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1. FROM MARXISM-LENINISM TO CULTURAL MARXISM

Some have seen in the recent defeat of Hilary Clinton in the American election the first significant blow to the “progress” of the juggernaut known as “Cultural Marxism” that is devastating the western world. Be that as it may, it will be worth studying the nature and origins of this movement...

It began as the result of the evident failure of Western Marxism in the years immediately after the First World War. Reflecting on the reasons for this, two prominent Marxist thinkers, Antonio Gramsci and George Lukács, “concluded that the working class of Europe had been blinded by the success of Western democracy and capitalism. They reasoned that until both had been destroyed, a communist revolution was not possible.

“Gramsci and Lukács were both active in the Communist party, but their lives took very different paths.

“Gramsci was jailed by Mussolini in Italy where he died in 1937 due to poor health.

“In 1918, Lukács became minister of culture in Bolshevik Hungary. During this time, Lukács realized that if the family unit and sexual morals were eroded, society could be broken down.

“Lukács implemented a policy he titled ‘cultural terrorism,’ which focused on these two objectives. A major part of the policy was to target children’s minds through lectures that encouraged them to deride and reject Christian ethics.

“In these lectures, graphic sexual matter was presented to children, and they were taught about loose sexual conduct.

“Here again, a Marxist theory had failed to take hold in the real world. The people were outraged at Lukács’ program, and he fled Hungary when Romania invaded in 1919.

“All was quiet on the Marxist front until 1923 when the cultural terrorist turned up for a ‘Marxist study week’ in Frankfurt, Germany. There, Lukács met a young, wealthy Marxist named Felix Weil.

“Until Lukács showed up, classical Marxist theory was based solely on the economic changes needed to overthrow class conflict. Weil was enthused by Lukács’ cultural angle on Marxism.

“Weil’s interest led him to fund a new Marxist think tank—the Institute for Social Research. It would later come to be known as simply The Frankfurt School.”

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1 Admin 1, “The Birth Of Cultural Marxism: How The ‘Frankfurt School’ Changed America (and the West)”, Smash Cultural Marxism, January 15, 2017.
In the same year of 1923, according to Bernard Connolly, another of the founders of the Frankfurt School, Willi Munzenberg, “reflected on the failure of the ‘urban proletariat’ to mount successful revolutions in economically advanced countries in the way predicted by Marx. To counter that failure it was necessary, he proclaimed, to ‘organize the intellectuals and use them to make Western civilization stink. Only then, after they have corrupted all its values and made life impossible, can we impose the dictatorship of the proletariat.’ Corrupting the values of Western civilization meant undermining and, ultimately, proscribing all the institutions, traditions, structures and modes of thought (‘tools of oppression’) that underpinned that civilization. Once national sovereignty and political legitimacy were got out of the way, it would be much easier for a central, unaccountable and malign (‘politically correct’) government to proscribe all the other foundations of civilization.”

“In 1930, the school changed course under new director Max Horkheimer. The team began mixing the ideas of Sigmund Freud with those of Marx, and cultural Marxism was born.

“In classical Marxism, the workers of the world were oppressed by the ruling classes. The new theory was that everyone in society was psychologically oppressed by the institutions of Western culture. The school concluded that this new focus would need new vanguards to spur the change. The workers were not able to rise up on their own.

“As fate would have it, the National Socialists came to power in Germany in 1933. It was a bad time and place to be a Jewish Marxist, as most of the school’s faculty was. So, the school moved to New York City, the bastion of Western culture at the time.

“In 1934, the school was reborn at Columbia University. Its members began to exert their ideas on American culture.

“It was at Columbia University that the school honed the tool it would use to destroy Western culture: the printed word.

“The school published a lot of popular material. The first of these was Critical Theory.

“Critical Theory is a play on semantics. The theory was simple: criticize every pillar of Western culture—family, democracy, common law, freedom of speech, and others. The hope was that these pillars would crumble under the pressure.

“Next was a book Theodor Adorno co-authored, The Authoritarian Personality. It redefined traditional American views on gender roles and sexual mores as ‘prejudice.’ Adorno compared them to the traditions that led to the rise of fascism in Europe.

Is it just a coincidence that the go-to slur for the politically correct today is ‘fascist’?

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“The school pushed its shift away from economics and toward Freud by publishing works on psychological repression.

“Their works split society into two main groups: the oppressors and the victims. They argued that history and reality were shaped by those groups who controlled traditional institutions. At the time, that was code for males of European descent.

“From there, they argued that the social roles of men and women were due to gender differences defined by the ‘oppressors.’ In other words, gender did not exist in reality but was merely a ‘social construct.’

“Adorno and Horkheimer returned to Germany when WWII ended. Herbert Marcuse, another member of the school, stayed in America. In 1955, he published *Eros and Civilization*.

“In the book, Marcuse argued that Western culture was inherently repressive because it gave up happiness for social progress.

“The book called for ‘polymorphous perversity,’ a concept crafted by Freud. It posed the idea of sexual pleasure outside the traditional norms. *Eros and Civilization* would become very influential in shaping the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

“Marcuse would be the one to answer Horkheimer’s question from the 1930s: Who would replace the working class as the new vanguards of the Marxist revolution?

“Marcuse believed that it would be a victim coalition of minorities—blacks, women, and homosexuals.

“The social movements of the 1960s—black power, feminism, gay rights, sexual liberation—gave Marcuse a unique vehicle to release cultural Marxist ideas into the mainstream. Railing against all things ‘establishment,’ the Frankfurt School’s ideals caught on like wildfire across American universities.

“Marcuse then published *Repressive Tolerance* in 1965 as the various social movements in America were in full swing. In it, he argued that tolerance of all values and ideas meant the repression of ‘correct’ ideas.

“It was here that Marcuse coined the term ‘liberating tolerance.’ It called for tolerance of any ideas coming from the left but intolerance of those from the right. One of the overarching themes of the Frankfurt School was total intolerance for any viewpoint but its own. That is also a basic trait of today’s political-correctness believers.

“To quote Max Horkheimer, ‘Logic is not independent of content.’
“The Frankfurt School’s work has had a deep impact on American culture. It has recast the homogeneous America of the 1950s into today’s divided, animosity-filled nation.

“In turn, this has contributed to the undeniable breakdown of the family unit, as well as identity politics, radical feminism, and racial polarization in America.\(^3\)

* 

Cultural Marxism is closely related to the idea of *political correctness*. Angelo M. Codevilla explains this important idea in more detail: “The notion of political correctness came into use among Communists in the 1930s as a semi-humorous reminder that the Party’s interest is to be treated as a reality that ranks above reality itself. Because all progressives, Communists included, claim to be about creating new human realities, they are perpetually at war against nature’s laws and limits. But since reality does not yield, progressives end up pretending that they themselves embody those new realities. Hence, any progressive movement’s nominal goal eventually ends up being subordinated to the urgent, all-important question of the movement’s own power. Because that power is insecure as long as others are able to question the truth of what the progressives say about themselves and the world, progressive movements end up struggling not so much to create the promised new realities as to force people to speak and act as if these were real: as if what is correct politically—i.e., what thoughts serve the party’s interest—were correct factually.

“Communist states furnish only the most prominent examples of such attempted groupthink. Progressive parties everywhere have sought to monopolize educational and cultural institutions in order to force those under their thumbs to sing their tunes or to shut up. But having brought about the opposite of the prosperity, health, wisdom, or happiness that their ideology advertised, they have been unable to force folks to ignore the gap between political correctness and reality.

“Especially since the Soviet Empire’s implosion, leftists have argued that Communism failed to create utopia not because of any shortage of military or economic power but rather because it could not overcome this gap. Is the lesson for today’s progressives, therefore, to push P.C. even harder, to place even harsher penalties on dissenters? Many of today’s more discerning European and American progressives, in possession of government’s and society’s commanding heights, knowing that they cannot wield Soviet-style repression and yet intent on beating down increasing popular resistance to their projects, look for another approach to crushing cultural resistance. Increasingly they cite the name of Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), a brilliant Communist theoretician for whom ‘cultural hegemony’ is the very purpose of the struggle as well as its principal instrument. His writings envisage a totalitarianism that eliminates the very possibility of cultural resistance to progressivism. But owing more to Machiavelli than to Marx or Lenin, they are more than a little complex about the means and are far from identical with the raw sort of power over culture enforced by the Soviet Empire or, for that matter, that is rife among us today…”

\(^3\) Admin 1, *op. cit.*
Although Gramsci died before the war, he became influential only later. “Gramsci started from mixed philosophical premises. First, orthodox Marxism: ‘There is no such thing as ‘human nature,’ fixed and immutable,‘ he wrote. Rather, ‘human nature is the sum of historically determined social relationships.’ The modern prince’s job is to change it. Wholly unorthodox, however, was his scorn for Marxism’s insistence that economic factors are fundamental while all else is superstructural. No, ‘stuff like that is for common folk,’ a ‘little formula’ for ‘half-baked intellectuals who don’t want to work their brains.’ For Gramsci, economic relations were just one part of social reality, the chief parts of which were intellectual and moral…

“Gramsci co-founded Italy’s Communist Party in 1921. In 1926, Mussolini jailed him. By the time he died eleven years later, he had composed twelve ‘prison notebooks.’ In private correspondence, he criticized Stalin’s literary judgment and deemed his attacks on Leon Trotsky ‘irresponsible and dangerous.’ But publicly, he supported every turn of the Soviet Party line—even giving his party boss, Palmiro Togliatti, authority to modify his writings. Imprisoned and in failing health, he was intellectually freer and physically safer than if he had been exposed to the intra-Communist purges that killed so many of his comrades.

“Gramsci’s concept of ‘cultural hegemony’ also swung both ways. Its emphasis on transforming the enemy rather than killing him outright was at odds with the Communist Party’s brute-force approach. His focus on cultural matters, reversing as it did the standard distinction between structure and superstructure, suggested belief in the mind’s autonomy. On the other hand, the very idea of persuading minds not through reasoning on what is true and false, good and bad, according to nature, but rather by creating a new historical reality, is precisely what he shares with Marx and… with the fountainhead of modern thought, Niccolò Machiavelli.

“Gramsci turned to Machiavelli more than to Marx to discover how best to replace the existing order and to secure that replacement. Chapter V of Machiavelli’s The Prince stated that ‘the only secure way’ to control a people who had been accustomed to live under its own laws is to destroy it. But Machiavelli’s objective was to conquer people through their minds, not to destroy them. In Chapter VI of The Prince he wrote that nothing is more difficult than to establish ‘new modes and orders,’ that this requires ‘persuading’ peoples of certain things, that it is necessary ‘when they no longer believe to make them believe by force,’ and that this is especially difficult for ‘unarmed prophets.’ But Machiavelli also wrote that, if such prophets succeed in inculcating a new set of beliefs, they can count on being ‘powerful, secure, honored and happy.’ He clarified this insight in Discourses on Livy Book II, chapter 5: ‘when it happens that the founders of the new religion speak a different language, the destruction of the old religion is easily effected.’ The Machiavellian revolutionary, then, must inculcate new ways of thinking and speaking that amount to a new language. In the Discourse Upon Our Language, Machiavelli had compared using one’s own language to infiltrate the enemy’s thoughts with Rome’s use of its own troops to control allied armies. This is the template that Gramsci superimposed on the problems of the Communist revolution—a template made by one ‘unarmed prophet’ for use by others.
“Machiavelli is the point of departure in a section of Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* that describes how the party is to rule as ‘the modern prince.’ But the modern prince’s task is so big that it can be undertaken seriously only by a party (in some 50 references he leaves out the word ‘Communist’), which he defines as ‘an organism; a complex, collective element of society which has already begun to crystallize as a collective will that has become conscious of itself through action.’ This prince, this party, has to be ‘the organizer and the active expression of moral and intellectual reform...that cannot be tied to an economic program.’ Rather, when economic reform grows out of moral and intellectual reform, from ‘germs of collective will that tend to become universal and total,’ then it can become the basis of the secularization of all life and custom.

“The party-prince accomplishes this by being Jacobin ‘in the historic and conceptual sense.’ Gramsci writes: ‘that is what Machiavelli meant by reform of the militia, which the Jacobins did in the French Revolution.’ The party must gather consensus from each of society’s discrete parts by persuading—inducing—people who had never thought of such things to join in ways of life radically different from their own. The party develops ‘its organized force’ by a ‘minutely careful, molecular, capillary process manifested in an endless quantity of books and pamphlets, of articles in magazines and newspapers, and by personal debates repeated infinitely and which, in their gigantic altogether, comprise the work out of which arises a collective will with a certain homogeneity.’

“Which is it then for Gramsci? Does the party inspire or perhaps cajole consent—or does it force it? His answer is ambiguous: ‘Machiavelli affirms rather clearly that the state is to be run by fixed principles by which virtuous citizens can live secure against arbitrary treatment. Justly, however, Machiavelli reduces all to politics, to the art of governing men, of assuring their permanent consensus.’ The matter, he writes, must be regarded from the “double perspective”...[that] corresponds to the double nature of Machiavelli’s centaur, beastly and human, of force and consent, of authority and hegemony... of tactics and strategy.’ Indeed that is Machiavelli’s point: whatever it takes.

“The key to Gramsci’s generalities and subtleties is to be found in his gingerly discussion of the relationship between the party and Christianity. ‘Although other political parties may no longer exist, there will always exist de facto parties or tendencies... in such parties, cultural matters predominate... hence, political controversies take on cultural forms and, as such, tend to become irresolvable.’ Translation: the progressive party-state (the party acting as a government, the government acting as a party) cannot escape the role of authoritative—perhaps forceful—mediator of societal conflicts having to do with cultural matters and must see to it that they are resolved its way.

“Specifically: as Gramsci was writing, Mussolini’s 1929 Concordat with the Vatican was proving to be his most successful political maneuver. By removing the formal enmity between the Church and the post-French-Revolution state, making Catholicism the state religion and paying its hierarchy, Mussolini had turned Italy’s most pervasive cultural institution from an enemy to a friendly vassal. Thousands of priests and millions of their flock would bend thoughts, words, and deeds to fit the
party-state’s definition of good citizenship. Gramsci described the post-Concordat Church as having ‘become an integral part of the State, of political society monopolized by a certain privileged group that aggregated the Church unto itself the better to sustain its monopoly with the support of that part of civil society represented by the Church.’ A morally and intellectually compromised Church in the fascist state’s hands, Mussolini hoped and Gramsci feared, would redefine its teachings and its social presence to fascist specifications. The alternative to this subversion—denigrating and restricting the Church in the name of fascism—would have pushed many Catholics to embrace their doctrine’s fundamentals ever more tightly in opposition to the party. The Concordat was the effective template for the rest of what Mussolini called the corporate state.

“Gramsci called the same phenomenon a ‘blocco storico,’ historic bloc, that aggregates society’s various sectors under the party-state’s direction. The intellectuals, said Gramsci, are the blocco’s leading element. In any given epoch they weld workers, peasants, the church, and other groups into a unit in which the people live and move and have their being, and from within which it is difficult if not impossible to imagine alternatives. Power, used judiciously, acts on people the way the sun acts on sunflowers. Within this bloc, ideas may retain their names while changing in substance, while a new language grows organically. As Gramsci noted, Machiavelli had argued that language is the key to the mastery of consciousness—a mastery more secure than anything that force alone can achieve. But note that Machiavelli’s metaphors on linguistic warfare all refer to violence. How much force does it take to make this historic bloc cohere and to keep recalcitrants in it? Gramsci’s silence seems to say; ‘whatever may be needed.’ After all, Mussolini used as much as he thought he needed.

“In sum, Mussolini, not Stalin; forceful seduction, not rape, is Gramsci’s practical advice regarding ‘cultural hegemony.’ Gramsci means to replace Western culture by subverting it, by doing what it takes to compel it to redefine itself, rather than by picking fights with it…”

Following Gramsci’s lead, the post-war Cultural Marxists compelled Western culture to redefine itself – that is, adopt the language and values of “political correctness”. And the storm-centre of this cultural revolution moved, together with the leaders of the Frankfurt school of social philosophy, from Europe to America…

“Beginning in the 1960s, from Boston to Berkeley, the teachers of America’s teachers absorbed and taught a new, CliffsNotes-style sacred history: America was born tainted by Western Civilization’s original sins—racism, sexism, greed, genocide against natives and the environment, all wrapped in religious obscurantism, and on the basis of hypocritical promises of freedom and equality. Secular saints from Herbert Croly and Woodrow Wilson to Franklin Roosevelt and Barack Obama have been redeeming those promises, placing America on the path of greater justice in the face of resistance from the mass of Americans who are racist, sexist, but above all stupid. To consider such persons on the same basis as their betters would be, as President Obama has called it, ‘false equivalence.’

“Thus credentialed, molded, and opinionated, a uniform class now presides over nearly all federal, and state, government bureaucracies, over the media, the educational establishment, and major corporations. Like a fraternity, it requires speaking the ‘in’ language signifying that one is on the right side, and joins to bring grief upon ‘outsider Americans who run afoul of its members...

“No more than its European counterparts does America’s progressive ruling class offer any vision of truth, goodness, beauty, or advantage to attract the rest of society to itself. Like its European kin, all that American progressivism offers is obedience to the ruling class, enforced by political correctness. Nor is there any endpoint to what is politically correct, any more than there ever was to Communism. Here and now, as everywhere and always, it comes down to glorifying the party and humbling the rest...

“The imposition of P.C. has no logical end because feeling better about one’s self by confessing other people’s sins, humiliating and hurting them, is an addictive pleasure the appetite for which grows with each satisfaction. The more fault I find in thee, the holier (or, at least, the trendier) I am than thou. The worse you are, the better I am and the more power I should have over you. America’s ruling class seems to have adopted the view that the rest of America should be treated as inmates in reeducation camps…”

*Cultural Marxism is also related to another important idea: *multiculturalism*. The Norwegian blogger Hanne Nabintu Herland writes: “Multiculturalism – many cultures living side by side with none of them taking the lead – has in essence turned out quite differently than then utopian dreamers and naïve neo-Marxists initially hoped for when they started out implementing this theory in the 1960’s. Instead, multiculturalism has slowly robbed ordinary Europeans of pride in their own culture, many now feeling discriminated against in their own countries. Today, we watch how the tensions are building up in Europe and clashes happening now on an almost daily basis.

“Over the past decade the opponents of multiculturalism have multiplied. Leading politicians like Angela Merkel, David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy have all condemned this neo-Marxist strategy of integration that equates the ideals of other cultures with European traditional values in Europe. The idea was that Europeans should not uphold their own cultural roots on their own soil, but instead listen humbly to new immigrants and accept their traditional norms and customs in the name of diversity. Whoever protested, has quickly, over the years been labelled ‘racist’ or ‘intolerant’, causing the person to quickly be silenced.

“The French philosopher, Jacques Derrida is often called the father of multiculturalism. He developed the theory of deconstruction, implying that power structures come in pair: one weak, the other strong. For example, the pair of man – woman, white – black, European – African/Asian. His desire to tone down the ‘strong in the pair’ was done by giving ‘the weak’ extra rights. Among the many

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5 Codevilla, op. cit.
mistakes that the neo-Marxist Derrida did, in his quest to tear down the traditional structures of the European society, was naively believing that ‘Europeans’ are always the strong part and ‘Africans – Asians’ always the weak part in the West. So, his theories legitimized a discrimination against Europe’s population, insinuating that their perspectives are uninteresting and that only the perspectives of ‘the weak’ – that is the non-Western foreigner – had the right to strongly voice his beliefs...”

Melanie Phillips sums up the matter well: “As communism slowly crumbled, those on the far Left who remained hostile towards western civilization found another way to realize their goal of bringing it down.

“This was what might be called ‘cultural Marxism’. It was based on the understanding that what holds a society together are the pillars of its culture: the structures and institutions of education, family, law, media and religion. Transform the principles and you can thus destroy the society they have shaped.

“The key insight was developed in particular by an Italian Marxist philosopher called Antonio Gramsci. His thinking was taken up by Sixties radicals – who are, of course, the generation that holds power in the West today.

“Gramsci understood that the working class would never rise up to seize the levers of ‘production, distribution and exchange’ as communism had prophesied. Economics was not the path to revolution.

“He believed instead that society could be overthrown if the values underpinning it could be formed into their antithesis: if its core principles were replaced by those of groups who were considered to be outsiders or who actively transgressed the moral codes of that society.

“So he advocated a ‘long march through the institutions’ to capture the citadels of culture and turn them into a collective fifth column, undermining from within and turning all the core values of society upside-down.

“This strategy has been carried out to the letter.

“The nuclear family has been widely shattered. Illegitimacy was transformed from a stigma into a ‘right’. The tragic disadvantage of fatherlessness was redefined as a neutrally viewed ‘lifestyle choice’.

“Education was wrecked, with its core tenet of transmitting a culture to successive generations replaced by the idea that what children already knew was of superior value to anything the adult world might foist upon them.

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“The outcome of this ‘child-centred’ approach has been widespread illiteracy and ignorance and an eroded capacity for independent thought.

“Law and order were similarly undermined, with criminals deemed to be beyond punishment since they were ‘victims’ of society and with illegal drug-taking tacitly encouraged by a campaign to denigrate anti-drugs laws.

“The ‘rights’ agenda – commonly known as ‘political correctness’ – turned morality inside out by excusing any misdeeds by self-designated ‘victim’ groups on the grounds that such ‘victims’ could never be held responsible for what they did.

“Feminism, anti-racism and gay rights thus turned… Christians into the enemies of decency who were forced to jump through hoops to prove their virtue.

“This Through the Looking Glass mind-set rests on the belief that the world is divided into the powerful (who are responsible for all bad things) and the oppressed (who are responsible for none of them).

“This is a Marxist doctrine. But the extent to which such Marxist thinking has been taken up unwittingly even by the Establishment was illustrated by the astounding observation made in 2005 by the then senior law lord, Lord Bingham, that human rights law was all about protecting ‘oppressed’ minorities from the majority…

“When the Berlin Wall fell, we told ourselves that this was the end of ideology. We could not have been more wrong.

“The Iron Curtain came down only to be replaced by a rainbow-hued knuckle duster, as our cultural commissars pulverised all forbidden attitudes in order to reshape western society into a post-democratic, post-Christian, post-moral universe. Lenin would have smiled…”

Or perhaps he would not have been so pleased...

For, as Ryszard Legutko writes: “If the old communists had lived long enough to see the world of today, they would be devastated by the contrast between how little they themselves had managed to achieve in their antireligious war and how successful the liberal democrats have been. All the objectives the communists set for themselves, and which they pursued with savage brutality, were achieved by the liberal democrats who, almost without any effort and simply by allowing people to drift along with the flow of modernity, succeeded in converting churches into museums, restaurants, and public buildings, secularizing entire societies, making secularism the militant ideology, pushing religions to the sidelines, pressing the clergy into docility, and inspiring powerful mass culture with a strong antireligious bias in which a priest must be either a liberal challenging the Church or a disgusting villain.”

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7 Phillips, “We were fools to think the fall of the Berlin Wall had killed off the far Left. They’re back – and attacking us from within”, The Daily Mail, November 9, 2009, p. 14.
“Consider the main enemy,” writes Codevilla: “religion. America’s mainline Protestant denominations have long since delivered their (diminishing) flocks to the ruling class’s progressive priorities. Pope Francis advertises his refusal to judge attacks on Western civilization, including the murder of priests. His commitment of the Catholic Church to the building of ‘a new humanity,’ as he put it at July’s World Youth Day in Krakow, opens the Catholic Church to redefining Christianity to progressive missions in progressive terms, a mission already accomplished at Georgetown University, Notre Dame, and other former bastions of American Catholicism now turned into bastions of American progressivism. Evangelical leaders seem eager not to be left behind. Gramsci would have advised that enlisting America’s religious establishments in the service of the ruling class’s larger priorities need not have cost nearly as much as Mussolini paid in 1929. Refraining from frontal challenges to essentials would be enough.

“Instead, America’s progressives add insult to injury by imposing same-sex marriage, homosexuality, ‘global warming,’ and other fashions because they really have no priorities beyond themselves. America’s progressive rulers, like France’s, act less as politicians gathering support than as conquerors who enjoy punishing captives without worry that the tables may turn…”

The latest insult to traditional thinking is self-marriage. Abigail Pesta writes: "Self-marriage is a small but growing movement, with consultants and self-wedding planners popping up across the world. In Canada, a service called Marry Yourself Vancouver launched this past summer, offering consulting services and wedding photography. In Japan, a travel agency called Cerca Travel offers a two-day self-wedding package in Kyoto: You can choose a wedding gown, bouquet, and hairstyle, and pose for formal wedding portraits. On the website I Married Me, you can buy a DIY marriage kit: For $50, you get a sterling silver ring, ceremony instructions, vows, and 24 ‘affirmation cards’ to remind you of your vows over time. For $230, you can get the kit with a 14-karat gold ring.

‘It’s not a legal process — you won’t get any tax breaks for marrying yourself. It’s more a ‘rebuke’ of tradition, says Rebecca Traister, author of All the Single Ladies: Unmarried Women and the Rise of an Independent Nation. ‘For generations, if women wanted to have economic stability and a socially sanctioned sex life or children, there was enormous social and economic pressure to do that within marriage,’ she says. ‘Personally, as someone who lived for many years single and then did get married, I know that the kind of affirmation I got for getting married was unlike anything I’d ever had in any other part of my life.’ That, she adds, is ‘incredibly unjust.’"

Here we come back to that passion which unites all the Marxists – old and new, cultural and barbarian: the feeling of burning injustice, of resentment, of envy. This feeling, together with the desire to “rebuke” tradition, shows that Cultural Marxism is the social and political mode of Satan’s protest against God. Only, in becoming “cultural”, Marxism has now migrated from a social or political movement to pure

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9 Codevilla, op. cit.
individualism, narcissism, even infantilism – which must mark the final death of Western civilization…


The Theophany of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.
2. RUSSIA IN THE 1990s: THE LAST CAPITALIST FRONTIER

From the vantage point of 2017, when Putin’s neo-Soviet and neo-fascist Russia appears to be dominating a dispirited and demoralized United States, we can see that the American victory in the Cold War was ephemeral and superficial (unless, as seems unlikely, Trump turns the tide).

Many plausible explanations have been given for this. One, expounded by the former world chess champion, Garry Kasparov, is that the West gave far too much money and concessions to Russia after 1991 without demanding enough in return – in particular, the thorough uprooting of the KGB system. There is much merit to this explanation – although it is difficult to see how that system could have been uprooted unless America had physically conquered and occupied the former Soviet Union. A second explanation, though discounted by Kasparov, also has merit: that the country felt humiliated and betrayed by its defeat, and was never really reconciled to it, just as Germany was not reconciled to its defeat in 1918. A third explanation is that if the KGB system was not uprooted, at least everything else was – by the Chicago Boys’ Friedmanite shock therapy, which so impoverished such a large part of the population that they lost their former (albeit brief) admiration for democracy and the West and returned to old collectivist modes of thinking. A fourth explanation is that God did not allow the Russians to liberate themselves from the nightmare of the twentieth century because they were still under the curse – they had not repented of the unprecedented sins of that century.

This article examines the first three explanations, beginning with Kasparov’s: “After my disappointing experiences discussing my homeland with American experts, it came as no surprise that President Bush often sounded more alarmed than overjoyed by the prospect of the Soviet Union falling to pieces. The empire was evil, yes, but it was the evil he and everyone in his administration knew very well. Bush also felt he could rely on Gorbachev, although he was a man backed by the KGB and who had never been elected to anything over the unknown quantity of the populist and popularly elected Boris Yeltsin.

“There was more than rhetoric involved in these bizarre attempts to prop up an old foe. Billions of dollars in Western aid and loan guarantees were provided to keep the USSR on life support. Germany alone extended an £8 billion package that was part of the agreement on German unification. Germany’s financial commitments to Russia would balloon to $45 billion by 1992 and they included money for sending Russian troops home and even building housing for them in Russia.

“The United States also stepped in with assurance well before any outcome was clear on democratic reforms in Moscow. On December 12, 1990, President Bush announced a package worth over $1.3 billion in credit and credit guarantees and waived the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment that put strict controls on doing business with the USSR. Four months later, Bush authorized another $1.5 billion in agricultural loan guarantees. The United States also sent medical aid directly to the Baltic States after the Soviet crackdown there, and to Ukraine for the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe.
“American and other G7 multilateral aid and credit to Russia and other Soviet states only increased over the next few years, with Russia by far the largest beneficiary. In March 1993, feeling the need to support Boris Yeltsin’s government, which was under parliamentary pressure, the G7 put together a $43 billion assistance plan. Japan bowed to the pressure of its fellow G7 members and did not tie its nearly $2 billion in aid to the disputed Kuril Islands. The IMF and the World Bank also opened their wallets, with the World Bank making its largest project loan ever of $610 million to help rebuild Russia’s oil industry. Russia failed to collect all of the offered and due to failing to achieve some required economic requirements. Thankfully, it was too little and far too late to keep the USSR together.

“Separately, during the 1990s billions of dollars came into secure the Soviet nuclear weapons and related programs in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. This can hardly be called anything but a wise investment, since the last things anyone wanted to see was a lack of oversight of nuclear weapons and materials or a diaspora of Soviet nuclear scientists in need of employment.

“All these numbers are tedious, but it is important to counter the popular Russian victimhood myth spread by Putin’s propaganda and by his anti-American, anti-NATO sympathizers around the world. The story goes that Russia was humiliated by the West when the USSR collapsed, leading to resentment and mistrust. They say the Cold War victory ‘lost Russia’ first by not providing enough assistance and then by expanding NATO too aggressively. Both accusations are demonstrably false… if anything the West has been far too willing to forgive and forget the past crimes and dangerous potential of its old enemy.

“In reality, many Western leaders became trapped by the idea that Russia was ‘too big to lose’ and had to be supported at all costs even when it was clear they were throwing good money after bad down a hole of post-Soviet corruption and mismanagement. The danger of hardliners kicking out Gorbachev or the Communists coming back and beating Yeltsin was considered too great. The brief August 1991 coup by hardliners against Gorbachev, whether it was real or of Gorbachev’s own desperate orchestration, resulted in an immediate bump in American aid. Similarly, when the Russian Duma challenged Yeltsin’s reforms in 1993, the US Senate immediately responded by pushing through a $2.5 billion aid package that had been delayed…

“Ironically, the roots of Russia’s descent back into totalitarianism can be traced to the West doing too much to respect the legacy of the USSR as a great power, not too little. Russia was allowed to inherit the Soviet Union’s seat on the UN Security Council when that organization, which had been designed to preserve the Cold War status quo, should instead have been formed to reflect the primacy of the free world. There were no demands for lustration – investigating and prosecuting, or at least ejecting, Soviet officials for their crimes – while Gorbachev was practically canonized in the West.

“Not exactly humiliation, unless you count the embarrassment of needing billions in cash and aid from a former rival, a rival that generations of Soviet propaganda had
portrayed as heartless and destructive. The USSR lost the Cold War, and losing is painful. This sentiment, feeling like losers, was a consequence of failing to move on from the nation that vanished under our feet. The USSR lost the Cold War, but it was a victory not just for the United States and the West, but for Russians and all Soviet citizens and everyone living behind the Iron Curtain. We were free to live, to speak, and to think for ourselves. The real loss came when we failed to uproot the KGB system…”

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But this raises the question: why? Why were the Russian people unable to uproot that system, when they had both the opportunity and the motivation, having suffered from its evil more than any other people? Although the answer to this question must be found at a deeper level than the purely political or economic, we should begin with the unprecedentedly severe economic collapse suffered by Russia in the 1990s, and the fear it generated.

“The basic choice,” writes Tony Judt, “facing post-Communist governments was either to attempt a one-time, overnight transformation from subsidized socialist economies into market-driven capitalism – the ‘big bang’ approach – or else proceed cautiously to dismantle or sell off the more egregiously malfunctioning sectors of the ‘planned economy’ while preserving as long as possible those features which mattered most to the local population: cheap rents, guaranteed jobs, free social services. The first strategy conformed best to the free-market theorems beloved of an emerging generation of post-Communist economists and businessmen; the second was more politically prudent. The problem was that either approach must in the short term (and perhaps the not-so-short term) cause significant pain and loss in Boris Yeltsin’s Russia, where both were applied, the economy shrank dramatically for eight years – the biggest peacetime setback for a major economy in modern history.”

Already in 1991, Yeltsin had decided to put the liberal economist Yegor Gaidar in charge of the “big bang” approach. He failed spectacularly, but, according to Kasparov, “it was a hugely difficult task under any circumstances. The history of left-wing dictatorships transitioning to democracy with market economics is a short collection of horror stories. Communism is like an autoimmune disorder; it doesn’t do the killing itself, but it weakens the system so much that the victim is left helpless and unable to fight off anything else. It destroys the human spirit on an individual level, perverting the values of a successful free society.”

However, it was not just that the spirit of entrepreneurialism had not been nourished in the Soviet period, so that people were unused to taking initiatives without orders from above. The problem went deeper in that the only people who had both the money (dollars, preferably) and the contacts in high places and abroad to build up a successful business were former Soviet bureaucrats and party members.

13 Kasparov, op. cit., p. 33.
But they brought with them the corruption of a lifetime in Soviet politics. Cynically swapping the badge “communist” for the badge “democrat”, these “oligarchs”, as they were called, introduced the old ways of corrupt Communism into the brave new world of liberal democracy. Even those who sincerely welcomed the democratic revolution and wanted to make an honest living as minor entrepreneurs could make little headway in a system that was built on bribery and falsehood, and in which scarce resources were snapped up by a few extremely rich individuals – who, to make things still more galling, were mainly Jews...

“Every day, Russians read about the new billionaires being created by cozy deals with the government. You didn’t have to understand how things like privatization vouchers, loans for shares, and rigged auctions worked to realize there was huge scam going on. Worried that reforms might be rolled back by conservatives, Yeltsin’s reform team, led by Yegor Gaidar and Chubais, started selling things off at a frantic pace at absurdly low valuations. Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Boris Berezovsky, already two of the wealthiest and most influential oligarchs, acquired their huge energy firms, Yukos and Sifneft, for less than 10 percent of their real value.”

A vast gap soon opened up between the “haves” and the “have-nots” in the new system; even professors were reduced to selling their last possessions on the streets. Hardly surprisingly, this led to a powerful wave of resentment against the “haves”, against the government that worked with them, and, more seriously, against the ideas of Capitalism and Democracy. In turn, these feelings swelled the already substantial ranks of the unrepentant Communists, who had never accepted the fall of the Soviet Union and were aiming at a return to power.

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If we look a little deeper into the causes of Russia’s economic collapse, we will see that the country was the victim of yet another application of the Friedmanite “shock therapy” that we have already encountered several times – in Chile, in Bolivia, in China and in Poland. And we will see that the strategy began to be applied to Russia before the Soviet Union’s final collapse, when it was in the throes of the shock of perestroika and therefore needed the West’s financial help.

Naomi Klein writes: “When Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev flew to London to attend his first G7 Summit in July 1991, he had every reason to expect a hero’s welcome. For the previous three years, he had seemed not so much to stride across the international stage as to float, charming the media, signing disarmament treaties and picking up peace prizes, including the Nobel in 1990...

“By the beginning of the nineties, with his twin policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), Gorbachev had led the Soviet Union through a remarkable process of democratization: the press had been freed, Russia’s parliament, local councils, president and vice president had been elected, and the constitutional court was independent. As for the economy, Gorbachev was moving toward a mixture of a free market and a strong safety net, with key industries under public control – a process he predicted would take ten to fifteen years to be completed. His end goal

14 Kasparov, op. cit., p. 76.
was to build social democracy on the Scandinavian model, ‘a socialist beacon for all mankind’.

“At first it seemed that the West also wanted Gorbachev to succeed in loosening up the Soviet economy and transforming it into something close to Sweden’s. The Nobel Committee explicitly described the prize as a way of offering support to the transition – ‘a helping hand in an hour of need’. And on a visit to Prague, Gorbachev made it clear that he couldn’t do it all alone: ‘Like mountain climbers on one rope, the world’s nations can either climb together to the summit or fall together into the abyss,’ he said.

“So what happened at the G7 meeting in 1991 was totally unexpected. The nearly unanimous message that Gorbachev received from his fellow heads of state was that, if he did not embrace radical economic shock therapy immediately, they would sever the rope and let him fall. ‘Their suggestions as to the tempo and methods of transition were astonishing,’ Gorbachev wrote of the event.

“Poland had just completed its first round of shock therapy under the IMF’s and Jeffrey Sachs’s tutelage, and the consensus among British prime minister John Major, U.S. president George H.W. Bush, Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney and Japanese prime minister Toshiki Kaifu was that the Soviet Union had to follow Poland’s lead on an even faster timetable. After the meeting, Gorbachev got the same marching orders from the IMF, the World Bank and every other major lending institution. Later that year, when Russia asked for debt forgiveness to weather a catastrophic economic crisis, the stern answer was that the debts had to be honored. Since the time when Sachs had marshaled aid and debt relief for Poland, the political mood had changed – it was meaner.

“What happened next – the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev’s eclipse by Yeltsin, and the tumultuous course of economic shock therapy – is a well-documented chapter of contemporary history. It is, however, a story too often told in the bland language of ‘reform’, a narrative so generic that it has hidden one of the greatest crimes committed against a democracy in modern history. Russia, like China, was forced to choose between a Chicago School economic program and an authentic democratic revolution. Faced with that choice, China’s leaders had attacked their own people in order to prevent democracy from disturbing their free-market plans. Russia was different: the democratic revolution was already well under way – in order to push through a Chicago School economic program, that peaceful and hopeful process that Gorbachev began had to be violently interrupted, then radically reversed.

“Gorbachev knew that the only way to impose the kind of shock therapy being advocated by the G7 and the IMF was with force – as did many in the West pushing for these policies. The Economist magazine, in an influential 1990 piece, urged Gorbachev to adopt ‘strong-man rule… to smash the resistance that has blocked serious economic reform.’ Only two weeks after the Nobel Committee had declared an end to the Cold War, The Economist was urging Gorbachev to model himself after one of the Cold War’s most notorious killers. Under the heading ‘Mikhail Sergeevich Pinochet?’ the article concluded that even though following its advice could cause
‘possible blood-letting... it might, just might, be the Soviet Union’s turn for what could be called the Pinochet approach to liberal economics.’ The Washington Post was willing to go further. In August 1991, the paper ran a commentary under the headline ‘Pinochet’s Chile a Pragmatic Model for Soviet Economy’. The article supported the idea of a coup for getting rid of the slow-going Gorbachev, but the author, Michael Schtage, worried that the Soviet president’s opponents ‘had neither the savvy nor the support to seize the Pinochet option’. They should model themselves, Schtage wrote, after ‘a despot who really knew how to run a coup, retired Chilean general Augusto Pinochet.’

“Gorbachev soon found himself facing an adversary who was more than willing to play the role of a Russian Pinochet. Boris Yeltsin, though holding the post of Russian president, had a much lower profile than Gorbachev, who headed all the Soviet Union. That was to change dramatically on August 19, 1991, one month after the G7 Summit....

“... As a leader, he had always been a kind of anti-Gorbachev. Where Gorbachev had projected propriety and sobriety (one of his most controversial measures was an aggressive anti-vodka-drinking campaign). Yeltsin was a notorious glutton and a heavy drinker. Prior to the coup, many Russians harbored reservations about Yeltsin, but he had helped save democracy from a Communist coup, and that made him, at least for the time being, a people’s hero...

“Jeffrey Sachs was in the room at the Kremlin on the day Yeltsin announced that the Soviet Union was no more. Sachs recalled the Russian president saying, ‘Gentlemen, I just want to announce that the Soviet Union has ended...’ And I said, ‘Gee, you know, this is once in a century. This is the most incredible thing you can imagine; this is a true liberation, let’s help these people.’ Yeltsin had invited Sachs to come to Russia to serve as an adviser, and Sachs was more than game: ‘If Poland can do it, so can Russia,’ he declared.

“But Yeltsin didn’t just want advice, he wanted the kind of gold-plated fund-raising that Sachs had pulled off for Poland. ‘The only hope,’ Yeltsin said, ‘was the promises of the Group of Seven quickly to grant us large sums of financial aid.’ Sachs told Yeltsin he was confident that if Moscow was willing to go with the ‘big bang’ approach in establishing a capitalist economy, he could raise something in the area of $15 billion. They would need to be ambitious, and they would need to move fast. What Yeltsin did not know was that Sachs’s luck was about to run out.

“Russia’s conversion to capitalism had much in common with the corrupt approach that had sparked the Tiananmen Square protests in China four years earlier. Moscow’s mayor, Gavriil Popov, has claimed that there were really only two options for how to break up the centrally-controlled economy: ‘Property can be divided among all members of society, or the best pieces can be given to the leaders... In a word, there’s the democratic approach, and there’s the nomenklatura, apparatchik approach.’ Yeltsin took the latter approach – and he was in a hurry. In late 1991, he went to the parliament and made an unorthodox proposal: if they gave him one year of special powers, under which he could issue laws by decree rather than bring them to parliament for a vote, he would solve the economic crisis and give
them back a thriving, healthy system. What Yeltsin was asking for was the kind of executive power enjoyed by dictators, not democrats, but the parliament was still grateful to the president for his role during the attempted coup, and the country was desperate for foreign aid. The answer was yes: Yeltsin could have one year of absolute power to remake Russia’s economy.

“He immediately assembled a team of economists, many of whom, in the final years of Communism, had formed a kind of free-market book club, reading the basic texts of the Chicago School thinkers and discussing how the theories could be applied to Russia. Thought they had never studies in the U.S., they were such devoted fans of Milton Friedman that the Russian press took to calling Yeltsin’s team ‘the Chicago Boys’, a knock-off of the original title, and fitting in the context of Russia’s thriving black market economy. In the West they were dubbed ‘the young reformers’. The group’s figurehead was Yegor Gaidar, whom Yeltsin names as one of the two deputy prime ministers. Pyotr Aven, a Yeltsin minister in 1991-92 who was part of the inner circle, said of his former clique, ‘Their identification of themselves with God, which flowed naturally from their belief in their all-round superiority, was, unfortunately, typical of our reformers.’

“Surveying the group that had suddenly ascended to power in Moscow, the Russian newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta observed the rather astonishing development that ‘for the first time Russia will get in its government a team of liberals who consider themselves followers of Friedrich von Hayek and the ‘Chicago School’ of Milton Friedman.’ Their policies were ‘quite clear – “strict financial stabilization” according to “shock therapy” recipes.’ At the same time as Yeltsin made these appointments, the newspaper noted, he had also put the notorious strongman, Yury Skokov ‘in charge of the defense and repressive departments: the Army, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Committee.’ The decisions were clearly connected. The article ended with a prediction: ‘It will come as no surprise if they attempt to construct something like a homegrown Pinochet system, in which the rule of the “Chicago boys” will be played by Gaidar’s team.’

“To provide ideological and technical backup for Yeltsin’s Chicago Boys, the U.S. government funded its own transition experts whose jobs ranged from writing privatization decrees, to launching a New York-style stock exchange, to designing a Russian mutual fund market. In the fall of 1992, US-AID awarded a $2.1 million contract to the Harvard Institute for International Development, which sent teams of young lawyers and economists to shadow the Gaidar team. In May 1995, Harvard named Sachs director of the Harvard Institute for International Development, which meant that he played two roles in Russia’s reform period: he began as a freelance adviser to Yeltsin, then moved on to overseeing Harvard’s large Russia outpost, funded by the U.S. government.

“Once again a group of self-described revolutionaries huddled in secret to write a radical economic program. As Dimitry Vasiliev, one of the key reformers, recalled, ‘At the start we didn’t have a single employee, not even a fax machine. And in those conditions, in just a month and a half, we had to write a comprehensive privatization program, we had to write twenty normative laws... It was a really romantic period.’
“On October 28, 1991, Yeltsin announced the lifting of price controls, predicting that ‘the liberalization of prices will put everything in its right place’. The ‘reformers’ waited only one week after Gorbachev resigned to launch their economic shock therapy program... [It] also included free-trade policies and the first phase of the rapid-fire privatization of the country’s approximately 225,000 state-owned companies.

“The country was taken by surprise by the “Chicago Boy” program,’ one of Yeltsin’s original economic advisers recalled. ‘That surprise was deliberate, part of Gaidar’s strategy of unleashing change so suddenly and quickly that resistance would be impossible. The problem his team was up against was the usual one: the threat of democracy obstructing their plans. Russians did not want their economy organized by a Communist central committee, but most still believe firmly in wealth redistribution and in an activist role for government. Like the Polish supporters of Solidarity, 67 percent of Russians told pollsters in 1992 they believed workers’ cooperatives were the most equitable way to privatize the assets of the Communist state, and 70 percent said they considered maintaining full employment to be a core function of government. That meant that if Yeltsin’s team had submitted their plans to democratic debate, rather than launching a stealth attack on an already deeply disoriented public, the Chicago School revolution would not have stood a chance...

“Joseph Stiglitz, who at the time was serving as chief economist at the World Bank, summarized the mentality that guided the shock therapists. His metaphors should by now be familiar. ‘Only a blitzkrieg approach during the “window of opportunity” provided by the “fog of transition” would get the changes made before the population had a chance to organize to protect its previous tested interests.’ In other words, the shock doctrine.

“Stiglitz called Russia’s reformers ‘market Bolsheviks’ for their fondness for cataclysmic revolution. However, where the original Bolsheviks fully intended to build their centrally planned state in the ashes of the old, the market Bolsheviks believed in a kind of magic: if the optimal conditions for profit making were created, the country would rebuild itself, no planning required. (It was a faith that would reemerge, a decade later, in Iraq.)

“Yeltsin made wild promises that ‘for approximately six months, things will be worse,’ but then the recovery would begin, and soon enough Russia would be an economic titan, one of the top four economies of the world. This logic of so-called creative destruction resulted in scarce creation and spiraling destruction. After only one year, shock therapy had taken a devastating toll: millions of middle-class Russians had lost their life savings when money lost its value, and abrupt cuts to subsidies meant millions of workers had not been paid in months.15 The average Russian consumed 40 percent less in 1992 than in 1991, and a third of the population fell below the poverty line. The middle class was forced to sell personal belongings from card tables on the streets – desperate acts that the Chicago School economists praised as ‘entrepreneurial’, proof that a capitalist renaissance was indeed under way, one family heirloom and second-hand blazer at a time.

15 The present writer experienced the same in another post-communist country, when employed as a lecturer by Sophia State University in Bulgaria in 1994-94. (V.M.)
“As in Poland, Russians did, eventually, regain their bearings and began to demand an end to the sadistic economic adventure (‘no more experiments’ was a popular piece of graffiti in Moscow at the time). Under pressure from voters, the country’s elected parliament – the same body that had supported Yeltsin’s rise to power – decided it was time to rein in the president and his ersatz Chicago Boys. In December 1992, they voted to unseat Yegor Gaidar, and three months later, in March 1993, the parliamentarians voted to repeal the special powers they had given to Yeltsin to impose his economic laws by decree. The grace period had expired, and the results were abysmal; from now on, laws had to go through parliament, a standard measure in any liberal democracy and following the procedures set out in Russia’s constitution.

“The deputies were acting within their rights, but Yeltsin had grown accustomed to his augmented powers and had come to think of himself less as a president and more as a monarch (he had taken to calling himself Boris I). He retaliated against the parliament’s ‘mutiny’ by going on television and declaring a state of emergency, which conveniently restored his imperial powers. Three days later, Russia’s independent Constitutional Court (the creation of which was one of Gorbachev’s most significant democratic breakthroughs) ruled 9-3 that Yeltsin’s power grab violated, on eight different counts, the constitution he had sworn to uphold.

“Until this point, it had still been possible to present ‘economic reform’ and democratic reform as part of the same project in Russia. But once Yeltsin declared a state of emergency the two projects were on a collision course, with Yeltsin and his shock therapists in direct opposition to the elected parliament and the constitution.

“Nevertheless, the West threw its weight behind Yeltsin, who was still cast in the role of a progressive ‘genuinely committed to freedom and democracy, genuinely committed to reform’, in the words of the then president Bill Clinton. The majority of the Western press also sided with Yeltsin against the entire parliament, whose members were dismissed as ‘communist hard-liners’ trying to roll back democratic reforms. They suffered, according to the New York Times Moscow bureau chief, from ‘a Soviet mentality – suspicious of reform, ignorant of democracy, disdainful of intellectuals or democrats.’

“In fact, these were the same politicians, for all their flaws (and with 1,041 deputies there were plenty), who had stood with Yeltsin and Gorbachev against the coup by the hardliners in 1991, who had voted to dissolve the Soviet Union and who had, until recently, thrown their support behind Yeltsin. Yet The Washington Post opted to cast Russia’s parliamentarians as ‘antigovernment’ – as if they were interlopers and not themselves part of the government.

“In the spring of 1993, the collusion drew closer when parliament brought forward a budget bill that did not follow IMF demands for strict austerity. Yeltsin responded by trying to eliminate the parliament. He hastily threw together a

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16 The real Boris I was Boris Godunov, who at the beginning of the seventeenth century had led Russia into a disastrous “Time of Troubles”. (V.M.)
referendum, supported in Orwellian fashion by the press, which asked voters if they agreed to dissolve parliament and hold snap elections. Not enough voters turned out to give Yeltsin the mandate he needed. He still claimed victory, however, maintaining that the exercise proved the country was behind him, because he had slipped in an entirely non-binding question about whether voters supported his reforms. A slim majority said yes.

“In Russia, the referendum was widely seen as a propaganda exercise, and a failed one at that. The reality was that Yeltsin and Washington were still stuck with a parliament that had the constitutional right to do what it was doing, slowing down the shock therapy transformation. An intense pressure campaign began Lawrence Summers, then U.S. Treasury undersecretary, warned that ‘the momentum for Russian reform must be reinvigorated and intensified to ensure sustained multilateral support.’ The IMF got the message, and an unnamed official leaked to the press that a promised $1.5 billion loan was being rescinded because the IMF was ‘unhappy with Russia’s backtracking on reform’. Pyotr Aven, the former Yeltsin minister, said, ‘The maniacal obsession of the IMF with budgetary and monetary policy, and its absolutely superficial and formal attitude to everything else... placed not a small role in what happened.’

“What happened was that the day after the IMF leak, Yeltsin, confident that he had the West’s support, took his first irreversible step toward what was now being openly referred to as the ‘Pinochet option’: he issued decree 1400, announcing that the constitution was abolished and parliament dissolved. Two days later, a special session of parliament voted 636-2 to impeach Yeltsin for this outrageous act (the equivalent of the U.S. president unilaterally dissolving Congress). Vice-President Aleksandr Rutskoi announced that Russia had already ‘paid a dear price for the political adventurism’ of Yeltsin and the reformers.

“Some kind of armed conflict between Yeltsin and the parliament was now inevitable. Despite the fact that Russia’s Constitutional Court once again ruled Yeltsin’s behavior unconstitutional, Clinton continued to back him, and Congress voted to give Yeltsin $2.5 billion in aid. Emboldened, Yeltsin sent in troops to surround the parliament and get the city to cut off power, heat and phone lines to the White House parliament building. Boris Kagarlitsky, director of the Institute of Globalization Studies in Moscow, told me that supporters of Russian democracy ‘were coming in by the thousands trying to break the blockade. There were two weeks of peaceful demonstrations confronting the troops and police forces, which led to partial unblocking of the parliament building, with people able to bring food and water inside. Peaceful resistance was growing more popular and gaining broader support every day.’

“With each side becoming more entrenched, the only compromise that could have resolved the standoff would have been for both sides to agree to early elections, putting everybody’s job up for public review. Many were urging this outcome, but just as Yeltsin was weighing his options, and reportedly leaning toward elections, news came from Poland that voters had rained down their decisive punishment on Solidarity, the party that had betrayed them with shock therapy.
“After they witnessed Solidarity get pounded at the polls, it was obvious to Yeltsin and his Western advisers that early elections were far too risky. In Russia, too much wealth hung in the balance: huge oil-fields, about 30 percent of the world’s natural gas reserves, 20 percent of its nickel, not to mention weapons factories and the state media apparatus with which the Communist Party had controlled the vast population.

“Yeltsin abandoned negotiations and moved into war posture. Having just doubled military salaries, he had most of the army on his side, and he ‘surrounded the parliament with thousands of Interior Ministry troops, barbed wire and water cannons and refused to let anyone pass,’ according to The Washington Post. Vice-President Rutskoi, Yeltsin’s main rival in parliament, had by this point armed his guards and welcomed proto-fascist nationalists into his camp. He urged his supporters to ‘not give a moment of peace’ to Yeltsin’s ‘dictatorship’. Kagarlitsky, who participated in the protest and wrote a book about the episode, told me that on October 3, crowds of supporters of the parliament ‘marched to the Ostankino TV center to demand that news be announced. Some people in the crowd were armed, but most were not. There were children in the crowd. It was met by Yeltsin’s troops and machineg unned.’ About one hundred demonstrators, and one member of the military, were killed. Yeltsin’s next move was to dissolve all city and regional councils in the country. Russia’s young democracy was being destroyed piece by piece.

“There is no doubt that some parliamentarians showed antipathy for a peaceful settlement by egging on the crowds, but as even the former U.S. State Department official Leslie Gelb wrote, the parliament was ‘not dominated by a bunch of right-wing crazies’. It was Yeltsin’s illegal dissolution of parliament and his defiance of the country’s highest court that precipitated the crisis – moves that were bound to be met by desperate measures in a country that had little desire to give up the democracy it had just won.

“A clear signal from Washington or the EU could have forced Yeltsin to engage in serious negotiations with the parliamentarians, but he received only encouragement. Finally, on the morning of October 4, 1992, Yeltsin fulfilled his long-prescribed destiny and became Russia’s very own Pinochet, unleashing a series of violent events with unmistakable echoes of the coup in Chile exactly twenty years earlier. In what was the third traumatic shock inflicted by Yeltsin on the Russian people, he ordered a reluctant army to storm the Russian White House, setting it on fire and leaving charred the very building he had built his reputation defending just two years earlier. Communism may have collapsed without the firing of a single shot, but Chicago-style capitalism, it turned out, required a great deal of gunfire to defend itself. Yeltsin called in five thousand soldiers, dozens of tanks and armored personnel carriers, helicopters and elite shock troops armed with automatic machine guns – all to defend Russia’s new capitalist economy from the grave threat of democracy…

“By the end of the day, the all-out military assault had taken the lives of approximately five hundred people and wounded almost a thousand, the most violence Moscow had seen since 1917. Peter Reddaway and Dmitri Glinski, who wrote the definitive account of the Yeltsin years (The Tragedy of Russia’s Reforms.
Market Bolshevism against Democracy) point out that ‘during the mopping-up operation in and around the White House, 1,700 persons had been arrested, and 11 weapons seized. Some of the arrested were interned in a sports stadium, recalling the procedures used by Pinochet after the 1973 coup in Chile.’ Many were taken to police stations, where they were severely beaten. Kagarlitsky recalls that while he was being struck on the head, an officer shouted, ‘You wanted democracy, you sons of bitches? We’ll show you democracy!’...”17

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At this point, October, 1994, Russian democracy died, to be replaced by an uncrowned monarch who was largely controlled by a clique of very rich “oligarchs”. The coup had been carried out with the full support of the West, thereby demonstrating what had been evident for some decades already, that the West’s primary concern and value was not democracy, but the free market. Various kinds of dictatorship from Pinochet to the Saudi kings to Yeltsin could be protected and supported – so long as they delivered the economic goods: oil and/or completely unregulated markets that the big western corporations could then exploit at enormous profit. The illusion of democracy was useful, and was especially plausible in countries like Russia where there had certainly been no democracy; so the hugely destructive changes introduced by the economic “experts” could all be described as the necessary transition from despotism to democracy. But “democracy” was the means, the excuse, not the end: the end was the unbridled rule of King Mammon...

“After Yeltsin’s coup,” continues Klein, “Stanley Fischer, first deputy managing director of the IMF (and a 1970s Chicago Boy), advocated ‘moving as fast as possible on all fronts.’ So did Lawrence Summers, who was helping to shape Russia policy in the Clinton administration. The ‘three “-isms”’, as he called them – ‘privatization, stabilization and liberalization’ – must all be completed as soon as possible.’

“Change was so rapid that it was impossible for Russians to keep up. Workers often did not even know that their factories and mines had been sold – let alone how they had been sold or to whom (a profound confusion I would witness a decade later in the state-owned factories of Iraq). In theory, all this wheeling and dealing was supposed to create the economic boom that would lift Russia out of desperation; in practice, the Communist state was simply replaced with a corporatist one: the beneficiaries of the boom were confined to a small club of Russians, many of them former Communist party apparatchiks, and a handful of Western mutual fund managers who made dizzying returns investing in newly privatized Russian companies. A clique of nouveaux billionaires, many of whom were to become part of the group universally known as ‘the oligarchs’ for their imperial levels of wealth and power, teamed up with Yeltsin’s Chicago Boys and stripped the country of nearly everything of value, moving the enormous profits offshore at a rate of $2 billion a month. Before shock therapy, Russia had no millionaires; by 2003, the number of Russian billionaires had rise to seventeen, according to the Forbes list.

“That is partly because, in a rare departure from Chicago School orthodoxy, Yeltsin and his team did not allow foreign multinationals to buy up Russia’s assets

directly; they kept the prizes for Russians, then opened up the newly privatized companies, owned by so-called oligarchs, to foreign shareholders. The returns were still astronomical. ‘Looking for an investment that could gain 2,000 per cent in three years?’ The Wall Street Journal asked. ‘Only one stock market offers that hope... Russia.’ Many investment banks, including Credit Suisse First Boston, as well as a few deep-pocketed financiers, quickly set up dedicated Russian mutual funds...”

However, there was a problem: the ordinary Russian people were not fooled by what was going on, and so the “democratic” cover for the robbery that was going on, Yeltsin, lost popularity – drastically. And so “in December 1994 Yeltsin did what so many desperate leaders [including Serbia’s Slobodan Milošević just a few years earlier] have done throughout history to hold on to power: he started a war. His national security chief, Oleg Lobov, had confided to a legislator, ‘We need a small, victorious war to raise the president’s ratings,’ and the defence minister predicted that his army could defeat the forces in the breakaway republic of Chechnya in a matter of hours – a cakewalk.

“For a while at least, the plan seemed to work. In its first phase, the Chechen independence movement was partially suppressed, and Russian troops took over the already abandoned presidential palace in Grozny, allowing Yeltsin to declare glorious victory. It would prove to be a short-term triumph, both in Chechnya and in Moscow. When Yeltsin faced reelection in 1996, he was still so unpopular and his defeat looked so certain that his advisers toyed with canceling the vote altogether; a letter signed by a group of Russian bankers published in all the Russian national newspapers strongly hinted at this possibility. Yeltsin’s privatization minister, Anatoly Chubais (whom Sachs once described as ‘a freedom fighter’), became one of the most outspoken proponents of the Pinochet option. ‘In order to have a democracy in society there must be a dictatorship in power,’ he pronounced. It was a direct echo of both the excuses made for Pinochet by Chile’s Chicago Boys and Deng Xiaoping’s philosophy of Friedmanism without the freedom.

“In the end the election went ahead and Yeltsin won, thanks to an estimated $100 million in financing from oligarchs (thirty-three times the legal amount) as well as eight hundred times more coverage on oligarch-controlled TV stations than his rivals. With the threat of a sudden change in government removed, the knockoff Chicago Boys were able to move to the most contentious, and most lucrative, part of their program: selling off what Lenin had once called ‘the commanding heights’.

“Forty percent of an oil company comparable in size to France’s Total was sold for $88 million (Total’s sales in 2006 were $193 million). Norilsk Nickel, which produced a fifth of the world’s nickel, was sold for $170 million – even though its profits alone soon reached $1.5 billion annually. The massive oil company Yukos, which controls more oil than Kuwait, was sold for $309 million; it now earns more than $3 billion in revenue a year. Fifty-one percent of the oil giant Sidenko went for $130 million; just two years later this stake would be valued on the international market at $2.8 billion. A huge weapons factory sold for $3 million, the price of a vacation home in Aspen.

18 Klein, op. cit., pp. 231.
“The scandal wasn’t just that Russia’s public riches were auctioned off for a fraction of their worth – it was also that, in true corporatist style, they were purchased with public money. As the Moscow Times journalists Matt Bivens and Jonas Bernstein put it, ‘a few hand-picked men took over Russia’s state-developed oil fields for free, as part of a giant shell game in which one arm of government paid another arm.’ In a bold act of cooperation between the politicians selling the public companies and the businessmen buying them, several of Yeltsin’s ministers transferred large sums of public money, which should have gone into the national bank or treasury, into private banks that had one been hastily incorporated by oligarchs. The state then contracted with the same banks to run the privatization auctions for the oil fields and mines. The banks ran the auctions, but they also bid in them – and sure enough, the oligarch-owned banks decided to make themselves the proud new owners of the previously public assets. The money that they put up to buy the shares in these public companies was likely the same public money that Yeltsin’s ministers had deposited with them earlier. In other words, the Russian people fronted the money for the looting of their own country.

“As one of Russia’s ‘young reformers’ put it, when Russia’s Communists decided to break up the Soviet Union, they made an ‘exchange [of] power for property’. Just like his mentor Pinochet’s, Yeltsin’s own family grew extremely rich, his children and several of their spouses appointed to top posts at large privatized forms.

“With oligarchs firmly in control of the key assets of the Russian state, they opened up their new companies to blue-chip multinationals, who snapped up large portions. In 1997, Royal Dutch/Shell and BP entered into partnerships with two key Russian oil giants, Gazprom and Sidanko. These were highly profitable investments, but the principal share of the wealth in Russia was in the hands of Russian players, not their foreign partners. It is an oversight that the IMF and the U.S. Treasury would successfully rectify in future privatization auctions in Bolivia and Argentina. And in Iraq after the invasion, the U.S. would go even further, attempting to cut the local elite out of lucrative privatization deals entirely.

“Wayne Merry, the chief political analyst at the U.S. embassy in Moscow during the key years of 1990 to 1994, has admitted that the choice between democracy and market interests in Russia was a stark one. ‘The U.S. government chose the economic over the political. We chose the freeing of prices, privatization of industry, and the creation of a really unfettered, unregulated capitalism, and essentially hoped that rule of law, civil society, and representative democracy would develop somehow automatically as a result of that… Unfortunately, the choice was to ignore popular will and to press on with the policy.’”

Shock therapy in Russia “had cracked it open to flows of hot money – short-term speculative investment and currency trading, which are highly profitable. Such intense speculation meant that in 1998, when the Asian financial crisis started spreading, Russia was left wholly unprotected. Its already precarious economy crashed definitively. The public blamed Yeltsin, and his approval rating dropped to an utterly untenable 6 percent. With the futures of many of the oligarchs in jeopardy

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once again, it was going to take yet another major shock to save the economic project and stave off the threat of genuine democracy coming to Russia.

“In September 1999, the country was hit by a series of exceedingly cruel terrorist attacks: seemingly out of the blue, four apartment buildings were blown up in the middle of the night, killing close to three hundred people…”

“The man put in charge of hunting down the ‘animals’ was Russia’s prime minister, the steely and vaguely sinister Vladimir Putin…”

As was revealed by former FSB (KGB) Agent Alexander Litvinenko, the “animals” were in fact the KGB, who staged the explosions and then put the blame onto Chechen terrorists in order to provide an excuse for the start of a Second Chechen war. For his exposures, Litvinenko paid with his life (through Polonium-210 poisoning) in London in 2006. In 2016 the British Supreme Court determined that Putin was “probably” behind the Litvinenko killing.

“Immediately after the apartment bombings, in late September 1999, Putin launched air strikes on Chechnya, attacking civilian areas. In the new light of terror, the fact that Putin was a seventeen-year veteran of the KGB – the most feared symbol of the Communist era – suddenly seemed reassuring to many Russians. With Yeltsin’s alcoholism making him increasingly dysfunctional, Putin the protector was perfectly positioned to succeed him as president. On December 31, 1999, with the war in Chechnya foreclosing serious debate, several oligarchs [notably Berezovsky] engineered a quiet takeover from Yeltsin to Putin, no elections necessary. Before he left power, Yeltsin took one last page out of the Pinochet playbook and demanded legal immunity for himself. Putin’s first act as president was signing a law protecting Yeltsin from any criminal prosecution, whether for corruption or for the military’s killing of pro-democracy demonstrators that took place on his watch.”

Klein concludes her verdict on Yeltsin’s reign as follows: “Yeltsin is regarded by history more as a corrupt buffoon than a menacing strongman. Yet his economic policies, and the wars he waged in order to protect them, contributed significantly to the Chicago School crusade death toll, which has been mounting steadily since Chile in the seventies. In addition to the casualties of Yeltsin’s October coup, the wars in Chechnya have killed an estimated 100,000 civilians. The larger massacres he precipitated have taken place in slow motion, but their numbers are much higher – the ‘collateral damage’ of economic shock therapy.

“In the absence of major famine, plague or battle, never have so many lost so much in so short a time. By 1998, more than 80 percent of Russian farms had gone bankrupt, and roughly seventy thousand state factories had closed, creating an epidemic of unemployment. In 1989, before shock therapy, 2 million people in the Russian Federation were living in poverty, on less than $4 a day. By the time the

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20 Klein, op. cit., pp. 236, 237.
22 Klein, op. cit., p. 237.
shock therapists had administered their ‘bitter medicine’ in the mid-nineties, 74 million Russians were living below the poverty line, according to the World Bank. That means that Russia’s ‘economic reforms’ can claim credit for the impoverishment of 72 million people in only eight years. By 1996, 25 percent of Russians – almost 37 million people – lived in poverty described as ‘desperate’.

“Although millions of Russians have been pulled out of poverty in recent years, thanks largely to soaring oil and gas prices, Russia’s underclass of extreme poor has remained permanent – with all the sicknesses associated with that discarded status. As miserable as life under Communism was, with crowded, cold apartments, Russians at least were housed; in 2006 the government admitted that there were 715,000 homeless kids in Russia, and UNICEF has put the number as high as 3.5 million children.

“During the Cold War, widespread alcoholism was always seen in the West as evidence that life under Communism was so dismal that Russians needed large quantities of vodka to get through the day. Under capitalism, however, Russians drink more than twice as much alcohol as they used to – and they are reaching for harder painkillers as well. Russia’s drug czar, Aleksandr Mikhailov, says that the number of users went up 900 percent from 1994 to 2004, to more than 4 million people, many of them heroin addicts. The drug epidemic has contributed to another silent killer: in 1995, fifty thousand Russians were HIV positive, and in only two years that number doubled; ten years later, according to UNAIDS, nearly a million Russians were HIV positive.

“These are the slow deaths, but there are fast ones as well. As soon as shock therapy was introduced in 1992, Russia’s already high suicide rate began to rise; 1994, the peak of Yeltsin’s ‘reforms’, saw the suicide rate climb to almost double what it had been eight years earlier. Russians also killed each other with much greater frequency; by 1994, violent crime had increased more than fourfold.

“’What have our motherland and her people gotten out of the last 15 criminal years?’ Vladimir Gusev, a Moscow academic, asked at a 2006 democracy demonstration. ‘The years of criminal capitalism have killed off 10 percent of our population.’ Russia’s population is indeed in dramatic decline – the country is losing roughly 700,000 people a year. Between 1992, the first full year of shock therapy, and 2006, Russia’s population shrank by 6.6 million. Three decades ago, André Gunder Frank, the dissident Chicago economist, wrote a letter to Milton Friedman accusing him of ‘economic genocide’. Many Russians describe the slow disappearance of their fellow citizens in similar terms today.

“This planned misery is made all the more grotesque because the wealth accumulated by the elite is flaunted in Moscow as nowhere else outside of a handful of oil emirates. In Russia today, wealth is so stratified that the rich and the poor seem to be living not only in different countries but in different centuries. One time zone is downtown Moscow, transformed in fast-forward into a futuristic twenty-first-

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23 One explanation provided by Schema-Monk Epiphany (Chernov) is that one in four Russians were employed as spies on their neighbours by the KGB, and vodka served to drown the guilt this engendered. (V.M.)
century sin city, where oligarchs race around in black Mercedes convoys, guarded by top-of-the-line mercenary soldiers, and where Western money managers are seduced by the open investment rules by day and by on-the-house prostitutes by night. In the other time zone, a seventeen-year-old provincial girl, asked about her hopes for the future, replied, ‘It’s difficult to talk about the twenty-first century when you’re sitting here reading by candlelight. The twenty-first century does not matter. It’s the nineteenth century here.’

“The pillage of a country with as much wealth as Russia required extreme acts of terror – from the torching of the parliament to the invasion of Chechnya. ‘Policy that breeds poverty and crime,’ writes Georgi Arbatov, one of Yeltsin’s original (and ignored) economic advisers, ‘... can survive only if democracy is suppressed.’ Just as it had been in the Southern Cone, in Bolivia under the state of siege, in China during Tiananmen. Just as it would be in Iraq...”

Writing in 1998, Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of Russia’s democratic party Yabloko, wrote: “Corporatist states, marked by high-level criminality but bearing the trappings of democracy, differ more than is sometimes recognized from Western-style market democracies. Their markets are driven by oligarchs, whose goal is increasing their personal wealth. Freedom of the press and other civil liberties are suppressed. Laws are frequently ignored or suspended and constitutions obeyed only when convenient. Corruption is rife from the streets to the halls of power. Personalities, contacts, and clans count for more than institutions and laws. For examples, one need only reflect on the unhappy experiences of many Latin American countries in the 1970s and 1980s...

“... While Russia has its economic successes, many aspects of the economy suggest that it is moving toward a corporatist market in which corruption is rampant. The most important of these trends is the rise of the Russian oligarchs, who have created a form of robber-baron capitalism. Far from creating an open market, Russia has consolidated a semi-criminal oligarchy that was already largely in place under the old Soviet system. After communism’s collapse, it merely changed it appearance, just as a snake sheds its skin…”

The snake shed its skin once more only two years later, when Putin came to power. He simply replaced one set of robber-barons by another, still wealthier and still more criminal clan or gang. What was added was a powerful “boss of bosses” to introduce “order” into this criminal world, guaranteeing the maximum and most efficient profit and corruption. As Anton Grigoriev puts it: “In the 1990s there was disorganized criminality. In the 2000s this was turned into the vertically integrated backbone of the new order.”


3. RUSSIA IN THE 1990s: THE SPIRITUAL FAILURE

The ROCOR philosopher Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin (+1954) said: “Russia will be regenerated only when in the soul of the Russian man there will again appear an altar for God and a throne for the Tsar”. These two conditions required the removal of two obstacles or spiritual mountains in the way of the building of God’s Temple (Zechariah 4:7): (1) the Moscow Patriarchate, that KGB-controlled mockery of an Orthodox church, enabling a true altar to be erected to the true God, and (2) the ideology of democracy, enabling a truly autocratic (i.e. Orthodox, not western-style, constitutional, and still less a despotic, absolutist) monarchism to take its place. Let us look at what progress was made towards these goals in the 1990s.

St. Paul said: “All things work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8:28), and the economic catastrophe of the 1990s had at least this good consequence: it enabled many Russians to see that communism and democracy were not simple opposites, the one evil and the other good. As long as Russians denounced communism but praised democracy, without seeing the close historical and philosophical kinship between these two western heresies, it was impossible for them to understand the real roots of the revolution and therefore return to True Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, already early in the 1990s Orthodox Russians were beginning to see the real nature, not only of the October Bolshevik-Communist, but also of the February Democratic-Masonic revolution that preceded it…

But at the beginning the tide was running in the opposite direction… In 1992 the Freemasons regained the power they had lost in Russia in 1922. Thus the Masonic historian Richard Rhoda wrote: “This writer has been advised in a letter of April 22, 1996 of the following by George Dergachev, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Russia. On January 14, 1992, the first regular Lodge ‘Harmony’ was constituted in Moscow by the Grand Lodge Nationale Française. This lodge now has 41 members.

“September 8, 1993 will be a memorable day in Russian Freemasonry, for three more lodges were constituted by the Grand Lodge Nationale Française: Lotus No. 2 in Moscow with 36 current members; New Astrea No. 3 in St. Petersburg with 19 current members; and Gamaïoun No. 4 in Voronezh with 13 current members...

“M.W. Bro. Dergachev writes: ‘Most of the Brothers have graduated from the Universities. Among them there are scientists, journalists, businessmen, bankers, officers of the Army, Navy, policemen, engineers, writers, producers and lawyers.’ These four Regular Daughter Lodges of the Grand Lodge Nationale Française formed the Grand Lodge of Russia on June 24, 1995. In addition to their Mother Grand Lodge, they have been recognized by the Grand Lodges of Poland, Hungary and New York. The Grand Master and Bro. Vladimir Djanguirian, his Grand Secretary, attended by invitation the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of New York this past May…”

Nor was the Masonic movement in Russia just an unimportant fad. For President Yeltsin himself became a Freemason in 1992 (as announced in Pravda); while his

successor, the KGB Lieutenant-Colonel Vladimir Putin, became one in Germany, where he was stationed at the time. Nevertheless, the economic catastrophe of the 1990s served to disillusion Russians with democracy, and therefore with Masonry by association...

