changes induced in European thinking by the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Ferguson argues that Early Modern Europe had six “killer apps”, as he calls them, that gave her a vital edge over the Oriental empires: competition, science, property rights, medicine, the consumer society and the work ethic.358 But probably more important than any of these was Europe’s sheer, overweening self-confidence or pride.

Of course, the Orientals were not renowned for their humility, either. But the Westerners were exceptional in the aggressiveness with which they displayed their arrogance. And they had a kind of missionary zeal to export their civilization that the Chinese never had.

358 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 12.
Darwin continues: “It was in this period that Europeans first advanced the claim that their civilization and culture were superior to all others – not theologically (that was old hat) but intellectually and materially. Whether this claim was true need not detain us. Much more important was the Europeans’ willingness to act as if it were. This was shown in their eagerness to collect and categorize the knowledge they gleaned from other parts of the world. It was revealed in the confidence with which they fitted this knowledge into a structure of thought with themselves at the centre. The intellectual annexation of non-European Eurasia preceded the imposition of a physical dominance. It was expressed in the ambition by the end of our period (earlier if we include the French invasion of Egypt) to ‘remake’ parts of Afro-Asia as the ‘New World’ had been ‘made’. And it ultimately rested on the extraordinary conviction that Europe alone could progress through history, leaving the rest of the world in a ‘stationary state’ awaiting Europe’s Promethean touch….

“In China between the 1750s and 1820s there was to be no great change in cultural direction, no drastic reappraisal of China’s place in the larger world, certainly no repudiation of the cultural past. Nor was there any obvious reason why there should have been. This was a wealthy, successful and sophisticated gentry society. The Chi’ien-lung (Qianlong) reign (1735-1796) was one of political stability, prosperity and (in China proper) peace. In the slogan of the day, it was the ‘Flourishing Age’. Their conquests in Inner Asia, the final victory over the turbulent steppe, crowned the Ch’ing’s achievement in pacifying, reunifying, consolidating and securing the Chinese realm. The perpetual threat of dynastic collapse in the face of barbarian attack – the great constant in China’s long history as a unified state – had been lifted at last: confirmation, were it needed, of China’s cultural and technological superiority where it mattered most. It was, after all, a triumph which, in geographical scale and geopolitical importance (if not economic value) matched Europe’s in America.

“There were of course social and cultural stresses. Military failures against Burma and Vietnam; symptoms of growing bureaucratic corruption; popular millenarian uprisings like the White Lotus movement: all hinted as the onset of dynastic decline, the gradual decay of the ‘mandate of heaven’ on which dynastic legitimacy was thought to depend. But the Confucian tradition remained immensely strong. Its central assumption was that social welfare was maximized under the rule of scholar-bureaucrats steeped in the paternalist and hierarchical teachings of K’ung-fu-tzu. The Confucian synthesis, with its Taoist elements (which taught the need for material simplicity and harmony with the natural world), faced no significant intellectual challenge. Religion in China played a role quite different from that of its counterpart in Europe. While ‘pure’ Taoism had some intellectual influence, and its mystical beliefs attracted a popular following, it had no public status, and was regarded with suspicion by the Confucian bureaucracy. Salvationist beliefs were officially frowned upon. Buddhism was followed mainly in Tibet and Mongolia. The emperors were careful to show it respect,
as a concession to the Buddhist elites co-opted into their system of overrule. In China proper it was marginalized. Buddhist monks, like Taoist priests, were seen as disruptive and troublesome.

“The scholar-bureaucracy, and the educated gentry class from which it was drawn, thus faced no competition from an organized priesthood. No challenge was made from within the social elite by the devotees of religious enthusiasm. Nor was the bureaucrats’ classical learning threatened by new forms of ‘scientific’ knowledge. For reasons that historians have debated at length, the tradition of scientific experimentation had faded away, perhaps as early as 1400. Part of the reason may lie in the striking absence in Confucian thought of the ‘celestial lawgiver’ – a god who had prescribed the laws of nature. In Europe, belief in such a providential figure, and the quest for ‘his’ purposes and grand design, had been a (perhaps the) central motive for scientific inquiry. But the fundamental assumption that the universe was governed by a coherent system of physical laws that could be verified empirically was lacking in China. Even the scholarly kaozheng movement in the eighteenth century, which stressed the importance of collecting empirical data across a range of scientific and technical fields, rejected ‘the notion of a lawful, uniform and mathematically predictable universe’. It should be seen instead as part of the long tradition of critique and commentary upon ‘classical’ knowledge, not an attack upon its assumptions…”

This is an important insight. We have seen how the scientific revolution, which had such an important impact on the Enlightenment, was pioneered by highly religious scientists, like Newton, who believed that in describing the laws of nature they were uncovering a little of the Mind of God. This assumption proceeded from the fundamental Christian belief that man is made in the image of God, and that his logical and reasoning powers are also in the image of the “Logos”, or Word and Wisdom of God. However, this assumption was lacking in Chinese thought, which stunted experimentation and scientific research. And this fact, combined with economic factors that we have mentioned, meant that China stagnated while Europe moved forward...

However, this is not enough to explain the sheer aggressiveness of the European expansion into the rest of the world, which was so destructive that the traditional societies of the East had the choice: either to become part of that expansion and that civilization, or be destroyed by it. Thus Japan chose, after some hesitation, to join – and prospered. China, however, resisted, which led to the collapse of her imperial system at the beginning of the twentieth century.

What was it about this new expansion of Christianity that made it so much more violent and harmful than previous such periods?

The answer lies in the fact that the Enlightenment, and, before it, Renaissance humanism and Protestant rationalism, had introduced a kind of virus into European Christianity that in fact turned it into anti-Christianity. Yes, the Christian belief in the One Creator of heaven and earth was the vital stimulus to modern science. But the “reasonable rationalism” of Christian scientists like Newton, who believed in revelation as well as reason, and in humbling the human mind before the Original Mind, was undermined by the “irrational rationalism” of the philosophers, who subjected everything to corrosive doubt, raising their own feeble reason above the whole of reality, and thereby undermining not only Christianity but even the possibility of any kind of truly rational thought. We have seen where this irrational rationalism led in the case of the philosophy of David Hume, and with what difficulty Immanuel Kant constructed a very limited breakwater against its ravages. It is not surprising that it should also have ravaged other traditional societies such as the Chinese, destroying, as Darwin writes, “the scholastic monopoly of ‘classical’ knowledge that remained so immensely powerful in Islamic and Confucian culture.”

Darwin provides another reason why the impact of Europe on the traditional societies of the East should have been so destructive at this time: the fact that the Europeans had acquired the habit of ruling and destroying in the New World – in North and South America. “It was in the Americas that the Europeans discovered their capacity to impose radical change upon other societies – through enslavement, expropriation, conversion, migration and economic exploitation. It was there that they saw the devastating effects that one culture or people could have on another – an impact without parallel elsewhere in Eurasia. It was there, above all, that they found peoples who were living in what seemed an earlier age, following modes of life that, conjecture suggested, might once have prevailed in Europe. ‘In the beginning,’ said Locke, ‘all the world was America’. The result was a great backward extension of the historical past (far beyond the limits of biblical creation) and a new mode of speculative inquiry into the stages through which European society must have passed to reach its contemporary form.

“America revolutionized the European sense of time. It encouraged Europeans to devise a historical framework into which they could fit the states and peoples of the rest of the world. It helped to promote a conjectural history of progress in which Europe had reached the highest stage. In the later eighteenth century this sense of Europe’s premier place in a global order was reinforced by three hugely influential ideas. The first was the virtue of commerce as a civilizing agent, on which Hume and the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment insisted. In The Wealth of Nations (1776), Adam Smith pressed the case for commercial freedom as the surest route to material progress, and the idea of unfettered trade as a means to global harmony was taken up by Immanuel Kant in his Perpetual Peace (1798). It was a short step to argue (like the Victorian free-traders) that Europe should lead the rest of the

\[360\] Darwin, op. cit., p. 208.
world into universal free trade, and to see the world itself as a vast single market. The second was the extraordinary confidence displayed by Enlightenment thinkers that human institutions and even human behaviour could be reconstructed along ‘rational’ lines. No one carried this further than the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, whose utilitarian calculus (the greatest happiness for the greatest number) supplied a measure against which laws and institutions anywhere in the world could be tested. Armed with the calculus, the enlightened legislator (from Europe) could frame better laws than benighted locals mired in superstition and antiquated prejudices. To his follower James Mill, the history of India revealed that ‘the manners, institutions and attainments of the Hindus have been stationary for many years’ (since about 300 BC he suggested), a savage indictment he extended to China. Europe’s Promethean touch offered the only hope for a resumption of progress. The third proposition was just as startling. It was the growing conviction by the end of the century that there rested on the Christian societies of Europe an urgent obligation to carry their gospel throughout the world. What was especially significant was the force of this evangelizing urge in Protestant Britain, the richest and strongest of the European maritime states, and by 1815 the dominant sea power throughout Southern Asia.

“The second half of the eighteenth century thus saw the crystallization of a new and remarkable view of Europe’s place in the world. The sense of the limits and peculiarities of European civilization characteristic of the Age of Equilibrium had been replaced by a conviction that Europe’s beliefs and institutions had a universal validity. This confident claim drew strength from the expansion of dominion, trade and influence, strikingly symbolized in the conquest of India. It rested on the conviction that European thought had explained the stages of history, and that European science could provide – systematically – all the data that were needed to understand the globe as a whole. The vital ingredients for a new mentality of global preponderance had now been assembled…”361

IV. THE ST. PETERSBURG AUTOCRACY (1660-1789)
61. THE REBELLION OF THE OLD RITUALISTS

It was not only the Russian State that had sinned in Nikon’s deposition: both the Russian hierarchs and the Eastern Patriarchs had submitted to the pressure of tsar and boyars. (In 1676 Patriarch Joachim convened a council which hurled yet more accusations against him…362) But judgement was deferred for a generation or two, while the Russian autocracy restored the Ukraine, “Little Russia”, to the Great Russian kingdom. With the weakening of Poland and the increase in strength of the generally pro-Muscovite Cossacks under Hetman Bogdan Khmelnitsky, large areas of Belorussia and the Ukraine, including Kiev, were freed from Latin control, which could only be joyful news for the native Orthodox population who had suffered so much from the Polish-Jesuit yoke. Moreover, the liberated areas were returned to the jurisdiction of the Russian Church in 1686. This meant that most of the Russian lands were now, for the first time for centuries, united under a single, independent Russian State and Church. The Russian national Church had been restored to almost its original dimensions. The final step would be accomplished by Tsar Nicholas II in 1915, just before the fall of the empire…

However, Constantinople’s agreement to the transfer of the Kiev metropolia was limited to allowing Moscow to ordain the Kiev metropolitan. It still remained, strictly speaking within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Moreover, the transfer was subject to three conditions: 1) the election of the metropolitan of Kiev was to take place by the bishops, clergy and nobles of the metropolis and with the permission and at the command of the Hetman, not the Russian tsar; 2) both the Ecumenical and the Moscow patriarchs were to be commemorated; and 3) the metropolitan of Kiev was to preserve all his privileges.363

In any case, in 1687 the Ecumenical Patriarch Dionysius was removed for this act, and the transfer of Kiev to Moscow denounced as anti-canonical by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Things were made worse when, in 1688, Moscow reneged on its promise to give Kiev the status of an autonomous metropolia and turned it into an ordinary diocese. This had consequences in the twentieth century, when Constantinople granted the Polish Church autocephaly in 1924, and then, from the beginning of the 1990s, began to lay claims to the Ukraine.

Constantinople’s so-called “transfer” of Kiev to the jurisdiction of the Russian Church was extracted only under heavy pressure from the Sultan, who wanted to ensure Moscow’s neutrality in his war with the Sacred League in Europe. Ironically, the fact that he succumbed to this pressure tends to give

strength to the argument that it was better for Kiev to be under the free Church of Russia rather than the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was in captivity to the godless Turks…

At the coronation of Tsar Theodore Alexeyevich certain additions were made to the rite that showed that the Russian Church now looked on the tsardom as a quasi-priestly rank. "These additions were: 1) the proclamation of the symbol of faith by the tsar before his crowning, as was always the case with ordinations, 2) the vesting of the tsar in royal garments signifying his putting on his rank, and 3) communion in the altar of the Body and Blood separately in accordance with the priestly order, which was permitted only for persons of the three hierarchical sacred ranks. These additions greatly exalted the royal rank, and Professor Pokrovsky explained their introduction by the fact that at the correction of the liturgical books in Moscow in the second half of the 17th century, the attention of people was drawn to the difference in the rites of the Byzantine and Muscovite coronation and the additions were introduced under the influence of the Council of 1667, which wanted to exalt the royal rank."364

The pious tsar did not use his exalted position to humiliate the Church. On the contrary, he tried, as far as it was in his power, to correct the great wrong that had been done to the Church in his father’s reign. Thus when Patriarch Nicon died it was the tsar who ordered “that the body should be conveyed to New Jerusalem. The patriarch did not want to give the reposed hierarchical honours. [So] his Majesty persuaded Metropolitan Cornelius of Novgorod to carry out the burial. He himself carried the coffin with the remains."365

Again, it was the tsar rather than the patriarch who obtained a gramota from the Eastern Patriarchs in 1682 restoring Nikon to patriarchal status and “declaring that he could be forgiven in view of his redemption of his guilt by his humble patience in prison”.366 This was hardly an adequate summary of the situation. But it did go some of the way to helping the Greeks redeem their guilt in the deposition of the most Grecophile of Russian patriarchs…

Meanwhile, the Grecophobe Avvakum was continuing to rant, announcing that all the “Nikonians” had to be rebaptised, and “that newborn babies knew more about God than all the scholars of the Greek church”.367 As Robert Massie writes, “these outbursts led to a second banishment, this time to far-off Pustozersk on the shore of the Arctic Ocean. Form this remote spot, Avvakum managed to remain the leader of the Old Believers. Unable to preach, he wrote eloquently to his believers, urging them to preserve the old faith, not to compromise, to defy their persecutors and to accept sufferings and martyrdom gladly in imitation of Christ. ‘Burning your body’, he said, ‘you

365 Rusak, op. cit., p. 194.
commend your soul to God. Run and jump into the flames. Say, “Here is my body, Devil. Take and eat it; my soul you cannot take.”’

“Avvakum’s final act of defiance assured his fiery destiny. From exile, he wrote to young Tsar Fedor declaring that Christ had appeared to him in a vision and revealed that Fedor’s dead father, Tsar Alexis, was in hell, suffering torments because of his approval of Nikonian reforms. Fedor’s response was to condemn Avvakum to be burned alive. In April 1682, Avvakum achieved his long-desired martyrdom, bound to a stake in the market-place of Pustomersk. Crossing himself a last time with two fingers, he shouted joyfully to the crowd, ‘There is terror in the stake until thou art bound to it, but, once there, embrace it and all will be forgiven. Thou shalt behold Christ before the heat has laid hold upon thee, and thy soul, released from the dungeon of the body, will fly up to heaven like a happy little bird.’

“Across Russia, the example of Avvakum’s death inspired thousands of his followers. During a six-year period, from 1684 to 1690, Old Believers voluntarily followed their leader into the flames, preferring martyrdom to accepting the religion of the Antichrist. [The Regent] Sophia’s government seemed to fit this image as well as that of Alexis or Fedor; indeed, she was even harsher on Schismatics than her father or her brother had been. Provincial governors were instructed to provide whatever troops were necessary to help the provincial metropolitans enforce the established religion…”

We have noted the opinion that if Patriarch Nikon had not been forced to leave his see, there would have been no Old Ritualist schism. Nor would there have been that weakening of the authority of the Church vis-à-vis the State that was to have such catastrophic consequences. And yet in the reign of Tsar Theodore Alexeyevich, Patriarch Nikon was posthumously restored to his see, the Old Ritualist schism was still of small proportions, and Church-State relations were still essentially “symphonic”. Even the Monastirskij Prikaz, which Nikon had fought so hard to remove, was in fact removed in 1675. What made the situation worse, and made the schism more or less permanent, was the stubborn fanaticism of the Old Ritualists and their turning a Church quarrel into a rebellion against the State.

S.A. Zenkovsky writes: “The struggle between the supporters of the old rite, on the one hand, and the state (the tsar) and the Church, on the other, was complicated by two important phenomena: the rebellion of the Solovki monastery (the monks were joined, at the beginning of the 1670s, by a part of the defeated rebels of Stepan Razin) and the burnings. The siege of Solovki, the very important monastery and fortress on the White Sea, lasted for ten years and ended with the deaths of almost all its defenders. This was no longer a conflict between the Church and the Old Ritualists, but between rebels and the state. More important in their consequences were the burnings

mass immolations of those Old Ritualists who considered that after the council of 1667 grace in the Church had dried up and that the Antichrist was already ruling on earth. The burnings had already begun in the middle of the 1660s under the influence of the ‘woodsman’, the fanatical and religiously completely pessimistic elder Capiton.

“The burnings lasted until the beginning of the 19th century, but at the end of the 17th, especially in the 1670s, they acquired a terrible character of a mass religio-psychological epidemic. In Poshekhone (in the Trans-Volga region, near Kostroma) between 4000 and 5000 people perished in the burnings; in one of the northern burnings about 2500 people died at once. It is very difficult to estimate the general number of victims of the burning before the end of the 17th century, but in all probability their number was no less than 20,000, and perhaps even more...

“The uprising on Solovki, the burnings, the participation of the Old Ritualists in the Razin rebellion, and the formation of a Cossack Old Ritualist ‘republic’ that separated from the Russian State at the turn of the 17th-18th centuries, gave the government enough reasons to persecute all the supporters of the Old Russian faith [sic] without examination...”

Indeed, as Bishop Gregory Grabbe writes: “The Church Herself hardly participated in the persecution... The persecutions were from the State and for political reasons, insofar as (some of) the Old Believers considered the power of the State to be antichristian and did not want to submit to it.” Those who did not attempt to challenge the authority of the State were not persecuted. Thus Zenkovsky notes that the priestless communities were not touched by the authorities, and that in general “the persecutions affected [only] those who tried to preach amidst the non-Old Ritualist population”.

Fr. Seraphim Rose wrote: “[The Old Ritualists] are sectarians, and their spirit, not just their externals, separates them from Orthodoxy. If God can somehow draw one or many of them to Orthodoxy, very good, but the measures of “penitence” which John Hudanish describes would be simply a flattering of their sectarian pride. Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky was against receiving Old Belivers even if they asked nothing but to keep the two-fingered cross—not because of the small act, but because this revealed they still had the sectarian mentality. Of course, since then the Russian Church has allowed Old Believers to retain the two-fingered Cross and their service books, but as a gesture of economy rather than an admission that Patriarch Nikon was wrong. For an Old Believer to become Orthodox there must be an awareness that the externals they preserve are not of the essence of Orthodoxy.”

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369 Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 89.
371 Zenkovsky, op. cit., p. 92.
A critical point came with the death of Tsar Theodore in 1682. Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: “He did not have a son and heir. Therefore power had to pass to the brother of the deceased, Ivan, the son of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich from his first marriage with Maria Ilyinichna Miloslavskaya. Behind Ivan Alexeyevich, there also stood his very active sister the Tsarevna Sophia. But we know that from the second marriage of Alexis Mikhailovich with Natalia Kirillovna Naryshkina there was another son, Peter Alexeyevich, who was born in 1672. In 1682 he was ten years old, while his half-brother Ivan was fifteen. The Naryshkins did not want to let their interests be overlooked, and wanted Peter to be made Tsar. A battle began between them and their supporters and the supporters of the Miloslavsky princes. The result was yet another schism, this time in the Royal Family itself... This of course elicited a time of troubles. Behind Sophia and the Miloslavskys there stood a part of the boyars, including Prince Basil Vasilyevich Golitsyn. Opposed to them was Patriarch Joachim (at first not openly) and other supporters of the Naryshkins. A rumour was spread about them that they wanted to ‘remove’ (kill) Ivan Alexeyevich. The army of musketeers [streltsy] in Moscow rebelled. The musketeers more than once burst into the royal palace looking for plotters and evil-doers, and once right there, in the palace, before the eyes of the Royal Family, including Peter, they killed the boyars A. Matveev and I. Naryshkin. The country was on the edge of a new time of troubles and civil war. The wise Sophia was able to come to an agreement with the Naryshkins and in the same year both Tsareviches, Ivan and Peter, were proclaimed Tsars, while their ‘governess’, until they came of age, became the Tsarevna Sophia. The leader of the musketeers’ army, the very aged Prince Dolgorukov, was removed in time and Prince Ivan Andreevich Khovansky was appointed. He was able quickly to take the musketeers in hand and submit them to his will.

“The Old Ritualists decided to make use of these disturbances. Protopriest Nikita Dobrynin, aptly nicknamed ‘Emptyholy’, together with similarly fanatical Old Ritualists, unleashed a powerful campaign amidst the riflemen and attained the agreement of the Royal Family and the Patriarch to the holding of a public debate on the faith with the ‘Nikonians’, that is, first of all with the Patriarch himself. This debate took place on July 5, 1682 in the Granovita palace in the Kremlin in the presence of the Royal Family, the clergy and the Syncele. Nikita read aloud a petition from the Old Ritualists that the new books and rites should be removed, declaring that they constituted ‘the introduction of a new faith’. Against this spoke Patriarch Joachim, holding in his hands an icon of Metropolitan Alexis of Moscow. He was very emotional and wept. The Old Ritualists did not want even to listen to him! They began to interrupt the Patriarch and simply shout: ‘Make the sign of the cross in this way!’, raising their hands with the two-fingered sign of the cross. Then Archbishop Athanasius of Kholmogor (later Arkhangelsk), who had himself once been an Old Ritualist, with knowledge of the subject refuted ‘Emptyholy’s’ propositions, proving that the new rites were by no
means ‘a new faith’, but only the correction of mistakes that had crept into the services. Protopriest Nikita was not able to object and in powerless fury hurled himself at Athanasius, striking him on the face. There was an uproar. The behaviour of the Old Ritualists was judged to be an insult not only to the Church, but also to the Royal Family, and they were expelled. Finding themselves on the street, the Old Ritualists shouted: ‘We beat them! We won!’ – and set off for the riflemen in the area on the other side of the Moscow river. As we see, in fact there was no ‘beating’, that is, they gained no victory in the debate. On the same night the riflemen captured the Old Ritualists and handed them over to the authorities. On July 11 on Red Square Nikita Dobrynin ‘Emptyholy’ was beheaded in front of all the people.

“Then, at a Church Council in 1682, it was decided to ask their Majesties to take the most severe measures against the Old Ritualists, to the extent of executing the most stubborn of them through burning. And so Protopriest Avvakum was burned in Pustozerzk. This is perhaps the critical point beyond which the church schism began in full measure, no longer as the disagreement of a series of supporters of the old rites, but as a movement of a significant mass of people. Now the Old Ritualists began to abuse not only the ‘Niconian’ Church, but also the royal power, inciting people to rebel against it. Their movement acquired not only an ecclesiastical, but also a political direction. It was now that it was necessary to take very severe measures against them, and they were taken, which probably saved the State from civil war. Many Old Ritualists, having fled beyond the boundaries of Great Russia, then began to undertake armed raids on the Russian cities and villages. It is now considered fashionable in our ‘educated’ society to have tender feelings for the schismatical Old Ritualists, almost as if they were martyrs or innocent sufferers. To a significant degree all this is because they turned out to be on the losing side. And what if they had won? Protopriest Avvakum used to say that if he were given power he would hang ‘the accursed Niconians’ on trees (which there is no reason to doubt, judging from his biography). He said this when he had only been exiled by the ‘Nikonians’, and not even defrocked. So if the Old Ritualists had won, the Fatherland would simply have been drowned in blood. Protopriest Avvakum is also particularly venerated as the author of his noted ‘Life’. It in fact displays the very vivid Russian language of the 17th century and in this sense, of course, it is valuable for all investigators of antiquity. But that is all! As regards the spirit and the sense of it, this is the work of a boundlessly self-deceived man. It is sufficient to remember that none of the Russian saints wrote a ‘Life’ praising himself…”

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The apocalyptic element in Old Ritualism took its starting-point from the prophecy of Archimandrite Zachariah (Kopystensky) of the Kiev Caves Lavra, who in 1620 had foretold that the coming of the Antichrist would take place in 1666. And in a certain sense the Antichrist did indeed come in 1666.

373 Lebedev, Velikorossia, pp. 154-156.
For as a result of the unlawful deposition of Patriarch Nicon, the symphony of powers between Church and State in Russia was fatally weakened, leading, in the long run, to the appearance of Soviet power, in 1917...374

The Old Ritualists also saw apocalyptic signs in the Tsar’s acceptance of the Patriarch’s reforms. And yet the parallel here, paradoxically, is with the Protestants, who similarly believed that true Christianity ended when State and Church came to work together in the time of the Emperor Constantine. The Old Ritualists fled into the woods to escape the Antichrist and wait for the Second Coming of Christ in their democratic communes, accepting the authority of neither king nor priest. Similarly, the Czech Taborites and German Anabaptists and English Puritans and Independents and Quakers fled from existing states to build their millenial communities in which the only king and priest was God.

This was particularly so with the priestless Old Ritualists, called the Bespopovtsi (as opposed to the Popovtsi, who still had priests, and the Beglopopovtsi who used priests fleeing from the official Church). The Popovtsi, according to St. Ignati Brianchaninov, “are different in certain rites which have no influence on the essence of Christianity, while the latter [Bespopovtsi] have no Bishop over themselves, contrary to the ecclesiastical canons. The formation of the former was aided in part by ignorance ascribing to certain rites and customs a greater importance that these rites have; while the formation of the latter was aided by the Protestant tendency of certain individual people.” 375

The communities of the priestless, like those on the River Vyg in the north, were almost democratic communes, having no priests and recognising no political authority – not unlike the contemporary Puritan communities of North America. And gradually, as in the writings of Semeon Denisov, one of the leaders of the Vyg community, they evolved a new conception of Holy Russia, according to which the real Russia resided, not in the Tsar and the Church, for they had both apostasised, but in the common people. As Sergius Zenkovsky writes, Denisov “transformed the old doctrine of an autocratic Christian state into a concept of a democratic Christian nation.”376

From that time an apocalyptic rejection of the State became the keynote of Old Ritualism. As Fr. George Florovsky writes, “the keynote and secret of Russia’s Schism was not ‘ritual’ but the Antichrist, and thus it may be termed a socio-apocalyptical utopia. The entire meaning and pathos of the first schismatic opposition lies in its underlying apocalyptical intuition (‘the time draws near’), rather than in any ‘blind’ attachment to specific rites or petty details of custom. The entire first generation of raskolouchitelej [‘teachers of

374 It was also in 1666 that Isaac Lurye proclaimed himself to be the (false) Messiah in Smyrna.
376 Zenkovsky, in Hosking, op. cit., p. 72.
schism’] lived in this atmosphere of visions, signs, and premonitions, of miracles, prophecies, and illusions. These men were filled with ecstasy or possessed, rather than being pedants... One has only to read the words of Avvakum, breathless with excitement: ‘What Christ is this? He is not near; only hosts of demons.’ Not only Avvakum felt that the ‘Nikon’ Church had become a den of thieves. Such a mood became universal in the Schism: ‘the censer is useless; the offering abominable’.