Instead, in the midst of poverty, anarchy and crime, many began to long nostalgically for the “order” of the Soviet period, considering that the cheapness of Soviet sausages outweighed the destruction of tens of millions of souls through Soviet violence and atheist propaganda. Like the children of Israel who became disillusioned with the rigorous freedom (combined with serpents) of the desert, they began to long once more for the fleshpots of Egypt, for the slavery which had nevertheless guaranteed them a certain standard of living and to which they had become accustomed. But unlike the Israelites, the wanderers in the desert of post-Soviet Russia had no Moses to urge them ever onwards to the Promised Land.

True, they felt the need for such a leader; and if many still longed for the return of a Stalin, there were others who preferred the image of Tsar Nicholas II, whose increasing veneration among the people (if not among the hierarchs) was one of the most encouraging phenomena of the 1990s. But veneration for the pre-revolutionary tsars was not going to bring about the appearance of a post-revolutionary tsar unless that veneration was combined with repentance. Few understood that the people had to become worthy of such a tsar by a return to the True Church and a life based on the commandments of God. Otherwise, if they continued to worship the golden calf, the new Moses, like the old one, would break the tablets of the new law before their eyes. And if they continued to follow the new Dathans and Abirams of the heretical MP, then under their feet, too, the earth would open up – or they would be condemned to wander another forty years in the desert, dying before they reached the promised land of a cleansed and Holy Russia.

As time passed, the corrupting and divisive effects of Russian “democracy” as ruled by Masons, Mafia criminals and Chicago economists became more and more evident. Pornography and crime of all kinds increased dramatically; and in the opinion of many it was now more difficult to bring up children in true Christian piety than it had been in the Soviet period. The general level of culture also declined; and the freedom given to religion turned out to be more to the advantage of all kinds of sects and false religions than to True Orthodoxy...

In fact, it was not so much a real religious renaissance as what Bishop Theophan the Recluse had prophesied over a century before: “Although the Christian name will be heard everywhere, and everywhere will be visible churches and ecclesiastical ceremonies, all this will be just appearances, and within there will be true apostasy. On this soil the Antichrist will be born...”28

That the return of democracy would not bring with it a real cleansing of political life became evident when none of the communist persecutors of the previous seventy years throughout Eastern Europe were brought to trial for their crimes. As was noted above, there was no lustration process, no “decommunization” analogous to the

28 Bishop Theophan, Tolkovanie na Vtoroe Poslanie sv. Apostola Paola k Soluniam (Interpretation of the Second Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians), 2.3-5.
denazification that took place in Germany in 1945. Consequently, one group of “repentant” communists, sensing the signs of the political times, seized power in 1991 in a “democratic” coup and immediately formed such close and dependent ties with its western allies that the formerly advanced (if inefficient) economy of Russia was transformed into a scrap-heap of obsolescent factories, on the one hand, and a source of cheap raw materials for the West, on the other. Another group, playing on the sense of betrayal felt by many, formed a nationalist opposition – but an opposition characterized by hatred, envy and negativism rather than a constructive understanding of the nation’s real spiritual needs and identity. Still others, using the contacts and dollars acquired in their communist days, went into “business” – that is, a mixture of crime, extortion and the worst practices of capitalism. It is little wonder that True Orthodox churches felt it necessary to retain the prayer to be delivered “from the bitter torment of atheist rule”…

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The apparent fall of communism throughout most of the Soviet bloc in 1989-91 raised hopes of a restoration of True Orthodoxy in Russia, which, if they seem naïve in retrospect, were nevertheless very real at the time. In retrospect, we can see that the changes introduced by glasnost’ and perestroika were less fundamental than at first appeared, and that the spirit and power of communism was far from dead when the red flag was pulled down from over the Kremlin on December 25, 1991. If some of the economic ideas of the revolution were discredited, and if its persecution of religion was removed, its fundamental concepts – the replacement of the Church by the State, God by the people, Tradition by science, Spirit by matter – remained as firmly entrenched as ever.

Nevertheless, the changes were significant enough to indicate the beginning of a new era. If we seek for historical parallels, then we can recall the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel to Jerusalem after their 70-year captivity in Babylon, or the Edict of Milan in 313, when the Emperor St. Constantine the Great came to an agreement with the pagan emperor Licinius to end the persecution of the Christians in the Roman empire. The problem for the Christians of the 1990s was: no Zerubbabel or Constantine was in sight.

The True Orthodox Christians of the Catacomb Church were cautious, fearing a deception. They were not convinced that the leopard had not changed its spots (Jeremiah 13.23), believing that the communists had merely assumed the mask of “democrats”, the wolves had simply put on sheep’s clothing while remaining inwardly as ravenous as before (Matthew 7.15). In general, therefore, they remained in the underground, not seeking to register their communities or acquire above-ground churches in which to worship.

Meanwhile, the Moscow Patriarchate (MP) – or “Soviet church” was fearful that its monopoly position in church life under the Soviets would be lost in the new democracy. Nevertheless, it took the opportunity presented by the new legislation to receive all the money budgeted for church restoration by the Russian parliament and

open many churches (1830 were opened in the first nine months of 1990 alone).

The first question to be answered was: how were the political changes to be evaluated? Was the collective Antichrist really dead? Was this only a temporary “breathing space” in which the Antichrist was preparing a new, subtler, and more deadly onslaught? Or was a real resurrection of Holy Rus’ about to take place, albeit after a difficult transitional phase?

The Church certainly stood to gain important benefits from democratization. Thus the fall of communism came not a moment too soon for the beleaguered Catacomb Church, which was divided and desperately short of bishops of unquestioned Orthodoxy and apostolic succession. As we have seen, ROCOR had been enabled ROCOR to enter Russia and regenerate the hierarchy of the True Church.

Again, the introduction of freedom of speech and the press enabled millions of Soviet citizens to learn the truth about their state and church for the first time. On the basis of this knowledge, they could now seek entrance into the True Church without the fear of being sent to prison or the camps. In the wave of disillusion with post-Soviet democracy that followed in the mid-1990s, it was pointed out – rightly – that freedom is a two-edged weapon, which can destroy as well as give life, and that “freedom” had brought Russia poverty and crime as well as goods on the shelves and interesting newspapers. However, for the soul thirsting for truth there is no more precious gift than the freedom to seek and find; and that opportunity was now, at last, presented to the masses.

On the other hand, only a minority of Russians used this freedom to seek the truth that makes one truly, spiritually free. And so if the fall of communism in 1989-91 was a liberation, it was a liberation strangely lacking in joy. Orthodoxy was restored neither to the state nor to the official church, and the masses of the people remained unconverted. Ten years later, a priest of the MP could claim that “the regeneration of ecclesiastical life has become a clear manifestation of the miraculous transfiguration of Russia”.

But behind the newly gilded cupolas reigned heresy and corruption on a frightening scale.

Thus Fr. Paul Adelheim, an MP priest who was killed in mysterious circumstances in the early 2000s, wrote: “Spiritual life is being destroyed and annihilated – moreover, it is being annihilated deliberately, of course, by the Moscow Patriarchate itself. It is destroying what it is possible to destroy in the Church... Our faith in the Church has been substituted by ideology. The Church has taken the place of the former Politburo of the USSR. That is what they call it now. They say that Russia is headed by chekists [KGB agents] and churchmen. It turns out in fact that there is no place in this Church for Christ.” Moreover, surveys showed that although the numbers of those confessing themselves to be Orthodox Christians had risen, the...

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31 However, according to Vladimir Rozanskij (“Rome and Moscow: a willing separation?” Asia News, 3 June, 2004), the “Moscow’ authorities confirmed that ‘for Easter [2004] less than 1% of the population attended any kind of religious service’. In the last ten years, there are twenty times more churches than there were under communism, with buildings being built or reopened. Yet in relation to the immediate post-communism years, only one third of people now attend the services”.

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correctness and depth of belief of these new Christians was very much open to question\textsuperscript{32}... More people called themselves “Orthodox” than confessed to believing in God!

In September, 1991, Patriarch Alexis of Moscow said, in justification of the Moscow Patriarchate’s cooperation with Stalin in the 1920s and 30s: “A church that has millions of faithful cannot go into the catacombs. The hierarchy of the church has taken the sin on their souls: the sin of silence and of lying for the good of the people in order that they not be completely removed from real life. In the government of the diocese and as head of the negotiations for the patriarchate of Moscow, I also had to cede one point in order to defend another. I ask pardon of God, I ask pardon, understanding and prayers of all those whom I harmed through the concessions, the silence, the forced passivity or the expressions of loyalty that the hierarchy may have manifested during that period.”\textsuperscript{33}

This is closer to self-justification than repentance (and was in any case contradicted by later statements). It is similar to the statement of Metropolitan Nicholas (Corneanu) of Banat of the Romanian Patriarchate, who confessed that he had collaborated with the Securitate, the Romanian equivalent of the KGB, and had defrocked the priest Fr. Calciu for false political reasons, but nevertheless declared that if he had not made such compromises he would have been forced to abandon his post, “which in the conditions of the time would not have been good for the Church”. In other words, as Vladimir Kozyrev writes: “It means: ‘I dishonoured the Church and my Episcopal responsibility, I betrayed those whom I had to protect, I scandalized my flock. But all this I had to do for the good of the Church!’”\textsuperscript{34}

In another interview in 1997 Patriarch Alexis said, referring to the Church in the time of Patriarch Tikhon: “The Church could not, did not have the right, to go into the catacombs. She remained together with the people and drank to the dregs the cup of sufferings that fell to its lot.”\textsuperscript{35} Patriarch Alexis here forgot to mention that Patriarch Tikhon specifically blessed Michael Zhizhilenko, the future Hieromartyr Maximus of Serpukhov, to become a secret catacomb bishop if the pressure on the Church from the State became too great. As for his claim that the sergianists shared the cup of the people’s suffering, this must be counted as conscious hypocrisy. It is well known that the Soviet hierarchs lived a life of considerable luxury, while lifting not a finger for the Catacomb Christians and dissidents sent to torments and death in KGB prisons!

On November 9, 2001, the patriarch threw off the mask of repentance completely, stating in defence of the declaration: “This was a clever step by which Metropolitan

\textsuperscript{32} Kimmo Kaariainen, \textit{Religion in Russia after the Collapse of Communism}, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998, p. 84; Tatiana Senina, “Ty nosish’ imia, budto zhiv, no ty mertv” (You have the name of being alive, but you are dead), \textit{Vertograd-Inform}, September-October, 2000, pp. 46-72.

\textsuperscript{33} 30 Dias (Thirty Days), Rome/Sao Paolo, August-September, 1991, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{34} Kozyrev, “[orthodox-synod] Re: The Orthodox Episcopate of the Russian persecuted Church”, \texttt{orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com}. 28 November, 2002.

Sergius tried to save the church and clergy. In declaring that the members of the Church want to see themselves as part of the motherland and want to share her joys and sorrows, he tried to show to those who were persecuting the church and who were destroying it that we, the children of the church, want to be loyal citizens so that the affiliation of people with the church would not place them outside the law.”

So the greatest act of betrayal in Russian history was “a clever step”, which did not destroy the Judas and those who followed him but “saved the church and clergy”!

After the failure of the putsch articles began to appear revealing the links of the Church hierarchy with the KGB. Rattled, the patriarch wrote to Frs. Gleb Yakunin and George Edelstein that their articles were “full of the spirit of unscrupulous blasphemy against the Church.”

One of the biggest fruits of glasnost’ – which did not, however, lead to a real ecclesiastical perestroika – was the confirmation in January, 1992, by a Commission of the Presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet investigating the causes and circumstances of the 1991 putsch, that for several decades at least the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate had been KGB agents. Members of the commission - L. Ponomarev, V. Polosin and Fr. Gleb Yakunin - obtained access to the records of the fourth, Church department of the KGB’s Fifth Directorate (in which the future president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, had worked), and revealed that Metropolitanans Juvenal of Krutitsa, Pitirim of Volokolamsk, Philaret of Kiev and Philaret of Minsk were all KGB agents, with the codenames “Adamant”, “Abbat”, “Antonov” and “Ostrovsky”.

This “news” was hardly unexpected. In 1989 Kharchev, Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, confirmed that the Russian Orthodox Church was rigorously controlled by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, especially its Ideological Department, and by the KGB. Again, Victor Sheimov, a former KGB major with responsibilities for upgrading the KGB’s communications security system until his defection in 1980, described the Fifth Directorate as being “responsible for suppressing ideological dissent, running the Soviet Orthodox Church and laying the groundwork for the First Chief Directorate’s subversive promotion of favourable opinion about the country’s position and policy.”

One of Sheimov’s jobs was to draft agents to infiltrate the “Soviet Orthodox Church”. Again, in 1992 a former KGB agent, A. Shushpanov, described his experiences working in the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department of External Ecclesiastical Relations. He said that most of the people working there were in fact KGB agents.

But it was the Commission’s report on March 6 that contained the most shocking revelations: “KGB agents, using such aliases as Sviatoslav, Adamant, Mikhailov, Nesterovich, Ognev and others, made trips abroad, organised by the Russian

36 http://www.ripnet.org/besieged/rparocora.htm
38 Kharchev, Argumenty i Fakty (Arguments and Facts), 1992, № 8, p. 5.
Orthodox Department of External Relations [which was headed by Metropolitan Cyril (Gundiaev), the future patriarch], performing missions assigned to them by the leadership of the KGB. The nature of their missions shows that this department was inseparably linked with the state and that it had emerged as a covert centre of KGB agents among the faithful.”

Again: “The Commission draws the attention of the Russian Orthodox Church leadership to the fact that the Central Committee of the CPSU and KGB agencies have used a number of church bodies for their purposes by recruiting and planting KGB agents. Such deep infiltration by intelligence service agents into religious associations poses a serious threat to society and the State. Agencies that are called upon to ensure State security can thus exert uncontrolled impact on religious associations numbering millions of members, and through them on the situation at home and abroad.”

The findings of the Commission included:- (i) the words of the head of the KGB Yury Andropov to the Central Committee sometime in the 1970s: “The organs of state security keep the contacts of the Vatican with the Russian Orthodox Church under control…”; (ii) “At the 6th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, the religious delegation from the USSR contained 47 (!) agents of the KGB, including religious authorities, clergy and technical personnel” (July, 1983); (iii) “The most important were the journeys of agents ‘Antonov’, ‘Ostrovsky’ and ‘Adamant’ to Italy for conversations with the Pope of Rome on the question of further relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church, and in particular regarding the problems of the uniates” (1989).

The Commission also discovered, but did not publish the fact, that the patriarch himself was an agent with the codename “Drozdov” (he was thought to have the rank of major). This was not made public because, writes Fen Montaigne, “members of the parliamentary commission had told the patriarch that they would not name him as an agent if he began cleaning house in the church and acknowledging the breadth of cooperation between the church and the KGB. ‘So far, we have kept silence because we wanted to give the patriarch a chance,’ said Alexander Nezhny, a journalist who said his comparison of the archives and church bulletins convinced

him that Alexis II is indeed ‘Drozdov’.”

Later investigations confirmed the fact. Thus on March 18, 1996 the Estonian newspaper Postimes published the following KGB report from the Estonian SSR: “Agent ‘Drozdov’, born in 1929, a priest of the Orthodox Church, has a higher education, a degree in theology, speaks Russian and Estonian perfectly, and some limited German. He enlisted on February 28, 1958 out of patriotic feelings in order to expose and drive out the anti-Soviet elements among the Orthodox clergy, with whom he has connections, which represents an overriding interest to the KGB agencies. At the time of enlistment it was taken into consideration that in the future (after securing his practical work) he would be promoted through the available channels to Bishop of Tallinn and Estonia. In the period of his collaboration with the organs of the KGB, ‘Drozdov’ has proved himself in a positive manner, is accurate in his reports, energetic and sociable. He understands theological matters and international situations well, is eager to carry out tasks given him by us and has already presented a good quantity of worthy material… After securing the agent in practical jobs for the agencies of state security concretely worked out, we intend to use him to further our interests by sending him into the capitalist countries as a member of ecclesiastical organizations.”

Nevertheless, what had been revealed was so shocking that the parliamentary commission was closed down by Ruslan Khasbulatov, the President of the Supreme Soviet, at the insistence, according to Ponomarev, of Patriarch Alexis and the head of the KGB, Yevgeny Primakov. One of the commission’s members, Fr. Gleb Yakunin, was accused of betraying state secrets to the United States and threatened with a private persecution. Fr. Gleb remained defiant. He wrote to the Patriarch in 1994: “If the Church is not cleansed of the taint of the spy and informer, it cannot be reborn. Unfortunately, only one archbishop – Archbishop Chrysostom of Lithuania – has had the courage publicly to acknowledge that in the past he worked as an agent, and has revealed his codename: RESTAVRATOR. No other Church hierarch has followed his example, however.

“The most prominent agents of the past include DROZDOV – the only one of the churchmen to be officially honoured with an award by the KGB of the USSR, in 1988, for outstanding intelligence services – ADAMANT, OSTROVSKY, MIKHAILOV, TOPAZ AND ABBAT. It is obvious that none of these or the less exalted agents is preparing to repent. On the contrary, they deliver themselves of pastoral maxims on the allegedly neutral character of informing on the Church, and articles have appeared in the Church press justifying the role of the informer as essential for the survival of the Church in an anti-religious state.

“The codenames I discovered in the archives of the KGB belong to the top hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate.”

After citing this letter, Vasily Mitrokhin, former chief archivist of the KGB, and Professor Christopher Andrew comment: “The letter to Aleksi II was unprecedented in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church – for, as the Patriarch must surely have been aware, DROZDOV, the most important of the KGB agents discovered by Father Gleb in the KGB archives, was in fact himself…”

In April, 1992, Archbishop Chrysostom of Vilnius said in an interview: “I cooperated with the KGB… but I was not a stool-pigeon…. Yes, we – or, at any rate, I, and I am saying this in the first place about myself – cooperated with the KGB. I cooperated, I gave my signature, I had regular meetings, I gave reports. I have my pseudonym or nickname, as they say – ‘Restavrator’. I cooperated with them consciously so as insistently to pursue my own church line – a patriotic line, too, as I understood it, with the help of these organs. I was never a stool-pigeon, I was not an informer… But together with those among us hierarchs, there are still more among the priests, there is a mass of unworthy, immoral people. It was this immorality, in the absence of a church court among us, that the KGB used. They defended them from us, the ruling bishops, so that we could not punish them.”

In the same year he declared to the Council of Bishops of the MP: “In our Church there are genuine members of the KGB, who have made head-spinning careers; for example, Metropolitan Methodius of Voronezh. He is a KGB officer [code-name PAUL], an atheist, a liar, who is constantly advised by the KGB. The Synod was unanimously against such a bishop, but we had to take upon us such a sin. And then what a rise he had!” According to ex-KGB agent Konstantin Preobrazhensky, Methodius was in fact not only a KGB agent, but “a regular officer of the GRU, the Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Defence Ministry”. In the KGB they call such people ‘officers of deep cover’. There are quite a few of them in today’s Moscow Patriarchate.”

At the same Council, a commission of eight MP bishops headed by Bishop Alexander of Kostroma was formed to investigate the charges of collaboration with the KGB. This commission has up to now (twenty-six years later) produced absolutely nothing! In view of the lack of a clear-out of KGB hierarchs, it remains true that, as the saying went, “the MP is the last surviving department of the KGB” or “the second administration of the Soviet state”.

Writing in 1995, John Dunlop concluded that “the overwhelming majority of the current one hundred and nineteen bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate were ordained to the episcopacy prior to August of 1991. This suggests that each of these bishops was carefully screened and vetted by both the ideological apparatus of the Communist Party and by the KGB.” Keston College came to the same conclusion.

47 Preobrazhensky, “Ecumenism and Intelligence”.
In fact, according to former KGB Lieutenant Colonel Konstantin Preobrazhensky, “Absolutely all [my italics – V.M.] the bishops and the overwhelming majority of the priests worked with the KGB. After all, the Church was considered to be a hostile medium, and it had to be controlled through agents. Even the very mechanism of appointing bishops allowed only agents there.

“Bishops were put into the nomenklatura of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and so each one was confirmed by the Ideological department. And what department sent documents there for important personnel appointments? You’re right: the KGB. The certificate on the future bishop was prepared by the Fifth administration, which carried out a general watch over the Church, together with the spy service, if he had been even once abroad. Each of the certificates ended with the same phrase: ‘He has been cooperating since such-and-such a year’.

“This was precisely the most important thing for the Central Committee of the CPSU! This phrase witnessed to the fact that the future bishop was not only loyal to Soviet power, but was hanging from it by a hook: after all, there are unfailingly compromising materials on every agent! And this means that no dissident outbursts were to be expected from this bishop…”

Other leading hierarchs in the Soviet bloc were communist agents. Thus Patriarch Ilia of Georgia was enrolled as an agent in 1962 – and still remains in power today, in 2018. Metropolitan Savva of Poland was recruited by the Polish communist security forces in 1966, with the codename “Yurek”. Another Polish Church leader, Metropolitan Basil, was also an agent. The Romanian hierarchy was thoroughly penetrated. So was the Bulgarian. The first Serbian patriarch to be an agent of the Yugoslav equivalent of the KGB was Patriarch German from about 1960.

With the KGB firmly back in the saddle, it is not surprising that the corruption in the Moscow Patriarchate continued unchecked. One anonymous member of the MP analyzed the situation as follows: “In spite of the liberation and a certain revival of Church life in recent years, her real situation has not changed markedly for the better. What is the use of an increasing number of baptisms if out of a thousand baptized scarcely one or two can be found who want to become Christians in our sense of the word, but practically everyone considers themselves to be ‘believers’ (in whom?)? What is the use of a growing number of publications of spiritual literature when clearly anti-church and heretical literature is spread at a far faster rate? What is the use of mass weddings when the number of abortions and divorces grows much faster, not to speak of every other kind of sexual immorality? What is the use of transmitting Divine services on television when the great majority of observers of these programmes do not themselves want to pray in church, preferring to play the role of ‘fans’, while those who seriously live the life of the Church hardly watch television? What is the point of teaching the Law of God in schools when all the rest

of the school programme remains atheist and a pupil of the sixth class ‘goes through’
the Bible stories in the section of the literature course entitled ‘fairytales’, and takes
exams on the history of the ancient world and the sections on Christianity in
accordance with exactly the same textbook as fifteen years ago? And even if there is a
serious attitude towards the Law of God in the school, what is the point of it if the
child’s atheist parents do not teach him Church life, confession and the sacraments,
prayer and fasting? Will such learning profit him?

“We are not talking in detail here about the de facto fall of Orthodoxy in West
Ukraine…, about the rapid growth and spread of Latinism, of Protestantism, of the
special heresy that strives to unite Christianity with Judaism, of Krishnaism, ‘non-
traditional medicine’, astrology, sorcery and the most various kinds of satanism. We
are also not talking here about the open campaign of moral corruption through all
the means of mass communication, which are almost exclusively in the hands of the
enemies of the Church and the fatherland.

“The main thing is that our Church [the MP] has practically renounced the ideals
of Holy Russia and Orthodox Statehood as moral-dogmatic standards, but has
become entwined in the rabbles of democratic politicians, and while breathing a sigh
of nostalgia for the Bolsheviks has begun in the persons of her hierarchs to bless all
the initiatives of the new power. This has led to our present position of being unable
to resist this concentrated and deeply positioned attack of the enemy forces against
the Church, which, moreover, has to a significant degree allowed the enemy to enter
the Church and sow his tares in her midst. For example, how can we resist the
widely disseminated teaching of Protopriest Alexander Men, who departed far from
Orthodoxy, but which has been condemned as a heresy by nobody? Only one small,
albeit very well written brochure has appeared in a very limited edition. In the
conditions of democracy everyone receives blessings for everything, and in the first
place those who do evil are blessed for their evil activities. And we have to look on
with horror as the flock of Christ is scattered by wolves before our very eyes…”

Archpriest Lev Lebedev, a convert from the MP to ROCOR, who suddenly and
mysteriously died in a New York hotel room in 1997 just as he was about to give a
blistering report on the MP to the ROCOR Synod, was still more trenchant in his
criticism:

“Only after… 1990, in a situation and atmosphere of relative civil liberty, and
especially after the staged supposed ‘putsch’ of the dissolution of the CPSU in 1991
and even of Soviet power in 1993 (!), did the following become completely clear. The
‘Patriarchate’ in the former Sovdepia was not at all an unfree, enslaved ‘Church of
silence’, as it was sometimes called. Its hierarchy had already for a very long time, not
at all under coercion, nor under pressure, but completely voluntarily and from the
soul, been attempting to please the Soviet regime. They were not the ‘new martyrs’
for the Church that they presented themselves as to their flock, and which is how
some observers from outside were inclined to see them. The point is that the
episcopate of the ‘patriarchate’ constructed by Sergius had more and more with
every succeeding generation (replenishment) truly fraternised and become friendly with

52 Anonymous, “O Pravoslavnom Tsarstve i Poslednem Vremeni” (On the Orthodox Kingdom and
the Last Times), no date or place of publication.
the partocrats, the nomenklatura of the CPSS, to the extent that the nomenklatura degenerated morally and ideologically! So that the bishops of the ‘patriarchate’, and especially the highest ones, that is, those who held real power in the Church, became one with the partocrats in spirit, in their manner of thinking, even, to a large extent, in their language (the use of stock phrases from the newspapers in their sermons and speeches had been noted long before). If there is anything more despicable in the world than the Soviet ‘cultural intelligentsia’, then it can only be the episcopate of the Moscow ‘patriarchate’! The princes (and ‘princelets’) of the church, exactly like the party boyars, began to be distinguished by an unbelievable haughtiness and arrogance towards those subject to them, and by the basest servility towards those above them, surrounding themselves with houses, dacha-palaces, crowds of toady-lackeys and every kind of luxury. Just like the partocrats, the bloated bishops of the ‘patriarchate’ became thieves from the public purse and swindlers, and acquired an amazing capacity to look with honest, clear eyes on an interlocutor or at their flock and deliberately deceive them in the most convincing manner. Their mendacity, their infinite mendacity almost in everything became a real second nature of the ‘patriarchal’ hierarchy. ‘Evil communications…’ If ecumenism made the Moscow ‘patriarchate’ one in spirit with all the heretics, and even with non-Christians, with whom it entered into spiritual communion through joint prayers, then sergianism made it one in spirit with the partocracy. Now, when the very partocracy has abandoned even the communist ideology that held it together, and even its own party, so as to become openly private owners of the huge resources stolen from the country and the people, and for that reason has ‘rebranded’ itself as democracy, while holding power in Russia as before, the ‘patriarchate’, being as before one with it, serves it on mutually beneficial terms. However, as we have seen, from now on the ‘patriarchate’ has started more and more openly to orient itself on the real masters of the situation – the Jews.

“Like all smart dealers ‘of this world’, the bishops of ‘the patriarchate’ are no longer able to maintain real ecclesiastical brotherhood and friendship in their relationships with each other. Jealousy, envy, enmity, intrigues and denunciations against each other have become the norm of their mutual relations. This has been transmitted to the clergy. If there are several priests in a parish, there can never be true friendship between them; jealousy and envy have become the norm. There is no point even speaking about Christian love among the clergy.

“‘The fish begins to rot from the head.’ This condition and behaviour of the hierarchy of the Moscow ‘patriarchate’ has been transferred, not without opposition, to the lower levels – through the middle clergy to the people, the flock, where it received the most powerful and long-lasting resistance. But with time even the flock ‘gave in’. In the mass of the Christians of the churches of the ‘patriarchate’, mutual love has become extremely scarce; more and more its place has been taken by jealousy, envy and the most terrible bitterness against each other (especially on the kliroses and at the money ‘desks’), a bitterness such as you will not find in secular establishments! In the last 10 years this has reached the level of pathological fear of each other in connection with suspicions of witchcraft! Many in the churches now fear to receive a prosphora or boiled wheat or a candle from each other… There where faith has withered there have grown up, like poisonous mushrooms, the most varied superstitions! And, you know, they really do practise witchcraft! And not only in the
villages, but also in the cities, moreover completely educated people! They learn from each other methods of ‘black’ and ‘white’ magic, spells, ‘charms’ and ‘anti-charms’. Sorcerers send their ‘patients’ to certain priests, and these in their turn – to sorcerers. Healer-sorcerers have appeared in the midst of the clergy… They go to him in droves, not only from the diocese, but also from other regions. The profit from it is very large. Batiushka generously shares it with the bishop, and for that reason the bishop does not touch him, in spite of the outrage of his brethren and some of the believers!… Suffering from spells and the evil eye have become very widespread illnesses amongst parishioners. Medicine in such cases is useless, it cannot even establish a diagnosis. And people suffer terribly! You should see (especially in the countryside) this bewitched, hunched-up, deformed humanity! And all this is from their own people, as a result of envy and revenge….

“There where hatred has taken the place of love, you can say what you like, only it is not the Church of Christ, and especially not the Russian Orthodox Church.

“The quality of faith has changed to an unrecognizable extent. To put it more bluntly, among people of that social milieu where to this day they sincerely suppose that an abandoned church is very suitable for a lavatory, among people of this milieu faith has long ago been turned into some church-like paganism, where everything comes down to ‘sacrifices’ to God, so that He may not punish them, or give them something they are asking for. Among people of a higher cultural level, alongside this a thirst for ‘spiritual experiences’ is also noticeable. But if there is no grace of the Holy Spirit and the lofty feelings produced by it, then they are trying to imagine them, that is, artificially create them. The result is ‘spiritual deception’ in the form of various levels of exaltation, leading right to psychological and mental illness of one or another level. So that now among believing intelligently the most zealous are always – without fail and necessarily – psychologically sick people. On this soil especially luxuriant blooms that have flowered in the ‘patriarchate’ have been the manifestations of false ‘eldership’ and the ‘deification’ of young archimandrites by demonized hysterics. In contrast to St. John of Kronstadt, the archimandrites (igumens, hieromonks and other ‘grace-filled batiushkas’) do not drive such people away from themselves, but in every way encourage them, sometimes creating out of these female worshippers veritable bands that morally (and sometimes even physically!) terrorize the other believers. This terrible phenomenon already has a marked antichristian character. One of the female worshippers of one such archimandrite very precisely said: ‘Batiushka is our God!’ What stands behind this is the thirst to have a ‘living god’, a man-god, whom one can make an idol of in one’s life. The epoch of the ‘cult of personality’ did not pass in vain. How many hundred and thousands of souls throughout Russia have been hopelessly spoiled by this newly appeared ‘elders’, ‘grace-filled’ instructors and ‘wonder-workers’! True eldership ceased long ago. Some widely venerated monastics from the Trinity – St. Sergius Lavra, the Pskov Caves monastery, the Riga desert and other places, however one may respect them, cannot be called elders. If only because they were silent through all the years of Khruschev’s mockery of the Church, and are silent now, after the speech of the ‘patriarch’ before the rabbis. Moreover, they do not bless others to speak. Why? Because the ‘patriarchate’ has constantly instilled and instills in its flock that in the Church ‘obedience is higher than fasting and prayer’, having forgotten to explain that this refers to the real Church, and not to the false one! These are
undoubtedly sincere and assiduous monastics; they also take the ‘patriarchate’ for the Russian Orthodox Church, that is, they also believe in the lie, encouraging those who trust them to believe in it, too...

“We must note that there were and still are completely honourable people in the bosom of the ‘patriarchate’, people who have sincerely converted to God. But they were always in the minority, and now all the more so, becoming all the time fewer, and they do not have the opportunity to determine Church life. Left only with their human strength, they can do little, although they present an at times exemplary model of asceticism and self-denial.

“The phenomena of spiritual deformity, canonical transgressions and moral sins are possible and, moreover, natural at any time of the existence of any local Church, insofar as it is a community not of ‘the pure and sinless’, but precisely of sinful, damaged people. The Church must therefore be a spiritual hospital for its members, for the flock. If the Church firmly holds to the Orthodox Faith and the holy canons ‘work’ in it in relation both to those above, and those below, to everyone (!), then it is a truly living organism of the Body of Christ, which is given life and raised up to God by the Holy Spirit. Then the excesses of various apostasies, crimes and transgressions of the canons in it are just that – excesses, instances on the background of what is on the whole a normal and correct life. But if the Church falls away both from the Faith and from the canonical order, it ceases to be the Body of Christ, that is, the Church, being turned into a community in which the virtues and correct conditions become occasional exceptions, while the general background and ‘norm of life’ turns out to be crime, apostasy and transgression… In such an inverted order of things the Church situation does not help, but hinders the salvation of those who trustingly enter it, it simply destroys them. Such, we see, is the situation in the Moscow ‘patriarchate’ to the highest degree. And so now it is extremely unclear what is served by the noisy opening of churches and monasteries, and the adornment of some of them in every way, and the building of Sunday schools and other institutions of the ‘patriarchate’. Does all this serve for the spiritual benefit or the further spiritual corruption of people? Most likely, it is the broadening and deepening of the sphere of evil and destruction, a trap for those who have sincerely been drawn to Christ. They will not be able to strike through to Him as long as they accept the ‘patriarchate’ as the Orthodox Church, as long as they believe in a lie that is incompatible with the Spirit of righteousness, the Holy Spirit.”

Very important was the role of the “startsy”, or elders, in the life of the MP. According to Igumen Gregory Lourié, the role of the MP elders, and especially Archimandrite Ioann (Krestiankin) of the Pskov Caves, was critical in turning the masses away from ROCOR at the beginning of the 1990s. “Archimandrite Ioann not only did not approve of the opening in Russia of parishes outside the jurisdiction of the ROC MP, but he also reproached ROCOR herself as a schism: ‘We have no canonical differences with the Russian Church Abroad, but we cannot now accept them on the Russian land, for they, by not recognizing our Mother Church, which lived through all the woes of Rus’ with her people, are becoming, not builders up, but schismatics and destroyers of that little which has remained with us. And if you

53 Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 644-647.
pray in a church belonging to the [Church] Abroad, you become a schismatic.’”

Perhaps the aspect of patriarchal life that most clearly demonstrated its degradation was its attitude to the very heart of all church life – the sacraments. Ludmilla Perepiolkina writes: “[Baptism] as a rule is administered through ablution or even sprinkling, although, as one knows, the threefold immersion of the baptized into the baptismal font [is the only correct form of baptism and] signifies Christ’s death and Resurrection on the third day. Therefore a negligent and needlessly hurried administration of this Mystery becomes an act of sacrilege.

“Both the baptized and their godparents are usually admitted to the Mystery without any preceding catechization and testing of faith. As a rule, godparents remain in absolute ignorance regarding their spiritual obligations and their responsibility before God for the upbringing of their godchildren. The godparents attending mass baptisms of the Moscow Patriarchate are mostly irreligious, often non-Orthodox, or atheists in general…

“Superstitious parents sometimes baptize their children several times (‘to keep them from becoming ill…”); religious illiteracy accompanies many other superstitions as well. Lately there have been increased instances of baptizing and even giving Holy Communion (!) to the dead. These awful phenomena are caused not only by the ignorance and covetousness of clergymen, but also by the fact that among the clergics of the Moscow Patriarchate there is an increase in the number of occultists, wizards, psychics. This is because there are not only neophytes among those ordained… but also converts from Eastern cults, Yoga, paganism, occultism and other demonic delusions. Having failed to renounce their former beliefs, the latter dissolve their ‘Christianity’ in this contamination. There are ‘priests’ who practise black magic and are a true horror to their ‘spiritual children’ whom they have enslaved and reduced to becoming zombies…

“In the city churches of the Moscow Patriarchate Chrismation, which is administered immediately after Baptism, resembles a production line in a factory, rather than a Church Mystery. Since at the time of their baptism people have merely their heads sprinkled with water over the baptismal font, they have their clothes on. A priest then hastily goes round the long rank of the newly baptised who stand there in ignorance. Then, at the sacred moment of Chrismation, requiring a special reverence, when the Holy Spirit is received, there is a general hurried discarding of superfluous clothing. Not infrequently a priest may even anoint parts of the body still covered by clothing.

“The following should be noted. Not so long ago a certain degree of confidence in the Patriarchate’s Chrism was based on the fact that every time it was sanctified, a part of the Chrism of the previous years had to be added. Thus, the chrism of the Soviet period must have contained a part of the Chrism sanctified by the Holy

54 Lourié, “Dve Tserkvi, dve very i raznie novomucheniki. Razmyshlenia po sluchaiu konchiny arkhimandrita Ioanna (Krestiankina)” (Two Churches, two faiths and different new martyrs. Thoughts on the occasion of the death of Archimandrite Ioann (Krestiankin)”, http://portalcredo.ru/site/print.php?act=comment&id=915.
55 In 2014 a photograph appeared on Facebook of Patriarch Cyril “baptizing” by sprinkling. (V.M.)
Patriarch Tikhon. However, in the most recent years many in the Moscow Patriarchate have been confused, and not only because the Chrism now in use was sanctified by the apostate Patriarch Alexis II (Ridiger). From many areas of Russia priest of the Moscow Patriarchate have reported that by its fragrance this Chrism is indistinguishable from ordinary oil although it should have a very complex fragrance due to the fact that it should consist of a multitude of fragrances symbolizing the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“The Mystery of Confession and the Mystery of Baptism elicit the most criticism. Practically everywhere the so-called ‘general confession’ is performed, which is not stipulated by the Church canons and which was not permitted even in the Moscow Patriarchate even in the first years after the Second World war, when there was an acute shortage of clergy. At the present time many young priests, accustomed to practice an insipid and formalized ‘general confession’, refuse to hear individual confession even if it is a question of only one or two people (who want to be confessed individually), not scores of them. A priest only covers the head of a penitent with his epitrachelion and recites the last short prayer of absolution, or simply makes the sign of the cross over him in silence. In 10 minutes time scores of people go through confession in this manner.

“The practice of such ‘remission of sins’ cannot be called anything but criminal! After all, many people, who for 70 years lived in the militantly atheist country where sin had become the norm, and who only recently learned to make the sign of the cross over themselves, often have no idea what sin is. Thus, the overwhelming majority of women who have undergone abortion do not know that they are murderers who have committed a mortal sin. The same happens to other people who seek healing of their soul in the Church, but do not find it. Is this not the reason why there is such an unprecedented number of all kinds of sects in post-Soviet Russia?

“Through the efforts of Renovationists of the Moscow Patriarchate, its theological academies and seminaries for years have been preparing a complete break between the Mysteries of Confession and Communion, and a rejection of the obligatory Confession before Communion resulting from such a break.

“The Moscow Patriarchate promotes the conviction that ‘obedience is more important than prayer and fasting’, than the Canons and Patristic teaching. This conviction has been turned into a means of the personal dependence and subjugation of church-going people to pseudo-clergy, pseudo-elders and pseudo-Patriarch...

“The most profound Mystery of the Church is that of Holy Communion... The gravest sin of the apostates is the profanation of this Mystery. They turn the Divine

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56 In an article published in Pravoslavnoe Slovo (The Orthodox Word), № 12 (49), 1995, priest Timothy Selsky writes that in the MP cathedral of a small town he noticed... a price-list displayed at the candle counter. “The column reading ‘Prayer after Abortion – 8000 Roubles’ caught my eye. What sort of a new rite was this? As I learned later, a woman who would pay the required sum at the candle counter would have a certain prayer read over her, a prayer which allegedly should be read after having killed one’s own child in the womb. Whence all this? What is the mystery of such an easy remission of a mortal sin unknown to any of the Holy Church Fathers? Have we lived to see the day when the forgiveness of the sin of infanticide is bought just like that for a mere 8000 roubles and without any confession at all?” (V.M.)
Liturgy, which only true believers are permitted to attend, into a show, a spectacle for the crowds of tourists and television viewers, and the Holy Gifts – Christ’s Body and Blood – are given to anybody and at random...

“Besides the corrupting influence which the distortion of the Mystery of Confession or its rejection has upon Orthodox Christians, this innovation is instrumental in achieving the ecumenical objective of allowing access to the Orthodox Mystery of Holy Communion to the non-Orthodox. The resolution of the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate concerning admission of Catholics to Communion in Orthodox Churches in Russia had been in force from 1969 to 1986. Subsequently this resolution has not been abolished, it has only been suspended (although on paper only)... At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s one could regularly observe crowds of Western tourists being admitted to Communion (without prior Confession, of course) in the church of St. John the Theologian at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg. A Jesuit hieromonk Michael Arranz, a Professor of the Eastern Institute in Rome, who in those years was lecturing on Liturgics at the ‘Orthodox’ Theological Academy in Leningrad, would partake of Communion in the Sanctuary of that church along with the clergy.

“When celebrating the Proskomedia and reciting litanies (ektenias), the ecumenists would commemorate heretics along with the Orthodox in accordance with their sermon on ‘the church without frontiers’, and during the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy they would replace the words ‘and may the Lord God remember you all Orthodox Christians in His Kingdom’ by ‘and all Christians’.

“In 1994 the Bishops’ Council of the MP left practically all matters concerning communication with the non-Orthodox to the personal discretion of its bishops and clergy, merely pointing out to them the undesirability of bewildering their flock.

“The instances of Protestants partaking of Holy Communion in the MP, have now become a regular phenomenon, at least in the Novgorod diocese, where its ruling Archbishop Lev [Tserpitsky] openly admits Protestants and Catholics to Communion in the ancient Cathedral of St. Sophia in the city of Novgorod. In this and similar instances the obvious motivation is undoubtedly the material benefit gained as a result of attracting foreign tourists, along with their dollars, pounds and marks, into the Patriarchate’s churches...”

In the 1970s, Metropolitan Nikodem of Leningrad was both a KGB agent and a secret Vatican bishop. In 1992 the Pope said that he had two cardinals among the bishops in Russia.58 Perhaps one of them was Archbishop Lev....

Another of them may have been Archbishop Theodosius (Protsyuk) of Omsk, who, according to Perepiolkina, “has not only received legates from the Vatican and openly concelebrated with them, even the Divine Liturgy, but presented the well-known Verenfried with an ‘episcopal cross...’ thus becoming an inseparable friend”


58 Perepiolkina, op. cit., p. 204.
of the wealthy Catholic sponsor.

“...The practice of offering communion to the heterodox... is reaching epidemic proportions in the MP. This may be illustrated by the state of affairs in the Kaliningrad vicariate of the MP which is... ruled by Bishop Panteleimon (Kutov), a subordinate of Metropolitan Cyril (Gundyaev). In connection with the building project (still only a project, although some donations have already been collected a long time ago) for a Cathedral in the former Koenigsberg (now Kalinigrad), local parishioners hope that ‘this will be an Orthodox church not only by its name. Unfortunately, Bishop Panteleimon’s ecumenical views leave little hope that in the new Cathedral things will be any different from what they are now in the patriarchal churches of the Kaliningrad area, where Orthodox people are offered communion from one chalice with heretics. Bishop Panteleimon himself felt no embarrassment when he declared that ‘Catholics... partook of communion in our churches, and the priests offered prayers for them’.

“The ecumenical epidemic has spread to even the remotest areas. In accordance with the Balamand Agreement [of 1994], the same church buildings are now being regularly used by representatives of different denominations (particularly in the Baltic States). In the village (!) Yegla of Borovichi region of the Novgorod district they are building a church which right at the start will be intended for ecumenical services. It will have three altars: Catholic, Protestant and ‘Orthodox’. The number of such ecumenical prayer houses in Russia is growing.”

“Ordination... It is generally known that anyone seeking after a high (or simply well-secured) position in the MP under the Communists had to win, in one way or another, the special favour of the God-defying regime.

“All this is entirely contrary to the 30th Apostolic Rule which reads: ‘If any bishop comes into possession of a church office by employing the secular rulers, let him be deposed from office, and let him be excommunicated. And all those who communicate with him too.’ (Compare Rule 3 of the 7th Ecumenical Council.) An unlawful tree cannot produce lawful fruit. Every year the ranks of the Patriarchate’s clergy have been supplemented by those ordained in violation of the Church canons: those tainted by simony, by second marriage, known homosexuals, obviously un-Orthodox and even those married to sectarians (the wife of a Moscow priest A. Borisov, one of the leaders of the late Archpriest Men’s group within the Moscow Patriarchate, is a Pentecostalist who organizes her sect’s meetings in his church.)

“Simony flourishes openly in some dioceses. Thus, it is well know that in Western Ukraine a prospective priest must remunerate his bishop with a sum of 10,000 roubles (the price of a ‘Volga’ car) for his ordination. Parishioners would collect the required sum and present it to their young priest on the day of his first church service. We have no reason to think that his ‘custom’ has in any way suffered from the anarchy which set in after the beginning of perestroika...

“The Sacrament of Marriage is almost always administered without any preparation and without prior Confession of the couple to be married. The

determining factor is the payment of a certain sum of money (which in recent years has increased to two, three and more times the average monthly wage). Contrary to the rules, several couples are wed at the same time and often on unstated days and during fasts. Marriages with non-Orthodox and with people of other faiths are allowed. For instance, some of St. Petersburg’s clergy recall a case in the later 70s when one of the well-known Archpriests of that city married his own daughter to a Moslem. It should be added that the perpetration of these and other kinds of unlawful acts is often motivated by the financial and social status of the parties to the marriage...

“Church prayer is also being profaned by the Patriarchate’s clergy when they ‘sanctify’ banks, restaurants, casinos, communist banners of the Red Army and Fleet, as well as buildings used by psychics and ‘healers’. The apostate MP has entered into a special relationship with the ‘Orthodox’ magicians in white coats...

“We may also mention the widespread advertising and sale of ‘holy’ water on the planes of Aeroflot, in shops and restaurants.

“All this, together with ‘funeral services’ for atheists and non-baptised persons (which an Orthodox clergyman may bring himself to perform only as a result of losing the fear of God), and a scandalous acceptance by the hierarchy of the MP (in the person of Metropolitan Pitirim) of a ‘donation’ from the criminal sect ‘Aum Shinri Kyo’ has become the means of replenishing church funds with dirty money.

“Such actions as the luxurious church ceremonies at the funeral of journalist List’yev, notorious for his immoral television programs (in particular those promoting incest), the burial of one of the mafia leaders in the sacred caves of the Pskov Monastery of the Caves, have become a rather symptomatic phenomenon in the Moscow Patriarchate...

“Criminal power has come to replace party power in Russia. This power has immediately secured the support of the MP and has occupied an appropriate place in its life. The MP itself is acquiring a criminal character with its ‘church’ banks, multi-billion fraud and cooperation with the mafia...

“During the long decades of Communist dictatorship an indulgent attitude to all ‘weaknesses’ and deviations of hierarchs and clergy had become firmly ingrained in the consciousness of the members of the MP. This justification of shortcomings was motivated by the alleged ‘captivity’ of the clergy (which from year to year was becoming increasingly voluntary). At the same time the episcopate succeeded in enhancing among the laity and clergy a peculiar kind of Papism (‘The Patriarch is responsible for everything’) and the cult of ‘blessed ignorance’ which, allegedly, makes one’s salvation easier to achieve. All these phenomena flourished and became the very essence of the Moscow Patriarchate, as the years of ‘democratic’ rule have been demonstrating, when discussions about ‘forced’ acts of apostasy… have become meaningless…”

Many Russians, while not blind to the corruption in the patriarchate, supported it

for the sake of the Fatherland; for Russia, they thought (correctly), could not be
resurrected without a Church, and the MP was the only Church that they saw
(incorrectly) as being able to become the religion of the State. However, as
Protopriest Lev Lebedev wrote, “Fatherland”, “Russia”, “the State” had become idols
in post-Soviet Russia, more important than the true Faith, without which they are
worthless: “The ideological idol under the name of ‘Fatherland’ (‘Russia’, ‘the state’) has
been completely preserved. We have already many times noted that these
corcepts are, in essence, pagan ideological idols not because they are in themselves
bad, but because they have been torn out from the trinitarian unity of co-subjected
corcepts: Faith, Tsar, Fatherland (Orthodoxy, Autocracy, People)... Everything that
one might wish to be recognized and positive, even the regeneration of the faith, is
done under the slogan of ‘the regeneration of the Fatherland (Russia)’! But nothing is
being regenerated. Even among the monarchists the regeneration of the Orthodox
Autocratic Monarchy is mainly represented as no more than the means for the
regeneration of the Fatherland. We may note that if any of the constituent parts of the
triad – Orthodoxy, Autocracy, People – is torn away from the others and becomes the
only one, it loses its power. Only together and in the indicated hierarchical order did
they constitute, and do they constitute now, the spiritual (and all the other) strength
and significance of Great Russia. But for the time being it is the ideological idol
‘fatherland’ that holds sway…”61


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61 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 655.
4. THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

In 1999, ten years since perestroika began to expose the secret corruption of the MP, the situation was back to “normal” – that is, homosexuality among the leading metropolitans and drunkenness among the priests, combined with tight cooperation with the leading elites in government and the mafia.

The MP was also completely dependent on the State financially. “Pravoslavnaia Gazeta [The Orthodox Newspaper], the official publication of the Yekaterinburg diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate, characterizes this situation as follows: ‘In 1917 all the property of the Orthodox Church was nationalized and de facto passed into the ownership of the state. In the last decade previously nationalized things have begun to be handed over to believers. But, as it turns out, not a single church is today owned by the Russian Orthodox Church. The churches are handed over only for use…”

Homosexuality, “the sin of Metropolitan Nicodemus”, as it is known in the MP, is very useful to the KGB. Preobrazhensky writes that for the last 70 years the KGB has been actively promoting homosexuals to the episcopate. “Even Patriarch Sergius is said to have been one of them. The homosexual bishops were in constant fear of being unmasked, and it made them easily managed by the KGB.”

In 1999, after persistent complaints by his clergy, the homosexual Bishop Nicon of Yekaterinburg was forced to retire to the Pskov Caves monastery. However, within three years he was back in Moscow as dean of one of the richest parishes. “The influential homosexual lobby of the Moscow Patriarchate saved Bishop Nicon.”

In 1998 the MP blessed a book compiled by Metropolitan Juvenal of Krutitsa and Kolomna, entitled A Man of the Church, consisting of fulsome tributes to the notorious Metropolitan Nikodem of Leningrad by several of his fellow-hierarchs. The Archbishop of Tver even wrote: “At present many are capable of accusing the former [clergy] of supposed collaboration with the KGB, including Vladyka Nikodem. But there was no other way out: the Church had to live somehow. Therefore there came into being a special mode of acting in order not to permit a total destruction of the Church…”

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63 “Dukhoventstvo stradaet alkogolizmom chasche, chem drugie gruppy naselenia, utverzhdaet psikhiatry” (The clergy suffer from alcoholism more than other groups of the population, say psychiatrists), portal-credo.ru, news, December 8, 2005.
64 This continues to the present day, with tragic consequences. Thus Archimandrite German (Khapugin) of Davydova Pustyn, near Moscow, “a very active businessman and quite rich”, was murdered in 2005 (Jeremy Page, “Mafia secret of murdered abbot”, The Times, July 29, 2005, p. 35).
65 Preobrazhensky, KGB v russkoj emigratsii, op. cit., p. 53.
66 Preobrazhensky, “Ecumenism and Intelligence”.
In view of this failure to repent, it is not surprising that the MP’s position in the Ukraine continued to deteriorate. As the new millennium dawned, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, supported by the secular authorities and Ukrainian nationalists, declared that the Ukraine was his canonical territory, and that the unification of the Kiev metropolia to the MP in 1686 had been uncanonical. In August, 2000, under strong pressure from the MP, he renounced this position.68

But then in November he reached an agreement with the UOAC and the UOAC-KP, but excluding the UOC-MP, on the formation of a united local church that would provide for “a cessation of mutual accusations” and a halt to the process of transfer of parishes from one jurisdiction to the other. A commission would oversee the organisational work, and this Commission would then present its conclusions to himself, after which he would determine “the canonical questions and the status of bishops and clergy” of both churches. This united church was approved of by the Ukrainian authorities, and deputies calculated that if such a church came into being and was recognized by Constantinople, a majority of believers in the UOC would join it.69 The invasion of the Patriarchate of Constantinople into the canonical territory of the Russian Church exacerbated their already strained relations (because of the quarrel over Estonia, in particular). The already tense situation was exacerbated by the Uniate Cardinal Husar calling on all the Ukrainian Orthodox to unite in “One Orthodox Ukrainian National Church” with the Byzantine rite but in submission to the Pope. In June, 2001 the Pope met leaders of all the Ukrainian churches in Kiev with the exception of the UOC-MP.70 By the latest count the UOC-MP had 9047 communities in the Ukraine (an increase of 557 on the previous year), the UOAC-CP had 2781 (an increase of 290), the UAOC had 1015, the Uniates had 3317 and the Latin-rite Catholics – 807.71

In this period an extraordinary increase in highly dubious miracles took place. For example, “as described in the newspaper Radonezh № 4 for 1999, in the Holy Entrance of the Mother of God monastery in Ivanovo diocese, in one of the cells myrrh-gushing takes place from any icons that are brought into it. By February more than 1000 such cases had been registered, and by April – more than 1600! That is, hundreds of times more that the number of myrrh-gushing, glorified icons that have appeared in the whole history of Christianity!”72

While such occult manifestations multiplied, the grossest ecumenism continued to be practised – almost certainly because the FSB (KGB) still needed MP clergy to penetrate foreign confessions for espionage purposes.73 As we have seen, the anti-ecumenical protests of the early and mid-1990s were suppressed, the challenge of ROCOR was rebuffed, and the “Third Way” practised by the Bulgarian and Georgian Churches ignored. While anti-ecumenical elements still existed in the MP (as when Russkij Vestnik published a protest against the MP’s participation in the WCC by the

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70 Sobornost’, June, 2001; in Pravoslavnaja Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 12 (1681), June 15/28, 2001, p. 16.
71 NG-Religia, № 7, 2001; in Pravoslavnaja Rus’ (Orthodox Russia), № 11 (1680), June 1/14, 2001, p. 16. In Russia at the same time there were four bishops, 220 parishes, 215 priests, 230 nuns, a seminary and a college (Russkaia Mysl’ (Russian Thought), 31 May – 6 June, 2001).
72 Vertograd-Inform, № 4 (49), 1999.
73 Preobrazhensky, “Ecumenism and Intelligence”.
Abbot and 150 monks of Valaam in 1998), along with renovationist, occultist, nationalist and communist elements, all were held together by the culture of obedience to the patriarch: all was permitted so long as no “schism” was created…

Some were impressed by the apparent hostility of the MP to the Roman Catholics’ proselytism of Russia. However, from the remarks of the leading hierarchs it became clear that the argument was simply over the Catholics’ supposed violation of a “mutual non-aggression pact”. Russia was the “canonical territory” of the MP, so the Catholics had no right there (as the patriarch put it: “Russia has historically been Orthodox for a thousand years, and therefore the Roman papacy has no right to make a conquest of it”): they should stick to their own “canonical territory”, the West.

That meant that the MP renounced any right to convert western heretics to Orthodoxy. As Metropolitan Cyril (Gundiaev), the future patriarch, put it: “In practice we forbid our priests to seek to convert people. Of course it happens that people arrive and say: ‘You know, I would like, simply out of my own convictions, to become Orthodox.’ ‘Well, please do.’ But there is no strategy to convert people.”

As the liberal era of the 1990s came to an end, the resurrection of the spirit of Soviet patriotism became more and more evident. This spirit, which seeks to justify the Soviet past and rejects repentance for its sins, was illustrated most vividly in an article entitled “The Religion of Victory” in which a new Russian religio-political bloc, “For Victory!” presented its programme. The victory in question was the victory of the Soviet forces over Nazi Germany in 1945, whose blood was considered by the bloc to have “a mystical, sacred meaning”, being “the main emblem of the Russian historical consciousness”.

Similarly, an article on an MP web-site produced this astonishing blasphemy: “The ‘atheist’ USSR, trampling down death by death, resurrected and saved the world. Only because ‘godly’ and ‘ungodly’ soldiers died in their millions do we live today and the whole population of the world, the whole of humanity, is alive. It would be no exaggeration to think that that terrible and great war and great Victory in that Great war caused the first sociologically large-scale micro-resurrection, a reproduction by the peoples of the USSR of the exploit of Christ.

“May 9, 1945 became the most convincing witness of the fact that 2000 years ago Christ was resurrected. Therefore our Great Victory is the feast of feasts, it is Pascha…”

The political and economic aspects of the bloc’s programme were communistic; but its nationalist and religious aspects were still more alarming. Yeltsin and his colleagues were accused of having betrayed ‘45 and the “truly genius-quality” achievements of post-war Sovietism.

“However”, wrote Valentine Chikin, “the enemy [which is clearly the West] has not succeeded in destroying our Victory. Victory is that spiritual force which will

help us to be regenerated. From Victory, as from a fruitful tree, will arise new
technologies, will grow new schools, defence will be strengthened, a world-view will
be worked out. A new communality embracing the whole nation will confirm the
Victory of ’45 in the 21st century, too.

“Let us not forget: in the 40s a wonderful fusing together of Russian epochs took
place. Of the pagan, with Prince Sviaslav [‘the accursed’, as the Orthodox Church
calls him], who defeated the Khazars. Of the Orthodox, in which the great Russian
commanders and saints Alexander Nevsky and Dimitri Donskoj acted. Of the
monarchist, with Peter, Suvorov and Kutuzov. In the smoke of the battles of the
Fatherland war they combined with the brilliant ‘reds’ Zhukov, Vasilevsky and
Rokossovsky, which Joseph Stalin so clearly and loudly proclaimed from the
Mausoleum…

“The bloc ‘For Victory’ has the right to claim the breadth of the whole nation.
The ideology of the bloc ‘For Victory!’ is the long awaited national idea… Victory is
also that sacred word which overflows the Russian heart with pride and freedom.”

Alexander Prokhanov continued the theme: “Victory is not simply the national
idea. Victory is a faith, the particular religious cast of mind of the Russians. Under
the cupola of Victory both the Orthodox and the Muslim and the atheist and the
passionately believing person will find himself a place. Of course, in order to reveal
this faith, it needs its evangelists, such as John the Theologian. It needs its builders
and organizers. In the consciousness of this religious philosophy there is a place for
artists and sculptors, sociologists and political scientists, historians and politicians.

“We still have to finish building this great Russian faith – Victory! In it the miracle
expected for centuries, which was handed down from the sorcerers from mouth to
mouth, from Kievans Rus’ to the Moscow princedom, from the empire of the tsars to
the red empire of the leaders (vozhdei). This is the hope of universal good, of
universal love. The understanding that the world is ruled, not by the blind forces of
matter, but by Justice and Divine righteousness.…”76

This Soviet patriotism was supported by the former idol of ROCOR’s liberals, Fr.
Demetrius Dudko. “Now the time has come,” he wrote, “to rehabilitate Stalin. And
yet not him himself, but the concept of statehood. Today we can see for ourselves
what a crime non-statehood is and what a blessing statehood is! No matter how
many cry that in Soviet times many perished in the camps – how many are perishing
now, without trials or investigations… If Stalin were here, there would be no such
collapse…. Stalin, an atheist from the external point of view, was actually a believer,
and this could be proved by facts if it were not for the spatial limitations of this
article. It is not without reason that in the Russian Orthodox Church, when he died,
‘eternal memory’ was sung to him… The main thing is that Stalin looked after people
in a fatherly manner. Stalin legitimately stands next to Suvorov!”77

76 V. Chikin, A. Prokhanov, “Religia Pobedy: Beseda” (The Religion of Victory: A Conversation),
Zavtra (Tomorrow), № 32 (297), 1999, p. 2. Cf. Egor Khomogorov, “Dve Pobedy” (Two Victories),
Spetsnaz Rossii (Russia’s Special Forces), № 5 (44), May, 2000, and my reply: V. Moss, “Imperia ili Anti-
Imperia” (Empire or Anti-Empire), http://www.romanitas.ru/Actual/Impire.htm.
77 Dudko, “Mysli sviaschennika” (The Thoughts of a Priest),
“Ecclesiastical Stalinism” was the most horrific sign of the lack of repentance of the MP even now that it was free from Soviet oppression. That lack of repentance has continued and intensified in the first decade of the twenty-first century… Phenomena such as “ecclesiastical Stalinism” were the result, largely, of the return to power of the KGB, now renamed the FSB. For, as Preobrazhensky writes, “After the democratic reforms of the 1990s the KGB officers managed to get everything back. All the Directorates of the Soviet KGB are reunited now in today’s FSB, except two of them: the First, which managed intelligence, and the Ninth, which guarded the highest Communist bureaucrats. Both are formally independent, but keep close connections with the FSB… The former First Chief Directorate of the KGB is now called the Foreign Intelligence Service. It is successfully managing the operation ‘ROCOR”’ – that is, the absorption of ROCOR into the MP.

The intelligence experts Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin confirm this assessment: “Ridiculed and reviled at the end of the Soviet era, the Russian intelligence community has since been remarkably successful at reinventing itself and recovering its political influence. The last three prime ministers of the Russian Federation during Boris Yeltsin’s presidency – Yevgeni Primakov, Sergei Stepashin and Vladimir Putin – were all former intelligence chiefs. Putin, who succeeded Yeltsin as President in 2000, is the only FCD [First Chief Directorate] officer ever to become Russian leader. According to the head of the SVR [Foreign Intelligence Service], Sergei Nikolayevich Lebedev, ‘The president’s understanding of intelligence activity and the opportunity to speak the same language to him makes our work considerably easier.’ No previous head of state in Russia, or perhaps anywhere else in the world, has ever surrounded himself with so many former intelligence officers. Putin also has more direct control of intelligence that any Russian leader since Stalin. According to Kirpichenko, ‘We are under the control of the President and his administration, because intelligence is directly subordinated to the President and only the President.’ But whereas Stalin’s intelligence chiefs usually told him simply what he wanted to hear, Kirpichenko claims that, ‘Now, we tell it like it is’.

“The mission statement of today’s FSB and SVR is markedly different from that of the KGB. At the beginning of the 1980s Andropov proudly declared that the KGB was playing its part in the onward march of world revolution. By contrast, the current ‘National Security Concept’ of the Russian Federation, adopted at the beginning of the new millennium, puts the emphasis instead on the defence of traditional Russian values: ‘Guaranteeing the Russian Federation’s national security also includes defence of the cultural and spiritual-moral inheritance, historical traditions and norms of social life, preservation of the cultural property of all the peoples of Russia, formation of state policy in the sphere of the spiritual and moral education of the population…’ One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Soviet intelligence system from Cheka to KGB was its militant atheism. In March 2002, however, the FSB at last found God. A restored Russian Orthodox church in central Moscow was consecrated by Patriarch Aleksi II as the FSB’s parish church in order to minister to the previously neglected spiritual needs of its staff. The FSB Director,

78 Preobrazhensky, “Ecumenism and Intelligence”.
79 Preobrazhensky, “Hostile Absorption of ROCOR”.
Nikolai Patrushev, and the Patriarch celebrated the mystical marriage of the Orthodox Church and the state security apparatus by a solemn exchange of gifts. Patrushev presented a symbolic golden key of the church and an icon of St. Aleksei, Moscow Metropolitan, to the Patriarch, who responded by giving the FSB Director the Mother God ‘Umilenie’ icon and an icon representing Patrushev’s own patron saint, St. Nikolai – the possession of which would formerly have been a sufficiently grave offence to cost any KGB officer his job. Though the FSB has not, of course, become the world’s first intelligence agency staffed only or mainly by Christian true believers, there have been a number of conversions to the Orthodox Church by Russian intelligence officers past and present – among them Nikolai Leonov, who half a century ago was the first to alert the Centre to the revolutionary potential of Fidel Castro. ‘Spirituality’ has become a common theme in FSB public relations materials. While head of FSB public relations in 1999-2001, Vasili Stavitsky published several volumes of poetry with a strong ‘spiritual’ content, among them Secrets of the Soul (1999); a book of ‘spiritual-patriotic’ poems for children entitled Light a Candle, Mamma (1999); and Constellation of Love: Selected Verse (2000). Many of Stavitsky’s poems have been set to music and recorded on CDs, which are reported to be popular at FSB functions.

“Despite their unprecedented emphasis on ‘spiritual security’, however, the FSB and SVR are politicized intelligence agencies which keep track of President Putin’s critics and opponents among the growing Russian diaspora abroad, as well as in Russia itself. During his first term in office, while affirming his commitment to democracy and human rights, Putin gradually succeeded in marginalizing most opposition and winning control over television channels and the main news media. The vigorous public debate of policy issues during the Yeltsin years has largely disappeared. What has gradually emerged is a new system of social control in which those who step too far out of line face intimidation by the FSB and the courts. The 2003 State Department annual report on human rights warned that a series of alleged espionage cases involving scientists, journalists and environmentalists ‘caused continuing concerns regarding the lack of due process and the influence of the FSB in court cases’. According to Lyudmilla Alekseyeva, the current head of the Moscow Helsinki Group, which has been campaigning for human rights in Russia since 1976, ‘The only thing these scientists, journalists and environmentalists are guilty of is talking to foreigners, which in the Soviet Union was an unpardonable offence.’ Though all this remains a far cry from the KGB’s obsession with even the most trivial forms of ideological subversion, the FSB has once again defined a role for itself as an instrument of social control…”

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In August, 2000 the MP held a “Jubilee” Hierarchical Council which seemed at least partly aimed at removing some of the last obstacles towards ROCOR’s unification with it. These obstacles, as formulated by ROCOR during the decade 1990-2000 were: 1. Ecumenism, 2. Sergianism, and 3. The Glorification of the New Martyrs, especially the Royal New Martyrs.

1. Ecumenism

In the document on relations with the heterodox, which was composed by a small group of bishops and presented to the Council for approval on the first day, few concessions were made to the opponents of ecumenism, apart from the ritual declarations that “the Orthodox Church is the true Church of Christ, created by our Lord and Saviour Himself; it is the Church established by, and filled with, the Holy Spirit…” “The Church of Christ is one and unique…” “The so-called ‘branch theory’, which affirms the normality and even the providentiality of the existence of Christianity in the form of separate ‘branches’…” is completely unacceptable.”

But, wrote Protopriest Michael Ar dov (ROAC, Moscow), “the ‘patriarchal liberals’ will also not be upset, insofar as the heretics in the cited document are called ‘heterodox’, while the Monophysite communities are called the ‘Eastern Orthodox Churches’. And the ‘dialogues with the heterodox’ will be continued, and it is suggested that the World Council of Churches be not abandoned, but reformed…”

Although there has been much talk about anti-ecumenism in the MP, it is significant that only one bishop, Barsanuphius of Vladivostok, voted against the document on relations with the heterodox (six Ukrainian bishops abstained).

The MP’s Fr. (now Metropolitan) Hilarion (Alfeyev) explained the origins of the document on ecumenism: “The subject of inter-Christian relations has been used by various groups (within the Church) as a bogey in partisan wars. In particular, it has been used to criticise Church leaders who, as is well known, have taken part in ecumenical activities over many years.” In Alfeyev’s opinion, “ecumenism has also been used by breakaway groups, such as the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and the Old Calendarists, to undermine people’s trust in the Church.” Therefore there was a need “for a clear document outlining the theological basis of the Russian Orthodox Church’s attitude towards heterodoxy, i.e. the question of why we need and whether we need dialogue with the non-Orthodox confessions, and if so which form this dialogue should take.” Alfeyev refused to answer the question whether the Council would discuss the matter of the participation of the MP in the WCC, but said that the patriarchate felt obliged to continue negotiations with Protestant and Catholic representatives in the WCC and to be a part of the ecumenical committee.

After the Council, there was no let-up in the MP’s ecumenical activities. Thus on August 18, “Patriarch” Alexis prayed together with the Armenian “Patriarch”. And on April 21, 2005, he congratulated the new Pope Benedict XVI on his accession, and expressed the hope that he would strive to develop relations between the two churches. When asked how he evaluated Pope John Paul II’s ministry, he replied: “His Holiness’ teachings have not only strengthened Catholics throughout the world

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81 Ar dov, “The ‘Jubilee Council’ has confirmed it: the Moscow Patriarchate has finally fallen away from Orthodoxy” (Report read at the 8th Congress of the clergy, monastics and laity of the Suzdal diocese of the Russian Orthodox [Autonomous] Church, November, 2000).  
82 Church News, vol. 12, № 6 (88), July-August, 2000, p. 8. Alfeyev had already shown his ecumenist colours in his book, The Mystery of Faith (first published in Moscow in Russian in 1996, in English by Darton, Longman and Todd in 2002), which was strongly criticised from within the MP by Fr. Valentine Asmus.
in their faith, but also borne witness to Christianity in the complex world of today.”83 After ROCOR joined the MP in 2007, the MP noticeably increased its ecumenical activities and its relationship with the Vatican continued to improve…

Deacon Nicholas Savchenko summed the MP’s degree of immersion in ecumenism as follows: “In an inter-confessional undertaking there are two degrees of participation. One case is participation with the authority of a simple observer, that is, of one who does not enter into the composition, but is only an observer from the side. It is another case when we are talking about fully-entitled membership in an ecumenical organization.

“Unfortunately, at the present time the ROC MP takes part in the activity of the WCC precisely as a fully-entitled member of the Council. It is precisely on this problem that I consider it important to concentrate attention. After all, it is the membership of the ROC MP in the WCC which most of all, willingly or unwillingly, encroaches upon the teaching of the faith itself and therefore continues to remain an obstacle to our [ROCOR’s] communion [with the MP]. It is possible to list a series of reasons why membership in the WCC is becoming such an obstacle.

“1. The first important reason consists in the fact that the ROC MP today remains in the composition of the highest leadership of the WCC and takes part in the leadership, planning and financing of the whole of the work of the WCC.

“Official representatives of the ROC MP enter into the Central Committee of the WCC. The Central Committee is the organ of the Council’s administration. It defines the politics of the WCC, make official declarations relating to the teaching of the faith and gives moral evaluations of various phenomena of contemporary life within those limites given to it by the church-members. The composition of the last CC of the WCC was elected at the WCC assembly in Harare in 1998. As is witnessed by the official list of the members of the CC of the WCC, five members of the Central Committee come from the MP, headed by Bishop Hilarion (Alfeyev). In all there are about 150 people in the CC, including 9 women priests, which we can see from the list of the members of the CC. The last session of the CC of the WCC with the participation of the representatives of the ROC MP took place at the end of August, 2003.

“Besides participating in the CC, the representatives of the MP go into the make-up of the Executive Committee of the WCC, one of whose tasks is the direct leadership of the whole apparatus of the Council and the organization of all its undertakings. There are 24 people in the official list of the members of the Executive Committee of the WCC, including the MP’s representative Bishop Hilarion (Alfeev). Besides him, there are representatives of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate, the Romanian Patriarchate and the American Autocephaly in the Executive Committee of the WCC. The last session of the Executive Committee with the participation of representatives of the MP took place at the end of August, 2003. At this last session a new ‘Committee for Prayer’ was formed. It was to occupy itself with the preparation of the text and rite of ecumenical prayers. There are 10 people in all in this committee, including a representative of the MP, Fr. Andrew Eliseev. Besides, the

83 Associated Press, April 21, 2005; Corriere della Sera, April 24, 2005.
deputy president of the ‘Committee for Prayer’ is a Protestant woman priest. Because of this participation the ROC MP is inevitably responsible for all the decisions of the WCC that contradict the dogmatic and moral teaching of the Orthodox Church.

“2. The second reason for the incompatibility of membership of the WCC with the Church canons consists in the fact that the regulations of the Council presuppose the membership in it not of individual person-representatives, but precisely of the whole Local Church in all its fullness. Each Local Church in the WCC is considered in its complete fullness to be a member or a part of the heterodox community.

“In correspondence with the Basis of the WCC, it is a ‘commonwealth of Churches’. In this definition there is a significant difference from the original formulation offered by the commission on ‘Faith and Order’ in 1937, when the future WCC was offered as a ‘community of representatives of the Churches’. The difference is substantial. A community of the Churches themselves is not the same as a community of representatives of the Churches, as we said earlier. In the present case it turns out that the Orthodox Church is considered to be a part of a certain broader commonwealth under the name of the WCC. The legislative documents of the WCC even directly reject any other understanding of membership – after all, if it were not so, the Council would no longer be a Council of churches. And the declaration on entrance into the WCC is given in the name of a church, and not in the name of representatives. In the declaration the church asks that it itself be received into the composition of the WCC. The Council is not a simple association of churches. In the regulatory documents it is asserted that it is a ‘body’ having its own ‘ecclesiological meaning’, as is said about it directly in the heading of the Toronto declaration. The regulatory documents reject only the understanding of the Council as a ‘body’ in separation from the church-members. But in union with the church-members the Council is precisely a ‘body’ with its own ‘ecclesiological meaning’. And this ‘ecclesiological meaning’ of the WCC, by definition ‘cannot be based on any one conception of the Church’, as it says in point 3.3 of the Toronto declaration. That is, the Orthodox Church is considered in its fullness to belong to the ‘body’ with this ‘ecclesiological meaning’, which in accordance with the constitution cannot be Orthodox.

“Such an understanding of membership in the WCC as the membership of the whole Orthodox Church is contained in the documents on the part of the Local Churches. For example, we can cite the following quotation from the document ‘The Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches’. This document was accepted at the session of the inter-Orthodoxy Consultation in 1991 in Chambésy. It says in point 4: ‘The Orthodox Churches participate in the life and activity of the WCC only on condition that the WCC is understood as a ‘Council of Churches’, and not as a council of separate people, groups, movements or religious organizations drawn into the aims and tasks of the WCC...’ (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, 1992, № 1, p. 62).

“Such an understanding of the membership of the whole of the Orthodox Church in the WCC was earlier officially confirmed by the Pan-Orthodox Conferences. Thus the Pan-Orthodox Conference of 1968 formulated its relationship with the WCC in the following words: ‘To express the common consciousness of the Orthodox Church that it is an organic member of the WCC and her firm decision to bring her
contribution to the progress of the whole work of the WCC through all the means at her disposal, theological and other.’ (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1968, № 7, p. 51). The following, Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference confirmed this formulation in the same sense in the Russian translation. ‘The Orthodox Church is a complete and fully-entitled member of the WCC and by all the means at her disposal will aid the development and success of the whole work of the WCC’ (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1987, № 7, p. 53). Although these formulations elicited disturbances at the time, nevertheless they have not been changed to the present day, insofar as only the Local Church herself can be a member of the WCC. Any other interpretation of membership is excluded. Either a Local Church is a member or part of the WCC, or it is not.

‘From what has been said it turns out that membership in the WCC is not simply observation of the activity of the Council. Membership is precisely becoming a part of the ecumenical commonwealth. The ROC MP must not be a member of the WCC since this signifies becoming a member of the ecumenical movement.

‘3. The third reason why membership in the WCC contradicts Orthodoxy is that membership inevitably signifies agreement with the constitutional principles of the WCC and its rules. For example, it says in the Constitution of the WCC (chapter 3) that the Council is created by the church-members to serve the ecumenical movement. Does this mean that the church-members must, or obliged in their fullness, to serve the ecumenical movement? It appears so. Further the Constitution of the WCC (chapter 3) describes the obligations of those entering the Council of churches in the following words: ‘In the search for communion in faith and life, preaching and service, the churches through the Council will... facilitate common service in every place and everywhere and... cultivate ecumenical consciousness’. From these words it follows directly that common preaching with the Protestants is becoming a constitutional obligation of the Orthodox Church. Obligations still more foreign to Orthodoxy are contained in the Rules of the WCC – a separate document that directly regulates the obligations of those entering into the Council of churches. Chapter 2 of the Rules of the WCC is called ‘Responsibilities of membership’. The following lines are found in it. ‘Membership in the WCC means... devotion to the ecumenical movement as a constitutive element of the mission of the Church. It is presupposed that the church-members of the WCC... encourage ecumenical links and actions at all levels of their ecclesiastical life’. These words of the Rules of the WCC oblige the Orthodox Church to perceive the contemporary ecumenical movement with all its gross heresies and moral vices as a part of the life of the Orthodox Church.

‘One more important constitutional document is the declaration ‘Towards a common understanding and vision of the WCC’. This document was accepted by the Central Committee of the WCC in 1997 with the participation of representatives of the Local Churches. It also contains views which are incompatible with the Orthodox teaching on the Church. In the first place this concerns how we are to understanding the term that is the cornerstone of the Basis of the WCC, that the Council is a ‘commonwealth of Churches’. In paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 the meaning of the term ‘commonwealth’ is described in the following words: ‘The use of the term ‘commonwealth’ in the Basis really convinces that the Council is more than a simple
functional association of churches... We can even say (using the words of the Resolution on ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council) that ‘real, albeit incomplete communion (koinonia) exists between them [the churches] already now’. From this quotation it follows directly that the church-members of the WCC are considered as entering into limited ecclesiastical communion with other members of the WCC with all their plagues and heresies. The document ‘Towards a common understanding and vision of the WCC’ in point 3.5.3 even directly extends this ecclesiastical communion to the whole Orthodox Church with all her people. The document says that this ecclesiastical communion in the Council ‘is not something abstract and immobile, it is also not limited by the official links between the leadership of the churches and their leaders or representatives. It is rather a dynamic, mutually acting reality which embraces the whole fullness of the church as the expression of the people of God’.

“The most important document of the WCC having a constitutional significance continues to remain the Toronto declaration – ‘The Church, the churches and the WCC’. On the basis of this document the Local Churches in the 1960s entered into the WCC. In it we also clearly see the principles that radically contradict Orthodoxy. Thus point 4.8 of the Toronto declaration declares: ‘The church-members enter into spiritual mutual relationships through which they strive to learn from each other and help each other, so that the Body of Christ may be built and the life of the Church renewed.’ Evidently, this principle of the ‘building of the Church of Christ’ contradicts the Orthodox teaching on the Church. However, it is precisely this, as we see here, that is inscribed in the foundation document of the WCC and can in no way be changed. Besides, the document in its conclusion says the following about the principles of the Toronto declaration, including the principle of the ‘building of the Body of Christ’: ‘Not one of these positive presuppositions which contain in themselves the basis of the World council are in conflict with the teachings of the church-members’.

“From what has been said we can draw the conclusion that membership in the WCC presupposes agreement with its constitutional principles, which contradict Orthodoxy. The ROC MP should not be a member of an organization whose constitutional principles contradict Orthodoxy…”84

2. Sergianism

The MP approved a “social document” which, among other things, recognised that “the Church must refuse to obey the State” “if the authorities force the Orthodox believers to renounce Christ and His Church”.85 Enormous significance was attached to this phrase by those in ROCOR who favoured union with the MP. However, on the very same page we find: “But even the persecuted Church is called to bear the persecutions patiently, not refusing loyalty to the State that persecutes it”. We may

infer from this that the MP still considers that its loyalty to the Soviet State was right and the resistance to it shown by the Catacomb Church was wrong. So, contrary to first appearances, the MP remained mired in Sergianism. In fact, Sergianism as such was not mentioned in the document, much less repented of. This is consistent with the fact that the MP has never in its entire history since 1943 shown anything other than a determination to serve whatever appears to be the strongest forces in the contemporary world. Until the fall of communism, that meant the communists. With the fall of communism, the MP was not at first sure whom she had to obey, but gradually assumed the character of a “populist” church, trying to satisfy the various factions within it (including nominally Orthodox political leaders) while preserving an appearance of unity.

In this connection Frs. Vladimir Savitsky, Valentine (Salomakh) and Nicholas Savchenko write: “The politics of ‘populism’ which the MP is conducting today is a new distortion of true Christianity. Today this politics (and the ideology standing behind it) is a continuation and development of ‘sergianism’, a metamorphosis of the very same disease. Today it seems to us that we have to speak about this at the top of our voices. Other problems, such as the heresy of ecumenism and ‘sergianism’ in the strict sense, while undoubtedly important, are of secondary importance by comparison with the main aim of the MP, which is to be an ‘all-people’ Church, in fact, in the ‘people’ (understood in a broad sense, including unbelievers and ‘eclectics’) there always have been those who are for ecumenism and those who are against. Therefore we see that the MP is ready at the same time to participate in the disgusting sin of ecumenism and to renounce it and even condemn it. It is exactly the same with ‘sergianism’ (understood as the dependence of the Church on the secular authorities). The MP will at the same time in words affirm its independence (insofar as there are those who are for this independence) and listen to every word of the authorities and go behind them (not only because that is convenient, but also because it thus accepted in the ‘people’, and the authorities are ‘elected by the people’). In a word, it is necessary to condemn the very practice and ideology of the transformation of the MP into a Church ‘of all the people’.”

This analysis has been confirmed by events since the former KGB Colonel Putin came to power in January, 2000. The MP has appeared to be reverting to its submissive role in relation to an ever more Soviet-looking government, not protesting against the restoration of the red flag to the armed forces and approving the retention of the music of the Soviet national anthem.

There followed an official justification of Sergianism. Thus on July 18, 2002, the Moscow Synod ratified a document entitled “The relationships between the Russian Orthodox Church and the authorities in the 20s and 30s”, which declared: “The aim of normalising the relationship with the authorities cannot be interpreted as a betrayal of Church interests. It was adopted by the holy Patriarch Tikhon, and was also expressed in the so-called ‘Epistle of the Solovki Bishops’ in 1926, that is, one year before the publication of ‘The Epistle of the deputy patriarchal locum tenens and temporary patriarchal Synod’. The essence of the changes in the position of the hierarchy consisted in the fact that the Church, having refused to recognise the

86 Protopriest Vladimir Savitsky, Hieromonk Valentine (Salomakh) and Deacon Nicholas Savchenko, “Pis’mo iz Sankt-Peterburga” (Letter from St. Petersburg), Otkliki, op. cit., part 1, Paris, 2001, p. 92.
legitimacy of the new power established after the October revolution in 1917, as the power became stronger later, had to recognise it as a state power and establish bilateral relations with it. This position is not blameworthy; historically, the Church has more than once found herself in a situation in which it has had to cooperate with non-orthodox rulers (for instance, in the period of the Golden Horde or the Muslim Ottoman Empire)."\textsuperscript{87}

However, Soviet power was very different from that of the Tatars or Ottomans, and “bilateral relations” with it, unlike with those powers, involved falling under the anathema of the Church. Moreover, if the Church at first refused to recognise Soviet power, but then (in 1927) began to recognise it, the question arises: which position was the correct one? There can be no question but that the position endorsed by the Russian Council of 1917-18 was the correct one, and that the sergianist Moscow Patriarchate, by renouncing that position, betrayed the truth – and continues to betray it to the present day through its symbiotic relationship with a government that openly declares itself the heir of the Soviet State.

As late as January 24, 2005 Metropolitan Cyril (Gundiaev) of Smolensk, head of the MP’s Department of Foreign Relations, confirmed that the MP does not condemn sergianism: “We recognize that the model of Church-State relations [in the Soviet period] did not correspond to tradition. But we are not condemning those who realized this model, because there was no other way of preserving the Church. The Church behaved in the only way she could at that time. There was another path into the catacombs, but there could be no catacombs in the Soviet space…”\textsuperscript{88}

And yet the Catacomb Church did exist “in the Soviet space” and produced a rich crop of sanctity…\textsuperscript{89}

When Gundiaev became patriarch, his place as head of the Department for External Relations was taken by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), who made this startling revelation to the American ambassador in Russia, as revealed by Wikileaks: “A (or the) main role of the Russian Orthodox Church is in providing propaganda for the official politics of the government.”\textsuperscript{90}

A clear example of how Sergianism continues to exist in practice is provided by the fact that the president of North Korea, Kim Chen Ir, though no friend of religion - in fact, religion is banned in North Korea – has nevertheless allow the MP to build a church to the Life-Giving Trinity in Pyonyang! Moreover, the beloved leader is devoting about $1,000,000.00 to its building! This is a country where millions of people are starving...

The question was: why should this avowed enemy of God be helping to build a church to the Life-Giving Trinity? Could it be that the black ryassas of Korean clergy

\textsuperscript{88}Gundiaev, in Verlograd-Inform, № 504, February 2, 2005.
\textsuperscript{90}“Otkrovenie Tovarischha Alfeyeva” (A Revelation of Comrade Alfeyev), Nasha Strana (Buenos Aires), N 2907, January, 2010, p. 4.
provided a good cover for exchanges between the beloved leader of the Korean masses and the beloved leader of the Russian masses?

A clue is provided by the interesting fact that four students from North Korea were studying in the Moscow theological seminary, and then became deacons in the MP, serving in the St. Nicholas cathedral in Vladivostok. And why have they come to Russia to study Orthodoxy? It seems they are quite frank in their reply to this question: they are in Russia at the command of their secular masters. "Orthodoxy comes to us with difficulty, but our great leader comrade Kim Chen Ir has taken the decision to build an Orthodox church in Pyonyang," declared Deacon Fyodor to journalists.

ROAC priest Fr. Michael Ardov commented well on this: "This is the sin of dual faith, for which the Lord punishes more severely than for lack of faith. A Christian cannot at the same time bow down to the Lord and to the powers of darkness. In North Korea there reigns the cult of the family of the Kims, which is accompanied by barbaric rites. The bishop of Vladivostok Benjamin should not allow the North Korean double-fathers over the threshold of the church even under threat of his being banned from serving. It is in this that his episcopal duty lies, and not in fulfilling the commands of the bosses like a soldier. But he has prepared the latter, demonstrating sergianism in action. It is noteworthy that this same Bishop Benjamin, being a professor of the Moscow theological academy, is glorified as a strict zealot of Orthodoxy. His example shows why in principle there can be no good bishops in the Moscow Patriarchate..."\(^1\)

3. The New Martyrs

The major problems here for the MP were the questions of the Royal Martyrs, on the one hand, and of the martyrs of the Catacomb Church who rejected Metropolitan Sergius, on the other. Non-royal martyrs killed before the schism with the Catacomb Church could be "safely" canonized. Thus in 1989, the MP canonized Patriarch Tikhon, and in 1992 it canonized three more martyrs and set up a commission to inquire into the martyrdom of the Royal Family, about which an MP publication wrote in 1998: “No less if not more dangerous as an ecclesiastical falsification is the MP’s Canonization Commission, headed by Metropolitan Juvenal (Poiarkov), which has suggested a compromise glorification of Tsar Nicholas Alexandrovich: ‘Yes, he was guilty of the tragedy on Khodynska field, he hobnobbed with Rasputin, he offended the workers, the country became backward. In general as a ruler of a state he was completely useless. Most important, he brought the country to revolution. But he suffered for Christ...’ Such a falsification will only continue that dirty stream of slander which the Christ-fighters began to pour out already long before 1917...”\(^2\)

After nearly a decade of temporising, the MP finally, under pressure from its flock, glorified the Royal New Martyrs and many other martyrs of the Soviet yoke. Having unanimously rejected this canonization at their council in 1998, two years later they unanimously accepted it. The glorification of the Royal New Martyrs was a compromise decision, reflecting the very different attitudes towards them in the

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\(^1\) Ardov, [http://rocornews.livejournal.com/197515.html](http://rocornews.livejournal.com/197515.html).

\(^2\) *Pravoslavie ili Smert’* (Orthodoxy or Death), № 8, 1998.
patriarchate. The Royal Martyrs were called “passion-bearers” rather than “martyrs”, and it was made clear that they were being glorified, not for the way in which they lived their lives, but for the meekness with which they faced their deaths. This allowed the anti-monarchists to feel that Nicholas was still the “bloody Nicholas” of Soviet mythology, and that it was “Citizen Romanov” rather than “Tsar Nicholas” who had been glorified - the man rather than the monarchical principle for which he stood.

As regards the other martyrs, Sergius Kanaev writes: “In the report of the President of the Synodal Commission for the canonisation of the saints, Metropolitan Juvenal (Poiarkov), the criterion of holiness adopted… for Orthodox Christians who had suffered during the savage persecutions was clearly and unambiguously declared to be submission ‘to the lawful leadership of the Church’, which was Metropolitan Sergius and his hierarchy. With such an approach, the holiness of the ‘sergianist martyrs’ was incontestable. The others were glorified or not glorified depending on the degree to which they ‘were in separation from the lawful leadership of the Church’. Concerning those who were not in agreement with the politics of Metropolitan Sergius, the following was said in the report: ‘In the actions of the “right” oppositionists, who are often called the “non-commemorators”, one cannot find evil-intentioned, exclusively personal motives. Their actions were conditioned by their understanding of what was for the good of the Church’. In my view, this is nothing other than blasphemy against the New Martyrs and a straight apology for sergianism. With such an approach the consciously sergianist Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov), for example, becomes a ‘saint’, while his ideological opponent Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, who was canonized by our Church, is not glorified. For us another fact is also important, that Metropolitan Seraphim was appointed by Sergius (Stragorodsky) in the place of Metropolitan Joseph, who had been ‘banned’ by him.”

Other Catacomb martyrs were “glorified” by the MP because their holiness was impossible to hide. Thus the relics of Archbishop Victor of Vyatka were found to be incorrupt and now lie in a patriarchal cathedral – although he was the very first bishop officially to break with Sergius and called him and his church organization graceless! Again, the reputation of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan was too great to be ignored, in spite of the fact that by the end of his life his position differed in no way from that of St. Victor or St. Joseph.

Some, seeing the glorification of the Catacomb martyrs by their opponents, remembered the Lord’s words: “Ye build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets’. Therefore ye bear witness against yourselves that ye are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up the measure of your fathers!” (Matthew 23.29-32).

This blasphemous canonisation of both the true and the false martyrs, thereby downgrading the exploit of the true martyrs, had been predicted by the ROCOR

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priest Fr. Oleg Oreshkin: 'I think that some of those glorified will be from the sergianists so as to deceive the believers. 'Look,' they will say, 'he is a saint, a martyr, in the Heavenly Kingdom, and he recognized the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, so you must be reconciled with it and its fruits.' This will be done not in order to glorify martyrdom for Christ's sake, but in order to confirm the sergianist politics.'

The main thing from the MP's point of view was that their founder, Metropolitan Sergius, should be given equal status with the catacomb martyrs whom he persecuted. Thus in 1997 the patriarch said: "Through the host of martyrs the Church of Russia bore witness to her faith and sowed the seed of her future rebirth. Among the confessors of Christ we can in full measure name… his Holiness Patriarch Sergius."

By the time of the council of 2000, the MP still did not feel able to canonise Sergius - probably because it fears that it would prevent a union with ROCOR. But neither did it canonise the leader of the Catacomb Church, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. This suggested that a canonisation of the two leaders was in the offing, but depended on the success of the negotiations between the MP and ROCOR.

The patriarch's lack of ecclesiastical principle and ecclesiological consistency in this question was pointed out by Fr. Peter Perekrestov: 'In the introduction to one article ("In the Catacombs", Soversheno Sekretno, № 7, 1991) Patriarch Alexis wrote the following: 'I believe that our martyrs and righteous ones, regardless of whether they followed Metropolitan Sergius or did not agree with his position, pray together for us.' At the same time, in the weekly, Nedelya, № 2, 1/92, the same Patriarch Alexis states that the Russian Church Abroad is a schismatic church, and adds: 'Equally uncanonical is the so-called "Catacomb" Church.' In other words, he recognizes the martyrs of the Catacomb Church, many of whom were betrayed to the godless authorities by Metropolitan Sergius's church organization..., and at the same time declares that these martyrs are schismatic and uncanonical!'

For in the last resort, as Fr. Peter pointed out, for the MP this whole matter was not one of truth or falsehood, but of power: "It is not important to them whether a priest is involved in shady business dealings or purely church activities; whether he is a democrat or a monarchist; whether an ecumenist or a zealot; whether he wants to serve Vigil for six hours or one; whether the priest serves a panikhida for the victims who defended the White House or a moleben for those who sided with Yeltsin; whether the priest wants to baptize by immersion or by sprinkling; whether he serves in the catacombs or openly; whether he venerates the Royal Martyrs or not; whether he serves according to the New or Orthodox Calendar - it really doesn't matter. The main thing is to commemorate Patriarch Alexis. Let the Church Abroad have its autonomy, let it even speak out, express itself as in the past, but only under one condition: commemorate Patriarch Alexis. This is a form of Papism - let the priests

94 "Ierei o. Oleg otvechaet na voprosy redaktsii" (The Priest Fr. Oleg Replies to the Questions of the Editors), Pravoslavnaia Rus' (Orthodox Russia), № 23 (1452), December 1/14, 1991, p. 7.
95 Ridiger, in Fr. Peter Perekrestov, "The Schism in the Heart of Russia (Concerning Sergianism)", Canadian Orthodox Herald, 1999, № 4.
96 Perekrestov, "Why Now?" Orthodox Life, vol. 44, № 6, November-December, 1994, p. 44.
be married, let them serve according to the Eastern rite - it makes no difference, what is important is that they commemorate the Pope of Rome.\textsuperscript{97}

It is open to question whether the patriarchate’s canonisation of even the true martyrs is pleasing to God. Thus when 50 patriarchal bishops uncovered the relics of Patriarch Tikhon in the Donskoj cemetery on April 5, 1992, witnesses reported that “it was even possible to recognise the face of the Patriarch from his incorrupt visage, and his mantia and mitre were also preserved in complete incorruption. Witnesses also speak about a beautiful fragrance and an unusual feeling of reverential peace at that moment. But then, as some patriarchal clerics confirm, on contact with the air the relics crumbled, or - as the Catacomb Christians remark - the relics were not given into the hands of the Moscow Patriarchate. Then they buried them in plaster - a blasphemous act from an Orthodox point of view...\textsuperscript{98}

The MP council’s documents were well characterised by the ROCOR clergy of Kursk as follows: “Everywhere there is the same well-known style: pleasing the ‘right’ and the ‘left’, the Orthodox and the ecumenists, ‘yours’ and ‘ours’, without the slightest attempt at definiteness, but with, on the other hand, a careful preservation of the whole weight of the sins of the past and present.”\textsuperscript{99} The “Jubilee Sobor” was final proof that the MP had not repented and could not repent unless its higher echelons were removed and the whole church apparatus was thoroughly purged.

\textit{January 10/23, 2017.}

\textsuperscript{97} Perekrestov, “Why Now?” \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{98} Eugene Polyakov, personal communication, April 5, 1992.
\textsuperscript{99} “Obraschenie kurskogo dukhovenstva k mitropolitu Vitaliu” (Address of the Kursk Clergy to Metropolitan Vitaly), \textit{Otkliki, op. cit.}, part 3, p. 80.
5. TRUE ORTHODOXY AND PEOPLE POWER

The lack of unity among the jurisdictions of Russian True Orthodoxy has naturally been the cause of much distress among Russian Orthodox Christians, and recently there has been more than attempt to seek a resolution of the problem in a closer examination of the last important directive of the united Church – ukaz number 362 of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. One of these attempts – by Igumen Andrei Erastov of Melbourne, Australia - was a very useful analysis that had the advantage of sticking close to the actual text of the ukaz and of presenting an accurate picture of the main changes in Orthodox Church administration since the beginning, even if the present writer believes that Fr. Andrei underestimates or ignores certain important obstacles to unity. A more recent attempt by an anonymous author is much less impressive: it not only completely misinterprets the ukaz (which he does not quote from), and seriously distorts the ecclesiological theory and practice of the Early Church, but his recommendations, if followed, would have the paradoxical practical result of undermining even what is left of the unity of the Russian Church, creating a “revolution from below” that destroys the power of bishops and therefore of Orthodoxy itself!

The anonymous author calls for nothing less than “the regeneration of the traditions of the Early Christian Church”, which “could be the basis for the establishment of the Philadelphian Church of the last times”. And this would be achieved, supposedly, by following the example of certain recent schismatics in breaking communion with their respective Synods on the basis of ukaz number 362. A tall – and very Protestant - order! Unity is to be achieved through disunity! The love of the brethren is to be attained by displaying disobedience and even hatred!

Let us continue with the anonymous author’s analysis (in italics), followed by our own comments:-

“Let us recall that that the North American Diocese of RTOC led by his Grace Bishop Stefan (Sabelnik) recently passed over to self-administration in accordance with the holy Patriarch Tikhon’s ukaz. More than 10 priests also joined him in Russia and Ukraine…”

But the patriarch’s ukaz says nothing about “passing over to self-administration”. It says nothing about, and certainly does not bless or in any way justify, one bishop separating from the bishops who ordained him and seizing parishes in other countries that belong to the jurisdiction of those bishops. Thus Bishop Stefan is a sick man who is barely able to look after his parishes in North America; in spite of this he has proclaimed himself the sole successor of ROCOR and decided to take parishes under his omophorion as far afield as Siberia!

100 «Указ №362 и самоуправляющиеся Церковные Округа» - доклад игумена Андрея (Эрастова) - РПЦЗ, Австралия http://orthodoxrusk.livejournal.com/20756.html
101 “ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ РУСЬ: Надежда на возрождение истинной Филадельфийской Церкви последних времен”, http://orthodoxrusk.livejournal.com/
The patriarch’s *ukaz* speaks only about UNITY, not SCHISM and SEPARATION. It exhorts bishops who live close to each other and under similar circumstances to get together and form a single administration under the leadership of the oldest among them. Bishop Stefan has done the opposite!

“After them, in ROCOR (A), at the January All-Abroad Council of this branch, under the presidency of Archbishop Andronik (Kotliaro), the decision was made to pass over to the *ukaz* of the holy Patriarch Tikhon number 362 and create self-administering Church districts.”

Again we see the theological and historical illiteracy of the anonymous author. To speak of “passing over” to the *ukaz* implies that the jurisdiction in question was not in obedience to it before. *De facto*, Metropolitan Agathangel may well have rescinded the application of the *ukaz* through his claim to be already the first-hierarch of the whole of the True Russian Church. But *de jure* the whole of ROCOR, and all its “splinters” have been subject to the patriarch’s *ukaz* since the 1920s. So it is not a question of “passing over” to the *ukaz*: any splinter group that considered itself to be not subject to that *ukaz* would be automatically excluded from the Church of St. Tikhon, the Church of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors.

A note about the use of the term “All-Abroad Council”. There were three lawful “All-Abroad Councils”: in 1921 in Karlovtsy under Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), in 1938 in Belgrade under Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky), and in 1974 in Jordanville under St. Philaret (Voznezensky) of New York. The fourth, in 2006 in San Francisco under the traitor Metropolitan Lavr, was illegal because it represented only a part of those who considered themselves to be in ROCOR, excluding, among many others, Metropolitan Vitaly and all those branches that recognized Vitaly, not Lavr, and that we now call ROAC, RTOC and ROCOR (V). The fifth “All-Abroad” council was even more of a misnomer, because it represented only the schismatic group of ROCOR (A) under “Metropolitan” Agathangel. And the sixth “All-Abroad” council represented only a handful of bishops who have separated from Agathangel.

“This tendency inspires hope that a real, and not a merely decorative, dialogue between the administratively separated branches of ROCOR-TOC is possible, and that they could be united ‘from below’, not administratively, but spiritually, without one splinter engulfing another (if the ‘uppers’ in the persons of the church administrations do not want dialogue and unity, then this could be realized by the ‘lowers’ instead of them – the dioceses and parishes, relying on the *ukaz* no. 362 of the holy Patriarch Tikhon.”

But where, pray, does the famous *ukaz* say anything about such a people’s revolution in the Church? The truth is: nowhere. The *ukaz* is directed to bishops alone, and recommends certain actions by bishops alone. It may be pertinent to point out to the anonymous author: we are not Protestants. We belong to the Orthodox Church, which was, is and always will be a hierarchical organization ruled by the bishops, in which the voice of “the grass-roots” is listened to but not necessarily obeyed.

“In essence, we can now see in the Russian Church (in Her various parts and branches) an elemental generation of a movement for the re-establishment of the Early Christian (pre-
Not true. From at least as early as the second century, the Church was ruled by a network – St. Cyprian called it a “college” – of bishops, who, while having quasi-monarchical powers within their own dioceses, were subject to the decisions of councils of bishops assembling in a given region with a metropolitan at their head. Apostolic canon 34 demonstrates that not even the metropolitan of the region had a completely free hand; he could not implement decisions that were not approved by the junior bishops of the region. So bishops in the Early (Pre-Constantinian) Church were not isolated, completely self-governing units. The Church was “conciliar” (sobornaia) from the beginning; and part of the definition of this property, which has entered into the very definition of the Orthodox Church, is that the highest organ of administration of the Church is not the supposedly “self-governing” bishops, but councils of bishops, of which the most authoritative are the Seven Ecumenical Councils – which had power, of course, over bishops, being able to create them, move them, punish them and depose them.

“With the removal from the midst of the Orthodox Tsar, the Anointed of God, and the departure into the past of the Constantinian (Imperial) epoch in the history of the Church, this tradition again became current after 1917 for True Orthodoxy, especially in the Russian Church, which served as the reason for the issuance of the holy Patriarch Tikhon’s prophetic ukaz number 362 on the self-governance of dioceses, which remains the foundation for all parts and splinters of ROCOR-TOC without exception.”

Not so. The reason for the patriarch’s ukaz was the administrative chaos created by the Bolsheviks in the Russian civil war, which deprived the patriarch of the possibility of communicating with all his bishops. There is no evidence whatsoever that the patriarch was trying to decentralize the Church to conform to a supposed Pre-Constantinian pattern. On the contrary, he was clearly trying to restore the administrative unity of the Russian Church under its lawful patriarch. This point has been well explained by Igumen Andrei in his January report referred to above.

“In essence, we are now returning to the situation of the Russian Church in the 1920s, the execution of the covenants of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia and the revival of the True Orthodox practice established in the Catacomb Church in the years of the God-fighting persecutions.”

The situation now is radically different from that in the 1920s or in later decades. Until about the imprisonment of Metropolitan Peter in 1926, not only was it possible to have councils legally convened under a lawful patriarch or first-hierarch: there was also unity of faith among most of the hierarchs (excluding the renovationists). But from the 1930s it became virtually impossible to convene councils, even on a small scale, as envisaged in the patriarch’s ukaz. Consequently, it became virtually impossible to create bishops (for that required two or three bishops meeting in council) or depose them (for the misdeeds or false opinions of bishops were not known to their colleagues, and in any case could not be discussed in council). So in a strictly limited sense the bishops did become “self-governing”.

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But for a true bishop such a situation is not only undesirable: it is a cause of bitter sorrow! For just as a fish out of water will eventually die from lack of oxygen, so a bishop who cannot consult with his fellow bishops will eventually perish spiritually from lack of counsel. By the Grace of God there are exceptions to this rule – but nobody can deny that the Conciliar Church as a whole stronger through her capacity to convene councils, insofar as it is only in council that the leaders of the Church can benefit from mutual counsel and imitate the holy unanimity attained at the first Council at Jerusalem, which declared: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us!”

Our present time is different again. The overt persecutions have ceased, and communications between bishops have become easier. However, the “authorities” remain hostile to the True Church, supporting the heretics; and the most important thing is missing from among the bishops: unity of faith. This is the real cause of the schisms and divisions among the True Orthodox bishops, and the real reason why the application of the holy patriarch’s ukaz is in fact impossible to put into practice in the way the patriarch envisaged. For the ukaz presupposed that all the “splinters” or autonomous jurisdictions should be one in faith and in Eucharistic communion with each other.

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Let us now turn from the anonymous author’s article to how the present disunity among the Russian True Orthodox can be overcome in an Orthodox manner.

The inescapable first step is the establishment of unity of faith within each jurisdiction or “splinter”. For it is an illusion to suppose that each jurisdiction is united at any rate within itself. We can see this most clearly in the recent history of one of these jurisdictions, RTOC.

In October, 2008, at its Odessa Sobor, RTOC under Archbishop Tikhon issued an excellent confession of faith which clearly and unambiguously declared the Church’s adherence to ROCOR’s anathema against ecumenism of 1983 and condemned the Moscow Patriarchate as graceless. In this way it conformed itself to the consensus opinion already voiced by the Holy New Martyrs of Russia, by St. Philaret (whose was canonized at the Odessa Sobor) and by other post-Soviet jurisdictions, notably ROAC under Metropolitan Valentine (in 1999) and ROCOR (V) under Metropolitan Vitaly (in 2001). At this point only Bishop Agathangel’s ROCOR (A) stood outside the consensus – partly, no doubt, because Agathangel owed the very existence of his Synod to the help provided him in ordinations of bishops by the heretical and defrocked Greek group known as the Cyprianites, whose crypto-ecumenical ecclesiology and refusal to accept and obey the 1983 anathema was notorious and long-standing.

However, dissidents were not slow to appear within RTOC’s ranks. The present writer remembers being asked by Archbishop Tikhon, already in June, 2011, to speak to one of the dissidents, Archimandrite Ilia (Empulov), who stubbornly maintained that the MP – which he had just left for reasons of the faith – was still a true Church. Over the following years, Fr. Ilia and his followers (mainly in the Omsk and Siberia
diocese) continued to disturb traditional Catacomb parishes (for example, in Tambov) and to deluge the Synod with demands and protests. Many Synodal sessions were occupied by attempts to explain the truth to the dissidents, who remained unmoved and impenitent. Finally, in March, 2016, after the Synod had published a detailed “Reply to the Omsk priests” refuting their major arguments, the dissidents broke communion with RTOC and came under the omophorion of Bishop Stefan of New Jersey.

A similar division took place some years earlier in ROAC between the Synod and a group of adherents of the name-worshipping heresy led by Fr. (now “Bishop”) Gregory Lurye. After five years of disturbances, in 2005 Lurye was finally expelled from ROAC. But he took two bishops with him, and together they have now formed yet another “splinter”, provocatively called “the Hierarchical Conference of ROAC”.

Meanwhile, more than one division has taken place among the bishops of ROCOR (A); the most recent was the departure of Archbishops Sophrony of St. Petersburg and Andronik of New York. In this case, unlike the cases of RTOC and ROAC, more right seems to be on the side of the dissidents and “rebels” than of the jurisdiction’s ambitious and overbearing first-hierarch. Moreover, the issues have been less doctrinal (Andronik’s jurisdiction has not issued any confession of faith) than administrative and canonical. Nevertheless, as is usually the case in such divisions, certain doctrinal differences between the sides are beginning to appear. This only goes to confirm the point being made: that doctrinal unity is the essential prerequisite of unity, and that if the jurisdictions cannot unite within themselves, they are highly unlikely to be able to unite between themselves.

But let us suppose that by some miracle all the jurisdictions reach unity of faith both within and between themselves. This might enable the splinters to at least come together in one large Sobor. However, a further problem will then inevitably arise: the dubiousness of the apostolic succession of several of the hierarchs. For example, RTOC and ROAC both reject the ordinations of the bishops of both Agathangel’s and Andronik’s jurisdictions that were carried out with the participation of the heretical and defrocked Greek Cyprianite bishops. And then there is the problem of immoral bishops…

So there are plenty of highly intractable problems ahead. But what has been discussed so far assumes that the attempts at unification will take place through the efforts of the leaders of the jurisdictions, the bishops. However, the anonymous author – we can return to him now – suggests a quite different approach: a grass-roots taking over of the process by the “lowers” (низь). This revolution – for that is what it is - would inevitably involve a lowering in the authority of all the bishops – and of the idea of the episcopate itself. However, as in any revolution, the undermining of one kind of authority will inevitably be followed by the imposition of another – and worse – authority, who will be a lawless despot. Thus King Charles was followed by Cromwell, Louis XVI – by Napoleon, and Tsar Nicholas – by Lenin.

It is not difficult to predict who will be the ultimate beneficiary of any revolution from below in the Russian Church. Its Kerensky will be “bishop” Gregory Lurye, the name-worshipper, who has already been steadily undermining the authority of all
the bishops and jurisdictions through a long series of articles. And its Lenin will be “Patriarch” Kyril Gundiaev of Moscow…

We know that the Russian Church will be reunited; this was prophesied by St. Anatoly of Optina before his martyric death in 1922. The question is: how? Historically, periods of anarchy in the Orthodox Church have been resolved by Orthodox emperors - the real "power of the people" - by metaphorically knocking the heads of warring bishops together in Councils convened by themselves. This is what happened, for example, with St. Constantine at the First Ecumenical Council, St. Theodosius the Great at the Second Council, Emperor Theodosius the Younger at the Third Council, Emperors Marcian and Pulcheria at the Fourth Council, Emperor Justinian at the Fifth Council, Emperor Constantine VI at the Sixth Council, and Empress Irene at the Seventh Council. Therefore, following history, and guided by the prophecies of the saints concerning the resurrection of Russia, those who love the Church and its sacred unity must pray that God returns a True Orthodox Tsar to the throne of Russia…

January 19 / February 1, 2017.
St. Mark of Ephesus.
99th Anniversary of the Anathematization of Soviet Power.
January 23, 2017 marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of “Patriarch” Sergius (Stragorodsky) of Moscow, the man who betrayed hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of the finest Christians of our time to tortures and death in the Soviet Gulag by denouncing them to the KGB as “counter-revolutionaries”, becoming himself “an agent of worldwide antichristianity”, as one of his victims, Boris Talantov, put it. On January 26, his successor, “Patriarch” Cyril (Gundiaev), codenamed “Mikhailov” in the files of his master, the KGB, served a pannihiya for him in Moscow, and delivered the following words in front of his grave. This is his speech, with a commentary in italics:

“Metropolitan Sergius did everything so that the Church should be preserved in the life of our people.” (Митрополит Сергий делал все для того, чтобы Церковь сохранялась в жизни нашего народа.)

Why call him “metropolitan” and not “patriarch”? Could it be because, in the conscience of the Russian people, Sergius was never a real patriarch, having acquired his rank by fawning before Stalin and trampling on the bodies of so many of his fellow hierarchs? For when he was made patriarch in 1944, no more than a handful of fellow traitors were in church to elect and enthrone him. The great majority of the others were either dead, having suffered martyrdom for refusing to do precisely what Sergius agreed to do, - that is, make the Church an instrument of “worldwide antichristianity” - or were still rotting “alive” in the camps, condemned to that destiny by Sergius himself when he denounced them as “counter-revolutionaries”. Was this the “life” that Sergius had preserved for the Church? No, this was spiritual death, the death of Judas, who hanged himself for 30 pieces and silver and then descended into hell as an example and warning to all traitors to the end of time…

“Not everyone was able at that time to understand the wisdom of his acts.” (Не все могли в то время понять мудрость его поступков.)

True, too true. Perhaps the only really true words in this address… Thus the leader of the Church and Metropolitan Sergius’ own ecclesiastical leader, the locum tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter, completely failed to understand his “wisdom”, demanding from his exile beyond the Arctic Circle that he step down from his post. Hieromartyr Joseph of Petrograd failed to understand his wisdom, denouncing his cunning. Hieromartyr Cyril of Kazan, the friend of St. John of Kronstadt and the most revered hierarch in the Russian Church, failed to understand his wisdom, denouncing his pharisism and cruelty. The Optina Elder Nektary, whom Patriarch Tikhon had consulted on all important decisions, failed to understand Sergius’ wisdom, saying already in 1927 that “the poison of renovationism” was in him still and forbidding his spiritual children from going to his churches. The whole choir of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors failed to understand his wisdom; for, having acquired “the humility of [true] wisdom” (James 3.13), they preferred to be fools for Christ and voluntarily undergo tortures and rather than accept Sergius’ wisdom, knowing that “this wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic” (James 3.15).

“Many light-mindedly accused him. Others heroically defended him.” (Многие с легкостью обвиняли его, другие — героически защищали.)
There is nothing light-minded about the accusations of all the bravest and best of the Church of Christ. It is a sentence so heavy, so weighty, that no man who is the object of it and understands its justice can fail to be crushed by it. As for heroism, What is heroic about defending a Judas? What is heroic about praising the course that allows you to die safely in your bed, as Sergius did, while hundreds of thousands of your brothers are dying in torment? What is heroic about refusing to say even a word in defence of your unjustly condemned brothers?

“Metropolitan Sergius himself, the future patriarch, fully understood the vulnerability of his position and the danger for his own personal authority of everything that he was doing in the name of the salvation of the Church. It is precisely in this that consists the exploit of his life... Patriarch Sergius did not think about what they would say about him in the future. He did what he had to do, and we bow our heads in gratitude before the exploit of his life...” (и сам митрополит Сергий, будущий Патриарх, в полной мере сознавал уязвимость своей позиции и опасность для своего личного авторитета всего того, что он делал во имя спасения Церкви. Именно в этом — подвиг его жизни. (...) Патриарх Сергий не думал о том, как о нем скажут в будущем. Он делал то, что должен был сделать, и мы с благодарностью склоняем свои главы пред подвигом его жизни.)

True up to a point. Sergius did not think about saving his reputation in the future. He thought only about saving his miserable skin in the present... As for saving the Church – yes, he thought about that, too. But not about the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is already saved by Christ and has no need of any human hand to support it. (Remember what happened to Uzzah when he tried to support the Old Testament Ark with his hand – he was struck dead by God!) He thought also – perhaps, for we cannot be sure that Sergius really cared for anybody except himself - about saving his “church” organization, what is now called the Moscow Patriarchate – that is, keeping it in existence as a faithful servant of the Antichrist and a spiritual snare for many future generations of Russians. As for his teaching that the Church is saved, not by the Cross of Christ, but by the treachery of feeble and sinful men, this was the heresy that the True Church has called “Sergianism”, but which Hieromartyr Victor of Vyatka – the very first bishop who separated from Sergius, whose relics are incorrupt, and whom the Moscow Patriarchate, amazingly, glorifies as a saint – called “worse than heresy”.

“Let us offer up our prayers in a special way for this great man, the confessor-patriarch, on whose actions the very destiny of the Church depended to a large degree. After all, we know that although the Church is invincible and gates of hell will never prevail against it (cf. Matthew 16.18), there have been many historical examples of Local Churches disappearing under the pressure of hostile forces. His Holiness Patriarch Sergius did not permit the disappearance of our Church. He preserved it and thereby to a great degree he predetermined the present spiritual development of our Church and of our people.” (Давайте особым образом вознесем молитвы об этом великом человеке, Патриархе-исповеднике, от действий которого во многом зависела в то время сама судьба Церкви. Ведь мы знаем: хотя Церковь непобедима и врата ада никогда ее не одолеют (см. Мф. 16:18), в истории было много примеров, когда Поместные Церкви исчезали под натиском враждебных сил. Святейший Патриарх Сергий не допустил исчезновения нашей Церкви. Он сохранял ее
Yes, and what a terrible, truly terrible spiritual state does the Moscow Patriarchate find itself today! And all as a direct result of Sergius’ betrayal, which tore his church away from Christ, depriving it at the same time of the Grace of God and the Truth of the Orthodox confession of faith. And all “only that they may not suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ” (Galatians 6.12).

The True Church will certainly prevail against the gates of hell, and glory to God that there are still Russian Christians today who are prevailing in it and through it. But let us not forget what happened immediately after the dialogue between Christ and the holy Apostle Peter on the Church. The Lord went on to describe how He would suffer and die for His Bride – that is, do the opposite of what Sergius did. “Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from Thee, O Lord, this shall not happen to Thee! But He turned and said to Peter: ‘Get thee behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’” (Matthew 16.22-23).

St. Peter repented, and was restored to his position as leader of the Church, going on to suffer a glorious martyrlic death. Sergius did not repent. He rebuked the Christians for choosing the way of Christ, and died still unmindful of the things of God. To him, therefore, and to the demonic temptation that he and his “church” continue to place before us, we reply in the words of the Lord: “Get thee behind me, Satan!”

January 22 / February 4, 2017.
Orthodox monarchist writers, such as Archbishop Averky (Taushev) and Archimandrite Konstantin (Zaitsev) often said that the only hope for mankind in its rapid descent into Satanism was the return to power of the Orthodox Autocracy in Russia. Let us therefore look more closely at the latest, Putinist phase of the Russian revolution, and the prospects of its final overthrow.

“On 31 December 1999, Yeltsin unexpectedly resigned and, according to the Constitution of Russia, Putin became Acting President of the Russian Federation. On assuming this role, Putin went on a previously scheduled visit to Russian troops in Chechnya.

“The first Presidential Decree that Putin signed, on 31 December 1999, was titled ‘On guarantees for former president of the Russian Federation and members of his family’. This ensured that ‘corruption charges against the outgoing President and his relatives’ would not be pursued. This was most notably targeted at Mabetex bribery case in which Yeltsin's family members were involved. On 30 August 2000, a criminal investigation (number 18/238278-95) was dropped in which Putin himself was one of suspects as a member of the Saint Petersburg city government. On 30 December 2000 yet another case against the prosecutor general was dropped ‘for lack of evidence’, in spite of thousands of documents passed by Swiss prosecutors… The case of Putin's alleged corruption in metal exports from 1992 was brought back by Marina Salye, but she was silenced and forced to leave Saint Petersburg.

“While his opponents had been preparing for an election in June 2000, Yeltsin's resignation resulted in the Presidential elections being held within three months, on 26 March 2000; Putin won in the first round with 53% of the vote.

“The inauguration of President Putin occurred on 7 May 2000… The first major challenge to Putin's popularity came in August 2000, when he was criticized for the alleged mishandling of the Kursk submarine disaster. That criticism was largely because it was several days before Putin returned from vacation, and several more before he visited the scene."102

From 2003 he began to reverse the main gains of the liberal 1990s – religious freedom, and a more open and honest attitude to the Soviet past. Churches were seized from True Orthodox Christians and their websites hacked; elections were rigged, independent journalists were killed; independent businessmen were imprisoned on trumped-up charges; new history books justifying Stalinism were introduced into the classrooms; the red flag and hammer and sickle were restored to the armed services, as well as the melody (if not the words) of the Soviet national anthem; youth organizations similar to the Hitler Youth were created.103

Banking on the high price of Russia’s oil, Putin began to rebuild Russia’s economic and military might – but imbalances within the economy hindered the diversification he needed. He also had to keep the oligarchs and Mafiosi on his side. Misha Glenny

has demonstrated in his important book *McMafia*, that the growth of trade liberalization and globalization in the 1990s engendered an enormous explosion in organized crime throughout the world. It now constitutes not only a significant part of world economic output, but also a distinct threat to the sovereignty of nations. Whether we are speaking about drug-trafficking (Colombia, Mexico), people-trafficking (China), counterfeiting (North Korea), gold (India), protection rackets (Japan), guns and bombs (North Korea), banking fraud (Brazil), oil (Nigeria, Libya) or diamonds (South Africa), in each sphere we see both enormous profits and penetration of governments and security forces. The cost not only in taxes but in ruined lives has been particularly horrendous especially in the case of drug-trafficking; here the criminals have consistently triumphed over the governments; even the war on drugs waged by the United States is judged by experts to have been a total failure, to the extent that decriminalisation – i.e. surrender – is being seriously put forward as the only “solution”.

In the 1990s the growth of organized crime in Russia penetrated and overwhelmed not only the elected government, but even the mighty KGB; the boundaries between business, law enforcement and the Russian mafia became hard to make out; and the power of the Russia mafia spread also to places like Israel and Hungary. Putin made great electoral capital out of his claims to control these oligarchs and mafiosi. And indeed, some of the oligarchs of the 1990s – those who refused to buckle under to Putin, like Berezovsky and Gusev – were indeed tamed (or, more usually, expelled). Thus Glenny writes: “In the 1990s, the oligarchs and gangsters clearly controlled the Kremlin. Under Vladimir Putin, who systematically used popular hostility to the oligarchs to strengthen his political position as President, the situation was reversed: criminal and oligarch interests were subordinate to state interests. It does not follow that Putin and friends persecuted criminals or dispensed with corrupt practices. On the contrary, they flourished as before but they are now much more carefully controlled. Of course, it is often difficult to tell who is truly running the show – the chicken or the egg!”

Whoever truly runs the show, it is clear that the financial interests of Putin and his friends play an increasingly important in his conduct of international affairs. Thus the new American National Security Adviser, General Macmaster, said in May, 2016 that “Russia invaded Ukraine without being punished, established dominance over this territory and then turned the situation in such a way as to pretend that we and our allies are escalating matters.” The general drew attention to the complex strategy employed by Moscow, which was based on a combination of two factors – ‘the usual forces’ and, under their cover, ‘the much more complex campaign bound up with the use of criminality and organized crime.”

Indeed, the long post-Soviet campaign of the KGB to undermine Ukrainian independence, which involved attempts to assassinate pro-western politicians,

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appears to have owed as much to “turf wars” between Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs as to anything else.\textsuperscript{106}

Of course, the purely political desire to restore the Soviet empire to its pre-1992 boundaries, was another very important motive. But it is very difficult to disentangle such supposedly “pure” political motives from financial ones. Thus there can be little doubt that the oligarchs that control such monstrous State-mafia companies as Gazprom and Rosneft are vitally interested in acquiring complete control over the oil and gas pipelines that pass through Ukraine. Other wars that Putin has conducted – in Chechnya, in Georgia and in Syria – also “coincidentally” happen to have important pipelines passing through them. If the United States is sometimes accused of conducting wars in the Middle East for the sake of oil interests, the same can be said with still greater confidence about Russia.

Putin’s personal profits from his “grand bargain” have clearly been enormous. Thus Rob Wile writes: asks: “Figuring out the Russian president’s net worth has long been the holy grail of spooks and hacks around the world. But the personal wealth of Putin—a former KGB agent—is nearly impossible to decipher, and is likely distributed across a secret web of company holdings, real estate, and other people’s accounts. In fact, at a time when his political motivations are under scrutiny across the world, the struggle to pin down Putin’s riches reveals something about the covert ways in which he wields his authority over Russia.

“Here’s what we know.

“The most often cited estimate comes from a former mid-level Kremlin adviser named Stanislav Belkovsky. In 2007, he claimed Putin had a fortune worth at least $40 billion – a figure that would put him in the top 10 of Forbes magazine’s ranking of billionaires.

“(Forbes, the premier chronicler of the world’s wealthiest, doesn’t include Putin on its list of billionaires. In 2015, the magazine said it couldn’t verify enough assets.)

“The Kremlin source based his estimate on Putin’s alleged stakes in several companies, mostly in the oil sector. He said the Russian president controlled 37% of the oil company Surgutneftegaz, 4.5% of natural gas company Gazprom, and had substantial holdings in a commodities trader called Gunvor.

“‘At least $40 billion,’ Belkovsky told the Guardian at the time. ‘Maximum we cannot know. I suspect there are some businesses I know nothing about.’

“The American government has linked Putin to Gunvor, too. ‘Putin has investments in Gunvor and may have access to Gunvor funds,’ the U.S. Treasury said in a statement in 2014 as it announced sanctions.

\textsuperscript{106} Andrei Illarionov, “Boevoj put’ FSB v Ukrainе” (The martial path of the FSB in Ukraine), Online Kiev, June 10, 2014, \url{http://kiev-online.net.ua/politika/andrei-illarionov-boevoi-put-fsb-v-ukrai.html}. 
“Gunvor—which reportedly made $93 billion in revenue in 2012—denies Putin has ever had any ownership in the company.

“Later, in 2012, Belkovsky upped his estimate to $70 billion, based on new information from ‘confidential sources around the corporations,’ according to an interview with non-profit journalism outlet The Bureau of Investigative Journalism.

“That’d put Putin within striking distance of Bill Gates, who according to Bloomberg is the world’s richest man with an estimated net worth of $84 billion.”

The latest estimate, by Bill Browder, author and a former fund manager in Russia, is that Putin is worth ‘$200 billion, with 58 planes and helicopters and 20 palaces and country retreats.’

Anton Grigoriev writes: “Few are those who take account of the fact that criminality in the 2000s was not conquered, but integrated. In Putin’s time, not only have the Chechens become the greatest patriots of the Russian Federation, but also the Russian ‘thieves in law’. Who, let us say, will now fail to call Joseph Kobzon, not only Russian, and a member of ‘One Russia’ [Putin’s political party] but also a loyal patriot loyal to the authorities? But in the 1990s Kobzon was one of the deputies who did not enter into any of the deputies’ groupings, was not a member of the party of power of that time, and was forbidden entry into the USA, with which the Russian Federation at that time entertained the best official relations. Since 1995 he had been forbidden entry because of suspicions that he was linked with organized crime. Several attempts to get an American visa, including with the help of diplomatic channels, let to nothing. But in the 2000s Kobzon became a political figure of pan-national reputation – the president of the Culture Committee of the State Duma from ‘One Russia’, and deputy-president of the Committee for Information Politics. That is, he became one of the authorities.

“In the 1990s there was unorganized crime. In the 2000s this turned into the vertically integrated backbone of the new order.”

But if Putin undoubtedly turned the tables on the mafia, or integrated himself with them to such an extent that he became “the boss of bosses” and the richest of them all, whose interests (apart from his own) did he ultimately represent?

There can be only one possible answer to that question: the KGB/FSB. As Martin Sixsmith writes, “In December 1999,.... Vladimir Putin went to celebrate his election

victory with his old comrades at the FSB. When the toasts came round and Putin proposed they should drink ‘To Comrade Stalin’ there was a shocked silence followed by a loud cheer. Putin opened his celebratory speech by jokingly telling his former colleagues: ‘The agent group charged with taking the government under control has completed the first stage of its assignment.’”

“The agent group” now moved on very quickly to the next stage: the re-establishment of the former USSR’s military power. Thus, as Masha Gessen writes, only his second decree “established a new Russian military doctrine, abandoning the old no-first-strike policy regarding nuclear weapons and emphasizing a right to use them against aggressors ‘if other means of conflict resolution have been exhausted or deemed ineffective’. Soon another decree re-established mandatory training exercises for reservists (all Russian able-bodied men were considered reservists) – something that had been abolished, to the relief of Russian wives and mothers, after the country withdrew from Afghanistan. Two of the decree’s six paragraphs were classified as secret, suggesting they might shed light on whether reservists should expect to be sent to Chechnya. A few days later, Putin issued an order granting forty government ministers and other officials to classify information as secret, in direct violation of the constitution. He also re-established mandatory military training in secondary schools, both public and private; this subject, which for boys involved taking apart, cleaning, and putting back together a Kalashnikov, had been abolished during perestroika. In all, six of the eleven decrees Putin issued in his first two months as acting president concerning the military. On January 27 [Prime Minister] Kasyanov announced that defense spending would be increased by 50 percent – this in a country that was still failing to meet its international debt obligations and was seeing most of its population sink further and further into poverty…”

Such an order could only mean one thing: that having returned to power after its temporary eclipse in the 1990s, the KGB was returning to the perennial expansionist goals of Soviet politics. Of course, Russia in 2000 was incomparably weaker than it had been even as recently as 1990. But the train was now back on the rails leading to the same goals as Lenin and Stalin had put before themselves.

However, certain changes in tactics and methods were now deemed necessary in order to “modernize” the revolution.

First, the old ideology of Marxism-Leninism had to be ditched. It was out-of-date and obviously false. Of course, telling lies had never been a problem for Soviet leaders and propagandists; but if the whole world saw that the Emperor had no clothes, it was time to discard the Emperor – or give him some new clothes. This was not to say, however, that old methods of the control of the press and other media were to be abandoned. Nor was the population, still saturated in Soviet modes of thinking, necessarily against such methods. According to a 2005 survey, 42% of the Russian people, and 60% of those over sixty, wanted the return of “a leader like Stalin.” Their wish had been granted... Thus in July, 2006, the Duma passed two laws allowing the secret services to eliminate “extremists” in Russia and on foreign

112 Orlando Figes, “Vlad the Great”, New Statesman, 3 December, 2007, p. 34.
territory, and defining “extremism” to include anyone “libellously critical of the Russian authorities”.

Again, old friends still stuck in the old Marxist ways were not discarded. So Zyuganov’s Russian Communist Party, as well as Zhirinovsky’s nationalist “Liberal Democrats”, would be given cozy and honoured places in the new order – so long as they did not present a serious threat to Putin’s “One Russia”, but remained a loyal (extremely loyal) “opposition”. (In fact, these opposition parties have been extremely useful to Putin. The Communists have kept the poor old pensioners onside, while Zhirinovsky has been used to air outrageous opinions and policies which Putin adheres to but which he does not want to espouse publicly.) Moreover, old comrades abroad such as the North Koreans and Cubans, and especially the Chinese, would remain comrades, of course.

But if the old Soviet ideology would be discarded, Soviet patriotism remained a compulsory element of the new order. Hence the return of the melody of the Soviet hymn, the red flag in the armed forces, the resurrection of the pioneers, etc. And, especially, the mythology of the “Great Patriotic War”, which has been pumped as never before (not even Stalin used it, because of its nationalist connotations).

Indeed, any doubting of that mythology would now become a criminal offence. Thus Dmitri Volchek writes: “‘One Russia’ proposes imprisonment for people who spread false information about the activity of the USSR during the war.

“A final version of a bill forbidding the rehabilitation of Nazism is ready. It was worked out by the ‘One Russia’ fraction in the Duma. The coordinator of the patriotic platform of OR, the president of the Committee for Security Irina Yarovaia, considers it necessary to punish people for ‘denial of fact and approval of crimes established by a sentence of the International Military Tribunal, as well as the distribution of knowingly false information about the activity of the USSR during the Second world war connected with accusing people of committing crimes established by the publicly determined sentences of the International Military Tribunal.

“Yarovaia proposes punishing such crimes with a fine of up to 300,000 roubles or imprisonment up to three years. It is proposed that the same actions carried out with the use of one’s service status or of the media should be punished with a fine of up to 100,000 – 500,000 rubles or a prison term of up to five years. In previous editions of the bill there was no mention of the USSR; it was a matter only of banning the declaration of the actions of the anti-Hitler forces as criminal. ‘Criticism of the USSR is threatened with prison,’ warns the newspaper Vedomosti. ‘If the bill is passed, will not historians occupied with the investigation of the crimes of Stalinism find themselves on the bench of the accused?’”113

Secondly, since the merging of the government, the bureaucracy, the KGB and the mafia was steadily advancing, there could be no question of cutting Russia off from the world economy; for the mafia derived most of its ill-gotten gains from outside Russia, and had invested heavily there in houses, yachts, football clubs, companies,

their children’s education, etc. Of course, this also made the new regime vulnerable to sanctions and to simple operations such as the cutting off of links with western banks. And the recent sharp decline in the Russian economy as a result of sanctions applied after the invasion of Ukraine has been a serious worry for Putin, however much he tries to shrug it off; it has knocked several percentage points off Russia’s GDP.

However, it was precisely the New Russians’ openness to the West that allowed them to infiltrate it to a degree that Soviet spies could only have dreamed of. Already in the liberal 1990s an increase in KGB activity in Britain was reported as compared with the Soviet period – and this at a time when so many people thought that the KGB no longer existed! In the 2000s and 2010s the spying and the propaganda barrage increased exponentially; foreign-language TV channels such as “Russia Today” beamed into millions of western homes, and began to produce significant fruits. Thus in Germany it was reported that as a result of Russian propaganda the populace had begun to move away from seeing Washington as the main friend of the country, and that Moscow was moving close to taking Washington’s place in the ratings. Again, polls show that four NATO countries – Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria and Slovenia – would prefer that Russia come to their aid in time of war than the US.114

Only China rivals Russia’s ability to infiltrate state institutions, corporations and major infrastructure (nuclear power stations, for example) through cyber warfare. Belatedly, NATO has decided to pour more money into combatting this deadly threat, which could give victory to Russia in any future war. Western Europe is particularly vulnerable to Russian hacking and cyber-spying; only Britain’s GCHQ at Cheltenham provides significant defence capacity against this new type of warfare.

But old-fashioned types of spying remained effective. Indeed, perhaps the most spectacular coup in this field, with incalculable consequences for the future, took place in 2013, when, as is now credibly argued by historians and experts, the present president of the United State, Donald Trump, was caught in a classic honeytrap and probably blackmailed into serving the Russians. Thus the Russian-American historian Yury Felshtinsky wrote on the eve of Trump’s electoral victory in 2016: “The behavior of Trump in relation to Russia fits into the schema of an agent’s behavior. I shall immediately qualify myself: I have no proofs that he is an agent of Putin. But the whole of his behavior points exclusively to this schema. Agent Trump is not allowed to criticise Putin; he is not allowed to criticise the foreign policy of Russia; he is not allowed to raise the question of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea; he is not allowed to encourage the strengthening of NATO and opposition to Russian aggression in Europe; he is not allowed to criticise Russian interference in the civil war in Syria.

“Trump is allowed to criticise American policy in relation to Syria and Iraq: to call for the weakening of NATO and the American withdrawal from Europe, Japan and the Muslim East; to call for the smoothing of relations with Russia and the

restructuring (in reality, the worsening) of relations with Mexico, on the one hand, and with China, on the other.

“There remains only one winner from the foreign policy programme written for Trump in the Kremlin (which I also cannot prove): Putin.

“I don’t know how Trump was recruited (perhaps during his visit to Moscow in 2013 to conduct a beauty contest.) But I know for certain that he was recruited...”

If this hypothesis proves to be true, then it points to the deepest and highest penetration yet into the fortress of the West by the Russian revolution, and the possible fulfillment of the prophecy of Elder Ignaty of Harbin (+1958): “What began in Russia will end in America.”

Trump and Putin are both essentially crooked businessmen turned politicians. Trump is a real-estate businessman (with several bankruptcies to his name); Putin is in the same business (he owns a fabulous number of palaces) but with a finger in the pie of almost every other form of organized crime. They unite through their common worship of Mammon – but with Putin as the senior partner controlling the Russian-American organized crime syndicate – and most of the world’s nuclear weapons...

A third major change of tactics that Putin’s revolution has necessitated is in relation to religion... In order to understand this change, we must first inquire into Putin’s personal religion (if he has any)... When Putin became president, he presented himself as “all things to all men”: a communist to the communists, a capitalist to the capitalists, a democrat to the democrats, a nationalist to the nationalists, and an Orthodox to the Orthodox. And yet Putin is no believer. On September 8, 2000, when asked by the American television journalist Larry King whether he believed in God, he replied: “I believe in people...”

This refusal to confess a faith in God is not surprising. It should be remembered, as Preobrazhensky points out, that Putin “began his career not in the intelligence ranks but in the ‘Fifth Branch’ of the Leningrad Regional KGB, which also fought religion and the Church. Putin carefully hides this fact from foreign church leaders, and you will not find it in any of his official biographies... The myth of Putin’s religiosity is important for proponents of ‘the union’. It allows Putin to be characterized as some Orthodox Emperor Constantine, accepting the perishing Church Abroad under his regal wing. For his kindness we should be stretching out our arms to him with tears of

115 It may also be the fulfillment of George Orwell’s quasi-prophetic allegory, Animal Farm, which describes the conflict between the Communists (the pigs) and the Capitalists (the humans) – and their final reconciliation. In the novel’s final scene, a deputation of neighboring farmers are given a tour of the farm, after which they meet in the dining-room of the farmhouse with Napoleon (a type of Stalin) and the other pigs. Mr. Pilkington makes a toast to Animal Farm and its efficiency. Napoleon then offers a speech in which he outlines his new policies: The word 'comrade' will be suppressed, there will be no more Sunday meetings, the skull of old Major has been buried, and the farm flag will be changed to a simple field of green. His greatest change in policy, however, is his announcement that Animal Farm will again be called Manor Farm. Soon after Napoleon’s speech, the men and pigs begin playing cards, but a loud quarrel erupts when both Napoleon and Pilkington each try to play the ace of spades. As Clover and the other animals watch the arguments through the dining-room window, they are unable to discriminate between the humans and the pigs...
gratitude…”

“For those who claim,” writes Professor Olga Ackerly, “that the ‘CIS is different from the USSR’ and Putin is a ‘practising Orthodox Christian’, here are some sobering facts. The first days and months Putin’s presidency were highlighted by the reestablishment of a memorial plaque on Kutuzovsky Prospect where Andropov used to live. The plaque was a symbol of communist despotism missing since the 1991 putsch, bearing Andropov’s name – a former head of the KGB, especially known for his viciousness in the use of force and psychiatric clinics for dissidents. On May 9, 2000, Putin proposed a toast to the ‘genius commander’ Iosif Stalin and promoted many former KGB officers to the highest state positions…”

“Important to note is that the Eurasian movement, with ties to occultism, ecumenism, etc. was recently revived by Putin, and a Congress entitled ‘The All-Russian Political Social Movement’, held in Moscow in April of 2001, was ‘created on the basis of the Eurasist ideology and inter-confessional [sic!] harmony in support of the reforms of President Vladimir Putin.’ The movement is led by Alexander Dugin, a sexual mystic, National Bolshevik Party member, son of a Cheka cadre, personally familiar with the so-called ‘Black International’, advisor to the State Duma, and participant in Putin’s ‘Unity’ movement.”

Again, while claiming to be a devout Orthodox Christian, as George Sprukts writes,

“1) he lights menorahs when he worships at his local synagogue;

“2) he has worshipped the mortal remains of Kim Il Sung in North Korea;

“3) he has worshipped the mortal remains of Mahatma Gandhi;

“4) he ‘believes not in God, but in Man’ (as he himself has stated);

“5) he was initiated into an especially occult form of ‘knighthood’ in Germany;

“6) he has restored the communist anthem;

“7) he has restored the bloody red rag as the RF’s military banner;

“8) he has not removed the satanic pentagram from public buildings (including cathedrals);

“9) he has plans of restoring the monument to ‘Butcher’ Dzerzhinsky;

“10) he has not removed the satanic mausoleum in Red Square nor its filthy contents.”

118 Sprukts, “Re: [paradosis] A Russian Conversation in English”,
Although Putin is clearly not an Orthodox Christian, he has many reasons for pretending to be one and for protecting the official Orthodox church. First, the MP hierarchs are his partners in organized crime and fellow agents in the KGB. This is illustrated by the activities of “the tobacco metropolitan”, now Patriarch Cyril Gundiaev, KGB Agent “Mikhailov”, who imports tobacco and alcohol duty-free and is now one of the richest men in Russia.\(^{119}\)

On January 22, 2012, the patriarch made an interesting proposal in the Russian Duma: to increase the rate that doctors charge for abortions. This would have the pleasing consequences of squeezing the rich (not the really rich, like himself, but the middle classes) and reducing the rate of abortions, thereby slowing down the catastrophic fall in Russia’s population. How moral! How financially prudent! How farsightedly caring about the demography of the Russian nation! Not a word, however, about the fact that abortion – any abortion, carried out for any or no price – is murder, and condemns the abortionist to eternity in hell-fire! Not a word about the fact that Russia is number one in the world for numbers of abortions per head of population. And not a word about the fact that (as the present writer has seen with his own eyes) placards outside churches proclaim it is possible to buy absolution from the sin of abortion from MP priests for a tidy sum of money; so that the jingle about the medieval papacy now applies equally to the Moscow Patriarchate:

\[\text{As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,}\]
\[\text{The soul from purgatory springs…}\]

Like his predecessor, Patriarch Cyril is financially interested in the abortion business – and in a most bizarre way. Thus “one can have an abortion and restore one’s virginity in the medical centre ‘Alternative’, which operates on the territory of the ‘Danilovskaia’ hotel attached to the Danilov monastery of the ROC MP in the centre of Moscow, reports a correspondent of Portal-Credo.Ru. Very close to the hotel can be found the official residence of Patriarch Cyril (Gundiaev) and the Department of Foreign Ecclesiastical Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate.

“If it turns out that the birth of a child forms no part of your plans, then it is necessary to reduce the consequences of termination of pregnancy to a minimum,’ it says on the page of the medical centre on the territory of the hospital “Danilovskaia”, which is dedicated to abortions and emergency terminations. Surgical and non-surgical methods of termination are offered, and abortion, it points out, ‘is always a hormonal stress for the organism’.

“The re-establishment of virginity is offered on the centre’s site as one of the services of aesthetic and intimate surgery. The site points out that the ‘foremother’ of

\(^{119}\) "In 1995, the Nikolo-Ugreshsky Monastery, which is directly subordinated to the patriarchate, earned $350 million from the sale of alcohol. The patriarchate's department of foreign church relations, which Cyril ran, earned $75 million from the sale of tobacco. But the patriarchate reported an annual budget in 1995-1996 of only $2 million. Cyril's personal wealth was estimated by the Moscow News in 2006 to be $4 billion." (http://news-nftu.blogspot.com, February, 2009)
this operation can be considered to be the goddess of love and beauty Aphrodite, who regularly dived into a special pool, ‘from which she emerged on the bank as a chaste virgin again’…”

The MP’s enormous property portfolio, of which the hotel Danilovskaia is only one small element, is beginning to elicit unfavourable comment in the country. However, Putin is not yet ready to throw his colleagues to the wolves; besides, they are useful to him in important ways. Thus Patriarch Cyril is useful, first, as a diplomat serving the interests of Putin. He does a considerable amount of external diplomacy, mainly among church leaders, both Orthodox and heterodox, but also with State leaders. Thus he has always maintained cordial relations with the Communist revolutionary Fidel Castro, and in 2016 he chose to meet the Pope in Cuba! A French comment on this meeting: "Cuba is at the same time a Catholic and a Communist land. Thus neither side had the feeling of going to Canossa." Indeed, this is the essence of the matter. Patriarch Cyril did not come to the meeting as a representative of Orthodoxy, but as a representative of Putin. This was a meeting of states, not of Churches.

Still more important is Cyril’s role as cheerleader for Putinism. Although the continuance in power of the heretical and deeply corrupt MP is a matter of deep sorrow for all truly Orthodox Christians, nevertheless there can be no denying that there has been a sharp growth in Orthodox religiosity in Russia since 1991. So millions of sincere if deluded people are ready to follow their leader wherever he points – whether it is in condemning the Ukrainian “schismatics” who reject the authority of the MP, or in hypocritically condemning the West for its lack of Christian values, or in praising the “holy wars” in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria, or in hailing the All-Holy Putin as the Saviour of Orthodoxy, the new St. Constantine.

For Putin’s regime claims to be the successor not only of the RSFSR and the USSR but also of the pre-revolutionary Russian Orthodox Empire. It may be described as neo-Soviet and neo-Fascist, without Marxism but with “Orthodoxy”. It draws support from a heady mixture of conflicting constituencies: nationalists and democrats and monarchists, conservative Orthodox and pagan mystics and dyed-in-the-wool atheists, westerners and capitalists, mafiosi and Slavophiles. Putin aims to find a place in his grasping heart for all the Russias of the last century. Only one condition is attached: that Putin’s regime is accepted as the lawful successor of all previous Russian regimes. This is a condition that no truly Orthodox Christian can accept; but Cyril accepts it with enthusiasm, and thereby provides an inestimable support to the new “Tsar”, the new Emperor of the supposedly resurrected Third Rome…

The inclusiveness of Putin’s regime even included some of the most irreconcilable enemies of Soviet power. Thus probably his greatest coup was his enticement of the fiercely anti-communist Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR) under Metropolitan Lavr into union with the MP. Here a sharp division emerged between the great majority of ROCOR’s flock inside Russia, also known as the Catacomb or True Orthodox Church, and the majority of her flock outside Russia. Inside Russia, the believers did not trust the changes that had taken place since perestroika; for them, the leopard had not

changed its spots (Jeremiah 13.23), the communists had merely assumed the mask of “democrats”, the wolves had simply put on sheep’s clothing while remaining inwardly as ravenous as before (Matthew 7.15). Outside Russia, on the other hand, most believers were displaying signs of “war weariness”; they wanted to believe that the Soviet Union had miraculously changed into a normal State overnight, that the KGB had disappeared, that the communists had repented, etc. When Putin came to power in 2000, this attitude intensified as nationalist feelings became mixed up with the dogmatic and canonical issues; and in 2007 ROCOR threw in the towel and was united with the MP, acknowledging the legitimacy of the Russian State.

Already three years before the unia, on May 28 / June 10, 2004, the Holy Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Russia under Archbishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko) had declared: “The Union of ROCOR with the MP is taking place through the political leadership of the Russian Federation and special services, and is the result of the New York Synod’s loss of freedom. This neo-sergianist act subjects the Church to antichristian powers and is an ecclesiastical crime analogous with the action of Metropolitan Sergius, and even more serious [than that] since it was committed voluntarily, and not under compulsion. The words of Hieromartyr Pachomy of Chernigov, spoken by him concerning Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod, apply completely to the Synod of Metropolitan Lavr: ‘Metropolitan Sergius is a complete slave, an obedient weapon in the hands of Soviet institutions... well-known to us, and it has completely lost its moral-ecclesiastical authority... In a word, the Holy Church has never before experienced such humiliation and abuse’.

‘The union of ROCOR and the MP is being accomplished on the orders of the world’s behind-the-scenes government, being a necessary part of the accomplishment of the plan for the world’s antichristian globalization. This union strengthens the post-Soviet regime of the Russian Federation, gives it a church blessing. The regime which is carrying out the dechristianization of the Russian people, a campaign for its moral corruption, and is encouraging its physical dying-out, is declared by the Synod of ROCOR-L to be Christian and Orthodox. Here are only a few of the facts confirming the antichristian essence of the present regime of the Russian Federation: ‘In Russian society catastrophic phenomena are taking place whose causes are concealed in its spiritual failure. On the basis of statistical data from Russian and foreign sources: a man is killed in Russia every minute, and every 10 minutes one or two suicides take place. The number of homeless children in Russia almost corresponds to the post-war level. 30% of youth use narcotics. On average practically every Russian woman has two to four abortions per year. The mortality rate is 70% higher than the birthrate – within 15 years Russia will have 22 million fewer people. That is more than we lost in the Second World War. Today we can say definitively: Russia is perishing not only spiritually, but also physically’ (I.A. Kunitsyn, member of the Historico-Judicial Commission of the Moscow Patriarchate attached to the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 2 June, 2004). Thus ROCOR-L is consciously taking part in a fake regeneration of Russia and the Russian Church. The New York Synod, having blessed this regime and declared it to be ‘helping the spiritual regeneration of Russia’, has committed a terrible crime against the Christian conscience.”