“The Schism, an outburst of socio-political hostility and opposition, was a social movement, but one derived from religious self-consciousness. It is precisely this apocalyptical perception of what has taken place which explains the decisive or rapid estrangement among the Schismatics. ‘Fanaticism in panic’ is Kliuchevskii’s definition, but it was also panic in the face of ‘the last apostasy’...

“The Schism dreamed of an actual, earthly City: a theocratic utopia and chiliasm. It was hoped that the dream had already been fulfilled and that the ‘Kingdom of God’ had been realised as the Muscovite State. There may be four patriarchs in the East, but the one and only Orthodox tsar is in Moscow. But now even this expectation had been deceived and shattered. Nikon’s ‘apostasy’ did not disturb the Old Ritualists nearly as much as did the tsar’s apostasy, which in their opinion imparted a final apocalyptical hopelessness to the entire conflict.

“‘At this time there is no tsar. One Orthodox tsar had remained on earth, and whilst he was unaware, the western heretics, like dark clouds, extinguished this Christian sun. Does this not, beloved, clearly prove that the Antichrist’s deceit is showing its mask?’

“History was at an end. More precisely, sacred history had come to an end; it had ceased to be sacred and had become without Grace. Henceforth the world would seem empty, abandoned, forsaken by God, and it would remain so. One would be forced to withdraw from history into the wilderness. Evil had triumphed in history. Truth had retreated into the bright heavens, while the Holy Kingdom had become the tsardom of the Antichrist...”

In spite of this apocalypticism, some of the Old Ritualists came to accept Russia as the legitimate Orthodox empire. Thus V.I. Kel’siev asserted that “the people continue to believe today that Moscow is the Third Rome and that there will be no fourth. So Russia is the new Israel, a chosen people, a prophetic land, in which shall be fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, and in which even the Antichrist will appear, as Christ appeared in the previous Holy Land. The representative of Orthodoxy, the Russian Tsar, is the most legitimate emperor on earth, for he occupies the throne of Constantinople...”

378 Hosking, op. cit., p. 73.
Although the Old Ritualists were truly schismatics, they were not wrong in discerning signs of serious decline in Muscovy towards the end of the seventeenth century. Under the influence of the West, such practices as smoking and drunkenness appeared. And concubinage also appeared in the highest places.

Archbishop Nathaniel of Vienna writes: “There is evidence that Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich had an illegitimate son (who later became the boyar Ivan Musin-Pushkin). Concerning Tsaritsa Natalia Kirillovna Tikhon Streshnev said that he was not her only lover, and Tsarevna Sophia had a ‘dear friend’ in Prince Basil Golitsyn. Such sinful disruptions had been seen earlier, being characteristic of the generally sensual Russian nature. But earlier these sins had always been clearly recognised as sins. People did not justify them, but repented of them, as Great Prince Ivan III repented to St. Joseph of Volotsk for his sin of sorcery and fortune-telling, as the fearsome Ivan the Terrible repented of his sins. But if the tsars did not repent of their sins, as, for example, Basil III did not repent of his divorce from St. Solomonia, these sins were rebuked by the representatives of the Church and burned and rooted out by long and painful processes. In the second half of the 17th century in Moscow we see neither repentance for sins committed, not a pained attitude to them on the part of the sinners themselves and the surrounding society. There was only a striving to hide sins, to make them unnoticed, unknown, for ‘what is done in secret is judged in secret’. A very characteristic trait distinguishing Muscovite society of the second half of the 17th century from preceding epochs, a trait fraught with many consequences, was the unrestrained gravitation of the upper echelons of Muscovite society towards the West, to the sinful West, to the sinful free life there, which, as always with sin viewed from afar, seemed especially alluring and attractive against the background of the wearisome holy Russian way of life.

“Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich, and all the higher Moscow boyars after him, introduced theatres. Originally the theatrical troupes most frequently played ‘spiritual’ pieces. But that this was only an offering to hypocrisy is best demonstrated by the fact that the actors playing ‘sacred scenes’ gratifying unspoiled sensuality about Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, David and Bathsheba and Herod and Salome, were profoundly despised by the tsar and other spectators, who considered them to be sinful, ‘scandal-mongering’ people. Neither holy days nor festal days, and still more not the eves of feasts, were chosen for the presentation of these scenes. (It is known that Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich changed the date of a presentation fixed for December 18, for ‘tomorrow is the eve of the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ’.) The real exponents of the really sacred scenes: The Action in the Cave and the

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379 There is evidence that drunkenness, long thought to be the vice of Russians from the beginning, was in fact rare before the seventeenth century and severely punished. Things began to change under the Romanovs, and western traders encouraged the new trend.
Procession on the Donkey were considered by nobody to be sinful people, and their scenes were put on precisely on holy days. The tsar was followed by the boyars, and the boyars by the noblemen; everything that was active and leading in the people was drawn at this time to a timid, but lustful peeping at the West, at its free life, in which everything was allowed that was strictly forbidden in Holy Rus', but which was so longed for by sin-loving human nature, against which by this time the leading echelons of Muscovite life no longer struggled, but indecisively pandered to. In this sinful gravitation towards the West there were gradations and peculiarities: some were drawn to Polish life, others to Latin, a third group to German life. Some to a greater degree and some to a lesser degree, but they all turned away from the Orthodox Old Russian way of life. Peter only decisively opened up this tendency, broke down the undermined partition between Rus’ and the West, beyond which the Muscovites timidly desired to look, and unrestrainedly threw himself into the desired sinful life, leading behind him his people and his state.

“Holy Rus’ was easily broken by Peter because much earlier it had already been betrayed by the leading echelons of Muscovite society.

“We can see the degree of the betrayal of the Holy Rus’ to a still greater degree than in the pandering to the desires of the flesh and the gravitation towards the free and sinful life, in the state acts of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich, and principally in the creation of the so-called Monastirskij Prikaz, through which, in spite of the protests of Patriarch Nikon, the tsar crudely took into his own hands the property of the Church ‘for its better utilisation’, and in the persecutions to which ‘the father and intercessor for the tsar’, his Holiness Patriarch Nikon, was subjected. Nikon understood more clearly than anyone where the above-listed inner processes in the Muscovite state were inclining, and unsuccessfully tried to fight them. For a genuinely Old Russian consciousness, it was horrific to think that the state could ‘better utilize’ the property of the Church than the Church. The state had been able earlier - and the more ancient the epoch, and the more complete its Old Russianness, the easier and the more often - to resort to Church property and spend it on its own urgent military and economic needs. After all, the Church took a natural interest in this. A son or daughter can freely take a mother’s money in a moment of necessity, and in the given case it is of secondary importance whether he returns it or not: it is a question of what is more convenient to the loving mother and her loving son. They do not offend each other. But in the removal of the monastery lands by Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich (although this measure was elicited by the needs of the war in the Ukraine, which the Church very much sympathised with), another spirit was clearly evident: the spirit of secularisation. This was no longer a more or less superficial sliding towards the longed-for sinful forms of western entertainment, it was not a temporary surrender to sin: it was already a far-reaching transfer into the inner sphere of the relations between Church and State - and what a state: Holy Rus’ - of the secular ownership relations with a view to ‘better utilization’ instead of the loving relations between mother and children.
characteristic of Orthodox morality. Better utilization for what ends? For Church ends? But it would be strange to suppose that the state can use Church means for Church ends better than the Church. For state ends? But then the degree of the secularization of consciousness is clear, since state ends are placed so much higher than Church ends, so that for their attainment Church property is removed. State ends are recognized as ‘better’ in relation to Church ends.

"Finally, the drying up of holiness in Rus’ in the second half of the 17th century is put in clearer relief by the fact that, after the period of the 14th-16th centuries, which gave a great host of saints of the Russian people, the 17th century turned out to be astonishingly poor in saints. There were far more of them later. In the century of the blasphemous Peter there were far more saints in Russia than in the century of the pious tsars Alexis Mikhailovich and Theodore Alexeyevich. In the second half of the 17th century there were almost no saints in Rus’. And the presence or absence of saints is the most reliable sign of the flourishing or, on the contrary, the fall of the spiritual level of society, the people or the state.

“And so it was not Peter who destroyed Holy Rus’. Before him it had been betrayed by the people and state nurtured by it. But Peter created Great Russia…”

Still more important than the cultural and moral influences introduced from the West into Muscovy (usually via Kiev) were the theological influences, both Catholic and, increasingly, Protestant. The Russian hierarchy was supported in its struggle against these tendencies by the Eastern Patriarchs, and in particular by Patriarch Dositheus of Jerusalem, who as Archimandrite Hilarion (Troitisky) wrote, was “a great zealot of Orthodoxy in the 17th century, sharply following Russian church life and often writing epistles to Russian patriarchs, tsars, even individual church and civil activists. Patriarch Dositheous looked on Russia as the support of the whole of Ecumenical Orthodoxy, and for that reason it was necessary for Russia first of all to keep to the Orthodox faith in all its strictness and purity. The patriarch looked with great alarm and fear at the increasing establishment of western, especially Catholic influence in Moscow. Patriarch Dositheous thought in a very definite way about Catholicism: ‘The papist delusion is equivalent to atheism, for what is papism and what is the unia if not open atheism?’ ‘The lawless papists are worse than the impious and the atheists; they are atheists, for they put forward two gods – one in the heavens, and the other on earth.’ ‘Papism is nothing other than open and undoubting atheism’. ‘The Latins, who have introduced innovations into the faith, the sacraments and all the church ordinances, are openly impious and schismatic, because they make a local

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church universal, and instead of Christ they venerate the popes as the head of the Church, and they venerate the Roman Church, which is a local church, as universal. And for that reason, according to the words of the Fathers and Teachers of the Church, they are deceivers, unfitting and shameless persons, not having love and being enemies of the peace of the Church, slanderers of the Orthodox, inventors of new errors, disobedient, apostate, as they were recognized to be by the Fathers, and therefore worthy of disdain.”

In order to preserve the purity of the faith in Muscovy, Patriarch Dositheus proposed reserving the most important posts in the State and Church to Great Russians, who were purer in their faith than the Little Russians coming from Polish-dominated lands. He proposed that Patriarch Joachim burn heretical books, and defrock or excommunicate those who read them. Moreover, he supported the creation of a Greco-Slavonic Theological Academy that would strengthen traditional patristic Orthodoxy against the Latinism of the Jesuit schools. Most of these aims were achieved. However, during the reign of Peter the Great, who turned the State and Church sharply towards the West, the Academy had been renamed as Latino-Slavonic and Little Russians were again in the ascendant over Great Russians…

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The transition from Holy Rus’ to Great Russia can be seen in the last decade of the seventeenth century, in the career of the last Patriarch of Muscovite Russia, Adrian. At his enthronement in 1690 he expressed a traditional, very Nikonian concept of the relationship between the Church and the State: “The kingdom has dominion only on earth, ... whereas the priesthood has power on earth as in heaven... I am established as archpastor and father and head of all, for the patriarch is the image of Christ. He who hears me hears Christ. For all Orthodox are the spiritual sons [of the patriarch] – tsars, princes, lords, honourable warriors, and ordinary people... right-believers of every age and station. They are my sheep, they know me and they heed my archpastoral voice…”

However, this boldness evaporated when the domineering personality of Peter the Great came to full power in the kingdom. Thus, as M.V. Zyzykin writes, “when Tsaritsa Natalia, who had supported Patriarch Adrian, a supporter of the old order of life, died [in 1694], there began a reform of customs which showed itself already in the outward appearance of the Tsar [Peter]. The Tsar’s way of life did not accord with the sacred dignity of the Tsar and descended from this height to drinking bouts in the German suburb and the life of a simple workman. The Church with its striving for salvation..

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retreated into the background, and, as a consequence of this, a whole series of changes in customs appeared. Earlier the First-hierarchs and other hierarchs had been drawn into the Tsar’s council even in civil matters; they had been drawn to participate in the Zemskie Sobory and the Boyar’s Duma; now Peter distanced the Church’s representatives from participation in state matters; he spoke about this even during the lifetime of his mother to the Patriarch and did not summon him to the council. The ceremony on Palm Sunday in which the Tsar had previously taken part only as the first son of the Church, and not as her chief master, was scrapped. This ceremony on the one hand exalted the rank of the Patriarch before the people, and on the other hand also aimed at strengthening the authority of his Majesty’s state power through his participation in front of the whole people in a religious ceremony in the capacity of the first son of the Church. Until the death of his mother Peter also took part in this ceremony, holding the reins of the ass on which Patriarch Adrian [representing Christ Himself] sat, but between 1694 and 1696 this rite was put aside as if it were humiliating for the tsar’s power. The people were not indifferent to this and in the persons of the riflemen who rebelled in 1698 they expressed their protest. After all, the motive for this rebellion was the putting aside of the procession on Palm Sunday, and also the cessation of the cross processions at Theophany and during Bright Week, and the riflemen wanted to destroy the German suburb and beat up the Germans because ‘piety had stagnated among them’. In essence this protest was a protest against the proclamation of the primacy of the State and earthly culture in place of the Church and religion. So as to introduce this view into the mass of the people, it had been necessary to downgrade the significance of the First Hierarch of the Church, the Patriarch. After all, he incarnated in himself the earthly image of Christ, and in his position in the State the idea of the enchurchment of the State, that lay at the foundation of the symphony of powers, was vividly expressed. Of course, Peter had to remove all the rights of the Patriarch that expressed this. We have seen that the Patriarch ceased to be the official advisor of the Tsar and was excluded from the Boyars’ Duma. But this was not enough: the Patriarch still had one right, which served as a channel for the idea of righteousness in the structure of the State. This was the right to make petitions before the Tsar, and its fall symbolized the fall in the authority of the Patriarch. Soloviev has described this scene of the last petitioning in connection with the riflemen’s rebellion. ‘The terrible preparations for the executions went ahead, the gallows were placed on Belij and Zemlyanoj gorod, at the gates of the Novodevichi monastery and at the four assembly houses of the insurgent regiments. The Patriarch remembered that his predecessors had stood between the Tsar and the victims of his wrath, and had petitioned for the disgraced ones, lessening the bloodshed. Adrian raised the icon of the Mother of God and set off for Peter at Preobrazhenskoye. But the Tsar, on seeing the Patriarch, shouted at him: ‘What is this icon for? Is coming here really your business? Get away from here and put the icon in its place. Perhaps I venerate God and His All-holy Mother more than you. I am carrying out my duties and doing a God-pleasing work when I defend the people and execute evil-doers who plot against it.’ Historians rebuke Patriarch Adrian for not saying what the First
Priest was bound to say, but humbly yielded to the Tsar, leaving the place of execution in shame without venturing on an act of heroic self-sacrifice. He did not oppose moral force to physical force and did not defend the right of the Church to be the guardian of the supreme righteousness. The petitioning itself turned out to be, not the heroism of the Patriarch on his way to martyrdom, but an empty rite. The Patriarch’s humiliation was put in the shade by Peter in that he heeded the intercession of a foreigner, the adventurer Lefort. ‘Lefort, as Golikov informs us, firmly represented to Peter that his Majesty should punish for evil-doing, but not lead the evil-doers into despair: the former is the consequence of justice, while the latter is an act of cruelty.’ At that very moment his Majesty ordered the stopping of the execution...”

In February, 1696 Patriarch Adrian was paralyzed, and in October, 1700, he died. Peter did not permit the election of a new patriarch, but only a locum tenens. Later in his reign he abolished the patriarchate itself and introduced what was in effect a Protestant form of Church-State relations...

Thus the seventeenth century ended with the effective fall of the symphony of powers in Russia in the form of the shackling of one of its two pillars – the patriarchate... That this would eventually lead to the fall of the other pillar, the tsardom, had been demonstrated by events in contemporary England. For there were uncanny parallels in the histories of the two countries at this time. Thus 1649 saw both the enactment of the Ulozhenie, the first official and legal expression of caesaropapism in Russia, and the execution of the king in England - the first legalized regicide in European history. And if by the 1690s both the patriarchate in Russia and the monarchy in England appeared to have been restored to their former status, this was only an illusion. Soon the doctrine of the social contract, which removed from the monarchy its Divine right and gave supreme power to the people, would triumph in both countries: in England in its liberal, Lockean form, and in Russia in its absolutist, Hobbesean form...

63. PETER THE GREAT AND THE WEST

The early modern period (to 1688) was distinguished by two contrary tendencies in politics: on the one hand, the tendency towards the absolutist state, almost freed now from the shackles of ecclesiastical and feudal obligation, and on the other hand, the rise of representative institutions and the gradual re-imposition of shackles on the state by “the will of the people” – that is, those classes of society (usually the aristocrats and landowners) who took it upon themselves to proclaim that their opinions were the opinions of the whole people. On the one hand, it was often assumed “that absolutism delivered the best government at home and the most effective defence of state interests abroad. Parliamentary or corporate systems, on the other hand, were widely considered to be corrupt, chaotic and prone to outside intervention. It was for this reason that the ‘reform’ party in Poland tried to curb the rights of the Sejm from the mid-1730s in favour of a more centralized government capable of resisting foreign powers…” On the other hand, “as the eighteenth century wore on, it became clear that the increasing bureaucratization of the continental European states [like Austro-Hungary] hampered effective decision-making, while parliamentary Britain remained capable of extraordinary clarity of vision, resilience and determined action.”

However, from the perspective of about the year 1700, or even 1750, it was the absolutist states such as France and Prussia that seemed to be the most successful. Britain’s triumph over France in the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), still lay in the future, as did the collapse of absolutist France in 1789. And that is one reason why the tendency in Russia was to develop in the direction of greater absolutism and despotism on the French or Prussian models, and not in the direction of British (still less Polish) representative government.

But this meant that Russia also, under western influence, developed away from the traditional model of Orthodox autocracy...

The difference between autocracy and despotism was well characterized by Nicholas Berdiaev as follows: “[In the Orthodox autocracy] there are no rights to power, but only obligations of power. The power of the tsar is by no means absolute, unrestricted power. It is autocratic because its source is not the will of the people and it is not restricted by the people. But it is restricted by the Church and by Christian righteousness; it is spiritually subject to the Church; it serves not its own will, but the will of God. The tsar must not have his own will, but he must serve the will of God. The tsar and the people are bound together by one and the same faith, by one and the same subjection to the Church and the righteousness of God. Autocracy presupposes a wide national social basis living its own self-sufficient life; it does not signify the suppression of the people’s life. Autocracy is justified only if the people has beliefs which sanction the power of the tsar. It cannot be an external violence inflicted on the people. The tsar is autocratic only if he is a truly Orthodox tsar.

The defective Orthodoxy of Peter the Great and his inclination towards Protestantism made him an absolute, and not an autocratic monarch. Absolute monarchy is a child of humanism...

“In absolutism the tsar is not a servant of the Church. A sign of absolute monarchy is the subjection of the Church to the State. That is what happened to the Catholic Church under Louis XIV. Absolutism always develops a bureaucracy and suppresses the social life of the people…”

As Francis Fukuyama writes, Peter “moved the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg and imposed a host of institutions from Europe. Peter was a giant, both physically and in terms of his leadership ability, and single-handedly pushed the limits of what was possible in terms of top-down social transformation of a society. War was... the chief motive for state building, especially the enormous pressures created by the Great Northern War with Sweden. Following defeat by Charles XII at the Battle of Narva in 1700, Peter began a thorough reorganization of the army along contemporary European lines and build a navy from scratch (beginning with a single ship and ending with a fleet of more than eight hundred that was capable of defeating the Swedish navy). He also modernized Russia’s central administration by abolishing the old prikazy and replacing them with a system of colleges modelled on similar institutions in Sweden. The colleges were built around technical expertise – often, at this point, coming from foreigners – and exercised a deliberative function in debating and executing policies.

“The first phase of state building in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was based on mobilization of the middle service class, which split the nobility and ensured that a large number of them would be directly dependent on the state. Peter went even further and drafted the entire aristocracy into state service. The gentry entered the army as boys, were promoted on modern merit criteria, and had to remain with the regiments for their entire lives. The idea of a service nobility thus lasted far longer in Russia than it had in Europe, though it was implemented very differently. The nobles who served the state did not come with their own retinues of vassals and retainers but were assigned positions by a centralized hierarchy. This led to an overall militarization of Russian society, with a moral emphasis on duty, honor, hierarchy, and obedience...

“Peter replaced the old mestnichestvo with a Table of Ranks in 1722, a hierarchical system in which each of his subjects was entered into a legally defined order with its own privileges and obligations. By reaching a certain grade, a non-noble servitor, whether bureaucrat or military man, was automatically entered into the ranks of the hereditary nobility. This provided a path for new entrants into the nobility, which was needed because of the state’s enormous staffing needs. The Table of Ranks solidified the corporate

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identity of the nobility and its capacity for collective action. But it never saw itself as an opponent of monarchical power; its interests had become too tightly bound to the state for that.

“What the nobles got in return for service was exemption from taxation, exclusive rights to the ownership of land and people, and the opportunity to squeeze their serfs harder. The close relationship of the deteriorating condition of the peasantry and the rise of a service gentry is indicated by the fact that serfdom first appeared in the lands given by the prince to his gentry as pomest’ia. These tended to be in the south, south-east, and west, frontier regions where new land had been acquired from neighbouring countries. In the great expanse of northern territories where there was no fighting, the condition of peasants was much better – they were for the most part state peasants with obligations to the state rather than a private landlord.

“Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a continuing increase in the tax burden laid on peasants, but the more important legal restrictions were placed on the right of movement. The peasants’ right of departure had been an old tradition, but it was increasingly limited and then abolished altogether. These limits on peasant movement were critical to both the formation of a cohesive Russian aristocracy and its alliance with the monarchy.

“The reason for this was, ironically, related to Russia’s geography, which... was highly unfavourable to the development of slavery due to its lack of circumscription. There are few natural barriers to movement such as impassable rivers or mountain ranges in Russia, and the country’s borderlands stretched outward with the expansion of the country, particularly to the south and the south-east. The free Cossack communities that grew up in southern Ukraine and in the Don basin were said to have been founded by escaped serfs. Just as in the American South, whose slave-owning territories abutted an open frontier, the institution of serfdom could be made viable only if there was strong agreement among serf owners to restrict their movement, to return runaways, and to severely punish not only serfs but also other landowners who violated the rules. If one major actor opted out of the system – whether a subset of landlords, or a group of free cities, or the king himself offering protection to runaways – then the whole system would collapse [as it did collapse in Western Europe]. Given the relative scarcity of labor in this period, it would be highly profitable for any individual landowner to defect from the coalition and attract serfs to his territory by offering them better terms. Hence the solidarity of the landowning cartel had to be reinforced through strong status privileges and binding commitment to enforce rules against peasant movement. Russian absolutism was founded on an alliance that emerged between the monarch and both the upper and lower nobility, all of whom committed themselves to binding rules at the expense of the peasantry.
“The need to maintain this serf-owning cartel explains many things about Russian political development. The government put increasing restrictions on the free ownership of land by non-serf-owning individuals. To acquire property, one had to enter the nobility, whereupon one automatically acquired serfs and the obligations to maintain the system. This then constrained the growth of a bourgeoisie in independent commercial cities, which had played such an important role in promoting peasant freedom in the West. Hence capitalist economic development in Russia was spearheaded by nobles rather than an independent bourgeoisie. The need to maintain the cartel also explains Russian expansion to the south and southeast, since the existence of free Cossack territories along the frontier presented a continuing lure and opportunity for peasant escape and needed to be suppressed…”

This analysis is developed by Archpriest Lev Lebedev: “Under Peter I a beginning was laid to that serfdom which for a long time became the shame and illness of Russia. Before Peter from time immemorial not only state peasants, but also those of the landowners were not deprived of rights, were under the protection of the laws, that is, they could never be serfs or slaves, the property of their lords! We have already seen that there were measures to limit and, finally, to ban the free departure of peasants, or their transfer from one lord to another. And there were measures to tie the Russian peasants to the land (but not to the lords!) with the aim of preserving the cultivation of the land in the central lands of Great Russia, keeping in them the cultivators themselves, the peasants that were capable of working. But Russian landowners always had bond-slaves, people who had fallen into complete dependence on the lords, mortgaging themselves for debts, or runaways, or others who were hiding from persecution. Gradually (not immediately) the landowners began to provide these bond-slaves, too, with their own (not common) land, forcing them to work on it to increase the lords’ profits, which at that time consisted mainly in the products of the cultivation of the land. Peter I, in introducing a new form of taxation, a poll-tax (on the person), and not on the plot of land and not on the ‘yard’ composed of several families, as had been the case before him, also taxed the bond-slaves with this poll-tax, thereby putting them in the same rank as the peasants. From that time the lords gradually began to look on their free peasants, too, as bond-slaves, that is, as their own property. Soon, under Catherine II, this was already legalised, so that the Empress called the peasants ‘slaves’, which had never been the case in Russia!”

And so, as absolutism displaced autocracy, the freedoms that autocracy preserved were whittled away… A similar process was happening in England, where the landowners won the right to enclose the common spaces, thereby driving out those the copyholders. Essentially, while the peasants did not become slaves, they lost their freedom…

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The westernization of official Russia was accomplished by a revolution from above, by Tsar Peter I and his successors, especially Catherine II. However, state power would have been insufficient to carry out such a radical change if it had not been supported and propelled by the spread of Masonic ideas among the aristocracy, in whose hands the real power rested after the death of Peter. So before examining Peter’s reforms, it will be useful to examine the beginnings of Masonry in Russia.

Russia became infiltrated by Freemasonry during the reign of Peter the Great, who undertook a programme of westernization that was supported and propelled by the spread of Masonic ideas among the aristocracy.

“There is no doubt,” writes Ivanov, “that the seeds of Masonry were sown in Russian by the ‘Jacobites’, supporters of the English King James II, who had been cast out of their country by the revolution and found a hospitable reception at the court of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich.

“Independently of the Masonic propaganda of the Jacobite Masons, the Russians had learned of the existence of the mysterious union of free stonemasons during their journeys abroad. Thus, for example, Boris Petrovich Sheremetev had got to known Masonry during his travels. Sheremetev had been given a most triumphant meeting on Malta. He took part in the great feast of the Maltese order in memory of John the Forerunner, and they had given him a triumphant banquet there. The grand-master had bestowed on him the valuable Maltese cross made of gold and diamonds. On returning to Moscow on February 10, 1699, Sheremetev was presented to the Tsar at a banquet on February 12 at Lefort’s, dressed in German clothes and wearing the Maltese cross. He received ‘great mercy’ from the Tsar, who congratulated him on becoming a Maltese cavalier and gave him permission to wear this cross at all times. Then a decree was issued that Sheremetev should be accorded the title of ‘accredited Maltese cavalier’.

“The early shoots of Russian Masonry,’ writes Vernadsky, ‘were particularly possible in the fleet, since the fleet had been created entirely on western models and under western influence.

“In one manuscript of the Public library the story is told that Peter was received into the Scottish degree of St. Andrew, and ‘made an undertaking that he would establish this order in Russia, a promise which he carried out (in the form of the order of St. Andrew the First-Called, which was established in 1698)…

“Among the manuscripts of the Mason Lansky, there is a piece of grey paper on which this fact is recorded: ‘The Emperor Peter I and Lefort were received into the Templars in Holland.’
“In the Public library manuscript ‘A View on the Philosophers and the French Revolution’ (1816), it is indicated that Masonry ‘existed during the time of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich. Bruce was its great master, while Tsar Peter was its first inspector.’”