We have seen that the essence of Putin’s regime is the legitimization of organized crime on a scale never seen before in world history. In this connection, we should recall that Leninism and banditism have existed in the closest symbiosis ever since Stalin robbed the Tbilisi bank and the Sochi post office to provide Lenin with funds for revolutionary terror in the early 1900s. The victims in the 1920s were the nobles, the industrialists and the Church, in the 1930s - the peasants, the generals and the Old Bolsheviks, in the 1940s - the Germans, the Crimean Tatars and other conquered peoples, and in the 1990s - all small-time investors and account-holders. In the 2000s it was the oligarchs’ turn: in true Leninist style, Putin “expropriated the expropriators”.

However, far from Putin “cleaning up” the country after the oligarchs’ excesses in the 1990s, which is what he claimed to be doing, he simply replaced one clan of bandits with another, sharing out the proceeds among those who recognized his power as the chief thief. The transfer from Yeltsin to Berezovsky had been effected, not by Yeltsin, but by the Jewish oligarch Berezovsky, who hoped that Putin would rule to the advantage of him and his clan. (Since Yeltsin had also been involved in the pillaging, Putin’s first act as president was to give immunity from prosecution to Yeltsin and his family.) However, Berezovsky was deceived: Putin put his own St. Petersburg mafia in charge and forced Berezovsky to flee into English exile until his recent mysterious “suicide”. Others who pretended to some measure of political and economic independence, such as Khodorkovsky, were imprisoned on trumped-up charges and/or driven out of the country...

The gap between the richest and the poorest in Russia became the highest in the world except in some Caribbean islands. State institutions and services, such as education and health, were starved of funds. The only notable exceptions were the armed forces and the security services, which received vast increases reminiscent of Hitler’s rearming in the 1930s. Moreover, he increased the numbers of bureaucrats, 78% of whom are now KGB, and increased their pay. In this way he guaranteed their support, a tactic he borrowed from the Bolsheviks in the Civil War period...

Like all Soviet leaders, Putin shows a marked antipathy to the West, and a steadfast conviction (or feigned conviction) that his country is morally superior to it; probably the main reason why so many Orthodox Christians - and not only Orthodox Christians - support him, is his claim to be restoring “Christian values” to Russia by contrast with “Eurosodom” and the decadent West…. “We have to give him a chance,” is the view. “And if he succeeds, then Christianity as a whole is the winner…” His holier-than-thou propaganda campaign began in about 2006, at just the time, as we now know, that he was preparing his invasion of fellow Orthodox Georgia. It intensified during the Kievan counter-revolution in 2013...

Of course, the West has only itself to blame for this. Thus its decision to join the civil war in Syria on the side of the Sunni rebels has enabled Putin to put himself

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forward as the champion, not only of the Shiites, but also of those Christians who have suffered at the hands of the rebels. Again, the West’s mindless pursuit of the LGBT agenda that has enabled Putin to portray himself as the champion of traditional Christianity. Of course, the irony is mind-boggling: the KGB, the biggest killer of Christians in history, which has regularly used well-trained heterosexual and homosexual prostitute-spies to pursue its ends, is now hailed as the champion of traditional Christian values!… But the level of historical knowledge in the West is now so low that younger generations in America, for example, scarcely have the first idea of what the Russian revolution and the KGB was.

‘Russia has been using this issue to develop a constituency in Muslim and African countries,’ says Mark Gevisser, an Open Society fellow who is writing a book on the global debate on gay rights. ‘This brand of ideological moral conservatism was originally minted in the US. It is highly ironic that these countries are mounting an anti-western crusade using a western tool. Moscow plays on opposition to gay rights most effectively closer to home. Last November, when it looked like the Ukrainian Viktor Yanukovych was close to signing an Association Agreement with the European Union, billboards appeared across the country warning that the ‘EU means legislating same-sex marriage’ ['EURO=HOMO']. The campaign was paid for by Ukraine’s Choice, a group associated with the Kremlin-connected politician and businessman Viktor Medvedchuk.’

Putin’s problem here is: the extreme moral degradation of contemporary Russian society is plain for all to see. For under the watch of Putin and Gundiaev, these profoundly immoral moralists and, self-styled guardians of Christian morality, Russia’s already shocking statistics on a wide variety of social indices – social equality, corruption, alcoholism, drug-taking, child mortality, suicide – have got worse, making her comparable only to some of the poorest and most corrupt nations of the Third World.

Thus according to United Nations statistics cited by Vladimir Ruscher, occupies the following positions in the world league tables:

1st in suicides of adults, children and adolescents;
1st in numbers of children born out of wedlock;
1st in children abandoned by parents;
1st in absolute decline in population;
1st in consumption of spirits and spirit-based drinks;
1st in consumption of strong alcohol;
1st in tobacco sales;
1st in deaths from alcohol and tobacco;
1st in deaths from cardiovascular diseases;
2nd in fake medicine sales;
1st in heroin consumption (21st in world production).

These statistics show that Russia, far from leading the world in virtue, is perhaps the most corrupt country of all. As regards general criminality, theft, corruption and murder (including abortion), Russia is very near the top of the league, and this not

least because the government itself has taken the lead in these activities, making Russia into a mafia state run by and for a small clique of fantastically rich criminals. Thus the general picture is one of extreme moral degradation.

The most obvious explanation for this is that during Soviet rule religious faith was persecuted and the only accepted morality was the anti-Christian revolutionary morality. However, Putin deals with this problem by putting the blame exclusively on the Yeltsin period (because that was the most westernizing). Before Yeltsin, as he argued in 2012 in a speech to the Federal Assembly, Soviet society had been distinguished by “charity, compassion and sympathy” (!) “Today,” however, “Russian society has an obvious deficit in spiritual bonds, a deficit in everything that made us at all times stronger, more powerful, in which we always prided ourselves – that is, such phenomena as charity, compassion and sympathy… The situation that has been created is a consequence of the fact that some 15 to 20 years ago ‘the ideological stamps of the former epoch’ were rejected… Unfortunately, at that time many moral signposts were lost…”

However, at the Valdai forum in 2013 Putin said that “many Euro-Atlantic countries have de facto gone down the path of the rejection of... Christian values. Moral principles are being denied... What could be a greater witness of the moral crisis of the human socium than the loss of the capacity for self-reproduction. But today practically all developed countries can no longer reproduce themselves. Without the values laid down in Christianity and other world religions, without the norms of ethics and morality formed in the course of millennia, people inevitably lose their human dignity. And we consider it natural and right to defend these values.”125

The strange thing about this statement is that Putin seems entirely unconscious of the fact that with regard to the “Christian value” that he cites here, “self-reproduction”, Russia performs worse than any western country. Thus even after taking migration into account, the twenty-eight countries of the European Union have a natural growth in population that is twice as high as Russia’s! And if he is referring not to the balance between the birth rate and the death rate, but to homosexuality as a factor that by definition inhibits reproduction, then the situation is little better in Russia than in the West. For in spite of Putin’s much-vaunted ban on pro-gay propaganda to minors, the vice remains legal among adults. Thus many in Putin’s entourage are homosexual; during the Winter Olympiad there were two openly gay bars in Sochi; while a marriage between two women was recently registered officially in Moscow.126 Homosexuality even flourishes in places from which it should have been banished first of all. Thus among the three hundred bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate, 50 according to one estimate (Fr. Andrei Kuraiev) and 250 according to another (Fr. Gleb Yakunin) are homosexuals. It is even claimed that promotion up the hierarchical ladder of the MP is possible only by serving the sexual needs of a bishop higher up the ladder...

126 “V Moskve pozhenili dvukh nevest” (In Moscow two brides were married),\nhttp://www.kp.ru/daily/26270/3148680/
The fall in the population of the Russian Federation has been catastrophic, even worse than in the late Soviet period and unprecedented for peace-time conditions. But its causes are mysterious: after all, while Putin has regularly disposed of journalists and dissidents, he has not (yet) resorted to mass murder on a Stalinist scale... Of course, the fact that supposedly Orthodox Russia is first in the world, according to United Nations figures, in child mortality, alcoholism, abortion, narcotics-consumption, etc., accounts for part of the figures. But even when these factors are taken account of, much still remains to be explained. Nicholas Eberstadt writes that “as of 1980, the Russian population may well have been suffering the very highest incidence of mortality from diseases of the circulatory system that had ever been visited on a national population in the entire course of human history—up to that point in time. Over the subsequent decades, unfortunately, the level of CVD mortality in the Russian Federation veered further upward.... By 2006... Russia’s mortality levels from CVD alone were some 30% higher than deaths in Western Europe from all causes combined.” But what is the cause of this huge level of CVD mortality? The usual physical factors – poverty, over-eating, drinking, smoking – do not explain it. The real cause, concludes Masha Gessen, is psychological and spiritual. Russia is dying of a broken heart:-

“Another major clue to the psychological nature of the Russian disease is the fact that the two brief breaks in the downward spiral coincided not with periods of greater prosperity but with periods, for lack of a more data-driven description, of greater hope. The Khrushchev era, with its post-Stalin political liberalization and intensive housing construction, inspired Russians to go on living. The Gorbachev period of glasnost and revival inspired them to have babies as well. The hope might have persisted after the Soviet Union collapsed—for a brief moment it seemed that this was when the truly glorious future would materialize—but the upheaval of the 1990s dashed it so quickly and so decisively that death and birth statistics appear to reflect nothing but despair during that decade.

“If this is true—if Russians are dying for lack of hope, as they seem to be—then the question that is still looking for its researcher is, Why haven’t Russians experienced hope in the last quarter century? Or, more precisely in light of the grim continuity of Russian death, What happened to Russians over the course of the Soviet century that has rendered them incapable of hope? In The Origins of Totalitarianism Hannah Arendt argues that totalitarian rule is truly possible only in countries that are large enough to be able to afford depopulation. The Soviet Union proved itself to be just such a country on at least three occasions in the twentieth century—teaching its citizens in the process that their lives are worthless. Is it possible that this knowledge has been passed from generation to generation enough times that most Russians are now born with it and this is why they are born with a Bangladesh-level life expectancy? Is it also possible that other post-Soviet states, by breaking off from Moscow, have reclaimed some of their ability to hope, and this is why even Russia’s closest cultural and geographic cousins, such as Belarus and Ukraine, aren’t dying off as fast? If so, Russia is dying of a broken heart—also known as cardiovascular disease.”127

The Lord said: “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” (Luke 12.1). In relation to no other sin is the Lord as fierce as in relation to hypocrisy, and His contest with the Pharisees was the most critical of His life; it led literally to His death. Pharisaism is bad enough in the individual, alienating him completely from the life in Christ. It is even more dangerous when it seizes hold upon a whole people that has, or once had, the knowledge of God, and which then, in combination with the passions of hatred, resentment, wounded pride and xenophobic nationalism, exposes Orthodoxy – for we are not talking only about Russian Orthodoxy here, but also to the other “Orthodox” nations who like to lambast the West - to ridicule or disgust among the non-Orthodox nations. “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you”, said the Prophet to the Jews when they were still the people of God (Ezekiel 16.27); and these words were echoed by the Apostle Paul in reference to the Jews of his time, when they had already fallen away (Romans 2.21). Again, the apostle said that “if we would judge ourselves we would not be judged” (I Corinthians 11.31) – but honest self-criticism is very rarely found among the Orthodox nations today...

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From 1991 until 2014, in spite of abortive attempts to free itself from its Soviet past, such as the 2004 “Orange” revolution, Ukraine remained in the grip of the Russian KGB, which did not hesitate to use violence and assassinations in order to impose its will on its satellite and retain its control over Ukraine’s economy, army and secret services128 (not to mention its nuclear weapons, which were handed over to Russia in 1994). However, when the most flagrantly mafioso of Ukrainian Presidents, Yanukovich, was ejected by the popular rebellion of Euromaidan in February, 2014, and the country began to move decisively out of the Soviet orbit again, Putin decided on more decisive measures. His consequent annexation of Crimea and invasion of the Donbass in 2014 remains the issue that most divides Russians, and that brings the arguments over the legitimacy of his regime into starkest relief.

The planning for this invasion began several years earlier... In 2008 Russia invaded Georgia, punishing them for their revolution in favour of the West and annexing Abkhazia and South Ossetia. “Moreover,” writes Armando Marques Guedes, “the Russian Administration signalled it was set for a sort of repeat performance. Toward the end of December 2008, the Kremlin announced an upgrade and an unexpected large-scale restructuring of its Armed Forces, along with a change in its military doctrine. All of this – as was later explained by the Russian Minister of Defence – was engaged in so that her Armed Forces would be ready to fight on ‘three fronts simultaneously in local and regional conflicts such as that of Georgia’. He thereafter defined the ‘post-Soviet space’ as the preferred location for such interventions, which he envisioned as coming to pass ‘during the year’ of 2009...”129 

This actually came to pass a little later, in 2014, with the annexation of Crimea, the military intervention in the Donbass and the creation of the Donetsk and Lugansk

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“people’s republics”. All of these acts were, of course, violations of international laws that Russia herself had signed up to only very recently. Thus in 1994, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom had signed the “Budapest Memorandum”, whereby they jointly guaranteed the territorial inviolability of Ukraine, Belarus’ and Kazakhstan in exchange for the nuclear weapons of those countries passing to Russia… However, on 4 March 2014, the Russian president replied to a question on the violation of Budapest Memorandum by describing the current Ukrainian situation as a revolution, when "a new state arises”. But “with this state and in respect to this state, we have not signed any obligatory documents”. Russia stated she had never been under obligation to "force any part of Ukraine’s civilian population to stay in Ukraine against its will." Russia suggested that the US was in violation of the Budapest Memorandum, describing the Euromaidan as a US-instigated coup.”

In November, Putin said that he would not allow the military defeat of the pro-Russian side in the Donbass civil war, and said that those western governments who were supporting Kiev were supporting Russophobes. On December 4, Putin stated that the March 2014 annexation of Crimea was a "historic event" that would not be reversed because Crimea is "Russia's spiritual ground".

Both the actions of Putin in Ukraine and the quasi-spiritual justification given for them by him are strongly reminiscent of those of Milošević in the former Yugoslavia. In both cases, the strategy was to rebuild a failed communist empire-state by stirring up ethnic conflicts in neighbouring states that had separated from the empire. Then troops were sent in on the pretence of “liberating” co-ethnics from their supposedly “fascist” oppressors. However, the most striking parallel to Putin’s actions in the Ukraine comes from the truly fascist state of Nazi Germany in 1938, when Hitler carved up Czechoslovakia on the pretence of rescuing the Sudeten Germans from their Czech oppressors. Nor is this the only similarity between the regimes of Putin and Hitler.

These similarities are the result not only of the general close similarity between the “twin totalitarianisms” of communism and fascism, but also of the fact that Russia never underwent a “decommunization” programme in 1991 comparable to that undergone by Germany in 1945. In fact, she is now actively “re-communizing” herself; both the Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine and Russia herself have seen a flourishing of Soviet “culture”. Thus icons of Stalin and hagiographies of the great leader have become commonplace. Moreover, statues of Lenin have been re-erected, and the hammer-and-sickle and other communist symbolism again feature in many places (even in conjunction with the Cross of Christ!).

Ukraine, by contrast, has been tearing down statues of Lenin at a great rate all over the country; genuine elections have been held; and most recently and significantly President Poroshenko and the Ukrainian parliament have passed legislation whose aim is the final decommunization of Ukraine.

The legislation consists of four bills. The first acknowledges a long list of movements and organizations that fought for a Ukraine independent of the Soviets. The “taboo” on these organizations is now lifted, and their deeds can be openly and freely analyzed by historians and others without fear of reprisals. The second bill opens the secret police archives, thereby making possible impartial historiography and the prosecution of communist criminals. The third bill says that Second World War began in 1939 with the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, rather than in 1941 with the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. The fourth bill prohibits the “propaganda of the Communist and/or National Socialist totalitarian regimes” in Ukraine. “In addition,” writes Alexander Motyl, “to advocating the removal of Communist monuments and public symbols and the renaming of streets and cities, the bill attempts to distinguish between materials that promote Communist and Nazi regimes, which is prohibited, and those that express pro-regime views, which would not be deemed illegal… The assumption underlying the [four] bills is that since communism and Nazism were equally evil ideologies, condemnation of one necessarily entails, both logically and morally, condemnation of the other. If de-Nazification is crucial, so too is decommunization.”

Of course, legislation is one thing, and its full implementation is another; and it must be admitted that the influence of the robber-barons is still strongly felt in Ukraine, and not only in the occupied areas. In particular, there is evidence that the Russian KGB still has strong influence in the Ukrainian armed forces. Nevertheless, these bills are precisely the kind of legislation that provides proof that a country is serious about decommunizing itself.

Naturally, this represents an extreme ideological threat to those who have no intention of being decommunized. As Sergei Yekelchyk writes: "The Ukrainian revolution of 2014 threatens the ideology of Putin’s regime. It questions Russia’s identity. It challenges Russia’s plan to restore its influence in the region. It also shows that a Putinite regime can be destroyed by a popular revolution. No wonder Russia

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133 In one year in Ukraine 1320 monuments to Lenin have been dismantled, and 1069 to other Communist idols. Taras Burnos, “V Ukraine za god demontirovali 1320 pamiatnikov Lenina” (In Ukraine in one year 1320 monuments to Lenin were dismantled), December 27, 2016, http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/3652887.html.


136 “Poroshenko vredit Ukraine bol’she, chem Putin – Gribauskajte” (Poroshenko is harming the Ukraine more than Putin – Gribuskajte), http://zvamynews.blogspot.com/2016/12/blog-post_27.html.

has recalled its ambassador from Ukraine and refuses to recognize the country’s new government...”

Patriarch Cyril of Moscow supports Putin’s Ukrainian policy to the hilt, even though it is even more disastrous for his church than for the state, since it divides his flock down the middle. There is a real possibility that a large part of the Ukrainian part of the MP, at present the largest Orthodox jurisdiction in the country, might leave the MP and join other jurisdictions (such as the Kievan Patriarchate). This would be a shattering blow to the MP, engaged as it is not only in a struggle with what it calls the Ukrainian schismatics, but behind them with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who supports them. The Ukrainian bishops appear to be standing loyally behind the new government in Kiev (even if the sympathies of some are probably with Moscow); they have been pleading with Putin not to invade the sovereign territory of the Ukraine, and have blessed Ukrainian soldiers to defend their homeland against invasion. Patriarch Cyril, by contrast, has been 150% behind Putin, saying that he hopes the Ukrainians will not resist the Russian army! Moreover, according to Russian media, the press-service of the MP has declared that “the Russian people is a nation divided on its own historical territory; it has the right to reunite it in a single state organism”. What can this mean if not that the whole of the Ukraine should be absorbed into the Russian Federation? But this is something that not even Putin (or “Putler”, as he is now often called on the Russian internet) has been so bold as to affirm – although he does not mind his acolytes, like Zhirinovsky and Dugin, floating the idea in public...

But if Ukraine falls out of the Russian sphere of influence, then there is a further danger that separatist movements will break out inside the Russian Federation itself. This could begin among the Crimean Tatars, and then spread to other regions such as the North Caucasus and Tatarstan. Turkey may then decide to take up the cause of the Russian Sunni Muslims... This in turn creates the further danger that Putin will form an alliance with the Iranian Shiites and declare a holy war on Sunni Islam, beginning with the Caucasian tribes on his southern border, continuing with the absorption of already half-conquered Georgia, and then going on into war-torn Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia (which he vowed to “destroy” in August, 2013) and Israel.... Indeed, Putin’s propagandist, Alexander Dugin, who believes that Putin is literally “all”, was probably acting as his master’s voice when he said, on January 4, 2016: “The Culture of Awaiting Solidarity with Shiites, the common struggle together with them against our common enemy -- American based ultra-radical pseudo-Islamism in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Bahrein, everywhere -- is our duty as Russians. Russian-Shia alliance is not only the geopolitical necessity, it is based on the deep spiritual roots. One Ayatollah in Qom during conversation with me has called it The Culture of Awaiting. We are waiting indeed the coming of Better World and final appearance of our divine Guide. The USA, NATO and its Middle East proxies and puppets (Saudi or Qatar as well as Israel) are the obstacles on the way of

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Second Coming. They are doomed. The Saudi regime must die first. They are but usurpers and liars. It is a kind of Eurasian fatwa. Glory to the Sheikh Nimr an-Nimr [the Shia leader executed by the Saudi authorities on January 2, 2016].”

The signs are that Putin is already preparing for such a regional war, which will certainly turn into a world war; and the population is being stirred up into a bellicose state by the state media. Putin is undoubtedly primarily moved by geopolitical and mercenary motives: but this is not to say that he will not gladly use “spiritual” propaganda as well. And the spiritual propagandists argue in this vein: “Little Russia” was for centuries part of the Russian Orthodox state, and therefore the restoration of Ukraine to Russia – and especially of Crimea, where Russian Orthodoxy began with the baptism of St. Vladimir in Cherson in 988 – is simply historical justice, reinforced by the multiple ties of language, blood and religion that unite the two countries; Ukraine is an inalienable part of the “Russian world”.

However, this begs the question: is the present Russian Federation the lawful successor of the Russian Orthodox empire? And the answer, clearly, is: no. In fact, neither Russia nor Ukraine can claim to be successors of the Russian empire on their territory. For neither State is truly Orthodox; both are struggling – Ukraine more successfully than Russia at the moment – to liberate themselves from their Soviet heritage, on the way to restoring, hopefully, that truly Orthodox statehood that they both betrayed in the Russian revolution...

The “spiritual” propagandists argue that since Ukraine has been part of Russia for centuries, Putin has the right and duty to “reclaim” it and force it back into the historical Russian empire. Thus the Orthodox publicist Mikhail Nazarov writes: “Ukraine (Little Russia), as the historical cradle of Rus’, is a part of thousand-year-old Russia that is dear to us, and for us it is not a foreign state, but is a part of our people that has been artificially and unlawfully cut off from us by its enemies against its will.”

“Against its will”? Certainly not. Whether or not one likes the Ukrainians’ decision to stay separate from the Russian Federation, there can be no doubt that this is what they chose – and freely. In 1991, when the Soviet Union began to fall apart, the Ukrainians voted decisively in favour of independence.

It is worth recalling the poll figures in order to understand how decisive this decision was in every part of the Ukraine, including the Russian-speaking regions of Crimea and Donbass. Thus 92.3% of the population as a whole voted for independence. In the Russian-language provinces of Lugansk and Donetsk the majorities were 83% and 77% respectively, while in Crimea the majority was 54%...

Nazarov’s defence of the invasion was made in the context of an illuminating dialogue on the war in Ukraine between himself and Prioress Euphrosyne (Molchanova) of Lesna monastery in France. His position is, in essence, that since contemporary Russia, for all its undisputed evils, is still the Third Rome, and therefore the last bastion of True Christianity – potentially, if not actually – against the real and greatest threat to civilization in the modern world, the Jewish-American
Antichrist, it should be supported against Ukraine, America’s satrap. Let us look at his argument in a little more detail.

In some ways, Nazarov’s anti-Americanism recalls the polemic of Alexander Dugin, who also plays with the concept of “Moscow – the Third Rome”, and who expresses a hatred of America so intense as to demonstrate that, while he may have abandoned the ideology of the Soviet era, he has by no means been exorcised of its ruling spirit: “An ominous and alarming country on the other side of the ocean. Without history, without tradition, without roots. An artificial, aggressive, imposed reality, completely devoid of spirit, concentrated only on the material world and technical effectiveness, cold, indifferent, an advertisement shining with neon light and senseless luxury; darkened by pathological poverty, genetic degradation and the rupture of all and every person and thing, nature and culture. It is the result of a pure experiment of the European rationalist utopians.

“Today it is establishing its planetary dominion, the triumph of its way of life, its civilizational model over all the peoples of the earth. And over us. In itself and only in itself does it see ‘progress’ and ‘civilizational norms’, refusing everyone else the right to their own path, their own culture, their own system of values.

“How wonderfully exactly does all this remind us of the prophecy concerning the coming into the world of the Antichrist…

“To close down America is our religious duty…”  

Nazarov does not speak about “closing down” America (still less about reducing it to “nuclear ash”, as does another Putinist propagandist, Dmitri Kiselev). But he accepts the Putinist theory that in the Russo-Ukrainian war it is really America that is fighting Russia under the Ukrainian flag, and that America is the Antichrist. And for that reason alone, in his opinion, it is right – indeed, vitally important and one’s duty as an Orthodox Christian - to support the Russian side, in spite of the fact, as Molchanova rightly points out, that it is Russians and Ukrainians who are suffering and dying, not Americans. For “I can agree with your understanding of what should be,” he writes to Molchanova, “but not in your apprehension of what is really happening and could be in contemporary Russia.”

And so he begins his argument thus: “It was pleasing to God, for the uncovering of the spiritual meaning of history to mankind, that the most antichristian people, who was preparing the kingdom of its messiah-antichrist, should find itself on the territory of the most Christian kingdom, the Third Rome, and enter into apocalyptic conflict with it. In order to crush the Orthodox Kingdom, all the external and internal anti-Russian forces were mobilized. Also multiplied were the apostatic sins of the

Russian upper classes, which became the inner reason for its fall. But it was allowed by the Lord as a final means of our sobering up ‘from the reverse’.

“Such a sobering up has not yet taken place at the level of the state, and perhaps will never take place. But is there in the world another people with such experience of resisting the forces of the Antichrist and with such knowledge of the meaning of history as the sobered-up part of the Russian people – albeit a very small part (the three percent mentioned above)? Where in the world are there more favourable conditions for the creation of the Camp and the City [Revelation 20.9]?…”

So far we can agree with Nazarov. The Russian people have indeed had unique experience in resisting the power of the Antichrist in the form of Soviet power, and therefore it is reasonable to suppose – and fully in accord with the prophecies of the saints – that Russia in the future should constitute the last refuge of True Christianity during the reign of the personal Antichrist. The problem is: the number of those who are “sobered-up” is far smaller than the three percent he mentions, the Soviet Antichrist is still in power in its Putinist mutation, and the vast majority of the Russian people are now following Putin with unashamed enthusiasm. So at the moment they are not in the Camp and City of the Saints, but in the camp and city of Gog and Magog – the Antichrist. The implication must be that Putin’s regime must be destroyed before the resurrection of Holy Russia can take place…

“However, let us examine the essence of the post-Soviet regime of the Russian Federation. You write: ‘The contemporary and Soviet authorities are one and the same. The Putinist regime at all times and in all place confesses itself to be the direct heir of the Soviet regime, which, in the words of Archbishop Nathanael (Lvov), ‘justifies, whitewashes and praises the greatest cruelties, deceptions, violence and in general trampling upon all the Divine and human laws, the greatest crimes that have ever been committed in human history.’

“I share your rejection both of the Soviet regime and the unworthy rulers of the Russian Federation, but I see their essence in something else. So as not to waste time (I’m already tired of writing), I shall cite an excerpt form the final, 25th chapter of ‘The Mission of the Russian Emigration’ (2014) which I should have shortened here, but did not succeed in doing. I consider this analysis important for the understanding also of the essence of the whole present world balance of forces, and for a correct relationship to this clergy ‘brought up from childhood in ROCOR, living in the West, but always considering itself Russian’.

“‘Of course, the present regime in the Russian Federation contradicts the Russian national tradition and historical truth, tramples on spiritual values and corrupts the people. Everywhere they are carefully preserving Soviet symbolism and the monuments to the God-fighting executioners, the Vandal destroyers of Russia (while their destruction is called ‘vandalism’), the communist festivals are celebrated as usual or given a new face in a cunning manner. This is nothing else than a continuing resistance to God, which is depriving our country of God’s help.”

True, too true. And the question then naturally arises: if God is depriving this accursed state of help, why should any Russian support it? Do not the supporters of
Putin’s regime in this way resist God? How can good come from supporting such manifest evil which God – by Nazarov’s own admission – refuses to support?

“Nevertheless, to call this regime ‘Soviet and Chekist’ is not accurate. This is another form of resistance to God that is closer to the Western type.

“During the years of the Cold war between the West and the USSR, the well-known ROCOR ideologues Archbishop Averky (Taushev) and Archimandrite Konstantin (Zaitsev) foresaw this regeneration of the Soviet regime (cf. chapter 24), and already at that time they noted: ‘God-fighting Marxist Communism, or Bolshevism, the struggle with which is placed by all nationalist Russian patriots as their main task, is only one of the children of this ‘world evil’. To struggle against it means to cut off the branches without noticing the trunk and the root that gave them birth and nourished them’ [Archbishop Averky (Taushev). The Protecting Veil of the Mother of God over Russia and the Russian Church Abroad // Contemporary Life in the Light of the Word of God. Sermons and Speeches, Jordanville, 1975, vol. II, pp. 514-515]. Since then the regime has changed still more in the direction of this basic ‘trunk’ from which it grew. Here are only a few of the basic differences between the former and the present regime.”

Three great lying ideologies predominate in today’s world – the ideology of individual human rights, or liberalism, the ideology of individual national rights, or nationalism, and the ideology of collective human rights, or communism. They are like the three unclean spirits seen by the God-seer: “I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet” (Revelation 16.13). While all of them have roots going way back in human history, they all came out into the open together at approximately the same time and place – France during the French Revolution. In this sense they are all children of the same world evil, and it is perfectly true that in order to fight evil at the root, it is necessary to be aware of all three of the evil branches.

“1. The communist ideology in the Russian Federation is not the state ideology. ‘No ideology can be established in the capacity of a state ideology’ (article 13 of the constitution of the RF), - although in practice it merges into the state ‘democratic’ ideology in imitation of the liberal principles of the legalization of sin. In the RF because of the conservatism of our people, things have not gone so far as the introduction of one-sex marriages, incest, euthanasia, etc. – this, in the eyes of despairing normal Europeans even makes the RF a bastion of ‘Christian values’…”

Earlier we discussed the way in which Putin has tried to include all constituencies in his doctrine of “sovereign democracy”. This doctrine means, in effect, that Russia is a “democracy” and Putin is her sovereign. Thus, as Roger Bootle writes, “In place of the tired and rotten value system of Communism, the prime value and objective of the modern Russian state is quite simply pro bono Putino…” But this, too, is quintessentially communist; for in the last analysis Lenin and Stalin did not rule for the benefit of anyone other than themselves, as absolute dictators who were prepared to kill anybody to remain in power…

Certainly, Putin’s regime is not Marxist-Leninist. However, the spirit of communism is still palpable; and the resurrection of Soviet symbolish and the veneration of communist heroes, including Stalin, hardly gives ground for believing that old-style communism is dead. Above all, the retention of Lenin’s mausoleum with its rotting corpse is a clear sign that the past is just waiting to leap back into the present...

“2. The economic system of the RF is not socialist, but its complete opposite – so-called Capitalism in its worst, criminal-oligarchial variant. The people’s heritage was seized after the fall of the USSR by the nomenclatura of the CPSU and its trusted representatives. Moreover, the state sector of the economy in the RF is in many profitable branches even smaller than, for example, in Germany or the Scandinavian countries – in the RF everything that was most valuable (in spite of its value to the state) was immediately farmed out to the newly created billionaires close to the authorities, whom the state even supports from the state budget in crisis moments.

“3. In contrast with the USSR, the freedom of the word in the RF is not under total control with the threat of repressions for any dissident paper, while it is effect in the western manner: that is – complete control over the main media while ‘a squeak of freedom’ is allowed in small-circulation publications and internet-blogs. Although this private sphere of freedom is also being (‘what is not in the media does not exist’) constantly restricted, and the list of banned literature is increasing and article 282 of the Criminal Codex of the RF works unceasingly, nevertheless every thinking man, if he wants it, can find and read truthful information on the internet. Even on Central Television channels, which are filled with Soviet and neo-Soviet films (for example, on the Civil War) truthful versions sometimes break through, as also documentary films on pre-revolutionary Russia, the revolution, collectivization and the GULag. True, ‘antisovietism’ is generally given out in westernising interpretations, and it is usually westernisers and communists (for example, Svanidze vs. Kurginian) who take part in television discussions of the Soviet period, while the Russian Orthodox evaluation is not allowed, for it would demonstrate the lie of both sides.

“There is undoubtedly a general ‘Soviet patriotism’ tendency among the present rulers; they preserve their succession from the USSR both in symbolism and in the system of school education and in external politics. However, to call this ‘the re-establishment of the Soviet regime’ is also not true. Putin’s aims and those of his ruling elite, which emerged from the CPSS and the KGB, is different: to launder and enoble the past Soviet order as being their own past and the legitimate basis of succession of their own power, exalting its scientific-technical, military, sporting and other achievements, and especially its victory in the Second World War, which has been turned into some kind of hysterical-religious ritual. This neo-Soviet mythology, with its evident harmfulness for the prestige of our country in the eyes of our Eastern European neighbours, has been implanted not for ideological, but for pragmatic ends, our of a refusal to offer personal repentance for their complicity in the strengthening of the God-fighting Marxist regime and for serving it. Therefore the people continues to be fooled, its ‘Sovietism’ is encouraged, as is its spiritual illiteracy together with its debauchery by western liberalism through television – for it is simpler to rule this people by means of material goods given in doses. After all, this is the basic principle of western democracy, but not of the communist order with its ‘Moral codex’. (By the way, it is in
approximately the same way, without any repentance, that the USA by means of Hollywood ‘ennobled’ and laundered its racist genocide of the American Indians, and the French – their God-fighting French revolution.)”

Here Nazarov makes a very eloquent case against Putin. How, after all this, can it be argued that his regime, which claims to be, and in essence and spirit is, the successor of the Soviet regime, should be supported in a fratricidal war against a nation that is struggling to escape its Soviet past? Let us remind ourselves of certain facts that Nazarov appears to have forgotten.

The Russian Orthodox Church was faced with the question of whether it was right to obey and support the Soviet state very shortly after the revolution, and came up with an unequivocal answer: the Soviet State is cursed by God, and no confessing Orthodox Christian can recognize it. Already on November 11, 1917 the Local Council of the Russian Church meeting in Moscow declared that Soviet power was “descended from the Antichrist and possessed by atheism”: “Open combat is fought against the Christian Faith, in opposition to all that is sacred, arrogantly abasing all that bears the name of God (II Thessalonians 2.4)... But no earthly kingdom founded on ungodliness can ever survive: it will perish from internal strife and party dissension. Thus, because of its frenzy of atheism, the State of Russia will fall... For those who use the sole foundation of their power in the coercion of the whole people by one class, no motherland or holy place exists. They have become traitors to the motherland and instigated an appalling betrayal of Russia and her true allies. But, to our grief, as yet no government has arisen which is sufficiently one with the people to deserve the blessing of the Orthodox Church. And such will not appear on Russian soil until we turn with agonizing prayer and tears of repentance to Him, without Whom we labour in vain to lay foundations...”

This attitude was confirmed and sealed by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon in his famous anathema against the Bolsheviks on January 18 / February 1, 1918, which was enthusiastically endorsed by the whole Council some days later. The holy patriarch, who was martyred for the Faith in 1925, exhorted the faithful to have “no dealings whatsoever” with “those outcasts of humanity”, the Bolsheviks. Some have argued that this anathema was addressed only to individual Bolsheviks who carried out acts of sacrilege against the Church and believers. However, in 1923 the patriarch confirmed that he had anathematized precisely “the Soviet state”. Moreover, the anathema fell not only on the Bolsheviks, but also on all those who cooperated with them.

An anathema on a state is unprecedented in Orthodox history. The only possible parallel is the virtual declaration of war on Julian the Apostate by SS. Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian. The truly Orthodox Church and the Soviet state were – and are - irreconcilable foes...

Nazarov continues: “5. This ‘neosovietization’ is also based on the people’s psychological nostalgia for the state order in the USSR, its more solid standard of life, its lower rate of criminality and greater social equality, and also on nostalgia for its lost ‘imperial’ state might (military, geopolitical).
“Such nostalgia is nourished by the present blatantly anti-Russian politics of the USA and their European vassals, with their cynical ‘double standards’ and egging on of all the RF’s opponents against her. In rejecting such western russophobia, the rulers of the RF usually resort to the inertia of the recent Cold war, ‘patriotically’ whitewashing and justifying its external politics – defensively now, not aggressively, as in the past (hence the re-establishment of pragmatic unions with communist and leftist regimes). But this in its turn is nourished by western affirmations that the RF is continuing its Soviet aggressive politics.”

Which, of course, it is! In fact, there can be little doubt that since the invasion of Georgia in 2008 Putin’s regime has become no less aggressive than the Soviet Union was, albeit from a weaker power base. The major difference, in fact, is in the West’s response, which has been much more hesitant and divided than in the past, largely because of the successful propaganda war waged by Putin’s propagandists all around the world.

“Most of all, the ruling elite of the RF would like to be accepted in the western, ‘pan-human family’ with its apostatic course. In the 1993 constitution of the RF, article 15, point 4, the primacy of international law over Russian laws was affirmed. The rulers of the RF are even dreaming of joining the membership of the world’s behind-the-scenes elite (forgiving it all its crimes against historical Russia) – as was openly recognized by the general director of the Information-Analysis agency for the administration of President Putin’s affairs, A.A. Ignatov:

“’The critical factor influencing contemporary globalization processes is the activity of the World government. Without going into the distressing details that are sketched by numerous conspiracy theories, we must recognize that this supra-national structure carries out its role as the staff headquarters of the ‘New World Order’ completely effectively. However, this organization orients itself in its work on the interests of a small elite, which is united by ethnic kinship and initiative in the lodges with destructive intentions. This circumstance – the usurpation of power in the World government by a Hasidic, para-Masonic group – needs to be corrected as soon as possible... The Russian elite must join the World government and its structures... and have the opportunity to influence the decisions taken by the secret international structures of power’ (A. Ignatov, Strategia ‘globalizatsionnogo liderstva’ dlia Rossii (The Strategy of a Globalized Leadership for Russia), Nezavisimaia Gazeta (The Independent Newspaper), September 7, 2000).”

However, this news is surely out of date now. In the 1990s and early 2000s, it certainly made sense for the KGB to infiltrate Russia’s leaders into the global elite, since Russia’s leaders were heavily involved in globalization for the maximisation of their ill-gotten and criminal gains. And there is little doubt that the global elite would have given, and probably did in fact give, the Russians “a place on the board” - as long as they played according to their rules. (We must remember that Yeltsin became a Freemason in 1992.) But when they invaded Ukraine in 2014, they broke those rules. And so the G8 group of top economies expelled Russia - it is now the G7 – and sanctions followed. Now Russia has the choice: play by the West’s rules or force it to do Russia’s will by coercive means...
“Therefore the present ‘neosovietization’ of Putin is just a *simulachrum* (from the Latin *simulo*, ‘I give the appearance, I pretend’) – a copy having no original in reality. By its resort to Soviet symbolism (as by its parasitism on pre-revolutionary history, ‘reburial’ of the heritage of the Russian emigration), the present authority is only trying to cover up its destructive essence and receive legitimacy in the eyes of its own people. And it is necessary to rebuke the present leaders of the RF precisely in this, main point – its western-oligarchical, Compradorian resistance to God (it’s still worse in Ukraine)... The present ‘democratic’ corruption of the people is even more dangerous than was the crude and lying Soviet dictatorship. The lie of ‘communism’ with its partisan stupidity was easier to recognize than the present lie, which has hundreds of new masks of ‘good’, of new manifestations in which the truth simply drowns in an ocean of lies, and is not crudely banned by the former methods. And unfortunately all this is covered up in a conformist manner by the church leadership, which is itself interested in ‘laundering’ the Soviet regime, so as not to repent of having served it.”

If, under Putin, the Soviet lie has been replaced by a still subtler and more dangerous one, then of course his regime should be still more firmly rejected! However, Nazarov points here to the worst lie of all, whose origin is by no means the West, but the East: that his regime goes under the name of “Orthodox”. Archimandrite Konstantin (Zaitsev) of Jordanville once said that the greatest crime of the Soviet State was to create the Soviet church, the MP. Putin’s neo-Soviet regime has trumped the old one in claiming to be Orthodox itself. This is the biggest lie of all – and an extremely successful one so far.

“9. However, too often criticism of the present authorities by the ‘true anticommunists’ does not distinguish the simulachre from the essence of the power, and its interests from the national-historical rights of the people. Hence the very striking phenomenon of the ‘true anti-communists’ support for the Ukr-American revolution in Ukraine and its punitive war against rebellious New Russia (‘O God, give victory to the Ukrainians and Russians over the Chekist RF’). That is, this blind, haughty ‘trueness’ is being turned into the same Russophobia, which differs little from the western variety; and the realization of its calls can lead in fact only to the overthrow of one group of oligarchs by another (which is what happened in Ukraine in 2014).”

One has to admire the ingenuity of Nazarov in supporting the anathematized Chekist regime of Putin even while providing a host of excellent reasons why it is destroying the Russian people! He thinks that the overthrow of Putin and his oligarchs will only lead to the instalment of another band of criminals. Possibly – although it is difficult to see how things could be any worse than they are now. One thing is certain: if Putin remains in power and conquers the Ukraine (with the help of ‘untrue anti-communists’ like Nazarov), then the progress already being made in the decommunization of the country will be reversed – at the cost, probably, of hundreds of thousands of Russian and Ukrainian lives. Moreover, it is almost certain that the West would intervene before the whole of Ukraine has been conquered – leading without fail to the greatest and most destructive war in history.
“10. In such a situation, remembering the experience of the Russian emigration and remembering ‘the fragility of Russia’, the morally justified choice is not that of one of the two sides in this confrontation between the plans of the world’s secret government and the plans of Putin, but that of the Russian Orthodox ‘third force’ in its defence of the historical rights and traditions of our people in hoping on God’s help…”

At first sight, this sudden turn in Nazarov’s argument is attractive. Why should we not reject both Putin’s “sovereign democracy” and Ukraine’s “western democracy” in this war, adopting a neutral stance behind this Orthodox “third force”? The trouble is: apart from the fact that neutrality is impossible, and Nazarov himself is by no means neutral, it is by no means clear what this “third force” is. It cannot be the thoroughly Sovietized and heretical MP. It cannot be ROCOR-A (which has expelled Nazarov!). Does he mean the future True Orthodox Tsar, which several of the prophecies speak about? If so, why doesn’t he mention him openly?

The truth is: the Russian people today are like the Israelites in Egypt, but without a Moses. Nazarov’s task seems to be to reconcile them to the rule of Pharaoh without mentioning the possibility of a Moses. It is as if he is saying: “Yes, Pharaoh is evil and oppressive; but we must obey him and support him in all his evil wars because there is in fact a still greater threat to our faith and nationhood coming from across the Tigris and Euphrates…”

But however great the threat posed by western civilization, the immediate and far greater threat to the salvation (in both a personal and a national sense) of the Russian people has to be the threat coming from inside Russia, from the neo-Soviet state of Putin and the neo-Soviet (and ecumenist) church of Gundiaev. God is not expecting the Russian people to save (or destroy) the West before they have saved themselves; charity begins at home, as does resistance to evil (David said: “Depart from evil” and then “do good”). The Russian revolution was created mainly by Russians, 80% of whom voted for socialist parties in 1917 without any significant encouragement from the West. Their task now is to repent thoroughly of that, and cast the last remnants of the rotten leaven of the Russian revolution out of their lives. Then, and then only, will it be the right time to turn to the wider world and extirpate it of Eurosodom and other related evils, if this is the task God gives them.

“In this polemic, honourable Mother Euphrosyne, I see the basic watershed in the following. My older instructors in the emigration at the beginning taught me, ‘a simple anti-Soviet’, to distinguish between the anti-national rulers and the people with its historical, lawful interests. In the tradition of ROCOR and the whole Russian Orthodox emigration it was always accepted that the Russian people with its historical rights should be distinguished from the criminal government. That is how the fathers of ROCOR acted, denouncing western Russophobia, the ‘Law on the enslaved nations’, the separatist politics of Radio Liberty. ROCOR always defended the territorial integrity of the Russian people and historical Russia even under the Communist God-fighting authorities, which had destroyed tens of millions of people. The ROCOR Synod also released a declaration against NATO’s aggression in defence of Serbia in spite of the fact that its then leader was the Communist Milošević. And could the real historical ROCOR today stand on the side of the ‘ATO’ punishers, the
defenders of the Leninist-Khruschevian boundaries of a state of ‘Ukraine’ that never existed independently, of the Ukronazis of the ‘Right Sector’ and their western protectors?”

Nazarov should be careful: the language of “rights”, whether human or national, is a western language deriving from the French revolution: it has no place in discussions of God’s judgements about the nations. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof”, and He gives it to whom He wills – temporarily and on trust. If we are believers, then we know that God changes the boundaries of the nations in accordance with His justice and for the sake of the salvation of the peoples – all the peoples – living in them, not because of any specious “rights”. Do the Jews have the right to rule present-day Israel. No they do not! Not even the King of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ admitted them that right before His death, having given “to Caesar what is Caesar’s”; still less did He accord them that right after they had killed Him, but scattered them in exile across the face of the earth. Do the Russians have the right to the whole of the former Russian empire now? Absolutely not! “The owner of the Russian land” under God was Tsar Nicholas II. But the Russians killed the lawful owner of the land and seized it for themselves. As a result, part of the Russian people was exiled like the Jews of old, while the rest were subjected to tortures in Russia herself, now given over to new owners and under a new name.

Nor is Nazarov being accurate in saying that the ROCOR Fathers made a strict distinction between the “bad” rulers of the USSR and the “good” people. On the contrary: both Archbishop Averky and St. John Maximovich declared that the whole of the Russian people were guilty of the sins of oath-breaking and regicide, thereby subjecting themselves not only to the 1918 anathema on those who cooperated with Soviet power but also to the curse of the Sobor of 1613 on those who would betray the Romanov dynasty. Of course, true repentance wipes out all sin; and the Holy New Martyrs, together with the best Christians of the Catacombs and Abroad, have proved by their confession and deeds that they are no longer under the curse. But not the whole people by any means…

On the first day of Great Lent, the Church reads the following words of the Prophet Isaiah: “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints; from the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it” (1.5-6). And if it be objected that the leaders are worse than the followers, we may agree – with this important qualification: that “if the blind follow the blind, they both fall into the pit” (Matthew 15.14). For as Isaiah says again: “The elder and honourable, he is the head; the prophet who teaches likes, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and those who are led by them are destroyed. Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows, for everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly” (9.15-17).

So let us put away all talk of “rights”. The people that has sinned as the Orthodox Russian people sinned has no rights! It can only beg for mercy from the Just God, realizing that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3.22). Indeed, it is precisely because of the privileges God gave them in the past – being subjects of a truly Orthodox king, with access to the true faith and true sacraments – that they have been punished more severely than any other nation and been
deprived of all their former rights and privileges, being more guilty than the surrounding nations (even the Americans!). For “to whom much has been given, of him much will be demanded” (Luke 12.48).

“No other people in the world has, even to a minimal degree..., that understanding of the meaning of history which has been preserved in the Orthodox teaching... This is revealed even among the spiritually illiterate Russian patriots and politicians, albeit in naïve, utopian, chiliastic beliefs and hopes in a special ‘messianic’ role for Russia in human history. It remains for us, in spite of everything, to preserve and spread a truly Orthodox understanding of Russianness and a true evaluation of what is happening in the hope of becoming worthy of God’s help. This hidden potential of the Russian people, which is able to reveal itself if it acquires a spiritual leadership, worries the secret world government exceedingly, since it is the indestructible Russian archetype, incompatible with the New World Order. Therefore the world system of evil continues to this day its preventative war against Russia independently of her regime.”

Here we come to the core of Nazarov’s faith in Putinist Russia. The Russian people, in his view, have a special “historiosophical” understanding of history, and a special continuing role in it. Surely he means here that Russia is still, now, the Third Rome, the only power capable of resisting the Jewish-American Antichrist; it is, or will be, “the City and Camp of the Saints”. However, he refrains from saying this openly because he does not want to be identified with “the spiritually illiterate Russian patriots and politicians” and their “naïve, utopian, chiliastic beliefs and hopes in a special ‘messianic’ role for Russia in human history”. But surely he should be more honest: as his writings have shown, he himself has definite beliefs and hopes in Russia’s messianic role, although his hopes and beliefs are, of course, not “native, utopian, chiliastic”?

The fact is: it is perfectly possible to believe in a special messianic role for Russia while rejecting completely the Putin regime and all its works, both within and outside the country. Indeed, the complete rejection of the Russian revolution in all its phases and incarnations, including the present one, is an absolute condition of the resurrection of Russia as a truly Orthodox state. For in no other way can the curse of 1613 and the anathema of 1918 be lifted from the Russian people.

Before the revolution, St. John of Kronstadt said that Russia without a tsar would be “a stinking corpse”. His prophecy has proved accurate, not only for the Soviet period, but also for the post-Soviet period, which should more precisely be called the neo-Soviet period. St. John’s opinion was echoed by the last true elder of the Russian Church Abroad, Archimandrite Nektary of Eleon (+2000): “For him, all governments in Russia after the overthrow of the Tsar on March 2, 1917 – whether the February-democratic government, the Bolshevik, or another – were enemies of God.”

But is it too much to hope that the stinking corpse of Lenin may finally be cast out of its mausoleum on Red Square, as that of the false Dmitri was cast out (through the barrel of a gun) in 1612? Could a real regeneration then take place, as it did in 1613, so that the purified, renewed and reinvigorated body of Orthodox Russia will shine

forth again in all its splendour, as the holy prophets said that it would? Could we be on the eve of that radical searching and repentance of Russian minds that, as the holy elders said, is the essential prerequisite of the resurrection of Holy Rus’?

It is indeed possible, but only if we remember that cancer remains dangerous and life-threatening even when only a few cancerous cells remain in the body; it has to be thoroughly extirpated. In the same way, the present recommunization led by Putin has to be extirpated completely. “Do you not know,” asks the Apostle Paul, “that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you are truly unleavened” (I Corinthians 5.6-7). For, as Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky), first-hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, wrote in 1938: “There is nothing more dangerous than if Russia were to want to assimilate anything from the sad inheritance left by degenerate Bolshevism: everything that its corrupting atheist hand has touched threatens to infect us again with the old leprosy.”

*February 16 / March 1, 2017.*
In the seventh century, the linguistic and cultural, as well as the doctrinal, differences between East and West were beginning to widen. St. Gregory the Great (+604) was the first Pope who did not speak Greek, although he had served in Constantinople, and remained loyal to the Byzantine Empire. In the sixth century Latin was still regularly spoken in Byzantium, but from the time of the Emperor Heraclius the East stopped using Latin even in its official documents, although it always retained the title of “Empire of the Romans”. The last emperor who came to Rome did so in 663 and the last pope to go to Constantinople went there in 710. Moreover, the patience of the West Romans was tested when the Council in Trullo (692) rejected certain Roman customs, such as fasting on Saturdays.

The estrangement deepened with Leo III’s espousal of the iconoclastic heresy, which sent streams of Orthodox refugees to the West. Then, in 733, Leo took the whole Roman diocese of East Illyricum, including the bishoprics of Sicily, South Italy, Crete, mainland Greece and the Balkans into the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The period of Western Christendom’s political and cultural orientation towards the Eastern Empire was coming to an end...

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This did not mean, however, that the Romans began to submit to Constantinople in the religious sphere. After a short period of theological equivocation from the death of St. Martin to the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 681, the Roman Popes resumed their traditional role of critics of Eastern waywardness in the faith. This was particularly evident during the period of the iconoclast heresy, which was anathematized by Popes Gregory II and III.

For over a hundred years, from the 730s to 843, the iconoclast heresy ruled in Byzantium, with only one Orthodox interlude from 787 to 815. In the first iconoclast period the Emperor Leo III’s quasi-Muslim understanding of the nature of icons went hand in hand with a resurrection of the pagan model of the imperator-pontifex maximus. In fact, insofar as the Muslim Caliph considered himself to be both a king and successor of the prophet, Leo could be said to have borrowed his theory of kingship (“I am both king and priest”), as well as his iconoclasm, from the Muslims. It was therefore eminently fitting that his main critic in both spheres should have been St. John of Damascus, a functionary at the Caliph’s court.

In the liturgical services the iconoclast emperors are called “tyrants” rather than true emperors. For in intruding into church affairs they betrayed their own calling, even if they had been Orthodox – which they were not. For, as St. John said. “What right have emperors to style themselves lawgivers in the Church?” “What does the holy apostle say? ‘And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers and shepherds, for building up the body of Christ.’ (I Corinthians 12.28). He does not mention emperors... Political prosperity is the
business of emperors; the condition of the Church is the concern of shepherds and teachers.”146

Again, the Seventh Council (convened in Nicaea in 787) decreed: “God gave the greatest gift to men: the Priesthood and the Imperial power; the first preserves and watches over the heavenly, while the second rules earthly things by means of just laws”.147 The epistle also produced a concise and inspired definition of the Church-State relationship: “The priest is the sanctification and strengthening of the Imperial power, while the Imperial power is the strength and firmness of the priesthood”.148

Some years later, in a document probably written early in the ninth century in Constantinople, but ascribed to the earlier Orthodox Pope Gregory II, Leo III’s claim to be both king and priest is fittingly refuted, while it is admitted that true kings are in some ways like priests: “You write: ‘I am Emperor and priest’. Yes, the Emperors who were before you proved this in word and deed: they build churches and cared for them; being zealous for the Orthodox faith, they together with the hierarchs investigated and defended the truth. Emperors such as: Constantine the Great, Theodosius the Great, Constantine IV, and the father of Justinian II, who was at the Sixth Council. These Emperors reigned piously: they together with the hierarchs with one mind and soul convened councils, investigated the truth of the dogmas, built and adorned the holy churches. These were priests and Emperors! They proved it in word and deed. But you, since the time that you received power, have not begun to observe the decrees of the Fathers…”149

The Pope also wrote: “You know, Emperor, that the dogmas of the Holy Church do not belong to the Emperor, but to the Hierarchs, who can safely dogmatize. That is why the Churches have been entrusted to the Hierarchs, and they do not enter into the affairs of the people’s administration. Understand and take note of this... The coming together of the Christ-loving Emperors and pious Hierarchs constitutes a single power, when affairs are governed with peace and love”. And again: “God has given power over all men to the Piety of the Emperors in order that those who strive for virtue may find strengthening in them, - so that the path to the heavens should be wider, - so that the earthly kingdom should serve the Heavenly Kingdom.”150

One person in two distinct natures: one power in two distinct functions: the Chalcedonian basis of the symphonic doctrine of Church-State relations is clear. And

146 St. John of Damascus, Second Apology against those who attack the Divine Images, 12. It may be pointed out, however, that I Corinthians 12.28 includes among the spiritual gifts that of “governments” (κυβερνητικός), which could plausibly be interpreted as referring to political government. But of course, this gift was that of governing the State, not the Church...

147 Seventh Ecumenical Council, in S. Fomin and T. Fomina, Rossia pered Vtorym Prishhestviiom (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. I, p. 91. As Gervais Dumeige points out, the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea was freer than the Fifth Council, “which felt the strong pressure of the Emperor Justinian, and more even than Constantinople III [the Sixth Council] where the presence of Constantine IV risked imposing on the conciliar debates... At Nicaea the men of the Church dealt with the affairs of the Church, under the direction of a man of the Church who knew the desires and wishes of the sovereigns. It was on a path prepared in advance that the bishops were able to advance freely” (Nicée II, Paris: Éditions de l’Orante, 1978, p. 195).


150 Pope Gregory II, in Fomin and Fomina, op. cit., vol. I, p. 82.
just as the symphonic doctrine of Church-State relations reflects Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, so the absolutist theory of Church-State relations reflects both Monothelitism and Iconoclasm. Just as Monothelitism denies that there is more than one will in Christ, so the absolutist theory denies that there is more than one will in the government of the Christian commonwealth, declaring that the will of the emperor can take the place of the will of the hierarchs. And just as Iconoclasm destroys the proper relationship between the icon and its archetype, saying that icons are in fact idols, so absolutism destroys the proper relationship and distance between the earthly type and his Heavenly Archetype, so that the emperor becomes, in St. Maximus’ words, “another God incarnate” - that is, an idol. For this, no less than for his iconoclasm, Leo III is justly called “forerunner of the Antichrist” in the Byzantine service books, and was anathematized by the Church as “the tormentor and not Emperor Leo the Isaurian”. The later iconoclast emperor, Constantine Copronymus, was also anathematized and denied the title of emperor: “the tyrant, and not Emperor”. Even more emphatic was the anathematization of Emperor Leo V the Armenian: “the evil first beast, the tormentor of the servants of Christ, and not Emperor Leo the Armenian”.

And so, just as the Seventh Council brought to an end the period of Christological debates, so it brought to an end the debates over the role of the Emperor in the Church. The Emperor was an icon of Christ the King, but only so long as he remained Orthodox; he was in the Church, but not above it. For, as the Council declared: “The priest is the sanctification and strengthening of the Imperial power, while the Imperial power is the strength and firmness of the priesthood”.

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However, while the role of the Emperor in the Church was now defined in iconographic terms as an icon of Christ the King, and as such necessarily Orthodox, in the second phase, or renewal of the iconoclast heresy that took place from 815 we see an interesting new argument put forward by the iconoclasts: that an emperor that is truly an icon of Christ must necessarily be victorious in battle, having the blessing of Christ on all his works. But the iconoclast emperors Leo III and Constantine V were on the whole victorious in battle, while the iconophile emperors Constantine VI and Irene, Michael I Rangave and Nicephorus, were all defeated. So this spoke in favour, according to the iconoclasts, of the iconoclast emperors having the true faith...

Of course, this was not a theological argument. The success of an emperor or king in battle may or may not be a function of the Orthodoxy of his faith. Sometimes God allows an Orthodox king to be defeated for quite different reasons. Saul fell at Gilboa

152 Fomina and Fomina, op. cit., pp. 89, 94.
because of his impiety, and David triumphed because of his piety. But Josiah, though righteous, was defeated and killed in battle, as were St. Oswald of Northumbria and St. Lazar of Serbia.

Again, in the life of the sixth-century St. Elesbaan, king of Ethiopia, we read that he “lived when Arabia was ruled by Dunaan, the oppressor of Christians. The pious Elesbaan was unable to look on indifferently as believers in Christ were being massacred. He declared war on Dunaan, but his military campaign was unsuccessful.

“Wishing to learn the reason for his defeat, Elesbaan, with prompting from above, turned to a certain hermit. He revealed to the emperor that he had proceeded unrighteously in deciding to take revenge against Dunaan, since the Lord had said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay!’ (Hebrews 10:30).

“The hermit counselled St Elesbaan make a vow to devote his final days of life to God, to escape the wrath of God for his self-willed revenge, and then to defeat Dunaan. St Elesbaan made a vow to the Lord, and marching off with his army against the enemy, he defeated, captured and executed him. After the victory the saint resigned as emperor, secluded himself within a monastery and for fifteen years he dwelt in strict fasting and asceticism.”

If we are to speak of Orthodox kings as icons of Christ the King, we must nevertheless remember that they were sinners who, with their peoples, were sometimes chastized by God…

The last iconoclast emperor, Theophilus, died in February, 842. His widow, St. Theodora, wanted to restore the icons, but she used her imperial authority to impose a bargain on the Church: if her reposed husband could be restored to the diptychs as an Orthodox emperor, she would give carte blanche to the patriarch to restore the true faith as he saw fit. The confessors of Orthodoxy were understandably reluctant to enter into such a bargain, since there was no reliable evidence that Theophilus had repented before his death. However, God inspired the new patriarch, St. Methodius, to resolve the dilemma in the following way. As Nun Cassia tells the story, “On March 4, 843 Methodius was consecrated to the see of Constantinople and immediately proclaimed that the whole Church should pray for the Emperor Theophilus, which continued for the whole of the first week of the Great Fast and ended with the miraculous blotting out of the name of Theophilus from the list of heretics that the patriarch had sealed before the beginning of the prayer and placed on the altar of Hagia Sophia. The reposed emperor was recognized as forgiven by the Church and as Orthodox, and on Sunday, March 11, 843 the icons were brought in a triumphal procession into the main church of the Empire, and icon-veneration has remained forever as an unshakeable dogma of the Orthodox Church…” In this way the dissonance of powers that had prevailed, with some intermissions, for such a long time was transformed into a symphony that remained stable, if not completely unshaken, until the First Fall of Constantinople in 1204...

*Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, 2017.*

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154 *Life of St. Elesbaan*, Holy Cross Monastery.
155 Senina, op. cit., pp. 129-130.
9. THE PHENOMENON OF FALSE ELDERSHIP

A Rejoinder to the “Response” to Fr. Alexey Young’s Article “Cults Within and Without” (Orthodox America, March-April, 1996)

The phenomenon of false eldership is well-known in monastic circles. However, in our times it has become rampant even in parishes in the world – especially in the Moscow Patriarchate, but also in the True Orthodox Church. Fr. Alexey Young has justly criticised the practice whereby lay parishioners are given monastic-style obediences by parish priests who arrogate to themselves authority over them that is appropriate only to a true, Spirit bearing elder. And he is surely right to say that you should be wary "if you are a layman in a parish situation [and] are expected to get permission (‘a blessing’) from the priest before you change jobs, buy a new car, etc. Under normal circumstances these are not the proper purview of a parish priest, however wise and pious he may otherwise be. One may -- and should -- ask for prayers and advice about these and other non-controversial aspects of practical life, but asking for permission is quite a different thing." Since such demands for monastic-style obedience are often encountered by laymen, Fr. Alexey, as a pastor of laymen, has every right to express an opinion on the subject, basing himself, of course, on the Tradition of the Orthodox Church as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Holy Fathers.

One of the Fathers who spoke most urgently about the dangers of false elders was Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, who wrote: "What has been said of solitude and seclusion must also be said of obedience to elders in the form in which it was practiced in ancient monasticism -- such obedience is not given in our time." Fr. Alexey does not mention Bishop Ignatius, but he follows in the same tradition when he asserts: "... in this country, at least, there are NO true elders today whose voice can he the voice of heaven for a disciple or spiritual child" (emphasis his).

The Response disputes this opinion, pointing out that the Optina elders flourished during the time of Bishop Ignatius, and that "in this century, many Holy Elders in Russia, Romania Bulgaria, Greece, Mt Athos, Mt. Sinai and elsewhere have led countless souls to salvation."

However, disputes about the number of elders in Russia or America in the 19th or 20th century are beside the point. The point is that the grace of true eldership has grown exceedingly scarce (how could it be otherwise in the era of the Antichrist?), and that great care must therefore be exercised before entering into a relationship of strict obedience to a supposed elder, insofar as obedience to a false elder, according to the Holy Fathers, can lead to the loss of one’s soul.

Thus in the sixth century, when monasticism was at its height and truly Spirit-bearing elders could be found in many places, Saint John of the Ladder still found it necessary to warn: “When motives of humility and real longing for salvation decide us to bend our neck and entrust ourselves to another in the Lord, before entering upon this life, if there is any vice and pride in us, we ought first to question and examine, and even, so to speak, test our helmsman, so as not to mistake the sailor for the pilot, a sick man for a doctor, a passionate for a dispassionate man, the sea for a harbor, and so bring about the speedy shipwreck of our soul.”
Again, in the eleventh century Saint Symeon the New Theologian wrote: “If you wish to renounce the world and learn the life of the Gospel, do not surrender (entrust) yourself to an inexperienced or passionate master, lest instead of the life of the Gospel you learn a diabolic life. For the teaching of good teachers is good, while the teaching of bad teachers is bad. Bad seeds invariably produce bad fruits...

“Every blind man who undertakes to guide others is a deceiver or quack, and those who follow him are cast into the pit of destruction, according to the word of the Lord, If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a hole (Matthew 15:14).”

In the eighteenth century, the situation had become so serious that, in spite of having an ardent desire to find a true elder to whom he could bow his neck in complete obedience, Saint Paisius Velichkovsky was unable to find such a man, although he scoured all the lands between Russia and Mount Athos. Eventually he and a like-minded brother from the Holy Mountain entered into mutual obedience to each other, “having instead of a father and instructor the teaching of our Holy Fathers.”

The author of the Response writes: "We must also understand what true Eldership is. True Elders do not, of course, ask us to do what is immoral or wrong. Nor do they claim to speak with the authority of Heaven or to possess infallibility. We Orthodox are not Papists."

So far so good. But then he continues: "To the extent that we entrust our souls to our Elders, make them images of Christ, and let God work through them, their human errors become inconsequential. In short, our obedience within monasticism, covered as we are by the Grace of the sacred tonsure, produces eldership. Eldership is not personal. Wherever there is sincere monastic obedience, there is Eldership."

The obedience of disciples produces elders, makes them images of Christ?! Perhaps this is just careless language, but the prima facie sense of the words implies that the grace of eldership comes, not from above, but from below, not from God but from the subjective and quite possibly misplaced faith of the disciple. Perhaps what is meant is that God bestows the grace of eldership on a man in response to the eager faith of his disciple. But this is still unacceptable from an Orthodox point of view. A disciple can no more make an elder than a layman can ordain a priest.

Bishop Ignatius puts the point in typically trenchant fashion: “Perhaps you retort: A novice's faith can take the place of an incompetent elder. It is untrue. Faith in the truth saves. Faith in a lie and in a diabolic delusion is ruinous, according to the teaching of the Apostle. They refused to love the truth that would save them, he says of those who are voluntarily perishing. Therefore, God will send them (will permit them to suffer) a strong delusion, so that they will believe a lie, that all may be condemned who do not believe the truth but delight in falsehood (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

How, then, are we to distinguish between true and false elders?
I. M. Kontzevich provides the answer in his book on the Optina elders: “Those who have given themselves over to the direction of a true elder experience a special feeling of joy and freedom in the Lord. He who writes these lines has personally experienced this in himself. The elder is the immediate channel of the will of God. Communion with God is always accompanied by a feeling of spiritual freedom, joy, and indescribable peace in the soul. Contrary to this, the false elder pushes God into the background, putting his own will in the place of God, which is accompanied by a feeling of enslavement, depression and, almost always, despondency. Besides, the complete submission of the disciples before the false elder exterminates his personality, buries his will, perverts the feeling of righteousness and truth, and, in this way, weakens his conscience from responsibility for his actions.

“Concerning false eldership his Reverence Ignatius Brianchaninov says this: 'It is a terrible business, out of self-opinion and on one’s own authority, to take upon oneself duties which can be carried out only by the order of the Holy Spirit and by the action of the Spirit. It is a terrible thing to pretend to be a vessel of the Holy Spirit when all the while relations with satan have not been broken and the vessel is still being defiled by the action of satan! It is disastrous both from oneself and one's neighbor; it is criminal, blasphemous.'

“False eldership produces hypnosis of thought. And since at the root of it there lies a false idea, this idea produces spiritual blindness. When the false idea covers up reality, then no arguments will be accepted any longer, since they stumble upon an idée fixe, which is considered to be an unshakeable axiom.” (The Acquisition of the Holy Spirit)

True eldership, according to Kontzevich, is nothing other than the gift of prophecy, the second of the gifts of the Spirit listed by the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 12:28). This is confirmed by Hieroconfessor Barnabas (Belyaev), Bishop of Pechersk, himself a clairvoyant elder, who wrote: "Elders in Russian ecclesiastical consciousness are ascetics who have passed through a long probation and have come to know the spiritual warfare from experience, who by many exploits have acquired the gift of discernment, and who, finally, are capable by prayer of attaining to the will of God for man. That is, to a greater or lesser extent they have received the gift of clairvoyance and are therefore capable of giving spiritual direction to those who turn to them." (Orthodoxy)

Bishop Ignatius' warnings against false eldership should not be taken as a renunciation of all forms of monastic obedience. If they were, his works would hardly have been given as required reading for monastics by the Optina elders and Bishop Theophan the Recluse. Hieromonk Nicon of Optina, in his commentary on Bishop Ignatius' writings, explains that his warnings apply only to the strictest kind of elder-disciple relationship: less strict forms of obedience still retain all their spiritual usefulness, even necessity; for no Christian can be saved without obedience and the cutting off of his will in some way. But in our apocalyptic age, when the love of many has grown cold and there is a general spiritual impoverishment, it is as dangerous to demand the strictest forms of obedience as it would be to demand the strictest forms of fasting or prayer or other kinds of ascetic endeavor. We must discern the signs of the times, and adapt our strategies for survival accordingly.
When we see, on the one hand, how difficult it is to be a Christian in the maze of modern life, and, on the other, with what swiftness and apparent ease the monks and pious laymen of past ages attained salvation through strict obedience to a God-bearing elder, it is tempting to find such an elder even when he does not exist. But when we surrender our will to a false elder, we become slaves of a man, a man who is suffering a very grave spiritual sickness; whereas Apostle Paul says, “You were bought with a price; do not become the slaves of men” (I Corinthians 7:23). And having become slaves of men, we lose that most quintessential attribute of man made in the image of God - independent judgment, and the ability to turn to God directly for enlightenment and help.

Many converts are tempted to submit to a false elder for another reason - that he led them to Orthodoxy and may well be the only Orthodox leader in the vicinity. Then a mixture of gratitude and the fear of becoming completely isolated may lead the convert to conclude that Divine Providence must have led him to submit his whole life to this man for the salvation of his soul. The false elder, who is often a cunning psychologist, can exploit this situation to gain complete control over his disciple, adding, in the case of disobedience, the threat of fearsome sanctions, including very strict penances, curses and even anathematization and expulsion (supposedly) from the Orthodox Church! - a tragic situation which may lead to the convert's abandoning the Orthodox Church altogether. The present writer has personally observed such situations in True Orthodox communities in England, Russia, Bulgaria and Greece.

Many who have fallen into the trap of false eldership and begin to see their real situation, are deterred from breaking free by false feelings of guilt, as if there were no circumstances in which a disciple can disobey an elder. But, even apart from heresy, there are certain conditions in which it is right to disobey and leave one's elder, as we read in the Sayings of the Desert Fathers:

A brother questioned Abba Poemen, saying, "I am losing my soul through living near my abba; should I go on living with him?" The old man knew that he was finding this harmful and he was surprised that he even asked if he should stay there. So he said to him, "Stay if you want to." The brother left him and stayed there. He came back again and said, "I am losing my soul." But the old man did not tell him to leave. He came a third time and said, "I really cannot stay there any longer." Then Abba Poemen said, "Now you are saving yourself; go away and do not stay with him any longer. And he added, "When someone sees that he is in danger of losing his soul, he does not need to ask advice."

St. Gregory of Sinai says: "You should not question everyone. You should go only to one, to someone who has been entrusted with the guidance of others as well, who is radiant alike in his life and in his words, and who although poor makes many rich (II Corinthians 6:10).

“For people lacking spiritual experience have often done harm to foolish questioners, and for this they will be judged after death.
“Not everyone is qualified to guide others: only those can do so who have been granted divine discrimination - what St Paul calls the 'discrimination of spirits' (I Corinthians 12:10) - enabling them to distinguish between bad and good with the sword of God's teaching (Ephesians 6:17).

“Everyone possesses his own private knowledge and discrimination, whether inborn, pragmatic or scientific, but not all possess spiritual knowledge and discrimination.

“That is why Sirach said, 'Be at peace with many, but let your counsellors be one in a thousand' (Ecclesiasticus 6:6).

“It is hard to find a guide who in all he does, says or thinks is free from delusion.

“You can tell that a person is undeluded when his actions and judgment are founded on the testimony of divine Scripture, and when he is humble in whatever he has to give his mind to.

“No little effort is needed to attain a clear understanding of the truth and to be cleansed from whatever is contrary to grace, for the devil - especially in the case of beginners - is liable to present his delusions in the forms of truth, thus giving his deceit a spiritual guise.” (On Prayer: Seven Texts On Delusion and Other Subjects)

* Perhaps the most characteristic mark of the last times is the spiritual isolation of the individual believer. As David says: “I am alone until I pass by... Flight hath failed me, and there is none that watcheth out for my soul” (Psalm 140.12, 141.6). Of course, no true Christian is ever really alone: he always has with him God and the Mother of God and all the saints and angels of the Heavenly Church. But in the last times the support of the Heavenly Church may be the only real support that the conscientious believer has, as the Earthly Church grows weak and small.

This has already been the experience of many thousands of believers of the Russian Catacomb Church, and it is therefore from the Catacomb Church that we hear the most urgent admonitions to preserve our spiritual freedom, "lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has 'given us as a free gift by His Own Blood" (Third Ecumenical Council, Canon 8).

Thus Hieromartyr Damascene, Bishop of Glukhov, said, "Perhaps the time has come when the Lord does not wish that the Church should stand as an intermediary between Himself and the believers, but that everyone is called to stand directly before the Lord and himself answer as it was with the forefathers!" (E.L. Episkopy-Ispovedniki) Again, Hieromartyr Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd, emphasized the possibility that the true Christians of the last times would have to leave all the recognized spiritual guides; for "perhaps the last 'rebels' against the betrayers of the Church and the accomplices of Her ruin will be not only bishops and not protopriests, but the simplest mortals, just as at the Cross of Christ His last gasp of suffering was heard by a few simple souls who were close to Him..."
Thus we may be moving into the last period of the Church's history, when the wheel has come round full circle and the Church has returned to the molecular structure of Abraham's Family Church, when true bishops are few and far between, when charismatic spiritual guides are no less scarce, and when the individual believer has to seek the answers to his spiritual problems from God and God's word alone, remembering David's words: “It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to hope in the Lord than to hope in princes” (Psalm 118:8-9).

Revised February 25 / March 10, 2017.
10. TWO CROSSES

On the Sunday of the Holy Cross, the faithful are exhorted by the Lord to take up their crosses and follow Him (Mark 8.34). At the end of Great Lent, however, the emphasis changes. We are exhorted to take up, not our crosses, but the Cross of Christ: “Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together, and we all take up Thy Cross and say…”

What is the difference between the two kinds of Cross – Christ’s and our own?

The cross is first of all the symbol of suffering. Both the Saviour and those who are saved by Him suffer. But the nature of the suffering in the two cases is very different.

Christ did not have to suffer. Not only is He impassible (without suffering) in His Divine nature. In His human nature, too, He did not have to suffer. For suffering is the result of the fall; it is the wages of sin, as St. Paul says; it is the punishment and correction imposed on fallen human nature by God in recompense for the fall. Adam and Eve did not suffer before the fall in any way; they suffered only after it. Thus according to the great God-seer, St. Seraphim of Sarov, Adam’s nature “was created to such an extent immune to the action of every one of the elements created by God, that neither could water drown him, nor fire burn him, nor could the earth swallow him up in its abysses, nor could the air harm him by its action in any way whatsoever. Everything was subject to him…”

The same is true of the human nature of the New Adam, Christ. At the Annunciation, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Holy Virgin Mary and cleansed her of all sin, both personal and original. (Contrary to Roman Catholic teaching, she was conceived in original sin, like all her ancestors, and so was subject to suffering and death.) So the Lord was conceived with a wholly perfect and sinless human nature. He neither sinned personally, nor did He receive original sin from His Mother. Therefore he did not have to suffer or die. But He willed both to suffer and to die in order to sympathize (which literally means: “co-suffer”) with us to the utmost. Every moment of His life on earth He willed to suffer what we suffer – only without sin (Hebrews 4.15).

We see this most clearly in the temptation in the wilderness. “When He had fasted forty days and forty nights,” we read, “afterwards He was hungry” (Matthew 4.2). This is a most supernatural hunger! For forty days and forty nights He did not suffer any hunger pains: only afterwards did He decide, of His own free will, to suffer hunger – forty days’ worth of hunger pains all at once! So all the sufferings of Christ during His earthly life were the result, not of the physical and psychological laws that govern human nature in its fallen state, but were willed by Him upon His sinless nature -which did not have to suffer at all. Thus every time He hungered He willed to hunger, every time he suffered any kind of pain He willed to suffer it.

156 Triodion, Great Vespers of Palm Sunday, “Lord, I have cried”, troparion.
157 St. Seraphim of Sarov, Conversation with Motovilov, in Fr. Seraphim Rose, Genesis, Creation and Early Man, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2000, p. 442.
Still more appallingly, He willed to take upon Himself the sins of the world, thereby destroying them. For us the guilt of sin is tormenting - but only to the extent that we realize its horror, which we rarely do because of the desensitizing effect of our general sinfulness. But for Christ, in the words of Metropolitan Philaret of New York, “every sin burned with the unbearable fire of hell”.\(^{158}\) Therefore when He took upon Himself the sins of the whole world, - in St. Paul's striking and paradoxical words, "God hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin" (II Corinthians 5.21) - the torment and the suffering of His sinless human soul were strictly unimaginable. As St. John Maximovich writes: “It was necessary that the sinless Saviour should take upon Himself all human sin, so that He, Who had no sins of His own, should feel the weight of the sin of all humanity and sorrow over it in such a way as was possible only for complete holiness, which clearly feels even the slightest deviation from the commandments and Will of God.”\(^{159}\)

That Life Incarnate should then die was still more unimaginable. Of course, “God did not create death”, and therefore death is unnatural. But for us death, though unnatural in essence, has nevertheless become in a certain sense natural - in the same sense that sin has become natural or “second nature” to us since the fall. However, there was nothing in the slightest natural about death for the sinless Lord. As Archbishop Averky of Jordanville says, “Death is the consequence of sin (Romans 5.12,15), and so the sinless nature of the God-Man should not have submitted to death: death for it was an unnatural phenomenon: which is why the sinless nature of Christ is indignant at death, and sorrows and pines at its sight.”\(^{160}\)

Vladimir Lossky writes: "The earthly life of Christ was a continual humiliation. His human will unceasingly renounced what naturally belonged to it, and accepted what was contrary to incorruptible and deified humanity: hunger, thirst, weariness, grief, sufferings, and finally, death on the cross. Thus, one could say that the Person of Christ, before the end of His redemptive work, before the Resurrection, possessed in His Humanity as it were two different poles - the incorruptibility and impassibility proper to a perfect and deified nature, as well as the corruptibility and passibility voluntarily assumed...”\(^{161}\)

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Let us now turn from the Cross of Christ to our cross. Of course, it is strictly impossible to compare the suffering of the God-Man, Who was able to accommodate within His sinless soul the suffering and the guilt of the whole of humanity, with the narrow, exceedingly limited suffering of our sin-laden souls – limited, moreover, precisely because of our sinfulness. Nevertheless, we shall dare to make some comparisons.

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First, whereas all the sufferings of the Saviour were voluntary, most of our sufferings are involuntary. We are born as fallen beings into a fallen world, and so are subject of necessity to the laws of that fallen world. Thus we do not hunger when we choose to, as the Lord chose; we hunger when our blood sugar and other physical variables fall below a certain level, sending signals to our brain – and all this is beyond our power to modify significantly.

And yet the Lord tells us to take up our cross – that is, act, not simply suffer. And we can act in various ways. The first is by refusing to grumble about our sufferings, thereby turning involuntary suffering into something accommodated in, because accepted by, our will; which may be called making a virtue out of necessity. There is an enormous difference between suffering without knowing or caring why or from whom our sufferings come, and suffering in the full knowledge that they are sent by God to correct and purify our souls. Therefore, says St. Paul, “let us not complain, as some of them [the Israelites in the desert] also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer” (I Corinthians 10.10).

The refusal to grumble or complain is but one example of self-denial, which the Lord commands even before He tells us to take up our cross (Mark 8.34). We deny ourselves whenever we say no to an impulse of our fallen nature: whether that would be to complain about our sufferings, or to indulge in sexual activity outside marriage, or to take revenge on someone who has injured us. This is the beginning of the cross, a form of asceticism that all Christians must practice. A higher stage is attained when the Christian practices the following voluntary acts: not only not complaining about suffering, but rejoicing in it; not only refusing to indulge in unlawful sexual activity, but embracing the virginal life; not only refusing to take revenge on his enemies, but doing good to them. This is not just self-denial, but taking up the cross.

The feats of the holy martyrs and monastic saints represent the highest peaks of cross-bearing. (St. Theodore the Studite said that the sorrows of monasticism reap the same reward as the pains of martyrdom.) Insofar as they constitute the highest, most complete transformation of involuntary into voluntary suffering, they come closest to the imitation of Christ crucified.

However, a radical difference must still be recognized.

For however great the voluntary sufferings of the saints and martyrs, they are not in themselves life-giving or salvific. For we are saved, not by works, but by faith. Or rather, there is one work that saves – the work of believing in Christ. For “‘what shall we do,’ asked the people, ‘that we may work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you should believe in Him Whom he hath sent’” (John 6.28-29).

In order to understand why this should be so, we need to look more closely at the parallel which the Holy Fathers draw between our cross and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on the one hand, and the Cross of Christ and the tree of Life, on the other. Two trees engendering two forms of life, and two forms of suffering. But only one of them is salvific, as having Life in itself.
The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents our fallen human nature separated from God. For it was in the centre of the garden (Genesis 3.3), where God, not man, should be. For from the point of view of the still immature nature of Adam and Eve, it was their own nature, with its needs and desires, that was at the centre, rather than the glorification of God. These needs and desires were not yet corrupted; but they were still not concentrated exclusively on, and united to, Life Itself and therefore fixed in goodness.

St. Gregory the Theologian says that the tree of Life was the contemplation of God. But Adam and Eve’s immaturity meant that they were not yet ready for contemplation. Therefore God commanded them not to partake of this tree until they had reached spiritual maturity and immovability in the good.

But what can be wrong with a knowledge of good and evil? Nothing in itself. Nor is the tree evil in itself, in its essence; for it was made by God, Who made all things “very good”, and it was truly “pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise” (Genesis 3.6). Human nature is not evil in itself, and it is designed to acquire a knowledge of good and evil, that is, of wisdom. But only in and through the tree of Life, the divinely human nature of Christ.

In separation from the true of Life, the knowledge of good and evil in the proper sense becomes a knowledge of something subtly different – the knowledge of pleasure and pain, that is, of what is considered good and evil by fallen men, but is not in fact truly good and evil. For our whole life, as St. Maximus the Confessor said, swings between the poles of the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The knowledge of how to obtain the “good” and avoid the “evil” is born of experience in the fall, and is inevitably imperfect; it cannot ascend beyond the good and evil of the fallen world to what is truly “beyond good and evil”, that is, to the realm where there is only Good. Far better, therefore, to acquire wisdom from the tree of Life, so as to be established immovably in the true Good before encountering sin and suffering, like the Divine Child in Isaiah Who “shall eat curds and honey, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good” (7.15).

The tree of Life, by contrast, represents, not fallen human nature and the wisdom that is attainable by fallen beings, but the unfallen divinely human nature of Christ, Who is Wisdom Incarnate. In the context of the New Testament Church it represents the Body and Blood of Christ, partaking of Whom we are delivered from the corruption engendered by our eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and are given true Life. Adam and Eve were barred from the tree of Life after their fall because, having allowed their nature to be corrupted by sin and not having repented properly, they would have made their corruption eternal; their participation in the Holy Mystery would have been to their condemnation.

Fallen man is crucified on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and is completely unable through his own works to free himself from this torment. However, with the eyes of faith he sees another tree – and another Man crucified upon it. Like the wise thief on the cross next to Christ’s, his faith connects him with
the Man; the two crosses are united, and the grace and power of the One quenches the evil energy of the other.

But in order to see the Cross of Christ, and experience its regenerative power, we have to ascend our own cross, repent of our sins and crucify our own fallen desires to the best of our ability. Only then will we, like the wise thief, be able to enter Paradise carrying our own cross behind Christ’s. For it is only “through the Cross” – Christ’s Cross – that “joy has entered the world”.162

St. Nikolai Velimirovich summarized it well: “What does ‘his cross’ mean? Why is this cross – his own, i.e. the separate and individual cross of each person, – also called the Cross of Christ? One’s own cross: the sorrows and suffering of earthly life, which are individual to each person. One’s own cross: fasting, vigil, and other pious spiritual labors through which the flesh is humbled and subjugated to the spirit. These labors should be appropriate to each person’s strength, and they are individual to each person. One’s own cross: illnesses and passions, which are individual to each person. With some of them we are born, with others we become contaminated along the path of life. The Cross of Christ is represented by Christ’s teaching. One’s own cross, no matter how heavy, is fruitless and in vain if it is not transformed into the Cross of Christ by following Christ. For Christ’s disciple his own cross becomes the Cross of Christ, because Christ’s disciple is firmly convinced that Christ watches over him ceaselessly, that Christ allots him the sorrows as a necessary and inevitable condition of Christianity, that not a single sorrow could come near him were it not allowed by Christ, that through sorrows a Christian becomes united with Christ, becomes a participant in His lot on earth and, therefore, in heaven.”


Monday of the Week of the Holy Cross.

162 Pentecostarion, Mattins of Pascha, ikos.
11. WHAT PRICE JUSTICE?

The death of the former IRA Chief of Staff Martin McGuinness, and the interesting and varied reactions to it in the British press today, raise the question: How important is justice? Is it a primary or secondary value? Can it be sacrificed for another value, such as love or peace?

One of the most powerful arguments of the atheists is: how can we believe in God when we see so much injustice in the world, where so many innocents suffer and die while criminals get away with murder? Supposing that He exists, then why does He not prevent it or punish it? If He cannot prevent it or punish it, then this shows that He is not omnipotent – in which case He is not God as we usually understand the word “God”. And if He can prevent or punish it, but doesn’t, then this shows that He is not just or loving – in which case, again, He is not God as we usually understand that term. “Where is the God of justice?”

This is an old question, and not a trivial one. It was raised in the Psalms, in Malachi (2.17), and then by the martyrs under the altar in Revelation (6.10), and has probably been pondered on by every thinking Christian ever since. There is an answer to it, as there is to all the great questions – which is not to say that atheists will be satisfied by it. But before coming to that answer, let us first ponder the fact that should astonish the atheists even more than God’s supposed injustice: that the love of justice is so powerful in human beings. The victims of Martin McGuinness’ IRA bombings, who lost husbands or wives or sons or daughters in them, and then had to see the man hailed as a “peace-maker” and shake the hand of the Queen of England, burn with the most powerful feelings of injustice, and will not be satisfied by the argument that he should be acquitted in the court of public opinion because, while admitting his crimes and showing no remorse for them, he nevertheless changed tactics (only because the old tactics failed) and became a major player in a successful peace process that has prevented the committing of many more murders – and in the meantime brought him honour and glory that he never dreamed of and certainly never deserved.

Where does this love of justice come from? It has no analogy in animal natures: animals get angry, and lash out at their tormentors, but they neither pursue lofty ideals nor harbour grievances that drive – sometimes poison - the whole of their lives. The pursuit of justice is found only in human beings made by God in His image, the image of the God of justice. Of course, the atheists will find some completely arbitrary and ad hoc explanation deriving from Darwinist theory to explain the love of justice in men. But who can believe such stupidity?

No rational person with a moral sense can deny that the love of justice, even if perverted at times into an insatiable desire of revenge, is one of the facts about man that raises him above the level of animality. There is no way it can be interpreted as

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163 Stephen Glover writes: “Former Tory Cabinet Minister Peter Lilley, whom I know to be an honourable man, has testified in the House of Commons that McGuinness told him that he had 12 Catholic informers killed in Northern Ireland” (“Mentioning McGuinness in the same breath as Mandela? I really do despair”, The Daily Mail, March 22, 2017, p. 16).
promoting the long-term survival of the species. On the contrary: animal species survive without any love of justice. But the human species could well destroy itself – and has come close to destroying itself already – because of wars fought for the sake of justice. For from where do the socialist and nationalist revolutions gain their motive power if not from the love of justice – albeit a false and perverted understanding of it?

It seems that men can live neither with themselves nor with others without justice; and this not simply because justice presupposes rules of conflict resolution that are useful for the survival of the species and individual human communities, but because justice is seen by men (or at any rate, some men) as a goal far higher than survival, being desirable for its own sake, to the extent that men, both individually and collectively, will risk their own lives rather than accepting injustice. That is why there is a general revulsion at certain major injustices – for example, Chamberlain’s pact with Hitler at Munich in 1938 – even though these could well be justified on the grounds of the survival of the nation and the prevention of war. Another such “justified injustice” is the Good Friday Agreement that ended the Troubles in Northern Ireland, when the murderer McGuinness played his famous “peace-maker” role and leading IRA murderers were secretly given exemption from prosecution in exchange for laying down their arms. Many – most – think this was justified. Others – the families of the victims and others – think that it was unjust, and that no possible peace could justify the sacrifice of justice it involved. Unfortunately, it is not unknown to see terrorists and murderers become even heads of states when their terrorist aims have been achieved, as a result of which they acquire not only immunity from prosecution, but even take on the role of judges and avengers in relation to other kinds of terror. The injustice of this is obvious; the only question is: can it be justified in view of some supposedly higher end? But whether or not a particular compromise with injustice can be justified, it is recognized to be in any case a compromise, in that justice is sacrificed for something else. In other words, justice is recognized to be a great value, the abandonment or reduction of which for whatever reason is always a loss. But such an attitude is anything but animalian, and implies that there are higher – or at least equal – values than mere survival, the preservation of life, one of which is justice.

Having established that the love of justice is an ineradicable aspect of human nature that cannot be reduced to anything animalian, the next thing we must recognize is that it does not and will never exist on earth. For as the wise Solomon says: “I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill” (Ecclesiastes 9.11). We may aspire to a meritocratic society, but we will never achieve it – the world is simply not constructed in such a way as to reward true merit.

And yet the ideal remains as powerful as ever. Moreover, believers know that there is a God of justice Who will blot out every injustice – not here, but in the heavens, where true righteousness dwells. And if the atheists say that this is simply “pie-in-the-sky” theorizing, mere wish-fulfilment, we reply: not only the greatest wishes of the righteous will be fulfilled there, but also the greatest fears of the unrighteous. For we are talking about real justice here! So those who do not believe in
God because they see no justice on earth need not worry: the McGuinnesses of this world will not escape justice in the end…

In fact, it is those revolutionaries and liberals who believe that it is in principle possible to establish justice upon earth, in this fatally corrupt and fallen world, who are fantasizing. For let us consider certain facts. In order to establish justice in the life of any individual man, we must know precisely who he is and what he deserves. And in order to know that, we need to know not only all his thoughts and desires to the smallest detail, but also all his strengths and weaknesses, both inherited and acquired, and all the influences that have worked upon him since his birth and even before his birth. Only a truly omniscient Being can know all these factors and their interactions, and weigh up their precise significance, excusing the man where excuses are justified and rejecting them where they are not.

And then, in order to give this man his just deserts, the whole of his life must be ordered in such a way that by the end of it he is neither unjustly happy nor unjustly wretched. Only a Being that is not only omniscient but also omnipotent can accomplish this! We as believers know that such a Being does indeed exist. He is the God of justice, Whose existence is not only the source of our love of justice but also the basis of the very rationality of the belief that justice is an ideal worth striving for… But we also know that He will not accomplish this in this world, but only in the life of the age to come, when He comes to judge the living and the dead and render unto each man according to his deeds…

Although only God can know what is truly just and bring true justice to pass, we must strive for it to the extent that our feeble and fallen faculties allow. That means that even when we see injustice apparently triumphing, we must neither indulge in futile rage or revolutionary fantasies, nor lose a godly hatred of injustice or faith in its final overthrow. For God has placed the love of justice in our souls in the image of His own supremely passionate love of justice. It was this love of justice that drove Him to send His Only-Begotten Son into the world to offer the supreme and all-encompassing Sacrifice for the sins of the world, so as to restore peace and justice between God and man. For, as St. John of the Ladder writes: “God is called love, and also justice.”

Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.

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12. ABRAHAM, THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL

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

The deification of the ruler of the City of Man in the person of Nimrod, and the building of the tower of Babel at his command, was, of course, a direct challenge to the truly Divine Ruler of the City of God. "However," writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, "not all of humanity agreed to take part in the building of the tower. Our Russian Tale of Burning Years (The Chronicle of Nestor), relying on the chronicle of George Armatoll, says that righteous Heber (‘from him came the Hebrews’) refused to take part in the undertaking. And the Armenian and some other chronicles add that certain Japhethites also refused, because of which a war took place between them and Nimrod."165

But the most famous exile from Babylon’s antitheist civilization was Heber’s grandson Abraham. God commanded him to depart and go to an unknown country, and he went to live “in tents, while he looked forward to a city founded, designed and built by God” (Hebrews 11.10). For the worshippers of God, who wish to be at peace with heaven, cannot co-exist in peace with the worshippers of man, who seek to “quarrel with heaven” and with heaven’s citizens. They must build their own polity that is not founded on the worship of man, but of God.

Abraham’s story, recounted in chapters 12 to 22 of Genesis, is that of a man who obeys no man, but only God; his faith did not come from men, because even his father “served other gods” (Joshua 24.2); we read of no priest or king to whom he deferred. The only exception is Melchizedek, the mysterious king-priest of Shalem, who blessed him on his return from the slaughter of the Babylonian kings. However, Melchizedek was the exception that proved the rule; for he was more like God than man, being both the first and the last man in the history of the People of God lawfully to combine the roles of king and priest166. Indeed, he was the first recorded true king and “priest of the Most High God”, who was called “Possessor of heaven and earth” (Genesis 14.18). This shows, according to St. Paul (Hebrews 7.3), that he was the type, not of any merely human king, but of Christ God, the Supreme King and Chief High Priest.167 Like Christ in His Divine generation, he was “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days not end of life, but

166 Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, Zapiski rukovodstvuisschikh k osnovatel’nomu razumeniu Knigi Byti (Notes Leading to a Fundamental Understanding of the Book of Genesis), Moscow, 1817, p. 78. Exceptions may be found in the history of the tiny kingdom of Montenegro in the Ottoman period.
167 Melchisedek’s combining the roles of king and priest may also signify the Divine origin of both offices. See Protopriest Valentine Asmus, “O monarkhii i nashem k nej otnoshenii” (“On Monarchy and our Relationship to It”), Radonezh, N 2 (46), January, 1997, p. 4.
made like the Son of God, remaining a priest continually” (Hebrews 7.3). Again like Christ at the Last Supper, Melchizedek offers Abraham bread and wine, which is why Christ is called “a priest after the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7.17). So Abraham is blessed by Christ Himself, the true King of Peace, in the person of Melchizedek, the “king of peace”...

Abraham’s life represents a model of the Christian life of faith demonstrated by works performed for God’s sake. Purified and strengthened through a series of trials, in each of which he is called to obey God by performing a work of faith, in Abraham we see “faith working together with his works, and by works faith being made perfect” (James 2.22). These works of faith include: exile from his native land (Chaldeia), separation from his relatives (Lot), struggle against the enemies of the faith (the four kings headed by the king of Babylon), struggle against his fallen desires (Pharaoh, Hagar) and, finally, the complete sacrifice of the heart to God (the sacrifice of Isaac). The supreme demonstration of Abraham’s faith was his belief that “God was able to raise [Isaac] from the dead” (Hebrews 11.19), which was a type of the Resurrection of Christ.

To strengthen him on this path, Abraham is given bread and wine, a figure of the Body and Blood of Christ, by Melchizedek. In fact he also receives the other sacraments in a figure. For he is ordered to carry out – not only on himself, but also on his whole family, and even his servants - circumcision, a type both of the Church’s Baptism by water and the Spirit, whereby all previous sins are washed away, and of the circumcision of the heart, whereby the desire to sin again in the future is cut off.

Abraham’s faith was not simply belief in God, but also in Christ God; for he believed in God’s promise that from his seed would come the Seed, the Messiah and Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ (Galatians 3.16), in Whom all the nations of the world would be blessed. This meant, as St. Theophan the Recluse explains, that “the blessing given to him for his faith would be spread to all peoples, but not because of Abraham himself or all of his descendants, but because of One of his descendants – his Seed, Who is Christ; through Him all the tribes of the earth would receive the blessing.” That Abraham truly had a vision of the Christ that was to come was confirmed by the Lord Himself, Who said: “Abraham rejoiced to see My day: He saw it, and was glad” (John 8.56).

Abraham is not only a model of the man of faith and the physical ancestor of Christ: he is spiritually the father of all the faithful Christians, being a type of the Apostles, who are “in labour again until Christ is formed” in every Christian (Galatians 4.19).

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168 However, Mar Jacob considered it to be no figure of the Eucharist but the Eucharist itself: “None, before the Cross, entered this order of spiritual ministration, except this man alone. Beholding the just Abraham worthy of communion with him, he separated part of his oblation and took it out to him to mingle him therewith. He bore forward bread and wine, but Body and Blood went forth, to make the Father of the nations a partaker of the Lord’s Mysteries.” (“A Homily on Melchizedek”, translated in The True Vine, Summer, 1989, no. 2, p. 44)  
169 St. Theophan, Tolkovanie na Poslanie k Galatam (Interpretation of the Epistle to the Galatians), 3.16.
God made certain promises to Abraham and his descendants, known as the Abrahamic Covenant, which prefigure the whole future history of the relationship between the City of God and the City of Man. They are so important that they are proclaimed in at least eight different versions, or “drafts” (Genesis 12.1-3, 12.7, 12.13, 14-17, 14.18-20, 15.1-19, 16.10-12, 17.1-22, 22.17-18), not to speak of their repetition to his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. Each successive draft makes the Covenant a little more precise and far-reaching, in response to Abraham’s gradual increase in spiritual stature.

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

Now according to the popular conception, Isaac is the ancestor of the Jews, and Ishmael – of the Arab peoples. Certainly, the description of Ishmael’s race as “wild” and warlike that is given by the Angel of the Lord to Hagar in the desert (Genesis 16.10-12) appears to correspond closely, as St. Philaret of Moscow points out, to the character and life-style of the Arabs until Mohammed and beyond, who were constantly fighting and lived “in the presence of their brethren” – that is, near, or to the east of, the descendants of Abraham from his other concubine, Hetturah – the Ammonites, Moabites and Idumeans. Moreover, a similar interpretation of the typology appears to stand true for the next generation, to Isaac’s sons Jacob and Esau, who are said to correspond to the Jews (Jacob), on the one hand, and the Idumeans (Esau), on the other. For this interpretation fits very well with the Lord’s words to Isaac’s wife Rebecca, that “two nations are in thy womb…, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder [Esau] shall serve the younger [Jacob]” (Genesis 25.23); for the Jews, from Jacob to David to the Hasmonean kings, almost always showed themselves to be stronger than the Idumeans and often held them in bondage. It was only towards the Coming of Christ that an Idumean, Herod the Great, reversed the relationship by killing the Hasmoneans and becoming the first non-Jewish king of Israel – the event which, according to the prophecy of Jacob, would usher in the reign of the Messiah (Genesis 49.10).

In fact, however, the racial interpretation of the two peoples of the Covenant has only limited validity before the Coming of Christ, and none at all after. For, according to the inspired interpretation of the Apostle Paul, the two peoples – or two covenants, as he calls them - represent, not racial, but spiritual categories: “Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar – for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us

\[170\] St. Philaret, *Zapiski rukovodstvuiuschia k osnovatel’nomu razumeniu Knigi Bytia* (Notes leading to a Basic Understanding of the Book of Genesis), Moscow, 1867, part 2, p. 98.
all.” (Galatians 4.22-26). In other words, Isaac stands for the Christians, both Jewish and Gentile, while Ishmael stands for the Jews who reject Christ. For the Christians, and this includes the Jews before Christ who believed in His Coming, - become through faith in Christ the freeborn heirs of the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, whereas the Jews, by remaining slaves to the Law of Moses and refusing to believe in Christ, show themselves to be the children of the bondwoman, and therefore cannot inherit the promises together with the Christians. Moreover, it can be said of the Jews, as of the men of Ishmael’s race, that ever since they rejected Christ they have become “wild”, with their hands against all, and the hands of all against them, always striving for “freedom” but remaining voluntarily in slavery to the Law (and to their own kahal). It may therefore be that the age-old phenomenon of mutual enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles, of anti-semitism and anti-Gentilism, is prophesied in these verses.

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

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

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

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

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

171 St. Philaret, Zapiski, p. 100.
172 St. Ambrose of Milan, On Isaac, or the Soul.
“Esau and Jacob are twins, of whom the smaller overcomes the larger: in the same day the spiritual Israel was born together with the carnal, but, growing up in secret, is finally revealed and acquires ascendancy over him.

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

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

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

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

As for the wives of Jacob, they also, like Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau, signify the spiritual Israel of the Church and the carnal Israel of the non-believing Jews. Thus Leah, whom Jacob married first, signifies with her weak eyes and fertile womb the weak faith of the carnal Israel and its abundant offspring. (It is precisely blindness that “shall befall Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in” (Romans 11.25)).

But Rachel, whom he married later but loved first and most strongly, signifies the New Testament Church, which the Lord loved first but married later. For the Church of the Gentiles, that of Enoch and Noah and Abraham before his circumcision, existed before that of Moses and David and the Old Testament Prophets. Moreover, Rachel brought forth her children in pain because the New Testament Church brought forth her first children in the blood of martyrdom, and is destined to inherit spiritual blessedness only through suffering – “we must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God” (Acts 14.22).

Christ recognized that the unbelieving Jews were the children of Abraham, saying: “I know that you are Abraham’s seed” (John 8.37). And yet only a few moments later He denied them this honour, saying: “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father… Ye are of your father, the devil” (John 8.39-41, 44). Ultimately, therefore, only Christians belong to the chosen people. As St. Justin the Martyr writes: “The

seed is divided after Jacob and comes down through Judah and Phares and Jesse to David. Now this is surely a sign that some of you Jews are surely the children of Abraham, and that you will share in the inheritance of Christ; but... a greater part of your people... drink of bitter and godless doctrine while you spurn the word of God.”

March 15/28, 2017.

174 St. Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, 34.
13. THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF TOTALITARIANISM

The theories of the early psychoanalysts have been dismissed by most succeeding generations of psychologists as either unverifiable or, in those cases where they have been found capable of testing – simply false. Nevertheless, there is one sphere and one period – the extreme criminality and unprecedented bloodshed of the years 1914-45 – where such theories have remained in vogue as having some partial explanatory value. Let us examine some of these explanations.

Niall Ferguson writes that in his Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), Freud “suggested that ‘beside the instinct preserving the organic substance and binding it into ever larger units, there must exist another in antithesis to this, which would seek to dissolve these units and reinstate their antecedent inorganic state; that is to say, the death instinct as well as Eros.’ It was the interaction of the death instinct and the erotic instinct which he now saw as the key to the human psyche: ‘The tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man, and ... constitutes the most powerful obstacle to culture... Eros... aims at binding together single human individuals, then families, then tribes, races, nations into one great unity, that of humanity. Why this has to be done we do not know; it is simply the work of Eros. These masses of men must be bound to one another libidinally; necessity alone, the advantages of common work, would not hold them together.

‘The natural instinct of aggressiveness in man, the hostility of each against us all of all against each one, opposes this programme of civilization. The instinct of aggression is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct we have found alongside Eros, sharing his rule over the earth. And now, it seems to me, the meaning of the evolution of culture is no longer a riddle to us. It must present to us the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instincts of life and the instincts of destruction.’

“Though it is now fashionable to sneer at Freud, there is something to be said for this interpretation – at least with respect to the behaviour of men at war. Today’s neo-Darwinian genetic determinism may be more scientifically respectable than Freud’s mixture of psychoanalysis and amateur anthropology, but the latter seems better able to explain the readiness of millions of men to spend four and a quarter years killing and being killed. (It is certainly hard to see how the deaths of so many men who had not yet married and fathered children could possibly have served the purpose of Dawkins’s ‘selfish genes’.) In particular, there is a need to take seriously Freud’s elision of the desire to kill – ‘the destructive instinct’ – and the lack of desire not to be killed – the striving of ‘every living being... to work its ruin and reduce life to its primal state of inert matter.’

“There is some evidence to support Freud’s thesis. In June 1914 – before the war in which he would fight had even begun – the ‘Vorticist’ artist Wyndham Lewis wrote: ‘Killing somebody must be the greatest pleasure in existence: either like killing yourself without being interfered with by the instinct of self-preservation – or exterminating the instinct of self-preservation itself.’\textsuperscript{175}

But there is a problem in seeing Thanatos as an integral part of human nature. Orthodox Christian anthropology has much to say about the thinking, desiring and aggressive faculties of man, and sees them all as positive in their original creation. Even aggression is good if it is turned to its original object – evil and the evil one. Only when, as a result of original sin, it is turned to hatred of man and a suicidal urge to destroy oneself, can we say that it has become evil. But this perverted force should not be seen, as the Freudians see it, as an ineradicable part of that human nature which God created in the beginning as “very good”. Moreover, even the perverted faculty can be turned back to the good. For, as St. Maximus the Confessor says: “For him whose mind is continually with God, even his concupiscence is increased above measure into a divinely burning love; and the entire irascible element is changed into divine charity.”176

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How do we explain the mass-worship of the most evil of men by populations previously deemed to be among the most civilized? Moderns refer to a nebulous something called “charisma”. Thus Laurence Rees writes: “Emil Klein, who heard Hitler speak at a beer hall in Munich in the 1920s,.. believes that Hitler ‘gave off such a charisma that people believed whatever he said’.

“What we learn from eye-witnesses like… Klein is that charisma is first and foremost about making a connection between people. No one can be charismatic alone on a desert island. Charisma is formed in a relationship. As Sir Neville Henderson, British ambassador to Berlin in the 1930s, wrote, Hitler ‘owed his success in the struggle for power to the fact that he was the reflection of their [i.e. his supporters’] subconscious mind, and his ability to express in words what that subconscious mind felt that it wanted.’

“It’s a view confirmed by Konrad Heiden, who heard Hitler speak many times in the 1920s: ‘His speeches begin always with deep pessimism and end in overjoyed redemption, a triumphant happy ending; often they can be refuted by reason, but they follow the far mightier logic of the subconscious, which no refutation can touch… Hitler has given speech to the speechless terror of the modern mass…”177

However, this is too vague – and too simple. The fact is that for most of their careers both Stalin and Hitler were considered singularly lacking in charisma. Stalin spoke with a heavy Georgian accent and was pockmarked. As for the “Bavarian corporal”, as Hindenburg called him, he was widely despised. And as late as 1928 the Nazis polled just 2.6 per cent of the German electorate.

“It took the Wall Street Crash and the dire economic crisis of the early 1930s to make millions of Germans responsive to Hitler’s appeal. Suddenly, to people like student Jutta Ruediger, Hitler’s call for a national resurgence made him seem like ‘the bringer of salvation’. So much so that by 1932 the Nazis were suddenly the

176 St. Maximus the Confessor, Second Century on Charity, 48.
biggest political party in Germany... Hitler was dismissed as a peripheral figure in 1928, yet lauded by millions in 1933. What changed was not Hitler, but the situation. Economic catastrophe made huge numbers of Germans seek a charismatic ‘saviour’…’”\textsuperscript{178}

“… But then Hitler and the Nazis seemed to hit a brick wall – in the shape of President Hindenburg. State Secretary Otto Meissner reported that Hindenburg said to Hitler on 13 August 1932: ‘He [i.e. Hindenburg] could not justify before God, before his conscience or before the Fatherland, the transfer of the whole authority of government to a single party, especially to a party that was biased against people who had different views from their own.’

“In this crucial period between Hindenburg’s rejection of Hitler’s bid for the chancellorship of Germany, and his final appointment as chancellor in January 1933, two different perceptions of Hitler’s charisma came together... Hitler, during these months, had never been more impressive to devoted followers like Joseph Goebbels. On 13 August 1932, Hitler discussed the consequences of Hindenburg’s rejection with his Nazi colleagues. ‘Hitler holds his nerve,’ recorded Goebbels in his diary. ‘He stands above the machinations. So I love him.’ Hitler exuded confidence that all would come right…”\textsuperscript{179}

And it did – for a time... So it was not simply dire economic circumstances, and the need for a saviour from them, but also overweening self-confidence, that went into the making of Hitler’s “charisma”. And yet this is still not enough to explain his rise. Freud considered it too simple to explain the worship of the masses for their totalitarian leaders simply as the consequence of fear of persecution, or because of political or economic motives. That would be to treat the matter in “far too rational a manner... Libidinal ties are what characterize a group”.\textsuperscript{180}

It is the love of the people for their leader that creates the group and the relationships within the group, which disappear “at the same time as the leader”.\textsuperscript{181} (This was true of Nazism, but less so of Stalinism.) “The credulity of love,” said Freud, “is the most fundamental source of authority”.\textsuperscript{182}

Hitler himself came to a similar conclusion about his powers, emphasizing that the masses should stop thinking and surrender themselves to the power of instinct: “The masses are like an animal that obeys its instincts. They do not reach conclusions by reasoning... At a mass meeting, thought is eliminated... Mastery always means the transmission of a stronger will to a weaker one, [which follows] something in the nature of a physical or biological law.”\textsuperscript{183}

\textsuperscript{178} Rees, op. cit., pp. 21-22, 24.
\textsuperscript{179} Rees, op. cit., p. 22.
\textsuperscript{180} Freud, Group Psychology, p. 103; in Philip Rieff, Freud; The Mind of the Moralist, University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 233.
\textsuperscript{181} Freud, Group Psychology, p. 94; in Rieff, op. cit., p. 235.
\textsuperscript{182} Freud, Three Essays, p. 150; in Rieff, op. cit., p. 237.
Hitler certainly believed in such a law. He refused to marry his mistress, Eva Braun, because he considered that a married man, like a married movie star, exercised less of a libidinal power over his worshippers. Thus when Hitler entered Vienna in 1938, “the whole city behaved like an aroused woman, vibrating, writhing, moaning and sighing lustfully for orgasm’, wrote one witness, George Clare, who stated that this was no purple passage but an ‘exact description’.\(^{184}\)

Certainly, it seems impossible to explain the passionate love of the Nazi Germans or Soviet Russians for their leaders without invoking some such deep psychological motive – stirred up and exploited by the demonic powers of the spirit world. Let us consider, for example, the quasi-hypnotic effect that Hitler had on the German masses.

The 1934 Nuremberg rally, writes Martin Gilbert, “had seemed to Hitler the ideal vehicle for nationwide propaganda, using documentary film with artistic presentation. He entrusted this task to a former actress and fiction film maker, Leni Riefenstahl, who worked to turn the 1934 rally into an epic paean of praise for the ‘Leader’. Her film *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willes)* was finished in 1935, and gave German audiences an almost mystical view of Hitler’s charismatic appeal: the film opens with Hitler in an aeroplane flying to Nuremberg, and descending through the clouds to the city and the rally, where the Nazi Party officials proclaim repeatedly: ‘Hitler is Germany, the Party is Germany, thus Germany is Hitler and the Party is Germany’. The film historian Charles Musser writes: ‘The exchange of looks and salutes creates a bond of obedience between these different levels, one in which the identity of the self is only found through identifying with the nation and the Party. In the process, Hitler and the various troops are *eroticized* by Riefenstahl’s adoring vision.’\(^{185}\)

We see a similar process taking place in Stalinist Russia. “Consider this diary entry written by a witness of Stalin’s visit to a young communist congress in April 1936: ‘And HE stood, a little weary, pensive and stately. One could feel the tremendous habit of power, the force of it, and at the same time something feminine and soft. I look about: Everybody had fallen in love with this gentle, inspired, laughing face. To see him, simply to see him, was happiness for all of us’.\(^{186}\) Again, a Lithuanian writer wrote: “I approached Stalin’s portrait, took it off the wall, placed it on the table and, resting my head in my hands, I gazed and meditated. What should I do? The Leader’s face, as always so serene, his eyes so clear-sighted, they penetrated into the distance. It seems that his penetrating look pierces my little room and goes out to embrace the entire globe... With my every fibre, every nerve, every drop of blood I feel that, at this moment, nothing exists in this entire world but this dear and beloved face.”\(^{187}\)

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\(^{186}\) Overy, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

The masses' eroticization of their leaders went together with their own brutalization - eros with thanatos. For, as Richard Pipes writes, “perhaps the most fundamental affinity among the three totalitarian movements lay in the realm of psychology: Communism, Fascism and National Socialism exacerbated and exploited popular resentments – class, racial, and ethnic – to win mass support and to reinforce the claim that they, not the democratically elected governments, expressed the true will of the people. All three appealed to the emotion of hate.” Thus anti-war films, such as Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*, were mocked in Germany, and violence and hardness were exalted over tenderness and compassion. “Hitler rejected ‘the loathsome humanitarian morality’, which he followed Nietzsche in seeing as a mask for people’s defects: ‘In the end, only the urge for self-preservation can conquer. Beneath it is so-called humanity, the expression of a mixture of stupidity, cowardice, and know-it-all conceit, will melt like snow in the March sun. Mankind has grown great in eternal struggle, and only in eternal peace does it perish.’”

The same moral revaluation, the same emphasis on violence and steely hardness (Stalin comes from the Russian word for “steel”) was taking place in Stalinist Russia. Thus “Nadezhda Mandelstam described how ‘Thou shalt not kill’ was identified with ‘bourgeois’ morality: ‘A number of terms such as ‘honour’ and ‘conscience’ went out of use at this time – concepts like these were easily discredited, now the right formula had been found.’ She noticed that people were going through a metamorphosis: ‘a process of turning into wood – that is what comes over those who lose their sense of values’.”

*Psychoanalysis attributes a cardinal importance to childhood conflicts and traumas in the explanation of behaviour. Thus Erich Fromm argued that Stalin, like Hitler, was a narcissist. As Alan Bullock writes: “‘Narcissism’ is a concept originally formulated by Freud in relation to early infancy, but one which is now accepted more broadly to describe a personality disorder in which the natural development of relationships to the external world has failed to take place. In such a state only the person himself, his needs, feelings and thoughts, everything and everybody pertaining to him are experienced as fully real, while everybody and everything else lacks reality or interest.

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

“So far psychiatrists have paid much less attention to Stalin than to Hitler. Lack of evidence is part of the reason. There has been no parallel in the case of the Soviet

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Union to the capture of documents and interrogation of witnesses that followed the defeat of Germany. But more important is the striking contrast in temperament and style between the two men: the flamboyant Hitler, displaying a lack of restraint and extravagance of speech which for long made it difficult for many to take him seriously, in contrast to the reserved Stalin, who owed his rise to power to his success, not in exploiting, but in concealing his personality, and was underestimated for the opposite reason – because many failed to recognize his ambition and ruthlessness. Nor surprisingly, it is the first rather than the second who has caught the psychiatrists’ attention. All the more interesting then is the suggestion that underlying the contrast there was a common narcissistic obsession with themselves.

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

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

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And yet Donald Rayfield may be right that “psychopaths of Stalin’s order arise so rarely in history that forensic psychiatry has few insights to offer” 192. In such cases, psychiatry needs to be supplemented with demonology, and in the essentially religious idea that a nation that has abandoned its faith and given in to the most primitive passions of envy, lust and hatred will be easily invaded and taken over by Satan.

The demonic nature of the Russian revolution hardly needs demonstrating. Many reported that the coming of Soviet power was as if the country had been invaded by demons, and there were many incidents in which demonic activity was almost palpable. Thus the Catacomb Christian P.M. writes: “I want to tell about the miracles of God of which I was a witness. In our village they closed the church and made it into a club. And then they declared that they would be showing a film – this was the first opening of the club. In the church everything was as it had been before, even the iconostasis was standing with its icons. They put in benches, hung up a screen and began to show the film. About half an hour passed, and then suddenly the people began to shout. Those who were at the back jumped up and rushed towards the exit, while those in front fell on the floor or crawled under the benches. What had happened? As many people later recounted, the holy Great Martyr George came out of an icon that was on the iconostasis on a horse, and taking a spear, galloped at the people, who began to flee in fear. But that was not the end of it. Somehow they got at any rate some of the people together again and continued to show the film. It was being shown by a mechanic and his assistant. And suddenly up in the choir they began to sing the Cherubic hymn – and so loudly that the film was scarcely audible. At that point they decided that some believers had climbed up and wanted to interrupt the showing of the film. So about seven members of the Komsomol and the assistant climbed up in order to catch them all and bring them down. But then they said that when they had climbed up the stairs the singing stopped, and they rejoiced – the believers had got frightened and fallen silent. But when they climbed up into the choir they saw that it was empty. They stood in bewilderment and could not understand how the singers could have run away. And then suddenly in the midst of them unseen singers began to sing the Cherubic hymn. Pursued by an unknown fear, they rushed to get out, not knowing the way, pushing and shoving each other. The assistant mechanic, who was running in front, suddenly fell down, and everyone ran over him since there was no other way because of the narrowness of the place. Having run down, they rushed out into the street. Now the showing was finally abandoned. The assistant mechanic was ill for a month and died, while the mechanic left, and nobody wanted to go to work in the club as a mechanic for any money. So from that time they stopped having a cinema in it.”

Similar incidents were reported in Nazi Germany. Thus “two British guests at a Hitler rally in Berlin in 1934, seated in a stadium just feet behind him, watched him captivate his listeners with the familiar rising passion and jarring voice. ‘Then an amazing thing happened,’ continued the account: ‘[we] both saw a blue flash of lightning come out of Hitler’s back… We were surprised that those of us close behind Hitler had not all been struck dead.’ The two men afterwards discussed whether Hitler was actually possessed at certain moments by the Devil: ‘We came to the conclusion that he was.’”

Freud’s former disciple Karl Jung declared in 1945 that the cause of the German people’s surrender to Nazism was demon-possession: “Germany has always been a country of psychological catastrophes: the Reformation, the peasant and religious

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[30-year] wars. Under the National Socialists the pressure of the demons increased to such an extent that human beings that fell under their power were turned into sleep-walking super-men, the first of whom was Hitler, who infected all the others with the same. All the Nazi leaders were possessed in the literal sense of the word... Ten percent of the German population today is hopelessly psychopathic...”

This demonic psychopathy had deep roots in German history. Already in the 1840s the German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine wrote: “A drama will be enacted in Germany compared with which the French Revolution will seem like a harmless idyll. Christianity may have restrained the martial ardour of the Teutons for a time, but it did not destroy it. Now that the restraining talisman, the cross, has rotted away, the old frenzied madness will break out again.”

Indeed: when the Cross rots away in the hands of hypocritical and faithless Christians, then no amount of civilization or art or science or rationality will save a people from complete possession by the enemy of mankind...

March 25/ April 7, 2017.
Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God.

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14. THE TERROR OF DOUBT

Today is the Sunday of “Antipascha” – literally, the Sunday “opposite” or “on the other side of” Pascha. Having rejoiced for the whole week in the Resurrection of Christ, we contemplate what it would be like if things were the opposite from what they are, if we did not have this joy in our faith, as if Christ were not risen, as if we were on the other side of the moon of hope, in the darkness of unbelief. The Apostle Thomas was in this black abyss. While the apostles and the holy women were rejoicing around him, he felt nothing in his soul. He was alone, dark and cold in spirit; he was still suffering the profound sorrow of the loss of his deeply beloved Master. He would, of course, have loved to believe as his fellow apostles believed - but he couldn’t.

What does this tell us? First of all it tells us that faith is a gift of God… There were “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1.3) of the Resurrection of Christ: the empty tomb, the graveclothes, the testimony of the soldiers, the testimony of the holy women, the testimony of Peter, the testimony of Luke and Cleophas. There was no reason to doubt these testimonies. If we know people to be reliable, and if they are unanimous in their testimony, a testimony that points to only one possible conclusion, it is not reasonable to doubt. Faith is, ultimately, rational; it is not blind; it is not absurd, even if it may be surprising and contrary to entrenched modes of thought. We do not have to give up our reasoning powers in order to believe. On the contrary, everything then pointed to the Resurrection of Christ, as it continues to point to it now. But reason, while it points us in a certain direction, to a certain destination, does not by itself take us all the way to that destination. As in Michelangelo’s famous painting in the Sistine chapel, where Adam’s outstretched finger reaches out for, but does not quite reach, the outstretched finger of God, our reasoning powers take us only so far in reaching the truth of God. There is a gap. And that gap can only be filled by a gift, the gift of the Spirit of truth, “the finger of God”, as St. Gregory of Nyssa calls Him. That is the gift of faith, that spark of electricity that jumps the gap and makes the connection. And God had not yet given Thomas the gift of faith.

Secondly, there are reasons why some people receive faith and others don’t, and why some people receive faith and keep it, while others receive it and then lose it. Although all the apostles except John fled at the time of the crucifixion, showing their lack of faith and courage, the fall was deepest for two of them: Peter and Thomas. Peter, because he had not only run away, but had even betrayed Christ – the same Christ Whom he had promised he would never betray. And Thomas, who had exhorted the others to go and die together with Christ, but then had run away to safety. Of course, the boasts of Peter and Thomas were not entirely empty bravado. They were both great men who showed their courage and their love for Christ in abundance later in life. But they had trusted in their own strength and not in God’s. And therefore God had allowed them to fall.

But there was a difference between the two. Peter repented of his fall immediately, weeping bitter tears of sorrow. And in token of his genuine and deep repentance the Resurrected Lord had made a special appearance to Peter… But we do not read this of Thomas. Did he fail to repent? We do not know. In any case, in contrast even with Peter, he was still in a dark place “on the other side” of Pascha…
But then the Spirit of truth placed an idea of genius into his mind, an experimental test of the Resurrection which, if passed, would convince not only Thomas but all later generations of reasonable men.

What do fallen men believe in most of all? The evidence of their senses? But which is the most reliable of the senses? Sight? No – a mirage can deceive a thirsty man in the desert when there is in fact no water there. Hearing? No – a recording can deceive a man into believing that he is hearing a living voice, when it is in fact dead. The most reliable – if also the crudest – is the sense of touch. So Thomas, inspired by God, demanded that he be able to perform an empirical, scientific experiment on the Body of Christ: if he could touch the print of the nails, and put his hand into the wound in His side, He would believe that He was not merely a man inspired by God, but the God-man. The Lord took him up on his “gamble”. He entered through the locked doors – another proof of the resurrection – and allowed Thomas to prove through the sense of touch that Christ is risen indeed, not only in spirit, but also in body, a body of flesh and bones. And so he uttered the triumphant words of undoubting faith: “My Lord and my God”...

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But let us return to the subject of doubt. Just as the foundation of all good is faith, so the root of all evil is doubt. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, who wrote a university thesis on the subject of the Resurrection of Christ as the Foundation of the Apostolic Faith, declares that there is no sorrier sight that “when a created man listens to the words of the Creator in the Gospel, and doubts them.

“Great Moses only once doubted God’s word, and he was therefore punished by being forbidden to enter the land to which he had been travelling for forty years. The Prophet Zacharias did not believe the words of the Archangel Gabriel about the birth of John the Forerunner, and was struck dumb at that moment.

“How dreadful also was the punishment given for the first doubt of our forefathers! Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise because they doubted God’s word and believed their own eyes; they believed themselves and the devil.”

“Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11.6), so we must flee doubt like the devil himself and stir up in ourselves every opportunity to strengthen our faith. Above all, we must strengthen our faith in the Resurrection of Christ. For, as St. Paul says, “If Christ is not risen, your faith is in vain, you are still in your sins” (I Corinthians 15.17).

Why is this so? Because when Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Trinity, it witnessed that His Sacrifice on Golgotha for the sins of the whole world had been accepted by God. Just as God witnessed by fire that the sacrifice of Abel was pleasing to Him, but rejected the sacrifice of Cain; and just as He witnessed by fire that the sacrifice of Elijah was pleasing to Him, but not the sacrifice of the

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priests of Baal, so He witnessed that the sacrifice of Christ on Golgotha was pleasing to him by the descent of the Holy Fire into the Holy Sepulchre, raising up the Temple of His Body after three days – while the veil of the Jewish temple was rent in twain and the fire of the Shekinah departed from it, never to return again...

But much more is signified by the Resurrection of Christ. Above all, it signifies that every word of Christ our Risen God is true, and that we have no reason to doubt it in any way. For by prophesying beforehand that He would accomplish this divine and most supernatural of acts, He not only confirmed all the words of the prophets who prophesied it hundreds of years before. He showed that He Himself spoke through the prophets, and that He Himself is God, Who must therefore be believed in everything, whatever any mere man may say or do to try and undermine His word. For “indeed, let God be true and every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That Thou mayest be justified in Thy word, and mayest overcome when Thou art judged’” (Romans 3.4).

As Bishop Nikolai puts it: “Man’s doubt in Christ is the ultimate revelation of man’s sickness in the great hospital of the world. The world has no medicine for this sickness, for the risen Christ is the only medicine, and if a man will not take it, how can he be healed?

“The Lord Jesus confirmed the revelation of truth by His conquest of death as the risen Lord. If a man does not believe in His Resurrection from the dead, how can he believe all the rest that He said and did? What mind could understand that He did indeed raise the dead, were He to have remained in the grave and seen corruption? What tongue could have confessed that His words were the words of life, were His life to have been snuffed out on the Cross on Golgotha?

“Oh, my brethren, the Lord has risen and is alive! What sort of further proof can be used when this is the most proven fact in the history of the world! God’s providence so ordained this, in His love for mankind…”

Sunday of Antipascha.

197 Velimirovich, op. cit., p. 215.
15. WHAT DOES “SON OF GOD” MEAN?

Most Western Christians today are Arians; that is, they believe that Christ is not God, not the Creator, but a man only, a mere creature, albeit a very exalted one. They allow that He is “the Son of God”, but they understand that term in a purely honorific manner; they do not believe that, as the Son of God, He is as much God as the Father is – “true God of true God”, as the Creed says. The Gospel of John, which we read during this Paschal period, was written precisely in order to refute this heresy. As we read on the First Sunday of Pascha: “In the beginning was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God… And the Word was made flesh” (John 1.1, 14).

Today’s Gospel expounds this truth with particular clarity: “The Jews sought to kill Him… because He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (John 5.18). In other words, the Jews understood the term “Son of God”, not in the honorific sense used by Western Christians today, but in the strict dogmatic sense that the Son of God is God in the same sense that the Father is God. “Then Jesus answered them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you: the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does, and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgement to the Son.” (John 5.19-22).

There is no greater power than the power to give life, to raise from the dead, and the power to judge the living and the dead. Both of these powers the Son claims to have in exactly the same measure as the Father, having them in Himself as part of His nature. In fact, it is He that will judge the living and the dead, not the Father – because He is man as well as God.

“That all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, Who sent Him” (John 5.23). “Therefore,” comments St. Theophylact of Bulgaria, “we must honour Him exactly as we honour the Father. This saying of Christ is a rebuke to the Arians. If they imagine they honour the Son as a mere creature, the Lord’s words compel them to honour the Father as a creature as well. Truly, the man who ‘honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father’! When someone claims that the Son is a creature superior to all others, and thinks that he pleases the Son with such false and empty honour, that man in fact dishonours the Father, Who sent the Son.” 198 As John says in another place: “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also” (I John 2.25).

What follows from this?

First, that the Jews, who deny the Son do not have the Father either – they are without God.

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198 St. Theophylact, Commentary on John.
Secondly, that the Muslims, who honour the Son in a purely honorific way without giving Him the same honour as to the Father, do not have the Father either – they are without God.

Thirdly, that the contemporary Christians who honour the Son in a purely honorific way without giving Him the same honour as to the Father, do not have the Father either – they are without God.

Fourthly, that the contemporary Orthodox Christians who, through membership of the World Council of Churches, honour the Jews, the Muslims and the heretical Christians who do not acknowledge the Divinity of Christ, are thereby dishonouring both Him and the Father – they are without God.

April 13/26, 2017.
One of the most striking facts of Christ’s ministry on earth was the praises He bestowed on non-Jews by comparison with the reproaches and threats He delivered to Jews. Speaking of the Roman centurion, He said that He “had not seen such great faith, no, not in Israel” (Matthew 8.10). He praised the Syro-Phoenician woman for her humility. And He had a long conversation with a Samaritan woman (John 4) that led to the conversion and baptism of most of that nation (Acts 8.5-25). In pondering why this should be so, it is natural to suppose that the Lord wanted to give a prophetic sign towards the future, towards the fact that many Gentiles would receive the Gospel while most of the Jews would reject it. Undoubtedly this is true. But we can go deeper: we may suppose that the Lord wanted to deliver a warning to the people of God – not only in His, but in every age – not to vaunt themselves over their unenlightened neighbours.

The great Serbian bishop, St. Nikolai Velimirovich, wrote in his Homily on the Sunday of the Samaritan woman: “Providence desired to create this opportunity for our instruction, so that we, when we see our enemy in need, will help him. And when our nation is at enmity with neighbouring peoples, we as men dare not extend this enmity to every man from that nation, but it is our duty, in a given situation, to help every man in need, with no consideration of whether he belongs to our nation or not.

“‘Then saith the woman of Samaria to Him: ‘How is that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.’ This woman held the view, common in those days, that a man must hate not only an enemy nation but also every individual in that nation. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Lord marked the hatred of the Jews for the Samaritans, and this event makes the hatred of the Samaritans for the Jews very clear. In order to break down the barriers of hatred between one nation and another, it is necessary first to break down the barriers of hatred between one man and another. This is the only rational way to heal the human race of the great sickness of mutual hatred.”

Again St. Nikolai wrote: “We sin if we see it as an obligation to hate those whom our relatives hate. This hatred passes into us like a family disease.” Some perpetuate race hatred on the pretence that in this way they are being loyal to God’s people and the true faith. But the Lord shows by His words and His actions that this is not so. It is perfectly possible to be a genuine patriot and a true believer while showing love for the stranger.

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Let us see how the Lord does this. First, when the Samaritan woman points out that by talking to her He is not acting with typical Jewish haughtiness, He does not justify Himself; He is interested neither in perpetuating the hostility of the Jews towards the Samaritans nor in explaining why He acts differently. Instead He offers

something good, something He knows she will be interested in having: living water.

Secondly, when she tries to goad Him into an argument on territorial rights by referring to “our” father Jacob and his ownership of the well, He does not take the bait. He knows that this is futile. Of course, He could argue that Jacob is not “your” father, but ours, insofar as he was a Jew and a true believer, whereas the Samaritans were of mixed race and mixed religion, worshipping not only the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but also the false gods and goddesses of the Assyrians and Babylonians. On the other hand, the Lord as God had Himself taken Samaria out of the hands of the Jews in punishment of their sins and delivered it into the hands of the Samaritans. So, as in almost all territorial disputes between nations, there were arguments on both sides...

In any case, the Lord is not interested in arguments about material things - money and land, but in spiritual matters. So he returns to the topic that will really benefit her: living water. Only now He points out that He is not talking about material water, but about spiritual water, about the Holy Spirit that quenches the soul’s thirst forever.

At this point, the usual, materialistic person would probably have lost interest in the conversation. But the Samaritan woman is intrigued - both by Him and by His proffered gift. However, she is not yet fully “hooked”. So the Lord suddenly displays His prophetic knowledge: he reveals her personal life in all its squalor... She, to her credit, is not offended by this: she recognizes that He is a prophet and is therefore now ready for the real revelation - that he is the Messiah that both Jews and Samaritans have been waiting for.

And then the Lord takes her beyond the bound, not only of Samaritan but also of Jewish religion, revealing to her the limitations of the Old Testament, which decreed that God should be worshipped only in the temple at Jerusalem. Of course, there was a purpose in that decree: the uniqueness of the temple at Jerusalem reflected the uniqueness of the true religion, and the commandment to worship only in Jerusalem helped protect the people from the “ecumenism” that so prevailed in the pagan Gentile world. And this in turn meant that those who worshipped other gods in other places did not know what they worshipped; for “salvation is of the Jews”. However, that salvation does not consist in rites carried out in a certain way in a certain place; that salvation consists in Christ Himself, Who is a Jew, but who has also come to save the Samaritans and all other peoples. “For in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek”.

The true worship, Christ reveals, is not confined in time or space, nor defined by rite or race. Those who wish to worship God must worship Him “in spirit and in truth” – and that worship is available to all peoples and in all places. In this way Christ definitively excludes both ecumenism – for “salvation is [only] of the Jews”, insofar as Christ the Saviour is a Jew – and nationalism – for the true worshippers will worship not, or not primarily, in a temple made by hands or in a particular national culture, but “in spirit and in truth”.

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It is not always realized how close are the apparent opposites of ecumenism and nationalism, whether of the ancient or modern types, and how aversion from the one often leads to the other. Thus ancient Gentile paganism was ecumenist; that is, it accepted simultaneously many different gods and “truths”, even though they were incompatible with each other. Jewish nationalism, on the other hand, believed that there is only one God and one Truth. As such, it was definitely superior to paganism. However, Jewish national pride corrupted this truth and degraded this real superiority by insisting that since the one God and the one Truth had been revealed exclusively to the Jews, they must be intrinsically superior to all the Gentile nations—superior, that is, not because of their faith and only because of their faith, but because they were superior to all other nations by nature. And in time this led to the belief, not just that salvation is only of the Jews, but also only for the Jews, because only they were worthy of it. Of course, there were Gentile converts to Judaism (especially in the last centuries before Christ). But increasingly these became converted, not to the universalist faith of the Old Testament, but to the corrupt, nationalist faith of Pharisaic Judaism. The Lord spoke about these Gentile converts to nationalistic Judaism when He said: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you traverse land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves” (Matthew 23.15).

In His conversation with the Samaritan woman, the Lord not only refuted the pagan ecumenism of the Samaritans, insisting that there was only one true faith, that of Israel, not Samaria. He also refuted the proud nationalism of the Pharisees, who cared not a jot for the salvation of the Samaritans or any non-Jews, but only for the glory of their sect and nation. He said that true worship of God consists in neither heretical extreme but in worship “in spirit and in truth” — “in spirit” to distinguish it from the evil spirit of the Pharisees, and “in truth” to distinguish it from the indifference to truth of the Samaritans.

Three facts confirm Christ’s anti-nationalist message. The first is that in His thirst for true worshippers, who will worship the Holy Trinity in spirit and in truth, He was prepared to cast off even His own nation, the nation of the Jews, who in their great majority had rejected Him and became guilty of His death. And so when Christ died on Golgotha, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the visible sign of God’s presence, the Shekinah, departed in order that He should find a more worthy habitation among the Gentiles.

Secondly, although He was utterly devoted to His nation, a true patriot if ever there was one, Christ consciously takes upon Himself the shame and stigma associated with the word “Samaritan”. When the Jews said of Him: “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” (John 8.48), it is remarkable that Christ strongly denies that He has a demon, but says nothing about His being a Samaritan. Indeed, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37), it is clear that He is the Good Samaritan, who saved the man fallen among thieves when the representatives of the People of God—the priest and the Levite—passed by on the other side...

Thirdly, Christ was killed because He refused to become a nationalist. Not only did He recognize and confirm the power of the pagan Romans over the Jews: He rejected
their nationalist dreams of overthrowing the Roman yoke. And for that He was killed; for “if we let Him alone,” said the Pharisees, “everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation” (John 11.48) – in other words, our dreams of a nationalist revolution will be destroyed.

“On coming into the world,” wrote the penitent ex-revolutionary L.A. Tikhomirov, “the Saviour Jesus Christ as a man loved his fatherland, Judaea, no less than the Pharisees. He was thinking of the great role of his fatherland in the destinies of the world and mankind no less than the Pharisees, the zealots and the other nationalists. On approaching Jerusalem (during His triumphal entry) He wept and said: ‘Oh, if only thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!’…, and recalling the coming destruction of the city, He added: ‘because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation’ (Luke 19.41, 44). ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem… which killest… them that are sent to thee!’ He said a little earlier, ‘how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and yet would not!’ (Luke 13.34). What would have happened if the Jews at that decisive moment had accepted the true Messiah? Israel would have become the spiritual head of the whole world, the beloved guide of mankind. At that very time Philo of Alexandria wrote that ‘the Israelites have received the mission to serve as priests and prophets for the whole world, to instruct it in the truth, and in particular the pure knowledge of God’. If they had recognized this truth in full measure, then the coming of the Saviour would have confirmed forever that great mission. But ‘the spirit of the prophets’ turned out to be by no means so strong in Jewry, and its leaders repeated the role of Esau: they gave away the right of the firstborn for a mess of pottage.

“Nevertheless we must not forget that if the nationalist hatred for the Kingdom of God, manifested outside tribal conditions, was expressed in the murder of the Saviour of the world, all His disciples who brought the good news of the Kingdom, all His first followers and a multitude of the first members of the Church to all the ends of the Roman empire were Jews by nationality. The greatest interpreter of the spiritual meaning of the idea of ‘the children of Abraham’ was the pure-blooded Jew and Pharisee, the Apostle Paul. He was a Jew by blood, but through the prophetic spirit turned out to be the ideological director of the world to that place where ‘there is neither Jew nor Greek’.”

Let us turn, then, to the teaching of St. Paul on this subject; for not only does he insist, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, that the Gentiles have equal access to the Kingdom with the Jews: he also brings the Lord’s teaching on Jews and Gentiles “up to date”, as it were. For while, in the Lord’s time the Jews were still the People of God, and subject to the temptation of nationalism, St. Paul is speaking in a time when the reverse is the case, when the People of God are now the Churches of the Gentiles, and it is they who are particularly subject to the temptation of nationalism. Thus in case the Christian Gentiles should become puffed up by their new status, he reminds them that at the end of time the cast-off Jews will be grafted back onto the tree of the faith. “For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive

201 Tikhomirov, Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii (The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, p. 142.
tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of
the olive tree. Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the
root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might
be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by
faith. Be not highminded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take
heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God:
on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his
goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in
unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert
cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature
into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be
grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be
ignorant of this mystery, that lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that
blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.
And so the whole of Israel will be saved…” (Romans 11.16-26).

Although with his usual tact the apostle emphasizes a positive message here – the
fact that, in the last times, Jews and Gentiles will be united in one Church, which he
calls “the whole of Israel”, - it cannot be denied that there is a darker, more
threatening aspect to his meaning. He is warning that “the first will be last and the
last first”: just as the Jews were cast out from being the Chosen People to make way
for you, so you Gentile Christians could be cast out in order to make way for the
penitent Jews into the Church. “The fullness of the Gentiles” refers to the last harvest
of Gentile Christians, after which there will be no more Gentile Christian generations.
Their Gentile nationalism could cast them out. “So be not highminded, but fear.”

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Let us now apply this teaching to our own generation...

No Orthodox Christian who impartially studies the contemporary state of the
Orthodox Church today can deny, on the one hand, that the Orthodox Church today
is in a catastrophic condition, and on the other, that there is a pernicious influence on
it of what we may call “Orthodox nationalism”. In almost all the Orthodox nations
we see that anti-semitism which St. Paul spoke about. But anti-semitism is only one
aspect of this evil phenomenon; it is not only above the Jews that the contemporary
Orthodox vaunt themselves, but also above many heterodox Gentile nations –
especially the Americans. Thus almost all the ills of contemporary Orthodox nations
are attributed – often with extraordinary vehemence and hatred – to the CIA, NATO
or some other American or American-led agency. The idea that the root causes of our
tragedies could lie in ourselves, in our contempt for the purity of our Orthodox faith
(hence the prevalence of abominable heresies such as ecumenism, sergianism,
evolutionism, Romanideanism, etc.) and equally abominable immoralities (like
abortion and fornication), which deprive the people of the grace to worship God “in
spirit and truth” - appears to be only rarely and feebly recognized by the
contemporary Orthodox. But perhaps an even more fundamental reason for this
pride and hardness of heart is (Pseudo-) Orthodox nationalism. By this we do not mean
that godly and truly Orthodox nationalism manifested by such heroes of the faith as
St. Tamara of Georgia, St. Alexander Nevsky and St. Lazarus of Serbia, who
defended their Orthodox nations against invaders from outside. We mean that *nationalism of the Pharisees*, who cared, not for the true Messiah living in their midst, whom in reality they hated, but only about their own “place and nation”. How many “Orthodox” leaders, for the sake of that “place and nation”, have “repeated the role of Esau, giving away the right of the firstborn for a mess of pottage”!

Let us take some examples. No Orthodox nation prides itself on its culture, and on its superiority to western culture more than the Greeks. And yet in both Church and State the leadership of the Greeks are thoroughly western: in the Church, it is the extreme ecumenist Bartholomew of Constantinople, and in the State is the Marxist Alexis Tsipras. Why don’t the Greeks cast out their false leaders? Then they would have something to boast about! But just as the Pharisees justified themselves by saying they were the sons of Abraham, so the Greeks justify themselves by their descent from the great Greeks of the past. But the Lord does not accept such a justification: just as the Jews were indeed descended from Abraham, but did not do the works of Abraham, so the Greeks, while descended from the Greek saints, do not do the works of those saints, and therefore will be cast out.

Take another example: the Russians. Because of their recent history as a multinational empire carrying the universalist message of the Gospel to all the eastern peoples, the Russians before the revolution, and for a long time after, were less inclined to crude nationalism than the Balkan Orthodox nations. But Putin has induced a vile and totally unjustified nationalism into them. Like the Greeks, the Russians leadership in both Church and State is thoroughly western: in the Church it is the extreme ecumenist and KGB agent Patriarch Cyril of Moscow, and in the State it is, of course, the neo-Soviet and neo-Fascist Putin. The hypocrisy of these leaders’ anti-western rhetoric is breath-taking: they unite in their condemnation of “Eurosodom”, and yet their Church hierarchy is penetrated through and through by sodomy – according to Deacon Andrei Kuraiev, 50 out of the 300 bishops, according to Fr. Gleb Yakunin – 250! Again, Patriarch Cyril considers himself purer in faith than Bartholomew of Constantinople, refusing to be present at the recent notorious Council of Crete. And yet last year had a very cordial meeting with the Pope and his good friend Fidel Castro in Cuba – all communist comrades together!

In 1992 the heads of all the Local Orthodox Churches meeting in Constantinople officially renounced proselytism among the western heretics. What an apocalyptic betrayal, unheard of in Orthodox Christian history! As for missionary work among the Muslims, this is practically unheard of now... Of course, the main cause of this decision was ecumenism. But, as we have seen, ecumenism and nationalism are closely related. It is possible to be simultaneously an extreme ecumenist and an extreme nationalist. A clear example is Patriarch Cyril of Moscow: a long-time admirer of the Vatican and participant in the World Council of Churches, on the one hand, and a vicious exponent of Russian (or perhaps we should call it neo-Soviet) nationalism, on the other. So besides ecumenism, there is another, perhaps even deeper cause: *Pseudo-Orthodox Nationalism*. For just as the Jews despised the Samaritans and made no real effort to convert them to the true faith, so many Orthodox Christians today secretly – or, to judge from Facebook, not so secretly – hate

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202 This has now been statistically demonstrated by polls carried out by the Pew Research Center. See “Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe”, May 10, 2017.
the westerners and are not at all interested in bringing them to Orthodoxy, of which they consider them to be either unworthy or incapable of understanding.

We have used the word “hatred”. But the refusal to convert the heretics to Orthodoxy may be motivated, not by an emotional kind of hatred, but simply by indifference. An Orthodox Englishman was in an English city he did not know on a Sunday, and decided to find an Orthodox church. Seeing a cupola in the distance, he headed for it. A priest was sitting outside the door of the church sunning himself. He stopped the Englishman as he was going into the church and inquired what he was doing. Our parishioner explained that he wanted to go to church because he was Orthodox. The priest (in a polite way) said: “But you are English”. “Yes,” he replied, “but I am also Orthodox.” “But my son, Orthodoxy is for Greeks and Russians, not the English.” And then he pointed him to an Anglican church in the distance...

Was this ecumenism or nationalism? It matters not. The important point is that the English Orthodox Christian was turned away because he had the wrong genes or culture. Many contemporary Orthodox seem to think that their nation, whatever its sins, even those against the faith, will always remain Orthodox, and therefore superior to the heterodox. It is as if they believe in a certain Orthodox gene, which guarantees them salvation as a kind of inalienable heritage from generation to generation. But we must never forget that Orthodoxy is not our genes, but “in spirit and in truth”. St. John the Baptist warned the Pharisees not to rely on their physical descent from Abraham - God can raise sons of Abraham from the stoniest of hearts. And the Lord repeatedly warned that the Kingdom of God can be taken from one people and given to another.

Nationalist pride is somehow considered excusable and even admirable where personal pride is not. This is a fallacy. This is not to say, of course, that we must not rejoice in the addition of saints to our national Church. But rejoicing is not the same as pride; the fact that a saint has been added to our national Church is cause for rejoicing, not because it shows that our race is somehow intrinsically superior to others, but because it brings another intercessor into the ranks of the Universal Church. Pride is pride in whatever form it comes; in both its personal and nationalist forms, it consists in the satanic sin of ascribing the glory to man and not to God. And its consequences are in both cases spiritually disastrous. For as Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) wrote: “The nation, this collective organism, is just as inclined to deify itself as the individual man. The madness of pride grows in this case in the same progression, as every passion becomes inflamed in society, being refracted in thousands and millions of souls.”