Russians joined the lodges, according to Hosking, because they “became a channel by which young men aspiring to high office or good social standing could find acquaintances and protectors among their superiors; in the Russian milieu this meant an easier and pleasanter way of rising up the Table of Ranks…”

There were, however, deeper, more sinister reasons for Masonry’s success. “Freemasonry,” writes Andrzej Walicki, “had a dual function: on the one hand, it could draw people away from the official Church and, by rationalizing religious experience, could contribute to the gradual secularisation of their world view; on the other hand, it could attract people back to religion and draw them away from the secular and rationalistic philosophy of the Enlightenment. The first function was fulfilled most effectively by the rationalistic and deistic wing of the movement, which set the authority of reason against that of the Church and stood for tolerance and the freedom of the individual. The deistic variety of Freemasonry flourished above all in England, where it had links with the liberal movement, and in France, where it was often in alliance with the encyclopaedists. The second function was most often fulfilled by the mystical trend, although this too could represent a modernization of religious faith, since the model of belief it put forward was fundamentally anti-ecclesiastical and postulated a far-reaching internalisation of faith founded on the soul’s immediate contact with God.”

Russians, though not uninfluenced by the rationalist side of Masonry, were especially drawn by its mystical side. For while their faith in Orthodoxy was weak, they were by no means prepared to live without religion altogether. “Finding myself at the crossroads between Voltaireanism and religion”, wrote Novikov, “I had no basis on which to work, no cornerstone on which to build spiritual tranquillity, and therefore I fell into the society.”

The success of Masonry, therefore, was largely due to the weakening of faith in Orthodoxy…

388 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. 95-96. Keith founded his Russian lodge in 1741-1742, and left Russia in 1747. One contemporary Masonic source writes: “One Russian tradition has it that Peter became a Mason on trip to England and brought it back to Russia. There is no hard evidence of this…” (Richard I. Rhoda, “Russian Freemasonry: A New Dawn”, paper delivered at Orient Lodge no. 15 on June 29, 1996, http://members.aol.com/houltonrne/rus.htm)
The conversion of Tsar Peter to Masonry, if it is a fact, was the fulfilment of
the fervent hopes of western Masons such as the philosopher Leibnitz, who in
1696 had written to Ludolph: “If only the Muscovite kingdom inclined to the
enlightened laws of Europe, Christianity would acquire the greatest fruits.
There is, however, hope that the Muscovites will arise from their slumbers.
There is no doubt that Tsar Peter is conscious of the faults of his subjects and
desires to root out their ignorance little by little.” 392 According to K.F.
Valishevsky, Leibnitz “had worked out a grandiose plan of scientific
undertakings, which could be achieved with the help of the Muscovite
monarch and in which the greatest German philosopher marked out a role for
himself. Leibnitz studied the history and language of Russia.” 393 And it was
Leibnitz, together with his pupil Wolf, who played the leading role in the
foundation of the Russian Academy of Sciences. 394

392 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 110.
393 Valishevsky, Petr Velikij (Peter the Great), in Ivanov, op. cit., p. 120.
394 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 137.
The Russian Church never fully recovered from the blow dealt to the "symphony of powers" by Patriarch Nikon’s unjust deposition and the consequent secularization. As a result, the whole country submitted to the cultural, scientific and educational influence of the West. This transformation was symbolized especially by the building, at great cost in human lives, of a new capital at St. Petersburg. Situated at the extreme western end of the vast empire as Peter's "window to the West", this extraordinary city was largely built by French and Italian architects on the model of Venice and Amsterdam, peopled by shaven and pomaded courtiers who spoke more French than Russian, and ruled by monarchs of mainly German origin. In building St. Petersburg, Peter was also trying to replace the traditional idea of Russia as the Third Rome by the western idea of the secular empire on the model of the First Rome, the Rome of the pagan Caesars and Augusti.

As Wil van den Bercken writes: “Rome remains an ideological point of reference in the notion of the Russian state. However, it is no longer the second Rome but the first Rome to which reference is made, or ancient Rome takes the place of Orthodox Constantinople. Peter takes over Latin symbols: he replaces the title tsar by the Latin imperator, designates his state imperia, calls his advisory council senate, and makes the Latin Rossija the official name of his land in place of the Slavic Rus’…”

“Although the primary orientation is on imperial Rome, there are also all kinds of references to the Christian Rome. The name of the city, St. Petersburg, was not just chosen because Peter was the patron saint of the tsar, but also to associate the apostle Peter with the new Russian capital. That was both a diminution of the religious significance of Moscow and a religious claim over papal Rome. The adoption of the religious significance of Rome is also evident from the cult of the second apostle of Rome, Paul, which is expressed in the name for the cathedral of the new capital, the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral. This name was a break with the pious Russian tradition, which does not regard the two Roman apostles but Andrew as the patron of Russian Christianity. Thus St. Petersburg is meant to be the new Rome, directly following on the old Rome, and passing over the second and third Romes…”

And yet the ideal of Russia as precisely the Third Rome, - that is, the protector of Orthodoxy throughout the world - not a resurrection of the First, pagan Rome was preserved; for “neither the people nor the Church renounced the very ideal of the Orthodox kingdom, and, as even V. Klyuchevsky noted, continued to consider as law that which corresponded to this ideal, and not Peter’s decrees.”

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But if Russia was still the Third Rome, it was highly doubtful, in the people’s view, that Peter was her true Autocrat. For how could one who undermined the foundations of the Third Rome be her true ruler? The real Autocrat of Russia, the rumour went, was sealed up in a column in Stockholm, and Peter was a German who had been substituted for him...

However, if the Russians were beginning to doubt, the Greeks were beginning to take to the idea, especially as Peter was now extending his power to the south... Thus in 1709 he defeated the Swedes at the Battle of Poltava, and then invaded the Balkans, calling on the Balkan Orthodox to see him as their protector. Although Peter was defeated by the Ottomans at the Battle of the Pruth, Russia now constituted a threat to Constantinople itself that translated into real influence with the Sultan. In fact, it is with Peter the Great and his eighteenth-century successors that we can first talk realistically about Russia fulfilling her role as the protector of the non-Russian Orthodox...

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

Less in the tradition of the Orthodox Emperor was Peter’s abolition of the Russian patriarchate and its replacement by a Synod that was formally a department of the State. In 1721 Peter petitioned the Ecumenical Patriarch to recognize this “governmental” (pravitel’stvennij) Synod as having “equal to patriarchal power”. In 1723 the reply came in the form of “two nearly identical letters, one from Patriarch Jeremiah of Constantinople, written on behalf of himself and the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria, and the other from Patriarch Athanasius of Antioch. Both letters ‘confirmed, ratified, and declared’ that the Synod established by Peter ‘is, and shall be called, our

holy brother in Christ’; and the patriarchs enjoined all Orthodox clergy and people to submit to the Synod ‘as to the four Apostolic thrones’.”

The Eastern Patriarchs’ agreement to the abolition of the patriarchate they themselves had established needs some explanation. Undoubtedly influential in their decision was the assurance they received from Peter that he had instructed the Synod to rule the Russian Church “in accordance with the unalterable dogmas of the faith of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Greek Church”. Of course, if they had known all the Protestantizing, not to speak of pagan, tendencies of Peter’s rule, and in particular his reduction of the Church to a department of the State, they might not have felt so assured...

Also relevant was the fact that the Russian tsar was the last independent Orthodox ruler and the main financial support of the Churches of the East. This made it difficult for the Patriarchs to resist the Tsar in this, as in other requests. Thus in 1716 Patriarch Jeremiah III acceded to Peter’s request to allow his soldiers to eat meat during all fasts while they were on campaign; and a little later he permitted the request of the Russian consul in Constantinople that Lutherans and Calvinists should not be baptized on joining the Orthodox Church.

But a still more likely explanation is the fact that the Eastern Patriarchs were themselves in an uncanonical (simoniac) situation in relation to their secular ruler, the Sultan, which would have made any protest against a similar uncanonicity in Russia seem hypocritical. In fact, in the 18th century we have the tragic spectacle of the Orthodox Church almost everywhere in an uncanonical position vis-à-vis the secular powers: in Russia, deprived of its lawful head and ruled by a secular, albeit formally Orthodox ruler; in the Greek lands, under a lawful head, the Ecumenical Patriarch, who nevertheless unlawfully combined political and religious roles and was chosen, at least in part, by a Muslim ruler; in the Balkans, deprived of their lawful heads (the Serbian and Bulgarian patriarchs) and ruled in both political and religious matters by the Ecumenical Patriarch while being under the supreme dominion of the same Muslim ruler, or, as in Montenegro, ruled (from 1782) by prince-bishops of the Petrovic-Njegos family.

Only little Georgia retained something like the traditional symphony of powers. But even the Georgians were forced, towards the end of the eighteenth century, to seek the suzerainty of Orthodox Russia in the face of

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399 However, “Christopher Hermann von Manstein found that during the Ochakov campaign in the 1730s ‘though the synod grants them a dispensation for eating flesh during the actual campaign, there are few that choose to take the benefit of it, preferring death to the sin of breaking their rule” (Janet M. Hartley, *A Social History of the Russian Empire, 1650-1825*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 242).
400 Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, part I, p. 294. At the Moscow council of 1666-67, it had been decreed, under pressure from Ligarides, that papists should be received, not by baptism, but by chrismation.
the Muslim threat. The idea was: better submit to the absolutist but Orthodox ruler of the Third Rome than the similarly absolutist but infidel ruler of the Second Rome.

The problem for the smaller Orthodox nations was that there was no clear way out of this situation. Rebellion on a mass scale was out of the question. So it was natural to look in hope to the north, where Peter, in spite of his “state heresy” (Glubokovsky’s phrase), was an anointed sovereign who greatly strengthened Russia militarily and signed all the confessions of the faith of the Orthodox Church. All these factors persuaded the Eastern Patriarchs to employ “economy” (leniency, condescension to weakness) and bless the uncanonical replacement of the patriarchate with a State-dominated Synod…

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Peter’s return from his first journey to the West, writes B.A. Uspensky, “was immediately marked by a whole range of cultural innovations. Already in the next year there began the forcible shaving of beards; the destruction of beards was marked for the New Year, 1699. It was then that there also began the struggle against Russian national dress and a range of other reforms of the same kind.”401

Peter learned many useful things on this journey to the West, especially as related to warfare. But in religion, as we shall see, the influences were harmful. And many, and not only the Old Ritualists, were prepared to condemn his undermining of the foundations of Russian society. Thus in 1699 or 1700, on a visit to Voronezh, he ordered the bishop of the city, St. Metrophan, to visit him at the palace he had erected on an island in the River Voronezh. “Without delay the holy hierarch set out on foot to go to the tsar. But when he entered the courtyard which led to the palace, he saw that statues of the ancient Greek gods and goddesses had been set up there on the tsar’s order, to serve as architectural adornment. The holy one immediately returned to his residence. The sovereign was apprised of this, but, not knowing the reason why the holy Metrophan had turned back, he sent another messenger to him with orders that he attend upon the sovereign in the palace. But the saintly bishop replied: ‘Until the sovereign commandeth that the idols, which scandalise all the people, be taken away, I cannot set foot in the palace!’ Enraged by the holy hierarch’s reply, the tsar sent him the following message: ‘If he will not come, he shall incur the death sentence for disobedience to the powers that be.’ To this threat the saint replied: ‘The sovereign hath authority over my life, but it is not seemly for a Christian ruler to set up heathen idols and thus lead the hearts of the simple into temptation.’ Towards evening, the tsar suddenly heard the great bell of the cathedral toll, summoning the faithful to church. Since there was no particular feast being celebrated the following day, he sent to ask the bishop why the bell was being

401 Uspensky, in Fomin & Fomina, Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1998, volume I, p. 268. Clergy and peasants were allowed to retain their beards. And nobles could keep them if they paid a “beard tax”.
rung. ‘Because His Majesty has condemned me to be executed, I, as a sinful man, must bring the Lord God repentance before my death and ask forgiveness of my sins at a general service of prayer, and for this cause I have ordered an all-night vigil to be served.’ When he learned of this, the tsar laughed and straightway commanded that the holy hierarch be told that his sovereign forgave him, and that he cease to alarm the people with the extraordinary tolling. And afterwards, Tsar Peter ordered the statues removed. One should understand that Peter never gave up his innovations, and if in this respect he yielded, it merely demonstrates the great respect he cherished for the bishop of Voronezh…”

It was not only the Church that suffered from Peter’s westernizing drive. The nobility were chained to public service in the bureaucracy or the army; the peasants - to the land. As we have seen, this was to some extent explained by military necessity. For Peter had to fight foreign wars (against the Turks and the Swedes) whose success required a standing army and modern technology.

Before Peter could begin his reforms in earnest, he had to crush the opposition to them. This meant, in the first place, the Streltsy (riflemen or musketeers), who had caused him such suffering when he was a child, and whose inefficiency and complaints, leading to open rebellion in 1700, led him both to crush the rebellion and torture the rebels in order to extract information from them. And he would not let anyone, even the Patriarch of all Russia, to stop him...

Thus, as Robert Massie writes, “reports of the horror reached such magnitude that the Patriarch took it upon himself to go to Peter to beg for mercy. He went carrying an image of the Blessed Virgin, reminding Peter of the humanity of all men and asking for the exercise of mercy. Peter, resenting the intrusion of spiritual authority on temporal matters, replied to the churchmen with great feeling: ‘What are you doing with that image and what business is it of yours to come here? Leave immediately and put that image in a place where it may be venerated. Know that I reverence God and His Most Holy Mother more earnestly, perhaps, than you do. But it is the duty of my sovereign office, and a duty that I owe to God, to save my people from harm and to prosecute with public vengeance crimes that lead to the common ruin.’ In this case, Peter continued, justice and harshness were linked, the gangrene ran deep in the body politic and could be cut out only with iron and fire. Moscow, he said, would be saved not by pity but by cruelty…”

Nevertheless, even at this relatively early stage of his reign, Peter’s attitude to the faith was not quite as simple as he made out. Thus “for the regimental priests who had encouraged the Streltsy, a gibbet constructed in

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the shape of a cross was erected in front of St. Basil’s Cathedral. The priests were hanged by the court jester, dressed for the occasion in clerical robes.” 404

In the second place, Peter felt that he had to crush his son, the Tsarevich Alexis. For the Tsarevich, whose mother Peter had cast away in favour of the German Anna Mons and then the Lithuanian Catherine, represented a focus around which there gathered all those who loved the old traditions of Holy Rus’ and hoped for their restoration. In killing him, therefore, Peter was striking a blow at the whole Orthodox way of life, and declaring, as it were, that there was no going back to the old ways.

Exactly two centuries later, in 1918, the Bolsheviks would do the same, and for the same reasons, to Tsar Nicholas II...

Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: “Peter I’s persecution of his own son, ending with the secret killing of the latter, was in essence the persecution of immemorial Great Russia, which did not want to change its nature, to be reborn according to the will of the monarch into something complete opposite to it. It was not by chance that the characteristics of the personality of the Tsarevich Alexis Petrovich mirrored so well the characteristics of the personality of the major part of Russia. In this major part the Tsar continued to be venerated, in spite of everything, as ‘the Anointed of God’, whom it was necessary to obey in everything except in matters of the faith, if he began to break or destroy its root foundations. Peter could not directly and openly war against this Great Russia (that is, with the majority of his people). Therefore he went on the path of slander (that his actions were opposed, supposedly, only by sluggards or traitors) and the hidden, as it were secret suffocation of everything whose root and core was Holy Rus’, Orthodox Rus’. On this path Peter was ineluctably forced to resort to one very terrible means: to cover his deliberately anti-God, dishonourable, if not simply criminal actions with pious words, using the name of God and other holy names, excerpts from the Holy Scriptures and Tradition, false oaths, etc. – or in other words, to act under the mask of Orthodox piety. Such had happened in earlier history and especially, as we remember, in the form of the actions of the ‘Judaizing’ heretics, Ivan IV and Boris Godunov. But from Peter I it becomes as it were a certain norm, a kind of rule for rulers that did not require explanation…” 405

Now that the Tsarevich was dead, Peter could proceed to his most important and destructive “reform”, the subjection of the Church to the State...

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404 Massie, op. cit., p. 258.
405 Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 194.
Peter had certainly been deeply influenced by the West; and perhaps the most important and dangerous influence that Peter had received on his journey there was that of the Anglican Bishop Gilbert Burnet. The Tsar and the famous preacher had many long talks, and according to Burnet what interested the Tsar most was his exposition of the “authority that the Christian Emperors assumed in matters of religion and the supremacy of our Kings”. Burnet told the Tsar that “the great and comprehensive rule of all is, that a king should consider himself as exalted by Almighty God into that high dignity as into a capacity of doing much good and of being a great blessing to mankind, and in some sort a god on earth”.

Peter certainly came to believe a similar teaching concerning his role as tsar. “By God’s dispensation,” he said, “it has fallen to me to correct both the state and the clergy; I am to them both sovereign and patriarch; they have forgotten that in [pagan] antiquity these [roles] were combined.” And now he set out gradually to enslave the Church to the power of the State. From 1701 to 1718 he enacted a series of piecemeal measures, but was to some extent inhibited by the intermittent resistance of the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Stefan Yavorsky of Ryazan, and of his own son, the Tsarevich Alexis. However, after the execution of the Tsarevich and the effective replacement of Yavorsky by a man more after his reforming heart, Metropolitan Theophan Prokopovich of Pskov, Peter set about a systematic codification and consolidation of his reforms in his Ecclesiastical Regulation, published in 1721...

On January 24, 1701 Peter ordered the re-opening of the Monastirskij Prikaz which Patriarch Nicon had so struggled against. The Prikaz was authorized to collect all state taxes and peasant dues from the estates of the Church, as well as purely ecclesiastical emoluments. A large proportion of this sum was then given to the state to help the war-effort against Sweden.

In other words, while the Church was not formally dispossessed, the State took complete control over her revenues. St. Demetrius of Rostov protested: “You want to steal the things of the Church? Ask Heliodorus, Seleucus’ treasurer, who wanted to go to Jerusalem to steal the things of the Church. He was beaten by the hands of an angel.”

The Church also lost her judicial independence, her ability to judge her own people in her own courts. The State demanded that clergy be defrocked for transgressing certain state laws. It put limits on the numbers of clergy, and

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407 It had not always been so. Thus early in his reign, in 1701, he replied to some Catholic Saxons who proposed a union between the Orthodox and Catholic churches: “Sovereigns have rights only over the bodies of their people. Christ is the sovereign of their souls. For such a union, a general consent of the people is necessary and that is in the power of God alone....” (Robert Massie, Peter the Great, London: Phoenix, 2001, p. 345).
408 St. Demetrius, in Fomin & Fomina, op. cit., volume I, p. 290.
of new church buildings. Monks were confined to their monasteries, no new monasteries could be founded, and the old ones were turned into hospitals and rest-homes for retired soldiers.

"Under Peter", writes Andrew Bessmertny, "a fine for the giving of alms (from 5 to 10 rubles) was introduced, together with corporal punishments followed by cutting out of the nostrils and exile to the galleys 'for the proclamation of visions and miracles'. In 1723 a decree forbidding the tonsuring of monks was issued, with the result that by 1740 Russian monasticism consisted of dodder old men, while the founder of eldership, St. Paisius Velichkovsky, was forced to emigrate to Moldavia. Moreover, in the monasteries they introduced a ban on paper and ink - so as to deprive the traditional centres of book-learning and scholarship of their significance. Processions through the streets with icons and holy water were also banned (almost until the legislation of 1729)! At the same time, there appeared... the government ban on Orthodox transferring to other confessions of faith." 409

If Peter was a tyrant, he was nevertheless not a conventional tyrant, but one who genuinely wanted the best for his country. And in spite of the drunken orgies in which he mocked her institutions and rites, he did not want to destroy the Church, but only “reform” her in directions which he thought would make her more efficient and “useful”.

Some of the “reforms” were harmful, like his allowing mixed marriages (the Holy Synod decreed the next year that the children of these marriages should be Orthodox, which mitigated, but did not remove the harmfulness of the decree). Others were beneficial. Thus the decree that the lower age limit for ordination to the diaconate should be twenty-five, and for the priesthood thirty, although motivated by a desire to limit the number of persons claiming exemption from military service, especially “ignorant and lazy clergy”, nevertheless corresponded to the canonical ages for ordination. Again, his measures ensuring regular attendance at church by laypeople, if heavy-handed, at least demonstrated his genuine zeal for the flourishing of Church life. Moreover, he encouraged missionary work, especially in Siberia, where the sees of Tobolsk and Irkutsk were founded and such luminaries as St. John of Tobolsk and St. Innocent of Irkutsk flourished during his reign. And in spite of his own Protestant tendencies, he blessed the publication of some, if not all, books defending the principles of the Orthodox faith against Protestantism.

The most shocking of the State’s demands on the Church that priests break the seal of confession and report on any parishioners who confessed anti-government sentiments. Thus did Peter create a “police state” in which the priests were among the policemen. Now “a ‘police state’”, writes Fr. Georges

Florovsky, “is not only, or even largely, an outward reality, but more an inner reality: it is less a structure than a style of life; not only a political theory, but also a religious condition. ‘Policism’ represents the urge to build and ‘regularize’ a country and a people’s entire life – the entire life of each individual inhabitant – for the sake of his own and the ‘general welfare’ or ‘common good’. ‘Police’ pathos, the pathos of order and paternalism, proposes to institute nothing less than universal welfare and well-being, or, quite simply, universal ‘happiness’. [But] guardianship all too quickly becomes transformed into surveillance. Through its own paternalist inspiration, the ‘police state’ inescapably turns against the church. It also usurps the church’s proper function and confers them upon itself. It takes on the undivided care for the people’s religious and spiritual welfare.”

Peter’s choice to lead his new “reformed” Church, Metropolitan Theophan (Prokopovich), was distinguished by an extreme pro-westernism. Thus he called Germany the mother of all countries and openly expressed his sympathy with the German Lutheran theologians. This attachment to Lutheranism, especially as regards Church-State relations, is evident in his sermons. Thus in his sermon on Palm Sunday, 1718, he said: “Do we not see here [in the story of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem] what honour is paid to the King? Does this not require us not to remain silent about the duty of subjects to esteem the supreme authority, and about the great resistance to this duty that has been exposed in our country at the present time? For we see that not a small part of the people abide in such ignorance that they do not know the Christian doctrine concerning the secular authorities. Nay more, they do not know that the supreme authority is established and armed with the sword by God, and that to oppose it is a sin against God Himself, a sin to be punished by death not temporal but eternal...

“Christians have to be subject even to perverse and unbelieving rulers. How much more must they be utterly devoted to an Orthodox and just sovereign? For the former are masters, but the latter are also fathers. What am I saying? That our autocrat [Peter], and all autocrats, are fathers. And where else will you find this duty of ours, to honour the authorities sincerely and conscientiously, if not in the commandment: ‘Honour thy father!’ All the wise teachers affirm this; thus Moses the lawgiver himself instructs us. Moreover the authority of the state is the primary and ultimate degree of fatherhood, for on it depends not a single individual, not one household, but the life, the integrity, and the welfare of the whole great nation.”

Already in a school-book published in 1702 Prokopovich had referred to the emperor as “the rock Peter on whom Christ has built His Church”. And in another sermon dating from 1718 he “relates Peter, ‘the first of the Russian

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tsars’, to his patron saint Peter, ‘the first of the apostles’. Like the latter, tsar Peter has an ‘apostolic vocation... And what the Lord has commanded your patron and apostle concerning His Church, you are to carry out in the Church of this flourishing empire.’ This is a far-reaching theological comparison.”

In July, 1721 Prokopovich published an essay “expressing the view that since Constantine’s time the Christian emperors had exercised the powers of a bishop, ‘in the sense that they appointed the bishops, who ruled the clergy’. This was, in short, a justification of Peter’s assumption of complete jurisdiction over the government of the church; for a ‘Christian sovereign’, Prokopovich concluded in a celebrated definition of the term, is empowered to nominate not only bishops, ‘but the bishop of bishops, because the Sovereign is the supreme authority, the perfect, ultimate, and authentic supervisor; that is, he holds supreme judicial and executive power over all the ranks and authorities subject to him, whether secular or ecclesiastical’. ‘Patriarchalism [patriarshestvo]’ – the belief that a patriarch should rule the autocephalous Russian church – Prokopovich equated with ‘papalism’, and dismissed it accordingly.”

The notion that not the Patriarch, but only the Tsar, was the father of the people was developed by Prokopovich in his Primer, which consisted of an exposition of the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer and the Beatitudes: “Question. What is ordained by God in the fifth commandment [‘Honour thy father and thy mother’]? Answer: To honour all those who are as fathers and mothers to us. But it is not only parents who are referred to here, but others who exercise paternal authority over us. Question: Who are such persons? Answer: The first order of such persons are the supreme authorities instituted by God to rule the people, of whom the highest authority is the Tsar. It is the duty of kings to protect their subjects and to seek what is best for them, whether in religious matters or in the things of this world; and therefore they must watch over all the ecclesiastical, military, and civil authorities subject to them and conscientiously see that they discharge their respective duties. That is, under God, the highest paternal dignity; and subjects, like good sons, must honour the Tsar. [The second order of persons enjoying paternal authority are] the supreme rulers of the people who are subordinate to the Tsar, namely: the ecclesiastical pastors, the senators, the judges, and all other civil and military authorities.”

As Cracraft justly observes, “the things of God, the people were being taught by Prokopovich, were the things of Caesar, and vice-versa: the two could not be distinguished.”

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414 Cracraft, op. cit., p. 60.
415 Prokopovich, in Cracraft, op. cit., p. 284.
With Prokopovich as his main assistant, Peter now proceeded to the crown of his caesaropapist legislation, his *Ecclesiastical Regulation* of 1721, which established an “Ecclesiastical College” in parallel with nine secular Colleges, or Ministries, to replace the old patriarchal system.

Peter did not hide the fact that he had abolished the patriarchate because he did not want rivals to his single and undivided dominion over Russia. In this he followed the teaching of the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes in his *Leviathan*: “Temporal and spiritual are two words brought into the world to make men see double, and mistake their lawful sovereign... A man cannot obey two masters…”

And so: “The fatherland,” intoned the Regulation, “need not fear from an administrative council [the Ecclesiastical College] the sedition and disorders that proceed from the personal rule of a single church ruler. For the common fold do not perceive how different is the ecclesiastical power from that of the Autocrat, but dazzled by the great honour and glory of the Supreme Pastor [the patriarch], they think him a kind of second Sovereign, equal to or even greater than the Autocrat himself, and imagine that the ecclesiastical order is another and better state.