It is time for the Orthodox nationalists to reach out and impart the priceless treasure of the Orthodox faith to their fellow human beings without allowing either ecumenism or Orthodox nationalism to hinder the process. “From those to whom much is given much is required” – that is a basic spiritual principle, repeated frequently in the Gospel. If the Orthodox hold the key to knowledge, it is they who are at least partially responsible if the other nations remain unenlightened. For where could they acquire knowledge if not from those who are already in the know? But millions of potential converts to Orthodoxy are being put off either because ecumenist Orthodox tell them there is not need to convert, or because joining a national Orthodox Church means accepting not just the faith of that Church but also
the prejudices and hatreds of that nation. The 1992 decision of the Orthodox Churches to prohibit proselytism among the westerners has its roots not only in a failure of faith, in an inability to understand what Orthodoxy really is, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, in a failure of love, a lack of desire for the salvation of one’s neighbour. The sad fact is that most Orthodox today either do not understand that those outside Orthodoxy will not be saved, which places an enormous responsibility on them not to hinder the path of the heterodox to Orthodoxy; or they do not believe in the idea of salvation, because they do not believe in hell; or, quite simply, they do not want them to be saved.

Our model, as always, is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who refused to allow the first-century equivalents of modern ecumenism and nationalism to hinder his way into the heart of the Samaritan woman. Nowhere in the Gospel do we see Him express such joy as when he saw the Samaritan converts of His convert coming towards him; for this harvest of souls, the fruit of truly international cooperation in the work of the Kingdom of God, was the whole purpose of His coming to earth. “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both He who sows and he who reaps my rejoice together” (John 4:34-35).

May 6/19, 2107.
17. INGRATITUDE

The Lord says to the Pharisees in today’s Gospel: “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” (John 10.32). Here Christ is rebuking the Pharisees for their ingratitude to Him. But He does it with such gentleness, such delicacy, without a trace of bitterness! Just a touch of irony… He Who did so many and such great works for all those on earth would just like to know, please: “For which of these works are you trying to kill Me? Not that these are My works really. Everything comes from the Father…”

It is very hard not to feel bitterness at those who are ungrateful to us. This is universally acknowledged. The hatred of external enemies is much easier to bear than the treachery of friends, the ingratitude of those to whom you have done good. “Ingratitude is the essence of vileness,” said the philosopher Immanuel Kant. “Most people return small favors, acknowledge medium ones and repay greater ones - with ingratitude,” said Benjamin Franklin. “I hate ingratitude more in a man,” says Viola in Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night, “more than lying, vanness, babbling, drunkenness, or any taint of vice whose strong corruption inhabits our frail blood.” Perhaps the greatest work of secular literature ever written – Shakespeare’s King Lear – is built entirely on the ferocious feelings elicited by filial ingratitude, and the main character’s triumphant victory over them.

We have to overcome our bitterness. For bitterness at ingratitude is just another form of hatred of enemies. And hatred prevents us from receiving the remission of our sins.

In Psalm 37 the great Prophet-King David exposes the illness and offers at least part of the cure: “My friends and my neighbours drew nigh over against me and stood, and my nearest of kin stood afar off. And they that sought after my soul used violence; and they that sought evils for me spake vain things, and craftinesses all the day long did they meditate. But as for me, like a dead man I heard them not, and was as a speechless man that openeth not his mouth. And I became as a man that heareth not, and that hath in his mouth no reproofs…”

So the first part of the cure is silence. It is so easy to answer back – and so harmful for the soul. It is much more difficult – but much more fruitful in the long run – to let the sinners have their temporary victory.

However, is there nothing we can or should do? No, we can and should do something; we should turn to the Righteous Judge, to God: “For in Thee have I hoped, O Lord; Thou wilt hearken unto me, O Lord my God. For I said: Let never mine enemies rejoice over me; yea, when my feet were shaken, those men spoke boastful words against me.”

So silence, prayer. And then there is a third remedy: repentance. For while Christ in no way deserved the ingratitude towards Him, that can never be said about us. Even if we are innocent in this particular case, there are many other sins we have committed in the past, for which God is now correcting and chastising us.
And so: “I am ready for scourges, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity, and I will take heed concerning my sin. But mine enemies live and are made stronger than I, and they that hated me unjustly are multiplied. They that render me evil for good slandered me, because I pursued goodness. Forsake me not, O Lord my God, depart not from me. Be attentive unto my help, O Lord of my salvation…”

Finally, we should look back on our good deeds towards our enemies, and examine ourselves: are we perhaps boasting of them just a little in the depths of our hearts, and forgetting that only good deeds done for the sake of Christ and by the grace of Christ are good in the eyes of God, the Giver of all good. The Lord shielded Himself from the charge of vainglory and boasting by ascribing all His indescribable good deeds to His Father. We should always and at all times and in all things ascribe all the little good we do to the Giver of all good – and be grateful.

May 7/20, 2017.
The period between the Ascension of the Lord and the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is a very specific and unique period in the Church Year. The Ascension is clearly the supreme climax in the Life of Christ. The Resurrection takes place at night, is hidden, is not believed by all, is opposed by the Jews. There is unbelievable joy, but also fear. Forty days later, however, all doubts have been removed from the faithful; their joy is complete, unmixed by fear. The Lord ascends in glory, in the sight of all, both angels and men, to the furthest reaches of the cosmos and beyond, to the Right Hand of God the Father. What could be greater, what more glorious?

And yet something is missing. It is not the Lord Himself that is missing, for even while He disappears from visible sight into the heavens, He assures them with His blessing (which, according to the Holy Fathers, is never-ending) that He will be with them invisibly and spiritually for ever, to the very end of the world. Indeed, it is impossible to believe that their joy would be as great if they did not believe His promise of this without any shadow of doubt. But something is missing nevertheless…

What is missing, of course, is the gift of the Holy Spirit in His fullness, which the Lord said they would receive in ten days’ time in Jerusalem. But, it may be asked, had they not already received the gift of the Holy Spirit on the first evening of Pascha, when the Lord came through the locked doors and breathed on them, saying: “Receive ye the Holy Spirit”? They had indeed received the Spirit; but the first reception at Pascha was different from the second reception at Pentecost.

The difference was explained by St. Gregory the Great in his Homilies on the Gospel as follows. At Pascha the apostles received the Holy Spirit as a strengthening and perfection of their unity as a body, the Body of Christ. The remitting of sins – that is, the sacrament of confession – was given together with this reception; for perfect unity is possible only when all sin has been removed, with the assurance that this Spirit-bearing Body has the capacity to remove all sin, all obstacles to unity between God and man and man and man, that may arise in it in the future. At Pascha, therefore, the Unity and Holiness of the Church is given. But at Pentecost there is given Her Catholicity and Apostolicity. The Spirit descends in separate tongues of fire upon each of the apostles, signifying those individual gifts of the Spirit that they will need in order to spread the Apostolic teaching to all the nations of mankind.

In the Gospel we find other distinctions between different bestowals of the Spirit. Thus during the Mystical Supper the Lord said: “If ye love with Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14.15-17).

Here we find the doctrine of the Holy Trinity encapsulated into one sentence, with the separate Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, clearly indicated. Here also we find the aim of the Christian life, the acquisition of the Holy
Spirit. And the assurance given to the apostles that they will attain that aim - the Holy Spirit will abide in them for ever.

The conditions of this gift are also indicated: fulfillment of the commandments, and separation from the world, which lies in evil and therefore cannot know God. As St. Theophylact of Ochrid writes, commenting on this passage: “What makes us able to know the Holy Spirit and to receive Him? The fact that you are not of this world...”

Finally, we are given a critical distinction between two modes in which the Holy Spirit communes with men: dwelling with them and dwelling in them. It is only the indwelling of the Spirit that saves us; this the apostles had not yet received at the time of the Mystical Supper, which is why the Lord uses the future tense: “He shall be in you”. However, even before the Holy Spirit dwells in us, He can dwell with us. This “with-dwelling” the apostles already had, which is why the Lord uses the present tense: “He dwelleth with you”. “With-dwelling” of the Spirit without His “indwelling” was the condition of the Old Testament saints, and of converts and catechumens who have received the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit, but have not yet received the Holy Spirit Himself in the sacrament of Chrismation.

The question arises: if we have received the Holy Spirit dwelling in us through the sacrament of Chrismation, why is it that St. Seraphim of Sarov says that the aim of the Christian life is to acquire the Holy Spirit? If we have already received the Holy Spirit, why do we still have to acquire it? The short answer to this is: just as we can acquire the Holy Spirit, so we can also lose it, which necessitates its re-acquisition. All sin brings with it a quenching of the Spirit, just as a lamp covered with a shade involves a quenching or diminution of light. We are called not to hide our light, the light of the Holy Spirit, under a bushel, the bushel of sin, but to put it in a prominent place so that it may illumine the whole room of our soul.

It is important not to be trapped, as it were, by spatial imagery here. The distinction between the “with-dwelling” and the “indwelling” of the Spirit is a spatial image, which aids our understanding, but only takes us so far. God is not in space and time; so He is neither “inside” nor “outside” nor “next to” our soul in a literal way. Similarly, we can use the metaphor of the light of the Holy Spirit growing or diminishing in the soul, being “covered” by sin or “uncovered” by its removal. But all such images are metaphors that have real value (for it is impossible for human beings to think without images), but cannot be taken literally without leading to absurdities.

If we bear these limitations of human thinking and imagining in mind, then we can return to the metaphors without fear of apparent contradictions. Thus during Chrismation, on the one hand, the Christian receives the Holy Spirit within him, and he does not have to acquire it again. Unless, that is, he apostasizes from the faith, becoming, for example, a Muslim, after which he needs to be chrismated again on returning to the Church in order to receive the Holy Spirit he has lost. On the other hand, it is obvious that some Christians have the Spirit in much greater abundance

than others. Thus the Saints, we can say, have acquired the Holy Spirit, whereas we sinners have to work very hard and repent very deeply in order to reach their level of spirituality. All Christians receive the same gifts in the holy sacraments. But some make us of the gift, and make it grow (as it were), while others bury it in the barren soil of their hardened hearts and bring forth no spiritual fruit.

Just as we receive the Holy Spirit in different modes or degrees, so we can lose Him in different modes and degrees. Thus in the Fall in the Garden of Eden, the Holy Spirit ceased to dwell in the souls and bodies of Adam and Eve and their descendants. Instead they put on “garments of skin” – that is, the death-bearing passions. “By a garment of this kind,” writes the Anglo-Saxon Father, the Venerable Bede, “the Lord signifies that they had now been made mortal – the skins contain a figure of death because they cannot be drawn off without the death of the animal”. 204 It also indicated that their animal nature “covered”, or suppressed, their spiritual nature.

However, while the Spirit ceased to be in men, as part of their constitution, as it were, so that they became “sensual [psychikoi, literally “psychical”], deprived of the Spirit” (Jude 19). He did not cease to be with them. This is seen in the fact that God continued to talk openly with men – good men such as Enoch, who “walked with God” (Genesis 5.24), and even bad men, like Cain. But as the spiritual condition of mankind deteriorated, and especially after the mysterious episode in which the “sons of God” began to take wives from the daughters of men, God made a further judgement: “My Spirit shall certainly not remain in these men for ever, because they are flesh. Instead they will have a life of 120 years” (Genesis 6.4 (Septuagint translation)). “Because they are flesh” – that is, according to St. John Chrysostom, “on account of their devoting themselves to carnal pleasures and not employing properly the properties of the soul, but passing their life as if they were clad in flesh alone and had no soul” 205. Since the Uncreated Spirit was no longer in or with the souls of men, the created breath of life would be withdrawn from all living creatures: they would be destroyed in the Flood. Moreover, after the Flood the span of men’s lives would be sharply reduced. Noah, who “found grace in the eyes of God” and “walked with God” like his great-grandfather Enoch (Genesis 6.8,9), lived to the age of 950. But already after the Flood, the life-span of even the most righteous of men contracted sharply. Moses, for example, lived to “only” 120…

Clearly the Spirit dwells in and with men in various ways and to various degrees. None of the righteous men of the Old Testament had the Holy Spirit living in them as a permanent acquisition, as it were; “for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7.39). But the Prophets “spoke through the Spirit”, as we say in the Creed, and many worked miracles and even raised the dead. God worked “with” them, but not “in” them. Even John the Baptist was not counted equal to the humblest of New Testament Christians; for “he who is least in the Kingdom of heaven” – that is, in the New Testament Church – “is greater than he” (Matthew 11.11). So great is the gift of the Holy Spirit abiding and dwelling only in Christians! At the same time, St John is “the greatest born of women”; so by Old Testament standards he “acquired the Holy Spirit” to a greater degree than any other of the

204 The Venerable Bede, On Genesis, I, 3.22.
205 St. Chrysostom, Homilies on Genesis, 22, 10.
righteous. Moreover, now that he has entered the New Testament Church with all the righteous of the Old Testament, he stands at the top of the hierarchy of saints just below the holiest of all created beings, the All-Holy Mother of God (but opposite her on the Deisis icons).

Vladimir Lossky explains this paradox well: “Christ, while bearing witness to St. John the Baptist, called him ‘the greatest of them that are born of women’ (Matthew 11.11; Luke 7.28), but he added, ‘He who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he’. Here Old Testament holiness is contrasted with the holiness that could be realized when the redemptive work of Christ was accomplished and when ‘the promise of the Father’ (Acts 1.4), the descent of the Holy Spirit, had filled the Church with the fullness of deifying grace. St. John, although ‘more than a prophet’ because he baptized the Lord and saw the heavens open and the Spirit like a dove descending on the Son of Man, died without having received the promise, like all the others ‘well-attested by faith’, ‘of who the world was not worthy’, who according to the divine plan ‘apart from us should not be made perfect’ (Hebrews 11.28-40), i.e. apart from the Church of Christ. It is only through the Church that the holiness of the Old Testament can receive its fulfillment in the age to come, in a perfection which was inaccessible to humanity before Christ.

“It is beyond any question that she who was chosen to be the Mother of God represents the summit of Old Testament holiness. If John the Baptist is called ‘the greatest’ of those before Christ, that is because the greatness of the All-Holy Mother of God belongs not only to the Old Testament, where she was hidden and does not appear, but also to the Church, in which she realized her fullness and became manifest, to be glorified by all generations (Luke 1.48). The person of St. John remains in the Old Testament dispensation; the most Holy Virgin passes from the Old to the New; and this transition, in the person of the Mother of God, shows us how the New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Old.”

It is above all the inheritance of original sin that prevents the acquisition of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Even the Mother of God, as St. John of Damascus teaches, had to be purified of original sin by the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation, before the Son of God could become the Son of Man in her womb. For us New Testament Christians who have received the remission of original sin in Holy Baptism, it is our continuing personal sins that prevent us from acquiring the Holy Spirit to the degree attained by the Saints.

At the Annunciation the Mother of God was already “full of grace”; the barrier preventing the full union of God and man was broken; which is why this feast is called “the fountainhead of our salvation”. But she undoubtedly received still greater grace at Pentecost – she is depicted in the centre of the icons of Pentecost. And then at her Dormition and Ascension into heaven she enters the Day of the Lord, the Eighth Day, being fully transfigured and resurrected in both soul and body.

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207 Menaion, March 25, Annunciation of the Theotokos, Vespers, troparion.
To conclude, the relationship between the Ascension and Pentecost is not one-way. That is, it is not only that the Ascension of Christ as the crowning glory of Christ’s Dispensation makes possible, and prepares the way for, the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Pentecost also prepares the way for our Ascension. For the Ascension of Christ contains within itself the seeds of our Ascension insofar as, in St. Paul’s words, God “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2.6). But our Ascension in Christ will not be possible if we have not received the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit at our personal Pentecost, the sacraments of baptism and chrismation – and then striven to emulate the saints by acquiring the Holy Spirit to a still greater degree through the fulfillment of the commandments.

St. Theophylact explains: “Just as God the Father raised up Christ in His human nature as the first fruits and the head of us men, in like manner He raised us up also. And because Christ, our Head, was seated there in His human nature, at the right hand of the Father, so also has the Father seated us who are His body with Him there. Therefore ‘in Christ Jesus’ means: because of Christ, our Head, is seated there, so also are we.”

May 15/28, 2017.
Sunday of the Holy Fathers.
Afterfeast of the Ascension of the Lord.

The normally cautious and diplomatic German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, yesterday dropped a diplomatic bomb-shell that threatens a fundamental change in relations between the European Union and the Anglo-Saxon nations (with the exception of Canada). She said that Europe “must take its fate into its own hands” because it can no longer rely on Britain and America following Brexit and the election of Donald Trump. “I have experienced this in the last few days,” she said, apparently referring to her encounters with Trump in NATO headquarters in Brussels and at the G7 conference in Sicily. She qualified her remarks by saying that Europe’s taking its fate into its own hands should be done “in friendship with the United States of America, in friendship with Great Britain and as good neighbours wherever that is possible also with other countries, even with Russia”. Nevertheless, the unfriendly thrust of her words was unmistakeable: “We have to know that we must fight for our future on our own, for our destiny as Europeans.”

Linking Brexit with Trump’s election is a characteristically European ploy. Although it is true that Trump backed Brexit (but now is not so sure), the two phenomena are far too diverse to be lumped together under one heading. They are usually portrayed as two aspects of a nationalist, anti-globalisation wave. But if Trump can be portrayed as in some ways a nationalist and anti-globalist, this is hardly the case with British Prime Minister Theresa May. In fact, May is a fervent globalist who shares almost all the values of the globalists. She is a nationalist only in the sense that she respects the wishes of the British people, as expressed in the June, 2016 referendum, that Britain should have greater control over her borders, her justice system and her laws than she has at present. Unlike Trump, she believes in climate change and the Paris Accord – the main stumbling-block between Trump and the Europeans.

So what are the Germans so upset about? One is Trump’s assertion that the excessive German trade surplus with the Americans in cars is “bad”. Well, from his, America-first point of view, it certainly is bad. But since Trump has also declared that he is against protectionism, this may not affect the Germans so much – Trump has said that a lot of things are “bad”, and has so far done little about them. Even if he does act to restrict American imports of German cars, why should the Germans make such a mountain out of what, for them, must be a relative mole-hill? After all, they must know that if they continue to produce high-quality cars which people around the world want to buy, then – providing they don’t cheat on emissions as Volkswagen has done – their huge export sales will continue to grow. Of course, that will mean trouble for other, less powerful economies. But the Germans are not crying over the financial troubles of other countries, as is witnessed by their quite ruthless behaviour in relation to the debts of their fellow-Europeans in Greece...

Again, Trump’s suspicions that the whole climate change issue may be a “hoax” are not a good reason for a major rumpus in European-American relations. There are many scientists who have real doubts that global warming – if it really exists, and the evidence is by no means as strong as it is often made out to be – is caused by human

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emission of carbon dioxide (as opposed to solar flares). And even if they are wrong, cannot the President of the United States be allowed to have a dissenting opinion, especially when implementing the climate change agenda will be so expensive and may have such an enormous impact on the world-wide economy, with especially deleterious consequences on the poorest countries? Could it be that the Germans in fact want to consolidate their own lead in non-carbon fuel technologies, such as wind-farms, so as to reap yet more of those massive export revenues? Merkel has said that the other six nations of G7 will go ahead with implementing the climate-change treaty. Fine, let them go ahead – Trump is not stopping them. The world will not perish if one nation, however important, is slow in implementing these highly controversial changes with their extremely unpredictable consequences. In any case, what can be gained from insulting and bullying the leader of the western world on his very first major trip abroad?

But the real reason for the Germans’ anger may be quite different. Not for the first time, Trump has scolded the European members of NATO for not fulfilling the promises they made at the NATO meeting in Wales to contribute a minimum of 2 per cent of their GDP to NATO. At a time when the military threat from Russia is great, even by German estimates, and any military conflict in Europe between Russia and NATO is likely to result in a Russian victory, only five of the NATO countries – including the United States (at 4 per cent) and the United Kingdom (at 2 percent) - are fulfilling the obligations entered into at Cardiff. Especially miserable has been the contribution of fat, rich Germany at 1.2 percent… Moreover, as Die Welle reports, Germany may be reducing its contribution still further, because as a result of a quarrel it is having with Turkey over human rights, it is thinking of withdrawing its troops from a NATO airbase in Turkey. At the same time, the Germans are complaining that Trump is undermining NATO! Is this not a hypocritical attempt to divert attention from their long-term, continuing attempt to place the costs of their own defence on the backs of the long-suffering Americans?

Merkel declares: “We have to know that we must fight for our future on our own, for our destiny as Europeans.” Probably she is thinking of trade wars here, not a shooting war with Russia. But if the Europeans are seriously thinking of taking their own destiny into their own hands, then they must be contemplating a European army independent of NATO. Indeed, this is a favourite idea of Juncker, the head of the European Commission. The British have strongly and with good reason objected to it, since it would inevitably weaken NATO and result in a much weaker overall defence capability...

All this must be music to the ears of the Russians, who have been trying to divide Europe and America for generations. Recent thinking has been that the weak link in the western alliance is Trump, because of his alleged illegal relations with Russia. It is even alleged that he was recruited as a Russian agent when he was caught in a honey-trap organized by the KGB at the Miss Universe context in Moscow in 2013.

This may be true, and it may also be that in Trump’s person the prophecy of Elder Ignaty of Harbin (+1958), that “What began in Russia will be completed in America”, will be fulfilled. Of late, however, Trump has not been carrying out Putin’s wishes as closely as the latter might have wished, notably in his bombing raid in Syria, in his threats towards North Korea, and in his authorization of huge increases in funding for the American military. It may be time to consider whether, even if Trump is a weak link, the weakest link in the western alliance may not be the same as it has always been – Germany.

Ever since Chancellor Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik during the 1970s, when Germany’s weak-willed desire to appease the Communist East grew in tandem with the strength of its economy, the ultimate loyalty of the Germans to the western alliance has been suspect. In exchange for more visas allowing East Germans to come to the West, Bonn laid itself dangerously open to espionage (Brandt’s secretary turned out to be a spy) and the possibility of being blackmailed in the economic and energy spheres by the Russians, who got much needed credits to import Western technology, develop their gas fields and build pipes to the West, which thereby became more dependent on Soviet energy.

Thus Helmut Schmidt “offered Russia favourable trade terms for a series of developments, including the provision by German firms of nine thousand ‘heavy-duty’ trucks, and the construction, by German firms, of a number of chemical plants throughout the Soviet Union. The Russians agreed to increase the existing supply of natural gas [through pipelines built by prisoners from the Siberian GULAG]. Schmidt also offered the German construction of a nuclear reactor at Kaliningrad.” 212 A later Chancellor who joined this dishonourable tradition of cooperation with the Soviets was Gerhard Schröder. He even went so far as to join the board of the giant Gazprom after his retirement as Chancellor…

When the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, and the two Germanies united, millions of former Stasi agents (one in four of the citizens of East Germany was a Stasi agent!) found themselves citizens of the West…

Two modern leaders who were closely affected by these events were Vladimir Putin and – Angela Merkel. Putin was working as a KGB agent in Dresden when he hurriedly had to burn his files on KGB agents in Germany before fleeing to his native Leningrad. He was deeply burned mentally by witnessing this humiliation of Soviet power, and vowed to reverse “the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the twentieth century”. Merkel’s father, a Lutheran pastor with a pro-Communist heart, migrated from West Germany to East Germany. There his daughter climbed the ladder of the Communist Party, before migrating back to the West and becoming Chancellor of the most powerful country in Western Europe. Although nobody seems to be suggesting that Merkel is working for Russia, the presence of so many people like her with Communist pasts in pivotal posts in the West (other examples are the former President of the European Commission, Barroso, an ex-Maoist, the Secretary-General

of NATO, Stoltenberg\textsuperscript{213}, and the leader of the British Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn), is disturbing…

Merkel has taken the lead in a new Ostpolitik towards Putin’s Russia. As in the earlier policy of the 1970s, the influence of Mammon in the form of German businessmen with interests in Russia seems to be acting as a restraint on any “excessive” zeal she might display in relation to Russia’s crimes in Ukraine. Thus while remaining outwardly loyal to the West’s policy of sanctions against Russia, Merkel has resisted any stronger measures and has hardly been effective in using her considerable economic power in making Putin stick to his commitments at the Minsk talks. Putin’s former economic advisor Andrei Illarionov has even suggested that negotiations with Russia over the Ukraine should not be conducted by the ineffective Germans and French, but rather within the framework of the Budapest Memorandum, whose western signatories were the United States and the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{214}

Merkel appears to be positioning herself as the leader of a Europe that is equidistant from Washington and Moscow – and with harsher words (at any rate in public) for Washington than for Moscow! Moreover, if she follows the lead of the new French President Emmanuel Macron, who considers Brexit a “crime” and is in favour of closer European integration, Europe may well be on the way to a socialist super-state closer in spirit and form to Russia than to the Anglo-Saxon democracies.

We must not forget the words of Jean Monnet in 1952: “The nations of Europe must be guided towards a Superstate without their peoples understanding what is happening. This can be carried out in successive stages, each camouflaged as having an economic goal, but which will end up by leading them irreversibly into a federation.” Of course, the usual platitudes about democracy continue to be mouthed; but the fact is that the European Union continues to be unremittingly hostile towards national sovereignty and the expression of any member state’s democratic will that is contrary to “Big Brother” in Brussels. And now that the threat of Marine Le Pen’s anti-Brussels campaign has failed, they are feeling more confident…

As for Britain and Brexit, although Merkel is thought to be an Anglophile, once calling the country “wonderful”, the fact remains that her first love (if we disregard her previous love for Communist East Germany) is for Europe, the European Socialist ideal, and the complete integration of Europe into a Superstate that follows the German lead in all things – the “Fourth Reich” in all but name. (During the 1980s, the British Minister Nicholas Ridley made the imprudent remark: “Europe is a German racket”. Imprudent, but true…) Of course, this does not mean that she has any kind of sympathy with the Third Reich – the Germans now, over seventy years after the death of Hitler, have sincerely and thoroughly turned away from any such crudity and cruelty. But the totalitarian ideal can take many forms, and since the Second World War it has remained, unrecognized, in the hearts of the majority of

\textsuperscript{213} “Novij glava NATO marksist Stoltenberg imel v KGB klichku ‘Steklov’” (The new head of NATO, the Marxist Stoltenberg had the nickname ‘Steklov’ in the KGB), Kavkaztsentr, November 11, 2014, http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2014/10/11/106542.shtml.

\textsuperscript{214} See his recent interview on Radio Svoboda.
European intellectuals (including British intellectuals). That ideal was decisively defeated in the Brexit referendum, however, when the English countryside and towns decisively outvoted their “superiors”, the London Europeans (and the Scottish anti-Englanders). Merkel accepts this result, albeit with great reluctance, and is now determined that the attractiveness of Brexit to those in Europe who might want to follow the same course should be destroyed – by making the terms of the eventual exit as painful for the British as possible…

However, if she succeeds, there will be a heavy price to be paid: an economic price and a political price. The economic price is that punishing the British with tariff barriers and huge “divorce bills” will also punish European traders and manufacturers, so intertwined have they become with their British counterparts. The political price could be even worse. The most steadfast defenders of West European freedom from 1939 to the present day have been the Americans and the British. By ceasing to rely on their friendship and help in defence, the Europeans will inevitably weaken NATO, as we have seen, or even destroy it altogether, making themselves an easy target for Putin – who, once he knows that NATO is a paper tiger, will undoubtedly annex the whole of Ukraine, thrusting Europe into a terminal decline ready to make peace with the pseudo-Tsar at any price… Not that Putin wishes to invade Western Europe and conquer it. No: times have changed since Stalin. As Illarionov has pointed out, Putin, unlike Stalin, perceives himself to be a cultured European and wants, not self-sufficiency on the model of the old Soviet bloc, which would condemn Russia to ever-increasing backwardness in relation to the rest of the world, but integration into the global economy. For he is first and foremost a mafia bandit – and bandits need other countries to launder their money and expand their business interests. He will probably be satisfied with direct control over Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Kazakhstan and Georgia, says Illarionov. The Europeans can keep their quasi-independence – so long as Russia has full access to their riches and they recognize his de facto pre-eminence. Perhaps Europe could even unite with Russia in an empire stretching, as that old traitor, De Gaulle, dreamed, from the Atlantic to the Urals…

Europe is not a rival, but a potential bride for Putin; she is the beauty and he the beast - an incongruous match, but a possible one resting on shared interests if not mutual attraction. It is not Europe, but America that is his real enemy, the rival that must be destroyed or at any rate humiliated and neutralized, because America is the only country (with the possible exception of China) that could spoil the party he wants to host, the gatecrasher who must be turned firmly away at the door. And Merkel’s petulance against Trump is playing perfectly into his hands…

St. Brendan the Navigator.
Russia has had an imperial and missionary presence on the American continent since the eighteenth century. Probably the first Russian Orthodox Christian in America was Colonel Philip Ludwell III, a third-generation Virginian and a relative of George Washington. But the first solid results for Orthodoxy took place far to the north in Russian Alaska.

The opening up of Alaska began in December, 1724, when Peter the Great sent the Danish navigator Vitus Bering to explore the borders of America. “Sail on vessels to the north,” he wrote to him, “and, based on current expectations, because no one knows where it ends, see if it appears that this land is part of America... You are to seek where Asia and America split.” Vitus discovered what is now known as the Bering Strait.

“In 1741,” writes F.A. Golder, “Vitus Bering’s expedition to the Gulf of Alaska opened up the region to an army of Russian traders and trappers, lured there by the plentiful supply of seal and sea otter pelts. By the end of the eighteenth century, Alaska had become a Russian territory, with outposts stretching across the Aleutian Isles to Sitka. Many of the Russians lived on equal terms with the native peoples dwelling in their traditional sod houses and adopting the local customs. Some of the wealthier traders would even adopt young natives and send them back to Russia to be educated.”

“This, unfortunately, was not the rule everywhere. The fierce competition for the lucrative fur trade led to the sometimes brutal exploitation of the Alaskan natives. Specifically on Kodiak Island, Gregory Shelikov’s and Ivan Golikov’s trading company was infamous for its abuse of the native people. The Kodiak men were enslaved in the hunting of sea otters, while the women were routinely abducted; hunger and physical abuse became common.

“Into this grim situation [the Vaalam monk] St. Herman and the nine other missionaries sailed in 1794 [at the command of the Holy Synod]. Despite the terrible conditions they endured – lack of food, insufficient clothing and shelter, and persecution by the Russian traders – the missionaries eagerly began their preaching of the Gospel. One would expect few of the natives to embrace the religion of a people they were resisting. Amazingly, the opposite occurred: almost every member of the Alutiiq tribe became Orthodox.”

By 1815 Alaska already had its first saint - St. Peter the Aleut, who was martyred by Roman Catholics in San Francisco. The most famous member of the Alaskan mission was St. Herman, who died in 1837 and was canonized in San Francisco in 1970. And there were others...

"From 1823," writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, "there begins a second special Church mission, whose most prominent representative turned out to be the young priest Fr.

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John Popov-Veniaminov, later Metropolitan Innocent of Moscow and Kolomna. This
great and wonderful man was born in 1797 in the village of a poor village reader near
Irkutsk. He finished his studies at the Irkutsk seminary, where he displayed great
interest both in theological and in secular sciences. In 1823, with the whole of his
family, wife and children, he arrived at the island of Unalaska and began his apostolic
ministry among the Aleuts, Kadyaks, Eskimos and Indians of the west coast of Alaska
and Northern California (the city of Novo-Arkhangelsk on the island of Sitka).
Teaching the local inhabitants various arts and household crafts, he with their help
built a church, introduced schools, work-houses and hospitals, and baptized thousands
of natives without ever resorting to violence or any pressure, but acting only through
love and the word of truth. Fr. John mastered six local languages, and studied and
described the everyday life, manners and anthropology of the tribes, the local
geography and climates, becoming a true father of the 'wild' peoples, or, as St.
Herman of Alaska used to say about himself, their 'nanny'! For the Aleuts he
composed an alphabet and translated the Gospel of Matthew and some necessary
prayers and other books into their language. His works on the ethnography of the
peoples of Alaska, California and the adjacent islands are still used in science to this
day and are considered models. Even then, during his lifetime, they were highly
valued by the academies of science of Russia and Europe! Father John Popov-
Veniaminov continued the best traditions of the Russian missionaries of Siberia, the
Altaï and the Far East. In those times that was not simple, it demanded courage,
asceticism. The point is that the interests of the apostolate of the Church in those
places often contradicted the interests of the Russian-American Company (RAC),
which traded in furs and sea animals. 'Industrial' people and RAC officials sometimes
displayed cruelty, and sometimes were inclined mercilessly to exploit the natives,
although one has to say that these were excesses, but not the rule! As a rule, even our
'industrials' behaved in a friendly and paternal manner to the native population of
America. Shelikhov considered marriages between Russian and Indians as very
desirable. There were mixed marriages. The children from these marriages (Creoles)
often turned out to be very capable people, while some of them attained high rank in
state service in Russia. Catherine II and Paul I prescribed only friendly relations
towards the natives under threat of punishment. A special decree of Emperor
Alexander I ordered the RAC 'first of all to venerate humanity' in all the peoples of
America, and in no case to resort to cruelty and violence. Russia often sent notes of
protest to the USA, whose merchants sold firearms to the Indians. The USA replied
that they were 'free', and that they could not ban this trade in death... But in the 19th
century among our workers in RAC there were people who were completely foreign
to Orthodox, who simply did not understand it (for example, the RAC's 'chronicler',
Khlebnikov). And sometimes it was difficult for our missionaries to defined whom
they had to enlighten first of all - the Aleuts and Indians, or our own people, the
Russians!... In such circumstances only an all-encompassing (spiritual and secular)
education of the apostles of America, like Fr. John Popov, could force some of the
officials of RAC to venerate the Church and her missionary work. In 1840, on the
recommendation of Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov), who had become friends with
Fr. John, Tsar Nicholas I appointed the priest Popov-Veniaminov, who had been
widowed by this time and had accepted monasticism, as the first bishop of the newly
formed Kamchatka, Kurile islands and Aleut diocese. When the Tsar gave this name
to the diocese, people remarked to him: 'But Your Majesty! There is not a single
church on the Kurile islands! 'Build them!' snapped the Emperor. That is how the new hierarch of the Russian Church Innocent (Veniaminov) appeared...\textsuperscript{218}

St. Innocent’s labours, together with those of Archimandrite Macarius in the Altai and Archbishop Nicholas in Japan, give the lie to the idea that Russian Orthodoxy in this period was "ossified" or "paralysed". In fact, the labours of these men, supported by the Tsars, proved both the vitality of Russian Orthodoxy and the continuing vitality of the Church-State "symphony".

In the Tsar's encouragement of the American mission "was reflected, as in a drop of water, the essence of the politics of the Third Rome - the widening of the boundaries of the Church. In her expansion to Alaska and Northern California, to the possessions of Japan and China, and to the sands of Central Asia, Russia derived not only commercial and military-strategic advantages (although these, too, were not of little importance), but brought to the new lands the light of her Orthodox Faith and spirituality. Besides, as has already been pointed out, she related to the peoples of these new lands with great respect. In contrast to the expansion of the Roman Catholic church, the Russian Orthodox Church and state did not convert one people to Christianity by forcible means! Amidst the pagan tribes of Siberia, the North, the Far East and America, the Russian spiritual missions were very active in preaching the Word of God, building churches and monasteries, hospitals, homes for invalids and the elderly, providing medical help and what would now be called 'social security', often quarrelling because of these good works with the local secular bosses. As regards the Mohammedan peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, here there was almost no missionary work. After the unsuccessful attempts to create spiritual missions for the Tatars and Kalmyks in the 18th century, Russia renounced special ecclesiastical missions in Mohammedan areas distinguished for their strong predilection for Islam. Orthodoxy was not imposed on the Mohammedan people; they were left to live freely in accordance with their own customs, but Orthodox churches naturally arose on their lands for the Russians who had settled there, so that all those desiring it among those peoples received the opportunity to learn Orthodoxy!!\textsuperscript{219}

However, in 1867 the Tsar sold Alaska and the Aleutian islands to the United States for $7.2 million.\textsuperscript{220} Could the need to pay for the armies in Central Asia have motivated this unexpected decision? Or the cost of defending 10,000 Russians and 40,000 Indians against the expected influx of American explorers and settlers?

A third possibility was the threat from Britain, which had fought Russia in the Crimean War, when the Unites States was Russia’s only ally: “The deal was born not of the Russian Empire’s rivalry with the United States, but through both countries’ competition with Britain, whose Empire made it the most powerful nation of the age, one with a truly global presence.

“Russia and Britain had already face off in the Crimean War, which had begun in October 1853... Though as the name suggests, the conflict was concentrated on

\textsuperscript{218} Lebedev, Velikorossia, St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 302-303.
\textsuperscript{219} Lebedev, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{220} The full text of the agreement: http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/1867(03)18.alyaska.php.
Russia’s south-west flank, it also spread to the Pacific, when a fleet of Russian cruisers based in Siberian ports threatened Britain’s trading links with California. A combined British and French squadron was assembled at Honolulu and on July 29th 1854 it set sail in pursuit of the Russian ships. Having taken the weakly defended port of Sitka in Alaska, they then headed south for Petropavlovsk, which ended in catastrophe for the allies.

“Even so, Russia remained fearful of British ambitions in the Pacific. Vancouver island, just off the mainland of western Canada, was already a British Crown Colony and the population of neighbouring British Columbia was increasing rapidly, as gold prospectors rushed west. Plans were advanced to incorporate the territory formally into the Empire. This meant that Britain’s possessions in North America would now share a land border with Russia.

“Alaska was difficult to defend, given the awesome supply lines, and so Tsar Alexander II decided to sell up. In 1859 he approached both Britain and the US as potential buyers. The former showed little interest, while the latter was too distracted by the impending Civil War to give it enough thought. When the war came to an end in 1865, interest was rekindled and the tsar instructed his ambassador in the US, Edward Stoeckl, to begin formal negotiations with Secretary of State, William Seward. Not only did the potential deal offer a considerable expansion of US territory – at more than 600,000 square miles it is twice the size of Texas – and a strategic location between Russia and British North America, but it was also a useful distraction from the fraught issue of post-Civil War Reconstruction.

“After an all-night negotiating session, the treaty was signed at 4 am on March 30th, 1867. The agreed price was $7,2 million, equivalent to around $20 million today, which works out at about two cents an acre.

“Captain Alexei Peschkurov handed over the territory to his opposite number with the words:

“By authority from his Majesty, the Emperor of Russia, I transfer to the United States the territory of Alaska.

“Just a few Russian fur traders and Orthodox priests remained behind and it was not until the Klondike gold rush of 1896 that Alaska attracted new settlers in numbers…” 221

However, the Orthodox Aleut Indians also remained behind – it was, after all, their native land. And it is said that they wept as the Russian flag was taken down for the last time... “Although the treaty guaranteed the rights of natives to remain Orthodox Christians, these articles were largely ignored by U.S. officials and Protestant missionaries. At the end of the nineteenth century many Alaskans could speak Russian, English and a native language, but were still considered uncivilized by the authorities. A systematic persecution of the native and Orthodox culture was initiated. Russian and native languages were forbidden to be used in schools. Soon a

policy of assimilation was implemented, and the traditional life of the Alaskans began to wane...”

From a financial point of view, the deal was probably a mistake - there were gold deposits under the Alaskan soil. But from a spiritual point of view, too, it was a dubious deal. As we have seen, Alaska, in contrast to Central Asia, had proved to be fertile territory for Russian missionaries, and the Indians were therefore not merely colonial subjects but brothers in Christ. What could justify the abandonment of thousands of brothers in Christ to a heretical government (even if the church buildings remained in the hands of the Orthodox, and permission was granted to the Russian Spiritual Mission to continue its work in Alaska)? Was not the Third Rome obliged to protect the interests of her converts in the New World?

As it turned out, Divine Providence protected the Orthodox Indians where the Russian tsar did not: in 1917 Russia herself came under the yoke of the atheists, so from that point of view it may have been just as well that the Orthodox Alaskans found themselves within the borders of another State.

May 18/31, 2017.

222 Golder, op. cit., pp. 12-12. Fr. Geoffrey Korz writes: "Until about 1900, the Alaskan native languages had a thriving literature and press under the auspices of the Orthodox Church, until American rule enforced an 'English-only' policy" ("The Alaska Code: Rare Alaskan Orthodox Manuscripts brought back to life," http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles6/KorzAlaskaText.php).

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 account only for the less serious forms of 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.

Another problem was that 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 Encyclopædists, 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…”

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 Gerald 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.”

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 despaired.

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

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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.” 227 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.” 228

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 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.” 229

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.” 230

228 Nadezhda Mandelstam, Hope against Hope.
230 Tikhomirov, “Dukhovenstvo i obshchestvo...”, op. cit., p. 32.
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 enthronе 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.

“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 Freudian 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.

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“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).

June 1/14, 2017.  
St. Justin the Philosopher.

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232 Lewis, “‘Bulverism’ or the Foundation of 20th Century Thought”, in God in the Dock, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 271-275, 276. Lewis developed this important argument in other works of his such as Mere Christianity and The Problem of Pain.
23. ISLAMIC DESPOTISM AND MILITARISM

St. John of Damascus (+749) says of the origins of Islam: “There is also the superstition of the Ishmaelites which to this day prevails and keeps people in error, being a forerunner of the Antichrist. They are descended from Ishmael, [who] was born to Abraham of Agar, and for this reason they are called both Agarenes and Ishmaelites. They are also called Saracens, which is derived from Sarras kenoi, or destitute of Sara, because of what Agar said to the angel: ‘Sara hath sent me away destitute.’ These used to be idolaters and worshiped the morning star and Aphrodite, whom in their own language they called Khabár, which means great. And so down to the time of Heraclius they were very great idolaters. From that time to the present a false prophet named Mohammed has appeared in their midst. This man, after having chanced upon the Old and New Testaments and likewise, it seems, having conversed with an Arian monk, devised his own heresy. Then, having insinuated himself into the good graces of the people by a show of seeming piety, he gave out that a certain book had been sent down to him from heaven. He had set down some ridiculous compositions in this book of his and he gave it to them as an object of veneration.”

By the time of his death in 632, Mohammed had established the dominion of his new religion of Islam over the whole of Arabia. He did not proclaim himself a king, still less a Persian-style “king of kings”, but a mere prophet – albeit the last and greatest of them. In fact, he was the prophet of one of the Arabian pagan demons, the moon-god Allah, whom he proclaimed to be the one true God. In spite of the clearly pagan origins of his faith, Mohammed claimed to abhor every kind of man-worship and idolatry.

Although Mohammed himself fought only relatively small-scale wars for the control of Arabia, his successors, the early caliphs, went with fire and sword throughout the Middle East and North Africa; and Islam in general has been the most violent religion in history.

The despotic pagan civilizations place the rights of the collective over the rights of the individual, thereby giving the state a despotic power and discouraging freedom of thought. Western civilization, on the other hand, generally allows freedom of conscience and some autonomy to the religious sphere. Islam places religion above the state, and religious law above state law.

234 Nektarios Lignos writes: “Allah, worshipped in pre-Islamic Arabia, is the god Muhammad’s Quraysh tribe worshipped, .... the moon god who was married to the sun goddess and they had three daughters – Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat. This is why we see the crescent moon symbol in conjunction with Islam.”
235 In Africa, the Muslims reached as far south as Makuria (modern-day Sudan). “During the summer of 642 AD, the Orthodox Christian Kingdom of Makuria defeated a Muslim invasion at the First Battle of Dongola. Ten years later the Orthodox Makurians would defeat a second and larger invasion force by the Caliphate. This resulted in a peace that lasted for nearly 700 years.” (Hieromonk Enoch, Facebook communication, July, 2016)
Roger Scruton has probed the difference between western and Islamic ideas in an illuminating way.\textsuperscript{237} The core religion of the West, Orthodox Christianity, grew up in the context of the Roman empire, and from the beginning gave the state a certain autonomy. The Christian was obliged to obey the state in all its laws that did not directly contradict the commandment of God: “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22.21). For although his ultimate loyalty was to God, the Christian was also a citizen of the state. He did not rebel against the State, but gradually worked on its crude mores until it became Christian itself. Then Church and State worked in harmony with each other in a “symphony of powers”. The Church was universal, and had members in many different countries. The State, on the other hand, was territorial, being based on the feeling of a common destiny of all or most of the people on that territory, reinforced by commonalities of language, culture and religion.

Islam, however, did not encourage the growth of stable territorial nation-states or empires. There were tribes, and there was the universal religion, and very little of what we may call “political infrastructure” in between. There was shariah, the law of Allah, but very little in the way of state law, and certainly nothing comparable to the legal structures created by Constantine, Theodosius and Justinian. And so, while the Muslims considered “the People of the Book”, the Jews and Christians, to be higher than pagans and therefore entitled to some respect, there was no such thing as equality under the law for all citizens, regardless of their faith, a typically Roman conception.

The promises of the Muslims to “the People of the Book” have counted for little in practice. Thus Bishop Dionysius (Alferov) of Novgorod writes: “In 638, after a year-long siege [of Jerusalem], [Patriarch Sophronius] handed over the city to Caliph Omar on definite conditions. The churches at the holy places (first of all Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre) remained in the possession of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, half of whose churches were turned into mosques. The preaching of Christianity to Muslims was forbidden, and the Christian churches into which Caliph Omar entered were seized by the Muslims and converted later into mosques. Later, this agreement was often broken by the Muslims, and the majority of the churches were destroyed. Even the very church of the Resurrection over the Holy Sepulchre was destroyed more than once. And yet the agreement with Omar created a certain basis for the further existence of the Jerusalem Patriarchate. It was recognized as a legal person, and the possessor of a series of churches and plots of land in Palestine. It was allowed to carry out Divine services, to look after the spiritual needs of Christians and even to judge the Christian population in civil cases. On the whole the Mohammedans did not interfere in the internal administration of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, although they often carried out external acts of violence and theft on the Christian population and clergy. The patriarch himself was elected by the Synod, although the Caliph confirmed him.

“The main feature of this agreement was the preservation of the earthly existence of the Jerusalem Church, the guarantee of its legal existence, possession of churches and property, the right to carry out open public services. The cost that had to be paid for this was not only complete loyalty to the Mohammedan authorities and prayers

for the caliph and his army, but also – which is more important – the refusal to preach Christianity to the Muslims and their own children who had been seduced into Islam. But the Arabs by deceit and violence converted thousands of Christians to their faith – and the archpastors of the Church did not dare to protest against this, and did not dare openly to carry out anti-Islamic propaganda, which was punished by death at all times in Islamic countries.”

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What was the nature of Islamic power? Bernard Lewis writes that “the power wielded by the early caliphs was very far from the despotism of their predecessors and successors. It was limited by the political ethics of Islam and by the anti-authoritarian habits and traditions of ancient Arabia. A verse attributed to the pre-Islamic Arabic poet ‘Abid ibn al-Abras speaks of his tribe as ‘laqah’, a word which, according to the ancient commentators and lexicographers, denotes a tribe that has never submitted to a king. ‘Abid’s proud description of his people makes his meaning clear:

They refused to be servants of kings, and were never ruled by any.
But when they were called on for help in war, they responded gladly.

“The ancient Arabs, like the ancient Israelites depicted in the books of Judges and Samuel, mistrusted kings and the institution of kingship. They were, indeed, familiar with the institution of monarchy in the surrounding countries, and some were even led to adopt it. There were kings in the states of southern Arabia; there were kings in the border principalities of the north; but all these were in different degrees marginal to Arabia. The sedentary kingdoms of the south used a different language, and were part of a different culture. The border principalities of the north, though authentically Arab, were deeply influenced by Persian and Byzantine imperial practice, and represent a somewhat alien element in the Arab world...

“The early Muslims were well aware of the nature of imperial monarchy as practised in their own day in Byzantium and in Persia, and believed that the state founded by the Prophet and governed after him by his successors the caliphs represented something new and different…”

However, the Ummayad Caliphs in Damascus, and then the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad, fell under strong Byzantine and then Persian influence...
Take the case of one of the best, and probably the most powerful, of the early caliphs, Muawiya, who in 661 became, as Simon Sebag Montefiore writes, “the Caliph of the vast empire that included Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Persia and Arabia... He ruled through Christian bureaucrats and tolerated Christians and Jews alike, seeing himself as something between Arab sheikh, Islamic caliph and Roman emperor. He was tolerant and pragmatic, following an early, looser version of Islam, happy to worship at Christian and Jewish sites, and share their shrine.” However, despite his “tolerance”, he continued to conquer Christian lands such as Rhodes and Cyprus,

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and almost took Constantinople. Later he expanded the empire into eastern Persia, central Asia, the Sahara and today’s Libya and Algeria.

Living as he did in Syria, whose culture was Byzantine, Muawiya began to be influenced by Byzantine ideas and practices. “Byzantine influence on the emerging Islamic civilization, a tidal pull that now reached its high-water mark, went far beyond the caliph’s assumption of royal ways. It covered virtually all areas of life.” Thus he was criticised, writes Colin Wells, “for putting on royal airs. In defense he explained ‘that Damascus was full of Greeks, and that none would believe in his power if he did not behave and look like an emperor.’” And his public designation, before his death in 680, of his son Yazid as his successor constituted a break with Islamic tradition and the adoption of the principle of dynastic succession.

“Yazid failed to grasp the succession, facing rebellions in Arabia and Iraq. Muhammed’s grandson Hussein rebelled to avenge his father Ali’s death but was brutally murdered at Karbala in Iraq, his martyrdom creating the Shia, ‘the party’, a division that still splits Islam today. However, after Yazid’s early death, Muawiya’s old kinsman Marwan started to reconquer the empire, dying in 685 and leaving this troubled inheritance to his son Abd al-Malik, the second of the titanic Ummayad Caliphs. Abd al-Malik was less human and flexible but more ruthless and visionary than Muawiya. He first mercilessly crushed the rebellions, retaking Iraq and Arabia; in Jerusalem he built the Dome of the Rock…

“… Abd al-Malik saw himself as God’s shadow on earth: if Muawiya was Caesar of the Arabs, he was a mixture of St. Paul and Constantine the Great – he believed in the marriage of empire, state and god. As such it was Abd al-Malik who collated the book of Islam – the Koran – into its final form (the inscriptions in Jerusalem’s Dome of the Rock are the first examples of the final Koran text), who defined Islamic rituals and who unified Islam into a single religion recognizable today with the emphasis on Koran and Muhammed, expressed in the double shahada: “There is no God but God and uhammed is the apostle of God’. Abd al-Malik and his son Caliph Walid expanded their empire to the borders of India and the coasts of Spain. Yet their dynasty remained part Islamic theocrats, part Roman emperors, often living in a distinctly unIslamic decadence. This led to the family’s downfall in the revolution of 750, when they were replaced by the Abbasid caliphs who ruled from Iraq and blackened the reputation of the Ummayads. To the Shia, they remained heretics and sinners because the Shia believed the real Caliphs were the twelve descendants from [Muhammed’s cousin] Ali and [his wife] Fatima: indeed the Shia of Iran still await the return of the Twelfth…”

It was Abu Muslim, a manumitted Persian slave, who raised the standard of revolt, defeated the Umayyads and created the Abbasid dynasty. A few years later, Al-Mansur (754-775), having moved the capital of the empire to Baghdad, came under the influence of Persia with its strong despotic tradition. And so Muslim

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241 Wells, op. cit., p. 129.
242 Wells, op. cit., p. 132.
“democratism” soon passed into a despotism no less fierce than the monarchies that Islam had destroyed. The caliphs of the ninth century, particularly Mamun (813-833), believed their authority to be unlimited. And the Fatimid ruler Al-Hakim even believed he was god...

Despotism in politics leads to the persecution of all non-State religion. Thus when Caliph Mutasim, Mamum’s brother and successor, conquered the Byzantine fortress town of Amorion, he executed forty-two prisoners who refused to renounce Christianity and embrace Islam.⁴⁴ That Muslim statehood should become despotic was a natural consequence of the lack of a separation of Church and State, which gave an absolute, unchecked power to the Caliphs, embodying as they did both religious and political authority.

“The increasingly authoritarian character of government”, writes Lewis, “and the disappointment of successful revolutionaries is vividly expressed in a passage quoted by several classical authors. A certain Sudayf, a supporter of the Abbasids, is cited as complaining of the changes resulting from the fall of the Umayyads and the accession of the Abbasids to the caliphate: ‘By God, our booty, which was shared, has become a perquisite of the rich. Our leadership, which was consultative, has become arbitrary. Our succession, which was by the choice of the community, is now by inheritance.’”⁴⁵

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There were differences between the Sunnis and the Shiias on the nature of Islamic power. One of the questions dividing them was whether the caliphate should be elective or hereditary. “The Shia maintained that the caliphate should be hereditary in the line of the Prophet, and therefore that all the caliphs, except only for the brief rule of Ali and of his son Hasan, were usurpers. The more generally accepted view of the Sunni Muslims was that the caliphate was elective, and any member of the Prophet’s tribe, Quraysh, was eligible.”⁴⁶ Al-Mansur in Spain made the caliphate there hereditary, but thirty years after his death the people abolished it altogether.

Another of the differences between the Sunnis and the Shiites was that the latter believed in a certain separation, even antagonism between the imamate and the State. “The myth of the Hidden Imam... symbolized the impossibility of implementing a truly religious policy in this world, since the caliphs had destroyed Ali’s line and driven the ilm [the knowledge of what is right] from the earth. Henceforth the Shii ulama [learned men, guardians of the legal and religious traditions of Islam] became the representatives of the Hidden Imam, and used their own mystical and rational insights to apprehend his will. Twelver Shiis (who believe in the twelve imams) would take no further part in political life, since in the absence of the Hidden Imam,

⁴⁵ Lewis, op. cit., pp. 143-144.
⁴⁶ Lewis, op. cit., p. 139.
the true leader of the ummah [the Muslim community], no government could be legitimate."^{247}

The Sunnis, on the other hand, tended to conflate political and religious power. Thus according to T.P. Miloslavskaya and G.V. Miloslavsky, they believed that the caliphate’s secular and spiritual powers (the sultanate and the imamate) were indivisible.\(^{248}\) Again, Colin McEvedy writes that “the successors of Mohammed, the Caliphs, combined, as he had, the powers of Emperor and Pope”.\(^{249}\) Again, Ninian Smart writes that Islam “deems institutions which cover the whole life of the community. There is nothing in Islam… corresponding to the Church. There is no place for a special institution within society devoted to the ends of the faith. For it is the whole of society which is devoted to the ends of the faith.”\(^{250}\) And again, Bernard Lewis writes: “It is sometimes said that the caliph was head of State and Church, pope and emperor in one. This description in Western and Christian terms is misleading. Certainly there was no distinction between imperium and sacerdotium, as in the Christian empire, and no separate ecclesiastical institution, no Church, with its own head and hierarchy. The caliphate was always defined as a religious office, and the caliph’s supreme purpose was to safeguard the heritage of the Prophet and to enforce the Holy Law. But the caliph had no pontifical or even priestly function… His task was neither to expound nor to interpret the faith, but to uphold and protect it – to create conditions in which his subjects could follow the good Muslim life in this world and prepare themselves for the world to come. And to do this, he had to maintain the God-given Holy Law within the frontiers of the Islamic state, and to defend and, where possible, extend those frontiers, until in the fullness of time the whole world was opened to the light of Islam…”\(^{251}\)

However, this indivisibility of powers resulted in a gradual undermining of the quasi-democratic ideal of early Islam by the reality of the caliphs’ almost unlimited power. On the one hand, the caliphs wanted to create an order in which, “as ideally conceived, there were to be no priests, no church, no kings and no nobles, no privileged orders or castes or estates of any kind, save only for the self-evident superiority of those who accept the true faith to those who willfully reject it – and of course such obvious natural and social realities as the superiority of man to woman and of master to slave.”\(^{252}\) But on the other hand, they were military leaders, and success in war required that they should be able to command no less obedience.

As François Guizot points out, the separation of spiritual and temporal power is a legacy of Christianity which the Islamic world abandoned: “This separation is the source of liberty of conscience; it is founded upon no other principle but that which is the foundation of the most perfect and extended freedom of conscience. The separation of temporal and spiritual power is based upon the idea that physical force

\(^{251}\) Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.
\(^{252}\) Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
has neither right nor influence over souls, over conviction, over truth. It flows from the distinction established between the world of thought and the world of action, between the world of internal and that of external facts. Thus this principle of liberty of conscience for which Europe has struggled so much, and suffered so much, this principle which prevailed so late, and often, in its progress, against the inclination of the clergy, was enunciated, under the name of the separation of temporal and spiritual power, in the very cradle of European civilisation; and it was the Christian Church which, from the necessity imposed by its situation of defending itself against barbarism, introduced and maintained it... It is in the combination of the spiritual and temporal powers, in the confusion of moral and material authority, that the tyranny which seems inherent in this [Muslim] civilisation originated.”

Another reason for the despotism inherent in Islam is the belief that all people are bound to obey Allah, and that those who do not obey – with the partial exceptions of the Jews and Christians - have no right either to life or freedom or property. The whole world is divided into the “House of Islam” (which means “obedience”), on the one hand, and the “House of War”, on the other. Therefore the natural state of relations between the two “Houses” is one of struggle, or “jihad”, interrupted only by temporary periods of peace permitted for purely tactical reasons. Thus the Koran says: “Kill the unbelievers wherever you find them” (Koran 2:191). “Make war on the infidels living in your neighbourhood” (Koran 9:123). “Fight and kill the unbelievers wherever you find them, take them captive, harass them, lie in wait and ambush them using every stratagem of war.” (Koran 9:5; cf. 8:60). “O believers, make war on the infidels who dwell around you. Let them find firmness in you” (Sura: 9; Ayat: 123). “Fight those who believe not... even if they be People of the Book [Jews and Christians] until they willingly agree to pay the tribute in recognition of their submissive state” (Sura: 9; Ayat: 29). “You will be called to fight a mighty nation; fight them until they embrace Islam” (Sura: 48; Ayat: 16).

The Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun summed up the difference between the Christian view of war and the Islamic view: "In the Muslim community, jihad is a religious duty because of the universalism of the Muslim mission and the obligation to convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force. The other religious groups did not have a universal mission, and the jihad was not a religious duty for them, save only for purposes of defense. But Islam is under obligation to gain power over other nations."

Thus, as L.A. Tikhomirov wrote: “In submitting without question to God, the Muslim becomes a spreader of the power of God on earth. Everyone is obliged to submit to Allah, whether they want to or not. If they do not submit, then they have no right to live. Therefore the pagans are subject either to conversion to Islam, or to extermination. Violent conversion to Islam, is nothing prejudicial, from the Muslim point of view, for people are obliged to obey God without question, not because they desire it, but because Allah demands this of them.”

Again, as Kenneth Craig writes, holy war, or jihad, “was believed to be the recovery by Islam of what by right belonged to it as the true and final religion but which had been alienated from it by the unbelief or perversity embodied in the minorities whose survival – but no more – it allowed....”

And if it allowed their existence, this was not because they had the “right” to survive, but because, for the time being, it was not advantageous to the Muslims – or beyond their power – to kill them...

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God placed Adam and Eve in Paradise together with the animals, and there they would have lived forever in joy and harmony without any pain or sorrow. However, although they were sinless and living in a wholly sinless and incorrupt world, the Paradise of delight, their holiness was as it were immature and untested. God decided to test their free will by giving them a small, easily-fulfilled commandment (especially for an unfallen nature), and by allowing the devil (who had fallen away from God before the creation of the material world) to approach them and test their obedience in the guise of a serpent. If they obeyed, they would become more mature and grounded in their holiness, and therefore still closer to God and each other. But if they disobeyed, they would lose that holiness, and the sinless nature both inside and outside them would be corrupted.

The Lord’s commandment was: “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat, you shall surely die” (Genesis 2.16-17). The devil tempted the woman, first, by suggesting that God was a liar, and that they would not die. Then he suggested that God was in fact envious of the apotheosis they would achieve if they ate of the tree. “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3.5). Eve liked the look of the fruit, ate of it and then gave it to her husband to eat.

Having believed in these lies and slander against the all-good God, and eaten of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, lost the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and suffered a catastrophic change in their physical and psychological nature. This change is signified in the Biblical text by their being endowed with “garments of skins” (Genesis 3.21). It is necessary to examine the meaning of this term with care.

Now skin is dead, and garments of skin can only be obtained by the killing of an animal. Therefore “by a garment of this kind,” writes the Venerable Bede, “the Lord signifies that they had now been made mortal – the skins contain a figure of death because they cannot be drawn off without the death of the animal”.257 And why, asks St. Ephraim, “would animals have been killed in their presence? Perhaps this happened so that by the animal’s flesh Adam and Eve might nourish their own bodies and that with the skins they might cover their nakedness, but also that by the death of the animals Adam and Eve might see the death of their own bodies.”258

Thus the spiritual death of man through sin led to the killing of an animal, the first physical death in creation (contrary to the theory of evolution, which posits billions and billions of completely senseless animal deaths before the appearance of man on the scene). This dead animality, in the form of animal skins, was then placed on man like an outer garment. But not simply placed on him: it entered into him, corrupting and coarsening his whole psycho-physical nature. It took hold of his

257 The Venerable Bede, On Genesis, I, 3.22.
258 St. Ephraim the Syrian, Commentary on Genesis, 2.33.1.
natural faculties and turned them into something different, what we call the passions. Thus St. Gregory Palamas writes: “Through this [the original] sin we have put on the garments of skin... and changed our abode to this transient and perishable world, and we have condemned ourselves to live a life full of passions and many misfortunes”.

There are three kinds of death: (i) spiritual death, the separation of the Holy Spirit from the soul (and hence, as we have seen, the loss of the likeness of God), (ii) physical death, the separation of the soul from the body, which comes later than spiritual death, but is an ineluctable consequence of it, and (iii) eternal death, the fixed and unchangeable abiding of a man in alienation from God.

St. Gregory of Nyssa compares this fallen life, or spiritual death, to “animals turning the mill”: “With our eyes blindfolded we walk round the mill of life, always treading the same circular path and returning to the same things. Let me spell out this circular path: appetite, satiety, sleep, waking up, emptiness, fullness. From the former of each pair we constantly pass to the latter, and back again to the former, and then back again to the latter, and we never cease to go round in a circle.... Solomon well describes this life as a leaking pitcher and an alien house (Ecclesiastes 12.6)... Do you see how men draw up for themselves honors, power, fame and all such things? But what is put in flows out again below and does not remain in the container. We are always consumed with anxious concern for fame and power and honor, but the pitcher of desire remains unfilled.”

Sexual desire, like hunger, sleepiness and all the other passions are fallen because they all belong to “the pitcher of desire” that “remains forever unfilled”. For fallen man, like the prodigal son, is forced to try and satisfy his hunger from the husks of the constantly changing and delusive world of fallen nature – a diet that only seems to nourish, but ends by making him hungrier than ever. It was not like that in Paradise, where man’s unfallen nature did not need corruptible food, but was constantly feasting on the incorruptible food provided by God Himself.

Thus St. Gregory writes: “When we have put off that dead and ugly garment which was made for us from irrational skins (when I hear ‘skins’ I interpret it as the form of the irrational nature that we have put on from our association with passion), we throw off every part of our irrational skin along with the removal of the garment. These are the things which we have received from the irrational skin: sexual intercourse, conception, childbearing, dirt, lactation, nourishment, evacuation, gradual growth to maturity, the prime of life, old age, disease and death.”


260 For this distinction, see Chrestos Androutsos, Dogmatiki tis orthodoxou anatolikis Ekklisias (The Dogmatics of the Orthodox Eastern Church), Athens, 1907, p. 164.


262 St. Gregory of Nyssa, On the Soul and Resurrection, chapter 10; translated by Catherine Roth, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, p. 114. It may be surprising to think of “gradual growth” as a consequence of the fall. But St. Ephraim the Syrian writes that in Paradise “just as the trees, the vegetation, the animals, the birds and even humankind were old, so also were they young. They were old according to the appearance of their limbs and their substances, yet they were young because of the hour and moment of their creation. Likewise, the moon was both old and young. It was
According to St. Gregory, the garments of skin, though the consequence of sin, are intended to turn us away from sin in two ways. The first way was delineated originally by Origen. Jean Daniélou writes: “In his work On the Dead [St. Gregory] explains that ‘the garment of skin’ allows man to turn back again freely to God: since man had despised the life of the spirit for carnal pleasure, God did not wish man ‘to withdraw from sin unwillingly and be forced by necessity towards the good’, for this would have destroyed man’s freedom and the image of God within him. Hence He made use of man’s very tendency by giving him the ‘garment of skin’. This would cause man to experience a disgust with the things of the world, and thus ‘he would willingly desire to return to his former blessedness’.

“In the Great Catechetical Discourse Gregory puts forward the second reason for the ‘garment of skin’, which derives not from Origen but from St. Athanasius. The idea is that the ‘garment of skin’, our present state of mortality, permits the bodily part of man to be destroyed; but since evil is so closely bound up with the body, evil too is destroyed, and thus man can be restored to his original innocence. Man’s body returns to earth like a vase of baked clay; thus the evil that was mingled with his body is now released, and the divine Potter can raise him up once more to his original beauty. Thus the ‘garment of skin’, though really foreign to human nature, was only given to man by a solicitous providence, as by a doctor giving us a medicine to cure our inclination to evil without its being intended to last forever.

“In answer to the question whether man was created without the ‘garment of skin’ (that is, without mortality and all the things that sex implies), Gregory gives one answer in his work On the Creation of Man: ‘The grace of the resurrection is the restoration of fallen man to his primitive state’. But in another passage in On the Creation of Man he puts forward another hypothesis, ‘as a kind of exercise’. Here he suggests that God in His foreknowledge knew that man would abuse his freedom and would fall; and hence ‘seeing that man by his sin had fallen from his blessed angelic state, God established a way by which the human race could be propagated in accordance with our nature; thus the total number of human souls would not be deficient, even though man had now lost the method of propagation by which the angelic hosts had multiplied.’ On this view (which is the one most important to us), God would have created man from the beginning with a mortal body through His foreknowledge of man’s sin.

“It is against the background of this doctrine that Gregory explains the two accounts in Genesis of the creation of man. Philo had already detected in Genesis two stages in man’s creation: in the first account, man, the first-born, is created in God’s image as the pre-existent archetype of the intelligible world; in the second, man, created as man and female, is man as he actually appears on earth... In man created in God’s image he sees the pre-existence of human nature in the perfection of the divine foreknowledge – such as it will be only at the end of time. Thus for Gregory, man created as male and female though first in the order of time is only young, for it was but a moment old, but was also old, for it was full as it is on the fifteenth day” (Commentary on Genesis, 1.24.1). Thus while there might be moral development in Paradise, there was no physical development or ageing. That came only as a result of the fall.
second in the order of intention...”

St. Maximus the Confessor develops some of St. Gregory’s ideas. Thus he describes this cyclical alteration of desire and fear, pleasure and pain as follows: “When God created human nature, he did not create sensible pleasure and pain along with it; rather, he furnished it with a certain spiritual capacity for pleasure, a pleasure whereby human beings would be able to enjoy God ineffably. But at the instant he was created, the first man, by the use of his senses, squandered this spiritual capacity - the natural desire of the mind for God – on sensible things. In this, his very first movement, he activated an unnatural pleasure through the medium of the senses. Being, in His providence, concerned for our salvation, God therefore affixed pain (οδυνη) alongside this sensible pleasure (ηδονη) as a kind of punitive faculty, whereby the law of death was wisely planted in our corporeal nature to curb the foolish mind in its desire to incline unnaturally toward sensible things.

“Henceforth, because irrational pleasure entered human nature, pain entered our nature opposite this pleasure in accordance with reason, and, through the many sufferings (παθηµατα) in which and from which death occurs, pain uproots unnatural pleasure, but does not completely destroy it, whereby, then, the grace of the divine pleasure of the mind is naturally exalted. For every suffering (πονος), effectively having pleasure as its primary cause, is quite naturally, in view of its cause, a penalty exacted from all who share in human nature. Indeed, such suffering invariably accompanies unnatural pleasure in everyone for whom the law of pleasure, itself having no prior cause, has preconditioned their birth. By that I mean that the pleasure stemming from the original transgression was ‘uncaused’ insofar as it quite obviously did not follow upon an antecedent suffering.

“After the transgression pleasure naturally preconditioned the births of all human beings, and no one at all was by nature free from birth subject to the passion associated with this pleasure; rather, everyone was requited with sufferings, and subsequent death, as the natural punishment. The way to freedom is hard for all who were tyrannized by unrighteous pleasure and naturally subject to just sufferings and to the thoroughly just death accompanying them.”

In spite of this, some of the passions – what are called the innocent passions - are necessary for survival in life after the fall. For, as St. John Chrysostom says, after the fall God “refashioned” the human body, which was “originally superior to what it is not”, so that it would be useful to us in our new situation. This is most obvious with hunger and sleep. If man did not feel hunger or weariness, he would not eat or

264 Since, according to St. Maximus, pleasure is defined as “that for which we naturally strive” (Ambigua 7, P.G. 91: 1088D), some kind of pleasure was present in us even before the fall. But this was a spiritual pleasure, a pleasure in God rather than in sensible things. (V.M.)
265 There is a pun here on the words “pain” and “pleasure”, οδυνη and ηδονη, which sound similar in Greek. (V.M.)
266 St. Maximus the Confessor, Questions to Thalassius, 61; translated by Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken in On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: St. Maximus the Confessor, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003, pp. 131-133.
rest and would waste away; for death, the first result of the fall, constantly erodes the strength of man from within, necessitating his restoration through food and sleep. It is also obvious in the case of sexual desire, which, while not necessary for the life of the individual, is necessary for the survival of the species as a whole. As St. Symeon of Thessalonica writes, marriage “is permitted because of the death that follows the disobedience, in order that, until the life [ζωη] and immortality that is through Christ should come, this present corrupt life [βιος] should remain.” Moreover, sexual desire not only stimulates the act that propagates the species. It is also an important factor in cementing the bond between the father and mother far beyond the duration of the sexual act (in human beings desire lasts longer, and fluctuates less, than in animals). The family unit in turn is the building block of the State (and the Church), which provides other essential survival functions.

It is not only these “crude” passions that have this dual character, both positive and negative, in the fall. Thus Nellas writes, interpreting Saints Gregory the Theologian and Maximus the Confessor: “Learning and work, in particular, constitute a coarsening, so to speak, of the original natural properties of wisdom and lordship over nature which man possessed as an image of God. They constitute an expression and function of these properties in material dress. Their aim when properly used was to lead man, and with him the world, towards God. But with sin they became imprisoned in the corrupt biological cycle, and they were coarsened and transformed into ‘garments of skin’.

“The same is true, to mention one more example, with regard to the deep and natural communion between persons which existed before the fall. (We have seen that a fundamental dimension of man’s being ‘in the image’ is that he constitutes at the same time both person and nature.) With the decline of man into individuality this communion was corrupted and shattered, and consequently in order to survive socially human beings needed some external organization, that is to say, they needed the city and, by extension, political life.

“The laborious cultivation of the soil, then, the professions, the sciences, the arts, politics, all the operations and functions by which man lives in this world, make up the content of the ‘garments of skin’ and bear the two-fold character which we have discussed above. On the one hand they are a consequence of sin and constitute a misuse of various aspects of our creation ‘in the image’. On the other they are a result of the wise and compassionate intervention of God and constitute the new clothing thanks to which human beings are able to live under the new conditions created by the fall.”

Thus, as St. Isaac the Syrian writes: “All existing passions are given for the support of each of the natures to which they belong naturally and for whose growth they were given by God. The bodily passions are placed in the body by God for its

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268 St. Symeon of Thessalonica, Περὶ τοῦ τιμωνον ναμιμου γαμου (On Honourable and Lawful Marriage), P.G. 155:504C. As a modern novelist has written: “Those burning Romantic poets weren’t wrong. Sex and death belong together, joined in our imaginations as they are in our DNA. Sex and death are our original parents. For some of us, the only family we’ll ever have.” (Jeanette Winterson, The Power Book, London: Vintage, 2001, p. 176).
269 Nellas, op. cit., p. 89.
support and growth; the passions of the soul, that is, the soul’s powers, [are placed there] for the growth and support of the soul.” But the fall has made each set of passions, though natural in themselves, opposed to each other. And so “when the body is constrained to go out from its passibility by abstaining from the passions in favour of the soul it is injured. Likewise, when the soul leaves what is its own and cleaves to that which is of the body it is injured.”

So even in the fall, even in the act of clothing us with the garment of the fallen passions, God in His Providence mixed mercy with punishment, life with death. Just as He mixed the pain of childbirth for Eve with the promise that she would give birth to the Redeemer Who would crush the head of the serpent...

Moreover, even death for the individual is a good, in that it cuts off sin, and by dissolving the body into its constituent elements gives the hope of their eventual reassembling, free of any admixture of evil, at the general resurrection. Thus St. Theophilus of Antioch writes: “God showed great beneficence to man because He did not leave him in sin unto the ages... For just as a vessel that has been made with a flaw is melted down or remolded to become new and whole, the same thing happens to man by death. For he is broken into pieces that he may rise whole in the resurrection; I mean spotless and righteous and immortal.”

In other words, physical death gives us a chance to be remade, and avoid eternal death.

Thus in the longer term physical death is a good; but in the shorter term, during the course of our earthly life, it is both evil in itself and one of the causes of our committing further evil, both because it impairs the good working of the brain and its ability to resist the machinations of the demons, and because it engenders the fear of death and the love of pleasure, the supposed antidote to death, in the soul.

St. Methodios of Olympus raises the question whether the “garments of skin” are bodies as such. He replies in the negative, referring to the verses in which Adam calls Eve “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh”. For here, “before the preparation of these coats of skin, the first man himself acknowledges that he has both bones and flesh”. The “garments of skin”, therefore, are not the body as such, but “the body of this death”, to use St. Paul’s phrase (Romans 7.24). “By which he does not mean,’ writes St. Photius the Great, interpreting St. Methodios’ thought, “that the body is death, but the law of sin which is in his members, lying hidden in his members, lying hidden in us through the transgression, and ever deluding the soul to the death of unrighteousness... [The apostle] says not that this body was death, but the sin which dwells in the body through lust...”

But if the garments of skin do not signify the body as such, they do signify a new

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271 St. Theophilus, *To Autolycus*, 2, 26. And St. Irenaeus writes: “He set a boundary to the sin of man, interposing death, and thus causing the end of sin, putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh in the earth so that man, ceasing to live unto sin and dying to it, might begin to live unto God” (*Refutation*, 3, XXVII, 6). Quoted in Romanides, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100. See also St. Ambrose’s discourse, *On the Good of Death*.
273 St. Photius the Great, *A Synopsis of some Apostolic Words from the same Discourse* [on the Resurrection by St. Methodios of Olympus], 3.
state of the body, its mortality and its grossness. “Man,” writes St. John of Damascus, “was ensnared by the assault of the arch-fiend, and broke his Creator’s command, and was stripped of grace and put off his confidence with God, and covered himself with the asperities of a toilsome life (for this is the meaning of the fig-leaves), and was clothed about with death, that is, mortality and the grossness of the flesh (for that is what the garment of skins signifies).”²⁷⁴ Again, St. Ignaty Brianchaninov writes, “the garments of skin signify our coarse flesh, which changed after the Fall, losing its subtlety and spirituality and receiving its present grossness.”²⁷⁵

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With the change in human nature, the whole of the rest of nature also changed; death and corruption entered the whole universe, while Paradise itself was withdrawn from the earth. For the next five-and-a-half thousand years, until the Coming of Christ (prophesied as the “Seed of the woman”, who would crush the head of the serpent, that is, the devil (Genesis 3.15)), there was absolutely no remedy for this, and all men lived in suffering, alleviated only by the hope of the Coming Saviour, Christ, Who just before raising Lazarus from the dead, and eight days before raising Himself from the dead, declared: “I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11.25-26)...

This does not mean that man can escape physical death at the end of his earthly life; for man has sinned, and must suffer “the wages of sin”, which is death (Romans 5). It means that if he believes in Christ, thereby receiving the remission of his sins (both original and personal), he will escape eternal death, and at the end of the world will receive the resurrection of his body also in a glorified, incorruptible form (John 5).

However, for those who do not believe in Christ, death remains the main problem of life, and eating of the tree of knowledge its only possible “solution”. Yuval Noah Harari calls this search for immortality “the Gilgamesh Project”. But it should more justly be called Adam and Eve’s project, for it was to them that Satan first presented the hope of escaping death by disobeying God’s commandment. “Of all mankind’s ostensibly insoluble problems, one has remained the most vexing, interesting and important: the problem of death itself. Before the late medieval era, most religions and ideologies took it for granted that death was our inevitable fate. Moreover, most faiths turned death into the main source of meaning in life.”

But then came SCIENCE, the modern tree of knowledge; and only today, according to Harari, is death not an inevitable destiny for men of science, “but only a technical problem” that could in principle be solved. “Until recently, you would not have heard scientists, or anyone speak so bluntly. ‘Defeat death?! What nonsense! We are only trying to cure cancer, tuberculosis and Alzheimer’s disease,’ they insisted. People avoided the issue of death because the goal seemed too elusive. Why create

²⁷⁴ St. John of Damascus, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, III, 1.
unreasonable expectations? We’re now at a point, however, where we can be frank about it. The leading project of the Scientific Revolution is to give humankind eternal life.”276 Thus does Satan continue to speak into the ears of deluded and faithless men, just as he did in the Garden of Eden…


24. CHRIST AS KING AND PRIEST

One of the marks of the Antichrist is that he will attempt to take upon himself the functions both of king and of high priest. This combination is strictly forbidden by Church tradition: king-priests are commonly found in pagan religions, but never in Christianity. Occasionally, bishops have been forced by circumstances to take upon themselves some of the functions of the secular ruler. This was the case, for example, in Montenegro during the early nineteenth century; and under the Turkish yoke the Ecumenical Patriarch was also appointed as head of the Orthodox nation under the Sultan. In general, however, any self-willed assumption of both powers was severely punished by the Church authorities. Thus when, in 796, Eadbert Praen, an English priest, assumed the crown of the sub-kingdom of Kent for himself, he was immediately rejected by the Archbishop of Canterbury and later anathematized by Pope Leo III. Such a priest-king, he wrote, was like Julian the Apostate…277

Julian was a pagan, and pagan kings very often combined the roles of kingship and priesthood (not to mention deity). But God’s true kings can never be priests. The only man known to have combined the roles of king and priests with God’s blessing is Melchizedek, the mysterious king-priest of Salem, who blessed Abraham on his return from the slaughter of the Babylonian kings.

However, Melchizedek was the exception that proved the rule; for he was more like God than man, being both the first and the last man in the history of the People of God lawfully to combine the roles of king and priest278. Indeed, he was the first recorded true king and “priest of the Most High God”, who was called “Possessor of heaven and earth” (Genesis 14.18). This title shows, according to St. Paul (Hebrews 7.3), that he was the type, not of any merely human king, but of Christ God, the Supreme King and Chief High Priest.279 Like Christ in His Divine generation, he was “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days not end of life, but made like the Son of God, remaining a priest continually” (Hebrews 7.3). Again like Christ at the Last Supper, Melchizedek offers Abraham bread and wine, which is why Christ is called “a priest after the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7.17). So Abraham is blessed by Christ Himself, the true King of Peace, in the person of Melchizedek, the “king of peace”…

When the Holy Fathers began to develop the Orthodox teaching on the relationship between the monarchy and the priesthood, they returned to the figure of Melchizedech. Paradoxically, in view of the later heresy of papism, it was some of the earlier, Orthodox popes who developed the dogma that the kingship and the priesthood cannot be combined in a single person – although their words were aimed rather at emperors who wanted to be popes (caesaropapism) rather than popes who wanted to be emperors (papocaesarism). Thus “before the coming of Christ,” wrote

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278 Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, Zapiski rukovodstvuiuschaia k osnovatel’nomu razumeniu Knigi Bytia (Notes Leading to a Fundamental Understanding of the Book of Genesis), Moscow, 1817, 1867, p. 78.
279 Melchizedek’s combining the roles of king and priest may also signify the Divine origin of both offices. See Protopriest Valentine Asmus, “O monarkhii i nashem k nej otnoshenii” (“On Monarchy and our Relationship to It”), Radonezh, N 2 (46), January, 1997, p. 4.
Pope Gelasius (492-496), “there existed people... who were, according to what sacred history tells us, at the same time both kings and priests, such as Melchizedek. This example was followed in his domain by the devil, who always, in a tyrannical spirit, claims for his own that which is fitting for divine worship, to the extent that the pagan emperors were also called pontiffs. But when there came He Who was in truth both King and Priest, from that time the emperor ceased to give himself the name of pontiff and the pontiff to lay claim to the royal pomp. For, although we say that the members of Christ, the true King and Priest, have, by reason of their participation in the glorious nature, received both the one and the other dignity through the sacred generosity [of Christ], so that they are at the same time ‘a royal and a priestly race’, nevertheless Christ, remembering the weakness of men..., has divided the spheres of the two powers by means of a distinction of duties and callings..., desiring that His own [children] should be guarded by grace-filled humility and should not once again become victims of human pride. So that the Christian emperors need the pontiffs for eternal life and the pontiffs conform to the imperial laws as regards the course of temporal things. Thus spiritual activities have been separated from carnal activities.... He who is entrusted with secular matters should not appear to preside over divine things, so that the modesty of the two orders should be respected....”

And so, as he wrote to the Emperor Anastasius, “there are two powers which for the most part control this world, the sacred authority of priests and the might of kings. Of these two the office of the priests is the greater inasmuch as they must give account even for kings to the Lord at the Divine Judgement. You know that although by your rank you stand at the head of the human race, you nevertheless bend your will before the leaders of Divine affairs, you turn to them in matters relating to your salvation, and you receive the heavenly sacraments from them. You know, consequently, that in matters of the faith you must submit to their lawful decisions and must not lord it over them – not submit them to your will, but be yourself guided by their judgements.” But “in matters touching public order, the Church hierarchs know that the emperor’s power has been sent down on you from above, and are themselves obedient to your laws, for they fear to be shown as opponents of your will in worldly affairs.”

Another Pope who took up the image of Melchizedech in order to humble a too-ambitious emperor was Nicholas I. But his motive was ambition of a no less pernicious kind: he wanted to bring down the emperor’s supposed caesaropapism in order to vaunt his own papocaesarism. Moreover, he wanted complete control over the Church in both East and West. However, if the papacy could cite some precedents for claiming supreme power over the Church in the West, in the East it had no jurisdiction and therefore no valid claims to power.

Nevertheless, in 863 Nicholas defrocked St. Photius of Constantinople. The Frankish Annals of St. Bertin for 864 responded by speaking of “the lord Nicholas, who is called pope and who numbers himself as an apostle among the apostles, and

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280 Gelasius, Tractatus IV.
who is making himself emperor of the whole world".  

Nothing daunted, in 865 Nicholas declared that the Pope had authority “over all the earth, that is, over every other Church”, “the see of Peter has received the total power of government over all the sheep of Christ”. As he wrote to Emperor Michael III: “The judge shall be judged neither by Augustus, nor by any cleric, nor by the people... The First See shall not be judged by any... Before the coming of Christ it was the case that there existed, in a type, men who were at once kings and priests: sacred history tells us that the holy Melchisedech was one of these. The devil, as one who ever strives, with his tyrannical spirit, to claim for himself what belongs to the worship of God, has imitated this example in his own members, so that pagan emperors might be spoken of as being at the same time the chief pontiffs. But He was found Who was in truth both King and Pontiff. Thereafter the emperor did not lay hands on the rights of the pontificate, nor did the pontiff usurp the name of emperor. For that one and the same ‘Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus’ (I Timothy 2.15), so separated the functions of the two authorities, giving each its own proper activities and distinct honours (desiring that these properties should be exalted by the medicine of humility and not brought down again to the depths by man’s arrogance...”

This would suggest that Nicholas supported the Orthodox teaching on the separation of the secular and ecclesiastical powers. And indeed, his treatment of the traditional theme of Melchizedek is Orthodox. However, while it was useful for him to preach the Orthodox doctrine in order to limit the power of the emperor, he accepted few, if any, limitations on his own power. He even hinted that the Byzantine emperors might not be legitimate emperors of the Romans, which would imply that the only legitimate emperor was the Frankish one, or, if the Donation of Constantine was to be believed, the Pope himself! Thus he said that it was ridiculous for Michael to call himself Roman emperor, since he did not even speak Latin!

The Roman papacy fell into several heresies, but the most fundamental of them, the heresy that gave it its specially antichristian character, was its assumption of supremacy, not only in the Church, but also in the State. It began by the papacy acquiring “the Papal States”; it continued, in 1059, with the papacy being crowned for the first time in a quasi-royal coronation (of Nicholas II), followed by the papacy taking upon itself the right to appoint and remove kings (the Norman invasion of England in 1066 and the centuries-long struggle with the German “Holy Roman Emperor”); and it reached its climax in megalomaniac documents such as Gregory VII’s Dictatus Papae (1075) and Boniface VIII’s Unam Sanctam (1302), which declared the papacy’s absolute authority over all churches, all states and all individuals. Not for nothing, therefore, did several saints call the Pope “the forerunner of the Antichrist”.

The true Divine order – the separation but at the same time “symphony” of powers between king and high priest - was indicated already in the Old Testament.

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282 Quoted in Fr. Andrew Louth, Greek East and Latin West, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, p. 168.
283 Nicholas I, in Bettenson and Maunder, Documents of the Christian Church, pp. 103, 104-105.
by King Jehoshaphat of Judah, who said: “Take notice: Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord, and Zebadiah the son of Ismael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king’s matters” (II Chronicles 19.11). However, when King Saul, tired of waiting for Samuel, transgressed against the Divine order by carrying out the appointed sacrifice himself, he lost his kingship (I Kings 13.13-14). Again, during the reign of King Uzziah the kingship began to encroach on the altar. Blessed Jerome explains: “As long as Zachariah the priest, surnamed the Understanding, was alive, Uzziah pleased God and entered His sanctuary with all reverence. But after Zachariah died, thinking to make the religious offerings himself, he infringed upon the priestly office, not so much piously as rashly. And when the Levites and the other priests exclaimed against him: ‘Are you not Uzziah, a king and not a priest?’ he would not heed them, and straightway was smitten with leprosy in his forehead, in accordance with the word of the prophet, who said, ‘Lord, fill their faces with shame’ (Psalm 82.17). Now Uzziah reigned fifty-two years… After his death the prophet Isaiah saw the vision [Isaiah 6.1]… While the leprous king lived, and, so far as was in his power, was destroying the priesthood, Isaiah could not see the vision. As long as he reigned in Judea, the prophet did not lift his eyes to heaven; celestial matters were not revealed to him.”

These were isolated instances, and the sin was always corrected. But from the time of the Maccabees, the error became systemic – with disastrous results for the Israelite autocracy. For from the time of Simon Maccabeus the Hasmonean rulers, who were of the priestly tribe but not of the kingly one, combined the roles of king and high priest (I Maccabees 13.42), thereby undermining the lawfulness of the leadership of the people of God. Finally Herod the Great came to power.

Now Herod was not only not of the line of David: he was not even a Jew by race. Tom Mueller writes: “His mother was an ethnic Arab [from Nabataea], and his father was an Edomite, and though Herod was raised as a Jew, he lacked the social status of the powerful old families in Jerusalem who were eligible to serve as high priest, as the Hasmonean kings had traditionally done. Many of his subjects considered Herod an outsider – a ‘half Jew’, as his early biographer, the Jewish soldier and aristocrat Flavius Josephus later wrote – and continued to fight for a Hasmonean theocracy.”

Pious Jews inevitably wondered how the promises made by God to David about the eternity of his dynasty (Psalm 131.11-15) could be fulfilled now that the Davidic line appeared to have died out. Perhaps the time had come for the appearance of the Messiah, whose kingdom would be eternal… After all, the “seventy times seven”

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285 The example of Saul was quoted by Patriarch Nikon of Moscow: “Listen to what happened to Saul, the first king of Israel. The Word of God said to Samuel: ‘I have repented that I sent Saul to the kingdom, for he has ceased to follow Me.’ What did Saul do that God should reject him? He, it is said, ‘did not follow My counsels’ (I Kings 15.10-28)...This is the Word of God, and not the word of man: ‘I made you ruler over the tribes of Israel and anointed you to the kingdom of Israel, and not to offer sacrifices and whole-burnt offerings,’ teaching for all future times that the priesthood is higher than the kingdom, and that he who wishes for more loses that which is his own.” (M.V. Zyzykin, Patriarkh Nikon, Warsaw: Synodal Press, 1931, part II, p. 17)

286 St. Jerome, Letter to Pope Damasus.

prophecy of Daniel (9.24-27) indicated that his coming would be in the first half of the first century AD.\textsuperscript{288} Moreover, had not the Patriarch Jacob, declared: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Genesis 49.10)? Now that the sceptre, in the form of the Jewish kingship, appeared to have departed from Judah, was it not time for the appearance of Shiloh?\textsuperscript{289}

Herod tried to remedy the fault of his non-Hasmonaean blood by marrying the Hasmonaean princess Mariamne, the grand-daughter of King Aristobulus and Hylrcanus II on her mother’s side. But his Jewish faith was superficial at best, if not completely feigned – he was more inclined to Greco-Roman culture and religion. Moreover, he proceeded to a frightful blood-letting of the leaders of Jewish society, killing most of the Sanhedrin and all of the Hasmonaean family, not excluding his own wife Mariamne and their sons Alexander and Aristobulus.

In view of the virtual extinction of the kingly line and the profound corruption of the priestly line, it was time for the only true King and Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come to earth and restore both lines, combining them, uniquely and unrepeatably, in His own Person. In Zachariah chapter 6, we have a striking messianic prophecy about Him Who would combine the roles of king and priest within Himself. For as crowns are placed on the head of Joshua, the high priest, the Lord says: “Behold the Man whose name is the Branch; and He shall grow up out of His place; and He shall build the Temple of Jehovah; even He shall build the Temple of Jehovah; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” That this refers primarily to Jesus the Messiah rather than Joshua the Jewish high priest is evident from several facts. First, “crowns” are not placed on the heads of priests, but of kings (it may be that only one crown is meant here, but made out of two materials, gold and silver). Secondly, the phrase “Behold the man” was later to be used by Pilate of Christ, and the name “Jesus” is in fact the same as “Joshua”. Thirdly, the “Branch” is a name for the Messiah in several Old Testament prophecies (cf. Isaiah 4.2, 11.1; Jeremiah 23.5, 33.15). Earlier, the Lord had said to Joshua that He would bring forth His servant, the Branch (3.8), so Joshua and the Branch are not in fact the same person. It is the Branch, not Joshua, Who will build the Temple, not of the Old Testament Church, but of the New Testament Church, the Body of Christ. He will “sit upon His throne”, which is not a normal thing for a priest to do: the reason is that He is not only a priest but also a king. That is, He is both the King of the Jews, and the High Priest of the Temple that is His Body, offering the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood for the salvation of all men. He is the only Person (except for Melchizedek) ever rightfully to combine the two roles in one Person. Normally, the attempt to

\textsuperscript{288} Bishop Alexander (Mileant) of Argentina (“On the Threshold”, Orthodox America, vol. XVIII, N 5 (161), January, 2000, p. 12) writes: “Daniel’s prophecy so explicitly and synonymously points to Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, that the Gemaric rabbi forbids his compatriots to calculate the dates of the Daniel septenaries, saying, ‘Those who calculate the times will hear their bones rattle’ (Sanhedrin 97).”

\textsuperscript{289} Bishop Alexander recounts a tradition from the Midrash “that when the members of the Sanhedrin learned that they had been deprived of the right to try criminal cases (in AD 30), they put on sackcloth and, tearing their hair, gathered and began to cry out: ‘Woe to us, woe to us: it has been a great while since we had a king from Judah, and the promised Messiah is not yet come!’ This occurred at the very beginning of Jesus Christ’s ministry” (ibid.).
combine the two roles leads to disaster, as it did at the beginning of history, when Nimrod tried to combine them, and as it will again at the end of history, when the Antichrist will try to imitate Christ in assuming supreme power in both Church and State. But Christ, being the only rightful King and Priest, brings “the counsel of peace” between God and man and between Jews and Gentiles... “For He is our Peace, Who hath made both one. And hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in decrees, for to create in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace. And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the Cross” (Ephesians 2.14-16).

June 22 / July 5, 2017.
St. Alban, Protomartyr of the British Isles.
Ironically, it was probably an Englishman, William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, who sketched the first plan for a united Europe as far back as 1693. His proposal was that the Sovereign Princes of Europe should “agree to meet by their stated deputies in a General Diet, Estates or Parliament, and there Establish Rules of Justice for Sovereign Princes to observe one to another; and... before which Sovereign Assembly, should be brought all Differences depending between one Sovereign and another... Europe would quietly obtain the so much desired and needed Peace.”

According to Yanis Varoufakis, the idea goes back to “the time-honoured Central European tradition associated with catchwords such as Mitteleuropa or Paneuropa...

“At its most wholesome, Mitteleuropa evoked a multinational multicultural intellectual ideal for a united Central Europe that the non-chauvinistic section of its conservative elites were rather fond of. However, Mitteleuropa was also the title of an influential book by Friedrich Naumann, authored in the midst of the Great War, which advocated an economically and politically integrated Central Europe run on German principles and with the ‘minor’ states placed under German rule. A great deal more liberal than Mitteleuropa, Paneuropa was the brainchild of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, an Austrian-Japanese intellectual who conducted a lifelong campaign to bring about a pan-European political and economic union.

“Despite these differences, Mitteleuropa and Paneuropa were aimed at protecting Europe’s centre from the geopolitical and economic encroachments of Russia from the east and the Anglosphere from the west. They also shared a view that European unity would have to be overlaid on Central Europe’s existing national institutions and, indeed, on its prevailing corporate power structures. A European union consistent with Mitteleuropa and Paneuropa visions would have to operate by limiting competition between corporations, between nations and between capital and labour. In short, Central Europe would resemble one gigantic corporation structured hierarchically and governed by technocrats, whose job would be to depoliticize everything and minimize all conflicts.

“Needless to say, the Mitteleuropa-Paneuropa vision enthused industrialists. Walter Rathenau, chairman of AEG (Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft) and later Germany’s foreign minister, went as far as to suggest that a Central European economic union would be ‘civilization’s greatest conquest’. The idea appealed not only to corporations like AEG, Krupp and Siemens, but also to the Roman Catholic Church and politicians like Robert Schuman, another of the European Union’s fathers, who was born in Germany but ended up French courtesy of a shifting border…”

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However, the first politician to really get the wheels of European integration moving was the French statesman Aristide Briand. He insisted, writes Tony Judt, that “the time had come to overcome past rivalries and think European, speak European, feel European. In 1924 the French economist Charles Gide joined other signatories in Europe in launching an International Committee for a European Customs Union. Three years later a junior member of the British Foreign Office would profess himself ‘astonished’ at the extent of continental interest in the ‘pan-European’ idea.

“More prosaically, the Great War had brought French and Germans, in a curious way, to a better appreciation of their mutual dependence. Once the post-war disruption had subsided and Paris had abandoned its fruitless efforts to extract German reparations by force, an international Steel Pact was signed, in September 1926, by France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and the (then autonomous) region of the Saar, to regulate steel production and prevent excess capacity. Although the Pact was joined the following year by Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary, it was only ever a cartel of the traditional kind; but the German Prime Minister Gustav Stresemann certainly saw in it the embryonic shape of future trans-national accords. He was not alone…”

As Conan Fischer writes, “French leaders had also begun to question whether individual European states could sustain their empires in the longer term and whether they were a match for the emerging continental superpowers, such as the United States and (potentially) the Soviet Union. Such ideas informed Briand’s thinking when, in 1929-30, he proposed creating a European Union, while Stresemann entertained comparable thoughts up to his death in October 1929. It followed that France and Germany would pursue rapprochement through the medium of European integration as national governments pooled aspects of sovereignty. French and German officials understood that even economic integration would entail a wider range of common policies and both countries also evoked common values, democratic and Christian, further to legitimize European integration and to counter the growing challenges of Bolshevism and Fascism…”

Adam Tooze writes: “In light of America’s uncompromising stance over war debts, in June 1929 at a meeting in Madrid, Briand and Stresemann had discussed a vision of a European bloc large enough to withstand American economic competition and capable of releasing itself from dependence on Wall Street. In a speech on 5 September 1929, using the League of Nations as his stage, Briand seized the initiative. The European members of the League must move toward a closer union. The toothless peace pact that bore his name was not enough. Given the obvious downward trend in the world economy and the looming prospect of further American protectionism, Briand’s first approach was to propose a system of preferential tariff reductions. But this economic approach met with such hostility that over the winter he moved to a different tack.

“In early May 1930, within weeks of the conclusion of the ticklish London Naval Conference, the French government circulated a formal proposal to all 26 of the other European member states of the League of Nations. Paris called upon its fellow-

Europeans to realize the implications of their ‘geographical unity’ to form a conscious ‘bond of solidarity’. Specifically, Briand proposed a regular European conference with a rotating presidency and a standing political committee. The ultimate aim would be a ‘federation built upon the idea of union and not of unity’. ‘Times have never been more propitious nor more pressing,’ Briand concluded, ‘for the starting of constructive work of this kind… It is a decisive hour when a watchful Europe may ordain in freedom her own fate. Unite to live and prosper!’”

However, Stresemann’s death a few weeks later brought an end to this initiative. Briand’s “Memorandum on the Organization of a Regime of European Federal Union” had to wait for the rise and fall of another scheme of European unity – Hitler’s – before it was revived and realized in the European Union of the late twentieth century.

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Tony Judt writes: “The very scale of the collective misery that Europeans had brought upon themselves in the first half of the twentieth century had a profoundly de-politicizing effect; far from turning to extreme solutions, in the manner of the years following World War One, the European publics of the gloomy post-World War Two years turned away from politics. The implications of this could be discerned only vaguely at the time – in the failure of Fascist or Communist parties to cash in upon the difficulties of daily existence; in the way in which economics displaced politics as the goal and language of collective action; in the emergence of domestic recreations and domestic consumption in place of participation in public affairs…

“In more ways than most contemporaries could possibly have foreseen, a new Europe was being born.”

In Western Europe, the post-war poverty and depression had been much greater than in the Anglo-Saxon countries (especially North America), and the consequent contrast as prosperity returned in the 1950s was therefore the more striking. Thus while in the period 1913-50 the average growth rate in Britain, France and Germany was 1.3 percent, in the period 1950-73 “French growth rate per annum had averaged 5 percent, West Germany had grown at nearly 6 percent and even Britain had maintained an average rate above 3 percent.” This extraordinary growth in prosperity, unparalleled in European history, could not fail to have an important and deleterious effect on the European psyche, accelerating its already pronounced turning away from religion and the spiritual life to Mammon. The American gospel of self-fulfilment played its part in this change, as preached by the wave of Hollywood films that poured into Europe. But there were other, still more significant factors.

One was the increased size and influence of the state, not in the totalitarian form of the contemporary Soviet Union, but in the more subtle and beguiling form of the

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West European welfare state... West European welfarism, otherwise known as Social Democracy, was for the time being a great success. As Judt writes: “In the peak years of the modern European welfare state, when the administrative apparatus still exercised broad-ranging authority and its credibility remained unassailed, a remarkable consensus was achieved. The state, it was widely believed, would always do a better job than the unrestricted market: not just in dispensing justice and securing the realm, or distributing goods and services, but in designing and applying strategies for social cohesion, moral sustenance and cultural vitality. The notion that such matters might better be left to enlightened self-interest and the workings of the free market in commodities and ideas was regarded in mainstream European political and academic circles as a quaint relic of pre-Keynesian times: at best a failure to learn the lessons of the Depression, at worst an invitation to conflict and a veiled appeal to the basest human instincts.

“The state, then, was a good thing; and there was a lot of it. Between 1950 and 1973, government spending rose from 27.6 percent to 38.8 of the gross domestic product in France, from 30.4 percent to 42 percent in West Germany, from 34.2 percent to 41.5 percent in the UK and from 26.8 percent to 45.5 percent in the Netherlands – at a time when that domestic product was itself growing faster than every before or since. The overwhelming bulk of the increase in spending went on insurance, pensions, health, education and housing. In Scandinavia the share of national income devoted to social security alone rose 250 percent in Denmark and Sweden between 1950 and 1973. In Norway it tripled. Only in Switzerland was the share of post-war GNP spent by the state kept comparatively low (it did not reach 30 percent until 1980), but even there it stood in dramatic contrast to the 1938 figure of just 6.8 percent.

“The success story of post-war European capitalism was everywhere accompanied by an enhanced role for the public sector. But the nature of state engagement varied considerably. In most of continental Europe the state eschewed direct ownership of industry (though not public transport or communications), preferring to exercise indirect control, often through autonomous agencies, of which Italy’s tentacular IRI was the biggest and best known...

“Doctrinal differences over the ostensible goals of the state might noisily oppose Left and Right, Christian Democrats and Communists, Socialists and Conservatives, but almost everyone had something to gain from the opportunities the state afforded them for income and influence. Faith in the state – as planner, coordinator, facilitator, arbiter, provider, caretaker and guardian – was widespread and crossed almost all political divides. The welfare state was avowedly social but it was far from socialist. In that sense welfare capitalism, as it unfolded in Western Europe, was truly post-ideological.

“Nevertheless, within the general post-war European consensus there was a distinctive vision, that of the Social Democrats. Social Democracy had always been a hybrid; indeed, this was just what was held against it by enemies to the Right and Left alike. A practice in lifelong search of its theory, Social Democracy was the outcome of an insight vouchsafed to a generation of European socialists early in the twentieth century: that radical social revolution in the heartlands of modern Europe –
as prophesied and planned by the socialist visionaries of the nineteenth century – lay in the past, not the future. As a solution to the injustice and inefficiency of industrial capitalism, the nineteenth-century paradigm of violent urban upheaval was not only undesirable and unlikely to meet its goals; it was also redundant. Genuine improvements in the condition of all classes could be obtained in incremental and peaceful ways.

“It did not follow from this that the fundamental nineteenth-century socialist tenets were discarded. The overwhelming majority of mid-twentieth century European Social Democrats, even if they kept their distance from Marx and his avowed heirs, maintained as an article of faith that capitalism was inherently dysfunctional and that socialism was both morally and economically superior. Where they differed from Communists was in their unwillingness to commit to the inevitability of capitalism’s imminent demise or to the wisdom of hastening that demise by their own political actions. Their task, as they had come to understand it in the course of decades of Depression, division and dictatorship, was to use the resources of the state to eliminate the social pathologies attendant on capitalist forms of production and the unrestricted workings of a market economy: to build not economic utopias but good societies.”

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The most sophisticated and complex organization of Social Democracy, creating a vast increase in state power, turned out to be supranational: the European Union, composed in the beginning of the six Benelux countries, but now (in 2017) encompassing twenty-seven states (excluding Britain, which voted to leave in 2016).

The European Union claims to have created peace in Europe; as David Reynolds puts it, the formation of the EU’s predecessor, the European Economic Community in 1957 was “effectively a peace settlement for Western Europe”. Many intellectuals in the early post-war generations believed that yet another war among the nations of Europe could be prevented only by uniting them in a new supra-nation. This, according to Michael McManus, was the motivation of Sir Edward Heath, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, who took his country into the Union in 1973.

Heath “had first-hand experience of a Nuremberg rally in 1937, of the Spanish Civil War in 1938, and of combat in the Second World war itself. His greatest fear was of a resurgence of nationalism in Europe and of another ruinous war. European unity was, for him, first and foremost, the necessary key to peace.

“This was the predominant view within the Conservative Party from the mid-1950s until the mid-1980s including most of Margaret Thatcher’s premiership. After the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, however, she recognised a new reality and was fearful of a united Germany. But Sir Edward’s needle had got stuck…”

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But was it really the European project that kept the peace in Europe? Hardly… The real causes of the preservation of peace in Europe were mutual exhaustion, the common threat of the Red Army just over the Elbe – and the consequent felt need for the formation of NATO in 1949. In fact, the real cause of peace was the American army, the core army of NATO, together with other American institutions in Europe. It was they that both defended the West against the Soviets and constantly cajoled the Europeans, especially the French, into working together for the common good.

The man usually credited with creating the EU, Jean Monnet, worked for much of his life in America and has been considered by many as almost an American spy. “It was Monnet,” write Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, “who had secured the Allies’ backing for General de Gaulle against Roosevelt’s opposition, and in return, de Gaulle gave him responsibility for rebuilding the French economy and industry – a position he used to achieve his great dream, laying the foundations for the EEC.

“‘The Schuman Declaration’ was the result of intrigue, trickery and subterfuge by Monnet, his most audacious trick being to get French and West German governments to set up a supranational organisation to co-ordinate their industries without realising exactly what they had signed up to. This radical new concept, of an organisation with control over individual nations’ industries but with its own, outside autonomy, laid the foundation for all that came after. Unsurprisingly, Monnet became president of the new body, called – with a chillingly Orwellian tone – the High Authority. [Former French Foreign Minister Robert] Schuman became the first president of the European Parliament in 1958.”

“The Schuman Declaration” took place on May 9, 1950, and marks the real birthday of the EU. What Schuman proposed (and realized through Monnet’s “audacious trickery”) was the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) with an embryonic supranational administration and court of justice located in Brussels. As Yanis Varoufakis points out, the ECSC was in fact a cartel, and therefore “a remarkable departure from American principles of governance, which since President Theodore Roosevelt had included a healthy dose of cartel busting. However, America’s global plan could not fly in Europe unless it made its peace with the Mitteleuropa-Paneuropa ideology intimately associated with Central Europe’s cartels.

“Making their peace with Central European corporatism, American policymakers had to swallow not only the idea of building the new Europe on a cartel of big business but also the unsavoury political agenda that went with it. Corporatists like Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet were bent on constructing the Brussels-based bureaucracy as a democracy-free zone. Count Coudenhove-Kalergi put it succinctly in one of his speeches when he declared his ambition for Europe to ‘supersede democracy and for it to be replaced by a ‘social aristocracy of the spirit’. As always

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happens when a technocracy harbouring a deep Platonic contempt for democracy attains inordinate power, we end up with an antisocial, dispirited, mindless autocracy.

“Europeans recognize this in today’s Brussels-based bureaucracy. Every survey of European public opinion finds large majorities with no trust in the EU’s institutions. While it is true that citizens around the world – for example, in Britain, the United States or India – are highly critical of their state’s institutions, the discontent with Brussels is qualitatively different. Take Britain for instance. The British state evolved as a set of institutions whose function was to regulate the struggle between different social groups and classes. The tussle between the king and the barons gave rise to Magna Carta, a deal the essence of which was to limit the king’s power. After the merchant class acquired economic power disproportionate to its social and political rank, the state evolved further to accommodate its interests with those of the aristocracy, especially after the 1688 Glorious Revolution. The Industrial Revolution brought new social strata into the mix (industrialists, trade unions, local communities made up of former peasants), extending the franchise and refining the state’s apparatus.

“Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic a similar process was spawning the American constitution. The United States government and bureaucracy also emerged at a time of intense conflict between vested interests and social classes. Slave-owning landowners, mainly in the South, clashed with East Coast traders and manufacturers in Illinois, Boston and Wisconsin. The Louisiana Purchase triggered a variety of new tussles between multiple interest groups. A brutal civil was proved impossible to avert and facilitated America’s consolidation. Later on, the rise of the labour unions and the military industrial complex signalled fresh rivalries. To bring the nation together and to homogenize its institutions so as to deal with the political, social and financial crises that these tensions threw up, Congress had to play a central equilibrating role. Indeed, no authority in the United States can defy Congress or ignore it. Whatever demerits American democracy may have, there can be no doubt that the democratic process is essential to keeping the nation together.

“By contrast, the European Union’s institutions did not evolve in response to social conflicts. National parliaments and institutions did all the heavy lifting in terms of ameliorating social conflicts while the Brussels bureaucracy was devised for the purpose of managing the affairs an industrial cartel made up of Central European heavy industry. Lacking a Demos – a ‘We the people…’ – to keep them in line, and indeed to legitimize their activities, Brussels bureaucrats both disdained democracy and were shielded from its checks and balances. While the cartel they administered was doing well under the auspices of the American-designed global financial system, the European Union’s institutions enjoyed widespread acceptance. However, unlike America’s Congress-centric system, the European Union lacked the democratic process necessary to fall back on in times of trouble.

“From the viewpoint of its official ideology, the European Union sounded very similar to the United States, even to liberal Britain. Free-market liberalism seemed to be the order of the day, and a single market free of state patronage the union’s objective. And yet, remarkably, the European Union began life as a cartel of coal and steel producers which, openly and legally, controlled prices and output by means of
a multinational bureaucracy vested with legal and political powers superseding national parliaments and democratic processes. Indeed, the inaugural task of the Brussels bureaucracy was to fix the price of steel and coal products and remove all restrictions on their movement and trading among the cartel’s member states. Curiously perhaps, this made perfect sense: what would be the point of cross-border cartel if its products were stopped at the borders, taxed and generally impeded by national government officials? The equivalent in the United States would have been a Washington bureaucracy, operating without a Senate or a House of Representatives to keep the bureaucrats in check, able to overrule state governments on almost anything and bent on fixing prices at levels higher than the market would have selected.

“The next step was obvious too: once tariffs on coal and steel were removed, it made sense to remove all tariffs. Except that French farmers, who always exerted exceptional influence on France’s political system, did not like the idea of untrammeled competition from imported milk, cheese and wine. So to co-opt French farmers, the so-called Common Agricultural Policy was established. Its purpose? To secure the farmers’ consent to a European free trade zone by handing over to them a chunk of the cartel’s monopoly profits.

“By the end of the 1950s a fully-fledged European Union (then known as the European Economic Community) had sprung from the multinational heavy industry cartel and its political incarnation in Brussels. Dollarized by the United States, it soon began to create large surpluses, which funded postwar Central European prosperity in the stable world environment provided by the Bretton Woods system, which was itself constantly stabilized by a United States ready and willing to recycle to Europe a large chunk of America’s surpluses. A golden age dawned, brimming with high growth, non-existent unemployment and low inflation, spawning a new Europe of shared prosperity. It was an American triumph that Europe’s elites were determined to portray as their own…”

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard confirms Varoufakis’ important conclusion: “The European Union was always an American project.

“It was Washington that drove European integration in the late 1940s, and funded it covertly under the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations.

“While irritated at times, the US has relied on the EU ever since as the anchor to American regional interests alongside NATO.

“There has never been a divide-and-rule strategy…

“The Schuman Declaration that set the tone of Franco-German reconciliation - and would lead by stages to the European Community - was cooked up by the US Secretary of State Dean Acheson at a meeting in Foggy Bottom. ‘It all began in Washington,’ said Robert Schuman’s chief of staff.

“It was the Truman administration that browbeat the French to reach a modus vivendi with Germany in the early post-War years, even threatening to cut off US Marshall aid at a furious meeting with recalcitrant French leaders they resisted in September 1950.

“Truman’s motive was obvious. The Yalta settlement with the Soviet Union was breaking down. He wanted a united front to deter the Kremlin from further aggrandizement after Stalin gobbled up Czechoslovakia, doubly so after Communist North Korea crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded the South.

“For British eurosceptics, Jean Monnet looms large in the federalist pantheon, the eminence grise of supranational villainy. Few are aware that he spent much of his life in America, and served as war-time eyes and ears of Franklin Roosevelt.

“General Charles de Gaulle thought him an American agent, as indeed he was in a loose sense. Eric Roussel’s biography of Monnet reveals how he worked hand in glove with successive administrations.

“General Charles de Gaulle was always deeply suspicious of American motives…

“Nor are many aware of declassified documents from the State Department archives showing that US intelligence funded the European movement secretly for decades, and worked aggressively behind the scenes to push Britain into the project.

“As this newspaper first reported when the treasure became available, one memorandum dated July 26, 1950, reveals a campaign to promote a full-fledged European parliament. It is signed by Gen William J. Donovan, head of the American wartime Office of Strategic Services, precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency.

“The key CIA front was the American Committee for a United Europe (ACUE), chaired by Donovan. Another document shows that it provided 53.5 per cent of the European movement’s funds in 1958. The board included Walter Bedell Smith and Allen Dulles, CIA directors in the Fifties, and a caste of ex-OSS officials who moved in and out of the CIA.

“Bill Donovan, legendary head of the war-time OSS, was later in charge of orchestrating the EU project…

“There is nothing particularly wicked about this. The US acted astutely in the context of the Cold War. The political reconstruction of Europe was a roaring success…”

In spite of the enormous debt the European Union owes to America, anti-Americanism has been a defining sentiment of European leaders almost from the beginning. The ungrateful and ultimately self-defeating desire to undermine American leadership in the western world has manifested itself in many ways: in

303 Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, “The European Union always was a CIA Project, as Brexiteers Discover”, The Daily Telegraph, business section, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/04/27/the-european-union-always-was-a-cia-project-as-brexiteers-discover/
France’s withdrawal from NATO, in the efforts to undermine the Bretton Woods Agreement, which led to the “Nixon Shock” of 1971, in Germany’s Ost-Politik at the height of the Cold War, in the refusal to pay its share of Europe’s own defence. Earlier this year Angela Merkel complained that Britain and the United States were withdrawing from Europe - and this in spite of the fact that America pays 4% of its GDP to NATO, Britain - 2%, and Germany – only 1.2%! Merkel then went on to say that Europe should “go it alone” in its defence. Of course, Europe has long wanted to have its own army, the one attribute of a truly sovereign state (apart from its unprotected borders) that it does not yet have. But in view of the Europeans’ refusal to pay for their own defence, a European army could only be built at the expense of withdrawing forces from NATO, thereby undermining European security at a critical moment of history. It is likely that Europe’s anti-Americanism will cost it dear in the future...

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A memo dated June 11, 1965 from the French Foreign Minister Giscard d’Estaing instructed the vice-president of the European Community to pursue monetary union by stealth, suppressing debate until the “adoption of such proposals would become virtually inescapable”. Since monetary union, as Alan Greenspan reminded the world when the disastrous common currency was in fact introduced decades later, cannot function properly without a unitary state, this typically stealthy instruction brings us to the real goal of the EU’s founders: the suppression of national sovereignties and the creation of political union in the form of a Superstate. This state, needless to say, would not be a democracy. This was not part of the Americans’ plan for Europe in the 1950s. But it had been in the Europeans’ plan from the beginning. For, as Jean Monnet put it as early as 1952: “The nations of Europe must be guided towards a Superstate without their peoples understanding what is happening. This can be carried out in successive stages, each camouflaged as having an economic goal, but which will end up by leading them irreversibly into a federation.”

Monnet’s words were prophetic: during the course of the twentieth century as the European Superstate’s powers increased inexorably, being sanctified through a series of treaties signed by the heads of the Union’s national governments, including the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the Single European Act of 1985, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the introduction of the single currency in 1999 and the Lisbon Treaty of 2007. But these acquisitions of power by the supranational Union were not democratically debated or ratified in any real sense; and the lack of democratic consensus and of sustained economic growth in later decades has caused serious problems, leading to Britain’s decision to withdraw from the Union in 2016.

As the present writer commented in 1995, “Stealthily, unnoticed even by the great majority of its own citizens, a totalitarian monster has been born in the heart of Western Europe. Although this monster, the European Union is the creation of a group of democratic states and is situated in the heartland of modern democracy, it has already to a large extent superseded the process of democratic decision-making in the member states and replaced it by an unelected body, the European Commission, which, together with the equally unelected European Court, has the power to issue directives that override all national legislation and which is steadily
penetrating every nook and cranny of the political, economic, social and religious life of the member states, from the permitted shape of cucumbers to the date of Pascha. Moreover, the Maastricht treaty of 1992 legislated that by 1997 a single European Currency would be created run by a single (again unelected) European Bank – an institution the creation of which, in the opinion of the president of the American Federal Reserve Bank, Alan Greenspan, must necessarily be accompanied by irreversible political union and the creation of a single European state.

“When national sovereignty has gone and national parliaments become emasculated talking shops (a process that is already far advanced), only the European Parliament may perhaps have the power to withstand the power of the Commission-Politburo. However, all the indications are that the European Parliament, like the Soviet Central Committee, will be a toothless institution populated by people who have already imbibed the socialist spirit of the European institutions and enthusiastically accepted the ideology of the European super-state. The only real function of the European parliament, according to the well-known Anglo-French industrialist and politician, Sir James Goldsmith, ‘is to provide cover for the Commission’; and he argues that ‘at the moment the work of the European Parliament is overwhelmingly either a waste of time or downright destructive.’

“Like all socialist revolutions, the modern European revolution claims to be democratic while actually working against the people and in secret from it. Thus Goldsmith writes: ‘The European Union was built in secret: not through carelessness or casualness, but in a deliberately planned and skilfully executed manner. Claude Cheysson, the former French Minister of Foreign Affairs and a member of the European Commission from 1985 to 1989, described the mechanism in an interview in Le Figaro on 7 May 1994. He explained proudly that the European Union could only have been constructed in the absence of democracy, and he went on to suggest that the present problems were the result of having mistakenly allowed a public debate on the merits of the Treaty of Maastricht.

“’The British newspaper The Guardian lodged a case before the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg complaining of the secrecy in which European decisions were taken. Lawyers for the European Council of Ministers responded by stating to the judges that “there is no principle of community law which gives citizens the right to EU documents.” They went on to make the astounding claim that although heads of government had repeatedly called for more openness in EU affairs, their declarations “were of an eminently political nature and not binding on the community institutions”. So they asked the judges to ignore the repeated declarations at EU summit meetings in the past two years in favour of greater openness. Statements by the twelve heads of government were no more than “policy orientations” and had no binding effect.

“’This belief that the nomenklatura knows best and that the public is no more than a hindrance explains why there now exists a profound and dangerous divorce between European societies and their governing elites.’”

So what is the European Union? Robert Skidelsky described it well as “diluting both the democratic and the national principles in the interest of a wide union of people.” In other words, it is a disguised empire masquerading as a democracy but with despotic and anti-national tendencies.

The success of the European Superstate (at least until the beginning of this century) has been guaranteed by the fact that its totalitarian essence has been masked by the gradualness and non-violence of its rise, by contrast with the violence of the Soviet and Nazi Superstates of the first half of the century. Moreover, it has managed to preserve for its citizens a high level of material comfort – always the most important attraction in the Age of Mammon. This has enabled it to hide from the majority of its citizens the gradual loss of many freedoms, and the enormous power of the atheist State (there is no mention of God in the Constitution, in spite of pleas from the Pope) over almost every aspect of their lives from the cradle to the grave. Only a few nations on the periphery of the Union have shown any serious sign of discontent: Britain, because of its attachment to real democracy and national sovereignty, Greece, because its economy has been destroyed by the Franco-German Politburo, and Poland, because its Christian feelings have been deeply offended by enforced immigration and Islamization. It remains to be seen what will now (this was written in 2017) come first: the final closing of the door on the last vestiges of national sovereignty (this is what the Brexit negotiations are all about), and the pulling up of the drawbridge on Fortress Europe, or disintegration and the twilight of the gods as the barbarian hordes (not only from ISIS and the like, but also from Putin’s Russia) finally overwhelm this last, most sophisticated attempt to build the Tower of Babel.


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26. THE REUNIFICATION OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

From the year 2000, as the Synod of ROCOR began officially to accept the canonicity of the MP and initiated union talks with it, the Church both inside and outside of Russia that remained faithful to the truth began to separate into so-called “splinters” (oskolki), small Synods not in communion with each other. Most of them claimed that their canonical existence, like that of ROCOR, was based on Patriarch Tikhon’s ukaz no. 362. However, as Igumen (now Bishop) Andrei (Erastov) argued earlier this year, strictly speaking, neither ROCOR in the 1920s nor, still less, the “splinters” of the early 2000s, ever corresponded to the conditions for the existence of the autonomous groups of bishops envisaged by the Patriarch’s ukaz, so that a canonical basis for the present-day True Orthodox Church of Russia must be sought elsewhere.

Let us examine Igumen Andrei’s argument, and his proposed solution to the problem of the “splinters”.

“It is completely obvious,” he writes, “that it is impossible now even to imagine a single administrative centre of the Russian Church. On the other hand, it is possible that its existence would not be useful. Church life, both in Russia and abroad, must be built on the basis of ukaz №362 as the basic guiding canonical document. In correspondence with this ukaz, church districts must be formed on voluntary principles; they must consist of several dioceses (no less than three or four). (A Church can be autocephalous only if can itself and install and judge its own bishops. For the election of a new bishop three diocesan bishops must participate and confirm a fourth as the metropolitan. (Fourth Canon of the First Ecumenical Council.)) These districts will be temporarily autonomous until the restoration of a lawful, canonical Higher Church Authority in the Russian Church.

“The hierarchs will have to elect from their midst a first-hierarch, in relation to whom they will carry out the obligations imposed by the 34th Apostolic canon. Such districts will maintain Eucharistic communion between themselves, together with close links expressed in fraternal communion and mutual support. At times they will gather together in common councils to resolve general church questions. However, from an administrative point of view each district will be independent. It is not difficult to see that such an organization of the Church will be a return to the canonical forms of the early Christians such an organization of the Church will be a return to the canonical forms of the early Christians.”

306 Совершенно очевидно, что сейчас нельзя даже представить себе единый административный центр Русской Церкви, с другой стороны, его существование, возможно, и не было бы полезно. Церковная жизнь, как в России, так и за рубежом должна строиться на основании указа №362 – основного руководящего канонического документа. В соответствии с этим указом, должны быть сформированы на добровольных началах церковные округа, состоящие из нескольких епархий (не менее трех - четырех), (Автокефальной может быть лишь та Церковь, которая сама может поставлять и судить своих епископов. Для избрания нового епископа необходимо участие на соборе 3-х епархиальных епископов и утверждение 4-го – митрополита. (4-е правило 1-го Всел Соb.)) Эти округа будут временно автономными, до восстановления законной канонической Высшей Церковной власти в Русской Церкви. Архиерей округа должны избирать из своей среды первоиерарха, в отношении к которому будут исполнять обязанности, налагаемые 34-м Апостольским правилом. Такие округа будут поддерживать между собой евхаристическое общение и тесные связи, выражающиеся в братском общении и
This extract already displays considerable confusion of thought. First, the author questions whether an administrative centre of the Russian Church is imaginable or even desirable. But then he suggests returning to the application of ukaz № 362 as the basic guiding canonical document. Fine; but this ukaz was issued by the administrative centre of the Russian Church and presupposes that such a centre is both imaginable and desirable… Then the author appears to concede that such a centre is indeed desirable; for he writes that the church districts “will be temporarily autonomous until the restoration of a lawful, canonical Higher Church Authority in the Russian Church”. But then he contradicts himself by declaring that “such an organization of the Church will be a return to the canonical forms of the early Christians” – when there were no Higher Church Administrations above the metropolitan level, no ukaz № 362 and no national Churches such as the Russian. So which is it? Is Igumen Andrei proposing a reconstruction of the unity of the national Church of Russia, or the radical decentralization of the Church on the model of the Early Church? The latter is by no means an impossibility, but it runs up against the insuperable obstacle that it requires that all the Local True Orthodox Churches – the Russian, the Greek, the Serbian, etc. – should announce their dissolution as national Churches and then their re-formation as independent metropolitan districts having no national mark or obedience to any national Church. However, it seems that nobody – except, perhaps, the name-worshipping “Bishop” Gregory (Lurye) – is even contemplating such a thing…

He continues: “Church formations on the model of church districts – the so-called ‘splinters’ – have already been formed among us historically. Of course, these church formations have great faults, for example, the fact that they overlap each other territorially. But they have one important merit – they already exist. Church construction has in mind already existing building material. In fact, the problem of the ‘splinters’ does not lie in their splintering. – this splintering has its positive sides, and is completely canonical. That is how the Church looked in antiquity, and such a splintering is envisaged by ukaz № 362. The main problem of the ‘splinters’ lies in the fact that there is no liturgical communion between them, and many of them have no conciliarity.

“At the basis of liturgical communion between the ‘splinters’, as in the early Church, there have to be: an Orthodox confession [of faith] and the lawfulness of the hierarchy. Eucharistic communion is impossible only with non-Orthodox, with those who do not have a correct ordination or with banned clergy. If these obstacles do not exist, then there is no reason to reject serving together. We must all reject the abnormality of the situation when Orthodox hierarchs have no Eucharistic communion with each other and do not care about that fact.”307

307 У нас уже исторически сложились церковные образования, на подобие церковных округов – это так называемые «осколки». Конечно, эти церковные образования имеют большие недостатки, например, то, что они территориально накладываются друг на друга. Но у них есть и одно важное достоинство – они уже существуют. А церковное строительство имеет в виду наличный строительный материал. Собственно, проблема «осколков» не в самом дроблении, – это дробление имеет свои позитивные стороны, и оно вполне канонично. Так выглядела Церковь в древности, и подобное дробление

взаимопомощи. По временам будут собираться общие соборы для разрешения общекерковных вопросов. Однако, в административном отношении каждый округ будет независимым. Нетрудно видеть, что такая организация Церкви будет возвратом к первохристианским каноническим формам.
Here at last we come to the nub of the situation. Igumen Andrei correctly observes that ukaz №362 cannot be applied at the present time because conditions have changed radically since the 1920s: communications are better, but there is no central authority for the splinters to communicate with; the splinters overlap each other territorially; and, still more important, there is no agreement in faith and therefore Eucharistic communion between them. However, he still seems to think that, for lack of anything better, we must make do with ukaz №362 as a basis for church unity. But how can an ukaz that cannot be applied to the present situation because of the factors mentioned above form the basis for church unity?! Although the ukaz was undoubtedly inspired by the Holy Spirit and was important for preserving church unity in the Soviet period, it presupposed an already-existing unity in faith which no longer exists; so it cannot be used as a basis for recreating that unity which is the essential condition for any serious work in church building.

“The principle expressed in ROCOR’s Statute: ‘The Russian Church Abroad is an unbreakable part of the Local Russian Orthodox Church temporarily self-governing on conciliar principles’ remains in force. However, it must be applied not to any single part of the Church, but to all of them together.”

All of them together? Even when they are not in communion with each other, and when they believe different things? This is “Catacomb Church ecumenism” and quite unacceptable!

“The ‘splinters’ dispute with each other over who has the right of succession from the pre-schism Church Abroad. However, it no longer exists. As was said before, the ROCOR Synod existed, not on the basis of any canonical acts, but in spite of them. The meaning of the existence of the Synod lay in the fact that it was the bearer of Church truth. But when the Synod later fell into the deception of Sergianism, it lost all significance. The canonical basis of the Synod lay in its lofty spiritual-moral authority and in considerations of what is profitable for the Church. (‘What is useful for the Church is canonical’ (V.V. Bolotov).)”
This again makes no sense. However great the authority of V.V. Bolotov, the expression “What is useful for the Church is canonical” is not sanctioned by Church tradition. For who is to say what is useful for the Church? Many ecumenists have considered following the canons about, for example, concelebration with heretics, to be not useful for the Church. Are they to be allowed to redefine what is not canonical as canonical simply because it is “useful” to them?! The MP is doing something similar now, issuing “canonical” rebukes to those who question the canonicity of the ecumenical movement...

He continues: “Therefore, before the restoration of a Higher Church Administration, the Russian Local Church must be composed of church districts in liturgical communion with each other. The process of the ‘splinters’ unification must not be seen in their merging together, into one structure or in the submission of all of them to one centre, but in the establishment of Eucharistic and fraternal communion, instead of the present rivalry, claims and mutual excommunications.

“The principle expressed in ROCOR’s Statute: ‘The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad is an unbreakable part of the Russian Orthodox Church temporarily self-governing on conciliar principles’ remains in force. However, it must be referred, not to any one part of the Church Abroad, but to all the parts together.”

Again, we see a confusion between means and ends in Igumen Andrei’s argument. He says that “before the restoration of a Higher Church Administration, the Russian Local Church must be composed of church districts in liturgical communion with each other.” But they are not in communion with each other, so what are they, canonically speaking, and where is the Local Russian Church? Again, he scorns “the present rivalry, claims and mutual excommunications”, but offers no solution as to how to overcome that. He rejects the solution of “the submission of all of them to one centre” – probably because he himself has fled from “Metropolitan” Agathangel’s attempt to make himself such a centre, “not a part, but the remnant” (не част’, a ostatok) of the Church – but also scorns a “merging” of the splinters on any other basis.

“A strange picture emerges: the ‘splinters’ are competing for possession of a non-existent heritage. The heritage of the Church Abroad does not consist in any special canonical right – that does not exist, but in the spirit of true churchliness, in the wisdom of the royal path, which unites a firm stand in the truth and the preservation of the tradition of the Church, but without deviating into the extremes of fanaticism and sectarian thinking. Unfortunately, our ‘splinters’ are not worrying at all about acquiring this spiritual heritage of the Church Abroad.

“It is to highest degree strange when some small ‘splinter’, not having the slightest moral authority behind it, lays claim to the highest authority over the whole of the Russian Church on the basis of some incomprehensible right of succession from the

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311 Таким образом, до восстановления законной высшей церковной власти Русская Поместная Церковь должна представлять из себя церковные округа, находящиеся в литургическом общении друг с другом. Процесс объединения «осколков» нужно видеть не в административном слиянии их в одну структуру или подчинении всех одному центру, а в том, чтобы между ними установилось евангелическое и братское общение, вместо нынешнего соперничества, претензий и взаимных отлучений.
former ROCOR, as, for example, was said in the ‘Declaration of the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR’.

“The ‘splinters’ have nothing to share and no reason to compete with each other. All of them are temporarily self-administering parts of the Russian Church Abroad independently of where they are, in Russia or abroad, and no matter with what abbreviations they label themselves. However, they have to organize themselves on the principle of conciliarity in accordance with ukaz № 362 so as to be transformed from ‘splinters’ into canonical Church Districts.”

A strange picture indeed! The ‘splinters’, according to Igumen Andrei, are uncanonical, and yet they have “a moral-spiritual authority”. Their existence is based on ukaz № 362, and yet the basic preconditions of that ukaz are nowhere fulfilled. Individually they are nothing, and yet taken together they constitute the whole of the Russian Church – so long as they can organize themselves and “be transformed from ‘splinters’ into canonical Church Districts.” But how? That question is not answered…

“Let us examine separately the question of clergy bans to which several ‘splinters’ have been subjected. The hierarchy of the majority of the ‘splinters’ has undoubted apostolic succession, but their canonicity remains under question because these ‘splinters’ at their foundation were evaluated as schism and their episcopate was placed under ban.

“Clergy bans can be imposed with various aims and have different meanings. For example, a ban can be imposed for a time, as a punishment for some act. Also, a ban can be imposed on a clergyman under accusation before an ecclesiastical court has judged him. In our case, a ban without time limit was imposed on bishops who had removed themselves from obedience to a church authority and had created their own separate jurisdiction. Such a ban is laid the disobedient so as to return them to obedience. In the history of the Church this has happened many times. Almost every time a ‘daughter’ Church separated from its mother-Church, this was linked with a schism and bans. That was the case, for example, when the Bulgarian Church separated from Constantinople in a self-willed manner in 1872.

312 Получается странный картинка: «осколки» соревнуются за обладание несуществующим наследством. Наследство Зарубежной Церкви состоит не в каких-то особых канонических правах – их нет, а в духе истинной церковности, в мудрости царского пути, соединяющего твердое стояние в истине и хранение предания Церкви, но без уклонения в крайности фанатизма и сектантского мышления. К сожалению, о стяжании этого духовного наследства Зарубежной Церкви наши «осколки» нисколько не заботятся.

В высшей степени странно, когда какой-нибудь маленький «осколок», не имея за собой ни малейшего морального авторитета, претендует на высшую власть над всей Русской Церковью, на основании какого-то невнятного правопреемства от прежней РПЦЗ, как, например, это было сказано в недавнем «Заявлении Архиерейского Собора РПЦЗ».

313 «Осколкам» нечего делить и не из-за чего соперничать. Все они являются временно-самоуправляющимися частями Русской Поместной Церкви, независимо от того, где они находятся, в России или за рубежом, и какой бы аббревиатурой они себя ни называли. Однако, им нужно организоваться на началах соборности, согласно с Указом № 362, чтобы из «осколков» стать каноническими Церковными Округами.

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“There are only three possible ways of removing such a ban and restoring peace in the Church. 1. If the disobedient group of bishops repents and returns into obedience to church authority. 2. If the church authority itself becomes softer and removes the ban. 3. If the church authority is unbending, those under ban can appeal to a higher ecclesiastical instance. For example, in 1935 there was a reconciliation between the Synod of the Church Abroad and Metropolitan Evlogy and Metropolitan Theofil, who returned into obedience to the Synod, and their bans were removed. But in relation to the bans placed on the ‘splinters’ by the ROCOR Synod (for example, on the Suzdal group), the problem consists in the fact that the church authority that imposed the bans no longer exists (since it has fallen into Sergianism), and so it is impossible to be reconciled and freed from the ban. For the ban can be removed only by that Church which imposed it (Apostolic Canon 32; Canon 5 of the First Ecumenical Council) or by a Church Council that is significantly more authoritative. Nor is it possible to appeal to a high ecclesiastical instance, insofar as that also does not exist for us. Of course, many ‘splinters’ claim the right of succession from the ROCOR Synod before 2007 or by the Synod Metropolitan Vitaly (2001-2007), it makes no sense to recognize these bans. We have to consider them to be non-existent. These bans could be removed by a common council of the hierarchs of the ‘splinters’.

“As regards the mutual bans imposed by the hierarchy of the ‘splinters’ on each other, these were sometimes imposed on the basis of incorrect canonical ideas. For that reason it would be possible simply to ignore them. As one contemporary church actor says, the process of ‘the gathering of the splinters’ must at the initial stage be more ‘theoretical’, and not organizational-administrative. It is time, finally, to compose a vivid and convincing ideology, or, expressing oneself in theological language, an ‘ecclesiology of the splinters’, which would gradually become more popular and influential than the old ‘administrative-synodal’ ecclesiology.”

315 Отдельно рассмотрим вопрос запрещений в священнослужении, которым подверглись некоторые «осколки». Иерархия большинства «осколков» имеет несомненное апостольское преемство, но каноничность их остается под вопросом, из-за того, что эти «осколки» при своем образовании были расценены как раскол и их епископат был подвержен запрещению. Запрещения в священнослужении могут быть наложены с различной целью и имеют различный смысл. Например, запрещение может быть наложено на время, как наказание за какой-либо проступок, также запрещение налагается на обвиненного клирика прежде церковного суда над ним. В нашем случае бессрочное запрещение было наложено на епископов, вышедших из повиновения церковной власти и составивших свою отдельную юрисдикцию. Такое запрещение налагается на непослушных, чтобы вернуть их к послушанию. В истории Церкви такое случалось множество раз. Почти каждый раз, когда происходило отделение «дочерней» Церкви от Церкви-матери, это было связано с расколом и претензиями. Так это было, например, когда Болгарская Церковь самовольно отделилась от Константинополя в 1872 г.

Существуют только три возможности, чтобы такое запрещение было снято, и восстановился мир в Церкви. 1. Если непокорная группа епископов раскается и вернется в послушание церковной власти. 2. Если сама церковная власть смягчится и снимет запрещение. 3. При неустойчивости церковной власти запрещенные могут апеллировать к суду высшей церковной инстанции. Например, в 1935 г. произошло примирение между Синодом Зарубежной Церкви и митр. Евлогием и митр. Феофилом, которые вернулись в послушание Синоду, и с ними были сняты запрещения. Но в отношении «осколков», запрещенных Синодом РПЦЗ, (как например, Суздальская группа), проблема состоит в том, что больше не существует церковной власти, наложившей это запрещение (т.е. она впала в сергианство), и таким образом, нет возможности примириться и освободиться от запрещения.
There is much we can sympathize with in these words. However, they suffer from the same lack of clarity and contradictoriness that we noted earlier. First, with regard to the bans placed on each other by the hierarchs of the “splinters”, Igumen Andrei sees the only solution in their being removed “by a common council of the hierarchs of the ‘splinters’”. Theoretically, that is possible – something similar happened in 1985 in the True Orthodox Church of Greece. But the True Orthodox Church of Greece remains as divided now as it was in 1985...

Moreover, how can he be confident that any kind of unanimity will be achieved in this “common council”? And what if the bans are fully deserved and should remain in force? To take just one example: both RTOC and ROAC and the new jurisdiction to which Igumen Andrei himself belongs have strong and justified grounds for refusing to accept “Metropolitan” Agathangel, the leader of the largest of the “splinters”.

On the other hand, he says, some of the bans were imposed, “on the basis of incorrect canonical ideas. For that reason it would be possible simply to ignore them.” True – but again, what chance is there of achieving unanimity on this?

As for the so-called “ecclesiology of the splinters”, Igumen Andrei writes: “In my opinion, such an ‘ecclesiology of the splinters’ was defined clearly enough by ukaz №362. As Protopriest Nikolai Artemov put it: ‘In essence, ukaz №362 sanctioned the reconstruction of the whole of the Russian Church on the principle of metropolitan or church districts preserving spiritual unity amongst themselves with the possibility of freely defining their common life on the level of the complete Russian Church.’”

А запрещение может быть снято только той Церковью, которая его наложила, (Ап.правило 32; 1-го Всел. Соб. 5-е правило) или церковным собором, значительно более авторитетным. Также нет возможности и апеллировать к высшей церковной инстанции, поскольку ее для нас также не существует. Конечно, многие «осколки» претендуют на правопреемство от Синода РПЦЗ, но как уже было сказано, такие претензии беспочвенны. Поскольку не имеется возможности по канонам снять прещения, наложенные Синодом РПЦЗ до 2007 г. или Синодом митр. Виталия (2001 г.-2007 г.), то уже не имеет смысла признавать эти прещения. Их нужно считать, как небывшие. Эти прещения могли бы быть сняты общим собором архиереев «осколков».

Что же касается взаимных запрещений, наложенных уже иерархий «осколков» друг на друга, то эти запрещения были подчас наложены на основании неверных канонических представлений. По этой причине их можно было бы просто игнорировать. По слову одного современного церковного деятеля, «процесс "собирания осколков" должен на первой стадии быть больше "идейным", а не организационно-административным. Пора, наконец, сформулировать ясную и убедительную идеологию, или, выражаясь богословским языком, "эклезиологию осколков", которая постепенно станет более популярной и влиятельной, чем старая "административно-синодальная экклезиология"»

316 По моему мнению, такая «эклезиология осколков» достаточно ясно определена Указом №362. Как это выразил прот. Николай Артемов: «По сути, Указом № 362 дана санкция на переустройство всей Русской Церкви по принципу митрополичьих или церковных округов, сохраняющих между собою духовное единение до возможности свободно определить свою общую жизнь на уровне всепольной Русской Церкви.»
This definition contributes nothing. How can these “metropolias” overlapping each other and having no community of faith between each other – nor any unifying centre for the resolution of disputes - possibly constitute one Russian Church?

The truth is that, while it might be a comforting idea to think that all the “splinters”, however unstable in their beliefs or shaky in their apostolic succession some of them may be, are equally valid branches of the True Russian Church, this is in fact a fantasy – and a dangerous fantasy, for it might encourage the idea that we should be seeking some kind of “lowest common denominator” on the basis of which to unite the Russian Church, which would almost certainly lead to the falling into heresy of the main body of the “reunited” Church. Of course, if the “common Council” were really able to separate the wheat from the chaff, and truth from heresy, there might be some point in it. But questions of the faith and apostolic succession would have to be addressed squarely – and there is no sign that Igumen Andrei’s jurisdiction, for one, wishes to do that.

“In conclusion,” he says, “I cite the word of one of the confessors of the Russian Church: ‘From history we see that sometimes nothing has united the parts of the Universal Church other than communion in the One Bread – Christ, the one Head in the heavens... The Church will not perish when its external unity is destroyed. She does not value external organization, but cares for preserving her truth.’”

Certainly, the Church’s unity is not constituted by any external organization, but by an inner commonality of faith – that is the main lesson of the Soviet period of Church history. But there remains a persistent demand that this inner unity should be shown, that it be declared. For “with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10.10).

So if Bishop Andrei really wishes the unity in truth of the Russian Church, he should show a good example by proclaiming his confession with his mouth. I would suggest that the following truths need to be part of his – and every other Russian bishop’s – confession:

1. The MP is a graceless organization created by Stalin, not by the Lord Jesus Christ. As a long-time collaborator with the Bolsheviks, it falls directly under the anathema of the Russian Council of 1918 against the Bolsheviks and their collaborators.
2. The MP and all the Orthodox members of the World Council of Churches fall under ROCOR’s anathema against ecumenism of 1983.

317 В заключение приведу слова одного из исповедников Русской Церкви: «Из истории мы видим, что частей Церкви Вселенской ничто подчас не объединяло, кроме причащения от Единого Хлеба-Христа, одного возглавления на небесах... Церковь не гибнет, когда внешнее ее единство разрушается. Она не дорожит внешней организацией, заботясь о сохранении своей истины."
3. The subtler version of ecumenism known as Cyprianism because of Metropolitan Cyprian of sorry memory also falls under the 1983 anathema. Since it was also condemned as such by the True Orthodox Church of Greece in 1986, all ordinations of Russian bishops carried out by the Cyprianites in 2006 and later are invalid.

Of course, this is only a beginning – but it would be a good beginning, which would serve to separate many of the wolves from the sheep.

Beyond confessing the true faith, there is one other important thing we can do to attain unity: we can pray for the appearance of a True Orthodox Tsar who will sort out the mess created by the heretics and their collaborators among the True Orthodox; for historically speaking, the external, organizational unity of the Church has been restored only by Orthodox emperors and kings.

For example, as the fifth century wore on, and the chaos caused by the heretics increased, the emperors were called upon to take a more active role in Church affairs. Thus we see in the life of St. Hypatius of Rufinianus that the Emperor, as well as the hierarchs, was required to defend the faith at the time of the Third Ecumenical Council in 431: “When Nestorius had left for Ephesus, and the Council had assembled, on the day when he should be deposed, Saint Hypatius saw in a vision that an angel of the Lord took hold of Saint John the Apostle, and led him to the most pious Emperor [Theodosius II] and said to him, ‘Say to the Emperor: “Pronounce your sentence against Nestorius”’. And he, having heard this, pronounced it. Saint Hypatius made note of this day, and it was verified that Nestorius was deposed on that very day…”

Nor did the Church have any objection to this – so long as the Emperor was Orthodox. Some “interference” by them was even sanctioned by Canon 93 (96) of the Council of Carthage in the year 419: “It behoves the gracious clemency of their Majesties to take measures that the Catholic Church, which has begotten them as worshippers of Christ in her womb, and has nourished them with the strong meat of the faith, should by their forethought be defended, lest violent men, taking advantage of the times of religious excitement, should by fear overcome a weak people, whom by arguments they were not able to pervert”. As an ancient epitome of this canon puts it: “The Emperors who were born in the true religion and were educated in the faith, ought to stretch forth a helping hand to the Churches. For the military band overthrew the dire conspiracy which was threatening Paul.”

Again, at the time of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451, when the Emperors were the Holy Marcian and Pulcheria, St. Isidore of Pelusium believed that some interference by these emperors was needed in view of the sorry state of the priesthood: “The present hierarchs, by not acting in the same way as their predecessors, do not receive the same as they; but undertaking the opposite to them,

they themselves experience the opposite. It would be surprising if, while doing nothing similar to their ancestors, they enjoyed the same honour as they. In those days, when the kings fell into sin they became chaste again, but now this does not happen even with laymen. In ancient times the priesthood corrected the royal power when it sinned, but now it awaits instructions from it; not because it has lost its own dignity, but because that dignity has been entrusted to those who are not similar to those who lived in the time of our ancestors. Formerly, when those who had lived an evangelical and apostolic life were crowned with the priesthood, the priesthood was fearful by right for the royal power; but now the royal power is fearful to the priesthood. However, it is better to say, not ‘priesthood’, but those who have the appearance of doing the priestly work, while by their actions they insult the priesthood. That is why it seems to me that the royal power is acting justly.\textsuperscript{320} It was acting justly, in Isidore’s view, because “although there is a very great difference between the priesthood and the kingdom (the former is the soul, the latter – the body), nevertheless they strive for one and the same goal, that is, the salvation of citizens”.\textsuperscript{321}

This points to the main function of the Emperor or Tsar in the life of the Church. He is the focus of unity and even, to some extent, the restorer of unity at times of extreme impiety and organizational chaos. So let us pray:

\textit{O Lord, Thou Remitter of the all the debts of sin, grant the grace of forgiveness to the sinful land of Russia which Thou hast punished with bitter wounds. Yet not in Thy wrath, but according to the multitude of Thy compassions and Thine ineffable mercy cleanse the Orthodox land of the godless foe; raise up, O Compassionate One, thine anointed tsar, and hearken unto us; grant peace to the Church and salvation to Thy people, the Tsar and all the countless assembly of new martyrs entreat Thee, the one blessed God of our fathers.}\textsuperscript{322}

July 13/26, 2017.

\textsuperscript{320} St. Isidore, Tvorenia (Works), Moscow, 1860, vol. 3, pp. 400, 410.
\textsuperscript{321} St. Isidore, quoted in M.V. Zyzykin, Patriarkh Nikon, Warsaw, 1931, vol. I, p. 244.
\textsuperscript{322} Service to the Royal New Martyrs, July 4, Mattins, Canon, Ode 7, troparion.
27. THE FALL OF THE NON-COMMEMORATORS

The news that Bishop Longinus of Bachna, Ukraine has returned into full communion with the Moscow Patriarchate and even accepted promotion to the rank of archbishop at the hands of Metropolitan Onuphrius of Kiev, is very sad. This is the monastic leader and gatherer of orphans who condemned the recent false Council of Crete (the one that was hoping to become the Eight Ecumenical), and anathematized the Latinizer Patriarch Cyril of Moscow. How are the mighty fallen! From robust, even inspiring confessor of the faith to the tame lapdog of the Putin-Gundiaev regime in the Kremlin! Why did he do it? We do not know and do not need to know. What we need to know is that Longinus' surrender shows the unalterable truth of church history: that in order to confess the faith you have to go the whole way, not only breaking communion completely with the heretics, but also joining a True Orthodox bishop as soon as possible.