“Thus the people are accustomed to reason among themselves, a situation in which the tares of the seditious talk of ambitious clerics multiply and act as sparks which set dry twigs ablaze. Simple hearts are perverted by these ideas, so that in some matters they look not so much to their Autocrat as to the Supreme Pastor. And when they hear of a dispute between the two, they blindly and stupidly take sides with the ecclesiastical ruler, rather than with the secular ruler, and dare to conspire and rebel against the latter. The accursed ones deceive themselves into thinking that they are fighting for God Himself, that they do not defile but hallow their hands even when they resort to bloodshed. Criminal and dishonest persons are pleased to discover such ideas among the people: when they learn of a quarrel between their Sovereign and the Pastor, because of their animosity towards the former they seize on the chance to make good their malice, and under pretence of religious zeal do not hesitate to take up arms against the Lord’s Anointed; and to this iniquity they incite the common folk as if to the work of God. And what if the Pastor himself, inflated by such lofty opinions of his office, will not keep quiet? It is difficult to relate how great are the calamities that thereby ensue.

“These are not our inventions: would to God that they were. But in fact this has more than once occurred in many states. Let us investigate the history of Constantinople since Justinian’s time, and we shall discover much of this. Indeed the Pope by this very means achieved so great a pre-eminence, and not only completely disrupted the Roman Empire, while usurping a great part of it for himself, but more than once has profoundly shaken other states and almost completely destroyed them. Let us not recall similar threats which have occurred among us.
“In an ecclesiastical administrative council there is no room for such mischief. For here the president himself enjoys neither the great glory which amazes the people, nor excessive lustre; there can be no lofty opinion of him; nor can flatterers exalt him with inordinate praises, because what is done well by such an administrative council cannot possible be ascribed to the president alone... Moreover, when the people see that this administrative council has been established by decree of the Monarch with the concurrence of the Senate, they will remain meek, and put away any hope of receiving aid in their rebellions from the ecclesiastical order.”

Thus the purely imaginary threat of a papist revolution in Russia was invoked to carry out a revolution in Church-State relations along Protestant lines. The Catholic threat was already receding in Peter’s time, although the Jesuits continued to make strenuous efforts to bring Russia into the Catholic fold. The real threat came from the Protestant monarchies, where caesaropapism was an article of faith.

Sweden and Prussia were the main models by the time of the Ecclesiastical Regulation. But the original ideas had come during Peter’s earlier visit to England and Holland. Thus, according to A.P. Dobroklonsky, “they say that in Holland William of Orange [who was also king of England] advised him to make himself ‘head of religion’, so as to become the complete master in his state.”

The full extent of the Peter’s Protestantization of the Church administration was revealed by the oath that the clerics appointed to the Ecclesiastical College were required to swear: “I acknowledge on oath that the Supreme Judge [Krainii Sud’ia] of this Ecclesiastical College is the Monarch of All Russia himself, our Most Gracious Sovereign”. And they promised “to defend unsparingly all the powers, rights, and prerogatives belonging to the High Autocracy of His Majesty” and his “august and lawful successors”.

The Church historian, Igor Smolitsch, called this the capitulation document of the Russian Church. Certainly, no Christian can recognize any mortal man as his supreme judge in the literal sense. Certainly, its evil fruits were very soon evident. Thus Tikhomirov writes: “In the first decade after the establishment of the Synod most of the Russian bishops were in prison, defrocked, beaten with whips, etc. I checked this from the lists of bishops in the indicated work of Dobroklonsky. In the history of the Constantinopolitan Church after the Turkish conquest we do not find a single period when there was such devastation wrought among the bishops and such lack of ceremony in relation to Church property.”

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418 Dobroklonsky, in Ivanov, op. cit., p. 132.
420 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 300.
Hobbes had written in his *Leviathan*: “He who is chief ruler in any Christian state is also chief pastor, and the rest of the pastors are created by his authority”.\(^{421}\) Similarly, according to Peter and Prokopovich, the chief ruler was empowered to nominate not only bishops, “but the bishop of bishops [i.e. the patriarch], because the Sovereign is the supreme authority, the perfect, ultimate, and authentic supervisor; that is, he holds supreme judicial and executive power over all the ranks and authorities subject to him, whether secular or ecclesiastical”.

The Tsar henceforth took the place of the Patriarch – or rather, of the Pope, for he consulted with his bishops much less even than a Patriarch is obliged to with his bishops. Thus, as Uspensky relates, “the bishops on entering the Emperor’s palace had to leave behind their hierarchical staffs... The significance of this fact becomes comprehensible if it is borne in mind that according to a decree of the Council of 1675 hierarchs left their staffs behind when concelebrating with the Patriarch... Leaving behind the staff clearly signified hierarchical dependence...”\(^{422}\)

Again, as Bishop Nicodemus of Yeniseisk (+1874) put it: “The Synod, according to Peter’s idea, is a political-ecclesiastical institution parallel to every other State institution and for that reason under the complete supreme commanding supervision of his Majesty. The idea is from the Reformation, and is inapplicable to Orthodoxy; it is false. The Church is her own Queen. Her Head is Christ our God. Her law is the Gospel...” Bishop Nicodemus went on to say that in worldly matters the Tsar was the supreme power, but “in spiritual matters his Majesty is a son of the Church” and therefore subject to the authority of the Church.\(^{423}\)

Zyzykin writes: “Basing the unlimitedness of his power in *Pravda Voli Monarshej* on Hobbes’ theory, and removing the bounds placed on this power by the Church, he changed the basis of the power, placing it on the human base of a contract and thereby subjecting it to all those waverings to which every human establishment is subject; following Hobbes, he arbitrarily appropriated ecclesiastical power to himself; through the ‘de-enchurshment’ of the institution of royal power the latter lost its stability and the inviolability which is proper to an ecclesiastical institution. It is only by this de-enchurshment that one can explain the possibility of the demand for the abdication of the Tsar from his throne without the participation of the Church in 1917. The beginning of this ideological undermining of royal power was laid through the basing of the unlimitedness of royal power in *Pravda Voli Monarshej* in accordance with Hobbes, who in the last analysis confirmed it on the basis, not of the Divine call, but of the sovereignty of the people...”\(^{424}\)

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\(^{422}\) Uspensky, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, volume I, p. 297.

\(^{423}\) Bishop Nicodemus, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, volume I, p. 296.

\(^{424}\) Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part III, p. 239.
The paradox that Petrine absolutism was based on democracy is confirmed by L.A. Tikhomirov, who writes: “This Pravda affirms that Russian subjects first had to conclude a contract amongst themselves, and then the people ‘by its own will abdicated and gave it [power] to the monarch.’ At this point it is explained that the sovereign can by law command his people to do not only anything that is to his benefit, but also simply anything that he wants. This interpretation of Russian monarchical power entered, alas, as an official act into the complete collection of laws, where it figures under No. 4888 in volume VII.

“…. In the Ecclesiastical Regulation it is explained that ‘conciliar government is the most perfect and better than one-man rule’ since, on the one hand, ‘truth is more certainly sought out by a conciliar association than by one man’, and on the other hand, ‘a conciliar sentence more strongly inclines towards assurance and obedience than one man’s command’… Of course, Theophan forced Peter to say all this to his subjects in order to destroy the patriarchate, but these positions are advanced as a general principle. If we were to believe these declarations, then the people need only ask itself: why do I have to ‘renounce my own will’ if ‘conciliar government is better than one-man rule and if ‘a conciliar sentence’ elicits greater trust and obedience than one man’s command?

“It is evident that nothing of the sort could have been written if there had been even the smallest clarity of monarchical consciousness. Peter’s era in this respect constitutes a huge regression by comparison with the Muscovite monarchy.”

Thus did Peter the Great destroy the traditional pattern of Church-State relations that had characterized Russian history since the time of St. Vladimir. Not until the reign of Nicholas II did the Church regain something like her former freedom. As Karamzin put it, under Peter “we became citizens of the world, but ceased to be, in some cases, citizens of Russia.”

If we compare Peter I with another great and terrible tsar, Ivan IV, we see striking similarities. Both tsars were completely legitimate, anointed rulers. Both suffered much from relatives in their childhood; both killed their own sons and displayed pathological cruelty and blasphemy. Both were great warriors who defeated Russia’s enemies and expanded the bounds of the kingdom. Both began by honouring the Church and ended by attempting to bend her completely to their will… There is one very important difference, however. While Ivan never attempted to impose a caesaropapist constitution on the Church, Peter did just that. The result was that Ivan’s caesaropapism disappeared after his death, whereas Peter’s lasted for another 200 years...

426 Karamzin, in Ivanov, op. cit., p. 137.
So can we count Peter as an Orthodox Tsar? There are some, even among conservative historians, who believe that Petrine absolutism was not an unmitigated evil, but worked in some ways for the good of the Orthodox People, in accordance with the principle that “all things work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8.28). Certainly, even an evil Tsar has at least this advantage, that he humbles the people, reminding them how far they have fallen, not being counted worthy of a good and merciful Tsar...

But some have even seen some of his aims as good in themselves. Thus the monarchist L.A. Tikhomirov wrote: “It would be superfluous to repeat that in his fundamental task Peter the Great was without question right and was a great Russian man. He understood that as a monarch, as the bearer of the duties of the tsar, he was obliged dauntlessly to take upon his shoulders a heavy task: that of leading Russia as quickly as possible to as a complete as possible a mastery of all the means of European culture. For Russia this was a ‘to be or not be’ question. It is terrible even to think what would have been the case if we had not caught up with Europe before the end of the 18th century. Under the Petrine reforms we fell into a slavery to foreigners which has lasted to the present day, but without this reform, of course, we would have lost our national existence if we had lived in our barbaric powerlessness until the time of Fredrick the Great, the French Revolution and the era of Europe’s economic conquest of the whole world. With an iron hand Peter forced Russia to learn and work – he was, of course, the saviour of the whole future of the nation.

“Peter was also right in his coercive measures. In general Russia had for a long time been striving for science, but with insufficient ardour. Moreover, she was so backward, such terrible labour was set before her in order to catch up with Europe, that the whole nation could not have done it voluntarily. Peter was undoubtedly right, and deserved the eternal gratitude of the fatherland for using the whole of his royal authority and power to create the cruellest dictatorship and move the country forward by force, enslaving the whole nation, because of the weakness of her resources, to serve the aims of the state. There was no other way to save Russia [1]

“But Peter was right only for himself, for his time and for his work. However, when this system of enslaving the people to the state is elevated into a principle, it becomes murderous for the nation, it destroys all the sources of the people’s independent life. But Peter indicated no limits to the general enserfment to the state, he undertook no measures to ensure that a temporary system should not become permanent, he even took no measures to ensure that enserfed Russia did not fall into the hands of foreigners, as happened immediately after his death.”

However, Archpriest Lev Lebedev, even while admitting the useful things that Peter accomplished, comes to a different and much darker conclusion: “We are familiar with the words that Peter ‘broke through a window into Europe’. But no! He ‘broke through a window’ into Russia for Europe, or rather, opened the gates of the fortress of the soul of Great Russia for the invasion into it of the hostile spiritual forces of ‘the dark West’. Many actions of this reformer, for example, the building of the fleet, the building of St. Petersburg, of the first factories, were accompanied by unjustified cruelties and merciless dealing with his own people. The historians who praise Peter either do not mention this, or speak only obliquely about it, and with justification, so as not to deprive their idol of the aura of ‘the Father of the Fatherland’ and the title ‘Great’. For the Fatherland Peter I was the same kind of ‘father’ as he was for his own son the Tsarevich Alexis, whom he ordered to be killed – in essence, only because Alexis did not agree with his father’s destructive reforms for the Fatherland. That means that Peter I did not at all love Russia and did not care for her glory. He loved his own idea of the transformation of Russia and the glory of the successes precisely of this idea, and not of the Homeland, not of the people as it then was, especially in its best and highest state – the state of Holy Rus’.

“Peter was possessed by ideas that were destructive for the Great Russian soul and life. It is impossible to explain this only by his delectation for all things European. Here we may see the influence of his initiation into the teaching of evil [Masonry] that he voluntarily accepted in the West. Only a person who had become in spirit not Russian could so hate the most valuable and important thing in Great Russia – the Orthodox spiritual foundations of her many-centuried life. Therefore if we noted earlier that under Peter the monarchy ceased to be Orthodox and Autocratic, now we must say that in many ways it ceased to be Russian or Great Russian. Then we shall see how the revolutionary Bolshevik and bloody tyrant Stalin venerated Peter I and Ivan IV. Only these two Autocrats were venerated in Soviet times by the communists – the fighters against autocracy… Now we can understand why they were venerated – for the antichristian and anti-Russian essence of their actions and transformations!

“Investigators both for and against Peter I are nevertheless unanimous in one thing: those transformations in the army, fleet, state administration, industry, etc. that were useful to Russia could not have been introduced (even with the use of western models) without breaking the root spiritual foundations of the life of Great Russia as they had been formed up to Peter. Therefore when they say that the actions of Peter can be divided into ‘harmful’ and ‘useful’, we must object: that which was useful in them was drowned in that which was harmful. After all, nobody would think of praising a good drink if a death-dealing poison were mixed with it...”

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428 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 175.
Certainly, there were many in Peter’s reign who were prepared to pay with their lives for their confession that he was, if not the Antichrist, at any rate a forerunner of the Antichrist... And yet the consensus was that Peter was not the Antichrist. The Church prayed for him and anathematized his enemies, even when they were Orthodox, like the Ukrainian Hetman Mazeppa, who deserted to the Swedish King Charles XII.429

Archbishop Nathaniel of Vienna poses the question: “Why, in the course of two centuries, have we all, both those who are positively disposed and those who are negatively disposed towards Peter, not considered him as the Antichrist? Why, next to the pious rebukers of Peter, could there be pious, very pious venerated of him? Why could St. Metropole of Voronezh, who fearlessly rebuked Peter’s comparatively innocent attraction to Greek-Roman statues in imitation of the Europeans, nevertheless sincerely and touchingly love the blasphemer-tsar and enjoy his love and respect in return? Why could Saints Demetrius of Rostov and Innocent of Irkutsk love him (the latter, as ‘over-hieromonk’ of the fleet, had close relations with him)? Why did the most ardent and conscious contemporary opponent of Peter’s reforms, the locum tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Stefan Yavorsky, who struggled with Peter’s anti-ecclesiastical reforms and was persecuted and constrained by him for that, nevertheless not only not recognize Peter as the Antichrist, but also wrote a book refuting such an opinion? Why in general did the Church, which has always put forward from its midst holy fighters against all antichristian phenomena contemporary to it, however much these phenomena may have been supported by the bearers of supreme power, the Church which later, under Catherine II, put forward against her far more restrained, veiled and far less far-reaching anti-ecclesiastical reforms such uncompromising fighters as Metropolitans Arsenius (Matseyevich) and Paul (Konyuskevich) – why, under the Emperor Peter, did the Church not put forward against him one holy man, recognized as such, not one rebuker authorized by Her? Why did our best Church thinker, who understood the tragedy of the fall of Holy Rus’ with the greatest clarity and fullness, A.S. Khomiakov, confess that that in Peter’s reforms, ‘sensing in them the fruit of pride, the intoxication of earthly wisdom, we have renounced all our holy things that our native to the heart’, why could he nevertheless calmly and in a spirit of sober goodwill say of Peter: ‘Many mistakes darken the glory of the Transformer of Russia, but to him remains the glory of pushing her forward to strength and a consciousness of her strength’?

“And finally, the most important question: why is not only Russia, but the whole of the rest of the world, in which by that time the terrible process of apostasy from God had already been taking place for centuries, obliged precisely to Peter for the fact that this process was stopped by the mighty hand of Russia for more than 200 years? After all, when we rightly and with reason refer the words of the Apostle Paul: ‘The mystery of lawlessness is already working, only it will not be completed until he who now restrains is

429 Massie, op. cit., p. 465.
removed from the midst’ to the Russian tsars, we think mainly of the Russian [Petersburg] emperors, and not of the Muscovite tsars. These comparatively weak, exotic rulers, to whom the world outside their immediate dominions related in approximately the way that, in later times, they related to the Neguses and Negestas of Abyssinia, could not be the restrainers of the world. Consequently Peter was simultaneously both the Antichrist and the Restrainer of the Antichrist. But if that is the case, then the whole exceptional nature of Peter’s spiritual standing disappears, because Christ and Antichrist, God and the devil fight with each other in every human soul, for every human soul, and in this case Peter turned out to be only more gifted than the ordinary man, a historical personality who was both good and evil, but always powerful, elementally strong. Both the enemies and the friends of Peter will agree with this characterization…"

The assertion that in the presence of the Orthodox Kingdom – the Russian Empire – that terrible universal outpouring of evil which we observe today could not be completed, is not an arbitrary claim. This is witnessed to by one of the founders of the bloodiest forms of contemporary anti-theism, Soviet communism – Friedrich Engels, who wrote: “Not one revolution in Europe and in the whole world can attain final victory while the present Russian state exists.”

So Peter, according to this view, was at the same time both persecutor and protector of the Church, both a forerunner of the Antichrist and the Restrainer against the Antichrist. He did great harm to the Church, but he also effectively defended her against her external enemies, and supported her missionary work in Siberia and the East. And he sincerely believed himself to be, as he once wrote to the Eastern patriarchs, ‘a devoted son of our Most Beloved Mother the Orthodox Church’.

Did Peter repent of his anti-Church acts? It is impossible to say. But we know that at the end of his life “he confessed and received communion three times; while receiving holy unction, he displayed great compunction of soul and several times repeated: ‘I believe, I hope!’…” This gives us, too, reason to hope and believe in his salvation.

430 Thus Sophia, Elector of Hanover, recognized in Peter “a very extraordinary man... at once very good and very bad” (Montefiore, op. cit., p. 86).
431 Archbishop Nathaniel (Lvov), “O Petre Velikom” (“On Peter the Great”), Epokha (The Epoch), N 10, 2000, N 1, pp. 35-36. Unlike several Byzantine emperors, he refused a unia with Rome. Thus he once attended a Catholic mass in Poland, and “his interest in the service prompted his Catholic hosts to propose a union of the Orthodox and Catholic churches, but Peter replied, ‘Sovereigns have rights only over the bodies of their people. Christ is the sovereign of their souls. For such a union, a general consent of the people is necessary and that is in the power of God alone’” (Massie, op. cit., p. 345).
432 Engels, “Karl Marx and the revolutionary movement in Russia”.
434 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 140. See also “Smert’ Imperatora Petra I kak obrazets khristianskoj konchiny” (“The Death of Peter I as a Model of Christian Death”), Svecha Pokaiania (The Candle of Repentance), N 1, March, 1999, pp. 6-7.
For from that eternal world his old friend and foe, St. Metrophan, once appeared to one of his venerators and said: “If you want to be pleasing to me, pray for the peace of the soul of the Emperor Peter the Great...”\textsuperscript{435}

\textsuperscript{435} “Smert’ Imperatora Petra I”, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 7.
65. THE DEGRADATION OF THE RUSSIAN AUTOCRACY

In sharp contrast to the relative stability of succession under the Muscovite tsars, every single change of monarch from the death of Peter I in 1725 to the assassination of Paul I in 1801 was a violent coup d’état involving the intervention of the Guards regiments and their aristocratic protégés. The result was perhaps the lowest nadir of Russian statehood, when the state was governed by children or women under the control of a Masonic aristocratic elite whose own support came, not from the people but from the army. Thus “in the course of thirty-seven years, Russia had, sardonic commentators remark, six autocrats: three women, a boy of twelve, an infant, and a mental weakling.” 436

Before his death Peter had instituted a new method of determining the succession to the throne. Abolishing primogeniture, which he called “a bad custom”, he decreed “that it should always be in the will of the ruling sovereign to give the inheritance to whomever he wishes”.437 However, it was only through a struggle for power among the nobles, Peter’s favourites, that his successor was determined.

This turned out to be his wife Catherine I, who was backed by the most ruthless of the favourites, Menshikov. A woman on the throne, writes Lebedev, “had never happened before in Great Russia. Moreover, she was not of the royal family, which nobody in Russia could ever have imagined up to that time.”438

Catherine soon died, and was succeeded by the fourteen-year-old Peter II, grandson of Peter the Great through his murdered son Alexei. He died on his wedding day, and was succeeded by Anna Ioannovna, daughter of Peter’s brother, Tsar Ivan. During her reign the government came to be dominated by three Germans, her advisers – Biron (her lover), Osterman and Münnich, and Franco-German culture became dominant at court and in the aristocracy.

The way Anna Ioannovna came to the throne illustrates how the Orthodox autocracy had deteriorated... Seven members of the Privy Council, consisting mainly of Dolgorukys and Golitsyns, met to decide the succession. Prince Dmitri Golitsyn argued for Anna of Courland. “‘She was born in our midst from a Russian mother and a good old family,’ he said – in other words, she was no upstart Empress Catherine and she had neither faction, nor known views, and she was single. Golitsyn suggested that ‘to make our lives easier and provide ourselves with more freedoms,’ Anna would be a figurehead, forced to accept only limited powers.

437 Tikhomirov, op. cit, p. 300.
438 Lebedev, op. cit, p. 200.
“‘Although we might achieve this,’ mused one of the Dolgorukys, ‘we might not hold on to power.’

“‘We’ll hold on to it all right,’ replied Golitsyn, dictating the terms to be offered to Anna, ending with the words: ‘Should I not fulfill any part of this promise, I shall be deprived of the Russian throne.’ This plan has been compared to the monarchy dominated by a landed oligarchy that developed in England after the Glorious Revolution forty years earlier, but really it was a brazen Dolgoruky power-grab, meagerly camouflaged by highfalutin ideals. To pull it off, they had to get to Anna before she discovered that this was just the scheme of six old aristocrats. So they closed the gates of Moscow and despatched a Golitsyn and a Dolgoruky to offer her their conditions: the tsar would no longer be able to marry, appoint an heir, declare war, levy taxes or spend revenues – without the permission of the Council. This would have constituted the greatest change in Russian government between 1613 and 1905.”

Lebedev well described the plans of the aristocratic plotters: through the conditions they imposed on Anna, “in essence the ‘superiors’ thereby abolished the Autocracy!”

“As soon as this news spread through the Lefortovo Palace, the race was on to beat the cabal to Anna. Karl Gustav von Löwenswolde, a Baltic courtier who had been one of Anna’s lovers, despatched a courtier to reach her first.

“That night, on 18 January [1730], Anna went to bed in the dreary town of Mitau not knowing that she was already empress of Russia.

“She learned the astonishing news from Löwenswolde. So on the 25th, when Princes Vasily Lukich Dolgoruky (uncle of Ivan and Ekaterina) and Mikhail Golitsyn (brother of Dmitri) arrived to offer her the throne, she knew what to expect. Now thirty-seven years old, a swarthy, deep-voiced scowl, she had cheeks ‘as big as a Westphalian ham’ and a face that her mother’s fool had compared to a bearded Muscovite: ‘Ding-dong here comes Ivan the Terrible!’ After twenty years of humiliation, this tsar’s daughter would have agreed to anything to get out of Courland. ‘I promise to observe the conditions without exception.’ She wrote – and prepared to leave for Moscow, where the Guards were now seething with outrage at the aristocratic coup…

“… Many officers believed that autocracy was the only system that could govern Russia; and all resented the machinations of Dolgorukys and Golitsyns. The senior officers – the Generalitet – were organized by Osterman to sign a petition. Meanwhile Anna cultivated the Preobrazhensky Guards, served them with vodka with her own hand and declared herself their colonel.

439 Montefiore, The Romanovs, p. 150.
440 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 206.
“On 25 February in the Kremlin, when Anna majestically greeted the elite in the company of the Golitsyns and Dolgorukys, Prince Alexei Cherkassky, Russia’s richest man and figurehead of the Generalitet, presented the petition asking her to rule as autocrat.

“’What right have you got, prince, to presume to make law?’ asked Vasily Lukich Dolgoruky.

“’As much as a Dolgoruky. You’ve deceived the empress!’ insisted Cherkassky, supported by the Guards, who offered to kill Anna’s enemies. Instead, the empress invited the Golitsyns and Dolgorukys to dinner. Afterwards, they returned to the hall where the Generalitet asked her to assume absolute power – but she feigned confusion. ‘The conditions I signed in Mitau weren’t the wish of the people?’

“’Nyet!’ roared the Guards.

“Turning on the cabal, Anna said, ‘That must mean you have deceived me!’ She sent for the signed conditions. ‘So this isn’t necessary,’ she declared, as she slowly tore the paper in half…”

So only five years after the supremely despotic Peter the Great, the Russian autocrats had to appeal to “the wish of the people” in order to justify their power! This illustrates the important truth that when a true symphony between Church and State is destroyed, the State veers between the seemingly opposite poles of despotism and democracy, unfettered absolutism and unbridled people-power. And if the Russian autocracy recovered, nevertheless the foundations had been shaken, and would reveal all their rottenness in 1917…

441 Montefiore, The Romanovs, pp. 151-152.
Anna’s reign was also known as Bironovschina, that is, the period in which her German favourite, Biron, was the de facto ruler, subjecting the Orthodox Church to a true persecution.

No sooner was Peter dead than thoughts about the restoration of the patriarchate re-surfaced. “The very fact of his premature death,” writes Zyzykin, “was seen as the punishment of God for his assumption of ecclesiastical power. ‘There you are,’ said Archbishop Theodosius of Novgorod in the Synod, ‘he had only to touch spiritual matters and possessions and God took him.’ From the incautious words of Archbishop Theodosius, Theophan [Prokopovich] made a case for his having created a rebellion, and he was arrested on April 27 [1725], condemned on September 11, 1725 and died in 1726. Archbishop Theophylact of Tver was also imprisoned in 1736 on a charge of wanting to become Patriarch. On December 31, 1740 he again received the insignia of hierarchical rank and died on May 6, 1741.442 For propagandizing the idea of the patriarchate Archimandrite Marcellus Rodyshevsky was imprisoned in 1732, was later forgiven, and died as a Bishop in 1742.443 Also among the opponents of Peter’s Church reform was Bishop George Dashkov of Rostov, who was put forward in the time of Peter I as a candidate for Patriarch... After the death of Peter, in 1726, he was made the third hierarch in the Synod by Catherine I. On July 21, 1730, by a decree of the Empress Anna, he, together with Theophylact, was removed from the Synod, and on November 19 of the same year, by an order of the Empress Anna he was imprisoned, and in February, 1731 took the schema. He was imprisoned in the Spasokamenny monastery on an island in Kubensk lake, and in 1734 was sent to Nerchinsk monastery – it was forbidden to receive any declaration whatsoever from him... Thus concerning the time of the Empress Anna a historian writes what is easy for us to imagine since Soviet power, but was difficult for a historian living in the 19th century: ‘Even from a distance of one and a half centuries, it is terrible to imagine that awful, black and heavy time with its interrogations and confrontations, with their iron chains and tortures. A man has committed no crime, but suddenly he is seized, shackleed and taken to St. Petersburg or Moscow - he knows not where, or what for. A year or two before he had spoken with some suspicious person. What they were talking about – that was the reason for all those alarms, horrors and tortures. Without the least exaggeration we can say about that time that on lying down to sleep at night you could not vouch for yourself that by the morning that you would not be in chains, and that from the morning to the night you would not land up in a fortress, although you would not be conscious of any guilt. The guilt of all these clergy consisted

442 See his short biography at http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_f/feofilakt_ropatin.php (V.M.)
443 He tried to explain that “the patriarchate is not only the oldest but also the only lawful form of government (understanding by the patriarchate the leadership of the Church by one of her bishops)” (Zyzykin, op.cit., part III, p. 263). (V.M.)
only in their desire to restore the canonical form of administration of the Russian Church and their non-approval of Peter’s Church reform, which did not correspond to the views of the people brought up in Orthodoxy.’

“But even under Anna the thought of the patriarchate did not go away, and its supporters put forward Archimandrite Barlaam, the empress’ spiritual father, for the position of Patriarch. We shall not name the many others who suffered from the lower ranks; we shall only say that the main persecutions dated to the time of the Empress Anna, when the impulse given by Peter to Church reform produced its natural result, the direct persecution of Orthodoxy. But after the death of Theophan in 1736 Bishop Ambrose Yushkevich of Vologda, a defender of the patriarchate and of the views of Marcellus Rodyshevsky, became the first member of the Synod. With the enthronement of Elizabeth he greeted Russia on her deliverance from her internal hidden enemies who were destroying Orthodoxy…”

"In Biron’s time,” writes Bessmertny, “hundreds of clergy were tonsured, whipped and exiled, and they did the same with protesting bishops - and there were quite a few of those. 6557 priests were forced into military service, as a consequence of which in only four northern dioceses 182 churches remained without clergy or readers.”

“This is what happened in Russia,” writes Zyzykin, “when the State secularisation which had begun under Alexis Mikhailovich led to the dominion of the State over the Church, while the authority in the State itself was in the hands of genuine Protestants, who did not occupy secondary posts, as under Peter, but were in leading posts, as under the Empress Anna. The ideology of royal power laid down under Peter remained throughout the period of the Emperors; the position of the Church in the State changed in various reigns, but always under the influence of those ideas which the secular power itself accepted; it was not defined by the always unchanging teaching of the Orthodox Church” – the symphony of powers.

In Biron’s time, wrote Bishop Ambrose of Vologda, “they attacked our Orthodox piety and faith, but in such a way and under such a pretext that they seemed to be rooting out some unneeded and harmful superstition in Christianity. O how many clergymen and an even greater number of learned monks were defrocked, tortured and exterminated under that pretense! Why? No answer is heard except: he is a superstitious person, a bigot, a hypocrite, a person unfit for anything. These things were done cunningly and purposefully, so as to extirpate the Orthodox priesthood and replace it with a newly conceived priestlessness [bezpopovshchina]…

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446 Zyzykin, op. cit., part III, p. 263.
“Our domestic enemies devised a stratagem to undermine the Orthodox faith; they consigned to oblivion religious books already prepared for publication; and they forbade others to be written under penalty of death. They seized not only the teachers, but also their lessons and books, fettered them, and locked them in prison. Things reached such a point that in this Orthodox state to open one’s mouth about religion was dangerous: one could depend on immediate trouble and persecution.”

Biron’s was a time, recalled Metropolitan Demetrius (Sechenov) of Novgorod, “when our enemies so raised their heads that they dared to defile the dogma of the holy faith, the Christian dogmas, on which eternal salvation depends. They did not call on the aid of the intercessor of our salvation, nor beseech her defense; they did not venerate the saints of God; they did not bow to the holy icons; they mocked the sign of the holy cross; they rejected the traditions of the apostles and holy fathers; they cast out good works, which attract eternal reward; they ate eat during the holy fasts, and did not want even to hear about mortifying the flesh; they laughed at the commemoration of the reposed; they did not believe in the existence of gehenna.”

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Hardly coincidentally, the humiliation of the Russians was accompanied by the first real resurgence of Jewish influence since the heresy of the Judaizers in the fifteenth century.

Thus Solzhenitsyn writes, citing Jewish sources: “In 1728, under Peter II, ‘the admission of Jews into Little Russia was permitted, as being people who were useful for trade in the region’, first as a ‘temporary visit’, but ‘of course, the temporary visit was turned into a constant presence’. Reasons were found. Under Anna this right was extended in 1731 to the Smolensk province, and in 1734 – to Slobodskaya Ukraine (to the north-east of Poltava). At the same time the Jews were allowed to rent property from landowners, and to take part in the wine trade. And in 1736 the Jews were permitted to transport vodka also to the state taverns of Great Russia.

“Mention should be made of the figure of the financier Levi Lipmann from the Baltic area. When the future Empress Anna Ioannovna was still living in Courland, she had great need of money, ‘and it is possible that already at that time Lipman had occasion to be useful to her’. Already under Peter he had moved to Petersburg. Under Peter II he ‘became a financial agent or jeweller at the Russian court.’ During the reign of Anna Ioannovna he received ‘major connections at the court’ and the rank of Ober-Gofkommissar. ‘Having direct relations with the empress, Lipmann was in particularly close touch with her favourite, Biron… Contemporaries asserted that… Biron turned to him for advice on questions of Russian state life. One of the consuls at the Prussian

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447 Bishop Ambrose, in Florovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.  
448 Metropolitan Demetrius, in Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
court wrote... that “it is Lipmann who is ruling Russia”.’ Later, these estimates of contemporaries were subjected to a certain re-evaluation downwards. However, Biron ‘transferred to him [Lipmann] almost the whole administration of the finances and various trade monopolies’. (‘Lipmann continued to carry out his functions at the court even when Anna Leopoldovna... exiled Biron.’)”

449 Solzhenitsyn, Dvesti Let Vmeste (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, pp. 26-27.
67. TSARITSA ELIZABETH

By the mercy of God, the Empress Anna died, and although Biron was appointed regent the next day, the Germans fell out amongst themselves. So in 1741, after the brief reign of Ivan VI, Elizabeth, a daughter of Peter the Great, came to the throne. Known as “the Russian Venus” because of her great beauty, she was sensual, extravagant and vain, a true daughter of her father. Nevertheless, she restored Russianness and Orthodoxy to the State.

Thus under Elizabeth, the Orthodox bishops returned from prison and exile. Thus “Chistovich writes: ‘The Synod remembered its sufferers under Elizabeth; a true resurrection from the dead took place. Hundreds, thousands of people who had disappeared without trace and had been taken for dead came to life again. After the death of the Empress Anna the released sufferers dragged themselves back to their homeland, or the places of their former service, from all the distant corners of Siberia – some with torn out nostrils, others with their tongue cut out, others with legs worn through by chains, others with broken spines or arms disfigured from tortures.’ The Church preachers under Elizabeth attributed this to the hatred for the Russian faith and the Russian people of Biron, Osterman, Minikh, Levenvold and other Lutheran Germans who tried to destroy the very root of eastern piety. They were of this opinion because most of all there suffered the clergy – hierarchs, priests and monks…”

Elizabeth also restored some of her former privileges to the Church. Thus in 1742, writes Vladimir Rusak, “the initial judgement on clergy was presented to the Synod, even with regard to political matters. The Synod was re-established in its former dignity, as the highest ecclesiastical institution with the title ‘Ruling’.

“The members of the Synod (Archbishop Ambrose Yushkevich of Novgorod, Metropolitan Arsenius Matseyevich of Rostov, both Ukrainians) gave a report to the empress in which they wrote that if it was not pleasing to her to restore the patriarchate, then let her at least give the Synod a president and body composed only of hierarchs. In addition, they petitioned for the removal of the post of over-procurator. The empress did not go to the lengths of such serious reforms, but she did agree to return to the clergy its property and submit the College of Economics to the Synod.”

However, writes Fr. Alexei Nikolin, “there was a significant rise in the significance of the over-procurator, whose post was re-established (during the reign of Anna Ivanovna it had been suspended). Prince Ya.P. Shakhovskoj, who was appointed to the post, was given the right to give daily personal reports to the empress, who entrusted him personally with receiving from her all the ukazes and oral directives for the Synodal administration. Thereby,

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450 Zyzykin, op. cit., part III, p. 262.  
however, there arose a very ambiguous state of affairs. On the one hand, the Synod’s affairs were being reported directly to the supreme power, but on the other the idea of the State’s interest, and its priority over the ecclesiastical interest, was being constantly emphasized. The strengthening of the overprocurator’s power was aided by an ukaz of the empress introducing a new system of Church administration in the dioceses – the consistories. In these institutions a leading role was acquired by the secretaries, who were appointed by the over-procurator, controlled by him and accountable to him. However, the noticeable tendency evident in these years towards a strengthening of the over-procurator’s executive power in the Church was restrained by the personal goodwill of the empress towards the clergy.”

Elizabeth “ordered crackdowns on Old Believers. There had been ineffective decrees to expel the Jews in 1727 and 1740. [She] ordered these decrees to be applied.”

In December, 1742, the tsaritsa forbade residence for the Jews throughout the Empire, since “from such haters of the name of Christ the Saviour great harm for our subjects must be expected”. 140 Jews were expelled from the Ukraine. But then the wax trade reported to the Senate that “banning the Jews from bringing in merchandise will bring with it a diminution of state income”. The Senate itself added its voice to this complaint, telling the empress that her decree had caused great harm to trade in the Ukraine and the Baltic, with a corresponding loss in customs receipts. But the empress replied: “I do not want any profit from the enemies of Christ”… However, it seems likely that the empress’ decree, like similar earlier decrees, remained a dead letter…

“On Elizabeth’s accession to the throne,” writes Ivanov, “a popular movement appeared, directed against foreigners, which established itself in the two following reigns. The lower classes were waiting for the expulsion of the foreigners from Russia. But nothing, except some street brawls with foreigners, took place.

“A reaction began against the domination of the foreigners who despised everything Russian, together with a weak turn towards a national regime…

“During the 20 years of Elizabeth’s reign Russia relaxed after her former oppression, and the Russian Church came to know peaceful days...

“The persecution of the Orthodox Church begun under Peter I and continued under Anna Ivanovna began to weaken somewhat, and the clergy raised their voices…

452 Nikolin, Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo (Church and State), Moscow, 1997, p. 96.
454 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., pp. 28, 29.
“Under Elizabeth there began the elevation to the hierarchical rank of Great Russian monks, while earlier the hierarchs had been mainly appointed from the Little Russians...

“Under Elizabeth the Protestants who remained at court did not begin to speak against Orthodoxy, whereas in the reign of Anna Ivanovna they had openly persecuted it. Nevertheless, Protestantism as a weapon of the Masons in their struggle with Orthodoxy had acquired a sufficiently strong position in the previous reigns. The soil had been prepared, the minds of society were inclined to accept the Freemasons.

“‘In the reign of Elizabeth German influence began to be replaced by French,’ an investigator of this question tells us. ‘At this time the West European intelligentsia was beginning to be interested in so-called French philosophy; even governments were beginning to be ruled by its ideas... In Russia, as in Western Europe, a fashion for this philosophy appeared. In the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna a whole generation of its venerated was already being reared. They included such highly placed people as Count M. Vorontsov and Shuvalov, Princess Dashkova and the wife of the heir to the throne, Catherine Alexeyevna. But neither Elizabeth nor Peter III sympathized with it.

“Individual Masons from Peter’s time were organizing themselves. Masonry was developing strongly...”\(^{455}\)

Nevertheless, “in society people began to be suspicious of Masonry. Masons in society acquired the reputation of being heretics and apostates... Most of Elizabethan society considered Masonry to be an atheistic and criminal matter...

“The Orthodox clergy had also been hostile to Masonry for a long time already. Preachers at the court began to reprove ‘animal-like and godless atheists’ and people ‘of Epicurean and Freemasonic morals and mentality’ in their sermons. The sermons of Gideon Antonsky, Cyril Florinsky, Arsenius Matseyevich, Cyril Lyashevetsky, Gideon Krinovsky and others reflected the struggle that was taking place between the defenders of Orthodoxy and their enemies, the Masons.”\(^{456}\)

It was in Elizabeth’s reign that the Secret Chancellery made an inquiry into the nature and membership of the Masonic lodges. The inquiry found that Masonry was defined by its members as “nothing else than the key of friendship and eternal brotherhood”. It was found not to be dangerous and was allowed to continue, “although under police protection”.\(^{457}\)

\(^{455}\) Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 160, 161, 162-163.
\(^{456}\) Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 165, 166.
Masonry was particularly strong in the university and among the cadets. “The cadet corps was the laboratory of the future revolution. From the cadet corps there came the representatives of Russian progressive literature, which was penetrated with Masonic ideals....

“Towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna Masonry openly revealed its real nature. At this time a bitter struggle was developing in the West between Austria and Prussia for the Austrian succession. In 1756 there began the Seven-Year war, in which Russia took an active part.

“The Mason Frederick II was again striving to subject Russia to his influence.

“This aim was to be attained completely by means of the defeat of the Russian army and her capitulation before the ‘genius’ commander.

“And one has to say that everything promised victory for Frederick II over the Russian army.

“He had a very well trained, armed and provisioned army with talented officers.

“Frederick was undoubtedly helped by the Masons – Germans who had taken high administrative and military posts in Russia.

“The noted James Cate, the great provincial master for the whole of Russia, was a field-marshal of the Russian army, but in fact carried out the role of Frederick’s spy; in 1747 he fled [Russia] to serve him and was killed in battle for his adored and lofty brother.

“In general the Russian army was teeming with Prussian spies and Russian Mason-traitors.

“The Russian army was deliberately not prepared...

“And at the head of the Russian army the Masons placed Apraxin, who gave no orders, displayed an unforgivable slowness and finally entered upon the path of open betrayal.

“The victory at Gross-Egersford was won exclusively thanks to the courage and bravery of the Russian soldiers, and was not used as it should have been by the Russian commander-in-chief. Apraxin had every opportunity to cross conquered Prussia, extend a hand to the Swedes in Pomerania and appear before the walls of Berlin. But instead of moving forward he stopped at Tilsit and refused to use the position that was favourable for the Russian army... Apraxin was only fulfilling his duty of a Mason, which obliged him to deliver his lofty brother, Frederick II, from his woes...
“But this was not the only help extended to Prussia by the Russian Masons. In 1758, instead of Apraxin, who was placed on trial, Fermor was appointed as commander-in-chief. He was an active Mason and a supporter of Frederick II. Fermor acted just like Apraxin. He displayed stunning inactivity and slowness. At the battle of Tornordof the commander-in-chief Fermor hid from the field of battle. Deserted and betrayed by their commander-in-chief the Russian army did not panic...

“With the greatest equanimity the soldiers did not think of fleeing or surrendering...

“Frederick II had everything on his side: complete gun crews, discipline, superior weapons, the treachery of the Russian commander-in-chief. But he did not have enough faith and honour, which constituted the strength and glory of the Christ-loving Russian Army.

“The help of the dark powers was again required: and the Russian Masons for the third time gave help to Frederick II.

“At first it was suggested that Fermor be replaced by Buturlin, whom Esterhazy quite justly called ‘an idiot’, but when this did not happen, they appointed Peter Saltykov to the post of commander-in-chief. The soldiers called him ‘moor-hen’ and openly accused him of treachery. At Könersdorf the Russian commanders displayed complete incompetence. The left wing of the Russian army under the command of Golitsyn was crushed. At two o’clock Frederick was the master of Mulberg, one of the three heights where Saltykov had dug in. By three o’clock the victory was Frederick’s. And once again the situation was saved by the Russian soldiers. The king led his army onto the attack three times, and three times he retreated, ravaged by the Russian batteries. ‘Scoundrels’, ‘swine’, ‘rascals’ was what Frederick called his soldiers, unable to conquer the Russian soldiers who died kissing their weapons.

“’One can overcome all of them (the Russian soldiers) to the last man, but not conquer them,’ Frederick II had to admit after his defeat.

“The victory remained with the Russian soldiers, strong in the Orthodox faith and devotion to the autocracy....”

Frederick was saved because Elizabeth died unexpectedly in 1761 – this was the so-called “Great Miracle of the House of Brandenburg” - and was succeeded by Peter III, a grandson of Peter the Great who nevertheless preferred the Germany he had been brought up in to Russia. So he stopped the war against Prussia, and planned to join Prussia in attacking Denmark. This alienated many senior officers, and prepared the way for the coup against him...

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In 1697 the Austrians under Prince Eugene Sobieski defeated the Ottomans at the Battle of Zenta, killing thirty thousand Turks. The balance of power in the region now changed sharply: at the Treaty of Karlowitz (or Karlovytsy) in 1699 the Habsburgs acquired Hungary and Slavonia. However, as Simon Winder writes, “the end of Ottoman rule in Central Europe raised immediately difficult questions about whether or not these new conquests were a reintegration of lost lands that had in the past been undoubtedly part of ‘the West’ or whether these were lands irredeemably tainted by ‘Easterners’. The old Habsburg core, running from Lake Constance in the west to the Military Frontier in the east, was some three hundred miles across. The addition in a generation of the old Ottoman territories more than doubled the monarchy’s width, taking it to only a hundred and fifty miles from the Black Sea. The monarchy which had once been unmistakably Alpine, German and Italianate was now very different. Most ‘eastern’ of all was that the new territories were religiously pluralistic and in that sense liberal, with Lutheran Saxons, Jewish Jews, Calvinist Hungarians and Orthodox Serbs and Romanians. This picture would have been even more complicated if so many Muslims had not fled the advance of the ‘Holy League’, seeking safety in Bosnia and Thrace.

“The triumph of the West therefore perversely released a huge wave of Catholic intolerance on these religiously patchwork territories. This renewed religious intolerance had begun even before the Siege of Vienna with increasing discrimination against Protestants in Royal Hungary.”\textsuperscript{459} Now it extended also to Orthodox Serbs and Romanians in the newly conquered territories...

It was hard to know which was the more difficult master – the Turks or the Austrians. The Turks kept their Christian subjects in poverty and ignorance, but did not, in general, compel them to renounce their religion. The Austrians were more “enlightened”, but at the same time a greater threat to the faith of the Orthodox. Thus the Corfiot Eugene Voulgaris preached as far as the court of the Russian Empress Catherine II on the dangers of Austro-Hungarian Catholicism to the Orthodox of the Balkans.

The danger was particularly acute in Transylvania, which came under Hungarian dominion... For there were many Romanians living in Transylvania, where, as Barbara Jelavich writes, “the Romanian Orthodox majority of the population was effectively blocked from political influence. The control of the province lay in the hands of the Hungarians; of the Szeklers, who were related to the Hungarians and spoke the same language; and of the Germans, called Saxons, descendants of twelfth-century immigrants. The Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian churches were

recognized, but not the Orthodox. In the eighteenth century a Uniate church
[Orthodox in rite, but papist in obedience] was established, which attracted
some Romanians and played an important cultural role. The Orthodox church
and its leaders, in particular Bishop Andreiu Şaguna, were an even greater
influence on the Romanian movement in the province.”

During the reign of Empress Maria Theresa (1741-1780), the Romanian
Orthodox of Transylvania and the Banat suffered great persecution from the
Hungarian Catholics. Among those martyred for the faith then were SS.
Bessarion, Sophronius and Oprea, and the Priests Moses and John. Others
took avoiding action.

That is why the Russian monastic founder living in Moldavia, St. Paisius
Velichkovsky, went to such extreme lengths to see that his monks did not
remain under the yoke of the Austrians. Thus we read in a life of the saint that
when the Russians and Turks concluded peace after a six-year war in 1774,
“the Roman Catholic Empress (Austrian Empress Maria Theresa) began to
demand of the Turkish Sultan those parts of the Moldavian land which he
had promised her (for her help in the war). And so the Germans took the
monastery of Dragomirna under their rule. Then our Father shed many tears:
he wept bitterly over the devastation of the souls of the brethren and, on the
other hand, he was crushed that the monastery should remain under the rule
of the Papists, with whom the Eastern Church can never have spiritual peace.
Likewise, the brethren also greatly grieved and bitterly wept...

“...The Elder was so apprehensive about heresies and schism that... he left
his monastery with all its possessions, movable and immovable, and went to
Moldavia, saying to his brethren: “Fathers and brothers, whoever wishes to
obey and follow his Elder, the sinful Paisius, let him come with me; but I give
no one a blessing to stay in Dragomirna. For it is impossible to escape heresies
while living in the court of the heretics. The Pope of Rome roars like a lion in
other kingdoms also and seeks whom he may devour; he gives no peace even
in the Turkish kingdom and constantly disturbs and offends the Holy Eastern
Church, and how much more in the Austrian realm does he devour the
living.””

This persecution in Romania coincided with a Catholic onslaught in other
parts of the Orthodox world. Thus Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia writes:
“In 1724 a large part of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch submitted to
Rome; after this the Orthodox authorities, fearing that the same thing might
happen elsewhere in the Turkish Empire, were far stricter in their dealings
with Roman Catholics. The climax in anti-Roman feeling came in 1755, when
the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem declared Latin

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p. 6.
462 Schema-Monk Metrophanes, Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska
Brotherhood, 1976, p. 158.
baptism to be entirely invalid and demanded that all converts to Orthodoxy be baptized anew. ‘The baptisms of heretics are to be rejected and abhorred,’ the decree stated; they are ‘waters which cannot profit… nor give any sanctification to such as receive them, nor avail at all to the washing away of sins’.”

Towards the end of the century the Austrian Emperor Joseph II introduced a certain measure of religious freedom in his empire, including for the Orthodox Christians. However, other measures introduced by him caused great harm to the Orthodox. Thus in the life of the Serbian Martyr Theodore Sladich we read: “In the late eighteenth century, many confused Serbs who had grown weary under the Turkish yoke and who wanted nothing of the Roman heresy, decided to turn to the ‘new’ ideas of the Enlightenment which came first to Vojvodina from Western Europe via Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and other European university centers. One of these ideas was the reduction of the number of holy days celebrated, in order to facilitate new economic plans and conditions. Some one hundred holy days were to be erased from the liturgical calendar. Also, under the Turkish system, Serbian clerical education was rather limited. Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790), ‘the enlightened despot’ in Vienna, with the blessing of Metropolitan Moses Putnik (1781-1790) in Srenski Karlovci (Lower Karlovac), advocated the closing of a number of monasteries in order to generate revenue to build various educational institutions. One supporter of this idea was the famous Serbian man of the Age of Reason, Dositheus Obradovich (1739-1811). Beginning as a monk in the Monastery of New Hopovo, he then left for Western Europe, returning to Vojvodina and later to Serbia as a humanist philosopher, a fierce critic of Church practices, and as Serbia’s first Minister of Education! In the end, this opting for the rationalism of the so-called Western European Enlightenment created within the pious Serbian peasantry a tremendous distrust of Church leadership, an abiding disdain for Church life and practices, and a many-faceted regression which was to last well into the nineteenth century.

“With all this in mind, it can now be easily ascertained why pious Serbs everywhere especially venerate St. Theodore Sladich. Quite often in his lifetime he was approached by both propagandists of the Latin Unia and by Serbian converts to Western rationalism who wanted him to leave the Church and embrace ‘modernistic’ ways of thought and living. Theodore was an ardent Orthodox and, due to his love for liturgical ritual and the vision of the doctrines of the Church, he became an outspoken proponent against the Latin Unia and the rationalistic innovations of Western Europe… In regard to rationalism and so-called ‘modern’ education, Theodore responded by explaining that the source of every true knowledge flowed from the Church – that all worldly knowledge can never replace that which a true Christian receives in church, God Himself educates the believer wholly: by acting upon his sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste, imagination, mind, and will, by the

463 Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy Ware), The Orthodox Church, London: Penguin, 1964, p. 98.
splendor of the images and of the building in general, by the fragrance of the incense, by the veneration of the Gospels, Cross and icons, by the singing and by the reading of the Scriptures. And most importantly, as Theodore once said: ‘In no way can secular education bring about the greatest mystery offered by the Church: the cleansing from sins’.\textsuperscript{464}

69. CATHARINE THE GREAT, THE NOBILITY AND THE CHURCH

Nicholas Riasanovsky writes of Tsar Peter III: “His reign of several months, best remembered in the long run for the law abolishing the compulsory state service of the gentry, impressed many of his contemporaries as a violent attack on everything Russian and a deliberate sacrifice of Russian interests to those of Prussia. While not given to political persecution and in fact willing to sign a law abolishing the security police, the new emperor threatened to disband the guards, and even demanded that icons be withdrawn from the churches and that Russian priests dress like Lutheran pastors, both of which orders the Holy Synod did not dare execute. In foreign policy Peter III’s admiration for Frederick the Great led to the withdrawal of Russia from the Seven Years’ War, an act which probably saved Prussia from a crushing defeat and deprived Russia of great potential gains. Indeed, the Russian emperor refused to accept even what Frederick the Great was willing to give him for withdrawing and proceeded to make an alliance with the Prussian king.”

Although Peter II’s manifesto giving freedom from obligatory state service to the nobility was, not unnaturally, applauded by the nobles, within a few months, on June 28, 1762, they staged a coup which soon led to his death in rather mysterious circumstances. His wife Catherine, a German, cooperated with the coup that brought her to the throne, a coup that was organized by the Masons Panin and Gregory Orlov and the French Count Saint Germain...

Catherine’s accession to the throne was doubly illegal. Not only in that it took place over the dead body of her husband, but also in that the legitimate successor was her son, the future Tsar Paul I. Catherine was in fact a usurper; the lawful monarch should have been her son. Always conscious of this, she did not simply not love her son: she did everything in her power to humiliate him. As Alexander Bokhanov writes, “she was not ashamed even to deny the paternity of her lawful son [that is, that Tsar Peter III was his father]! Catherine had an instinctive dislike of Paul Petrovich; we can even speak of a kind of maniacal syndrome.” Her hatred of him went so far as to deprive him of the possibility of bringing up his own sons Alexander and Nicholas, and to refuse him all participation in state affairs.

“The new regime,” writes Isabel de Madariaga, “proceeded at once to rally the support of the groups that really mattered: the army, provincial officials and the Church. The plotters themselves were well placed to win over the soldiers with assurances that the Danish campaign [in alliance with Prussia] would be called off, and the men evidently welcomed Catherine’s accession

\[465\] Riasanovsky, op. cit., p. 248.
\[466\] Lebedev, op. cit., p. 215.
\[467\] Bokhanov, Pavel I (Paul I), Moscow: Veche, 2010, p. 78.
with real rejoicing. The very limited degree of opposition in the army came from some of the officers, who may have taken seriously their oath of allegiance to Peter. No such scruple seemed to worry the Church hierarchy, which showed no hesitation whatever in administering the oath of allegiance to Catherine to those who had only six months previously sworn allegiance to Peter III. The first manifesto issued by the new government on 28 June 1762 showed its awareness of the most emotionally vulnerable points of popular opinion. It stressed that Catherine had taken power because of the danger to the Orthodox faith, and the insult to the Russian army implicit in the country’s ‘enslavement’ to her worst enemy, namely Prussia, the policy supported by Peter…"468

The Muscovite tsars had created a Chelobitnij Prikaz that enabled the ordinary people to bring their complaints directly to the tsar. Even Peter, while creating the beginnings of a powerful bureaucracy, had retained sufficient control over the bureaucrats to ensure that he was not cut off from the people and remained the real ruler of the country. “But after his death, as Tikhomirov explained, “the supreme power was cut off from the people, and at the same time was penetrated by a European spirit of absolutism. This latter circumstance was aided by the fact that the bearers of supreme power were themselves not of Russian origin during this period, and the education of everyone in general was not Russian. The imitation of administrative creativity continued throughout the eighteenth century.”469

This tendency reached its peak under Catherine the Great. At the beginning of her reign, Nikolai Panin had tried to create a system that imposed certain aristocratic checks on the sovereign’s power on the model of Sweden. However, Catherine cleverly sidelined both this reform and Panin himself. “The first changes in the structure and spirit of the government in Russia undertaken by the new regime all tended to the strengthening of the direct personal control of the sovereign over the institutions of central and local government and their personnel. At a time when Catherine might have been expected to woo the nobility in order to consolidate her precarious hold on the throne, no concession whatsoever was made to noble ambition. No outright attack was made on the vested interests of the high aristocracy. But by playing off the partisans of the imperial council against the partisans of the Senate Catherine succeeded in killing the one, and downgrading the other. Meanwhile the procuracy, under Catherine’s obedient servant, Vyazemsky, with his subordinate network of procurators, served increasingly as the oko gosudarevo, the ‘eye of the sovereign’ and the effective instrument of her policy and her power…”470

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469 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 341.
470 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 60.
Catherine’s first act was to reward her co-conspirators handsomely with money and serfs. This pattern became the rule during her reign as the number of those who needed to be rewarded (mainly her lovers) increased, as well as the numbers of serfs “on the market” through the conquest of new territories and the expropriation of church lands. Thus she took away about a million peasants from the Church, while giving about a million previously free (state) peasants into the personal possession of the nobility.\(^{471}\) She also imposed even tighter restrictions on the movement of serfs. And she introduced the system into the Ukraine...

Thus in the course of the eighteenth century, and especially during Catherine’s reign, the nobility finally recovered the dominant position they had lost under Ivan the Terrible and the seventeenth-century Tsars. Although this was a dominance over the peasants, not over the sovereign... With this dominance of the nobility came the dominance of westernism in all its forms.

As Richard Pipes writes: “It has been said that under Peter [the Great] Russia learned western techniques, under Elizabeth western manners, and under Catherine western morals. Westernization certainly made giant progress in the eighteenth century; what had begun as mere aping of the west by the court and its elite developed into close identification with the very spirit of western culture. With the advance of westernization it became embarrassing for the state and the dvorianstvo [nobility and civil servants] to maintain the old service structure. The dvorianstvo wished to emulate the western aristocracy, to enjoy its status and rights; and the Russian monarchy, eager to find itself in the forefront of European enlightenment, was, up to a point, cooperative.

“In the course of the eighteenth century a consensus developed between the crown and the dvorianstvo that the old system had outlived itself. It is in this atmosphere that the social, economic and ideological props of the patrimonial regime were removed....

“Dvoriane serving in the military were the first to benefit from the general weakening of the monarchy that occurred after Peter’s death. In 1730, provincial dvoriane frustrated a move by several boyar families to impose constitutional limitations on the newly elected Empress Anne. In appreciation, Anne steadily eased the conditions of service which Peter had imposed on the dvorianstvo...

“These measures culminated in the Manifesto ‘Concerning the Granting of Freedom and Liberty to the Entire Russian Dvorianstvo’, issued in 1762 by Peter III, which ‘for ever, for all future generations’ exempted Russian dvoriane from state service in all its forms. The Manifesto further granted them the right to obtain passports for travel abroad, even if their purpose was to enroll in the service of foreign rulers – an unexpected restoration of the

\(^{471}\) Lebedev, op. cit., p. 217.
ancient boyar right of ‘free departure’ abolished by Ivan III. Under Catherine II, the Senate on at least three occasions confirmed this Manifesto, concurrently extending to the dvorianstvo other rights and privileges (e.g. the right, given in 1783, to maintain private printing presses). In 1785 Catherine issued a Charter of the Dvorianstvo which reconfirmed all the liberties acquired by this estate since Peter’s death, and added some new ones. The land which the dvoriane held was now recognized as their legal property. They were exempt from corporal punishment. These rights made them – on paper, at any rate – the equals of the upper classes in the most advanced countries of the west.”

“The nobles,” writes Sir Geoffrey Hosking, “thus possessed certain secure rights, including that of private property in land. This was an unprecedented situation in Russian society, and, in the absence of a similar charter for peasants, it consolidated in practice their right to buy and sell the serfs who occupied that land as if they too were private property.

“Catherine’s reforms thus took the first step towards creating a civil society in Russia, but at the cost of deepening yet further the already considerable juridical, political and cultural gap between the nobles and the serfs among whom they lived. Serfs became mere chattels in the eyes of their masters, objects which could be moved around or disposed of at will, as part of a gambling debt, a marriage settlement or an economic improvement scheme. In practice, they could normally be sold as commodities, without the land to which they were theoretically attached, and without members of their own families.

“Lords had judicial and police powers over their serfs, as well as economic ones, which meant that they could punish serfs in any way they saw fit: they could flog them, send them to the army or exile them to Siberia. Theoretically, they were not permitted to kill a serf, but if a harsh flogging or other ill-treatment caused a serf’s death, there was very little his fellow peasants could do about it. Not that the great majority of lords were remotely so brutal or careless. But the mentality induced by this impunity nevertheless blunted the lord’s sense of responsibility for the consequences of his own actions.”

472 Pipes, Russia under the Old Regime, London: Penguin, 1995, pp. 132, 133. Lebedev writes that “nobility itself was now also transferred by heredity insofar as the nobles had been completely freed from the obligation to serve anywhere. They could send their serfs to forced labour without trial, apply physical punishments to them, buy and sell them (exchange them for wolfhounds’)… Catherine II forbade only the sale of families of peasants one by one, but (this became usual) ordered them to be sold in families. But in practice this ruling was violated pretty often.” (op. cit., p. 227).

473 Hosking, op. cit., p. 158. “Only extreme cruelty in relation to serfs (and that in the rarest cases!), sadistic torture and murder was punished, insofar as all this sickened the ‘moral feelings’ of the nobles, who considered themselves an ‘enlightened’ class. They paid no attention at all to ‘ordinary’ cruelty, it was in the nature of things. The serfs no longer vowed allegiance to the Tsars, and their testimonies were not admitted in court and they themselves could not take anybody to court. Their whole life, destiny, land and property were the personal property of the landowners. By forbidding the transfer of peasants from their lords
Catherine also gave the nobles the right to trade and the right to organize local associations that would elect local government officials. All this would seem to indicate the influence on Catherine of her reading of Montesquieu and Diderot. Thus Montesquieu had argued for the creation of aristocratic “intermediate institutions” between the king and the people – institutions such as the parlements and Estates General in France; he believed that “no monarch, no nobility, no nobility, no monarch.”\textsuperscript{474} However, Montesquieu’s aim had been that these institutions and the nobility should check the power of the king. Catherine, on the other hand, was attempting to buttress her power by buying the support of the nobles.\textsuperscript{475}

But if the sovereign and the nobility were coming closer together, this only emphasized the gulf between this nobility and the masses of the Russian people. Even their concept of Russianness was different. As Hosking writes, “the nobles’ Russianness was very different from that of the peasants, and for that matter of the great majority of merchants and clergy. It was definitely an imperial Russianness, centred on elite school, Guards regiment and imperial court. Even their landed estates were islands of European culture in what they themselves often regarded as an ocean of semi-barbarism. The Russianness of the village was important to them, especially since it was bathed in childhood memories, but they knew it was something different.”\textsuperscript{476} Above all, the Russianness of the nobles was different from that of the peasants because the latter was based on Orthodoxy. But the nobles had different ideals, those of the French Enlightenment. Even the sovereign, the incarnation of Holy Russia, was becoming a bearer of the French ideals rather than those of the mass of his people. Moreover, with the growth in the power of the bureaucracy he was becoming increasingly isolated from ordinary people and unable to hear their voice.

But if Catherine was a bearer of French Enlightenment ideals, she did little to incarnate them in reality, and was certainly no democrat. Thus in her \textit{Nakaz} or “Instruction” of 1767 she spoke against the state in which the idea of equality takes root in the people to such an extent “that everyone aims at being equal to him... who is ordained by the Laws to rule over him” (article 503). And when the dramatist A.P. Sumarokov said: "The majority of votes does not confirm the truth; truth is confirmed by profound reason and impartiality," the empress replied approvingly: "The majority does not confirm the truth, but only indicates the wishes of the majority."\textsuperscript{477}  

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\textsuperscript{474} Montesquieu, \textit{The Spirit of the Laws}.
\textsuperscript{475} Hosking, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{476} Hosking, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{477} De Madariaga, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 157, 159.
Absolute monarch that she was, Catherine was no supporter of the traditionally Orthodox “symphonic” model of Church-State relations. Thus “[the Archbishop of Novgorod],” she wrote to Voltaire, “is neither a persecutor nor a fanatic. He abhors the idea of the two powers”.478 And in her correspondence with the Austrian Emperor Joseph II she called herself head of the Greek Church.479 Under Peter, the election of bishops had been as follows: the Synod presented two candidates for the episcopacy of a vacant see to the monarch, and he chose one of them. The newly elected bishop then had to swear an oath that included recognizing the monarch as “supreme Judge” of the Church. Catherine did not change this arrangement; and she restricted the power of the bishops still further in that out of fear of “fanaticism”, as Rusak writes, “cases dealing with religious blasphemies, the violation of order in Divine services, and magic and superstition were removed from the competence of the spiritual court…”480

“The first over-procurator in the reign of Catherine II,” writes Rusak, “was Prince A. Kozlovsky, who was not particularly distinguished in anything, but under whom the secularization of the Church lands took place.

“His two successors, according to the definition of Kartashev, were ‘bearers of the most modern, anti-clerical, enlightenment ideology’. In 1765 there followed the appointment of I. Melissino [a “deeply anti-clerical Mason”481] as over-procurator. His world-view was very vividly reflected in his ‘Points’ – a project for an order to the Synod. Among others were the following points:

“3)… to weaken and shorten the fasts…

“5)… to purify the Church from superstitions and ‘artificial’ miracles and superstitions concerning relics and icons: for the study of this problem, to appoint a special commission from various unblended-by-prejudices people;

“7) to remove something from the long Church rites; so as to avoid pagan much speaking in prayer, to remove the multitude of verses, canons, troparia, etc., that have been composed in recent times, to remove many unnecessary feast days, and to appoint short prayer-services with useful instructions to the people instead of Vespers and All-Night Vigils…

“10) to allow the clergy to wear more fitting clothing;

478 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 114.
479 She once said to Countess Dashkova: “Also strike out ‘as a beneficent Deity’ - this apotheosis does not agree with the Christian religion, and, I fear, I have no right to sanctity insofar as I have laid certain restrictions on the Church’s property” (Fomin & Fomina, op. cit., vol. I, p. 299).
481 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 119.
“11) would it not be more rational completely to remove the habit of commemorating the dead (such a habit only provides the clergy with an extra excuse for various kinds of extortions)…

“In other points married bishops, making divorces easier, etc., were suggested.

“As successor to Melessino there was appointed Chebyshev, a Mason, who openly proclaimed his atheism. He forbade the printing of works in which the existence of God was demonstrated. ‘There is no God!’ he said aloud more than once. Besides, he was suspected, and not without reason, of spending large sums of Synodal money.

“In 1774 he was sacked. In his place was appointed the pious S. Akchurin, then A. Naumov. Both of them established good relations with the members of the Synod. The last over-procurator in the reign of Catherine II was the active Count A. Musin-Pushkin, the well-known archaeologist, a member of the Academy of Sciences, who later revealed the “Word on Igor’s Regiment’. He took into his hands the whole of the Synodal Chancellery. Being a Church person, he did not hinder the members of the Synod from making personal reports to the empress and receiving orders directly from her.”

The best hierarchs of the time were inhibited from attending Synodal sessions by the impiety of most of the over-procurators. Thus Metropolitan Platon of Moscow protested “on seeing that the over-procurators in the Synod (Melessino and Chebyshev) were penetrated with the spirit of freethinking, and that the opinions of the members of the Synod were paralyzed by the influence of the then all-powerful in church matters spiritual father of the empress, Protopriest Ioann Pamphilov”. Few were those who, in this nadir of Russian statehood and spirituality, had the courage to expose the vices of Russian society while proposing solutions in the spirit of a truly Orthodox piety. One of the few was St. Tikhon, Bishop of Zadonsk. He both rebuked tsars and nobles for their profligate lives and injustice to their serfs, and criticized the western education they were giving their children: “God will not ask you whether you taught your children French, German or Italian or the politics of society life – but you will not escape Divine reprobation for not having instilled goodness into them. I speak plainly but I tell the truth: if your children are bad, your grandchildren will be worse… and the evil will thus increase… and the root of all this is our thoroughly bad education…”

Another righteous one was Metropolitan Arsenius (Matseyevich) of Rostov, a firm believer in the independence of the Church who rejected Catherine’s expropriation of the monasteries in 1763-1764, saying that the decline of monasticism in Russia might in the end lead “to atheism”. He also

483 Dobroklonsky, op. cit., p. 549.
refused to swear an oath of allegiance to her as “Supreme Judge” of the Church. He had refused to do this also in the reign of Elizabeth; and she, a true believer, had not punished him for this. But Catherine was different: she had him defrocked and exiled to the Therapontov monastery, where Patriarch Nicon had once been kept. But since he continued to write letters against secularization, he was deprived of monasticism and under the name of “Andrew the Liar” was incarcerated for life in the prison of the castle in Revel (Tallinn). There he died in 1772, after accurately prophesying the fates of those bishops who had acquiesced in his unjust sentence.485

With Arseny in prison, the other hierarchs meekly submitted to Catherine expropriating ecclesiastical and monastic lands. Already between 1762 and 1764 the number of monasteries was reduced from 1072 to 452, and of monastics – from 12,444 to 5105! In exchange, the Church was put on the State’s payroll. Thus, according to De Madariaga, “the total income made available to the state from Church lands amounted to some 1,366,299 r.p.a. From this sum, the state paid to the Church about 462,868 r.p.a. in the years 1764-8. Over the years, state income from the church peasants rose steadily, reaching 3,648,000 r. in 1784. The state grant to the Church also rose to 540,000 r.p.a in 1782, 710,000 in 1792 and 820,000 in 1796. A further 115,000 r.p.a. was allotted to the almshouses for retired officers and soldiers and funds were made available to seminaries. The state thus made a very good bargain at the expense of the Church…”486

With the hierarchs in paralysis, it is not surprising that in the eighteenth century the lower clergy were in a still more humiliating condition, and were even subjected to physical violence by governors and landowners.

De Madariaga writes: “The relationship of the local authorities with the clerical estate was complex and the extent of their jurisdiction limited. In principle members of the clerical estate came under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authorities but in practice much depended on ran: whereas a church dignitary, or an abbot, would be respected by governors and voyevodas, the local village priest or local church servants were often arrested with impunity, particularly if there was any suspicion of connivance with peasant disorders. But the Church authorities called on the civil authorities for legal support in such important matters as combatting heresy and sacrilege, preventing proselytizing activities of other faiths and the conversion of infidels to Orthodoxy. This task was particularly important in those guberniyi [provinces] containing large Tartar populations, e.g. Kazan’. The

485 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 221. Metropolitan Arsenius has recently been canonized by the Moscow Patriarchate. While he was still alive Archimandrite Theophylact of the Novotorzhsk Borisoglebsk monastery said that St. Demetrius of Rostov had appeared to a certain deacon in a dream and said to him: “Do you know that you have a God-pleaser who is incomparably greater than I still living on earth – his Eminence Metropolitan Arseny.” For this story the Senate decreed: “to defrock Theophylact, deprive him of his monasticism and exile him to Irkutsk monastery”.

486 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 118.
civil authorities dealt with the Old Believers, and it was their function to attempt to prevent the acts of collective self-immolation by fire which occasionally occurred among the more extreme groups. In addition the civil authorities, both at the request of the ecclesiastical authorities and on their own initiative, prosecuted those of all classes who failed to attend confession and communion, and to appear regularly at church, those guilty of adultery and evil living, etc.\textsuperscript{487}

“The secularization of church lands, and the ensuing legislation, affected the parish priest in a number of ways. To begin with, in the 1760s a number of taxes on the priests were abolished now that the bishops had a fixed income. But the income of the urban or rural parish priest still remained low and insecure… The death of a wife could be a fatal blow, since widowers were not allowed to officiate, nor could they remarry. The position of a priest too old to fulfill his duties and of the dependants of a deceased priest remained very difficult unless a relative could be speedily inducted…”\textsuperscript{488}

“Under Catherine II,” writes Lebedev, “the age-old Russian home and church schools for children were forbidden as not being scientific and aiding superstition. The local authorities were ordered ‘from the highest levels’ to introduce ‘correct’ schools with good teaching. But at that time for a series of reasons they were not able to do this, while the schools of the old ‘amateur’ type disappeared both in the cities and in the countryside. And it turned out that ‘the enlightened age of Catherine’ laid a beginning to the wide spreading of illiteracy and ignorance in the masses of the Great Russian people, both in the lower classes of the city population and even more in the country. In the cities… schools and gymnasia were built mainly for the higher classes. It was at that time that lycea for men and the women’s Smolny institute appeared… There they studied the secular sciences thoroughly, but it was necessary to teach something spiritual there as well! The imperial power understood that it was impossible not to teach religion. On the contrary, in the interests of the authorities the Orthodox Faith and Church and Orthodox education were used as a means to educating the ‘new breed’ of noble (above all noble) fathers and mothers in the spirit of devotion to the authorities, a definite ‘morality’ and the honourable fulfillment of duty. But in ‘society’ at that time the Law of God was considered to be a purely ‘priestly’ subject. It was ordered that ‘children should not be infected with superstition and fanaticism’, that is, they were not to speak to them about the Old Testament punishments of God or about miracles and the Terrible Judgement (!), but they were to instill in them primarily ‘the rules of morality’, ‘natural (?)) religion and ‘the importance of religious tolerance’. We shall see later what kind of ‘new breed’ of people were the products of this kind of ‘Law of God’…”\textsuperscript{489}

\textsuperscript{487} De Madariaga, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{488} De Madariaga, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{489} Lebedev, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 260.
Seeing the increasing alienation of their sovereigns from traditional Orthodoxy, sections of the simple people took action to liberate, as they saw it, the Russian tsardom from foreign and heterodox influence.

Thus the rebellion of Pugachev in 1774, while superficially a rebellion for the sake of freedom, and the rights of Cossacks and other minorities, was the very opposite of a democratic rebellion in the western style. For Pugachev did not seek to destroy the institution of the tsardom: on the contrary, he proclaimed himself to be Tsar Peter III, the husband of the Empress Catherine. He was claiming to be the real Tsar, who would restore the real Orthodox traditions of pre-Petrine Russia – by which he meant Old Ritualism. For he was “blessed for the kingdom” by the Old Ritualist “elder” Philaret, whom he in turn promised would become “patriarch” when he conquered Moscow...

As we have seen, a false legitimism, as opposed to liberalism, was also characteristic of the popular rebellions in the Time of Troubles. K.N. Leontiev considered it to be characteristic also of Stenka Razin’s rebellion in 1671, and saw this legitimism as another proof of how deeply the Great Russian people was penetrated by the Byzantine spirit: “Almost all of our major rebellions have never had a Protestant or liberal-democratic character, but have borne upon themselves the idiosyncratic seal of false-legitimism, that is, of that native and religious monarchist principle, which created the whole greatness of our State.

“The rebellion of Stenka Razin failed immediately people became convinced that the tsar did not agree with their ataman. Moreover, Razin constantly tried to show that he was fighting, not against royal blood, but only against the boyars and the clergy who agreed with them.

“Pugachev was cleverer in fighting against the government of Catherine, whose strength was incomparably greater than the strength of pre-Petrine Rus’. He deceived the people, he used that legitimism of the Great Russian people of which I have been speaking.”

“The slogan of Pugachev’s movement,” writes Ivanov, “was The Freedom of the Orthodox Faith. In his manifestos Pugachev bestowed ‘the cross and the beard’ on the Old Ritualists. He promised that in his new kingdom, after Petersburg had been destroyed, everyone would ‘hold the old faith, the shaving of beards will be strictly forbidden, as well as the wearing of German clothes.’ The present churches, went the rumour, would be razed, seven-domed ones would be built, the sign of the cross would be made, not with three fingers, but with two. In Pugachev the people saw the longed-for lawful

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tsar. It was in this that the power of Pugachev’s movement consisted. There is no doubt that economic reasons played a significant role in this movement. The dominance of foreigners and Russian rubbish under Peter I and of the Masonic oligarchy under his successors had created fertile soil for popular discontent. The Masonic oligarchy acted in its own egoistic interests, despising the needs and interests of the people.”

However, the Church and most of the people still recognized Catherine as the lawful anointed sovereign, and the hierarchs of the Church publicly called on the people to reject the pretender. As a result, “it is not surprising that Pugachev dealt cruelly with the clergy. From their midst he created at this time no fewer than 237 martyrs for faithfulness to the throne.”

The main reason why the main mass of the people and the clergy rejected Pugachev was that the eighteenth-century sovereigns, while being despotic in their administration and non-Russian in their culture, never formally renounced the Orthodox faith, and even defended it at times. Thus “Peter I,” writes Dobroklonsky, “who allowed himself a relaxed attitude towards the institutions of the Church, and even clowning parodies of sacred actions, nevertheless considered it necessary to restrain others. There was a case when he beat Tatischev with a rod for having permitted himself some liberty in relation to church traditions, adding: ‘Don’t lead believing souls astray, don’t introduce free-thinking, which is harmful for the public well-being; I did not teach you to be an enemy of society and the Church.’ On another occasion he subjected Prince Khovansky and some young princes and courtiers to cruel physical punishments for having performed a blasphemous rite of burial on a guest who was drunk to the point of unconsciousness and mocked church vessels. While breaking the fast himself, Peter I, so as not to lead others astray, asked for a dispensation for himself from the patriarch. Anna Ioannovna, the former duchess of Courland, who was surrounded by Germans, nevertheless paid her dues of veneration for the institutions of the Orthodox Church; every day she attended Divine services, zealously built and adorned churches, and even went on pilgrimages. Elizabeth Petrovna was a model of sincere pity: she gave generous alms for the upkeep of churches, the adornment of icons and shrines both with money and with the work of her own hand: in her beloved Alexandrovsk sloboda she was present at Divine services every day, rode or went on foot on pilgrimages to monasteries, observed the fast in strict abstinence and withdrawal, even renouncing official audiences. There is a tradition that before her death she had the intention of becoming tonsured as a nun. Even Catherine II, in spite of the fact that she was a fan of the fashionable French philosophy, considered it necessary to carry out the demands of piety: on feastdays she was without fail present at Divine services; she venerated the clergy and kissed the hands of priests…”

491 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 182-183.
492 Dobroklonsky, op. cit., p. 579.
Moreover, the eighteenth-century sovereigns undoubtedly served the ends of Divine Providence in other important ways. Thus it was under Peter I, and with his active support, that the Russian Spiritual Mission in Beijing was established.\textsuperscript{494} Again, it was towards the end of the eighteenth century that the Russian mission to Alaska began. And it was under Catherine especially that the age-old persecutor of Russian Orthodoxy, Poland, was humbled, literally disappearing from the map of Europe, while Ottoman Turkey was driven from the north shore of the Black Sea, thus enabling the fertile lands of southern Russia to be colonized and exploited. These important military triumphs, which were essential for the survival of the Orthodox Empire into the next century (although they created their own problems, as we shall see), would have been impossible, given Russia’s lack of economic development, without a very authoritarian power at the helm.

The eighteenth-century rulers of Russia can be seen both as forerunners of the Antichrist, insofar as they undermined the traditional Orthodox way of life in Russia, and as restrainers of the Antichrist, one of the chief functions of the Roman emperor in Orthodox eschatological thought, in that they built up a mighty state that was able to defend what was left of the Orthodox way of life in the next century while spreading that way of life by missionary means to other peoples. Thus they made possible both the glorious victory of 1812 over the French Antichrist, and the catastrophic surrender of 1917 to the Soviet Antichrist. And so it was in the eighteenth century that Russia finally emerged on the world stage as the universalist empire of the Third Rome, the heir of the Second, New Rome of Byzantium – only to fall, in the twentieth century, to the pagan spirit of the First Rome that these same eighteenth-century rulers had re-implanted in her.

In the nineteenth century it was remarked, with some justice, that the Orthodox Church since Catherine had been “in paralysis”. However, a better metaphor might be “kept from falling by a straitjacket”; for it must be remembered that at this low point in Russia’s spiritual progress, a rigid straitjacket or encasing may well have been necessary. Thus with regard to religion, as the historian Mikhail Pogodin commented, “if the ban on apostasy had been lifted, half the Russian peasants would have joined the raskol [Old Ritualists], while half the aristocrats would have converted to Catholicism.”\textsuperscript{495} And if this remark is clearly an exaggeration, it nevertheless contains this kernel of truth: that the greater initiative and responsibility given to the Church and people in a true Orthodox autocracy with a real symphony of powers would have been too great a burden for the Russian Church and people to sustain at this time. They were simply not prepared for it.

For sometimes the body needs to regain its strength before the soul can begin the process of regeneration. A broken limb needs to be strapped in a

\textsuperscript{494} Dr. Jeremias Norman, “The Orthodox Mission to the Chinese”, \textit{Orthodox Tradition}, vol. XVIII, N 1, 2001, pp. 29-35.
\textsuperscript{495} Pogodin, in Hosking, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 237.
rigid encasing of plaster of Paris until the break has healed, the plaster can be removed and the restored limb is strong enough to step out without any support. In the same way, the straitjacket of "Orthodox absolutism" on the Church, contrary to the Orthodox ideal though it was, was perhaps necessary until the double fracture in Russian society caused by Petrine westernism and the Old Ritualist schism could be healed…496

496 “Before the Pugachev revolt the Old Believers seemed to present no political threat to [Catherine] and she took steps to stop persecution and renewed the offer [made by Peter] of amnesty to all who returned from abroad. In 1769 the right to give evidence in court was restored to them” (De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 122).
However one may evaluate it in other respects, Catherine’s reign was outstandingly successful in one respect — militarily. Through her great military commanders — Rumyantsev, Suvorov, Potemkin and Ushakov — Catherine defeated the Turks in the south and the Poles in the west, while the rebels in the east under Pugachev were easily disposed of. However, her reign is also a textbook illustration of the important historical principle that we find exemplified in many historical epochs: that the very victories of a regime, especially if they are achieved in an aggressive war, can sow the seeds of its eventual fall — whether through financial exhaustion, or imperial over-reach, or the incorporation of irreconcilable enemies into the body politic...

Catherine developed a new concept of the place of Russia in the world. “Russia,” she wrote in the very first line of her Instruction for government in 1767, “is a European power.” “The next paragraph,” writes Simms, “went on to say that Russia had become a great power by being European, that is ‘by introducing the manners and customs of Europe’. What Catherine had in mind here was not the Europe of representative institutions, but that of princely absolutism. This was because, as the second chapter of her ‘instruction’ explained, ‘the extent of the [tsarist] Dominion requires an absolute power to be vested in that person who rules over it,’ in order to expedite decisions. The ‘intention and end of Monarchy,’ she continued, ‘is the glory of their citizens, of the state and of the monarchy’, that is, territorial expansion and military success. ‘From this glory,’ Catherine added, ‘a sense of liberty arises in a people governed by monarch, which… may contribute as much to the happiness of the subjects as even liberty itself.’ In other words, Russians would find compensation for their lack of freedom in the glory of their state as a European great power.”

But this was directly contrary to the ordinary Orthodox Russian’s concept of his state. First of all, to him Russia was not a European power in the sense of just another of the Catholic or Protestant states of the West. She was the Third Rome, the successor of Byzantium. And her aim was not her own glory, or the glory of her citizens, but the glory of God and of Orthodoxy. Catherine made some concessions to these sentiments, always insisting on her Orthodoxy and gladly adopting the traditional aim of the Russian tsars of liberating Constantinople and the Balkans from the Muslim yoke. (That is why she called her grandson Constantine in anticipation of the desired event.) But under the cloak of traditionally Orthodox aspirations, she pursued a typically West European agenda of Great Power politics and territorial expansion. This is not to say that her victories did not bring genuine benefit to the Orthodox. But, as in the case of Peter the Great, we have to ask: were the sovereign’s secular achievements on the battlefield and elsewhere sufficient to offset the spiritual harm she inflicted?

497 Simms, op. cit., p. 119.
This question was particularly relevant in relation to Poland. Even after the union of the Eastern Ukraine with Russia in 1686, very extensive formerly Russian lands still remained under Polish control. However, in 1717, as a result of civil war between King Augustus II and his nobles, Poland fell under the effective control of Russia. And so Poland’s domination of the South Russian lands from the fourteenth century onwards now began to be reversed... Poland was ruled by a weak monarchy that was paralyzed by its over-powerful and unpatriotic nobility, whose frequent application of their right to a liberum veto in the Polish Seim, or parliament, tended to paralyze all constructive work for the state. As a result of this weakness (encouraged by Catherine), Poland showed herself to be a failing state, and in 1772, 1793 and 1795 she was partitioned between Russia, Austria and Prussia.

Nevertheless, in spite of the weakness of the Polish state throughout the eighteenth century, the persecution of the Orthodox living in Poland did not cease. The Polish nobility did everything they could to deny the non-Roman Catholic Christians (the Orthodox, the Lutherans, and the Calvinists) political rights until well into the eighteenth century. And they continued to try and keep the uniates, i.e. those Orthodox who had been beguiled into Catholicism after the Unia of Brest-Litovsk, from reverting to Orthodoxy.

Moreover, they continued to cover the crimes of the Jews against the Orthodox Christians, which had been one of the causes of the pogroms committed by Khmelnytsky’s Cossacks. Thus in 1690 a six-year-old Orthodox child by the name of Gabriel, who lived in Grodno province, was kidnapped by a Jew and ritually slaughtered, “as was confirmed by a judicial investigation. St. Gabriel was crucified, his side was pierced and he was punctured by various instruments until all his blood came out and he died. The body of the child was cast into a field, but was soon discovered and given over to a Christian burial, while his tormentors received their due reward. 30 years later, in 1720, the relics of St. Gabriel were uncovered and found to be incorrupt.” 498 Years later, Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) wrote a service to the saint for his canonization...

The Orthodox Christians in Poland, writes A.P. Dobroklonsky, “suffered every possible restriction. In 1717 the Sejm deprived them of their right to elect deputies to the Sejms and forbade the construction of new and the repairing of old churches; in 1733 the Sejm removed them from all public posts. If that is how the government itself treated them, their enemies could boldly fall upon them with fanatical spite. The Orthodox were deprived of all their dioceses and with great difficulty held on to one, the Belorussian; they were also deprived of the brotherhoods, which either disappeared or accepted the unia. Monasteries and parish churches with their lands were forcibly taken from them... From 1721 to 1747, according to the calculations of the Belorussian

Bishop Jerome, 165 Orthodox churches were removed, so that by 1755 in the whole of the Belorussian diocese there remained only 130; and these were in a pitiful state... Orthodox religious processions were broken up, and Orthodox holy things subjected to mockery... The Dominicans and Basilians acted in the same way, being sent as missionaries to Belorussia and the Ukraine - those 'lands of the infidels', as the Catholics called them, - to convert the Orthodox... They went round the villages and recruited people to the unia; any of those recruited who carried out Orthodox needs was punished as an apostate. Orthodox monasteries were often subjected to attacks by peasants and schoolboys; the monks suffered beatings, mutilations and death. 'How many of them,' exclaimed [Bishop] George Konissky, 'were thrown out of their homes, many of them were put in prisons, in deep pits, they were shut up in kennels with the dogs, they were starved by hunger and thirst, fed on hay; how many were beaten and mutilated, and some even killed!'... The Orthodox white clergy were reduced to poverty, ignorance and extreme humiliation. All the Belorussian bishops were subjected to insults, and some even to armed assault....

"The Orthodox sought defenders for themselves in Russia, constantly sending complaints and requests to the court and the Holy Synod. The Russian government according to the eternal peace of 1686 had reserved for itself the right to protect the Orthodox inhabitants of Poland, and often sent its notes to the Polish court and through its ambassadors in Poland demanded that the Orthodox should be given back the dioceses that had been granted to them according to the eternal peace and that the persecutions should cease; it also wrote about this to Rome, even threatening to deprive the Catholics living in Russia of freedom of worship; more than once it appointed special commissars to Poland for the defence of the Orthodox from abuse and in order to investigate complaints. But the Polish government either replied with promises or was silent and dragged out the affair from one Sejm to another. True, there were cases when the king issued orders for the cessation of persecutions... But such instructions were usually not listened to, and the persecution of the Orthodox continued. Meanwhile the Russian government insufficiently insisted on the carrying out of its demands.

"Only from the time of Catherine II did the circumstances change. On arriving at her coronation in Moscow, George Konissky vividly described for her the wretched condition of the Orthodox in Poland and besought her intervention (1762). A year later all the Orthodox of Poland interceded with her about this. The empress promised her protection and made the usual representation to the Polish court. At that time a new king, Stanislav Poniatovsky, had been established, with her assistance, on the Polish throne. George Konissky personally appeared before him and described the sufferings of the Orthodox in such a lively manner that the king promised to do everything to restore the rights of the Orthodox (1765) and actually issued a decree on the confirmation of their religious rights, demanding that the uniate authorities cut short their violence. However, the uniate and Catholic authorities were not thinking of obeying the king. Their spite against the
Orthodox found fresh food for itself. In 1765-1766, amidst the Russian population of Poland, and mainly in Little Russia, a powerful mass movement against the unia had begun. Its heart was the Orthodox see of Pereyaslavl headed by Bishop Gervasius Lintsevsky and the Motroninsky monastery led by Abbot Melchizedek Znachko-Yavorsky. Multitudes of the people went there and were there inspired to the task of returning from the unia to Orthodoxy. Crowds of people gathered everywhere in the villages; together they swore to uphold the Orthodox faith to the last drop of their blood, they restored Orthodox churches and restored Orthodox priests provided for them by Gervasius. They persuaded uniate priests to return to Orthodoxy, and if they refused either drove them out of the parishes or locked the churches. Whole parishes returned to Orthodoxy. The uniate authorities decide to stop this movement. The uniate metropolitan sent a fanatical zealot for the unia, the official Mokritsky, to the Ukraine with a band of soldiers. The Orthodox churches began to be sealed or confiscated; the people were forced by beatings to renounce Orthodoxy. Abbot Melchizedek was subjected to tortures and thrown into prison. There were even cases of killings for the faith... This violence elicited a fresh representation from the Russian court. Moreover, the courts of Prussia, England, Sweden and Denmark demanded that the Poles reviewed the question of the dissidents (Orthodox and Protestants) at the Sejm and protected their rights. However, the Sejm that took place in 1766 still further restricted their religious liberty. The Catholic bishops Soltyk and Krasinsky by their epistles stirred up the people against the dissidents; the Pope himself (Clement XIII) tried to persuade Stanislav not to make concessions. Then the dissidents began to act in a more friendly manner towards each other. In Torn and Slutsk conferences of noblemen were convened, and in other places up to 200 similar unions appeared with the aim of obtaining rights for the non-Catholics of Poland. In her turn Russia, in order to support these demands, moved her army into Poland. Relying on it, the Russian ambassador in Poland Repin demanded a review of the question of the dissidents at the new Sejm in 1767. When at this Sejm the Catholic bishops Soltyk, Zalusky and some others continued to resist any concessions in favour of the dissidents, Repin arrested them and the Sejm agreed upon some important concessions: everything published against the dissidents was rescinded, complete freedom of faith and Divine services was proclaimed, they were given the right to build churches and schools, convene councils, take part in Sejms and in the Senate, educate children born from mixed marriages in the faith of their parents – sons in the faith of their fathers and daughters in the faith of their mothers, and forcible conversions to the unia were forbidden. These decrees were confirmed by a treaty between Russia and Poland in 1768. It was then decided that the Belorussian see should remain forever in the power of the Orthodox together with all the monasteries, churches and church properties, while the monasteries and churches that had been incorrectly taken from them were to be returned. For this a special mixed commission of Catholics and dissidents – the latter led by George Konissky – was appointed. In these circumstances the movement among the uniates that had begun before was renewed with fresh force. Most of them – sometimes in whole parishes – declared their desire to return to Orthodoxy; these
declarations were addressed to George Konissky, presented to Repin and written down in official books; even the uniate bishops turned to the king with a request that they be allowed to enter into discussions concerning a reunion of the uniates with the Greco-Russian Church. But the indecisiveness of the Polish and Russian governments hindered the realization of these desires. Comparatively few parishes succeeded in returning to Orthodoxy, and then the matter of their reunion was stopped for a time. Immediately the Russian army left the boundaries of Poland, the Polish fanatics again set about their customary way of behaving. Bishop Krasinsky of Kamenets went round Poland in the clothes of a pilgrim and everywhere stirred up hatred against the dissidents; the papal nuncio fanned the flames of this hatred in appeals to the clergy, and sometimes also in instructions to the people. Those who were discontented with the Sejm of 1767 convened the conference of Bar in order to deprive the dissidents of the rights that had been granted them. Again there arose a persecution of the Orthodox, who could not stand the violence. In Trans-Dnieper Ukraine, under the leadership of the zaporozhets Maxim Zhelezniak, a popular uprising known as the Koliivschina began. The anger of the rebels was vented most of all on the landowners, the Jews, the Catholic priests and the uniate priests. They were all mercilessly beaten up, their homes were burned down, their property was looted; even the whole of the small town of Uman was ravaged. The rebellion enveloped the whole western region. The Polish government was not able to cope with it. The Russian armies under Krechetnikov came to its aid. The revolt was put down. But unfortunately, Krechetnikov and Repin, listening to the insinuations of the Poles and not seeing the true reasons for the rebellion, looked on it as an exclusively anti-state peasants’ rebellion, and so they themselves helped in destroying that which stood for Orthodoxy and Russian nationality in the Ukraine. Gervasius and Melchizedek, being suspected of rebellion, were retired; the Orthodox people, being accused of stirring up the people, had to hide in order to avoid punishment. The uniate priests took possession of many Orthodox parishes; in many places the Orthodox were forced to appeal with requests to perform needs to parishless priests coming from Moldavia and Wallachia. Fortunately, in 1772 there came the first division of Poland, in accordance with which Belorussia with its population of 1,360,000 was united with Russia. At this the Polish government was obliged to take measures to pacify the Orthodox who remained in their power, but in actual fact nothing was done. A new woe was then added to the already difficult position of the Orthodox: With the union of Belorussia with Russia not one Orthodox bishop was left within the confines of Poland, and for ordinations the Orthodox were forced to turn to Russia or Wallachia. Only in 1785 did the Russian government, with the agreement of the Polish king, appoint a special bishop for them, Victor Sadkovsky, with the title of Bishop of Pereyaslav and vicar of Kiev, with a salary and place of residence in Slutsk monastery. But when, with his arrival, another movement in favour of Orthodoxy arose among the Ukrainian uniates, the Poles were disturbed. Rumours spread that another Koliivschina was being prepared and that the clergy were inciting the people to rebel. Whatever Victor did to quash these rumours, they continued to grow. They began to say that arms for a planned beating up of the Catholics and
uniates were being stored in the hierarchical house and in the monasteries. In accordance with an order of the Sejm, Victor was seized and taken in fetters to Warsaw, where he was thrown into an arms depot (1789); some Orthodox priests were subjected to the same treatment; many were forced to save themselves by fleeing to Russia. The whole of the Orthodox clergy were rounded up to swear an oath of allegiance to the king. After this the thought was voiced in the Sejm of 1791 of freeing the Orthodox Church within the confines of Poland from Russian influence by making it independent of the Russian Synod and transferring it into the immediate jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Pinsk congregation, made up of representatives of the clergy and brotherhoods, did indeed work out a project for the conciliar administration of the Church. But it was not fated to be put into effect. Soon there followed, one after the other, the second (1793) and third (1795) divisions of Poland, in accordance with which Russia acquired all the ancient Russian lands with the exception of Galicia, and the Lithuanian region with a population of more than 4 million.

“With the union of Belorussia and the south-western regions to Russia there finally came to an end the age-old sufferings of the Orthodox there. At the same time there came the right opportunity for the uniates to throw off the fetters of the union that had been forcibly imposed upon them. The Belorussian Archbishop George Konissky received many declarations from uniate parishes wishing to return to Orthodoxy. Although the Russian government did not allow him to do anything about these declarations without special permission, and itself did not give permission for about 8 years, the striving of the uniates for Orthodoxy did not wane. When, finally, permission was given, up to 130,000 uniates went over to Orthodoxy. In the south-western region an energetic assistant of George Konissky in the work of uniting the uniates was Victor Sadkovsky, who had been released from prison and raised to the see of Minsk (1793). With the permission of the government, he published an appeal to the uniates of his diocese urging them to return to Orthodoxy. Soon, on the orders of the government, the same was done in the Belorussian region. Moreover, the government told local authorities to remove all obstacles that might appear in the unification of the uniates on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy and landowners, and threatened the guilty with responsibility before the law, while at the same time forbidding their forcible union. The appeals had an extraordinary success. In less than a year (from the middle of 1794 to the beginning of 1795), more than one-and-a-half million uniates had joined the Orthodox Church; the numbers of those united by the end of the reign of Catherine II came to no less than two million.”

The liberation of millions of Orthodox peasants from their Polish and Jewish persecutors, under whom they had suffered already for centuries, and the return of millions of uniates to their original faith and Church, was undoubtedly a great triumph of Orthodoxy. However, the bitter fact was that

the cost of the annexation of Poland (with help from Prussia in the west and Austria in the south) came at a very high cost – not only in terms of the thousands of people killed on both sides in the eighteenth century, but in another very important respect. For it meant the inclusion into the Russian empire of many millions of Poles and Jews who were bitterly hostile both to Russia and to the Orthodox faith, and who were to cause continual civil strife in the western territories right up to the First World War.

As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes, “from the point of view of the interests of Great Russia, it was necessary to pacify Poland, but not seize the age-old Polish and purely Lithuanian lands. This wrong attitude of Russia to the neighbouring peoples then became a ‘mine’ which later more than once exploded with bad consequences for Russia…”

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500 Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 232.
71. CATHERINE AND THE JEWS

On Catherine’s accession to the throne, as De Madariaga writes, “there were very few Jews in Russia, where settlement had not been allowed in Muscovite days. But Jews had settled in Polish Ukraine, and a few communities in Little Russia had survived the ferocious pogroms carried out by Bogdan Khmel’nitsky’s Cossacks in the seventeenth century. A few Polish Jewish prisoners of war had settled in Russia proper and their presence was winked at, but Jews were not allowed into Moscow. Catherine I issued an ukaz in 1727 ordering the expulsion of all Jews from Russia and Little Russia – a law which was not implemented since Jews were far too necessary to the Little Russian economy. Eighteenth-century religious intolerance reached its zenith when a Jew was convicted in 1738 of having converted a naval officer to Judaism. Both were burnt alive on 15 July 1738 in St. Petersburg. A more effective edict of expulsion was dictated by Elizabeth in 1742, and by her order the distinguished Sephardi court physician, Antonio Nunes Ribeiro Sanches, was forbidden to return to his post in Russia and deprived of his honorary membership of the Academy of Sciences.

“Four or five days after her accession Catherine attended a routine session of the Senate, to find on the agenda a proposal dating from Peter III’s days to admit Jews to settle in Russia. The empress doubted the wisdom of beginning her reign with a measure marking such a deviation from her proclaimed intention of defending the Orthodox faith. She was rescued from her predicament by a senator who proposed examining Elizabeth’s decision on a previous project of the same kind. On reading the empress’s words: ‘I wish to derive no benefit from the enemies of Jesus Christ’, Catherine was emboldened to postpone the question. The manifesto inviting foreigners to settle in Russia, issued on 4 December 1762 explicitly excluded Jews...”

According to Lebedev, she “was convinced that it was impossible to forbid the entrance of the Jews into Russia, it was necessary to let them in. But she considered it dangerous to do this at the very beginning of her reign, since she understood that she had to deal with the Russian people, ‘a religious people’, who saw in her ‘the defender of the Orthodox Faith’, and that the clergy were extremely upset by Peter III’s order on the expropriation of the Church’s landholdings. Moreover, she had been shown the resolution of Elizabeth Petrovna on the entrance of the Jews...”

However, the successive partitions of Poland forced her to look at the question again; for through them the Russian empire acquired, according to one estimate, as many as a million Jews, according to another - 1.36 million.

501 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 504.

266
Administering this vast new population and territory with its mixed population of Russians, Poles and Jews would have been a major problem for any State. In this case, when the newly subject populations were fanatically anti-Russian and anti-Orthodox, the problem was still greater. As the worried empress wrote: “what seemed a child’s game is becoming a most serious matter. The Russian state has bumped into the most numerous Jewish masses in Europe”. The problem was made still worse by the fact the Jewish population constituted a “State within the State”, being governed by its rabbis and kahals. It was they who indoctrinated their people into the anti-Christian world-view of the Talmud, which in Russia, as in Byzantium and so many other Christian states, made cooperation between the Christian state and the Jewish population so difficult.

The problem of the kahal could not be ducked. The authorities had a responsibility both to the Russian peasants who were exploited by it economically and to those ordinary Jews who suffered from its despotism. Nevertheless, Catherine, - influenced, no doubt, by the Toleranzpatent (1782) of her fellow “enlightened despot”, Joseph II of Austria – at first tried to duck it by adopting the easier expedient of acting like a liberal… Hence her ukaz of May 7, 1786 proclaiming equality for the Jews, which has been called “the first official statement of the civil equality of the Jews in Europe”.

Solzhenitsyn writes: “When the Jews passed under the authority of the Russian State, the whole of this internal system in which the kahal hierarchy was interested was preserved. And, as Yu. I. Hessen presupposes with that irritation that by the middle of the 19th century had grown among enlightened Jews against the ossified Talmudist tradition, ‘the representatives of Jewry’s ruling class did all they could to convince the [Russian] government of the necessity of keeping the age-old institution in being, since it corresponded to the interests both of the Russian authorities and of the Jewish ruling class’; ‘the kahal together with the rabbinate possessed the fullness of power, and not infrequently abused this power, stealing public resources, trampling on the rights of poor people, incorrectly imposing taxes and taking revenge on personal enemies’. At the end of the 18th century one of the governors of the region joined to Russia wrote in a report: ‘the rabbi, the spiritual court and the kahal, “yoked together by close bonds, and having in their power and disposing even of the very conscience of the Jews, lords it over them on their own, without any reference to the civil authorities”’.

“And when, in the 18th century, there developed in Jewry the powerful religious movement of the Hassidim, on the one hand, and on the other, the enlightenment movement of Moses Mendelssohn towards secular education, the kahals energetically suppressed both the one and the other. In 1781 the Vilnius rabbinate declared kherem [anathema] on the Hassidim, and in 1784 a
congress of rabbis in Mogilev declared the Hassidim to be ‘outside the law’ and their property ‘escheated’. After this the common people in some towns destroyed the houses of the Hassidim, that is, they caused an intra-Jewish pogrom. The Hassidim were persecuted in the most cruel and dishonourable way, they were not even spared false political denunciations against them to the Russian authorities. However, in 1799, on the denunciation of the Hassidim, the authorities arrested the members of the Vilnius kahal for expropriating taxes they had collected. Hassidism continued to spread, in some provinces with particular success. The rabbinate delivered the books of the Hassidim to public burning, while the Hassidim spoke out as defenders of the people against the abuses of the kahals. ‘At that time the religious struggle put into the shade, as it would seem, the other questions of Jewish life.’

“The part of Belorussia united to Russia in 1772 was constituted by the Polotsk (later the Vitebsk) and Mogilev provinces. It was declared to them in the name of Catherine that the inhabitants of this region ‘whatever race or calling they might be’ would from now on [retain] the right publicly to practise their faith and possess private property’. Moreover, they would be given ‘all those rights, freedoms and privileges that her subjects enjoyed of old’. 506

“Thus the Jews were made equal in rights with the Christians - they had been deprived of this in Poland. Moreover, a special addition was made concerning the Jews, that their communities ‘would be left and preserved with all those freedoms that they now... enjoy’ – that is, nothing would be taken from what they enjoyed in Poland. True, the power of the kahals was thereby preserved, and the Jews through their kahal organization still remained cut off from the rest of the population, and did not yet enter directly into that mercantile-industrial estate that corresponded to their main occupations.

“At first Catherine was wary both of the hostile reaction of the Polish nobility, which had lost power, and of the unpleasant impression [her decree] produced on her Orthodox subjects…”

“But,” continues Solzhenitsyn, “being sympathetic towards the Jews and expecting from them economic benefit for the country, Catherine was preparing for them still greater rights. Already in 1778 there was extended to the Belorussian region the recent measure that applied to the whole of Russia: those who possessed capital up to 500 roubles from now on constituted the estate of the town-dwellers [meschane], and those who had more – the estate of the merchants [kuptsy], the three guilds, in accordance with their wealth,
and were freed from poll tax, and would pay 1% from the capital that they had ‘declared in accordance with conscience’.

“This decree had a special, great significance: it destroyed the national isolation of the Jews that had prevailed to that time (Catherine wanted to destroy it). It also undermined the traditional Polish view of the Jews as a non-State element. It also undermined the kahal structure, and the coercive power of the kahal. ‘From this moment there begins the process of the introduction of the Jews into the Russian State organism… The Jews widely used the right of registering among the merchants’ – so that, for example, in Mogilev province 10% of the Jewish population were declared to be merchants (and of the Christians – only 5.5%). The Jewish merchants were now freed from paying taxes to the kahal and were no longer obliged, in particular, to seek permission from the kahal for every trip, as before: they now had to deal only with the common magistrate, on common terms. (In 1780 the Jews of Mogilev and Shklov met Catherine with odes.)

“With the departure of the Jewish merchants the State rubric ‘Jew’ also ceased to exist. All the rest of the Jews now had to be categorized in some estate, and it was evident that they could be categorized only as town-dwellers. But at first there were few who wanted to transfer, because the annual poll tax from town-dwellers at that time was 60 kopecks, while from the Jews it was 50 kopecks. However, no other path remained to them. And from 1783 the Jewish town-dwellers, like the Jewish merchants, had to pay their taxes, not to the kahal, but to the magistrate, on common terms, and receive a passport for a journey from him, too.

“This movement was strengthened by a general municipal decree of 1785, which envisaged only estates, and by no means nations. According to this decree, all the town-dwellers [and therefore all the Jews) received the right to participate in local administration according to estates and to take up public posts. ‘According to the conditions of that time, this meant that the Jews became citizens with equal rights… Entering the merchant and town-dweller classes in the capacity of members with equal rights was an event of major social significance’, and was meant to turn the Jews into ‘a social force of which it was impossible not to take account, thereby raising their moral self-esteem’. This also alleviated the practical task of defending their vital interests. ‘At that time the mercantile-industrial class, as also the municipal societies, enjoyed broad self-rule… Thus into the hands of the Jews, on an equal basis with the Christians, was handed considerable administrative and judicial power, thanks to which the Jewish population acquired strength and significance in social-state life.’ There were now burgomeisters and ratmans and judges from the Jews. At first in the major towns a limitation was applied: that there should be no more Jews than Christians in elected posts. However, in 1786 ‘Catherine sent the Belorussian governor-general an order signed in his own hand’: that equal rights for the Jews ‘in municipal-estate self-rule...
should “unfailingly and without any delay be brought into effect”, while non-
fulfillers of the decree “would be punished by law”.507

“Let us note that in this way the Jews received civil equality of rights not
only in distinction from Poland, but earlier than in France or the German
lands. (Under Frederick II there was a very powerful oppression of the Jews.)
And, which is still more significant: the Jews in Russia from the beginning
had that personal freedom which the Russian peasants were not to have for a
further 80 years. And paradoxically: the Jews received even greater freedom
than the Russian merchants and town-dwellers: the latter lived unfailingly in
the towns, while the Jewish population, not following their example, ‘could
live in the uyezd settlements, occupied, particularly, in the wine trade’.
‘Although the Jews lived in large numbers not only in the towns, but also in
the villages, they were registered in the municipal societies… included into
the estates of the merchants and town-dwellers’. ‘By reason of the nature of
their activity, surrounded by unfree peasantry, they played an important
economic role – the [village] trade was concentrated in their hands, they
leased various sections of the landowners’ sources of income, and sold vodka
in the taverns’ – and thereby ‘assisted in the spread of drunkenness’. The
Belorussian administration pointed out that ‘the presence of Jews in the
villages has a harmful effect on the economic and moral condition of the
peasant population, since the Jews… develop drunkenness among the local
population’. ‘In the reports of the local administration, mention was made,
incidentally, that the Jews led the peasants into drunkenness, idleness and
poverty by giving them vodka on credit…’ But ‘the wine industry was a
tempting source of income’ – both for the Polish landowners and for the
Jewish middlemen.

“It is natural that the civil gift received by the Jews could not fail to bring
with it a reverse threat: it was evident that the Jews had to submit to the
common rule, stop the wine trade in the villages and leave them. In 1783 it
was published that ‘a direct rule obliges each citizen to determine his trade
and craft, a decent wage, and not wine distilling, as being an industry not
appropriate for him”, and if a landowner permits the distilling of vodka in the
village “to a merchant, a town-dweller or Jew”, then he will be considered a

507 “In 1785 and again in 1795 (on the occasion of the Third Partition),” writes Vital, “the
principle that Jewish town-dwellers and merchants were entitled to treatment on an equal
footing with all other town-dwellers and merchants was authoritatively restated. Allowance
was made for Jews of the appropriate class to serve as electors to municipal office and to be
elected themselves. But precisely what social class or classes Jews should be permitted to
belong to was (and would remain) a vexed question. Clearly, they were not peasants
(krestyaniny). They were certainly not serfs (krepostnye). They were not of the gentry
(dvoriansvo). They might be merchants (kuptsy), but membership of the guilds of
merchants, especially the higher guilds, was a costly affair and few Jews were of the requisite
wealth and standing to join them; and, in any event, such membership entailed rights to
which the ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ people (korennoe naselenie), namely the ethnic Russian
(and of course the Polish) merchants, objected. That left the class of town-dwellers
(meshchansvo); but the fact was that the great majority of the Jews of Russia and Poland at
this time were not town-dwellers…” (Vital, op. cit., pp. 84-85). (V.M.)
breaker of the law’. And then: ‘they began to thrust the Jews out of the villages and into the towns, so as to distract them from their age-old pursuits… the leasing of wine distilleries and taverns’.

“It goes without saying that for the Jews the threat of being thrown out of the villages looked, not like a State tidying-up measure, but like a special measure against their national-confessional group. In being clearly deprived of such a profitable industry in the villages, and being moved to the town, the Jewish town-dwellers fell into a thick net of intra-municipal and intra-Jewish competition. The Jews became very upset, and in 1784 a deputation from the kahals to St. Petersburg to lobby for the rescinding of this measure. (At the same time the kahals calculated: with the help of the government they would get back the fullness of the power over the Jewish population that they had lost.) But the reply in the name of the empress was: ‘Since the people of the Jewish confession have already entered into a condition equal with others, it behoves them in all cases to observe the rule established by Her Majesty that everyone in accordance with his calling and condition should enjoy the benefits and rights without distinction of confession or nation.’

“However, she had to take account of the concentrated strength of the highly involved Polish landowners. Although in 1783 the administration of the Belorussian region had forbidden them from farming out or leasing the wine distilleries ‘to people who do not have the right to it, “especially the Jews”,... the landowners continued to farm out the wine distilleries to the Jews. This was their right’, the well-established heritage of age-old Polish customs.

“And the Senate did not dare to compel the landowners. And in 1786 it rescinded the transfer of the Jews to the towns. For this the following compromise was worked out: let the Jews be considered as having been moved to the towns, but retain their right to temporary absence in the countryside. That is, let them remain in the village, wherever they lived. The Senate’s decree of 1786 allowed the Jews to live in the villages, and ‘the landowners were allowed to farm out the production and sale of spirits to the Jews, while the Christian merchants and town-dwellers did not receive these rights.’

“Moreover, the lobbying of the kahal delegation to St. Petersburg did not remain completely without success. It did not obtain what it asked for, the establishment of separate Jewish courts for all law-suits between Jews, but (1786) the kahals were given back a significant part of the administrative rights and oversight over the Jewish town-dwellers, that is, the majority of the Jewish population: the apportionment not only of public duties, but also the collection of the poll-tax, and once again the regulation of the right of absence from the community. That meant that the government saw its own practical interest in not weakening the power of the kahal.
“In general throughout Russia the whole of the mercantile-industrial estate (merchants and town-dwellers) did not enjoy freedom of movement and was tied to the place of its registration (so that by their departure they not lower the capacity of pay of their municipal societies). But for Belorussia in 1782 the Senate made an exception: the merchants could go from town to town ‘in accordance with the convenience of their commerce’. This rule again gave the advantage to the Jewish merchants.

“However, they began to use this right more broadly than it had been defined: ‘the Jewish merchants began to be registered in Moscow and Smolensk’. ‘The Jews began to settle in Moscow soon after the reunion of the Belorussian region in 1772… At the end of the 18th century there was a significant number of Jews in Moscow… Some Jews, having registered among the local merchants, started to trade on a large scale… But other Jews sold foreign goods in their flats or coaching inns, and also by delivering to houses, which at that time was completely forbidden.’

“And in 1790 ‘the Moscow society of merchants made a judgement’ that in Moscow there had appeared from abroad and from Belorussia ‘a very large number of Jews’, some of whom had registered straight into the Moscow merchants and were using forbidden methods of trading, by which they were causing that trade ‘very significant harm and disturbance’, while the cheapness of their goods indicated that they were contraband. Moreover, ‘the Jews, as is well-known, clip coins; it is possible that they will do this also in Moscow’. And in response to ‘their cunning schemes’ the Moscow merchants demanded the removal of the Jewish merchants from Moscow. But the Jewish merchants in their turn presented ‘a complaint… that they were no longer being received among the Moscow and Smolensk merchants’.

“The ‘Council of the Empress’ reviewed the complaints. In accordance with the unified Russian law it found that the Jews did not have the right ‘to be registered into the Russian mercantile towns and ports’, but only in Belorussia. They said that ‘‘no benefit is foreseen’ from allowing the Jews into Moscow’. And in December, 1791 an imperial decree was issued ‘on not allowing the Jews to be registered in the inner provinces’, while they could go to Moscow ‘only for definite periods on business’. The Jews could enjoy the rights of the merchants and town-dwellers in Belorussia. But Catherine added a softener: the Jews were given the right to live and be registered as town-dwellers also in newly-acquired New Russia – in the governor-generalship of Yekaterinoslav and in the province of Tauris (soon this would be the Yekaterinoslav, Tauris and Kherson provinces). That is, she opened to the Jews new and extensive provinces into which Christian merchants and town-dwellers, in accordance with the general rule, were not allowed to settle from the inner provinces…

“The pre-revolutionary Jewish Encyclopaedia writes: by the decree of 1791 ‘a beginning was made to the Pale of Settlement, although unintentionally. Under the conditions of the general structure of society and the State at that
time, and of Jewish life in particular, the government could not have had in mind to create for the Jews a special oppressive situation, or of introducing exclusive laws for them, in the sense of limiting their rights of residence. According to the circumstances of that time, this decree did not contain in itself anything that could put the Jews in this respect in a less favourable position by comparison with the Christians... The decree of 1791 did not introduce any limitation in the rights of the Jews in respect of residence, it did not create a special ‘pale’, and even ‘before the Jews were opened new provinces into which according to the general rule it was not allowed to move’; ‘the centre of gravity of the decree of 1791 did not lie in the fact that they were Jews, but in the fact that they were trading people; the question was viewed not from a national or religious point of view, but only from the point of view of usefulness’.

“And so this decree of 1791, which was even advantageous for Jewish by comparison with Christian merchants, with the years was turned into the basis of the future ‘Pale of Settlement’, which lay like a dark shadow on the existence of the Jews in Russia almost to the revolution itself...”

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However, there was a last twist to Catherine’s Jewish policy. De Madariaga writes: “With the second and third partitions of Poland, new areas with substantial populations were annexed by Russia (the gubernii of Volynia and Podolia in 1793, the gubernii of Vilna and Grodno in 1795). In general the same civil and religious rights were extended to these Jews as in Belorussia. But in 1794 Catherine inaugurated a major departure from previous Russian policy. An ukaz of 23 June 1794 decreed that the Jewish population should pay double the tax paid by the Christian members of the corresponding estate. At the same time the area of authorized Jewish settlement was widened to include the three guberniya of Little Russia (Kiev, Chernigov and Novgorod Seversk).

“Various explanations of the decree of 1794 have been put forward. Did it represent a beginning of government anti-semitism? Was it a purely revenue raising measure during a financial crisis designed to offset Jewish exemption from the recruit levy? Did it represent fear of the Jews as carriers of the seditious ideas of the French Revolution? Or did it respond to the desire of the government to move people from the more densely populated western borders to the lightly settled southern lands acquired from the Porte at the peace of Jassy? For those who emigrated escaped all taxation for a while, and in the long run contributed to the development of one of the great cities of Russian Jewry, Odessa...”

508 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., pp. 35-42.
509 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 508.
The hypothesis of fear of the Jews as carriers of the seditious ideas of the French Revolution is likely to be at least part of the explanation. For the role of the Jews in that revolution was well known – they had been emancipated just before the Terror began, and the link between Jewry and the revolution became stronger and clearer throughout the following century. Therefore once the decision had been taken – precisely in order to stop the spread of the revolutionary contagion\textsuperscript{510} – to annex Poland rather than simply control it, it was inevitable that a stricter attitude would have to be taken to the Polish Jews also.

And yet, as Bakhanov writes, “there were quite a few people in Russia who did not consider the decision on endless territorial expansion as correct; but nobody dared to contradict the will of Catherine II. Only one man was found who cast doubt on the chosen expansionist course. He was the Tsarevich Paul. In 1774 he presented a note to Catherine – ‘Meditations on the state in general, on the number of soldiers required to defend it, and the defence of all its borders’. The twenty-year-old young man actually formulated a military-state doctrine that after his enthronement would become the basic principle of imperial politics.

“Its essence boiled down to three important points. First, Russia should not conduct offensive wars, but only defensive ones. Secondly, Russia should not expand her borders and should reject territorial expansion. Thirdly, the army should be cut down, but reorganized on the basis of strict reglamentation, thanks to which it would be possible to obtain significant economies in state expenditures.

“Catherine did not simply ignore the suggestions offered by her son, but she angrily rejected them, considering them to be ‘the stupidity of a stupid man’...”\textsuperscript{511}

And yet this supposedly stupid man was the rightful ruler of Russia, who, when permitted to inherit the throne on his mother’s death, showed that he was indeed wise, being the man chosen by Divine Providence to begin the return of Russian statehood to true Autocracy...

\textsuperscript{510} As De Madariaga writes, “with the passage of time the dangers of ‘Jacobinism’ became ever clearer to the Russians. The ‘seed’ had struck such deep root that it was impossible for governments, anxious to prevent the established order from being overturned by ‘absurd equality and transient freedom’, to allow a Polish government to subsist. Past experience showed that it was impossible to make friends of the Poles” (op. cit., p. 448).

\textsuperscript{511} Bakhanov, op. cit., pp. 74-75.
De Madriaga perceptively notes that Catherine, “set herself the task of continuing [Peter the Great’s] policies but by diametrically opposite means. Thus where Peter indiscriminately imported the form and the substance of European thought and customs, Catherine neglected the form and went for the substance. Where Peter denigrated Russia in the interests of westernization, Catherine, the foreigner, extolled the native virtues of Russia and Russians, and imbued them with a high sense of their equality with, if not their superiority over, Western Europe. Where Peter used terror, Catherine used persuasion.”

Indeed, it was in her softening of the excessively harsh life and attitudes of Peter’s reign by what she saw as the best products of western thought and practice that she earned the title of an “enlightened despot” together with her contemporaries Frederick of Prussia and Joseph of Austria. Of course, however “enlightened” she may have been, she remained a despot, retaining an iron fist within her feminine velvet glove. And one of the main criticisms of her reign was that while not surrendering any of her own power as despot, she did not radically change the despotism wielded by the nobles over the serfs, and even extended the serfdom system into the Ukraine. However, she tried hard to alleviate the lot of the serfs, whose life, though hard, was probably no harder than that of the English peasants and easier than that of the French. She truly abhorred torture, and even managed to see that the greatest rebel of her reign, Pugachev, was executed before he could be tortured.

Moreover, as De Madariaga points out, there were strong reasons why she did not meddle with the basic hierarchical structure of society. “Thus it was not fear of the nobility which prevented Catherine from intervening decisively in the vexed field of serfdom. It was rather the conviction, particularly deeply rammed home by the Pugachev revolt, that the time was not yet ripe to tackle a problem so closely linked with public order, finance and military strength. Russia was not yet rich enough, nor well-governed enough, there was indeed not enough government throughout the country, to enable it to cope with the massive social upheaval implicit in a change in the status of the serfs... Yet where Catherine could narrow down the range of those entitled to own serfs, reduce the ways by which people were enserfed, and increase the security of those who had been freed, she did so. The empress’s remark to the Baltic official, Dahl, comes to mind: ‘Wherever you touch [the peasant question], it does not yield.”

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512 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 581.
513 De Madariaga, op. cit., ch. 35.
514 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 267.
515 De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 585.
It did not yield, above all, because the nobility would not yield; and since the nobility provided the whole of the administration of the country, as well as all the military officers, she could not afford, and would not have been able to, change the system – Catherine’s reign was indeed the heyday of the Russian nobility.

But the nobility was changing… It could not failed to be touched by the western ideas which were now penetrating the country in many ways and – until the very last years of Catherine’s reign – in relatively uncensored forms. One of the most important channels of westernization was Freemasonry. In Catherine’s reign there were about 2500 Masons in about 100 lodges in St. Petersburg, Moscow and some provincial towns. “By the middle of the 1780s,” writes Dobroklonsky, Masonry “had even penetrated as far as Tobolsk and Irkutsk; Masonic lodges existed in all the more or less important towns. Many of those who were not satisfied by the fashionable scepticism of French philosophy or, after being drawn by it, became disillusioned by it, sought satisfaction for their heart and mind in Masonry”.

Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: “The freemasons of Catherine’s reign maintained an ambivalent relationship with the Church. In any event, the formal piety of freemasonry was not openly disruptive. Many freemasons fulfilled all church ‘obligations’ and rituals. Others emphatically insisted on the complete immutability and sacredness of the rites and orders ‘particularly of the Greek religion’. However, the Orthodox service, with its wealth and plasticity of images and symbols, greatly attracted them. Freemasons highly valued Orthodoxy’s tradition of symbols whose roots reach back deeply into classical antiquity. But every symbol was for them only a transparent sign or guidepost. One must ascend to that which is being signified, that is, from the visible to the invisible, from ‘historical’ Christianity to spiritual or ‘true’ Christianity, from the outer church to the ‘inner’ church. The freemasons considered their Order to be the ‘inner’ church, containing its own rites and ‘sacraments’. This is once again the Alexandrian [Gnostic] dream of an esoteric circle of chosen ones who are dedicated to preserving sacred traditions: a truth revealed only to a few chosen for extraordinary illumination.”

“Who became freemasons?” asks Janet Hartley. “The Russian historian Vernadsky estimated that in 1777 4 of the 11-member Council of State, 11 of the 31 gentlemen of the bedchamber, 2 of the 5 senators of the first department of the Senate, 2 of the 5 members of the College of Foreign Affairs and the vice-president of the Admiralty College were masons (there were none known at this date in the War College). A large number of the noble deputies in the Legislative Commission were masons. Members of the high aristocracy and prominent figures at court were attracted to freemasonry,

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516 Riasanovsky, op. cit.
517 Dobroklonsky, op. cit., p. 664.
518 Florovsky, op. cit., pp. 155-156.
including the Repnins, Trubetskois, Vorontsovs and Panins. Special lodges attracted army officers (like the Mars lodge, founded at Iasi in Bessarabia in 1774) and naval officers (like the Neptune lodge, founded in 1781 in Kronstadt). There were masons amongst the governors of provinces established after 1775 (including A.P. Mel’gunov in Yaroslavl’ and J.E. Sievers in Tver’), and amongst senior officials in central and provincial institutions. Almost all Russian poets, playwrights, authors and academics were masons. Other lodges had a predominantly foreign membership, which included academics, members of professions, bankers and merchants....

“Catherine II had little sympathy for the mystical elements of freemasonry and their educational work and feared that lodges could become venues for conspiracies against the throne. In the 1790s, at a time of international tension following the French Revolution, Catherine became more suspicious of freemasonry, following rumours that Grand Duke Paul... was being induced to join a Moscow lodge. In 1792 (shortly after the assassination of Gustavus III of Sweden), [the publisher N.I.] Novikov’s house was searched and Masonic books were found which had been banned as harmful in 1786. Novikov was arrested and sentenced, without any formal trial, to fifteen years imprisonment, though he was freed when Paul came to the throne in 1796. In 1794, Catherine ordered the closure of all lodges.”

Catherine was not wrong to suspect that Masons were aiming to overthrow her. Already in 1781, in Frankfurt, the Illuminati “had decided to create in Russia two capitularies ‘of the theoretical degree’ under the general direction of Schwartz. One of the capitularies was ruled by Tatischev, and the other by Prince Trubetskoj. At a convention of the Mason-Illuminati in 1782 Russia was declared to be ‘the Eighth Province of the Strict Observance’. It was here that the Masons swore to murder Louis XVI and his wife and the Swedish King Gustavus III, which sentences were later carried out [in 1792]. In those 80s of the 18th century Masonry had decreed that it should strive to destroy the monarchy and the Church, beginning with France and continuing with Russia. But openly, ‘for the public’, and those accepted into the lower degrees, the Masons said that they were striving to end enmity between people and nations because of religious and national quarrels, that they believed in God, that they carried out charitable work and wanted to educate humanity in the principles of morality and goodness, that they were the faithful citizens of their countries and kings...”

However, Russia did not follow the path of France at this time because eighteenth-century Russian Masonry, unlike its contemporary French counterpart, was not very radical in its politics. Thus Novikov, according to Pipes, must be classified as “a political conservative because of his determination to work ‘within the system’, as one would put it today. A

520 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 243.
freemason and a follower of Saint-Martin, he thought all evil stemmed from man’s corruption, not from institutions under which he lived. He mercilessly exposed ‘vice’ and promoted with such enthusiasm useful knowledge because of the conviction that only by improving man could one improve mankind. He never questioned the autocratic form of government or even serfdom. This stress on man rather than the environment became a hallmark of Russian conservatism.”

Another conservative Mason was Prince Michael Shcherbatov, who represented the extreme right wing of the aristocratic opposition to Catherine. He was a monarchist who believed in the close alliance of tsar and aristocrats, and opposed all concessions to the peasantry or the merchants. He believed that Russia’s traditional autocracy had been replaced by despotism under Peter, who treated the aristocrats brutally and opened the way for widespread “voluptuousness” in Russian life.

If Shcherbatov represented a nobleman pining nostalgically for the non-despotic orderliness of pre-Petrine Russia, Count Nikita Panin and Alexander Radishchev represented a more radical, forward-looking element in the aristocracy. Panin and his brother had already, as we have seen, taken part in the coup against Peter III which brought Catherine to the throne. But when Catherine refused to adopt Nikita’s plan for a reduction in the powers of the autocrat and an extension of the powers of the aristocratic Senate, they plotted to overthrow her, too. Their plot was discovered; but Catherine pardoned them… Nothing daunted, Nikita wrote a Discourse on the Disappearance in Russia of All Forms of Government, intended for his pupil, Crown Prince Paul, in which he declared: “Where the arbitrary rule of one man is the highest law, there can be no lasting or unifying bonds; there is a state, but no fatherland; there are subjects, but no citizens; there is no body politic whose members are linked to each other by a network of duties and privileges.”

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With Alexander Radishchev, we come to the first real intelligent in the nineteenth-century understanding of the word – that is, an intellectual openly criticizing the autocracy from a liberal, westernizing point of view. His Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow (1790), writes Pipes, “exposed the seamier sides of Russian provincial life… [He] drank deeply at the source of the French Enlightenment, showing a marked preference for its more extreme materialist wing (Helvétius and d’Holbach).”

“Modelled in outward form on Sterne’s Sentimental Journey, Radishchev’s book expresses in the language of sensibility a passionate critique of the evils man inflicts on man, including serfdom, and an equally passionate belief in

521 Pipes, op. cit., p. 258.
522 Walicki, op. cit., p. 33.
523 Pipes, op. cit., p. 258.
the ability of man to find within himself the means – truth, justice – to achieve reform. In episodes arising at each staging post he describes the inhumanity of the recruit levy, the abuse of serf labour, the defenceless state of serf women belonging to lecherous landlords, the verdicts of corrupt judges and the sufferings of honest ones. He uses the technique of the ‘bundle of papers found by accident’ to produce a plan for the emancipation of the serfs, preceded by a devastating indictment of slavery in general and Russian serfdom in particular. He issued the warning: ‘Do you now know… what destruction threatens us and in what peril we stand?’ And he went on to stress that the serfs, driven desperate by oppression, and with no glimmer of hope for the future, were merely waiting their chance to revolt. Then ‘the destructive force of bestiality’ would break loose, ‘round about us we shall see sword and prison. Death and fiery desolation will be the meed for our harshness and inhumanity.’ Radishchev openly referred to the horrors of the Pugachev revolt, in which the serfs ‘had spared neither sex nor age’ and ‘had sought more the joy of vengeance than the benefit of broken shackles’. The danger was mounting, he warned, and the serfs would respond to the appeal of the first demagogue… Realizing that ‘the supreme power was not strong enough to cope with a sudden change of opinions’, Radishchev proposed a gradual emancipation of the serfs. All domestic serfdom should be abolished at once, but peasants should first be granted full ownership of their private plots and then be allowed to buy their freedom for a fixed sum. Other targets of Radishchev’s criticism were ranks awarded merely for court service, and censorship, even of pornography: let venal girls be censored, but not the productions of the mind, however dissolute, since no book has ever infected one with venereal disease.

“Radishchev submitted his book anonymously to the chief of police of St. Petersburg in charge of censorship, who took it, after a cursory glance, to be no more than a travelogue à la Sterne, approved it, and returned it to the customs office, whence it had been submitted. Radischev took the opportunity to add a few more passages, including a reference to the French Revolution, before printing and distributing it.

“Catherine read the ‘Journey’ in June 1790, when she was already beginning to exercise a secret quarantine against possible French contagion. In April 1790, orders had been issued to guard against the machinations of a club set up in Paris to organize foreign propaganda. The police were told to keep a discreet watch on its possible activities in Russia and to forbid all secret meetings and conventicles of Masonic lodges and other such ‘concealed and absurd gatherings’. Catherine’s views on Radishchev’s ‘Journey’ can be followed in her secretary’s diary and above all in her own marginal notes on her copy of the book.

“The empress commented adversely on Radishchev’s criticism of landowners and on his emotional portrayal of the condition of the serfs, which she utterly rejected since, in common with many Russians, including e.g. Fonvizin, she sincerely believed that ‘the Russian peasants under good
masters were better off than anywhere in the world’. She secretly noted Radishchev’s proposals for emancipation, but was outraged by his warning of the impending revenge of the serfs. She saw in him a man worse than Pugachev (whom Radishchev had condemned), inciting the peasants to bloody rebellion. Not only peasants, but the people in general were being roused to disregard the authority of rulers, tsars, emperors, magnates and officials, noted Catherine, and Radishchev was comparing himself to Franklin as ‘the inciter to rebellion’. Here Catherine detected the ‘French poison’ with which Radishchev was infected and which manifested itself even more clearly in several stanzas of an Ode to Liberty which he had included in the ‘Journey’. The poem was originally written in 1781-3, with reference to the American Revolution, and contained lengthy tirades against the despotism of priests and kings. Radishchev calls on the spirits of Brutus and William Tell, and praises Cromwell by whom the ‘king was brought to the block’. But Cromwell also incurs the writer’s condemnation for having seized power from Charles I, and destroyed the freedom of England. On the well-known allegorical scene of the dream, in which a blind ruler is portrayed sitting in glory, surrounded by sycophantic courtiers, and is suddenly enabled to see by the pilgrim Truth the dreadful reality, the poverty and corruption, the horrors of war, where the commander-in-chief, instead of fighting, ‘wallow in luxury and pleasure’, Catherine merely remarked: ‘The author is maliciously inclined.’ It was not therefore this particularly savage denunciation of her own government and of Potemkin which aroused her anger, it was the effort to introduce French revolutionary principles into Russia: the violent overthrow of established authority and of the social order.

“It did not take long for Catherine to identify the author, and Radishchev was soon arrested and taken to the Peter and Paul fortress. He was interrogated at length by Sheshkovsky (head of the Secret Expedition of the Senate) who based many of his questions on Catherine’s marginal notes. Radishchev was not, according to all the available evidence, subjected to any physical duress let alone any form of torture, though incarceration in the grim fort was in itself a terrifying enough experience.

“Radishchev’s answers and admissions suggest that his arrest aroused him out of a dream world into the world of reality; he woke up to the unwisdom of the manner in which he had expressed himself, particularly in the heated atmosphere of the 1790s. He declared that his main object had been the winning of literary acclaim. He denied any intention of attacking the present Russian form of government, and the Statute of 1775 in particular; he intended only to point to certain practical shortcomings, as reported by public opinion. He had not intended to arouse peasants against landowners; he had only wished to force bad landowners to be ashamed of their cruelty. He admitted that he hoped for the freedom of the serfs, but by means of legislate action such as that already undertaken by the empress, when she had banned the sale of serfs or the assignation of state peasants to industrial enterprises, or when she had regulated the treatment of industrial serfs, or forbidden the corporal punishment of soldiers without a court martial.
Without thus going back on the substance of what he had written, Radishchev, aware of the possible consequences to his family, did his best to minimize its consequences by admitting that his language had been exaggerated and insulting, and his accusations against government officials wild. He threw himself on Catherine’s mercy. But in spite of his appeals, he was tried by the St. Petersburg criminal court on charges of sedition and lèse majesté, and sentenced to death on 24 July 1790, a sentence which had to be passed to the Senate and the empress for confirmation. The Senate, as might be expected, confirmed the verdict on 8 August. Not until 4 September was Radishchev put out of his misery, on hearing that Catherine had commuted the death penalty, on the occasion of the peace with Sweden, to the loss of his status as a noble, and ten years’ exile in Ilimsk, a remote fort in Siberia. Roughly dragged away in chains almost at once, Radishchev’s lot was much alleviated thanks to A.R. Vorontsov. When he informed Catherine that the condemned man was in irons, she ordered them to be removed at once; and Vorontsov gave Radishchev a total of 500 rubles to equip him with adequate clothing and supplies. He was allowed to break his journey several times – he took sixteen months to reach Ilimsk – and Vorontsov gave him an annual allowance of 500, then 800, then 1000 rubles during his exile…”

We have dwelt at length on Radishchev because he represents the first truly modern, westernised Russian. His thought, his relationship with the autocracy, and even the relative gentleness of his exile in Siberia, were to be repeated many times in the nineteenth century intelligentsia – from the Decembrists to Dostoyevsky to Lenin... He was the forerunner of the revolutionaries, and the Journey has been called “the first trial balloon of revolutionary propaganda in Russia.”

The ideas of duty, of self-sacrifice, of God and immortality play no part in Radishchev’s thought. Nothing of the sacred, of the veneration due to that which is established by God, remains. Only: “The sovereign is the first citizen of the people’s commonwealth”, and: “Wherever being a citizen is not to his advantage, he is not a citizen.” Such ideas lead logically to the self-annihilation of society. In his personal case, they led to suicide...

“There are grounds for assuming,” writes Walicki, “that this act was not the result of a temporary fit of depression. Suicide had never been far from his thoughts. In the Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow he wrote: ‘If outrageous fortune hurl upon you all its slings and arrows, if there is no refuge left on earth for your virtue, if, driven to extremes, you find no sanctuary from oppression, then remember this: you are a man, call to mind your greatness and seize the crown of bliss which they are trying to take from you. Die.”

524 De Madariaga, op. cit., pp. 542-545.
526 Walicki, op. cit., p. 38.
Radischev clearly exemplifies the bitter fruits of the westernizing reforms of Peter the Great and his successors. It was this mad, proud striving for mastery of one’s life, without acknowledgement of the Master, God, that was to lead much of Europe to a kind of collective suicide in the next age. And its appearance in Orthodox Russia, leading to the shackling and poisoning of the only source of all true spiritual life, the Orthodox Church, was the result, in large part, of the westernism of Peter I and Catherine II...

And yet, as so often in history, we see that the seeds of revival were being sown in this, the nadir of Russian spiritual history. For it was in the reign of Catherine that St. Paisius Velichkovsky was laying the foundation for the revival of Russian monasticism in the nineteenth century that would produce such beautiful fruits as the elders of Optina. And it was in her reign that a young man called Seraphim entered the monastery of Sarov and from there began his ascent to the summit of spiritual perfection... For history remains the domain, not only of psychological, sociological, political and economic laws, but also of that which is in principle unpredictable - the free will of man and the grace of God...

And so, on the one hand, the results of the transformation of the Russian State in the eighteenth century from an autocracy into an absolutist state were spiritually disastrous (even if they had some good results in the secular realm). And on the other hand, while groaning beneath this western yoke, the people retained its Orthodox faith, making possible the slow, not always steady, and unfortunately incomplete, but nevertheless real return of Russia to its pre-Petrine traditions from the reign of the Emperor Paul (1796-1801) onwards. Thus while the eighteenth century represented the deepest nadir yet in Russian statehood, Russia still remained recognizably Russia, the chief bearer and defender of the true faith in God in the world...