The non-commemorators have generated considerable momentum in the Orthodox East. The council of Crete seems to have wakened many from their dogmatic slumbers. But they all seem to be under the illusion that the heresy of ecumenism has appeared for the first time in their (our) generation. They stubbornly ignore the fact that the True Church of Christ has been confessing the truth against ecumenism for nearly one hundred years, ever since the Patriarchate of Constantinople officially recognized the Catholics and Protestants to be co-heirs with the Orthodox in Christ in 1920, and introduced the new calendar as a necessary precondition of communion with the West in 1924. Some of them know something about the history of the Church in the last century; but none of them wish to follow the example of the martyrs and confessors of that period and join the True Orthodox Churches they belonged to. Instead, they have created new semi-churches that exist somewhere in the no-man's land between True Orthodoxy and World Orthodoxy. And then, in the end, not having the spiritual strength to remain in that uncanonical situation, they eventually fall back into communion with “the church of the evil-doers”, fulfilling the word of the apostle: “It has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit’ and ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire’” (II Peter 2.22).

With regard to the Russian Church, they also forget something else: that the ecumenist heresy, which the Russian Church espoused when it joined the World Council of Churches (under KGB pressure) in 1961, is only the fruit of a still deeper illness: sergianism, the sin of Judas, the sin of bowing down to the collective Antichrist of Sovietism. And that disease goes back to the time of Metropolitan Sergius – that is, to 1927. To escape ecumenism, but remain mired in sergianism, is to escape Scylla only to fall into the arms of Charybdis.

The fundamental fact is this: that the Moscow and Constantinople Patriarchates have been outside the True Church of Christ long before our time. Therefore it is not sufficient just to leave them – although this is a praiseworthy and absolutely

necessary first step. As David says, we must first “depart from evil” – leave the false, heretical churches – and then “do good” – join the One, True Church. And if the True Church looks poor and divided, let this not disturb the heart of the true believer, who is taught by the Lord to seek for His grace and strength, not in great cathedrals and imposing structures, but in humility and external weakness. For as St. Anatoly of Optina said: "There will be a storm. And the Russian ship will be destroyed. Yes, it will happen, but, you know, people can be saved on splinters and wreckage. Not all, not all will perish..."

The non-commemorator must understand that Baptismal grace will not magically descend upon his head when he walks out from under the golden cupolas of the Moscow Patriarchate for the last time. He must go on to humble his neck before a bishop or priest of the True Church (in spite of the fact that he most likely has no gold-covered cupolas), confess his sins before him, including the sin of having belonged to a heresy, and then receive the grace of baptism from him. Then, and only then, will he have the strength not only to confess the true faith, but not to backslide into heresy. For, as the Lord says: “The just shall live by faith. But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him” (Hebrews 10.38).

August 6/19, 2107.

_The Transfiguration of our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ._
“In a US newspaper article last week,” writes Janet Daley, “an apologist for the new metropolitan consensus described the acceptable world view as ‘internationalist, secular, cosmopolitan, multicultural liberalism’. This seems to make it explicitly opposed to national pride, religious faith, cultural identity, communal cohesion and any form of social conservatism.” This is a fair summary of the difference between Left and Right in contemporary political debate. It is very different, however, from how “Left” and “Right” would have been defined in the 1930s, when “Left” meant Communism and “Right” meant Fascism, while the majority found themselves somewhere in a vaguely liberal centre. The question is: to what extent are these labels at all relevant or accurate now, and where, if anywhere, should Orthodox Christians place themselves on the political spectrum?

It is commonly thought that religion and politics are different spheres which should mix as little as possible. This is true in a general sense insofar as religion is concerned with the heavenly and eternal, and politics – with the earthly and temporal. Moreover, Christians in ancient times were not encouraged to engage in politics (clergy are expressly forbidden to do so, while politics was considered the business only of kings and their counsellors), but simply to obey the God-established authorities (Romans 13.1-6). They were to give to Caesar what was Caesar’s in the sense of taxes and military service. And they were to pray “for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” (II Timothy 2.2).

However, this order of piety presupposed a certain order in politics – that is, a basically monarchical structure of government which did indeed guarantee “a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence”, in which the authorities were “for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good” (I Peter 2.14). What if that political order were overturned and anarchists, heretics or persecutors of the good came to power? Was this the time to enter politics?

No: the Church allows the direct interference in politics by Christians only in exceptional circumstances and in very limited ways. One of these is when God – not the people, it should be noted – brings a Christian or a sympathizer with the Christians to power, as when St. Constantine was raised to power in 312, or the Emperor Jovian in 363. Another is when God raises prophets or God-bearing elders to remonstrate with the authorities, as when St. Athanasius the Great took hold of the horse of St. Constantine when he was siding with Arius, or when St. Isaac of the Dalmatus monastery gave a solemn warning to the Arian Emperor Valentinian.

As centuries passed, and traditional, Christian and monarchical modes of thought weakened, a new situation arose. The critical turning-point was the French revolution, which introduced the strictly heretical idea that legitimate political power comes, not from God, but from the people. The consequence is that the people have the right – even the duty - to overthrow unpopular authorities and impose their own.

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324 Daley, “Worms begin to turn on an arrogant elite caste that abhors their existence”, Sunday Telegraph, August 27, 2107, p. 18.
It was at this point that the Left/Right contrast originated (it is said, from where people sat in the French Constituent Assembly). The Left were those who wished to push forward the egalitarian ideas of the revolution, extending and deepening its social, political and religious aspects, while the Right tried to check and, if possible, reverse these changes. Throughout the nineteenth century, and until the First World War, Left and Right slugged it out, with political power remaining mainly in the hands of the Right but with the Left having made significant inroads into the generally accepted beliefs of the majority and even of many of the rulers. The triumph of the Russian revolution under Lenin and Stalin, and its defeat of the Right under Mussolini and Hitler in the Second World War, strengthened the Left throughout the world. However, the United States benefited even more from the war than the Soviet Union; and, though a revolutionary, “leftist” state since its foundation in 1776, it now undertook a kind of centrist counter-revolution to defend the world against the worst excesses of the Left in the form of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the Far East.

The American victory in the Cold War appeared to seal the triumph of centrism, making the world safe for democracy, human rights and free markets against the extremes of Communism, on the one hand, and Fascism, on the other. However, the twenty-five years or so that have elapsed since 1991 have seen great, unexpected and highly confusing changes. On the one hand, countries that formerly were identified with the extreme Left, such as Russia, appear to have moved sharply to the Right – both the Fascist Right of the inter-war years and (much more speciously) “the Orthodox Christian Right” of the pre-1917 era. On the other hand, the United States have bifurcated into new forms of extremism which we continue, misleadingly, to call “Left” and “Right” but which in fact bear little resemblance to what those terms would have meant in the nineteenth century.

Truly, as W. B. Yeats said just after the First World War, “the centre cannot hold”... Indeed, it appears to have disappeared forever in America today, and is becoming ever more timid and beleaguered in many other parts of the world. The only solution is to find, not a weak compromise somewhere in the middle between Left and Right, but the true moral high ground of an Orthodox Christian position in the midst of the contemporary confusion.

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But first let us remind ourselves of the main characteristics of the Left and the Right in their “classical” forms, beginning with the Left:

1. Anti-monarchism and anti-theism: the elimination of the concept of the State as a family under a father-king and a Father-God. The Soviet Union was the first officially atheist and anti-theist state in history, and killed more Orthodox Christians than any other.
2. Totalitarianism: the massive expansion of the state in order to control all aspects of life (even when it is supposed to be “withering away”).
3. Egalitarianism: the destruction of all forms of hierarchy in the name of equality. This includes the hierarchy of the family, the root of the state itself:
the woman is equal to the man and does not need to obey him, while the
children can also rebel against their father and denounce him to the state.

4. Theft and banditry: the appropriation of most property by the state and its
redistribution in accordance with the needs of the elite (hence the saying: “all
men are equal, but some are more equal than others”).

5. Expansionism and militarism: the undermining of all rightist or centrist states
and their take-over by “the real Left”. By 1949 Communism had taken control
of one-quarter of the globe (Revelation 6.8), and by the late 1970s, as it took
over large parts of Africa and Asia, it looked as if it might conquer the whole
world.

6. Murder and artificial famine: the systematic elimination of dissidents. The
greatest slaughters in history in absolute terms have been carried out by Leftist
governments.

7. Internationalism: the rejection or downgrading of national sovereignty in
favour of an “Internationale” of some undefined sort; the exaltation of
international laws and norms above national laws and norms; the tendency
towards global government (the United Nations or some secret Masonic-type

group behind it).

Now, when put as starkly as this, it is obvious that no Orthodox Christian can
have any truck with the Left; to do so would be to deny the faith. However,
Orthodox leftists console themselves with the following excuses:

1. No State carries out the Left’s programme in its entirety. Orthodox Christianity
is tolerated in most leftist governments in the post-1991 era. Therefore one can
accommodate oneself to at any rate the more liberal elements of the state, hoping that
it will reform itself in time. However, no convincing example of such a reformation
can be adduced. Leftist states have always collapsed under the burden of their own
contradictions (Venezuela is the latest example), but never through the conversion of
the regime itself to Orthodox Christianity. Putin’s Russia is no exception – although
to demonstrate that would require another article.

2. Some degree of conformity with Leftism is permissible in order to save oneself,
one’s family and the Church. This excuse is called “Sergianism” after its most famous
exponent, “Patriarch” Sergius of Moscow, and was refuted by the Lord Jesus Christ,
Who said: “He who finds his life will lose it” (Matthew 10.37). And again: “Whoever
denies Me before men, him also will I deny before My Father Who is in heaven”
(Matthew 10.33).

3. The alternative – the Rightist state – is worse. However, it is highly debatable
whether Stalin’s Russia was a lesser evil than Hitler’s Germany. As regards the
consequences for Orthodox Christianity, it certainly was not, since Stalin and Mao
established anti-theism from Berlin to Beijing, engulfing all the Orthodox states
except Greece (which, however, is now Marxist).

Turning now to the definition of Rightism, it is necessary first of all to emphasize
that the Right as embodied in, say, Hitler’s Germany, clearly rejected only two of the
Left’s six characteristic features: numbers 3 and 7 in the list above – egalitarianism
and internationalism. For it was, of course, both hierarchical and nationalist. Nor was
it explicitly anti-monarchist and anti-theist (point 1). Nevertheless, it shackled all traditional faiths to the worship of the totalitarian state (point 2), just as in the contemporary Soviet Union; and Hitler, like Stalin, never showed any inclination to replace his absolute dictatorship with anything like a traditional monarchy.

The Harvard historian Niall Ferguson asks: “Were not Stalin and his German counterpart in reality just two grim faces of totalitarianism? Was there any real difference between Stalin’s ‘socialism in one country’ and Hitler’s National Socialism, except that one was put into practice a few years before the other? We can now see just how many of the things that were done in German concentration camps during the Second World War were anticipated in the Gulag: the transportation in cattle trucks, the selection into different categories of prisoner, the shaving of heads, the dehumanizing living conditions, the humiliating clothing, the interminable roll-calling, the brutal and arbitrary punishments, the differentiation between the determined and the doomed. Yes, the regimes were very far from identical... But it is at least suggestive that when the teenage zek Yuri Chirkov arrived at Solovetsky, the slogan that greeted him was ‘Through Labour – Freedom!’ – a lie identical to the wrought-iron legend Arbeit Macht Frei that would later welcome prisoners to Auschwitz…”

There were indeed many close similarities between Nazism and Socialism. One was their common hatred of the capitalist system and liberal individualism in general. Thus Courtney Kirchoff points out that under Hitler, “health care was socialized, free for everyone. Doctors were salaried by the government.... Our tax rates went up to 80% of our income... We had big programs for families. All day care and education were free. High schools were taken over by the government and college tuition was subsidized. Everyone was entitled to free handouts, such as food, clothing, and housing...”

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Now many on both the Left and the Right would see the above account as thoroughly misleading because the majority of both Leftists and Rightists would reject both Stalin and Hitler and adopt far more “moderate” views. This is true; and yet if we are to understand the essence of any movement in the history of ideas, we will find it both in its root and in its final flowering. “By their fruits ye shall know them” is a perfectly general criterion.

So let us look at the root of the Left/Right phenomenon, as we see it in the French Revolution and the German War of Liberation.

All the characteristics of the Russian revolution are to be found in the French revolution, albeit on a smaller scale. Indeed, Lenin and his fellow revolutionaries quite consciously saw themselves as following their French predecessors - “In my beginning is my end”. It is therefore illogical for “moderate” Leftists, such as the present-day French government, to laud the French revolution and turn away from its logical and historical fruit in the Russian revolution.

Particularly important was the figure of Napoleon, the man who spread the ideals of the French revolution throughout Europe. David Bell argues that many of the elements of “total war” – conscription, total disregard for the rules of combat, guerilla warfare, the perverse idea of war for the sake of peace – were first practised, not in the First World War, as often thought, but by Napoleon. And just as many of the leading Fascists of the twentieth century – Mussolini, for example – were originally Socialists and admirers of Lenin, so many leaders of the German counter-revolution – Hegel, for example - were originally admirers of the French revolution and Napoleon.

It was Napoleon’s crushing victory over the Prussians in 1806 that both aroused the admiration for Napoleon in the Germany intellectuals, and started the reaction… Against the French insistence that they were “the great nation”, the universal nation of universal human rights, and were therefore entitled to impose a universal dominion, the Germans defended the uniqueness and holiness of their own nation. Their reaction was born of wounded pride, victimhood, a “form of collective humiliation”, in Sir Isaiah Berlin’s words. As Adam Zamoyski writes: “The humiliation of seeing the prestigious army created by the great Frederick trounced by the French led to painful self-appraisal and underlined the need for regeneration. But it also stung German pride and dispelled the last shreds of sympathy for France – and, with them, the universalist dreams of the previous decade.”

Using the Prophet Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones (ch. 37), Johann Gottlieb Fichte described the future regeneration of Germany thus: “Although the bones of our national unity… may have bleached and dried in the storms and rains and burning suns of several centuries, yet the reanimating breath of the spirit world has not ceased to inspire. It will yet raise the dead bones of our national body and join them bone to bone so that they shall stand forth grandly with a new life… No man, no god, nothing in the realm of possibility can help us, but we alone must help ourselves, as long as we deserve it…”

“This is a Pelagian, if not a thoroughly atheist vision… Fichte,” writes Paul Johnson, “was much impressed by Niccolò Machiavelli and saw life as a continuing struggle for supremacy among the nations. The nation-state most likely to survive and profit from this struggle was the one which extended its influence over the lives of its people most widely. And such a nation-state – Germany was the obvious example – would naturally be expansive. ‘Every nation wants to disseminate as widely as possible the good points which are peculiar to it. And, in so far as it can, it wants to assimilate the entire human race to itself in accordance with an urge planted in men by God, an urge on which the community of nations, the friction between them, and their development towards perfection rest.’

330 Fichte, Addresses to the German Nation (1807).
“This was a momentous statement because it gave the authority of Germany’s leading academic philosopher to the proposition that the power impulse of the state was both natural and healthy, and it placed the impulse in the context of a moral world view. Fichte’s state was totalitarian and expansive, but it was not revolutionary. Its ‘prince’ ruled by hereditary divine right. But ‘the prince belongs to his nation just as wholly and completely as it belongs to him. Its destiny under divine providence is laid in his hands, and he is responsible for it.’ So the prince’s public acts must be moral, in accordance with law and justice, and his private life must be above reproach. In relations between states, however, ‘there is neither law nor justice, only the law of strength. This relationship places the divine, sovereign fights of fate and of world rule in the prince’s hands, and it raises him above the commandments of personal morals and into a higher moral order whose essence is contained in the words, *Salus et decus populi suprema lex esto.*’ This was an extreme and menacing statement that justified any degree of ruthlessness by the new, developing nation-state in its pursuit of self-determination and self-preservation. The notion of a ‘higher moral order’, to be determined by the state’s convenience, was to find expression, in the 20th century, in what Lenin called ‘the Revolutionary Conscience’ and Hitler ‘the Higher Law of the Party’. Moreover, there was no doubt what kind of state Fichte had in mind. It was not only totalitarian but German. In his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807), he laid down as axiomatic that the state of the future can only be the national state, in particular the German national state, the German Reich.”

There is an interesting link between Fichte’s egoistic metaphysics and his nationalism. As Bertrand Russell writes, Fichte was an idealist philosopher, who “carried subjectivism to a point which seems almost to involve a kind of insanity. He holds that the Ego is the only reality, and that it exists because it posits itself; the non-Ego, which has a subordinate reality, also exists only because the Ego posits it... The Ego as a metaphysical concept easily became confused with the empirical Fichte; since the Ego was German, it followed that the Germans were superior to all other nations. ‘To have character and to be a German,’ says Fichte, ‘undoubtedly mean the same thing’. On this basis he worked out a whole philosophy of nationalistic totalitarianism, which had great influence in Germany”.

So we see that Communism and Fascism have common roots in the great conflict between the French revolution and the German counter-revolution of the early nineteenth century. Neither worshipped God in any traditional sense. Both worshipped the state, the big State, and the right of the state to pursue its aims through violence - the revolution in order to wipe out kings and bishops and aristocrats of all stripes, and the counter-revolution in order to wipe out the revolutionaries and later all nationalities that threatened the German nation (Jews, Slavs, etc.). Both practiced a particularly ruthless form of revolutionary morality that did not allow pity or humanity, let alone Christian love, to interfere with the pursuit of their aims. Their common characteristic was therefore hatred, hatred for “the enemies of the people” – i.e. Fascists and counter-revolutionaries if you were a revolutionary, or cosmopolitans and globalists and people of the wrong colour and genes if you were a counter-revolutionary. Both were militarist and expansionist; the

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logical consequence of their inhabiting the same planet was constant and total war, war if necessary to the destruction of the whole world.

The disillusioned communist Vasily Grossman, in a novel entitled *Life and Fate*, emphasized the similarities between Soviet Communism and German Nazism. In one revealing scene an SS officer is talking to his prisoner, an old Bolshevik. “When we look at one another in the face, we’re neither of us just looking at a face we hate – no, we are gazing into a mirror. That’s the tragedy of our age. Do you really not recognize yourself in us; yourselves and the strength of your will?... You may think you hate us, but what you really hate is yourselves in us... Our victory will be your victory... And if you should conquer, then we shall perish only to live in your victory.”

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So not only in their roots, but also in their fruits, Left and Right have shown very similar tendencies and teachings; to that extent they are twin offshoots of the one antichristian revolution. However, this conclusion needs to be qualified in three important ways. First, even if Left and Right are twins, it was the Left that left the mother’s womb first (in 1789 as opposed to 1807), and the Right has been trying ever since to catch it by the ankle and draw it back. (Sometimes it even tries to anticipate the Left, as when the Rightist Bismarck introduced the welfare state into Germany in order to cut the ground from under the Left’s feet.) Secondly, the Left has always set the agenda, as it were; while the Right has always ended by accepting most of the Left’s agenda. Thus by the 1930s the Right no less than the Left used the language of democracy; everything was done in the name of their common god, “The People”. And thirdly, they are not identical twins but represent and cater to different needs or passions of human nature – the innovative and the conservative – both of which have to be accommodated if the (by definition innovative) revolution is to go forward.

The relatively conservative nature of Rightism represents a temptation for Orthodox Christians. For on the one hand they are naturally opposed to most of the Leftist programme, especially the destruction of religion and the family. But then, on the other hand, they can easily become associated with anti-Orthodox elements of the Rightist programme, such as anti-Semitism. For example, in the inter-war years the Romanian Church and State, rightly frightened by the terrible persecution taking place in its neighbour, the Soviet Union, and influenced by Rightist organizations such as the Iron Guard under Codreanu, became allies of Nazi Germany. Now it was one thing to prefer Nazi Germany to the Soviet Union as the lesser of two evils, being less of a direct threat to Orthodox Christianity – a choice that many other Orthodox Christians in Central and Eastern Europe also made. It was quite another to adopt its murderous attitude to the Jews – a temptation that neighbouring Bulgaria, caught in a similar dilemma, managed to avoid.

However, since the fall of Communism, when explicitly anti-theist regimes seem to be rare and far away (North Korea is perhaps the last “pure” example), many Orthodox Christians appear to have returned to the Left as if it were now respectable. But is it really safe to be Leftist now?

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Let us see…

After quoting from John Lennon’s song:

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\text{Imagine there's no countries} \\
\text{It isn't hard to do} \\
\text{Nothing to kill or die for} \\
\text{And no religion too,}
\]

Fr. Michael Shanbour writes: “John Lennon’s lyrics strike a chord in us. We all remember a time when we yearned for a unity with others where the slightest separation is melted away in the face of pure love and abiding peace. Indeed the longing for true communion is the fundamental God-implanted hunger in every human soul.

“However over the centuries many have misused or misapplied this natural yearning for communion by artificially discounting the true borders of personhood. Examples include political ideologies such as Communism and like-minded social experiments such as hippie commune-ism…

“All of these have one thing in common – they seek to create a perceived communion by breaking down extant distinctions and definitions. As the former Beatle seems to advocate, division and disunity are actually caused by boundaries and beliefs. Yet a ‘communion’ without borders is short-lived and futile because it is not consonant with reality itself. For instance, a country is not threatened by the existence of its borders; its borders are what make possible a real identity and a unifying culture. Imagine a country without borders and I will show you an imaginary country.”\(^{334}\)

Can we characterize Leftist ideologies as attempts to create communion by breaking down barriers, borders and inequalities of all kinds? If we are looking at the world through rose-tinted spectacles, then there is much to be said for this perspective. Thus nineteenth-century Leftism can be seen as destroying the barriers between kings and subjects, bishops and laymen, rich and poor, while twentieth and twenty-first Leftism takes things further, destroying the barriers between classes, nations, religions and even genders…

Thus Ms. Alison Saunders, head of Britain’s Crime Prosecution Service, has defined "hate crime" as "any criminal offence... perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender."\(^{335}\)


\(^{335}\) Daily Mail, August 22, 2017, p. 15.
Again, Article 21, entitled “Non-Discrimination”, of the “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union” (February, 2012), declares: “Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.”

“Any discrimination based on any ground”: the breath-taking universality of this command tells us two things: first, that it cannot be fulfilled since it goes against nature, and secondly, that it must not be fulfilled since it goes against God. Neutrality is impossible in this situation: like Mrs. Thatcher in relation to the European super-state which issued this command to its citizens, we must say: “No, no, no!” Only we must reject it on the grounds, not of Rightism, whether moderate (conservative) or extreme (Fascist), for reasons indicated above, but on grounds of Orthodox Christianity alone.

Now it was precisely Orthodox Christianity that began the struggle against unjust discrimination on the grounds of nationality, social status or gender. As St. Paul wrote: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3.28; cf. Colossians 3.11). That is, as St. Maximus the Confessor defines it: "Men, women and children, profoundly divided as to race, nation, language, manner of life, work, knowledge, honour, fortune... are all recreated by the Church in the Spirit. To all equally she communicates a divine aspect. All receive from her a unique nature which cannot be broken asunder, a nature which no longer permits one henceforth to take into consideration the many and profound differences which are their lot. In that way all are raised up and united in a truly catholic manner.”

However, while these distinctions are of secondary importance in the sense that they are irrelevant to church membership, this by no means implies that they are unimportant or should be ignored in the practice of the Christian life. On the contrary: the distinction between male and female, for example, is a permanent and inescapable fact which must be taken account of in that large and important sphere of Christian morality which is sexual morality. Rightism rightly attempts to preserve these distinctions; for they are natural and therefore cannot be destroyed. Indeed, the attempt to destroy them can only lead to disaster as nature – or rather, the Creator of nature - takes its and His revenge. For Rightism in its less extreme forms is essentially conservatism, the attempt to conserve the values of the past, and prevent the removal of the landmarks that our ancestors placed (Proverbs 22.28; Hosea 5.10). What could be more Orthodox than that?

The problem is: in order to defend one outpost of traditional values, conservatives tend to surrender another “in exchange”, so that they are like an army in perpetual retreat. It began in the nineteenth century with monarchism. In order to defend at least the appearance of monarchism and the possibility of constitutional monarchy, they gave up the Christian teaching that power comes from God, not the people, and accepted the principle of democracy, the sovereignty of the people...

Since the late twentieth century, the issues have more often related to gender and reproduction. Thus while rejecting homosexuality, the conservatives usually give up
on fornication, saying that it’s permissible “as long as they love each other”. Again, in order to reject same-sex marriage, they give up on homosexuality, saying that they are “not homophobic” and “have nothing against gays”. Again, in order to limit the numbers of children aborted, they give up on the basic principle that abortion is murder, only insisting (until outvoted) on a time-limit...

Seeing that the Leftists will not be persuaded by sweet reason, some conservatives adopt the tactics of their adversaries: violence and intimidation. So they threaten to kill gays, or destroy abortion clinics. This is fatal: from then on, whatever excuses they may give that they are averting something worse, they will not be listened to; for now, having become truly like the Left in their violence and hatred, they are “Fascists” and “Hitlerites” in the language of the media (most of which are Leftist)...
The paradox is that some of the favourite causes of the Left, such as euthanasia and eugenics, are in origin truly Fascist. But by this time it hardly matters who started it and what labels we attach to whom: Right and Left have become mirrors of each other; both sides are ruled by Hate, both are destined for hell...

We see this clearly in the present confrontation between Left and Right in the United States. Were the Rightist White supremacists right in protesting the tearing down of the statue of General Lee, one of the most honourable leaders of the Confederate South, who treated his slaves well and was greatly loved by them? Yes indeed... But having draped themselves in the banners of anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism, the protestors were simply asking for trouble – and got it. They gave their Leftist opponents, Antifa, a golden opportunity to score a huge propaganda victory.

At the same time, they lost the opportunity to point out the crass hypocrisy of the Leftists. For, as Fr. George Rutler writes: “There have been no protests about a statue of Lenin on La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles, or one on Norfolk Street in Seattle, or one on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, notwithstanding the more than 60 million humans whose deaths he engineered, and the pall of misery with which he blanketed much of the world. As for race, there are untouched statues of Margaret Sanger whose eugenic symbiosis with the National Socialists set in motion the annihilation of millions of African-American babies.”

Even Harvard professor Alan Dershowitz has urged his fellow liberals to condemn their more radical elements, such as Antifa, and not to consider them heroes for their crusade against statues, because they are “radical” and “anti-American” and are really “trying to tear down America.” He went on to compare the campaign to rewrite American history with the methods of Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union.

337 “Harvard Professor Dershowitz Compares Antifa to Stalin, says they are ‘Trying to Tear Down America’“, Orthodox Christianity, August 23, 2017. http://orthochristian.com/105935.html
James S. Robbins was surely right when he commented on this situation: “Neo-Nazis and the KKK are the mirror image of the anarchist and Communist left. All are a threat to our way of life…”

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So what are we to do? Shout “a pox on both your houses” and withdraw completely from the battle? This might be a possibility for Amish brethren, hill-billys or Orthodox hermits: it is impossible for those with children in the world, who have to protect them from their teachers and peers that indoctrinate them with the literally soul-destroying doctrines of the Left. The fact is: we no longer live in a world in which we can simply ignore politics and live a completely depoliticized life. For since the French revolution politics has invaded the religious sphere, and now there is nowhere to hide from the invasion. We have to stand up and fight the Leftist revolution.

But, as we have seen, joining the Right is no solution. For the Right compromises itself by its violent methods that mirror those of the Left, by its frequent adherence to anti-Orthodox beliefs, such as anti-Semitism, which no Orthodox Christian can be associated with, and, most basically, by its manifest failure to stop or even slow down the Left over a period of more than two hundred years. Indeed, it could be argued that some Rightist movements have actually helped the Left in the long run by giving them a propaganda weapon that they can employ to trounce their opponents, however unjustly and unscrupulously this weapon is used.

The only alternative is the confession of the Orthodox Faith. Like the early Christians, who did not practice politics, we must not join parties or movements or demonstrations that will only compromise our Orthodoxy and in any case hold no prospect of success. This is not to say that there is no hope: while there is life there is hope, and the early Christians certainly never lost hope – a hope that was justified when St. Constantine overthrew the tyrants and founded Christian Rome. But we must be clear that the revolution that began in 1789, acquired a new injection of satanic energy in 1917, and is now, in 2017, preparing to assault the very foundations of society and even change human nature itself, will not be stopped by feeble human resources, but only by God. At the same time, we can play a positive role in bringing God’s intervention closer; we can stand where we are, not conceding in inch, stand in the fear of God, and in the firm hope of deliverance. For “you will be hated by all men for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10.22).

August 16/29, 2017.

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338 James S. Robbins, “Trump is right — violent extremists on both sides are a threat”, USA Today, August 17, 2017.
In the eighteenth century, following the dictates of reason so-called, the great philosophers of the West went to the very edge of irrationality and insanity. They looked over the edge, but - determined to remain sane and enlightened whatever their thoughts might lead them to conclude - stepped back. But western man has never forgotten the dreadful dark abyss it once peered into. He is still suffering from vertigo, and, being still unenlightened by the Word of God, he has been on the edge of falling into madness ever since…

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 minds continuing through time 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 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 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.”

Bertrand Russell 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, this cannot be justified by reason; for it “is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures.”

341 Copleston, op. cit., p. 106.
342 Copleston, op. cit., p. 88.
344 Copleston, op. cit., p. 92.
345 Russell, op. cit., p. 697.
346 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… As Roy Porter writes, “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 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 –

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347 Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
351 Hume, *On Suicide*.
352 Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
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.”

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.”

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357 Copleston, op. cit., p. 147.
358 Copleston, op. cit., p. 149.
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 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 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

359 Copleston, op. cit., pp. 150-151.
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. For that is what Hume was – probably the most subversive thinker in history before Nietzsche...

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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 thoroughgoing 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?” 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

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361 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, first edition, XVII.
freedom, which transcends nature and causality. “There is thus a being above the world, namely the spirit of man”.

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.” 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...

In this way, Kant seeks to restore faith in those objects of belief – God, the soul, immortality – that Hume’s scepticism had undermined. 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...

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 blade 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.

362 Kant, Opus Postumum, XXI.
363 Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals.
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 Sir Isaiah 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 a 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 overpowering 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 – with no synthesis in sight. Dissatisfied with the dry soullessness of the Enlightenment, western man would not go back to the sources of his civilization in Orthodox Christianity, but only forward to – the Revolution, and the hellish torments of the Romantic hero. For, as Francisco Goya said, “the sleep of Reason engenders monsters”…

August 24 / September 6, 2017.

In today’s Gospel the Canaanitish woman achieves salvation by humbly accepting being compared to a dog (Matthew 15.27). For dogs are one of Holy Scripture’s commonest symbols for “unbelievers”, as in: “Give not that which is holy to dogs” (Matthew 7.6) and “outside [the Kingdom] are dogs and sorcerers” (Revelation 22.15) And she, as a pagan, was an unbeliever, and therefore a dog. But she sensed the untruth in her inherited paganism, while sensing the truth in Christ, Whom she called “Lord” and “Son of David” as if she were a believing Jew. In this way she propelled herself out of the class of unbelieving dogs and into the class of believing human beings who by their belief make themselves worthy of the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table – the Holy Things of the Divine Eucharist.

The distinction between believers and unbelievers is the most fundamental of all distinctions. The distinctions between colour and race and gender and ability are important and not to be ignored, but they are not fundamental; they are not relevant to our ultimate destiny in eternity. But the distinction between belief and unbelief is – in spite of the ecumenists’ assertions – absolutely vital; holding the true faith is “the one thing necessary”.

We must be careful, however: today’s unbeliever may become tomorrow’s believer, and vice-versa. “Let him who thinks he stands fear lest he fall”. The first can become last, and the last – first.

And so it was with the Jews. They were believers, but out of pride lost the faith, and became, symbolically speaking, dogs. And so: “Beware of dogs”, said St. Paul, “beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation” (Philippians 3.2) – by which he meant the unbelieving Jews.

We could say the same of many Orthodox Christians today. They are incredibly proud of belonging to an historically Orthodox nation, while showing none of the fruits of Orthodox faith. It is a tragic paradox that nations, including Orthodox nations, often vaunt themselves most when they are at their spiritual nadir, and least worthy of praise and honour. At the same time, they look down on certain non-Orthodox nations. Not only do they not show the fruits of Orthodox faith: they make no attempt to tell their neighbours about Orthodoxy, so that they should cease to be dogs, “unpersons” (neliudi), and become true human beings.

National pride is not that different from personal pride. Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) wrote: “The nation, this collective organism, is just as inclined to deify itself as the individual man. The madness of pride grows in this case in the same progression, as every passion becomes inflamed in society, being refracted in thousands and millions of souls.”

Of course, this is not an excuse for ecumenism. Even when the Jews were at their lowest point and on the edge of destruction, the Lord said: “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4.22). He was not an ecumenist, and always affirmed that the truth was in

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365 Gribanovsky, “Conversations with My Own Heart”, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville.
Israel and not elsewhere. At the same time, it is striking how little he praised the Jews of His time – even the Apostles, with whom He was often deeply exasperated, once even calling them “evil” – and how often He praised “believing unbelievers”. Of whom does He say that He has never seen such faith, “no, not in Israel”? Of a Roman centurion, a foreigner and an unbeliever. Who was the first convert to the faith that we know by name in the Acts of the Apostles? Another Roman centurion, Cornelius. And to whom does He say: “Great is your faith”? The Canaanitish woman of today’s Gospel, the “dog” who became a true human being.

The Church will never fail, but it is perfectly possible for all the existing Orthodox nations – the Greeks, the Russians, the Serbs, the Bulgarians, the Romanians, the Georgians – to fall away from the Kingdom, and to be replaced by westerners, Africans or Asians “bringing forth the fruits thereof”. St. John of Kronstadt openly speculated, at the time of the greatest glory of the Russian empire, that the whole of Russia might fall away from Orthodoxy and become like the Carthaginian church of old. And the new martyr St. Victor of Glazov said he respected an Orthodox Japanese more than an apostate Russian, of whom there were so many then and now.

Having the true faith imposes obligations, not privileges, in relation to unbelievers. This was so even in the Old Testament. For example: “Ye shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 22.21). And again: "Would you kill those you have taken captive? Set bread and water before them they may eat and drink and return." (II Kings 6:22) God rewarded such generosity: after Israel's kindness to a captured invading foe, "marauding bands of Aramaeans did not come again into the land of Israel."

In the New Testament our obligations are much greater: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify Your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5.16). The early Christians were noted for their extraordinary charity to all those around them. For, as St. Justin the Martyr said: “We used to hate and destroy one another and refused to associate with people of another race or country. Now, because of Christ, we live familiarly with such people and pray for our enemies.” But if the unbelievers see, not light but darkness, not love but hatred, not the freedom of the Spirit but satanic oppression and violence, how can they come to the true faith and glorify God? Is it not the case here that “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you?” (Ezekiel 16.27)?

Jewish nationalism destroyed the Jews; for it compelled them to crucify their universalist Messiah. Orthodox nationalism has the capacity to have the same effect on the Orthodox Christians today. Let us listen to two Orthodox thinkers who were well aware of this danger.

St. Nikolai Velimirović warned strongly against perpetuating racial hatred against neighbouring unbelieving nations: “We sin if we see it as an obligation to hate those whom our relatives hate. This hatred passes into us like a family disease.” While rejecting the false beliefs of these nations, he said, we must still show them love: “When our nation is at enmity with neighbouring peoples, we as men dare not

366 St. Justin the Martyr, First Apology, 14.
extend this enmity to every man from that nation, but it is our duty, in a given situation, to help every man in need, with no consideration of whether he belongs to our nation or not.”368

Again, Bishop Nikolai’s famous disciple, Archimandrite Justin Popović, said: “The Russian, Serbian, and Bulgarian nations can be great only if the goal of their existence be the collective realization of the commandments of the Gospel. Otherwise, ‘Serbianism, ‘Russianism’, and ‘Bulgarianism’, are reduced to senseless and pernicious chauvinism. If ‘Serbianism’ flourishes not by the power of evangelical podvigs and not to Orthodox Catholicity, then it will choke in its own egoistic chauvinism.

“What is profitable for Serbdom is profitable for other nationalities as well. Nations pass, the Gospel is eternal. Only in so far as a nation is filled with the eternal evangelical truth and righteousness, does it exist, and itself becomes and remains eternal. Only such patriotism can be justified from an evangelical point of view.”

“This is the patriotism of the holy apostles, the holy martyrs, the holy fathers.” 369

And again he writes: “It is time, it is the twelfth hour, for certain of our ecclesiastical representatives to stop being exclusively slaves of nationalism and politics, no matter what and whose, and become high priests and priests of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.”

Loving our enemies, whether personal or national, does not entail admiring, or agreeing with, or even liking them. It does mean desiring their salvation, and doing nothing that would hinder it. As long as there is life there is hope; and as long as an unbeliever is alive, there is hope for his salvation - and fear that his believing accuser may fall. “For a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Ecclesiastes 9.4).

September 19 / October 2, 2017.

368 Velimirović, Homily on the Fourth Sunday after Pascha.
369 Popović, “On Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)”
31. THREE ATTITUDES TO DEATH

There are three basic attitudes to death: the tragic, the trivial and the triumphant.

The tragic was often superbly expressed by the pagans of antiquity, and even more by the Jews of the Old Testament. Death is tragic because it brings to a definitive, final end everything that we value in life: love, pleasure, beauty, talent, health, glory and honour. The pagans deeply lamented this, and therefore counseled their fellow men to seize the good things of life with as much passion and courage as possible, because it will all pass soon. Carpe diem – seize the moment, because it will pass, it will pass forever and ever. There is perhaps no more heartbreaking story in world literature than that of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus the great musician is granted, for the sake of his great musicianship, to lead his beloved wife out of hades - on condition he does not turn to look at her before they are both back in the light and among the living. However, longing just to take a peep at his beloved, he looks back too early, while she is still in the dark – and loses her forever.

That is, of course, a myth; but there is a similar, but true story in the Bible. God has mercy on the family of Lot, and an angel leads them away from burning Sodom. But they are forbidden to look back at the scene of death and destruction. However, Lot’s wife looks back – and is turned into a pillar of salt.

The Jewish understanding of death is deeper than that of the pagans because they understood the cause of it – the sin of man. It is because Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden that they and all their descendants were condemned to death. In the Old Testament, there was no consolation to soften the edge of this universal tragedy. Even the righteous went down into hades, a dark, shadowy place with no joy nor exit. Even the righteous Jacob contemplated death with a tragic bitterness: “I shall go down mourning to my son Joseph in hades” (Genesis 37.35).

In the Old Testament there is no doctrine of eternal life with God in Paradise. Some of the prophets hinted at a better future, but these hints were not understood until the Coming of Christ. Death was as tragic for the Jews as for the pagans.

But then came Christ, and our understanding of death was transformed. There was still tragedy – the Lord wept in front of the rotting corpse of his friend Lazarus. But to the widow of Nain, whose only son had died, He said: “Weep not”. And this was not just the conventional, weak comfort that we give to bereaved relatives. For He touched the bier and her son was raised from the dead. There were healings and miracles in the ancient world. But none like this one. And none like this Healer, Who offered, not temporary palliatives or mere prolongation of life on earth, but eternal life in heaven.

For by offering the perfect Sacrifice or Propitiation for sin, Christ removed the root cause of death and thereby granted eternal life to all those that believe in Him and express their faith in their works. Death now need not be a tragedy – or only a partial, relative, temporary tragedy. Death now can be, - and is for all true Christians, - an entrance into an eternal life of boundless joy with God and all His saints. How unbearable would death be, says St. John Maximovich, if we had no hope of seeing
our reposed relatives in Paradise. But it is bearable precisely because that hope truly exists for true Christians.

So for the true believer death is now, not a tragedy, but a triumph, an entrance into a new and far better life in which there will be “neither pain nor sorrow nor sighing”.

However, contemporary Christians have turned the triumph not merely back into a tragedy but, still worse, into a triviality. First of all, they do not really believe in the power of Christ’s Sacrifice on Golgotha, nor in His resurrection from the dead – without which, as St. Paul says, our own forgiveness and resurrection are unthinkable. Secondly, they reject the infallible word of Scripture: “It is given to men to die once, and then the judgement” (Hebrews 9.27). No, there will be no judgement, they say! God is too merciful to judge or condemn anybody; we will all be saved, we will all go to Paradise!

How senseless, how profoundly unserious and superficial! If God is so merciful that all will be saved, why does He say the exact opposite on so many occasions? And why does He not remove death and suffering right now, and take us all into Paradise – now! What is the point of this purgatory of life on earth, if we are all going to be saved? And why use the word “saved”, when there is in fact nothing to be saved from?

“Okay, perhaps Hitler and Stalin should go to hell,” reply the trivia-mongers. “But not we decent, caring, civilized people. And still less the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Moslems, the Jews, the ordinary atheists who cannot help being brought up in their non-Christian environments and families.” The logic of this ecumenism rests on the denial of judgement and an overwhelming sense of pride. Ultimately - with one or two exceptions – we are all “worth it”, as the advert says. For we are the judges, not God.

But perhaps there are some who are still more “worth it”, still more caring, because they don’t believe that even Hitler and Stalin will go to hell. Perhaps the Jehovah’s Witnesses are right, and these monsters will simply cease to exist at death, just like all the evil people that ever lived. After all, the idea of anyone suffering for eternity is just so unbearable, so uncivilized, so unworthy of the idea of a loving God!…

After all, aren’t we all victims anyway? Victims of class prejudice, or national prejudice, or colour prejudice, or gender prejudice? How can such victims be judged for anything? Indeed, perhaps even Hitler and Stalin were victims of their environments, of bad parenting. Indeed, if Darwinism, that doctrine of original death is true, and we are all just the chance products of a piece of overheating matter that exploded 14 billion years ago, then it makes no sense to judge anyone for anything. God is dead, and with his death there died any sensible – that is, scientific - concept of good and evil.

Such thoughts, which would have been unthinkable only a few years ago, are commonplace now: the descent of modern man into madness seems inexorable. And
yet we haven’t reached rock-bottom yet. The rock-bottom is to deny, not simply the Justice of God after death, but death itself…

As Daniel Hannan writes, “What if we could halt the degeneration of cells, and so halt ageing itself? A quiet revolution is underway in gerontology. Twenty years ago, physical decline was seen as inescapable, and the various conditions associated with old age – heart failure, diabetes, Alzheimer’s and so on – were viewed as discrete diseases. Senescence itself was thought to be beyond the reach of medical science.

“We are now witnessing a vertiginous shift. Rather than treating the separate manifestations of old age, biotech companies are categorizing old age itself as a disease, and searching for a cure. Why, after all, should cells die?”

However, this dream of eternal life in this corrupt world is only that – a dream, based on the first lie that Satan, “the father of lies”, instilled into the ears of Eve: “Thou shalt not surely die”. And if people do not believe in Satan or the Bible, perhaps they will believe the results of a recent scientific study. For “researchers have concluded,” writes Victoria Allen, “there is ‘no way out of death’, even with a breakthrough in drugs or treatments.

“The problem is that some cells become sluggish as we get older, so our bodies slow down and organs start to fail, while other cells speed up and cause cancer.

“We could slow down the cancer cells, but this would worsen the effects of ageing by creating more sluggish cells. Meanwhile, speeding up slow cells could trigger cancer.

“The Catch-22 situation was found in a study by the University of Arizona based on a new mathematical model of ageing. Senior author Joanna Masel, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, said: ‘Ageing is mathematically inevitable – like, seriously inevitable. There’s logically, theoretically, mathematically no way out.’ It had been hope the discovery of ‘telomeres’ could be the key to keeping the human race forever young. These are caps – much like the plastic ones on the ends of shoelaces – which stop the chromosomes that house our DNA from fraying, something that causes ageing and disease. However, drugs that stop telomeres from wearing away could be counter-productive, according to the US researchers…

“Writing in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the researchers conclude that ageing is an ‘intrinsic property of being multicellular’.

“Professor Masel said: ‘Things will get worse over time, in one of these two ways or both. Either all of your cells will continue to get more sluggish, or you’ll get cancer. And the basic reason is that things break. It doesn’t matter how much you try to stop them from breaking – you can’t.’”

370 Hannan, “My 14-month old might live to see the end of human ageing”, Sunday Telegraph, 8 October, 2107, p. 16.
Will we never learn? Death and taxes are the two inescapable accompaniments of life. And death is the more inescapable of the two.

The tragedy of pre-Christian death, having been transformed into triumph by Christ’s resurrection from the dead, and into trivia by our post-Christian society, is now fast descending back into tragedy again. Only the tragedy is deeper and darker than before. For however hard man tries, he cannot completely forget the promise of eternal life – in the heavens, not in this corrupt life - given to Him by Christ and realized in the lives of millions of true Christians. Death is a blessed gift to fallen man because it constantly reminds him, in the midst of all his vanity and vainglory, that all this is dust and ashes. It is the one fact of his life which he can never deny and which will always bring him back to the reality of his humiliation. If he accepts this humiliation, he will rise in glory. But if he denies even the undeniable, the one supreme and inexorable fact of life, then the prospect before him is truly tragic: he will let that opportunity given him by Christ, Who holds the keys of death and hell in His hands, disappear, never to return. Like Orpheus, he will see the vision of true life and love vanishing forever into the dark mists of hell.

*September 27 / October 10, 2017; revised October 19 / November 1, 2017.*
32. THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

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

The power that replaced that of the tsar was from the beginning dual, being composed of the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet of soldiers’ and workers’ deputies. And they were unequal partners: already on the night before the abdication the Duma had begged Himmer, Nakhamkes and Alexandrovich of the Petrograd Soviet to allow them to create a government. This showed that the Soviet, and not the Provisional Government, was the real ruler of Russia now.

And already on March 2, in its very first act, “Soviet Order Number One”, the Soviet rubbed the government’s nose in the dust: “The orders of the military commission of the State Duma are to be obeyed only in such instances when they do not contradict the orders and decrees of the Soviet”. In other words, while the official power was in the hands of the Duma, the real power lay in the hands of the Soviets; the Provisional Government that officially came into being on March 3 was to rule only by permission of the real ruler, the Soviet, which had come into being on March 1 and supposedly represented the soldiers and workers. The immediate effect of Order Number One was to destroy discipline in the army, as soldiers refused to salute or obey their officers – or simply went home to join in the looting of landowners’ and church estates. And so the Tsar’s main purpose in abdicating – to preserve the army as a fighting force capable of defeating the Germans – was frustrated before the ink was dry on his manifesto.

On the same day, March 2, at the Tauris palace in Petrograd, Pavel Milyukov announced the formation of a “Provisional” government to oversee the administration of the country until the convening of an elected Constituent Assembly. The “poisonous question” was put to him: “Who elected you?” Many years later Milyukov wrote: “I could have read out a whole dissertation in reply. We were not ‘elected’ by the Duma. Nor were we elected by Lvov in accordance with the tsar’s order prepared at Headquarters, of which we could not have been informed. All these sources for the succession of power we ourselves had consciously cast out. There remained only one reply, the clearest and most convincing. I replied: ‘The Russian revolution has elected us!’ This simple reference to the historical process that brought us to power shut the mouths of the most radical opponents.”

But if it was the revolution that “elected” the leaders of the Provisional Government, they could not really object to the further “election” of Lenin, could they? That is why they offered no real opposition to the Bolshevik revolution in October, and were so easily swept into “the dustbin of history”, in Trotsky’s phrase.

The formal head of the Provisional Government was Prince Lvov. But the real leader was the Justice Minister, Alexander Kerensky, a Trudovik lawyer who had wanted to be an actor. As Graham Darby writes, contemporaries saw Kerensky “as the real prime minister from the outset but despite being in both the government and the soviet – thereby embodying the dual power structure – he was in between the two camps, distanced from party politics, a politician of compromise who would fail to reconcile the irreconcilable... For a brief moment Kerensky was the essential man, the peoples’ tribune, a fine orator and a man of charisma. A good actor, he could catch the mood of an audience. He wore semi-military costume and attempted to strike a Napoleonic pose. He enjoyed immense popularity, even adulation, in the early months and a personality cult grew up around him fuelled by his own self-promotion, a range of propaganda (articles, medals, badges, poems) and a receptive audience. Many saw him as a saviour, the true successor to the tsar. There was, however, an inherent contradiction between Russia’s political culture, with its dependency on powerful leaders, and the democratic ideology of the early stages of the revolution, a contradiction embodied in Kerensky, the undemocratic democrat. The adulation went to his head and he came to overestimate his popularity long after it had evaporated. He moved into the Winter Palace, lived in the tsar’s apartments and used the imperial train. He was seemingly powerful but only by virtue of the offices he held and the fickle nature of mass popularity. To sustain the latter he had to fulfil everyone’s expectations, but as Lenin pointed out, he ‘wanted to harmonise the interests of landowners and peasants, workers and bosses, labour and capital’. It was an impossible task...”

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

Since the legitimizing power of the Tsar’s orders had been rejected, there remained only the authority of a popular election, according to liberal theory. But the

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Provisional Government had not, of course, been elected. Rather, its purpose was to supervise the election of a Constituent Assembly which alone, according to liberal theory, could bring a legitimate government into power. So Miliukov resorted to a deliberate paradox: they had been “elected” by the revolution. The paradox consists in the fact that revolutions do not “elect” in accordance with established legal procedures; for the revolution is the violent overthrow of all existing procedures and legalities...

But if the Provisional Government came to power through the revolution – that is, through the violent overthrow of all existing legalities – it had no legal authority to suppress the continuation of the revolution through the violent overthrow of its own power. In this fact lies the clue to the extraordinarily weak and passive attitude of the Provisional Government towards all political forces to the left of itself. It could not rule because, according to its own liberal philosophy, it had no right to rule... No such inhibitions were felt by the radical socialists, for whom might was right and the niceties of liberal political philosophy and procedure were irrelevant.

The lesson was clear: if the Russians did not want to be ruled by the God-anointed Tsar, then, by God’s permission and as punishment for their sins, they would be ruled by the Satan-appointed Soviets...

The Soviet Order number one of February, 1917, and the success of the Bolshevik propaganda against the war from April onwards, destroyed discipline in the army. As more and more soldiers returned to their villages, the June offensive ended in dismal failure. General Alexeyev had calculated that the losses would be about 6000, but they turned out to be 400,000. An offensive that had been designed by Kerensky and the liberals to bolster the state and the forces of law and order by bringing all classes together on a patriotic wave ended by opening the path to the final destruction of the state.

The coup began with the setting up of a separate government by the Bolshevized sailors of Kronstadt, which precipitated a confused “semi-insurrection”, in Trotsky’s words, in early July. But the insurrection failed, Kerensky became prime minister and a crackdown on the Bolsheviks began. Lenin fled, disguised as a woman, to Finland, and many party members were arrested. It was left to Stalin and Sverdlov, working underground, to keep the party afloat... The Mensheviks and other socialists to the right of the Bolsheviks also helped at this critical point. Believing that there were “no enemies to the Left”, and fearing a counter-revolution, they protected the Bolsheviks from treason charges. A year later, the Bolsheviks proved their ingratitude by imprisoning the Mensheviks... In spite of this setback, support for the Bolsheviks continued to grow, especially after they adopted the SR slogan, “Land to the Peasants!” legalizing the peasants’ seizure of the landowners’ estates. As their wars against the peasantry in 1918-22 and 1928-1934 were to show, the Bolsheviks were never a pro-peasant party, and really

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376 Figes, op. cit., p. 436.
wanted to nationalize the land rather than give it to the peasants. This was in accordance with Marxist teaching, which saw the industrial proletariat as the vanguard of the revolution, but looked down on the peasants, with their religiosity, old-fashioned ways and rejection of state interference, as being relics of the old order. However, towards the end of his life, in 1881, Marx had entered into correspondence with the narodnik Vera Zasulich, and had recognized the possibility that the revolution in Russia could begin with the agrarian socialists. So Lenin had some precedent in making tactical concessions to the SRs at this point – concessions he was soon to take back once he was in power. It paid off: many Left SRs joined the party, and others voted for the Bolsheviks in the Soviets.

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

Orlando Figes writes: “The social polarization of the summer gave the Bolsheviks their first real mass following as a party which based its main appeal on the plebeian rejection of all superordinate authority. The Kornilov crisis was the critical turning point, for it seemed to confirm their message that neither peace nor radical social change could be obtained through the politics of compromise with the bourgeoisie. The larger factories in the major cities, where the workers’ sense of class solidarity was most developed, were the first to go over in large numbers to the Bolsheviks. By the end of May, the party had already gained control of the Central Bureau of the Factory Committees and, although the Menshevik trade unionists remained in the ascendancy until 1918, it also began to get its resolutions passed at important trade union assemblies. Bolshevik activists in the factories tended to be younger, more working class and much more militant than their Menshevik or SR rivals. This made them more attractive to those groups of workers – both among the skilled and the unskilled – who were becoming increasingly prepared to engage in violent strikes, not just for better pay and working conditions but also for the control of the factory environment itself. As their network of party cells at the factory level grew, the Bolsheviks began to build up their membership among the working class, and as a result their finances grew through the new members’ contributions. By the Sixth Party Conference at the end of July there were probably 200,000 Bolshevik members,

rising to perhaps 350,000 on the eve of October, and the vast majority of these were blue-collar workers.”

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

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

Trotsky’s support for the Leninist line was crucial to the success of the revolution. For a long time he had not seen eye-to-eye with Lenin. Originally a Menshevik, in 1904 he accurately summed up Lenin’s dictatorial aims: “The party organization is substituted for the party, the Central Committee is substituted for the party organization, and finally a ‘dictator’ is substituted for the Central Committee.” And as late as March, 1917, Lenin had expressed his wariness of Trotsky: “The main thing is not to let ourselves get caught in stupid attempts at ‘unity’ with social patriots, or still more dangerous… with vacillators like Trotsky & Co.” Nevertheless, by 1917 there were no major differences between the two revolutionaries, so it was logical that Trotsky should join - it was probably his vanity and ambition that had prevented him from surrendering to the party he had criticized for so long. And now his oratorical power to sway the mob, and the key position he occupied in the Petrograd Soviet and its Revolutionary Military Committee, supplied the vital element that propelled the Bolsheviks to power.

Figes continues: “The rising fortunes of the Bolsheviks during the summer and autumn were essentially due to the fact that they were the only major political party which stood uncompromisingly for Soviet power. This point bears emphasizing, for

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379 Figes, op. cit., p. 457.
380 Figes, op. cit., p. 459.
381 Trotsky, Our Political Tasks (1904); in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 679.
one of the most basic misconceptions of the Russian Revolution is that the Bolsheviks were swept to power on a tide of mass support for the party itself. The October insurrection was a coup d’état, actively supported by a small minority of the population (and indeed opposed by several of the Bolshevik leaders themselves). But it took place amidst a social revolution, which was centred on the popular realization of Soviet power as the negation of the state and the direct self-rule of the people, much as in the ancient peasant ideal of volia. The political vacuum brought about by this social revolution enabled the Bolsheviks to seize power in the cities and consolidate their dictatorship during the autumn and winter. The slogan ‘All Power to the Soviets!’ was a useful tool, a banner of popular legitimation covering the nakedness of Lenin’s ambition (which was better expressed as All Power to the Party). Later, as the nature of the Bolshevik dictatorship became apparent, the party faced the growing opposition of precisely those groups in society which in 1917 had rallied behind the Soviet slogan…

The lack of opposition to the Bolshevik coup was almost farcical. First, the Petrograd garrison mutinied, leaving the government no substantial forces in the capital. Then, on the night of the 24th, Kerensky fled in a stolen car. The rest of the ministers huddled in the Winter Palace guarded by some Cossacks, cadets and 200 women from the Shock Battalion of Death – about 3000 people in all. But such was their lack of morale that by the evening only 300 of these were left. Very little fighting actually took place.

The Bolsheviks’ most potent weapon was the blank round fired by the cruiser Aurora at 9.40 p.m. “The huge sound of the blast, much louder than a live shot, caused the frightened ministers to drop at once to the floor. The women from the Battalion of Death became hysterical and had to be taken away to a room at the back of the palace, where most of the remaining cadets abandoned their posts.” When the Bolsheviks finally stormed into the Palace, their first act was to break open the wine cellars and get drunk…

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

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384 Figes, op. cit., p. 488.
and walked out of the Congress hall in protest, while the Bolshevik delegates stamped their feet, whistled and hurled abuse at them.

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

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

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

“And then Lunacharsky read out Lenin’s Manifesto ‘To All Workers, Soldiers and Peasants,’ in which ‘Soviet Power’ was proclaimed, and its promises on land, bread and peace were announced. The reading of this historic proclamation, which was constantly interrupted by the thunderous cheers of the delegates, played an enormous symbolic role. It provided the illusion that the insurrection was the culmination of a revolution by ‘the masses’. When it had been passed, shortly after 5 a.m. on the 26th, the weary but elated delegates emerged from the Tauride Palace. ‘The night was yet heavy and chill,’ wrote John Reed. ‘There was only a faint unearthly pallor stealing over the silent streets, dimming the watch-fires, the shadow of a terrible dawn rising over Russia…”

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

“From the instant he seized dictatorial power Lenin proceeded to uproot all existing institutions so as to clear the ground for a regime subsequently labelled ‘totalitarian’. This term has fallen out of favour with Western sociologists and political scientists determined to avoid what they consider the language of the Cold War. It deserves note, however, how quickly it found favour in the Soviet Union the instant the censor’s prohibitions against its use had been lifted. This kind of regime, unknown to previous history, imposed the authority of a private but omnipotent

385 Figes, op. cit., pp. 489-490.
386 Figes, op. cit., p. 492.
‘party’ on the state, claiming the right to subject to itself all organized life without exception, and enforcing its will by means of unbounded terror…” 387

“On the day after the coup,” writes Adam Tooze, “Lenin proposed that the Constituent Assembly elections be cancelled altogether. There was no need for such an exercise in ‘bourgeois democracy’. But he was overruled by the Bolshevik Executive Committee, which decided that to flout the democratic hopes of the February revolution so openly would do more harm than good.” 388

In the elections, the turnout was large (60%), and Russians voted in large numbers for the main socialist party of the SRs (58%). The Bolsheviks polled only 25%, the Ukrainian Mensheviks - 12%, and other national parties - 4%. In all, socialist or revolutionary parties received 80% of the vote, while the liberal Cadets received 5%. 389 There is no question about it: the revolution was not imposed upon the Russian people, in their great majority they called it upon themselves…

According to Solzhenitsyn, “More than 80% of the Jewish population of Russia voted” for Zionist parties. Lenin wrote that 550,000 were for Jewish nationalists. ‘The majority of the Jewish parties formed a single national list, in accordance with which seven deputies were elected – six Zionists and Gruzenberg. ‘The success of the Zionists’ was also aided by the [published not long before the elections] Declaration of the English Foreign Minister Balfour [on the creation of a ‘national centre’ of the Jews in Palestine], ‘which was met by the majority of the Russian Jewish population with enthusiasm’.” 390 Thus in many cities there were festive manifestations, meetings and religious services.

The Constituent Assembly was convened in January, 1918. On the first day, “between 3 and 4 a.m. on the 6th, the Chairman of the Assembly and leader of the SRs, Victor Chernov (1873-1952), was trying to pass a law for the abolition of landed property when he was tapped on the shoulder by a sailor, the commander of the Bolshevik Guard. ‘I have been instructed to inform you that all those present should leave the Assembly Hall,’ the sailor announced, ‘because the guard is tired’.” 391 The Assembly never reconvened.

So the supreme authority in the Russian republic disappeared because the guard was tired… Thus was Russian democracy brought to an abrupt and inglorious end… And with it disappeared the last chance that the Russian people would have to reinstate the monarchy in a peaceful and orderly fashion and avoid the great catastrophe that now overtook them…

September 28 / October 11, 2017.

389 Tooze, op. cit., p. 85; Pipes, op. cit., pp. 5, 149.
390 Solzhenitsyn, Dvesti let vmeste (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, p. 73.
St. Constantine, the first Christian emperor, came to power at a time when the superiority of the hierarchical, monarchical principle was undisputed in the ancient world. And under him it remained unchanged – Constantine was no democrat, and by abolishing the tetrarchy he reasserted one-man-rule. The pagan distinction between true autocracy and tyranny also remained, although subtly modified. The real change was in the idea that the State and its prosperity were no longer the highest values. For above the State was the Church, and the State existed in order to serve the Church, not vice-versa.

The hierarchical principle remained unchanged because it was fully in accordance with Christian teaching. For the Apostles did not only preach obedience to the emperor: they extended the hierarchical principle to every level of society. Thus "be subject for the Lord's sake," says St. Peter, "to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and praise those who do right..." (I Peter 2.13). This included even the institution of slavery: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward" (I Peter 2.18). Again St. Paul says: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And those who have believing masters must not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service" (I Timothy 6.1-2).

Following the Holy Apostles, the Holy Fathers asserted that the hierarchical principle of one-man rule is natural, God-given and superior to any other principle of government. In developing this thought, they adopted the originally pagan idea that the earthly king is the image of the Heavenly King, purifying it of the tendency, so natural to pagan thought, to identify the earthly and the Heavenly, the image and its archetype. Earthly kings could be images of the Heavenly King, and were to be venerated as such; but they were not god-kings, not objects of worship. Thus Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea wrote of St. Constantine: "The kingdom with which he is invested is an image of the heavenly one. He looks up to see the archetypal pattern and guides those whom he rules below in accordance with that pattern." "The ruler of the whole world is the second Person of the All-Holy Trinity – the Word of God, Who is in everything visible and invisible. From this all-embracing Reason the Emperor is rational, from this Wisdom he is wise, from participation in this Divinity he is good, from communion with this Righteousness he is righteous, in accordance with the idea of this Moderation he is moderate, from the reception of this highest Power he is courageous. In all justice one must call a true Emperor him who has formed his soul with royal virtues, according to the image of the Highest Kingdom".392

While rejecting the pagan idea of the despotic god-king, the Christian idea of the emperor as the image of the Heavenly King also excluded the no less pagan idea of democratism, rule by the people. Thus Eusebius: “The example of monarchical rule

392 Eusebius, Oration in Honour of Constantine.
there is a source of strength to him. This is something granted to man alone of the creatures of the earth by the universal King. The basic principle of kingly authority is the establishment of a single source of authority to which everything is subject. Monarchy is superior to every other constitution and form of government. For polyarchy, where everyone competes on equal terms, is really anarchy and discord. This is why there is one God, not two or three or even more. Polytheism is strictly atheism. There is one King, and His Word and royal law are one.”

Again, St. Basil the Great wrote: “Even the king of the birds is not elected by the majority because the temerity of the people often nominates for leader the worst one; nor does it receive its power by lot, because the unwise chance of the lot frequently hands over power to the last; nor in accordance with hereditary succession, because those living in luxury and flattery are also less competent and untaught in any virtue; but according to nature one holds the first place over all, both in its size and appearance and meek disposition.”

And St. Gregory the Theologian wrote: “The three most ancient opinions about God are atheism (or anarchy), polytheism (or polyarchy), and monotheism (or monarchy). The children of Greece played with the first two; let us leave them to their games. For anarchy is disorder: and polyarchy implies factious division, and therefore anarchy and disorder. Both these lead in the same direction – to disorder; and disorder leads to disintegration; for disorder is the prelude to disintegration. What we honour is monarchy.”

Later generations of Byzantines remained faithful to the hierarchical principle. Thus St. John Chrysostom wrote: “Equality is known to produce strife. Therefore God allowed the human race to be a monarchy, not a democracy. But the family is constructed in a similar way to an army, with the husband holding the rank of monarch, the wife as general and the children also given stations of command.”

Again, the champion of St. Chrysostom, St. Isidore of Pelusium, “after pointing to the order of submission of some to others established everywhere by God in the lives of rational and irrational creatures, concludes therefrom: ‘Therefore we are entitled to say that... power, that is, royal leadership and authority, is established by God.”

And over four centuries later St. Theodore the Studite generalized the principle as follows: "There is one Lord and Giver of the Law, as it is written: one authority and one Divine principle over all. This single principle is the source of all wisdom, goodness and good order. It extends over every creature that has received its beginning from the goodness of God... It is given to one man only... to construct rules of life in accordance with the likeness of God. For the divine Moses in his description of the origin of the world that comes from the mouth of God, cites the word: 'Let us create man in accordance with Our image and likeness' (Genesis 1.26). Hence the establishment among men of every dominion and every authority, especially in the Churches of God: one patriarch in a patriarchate, one metropolitan in a metropolia, one bishop in a bishopric, one abbot in a monastery, and in secular life, if you want to listen, one king, one regimental commander, one captain on a

393 Eusebius, Oration in Honour of Constantine.
394 St. Basil the Great, Hexaemeron 8. In accordance with Roman conceptions, St. Basil did not believe that monarchical power had to be hereditary. The virtue of hereditary succession was developed later.
396 St. John Chrysostom, Homily 34 on I Corinthians, 7.
ship. And if one will did not rule in all this, there would be no law and order in anything, and it would not be for the best, for a multiplicity of wills destroys everything."\textsuperscript{398}

The principle of one-man rule in politics was greatly strengthened in Byzantium by the idea that the fount of all secular law in the empire was \textit{the emperor himself}. This did not mean, however, that the emperor’s rule was completely arbitrary. He had to obey the Church, on the one hand, and his own laws, on the other. Thus St. Ambrose of Milan wrote to the Emperor St. Theodosius the Great that the emperor must respect and bind himself by the laws he promulgates, or he risks great dangers in the civil sphere: "And how, O Emperor, are we to settle a matter on which you have already declared your judgment, and have even promulgated laws, so that it is not open to any one to judge otherwise? But when you laid down this law for others, you laid it down for yourself as well. For the Emperor is the first to keep the laws which he passes. Do you, then, wish me to try how those who are chosen as judges will either come, contrary to your decision, or at least excuse themselves, saying that they cannot act against so severe and so stringent a law of the Emperor?"\textsuperscript{399}

The Emperor Justinian promulgated the famous principle of \textit{the symphony of powers}, the idea that Church and State, though independent of each other, were to work together for the salvation of men, each being supreme in its own sphere... From the time of Justinian we also come across the idea that the emperor is “the living law”, \textit{the law personified}. As Tom Holland writes: “If it was true, as Justinian ringingly declared, that ‘what medicine is to disease, so laws are to public affairs’, then there was much that first needed to be done before the emperor’s prescription could be applied to the sickening world. The sheer scale and antiquity of the Roman people’s achievements in the field of law had resulted in a legacy that was intimidatingly chequered. Justinian, however, was hardly the man to duck such a challenge. His first step, only a few months into his reign, was the appointment of a commission to harmonise the various unwieldy collections of laws used by previous emperors, then, a year and a half late, he charged a second commission with the even more daunting task of collecting the entire stupendous body of private writings on Roman law. Complete constitutions had to be revised, almost two thousand individual books called in and minutely sifted; tens of thousands of excerpts made. The resulting codification, achieved in record time, was so staggering that it appeared to many something more than human. Justinian himself presented it proudly as a process of restoration; but there was something about it as well of a revolution. ‘We have by means of old laws not only brought matters into a better condition, but we have also promulgated new laws.’ The emperor saw no need to conceal the fact. He was himself, as he declared, \textit{nomos empsychos} – the ‘living law’. Here, in this self-promotion, was the ultimate refinement of what generations of emperors had been working to achieve. Henceforward, the rules by which the Roman people lived and were bound were to have just the single fountainhead: the emperor himself, enthroned in his palatial citadel. No wonder, then, that Justinian should have sought, not merely to impose his stamp upon the long centuries of Roman legal achievement, but also prescribe where and how that achievement should be taught. Private law

\textsuperscript{398} St. Theodore, \textit{The Philokalia}, volume IV, p. 93; in Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), \textit{Russkaia Ideologia} (The Russian Ideology), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 46-47.

\textsuperscript{399} St. Ambrose, \textit{Epistle 21}, 9.
schools were definitively banned. No teachers were to be licensed, save for those directly sanctioned by the state. Now, more than ever, the whole world was to be administered from the centre, from the palace of Constantinople.”

This did not mean that the emperor was also to govern the Church. But it did mean that in Greco-Roman antiquity and the Middle Ages, right down to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the idea was firmly established that all true power, whether in Church or State, came from above, from God, being mediated through the one-man leader of the Empire or the collegial leadership of the Church. Whatever rights the emperor had in the Church in Byzantine times were given to him by the Church, for the sake of the Church, and in view of the fact that he was himself specially anointed to the kingdom by the Church. This is a vitally important point which is often overlooked by those who look on Church and State as necessarily warring principles. Just as the soul and the body are not by nature warring principles, even if the fall has often set them against each other, so it is with the Church and State. And yet we must agree with Sir Steven Runciman that “the chief practical problem that faces any organized Church lies in its relation to the State”...

The rights of the Emperor in the Church were limited by the fact that he could not perform sacraments, nor did he ordain or defrock bishops and priests. “To be sure, the Emperor wore vestments similar to those of the bishop and even had a special place in the worship of the Church, such as censing the sanctuary at the Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ, offering the sermon during Vespers at the commencement of the Great Lent, and receiving Holy Communion directly from the altar as did the clergy. Nevertheless, the Emperor was not a priest and many Greek Fathers disapproved of even these privileges. Emperor Marcian (451-457) may have been hailed as a priest-king at the Council of Chalcedon (451), but this did not bestow sacerdotal status on him or any Byzantine imperator.”

One of the rights given to the Emperor by the Church was that of convening Councils and enforcing their decisions. This right did not empower the emperor or his officials to interfere in the proceedings on a par with the bishops, but it did enable him to make quiet suggestions which were often vitally important. Thus at the First Council it was the Emperor Constantine who quietly suggested the word “consubstantial” to describe the relationship between the Son of God and God the Father. Again, although the Emperor Marcian said that he had decided to be present at the Fourth Ecumenical Council “not as a manifestation of strength, but so as to give firmness to the acts of the Council, taking Constantine of blessed memory as my model,” his firm but tactful intervention was decisive in the triumph of Orthodoxy.

The Emperor also had the right to invest the Patriarch. “According to the official formula,” writes Runciman, “the Patriarch was elected by the decree of the Holy...”

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403 Archbishop Averky (Taushev) of Syracuse, Sem’ Vselenskikh Soborov (The Seven Ecumenical Councils), Moscow, 1996, p. 11.
404 Averky, op.cit., p. 71.
Synod and the promotion of the Emperor. His investiture took place in the Imperial Palace in the presence of the high dignitaries of Church and State. Until 1204 the scene was the Palace of Magnaura, where the Emperor in person announced the election with the formula: ‘The Divine grace, and Our Majesty which derives from it, raised the most pious [name] to be Patriarch of Constantinople.’ After 1261 the investiture was held in the triclinium of the Palace of Blachernae; and about the same time the formula was changed. The Emperor now said: ‘The Holy Trinity, through the power that It has given Us, raises you to be Bishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Oecumenical Patriarch.’ By the beginning of the fifteenth century the formula and the setting had changed once more. The investiture now took place in a church in the presence of the Emperor; but it was a high lay official who pronounced the words: ‘Our great and holy Sovereign and the Sacred Synod call Your Holiness to the supreme throne of Patriarch of Constantinople.’ The theologian Symeon of Thessalonica, writing in about 1425, regretted the change of words as there was no mention of God, though he liked the recognition given to the Holy Synod. When the election had thus been proclaimed the Emperor gave to the Patriarch the cross, the purple soutane and the pectoral reliquary which symbolized his office. After this investiture the new Patriarch rode in procession through the streets of Constantinople to the church of Saint Sophia, where he was consecrated by the Metropolitan of Heraclea, in memory of the days when Byzantium had been a suffragan see under Heraclea.”

The Emperor chose the Patriarch from three candidates put forward to him by the Holy Synod. As Simeon of Thessalonica witnessed, this right was not seized by the emperor by force, “but was entrusted to him from ancient times by the Holy Fathers, that is, by the Church itself”. Moreover, “if none of the three candidates was suitable, the basileus could suggest his own candidate, and the Hierarchical Synod again freely decided about his suitability, having the possibility of not agreeing. The king’s right did not in principle violate the Hierarchs’ freedom of choice and was based on the fact that the Patriarch occupied not only a position in the Church, but was also a participant in political life… Simeon of Thessalonica said: ‘He, as the anointed king, has been from ancient times offered the choice of one of the three by the Holy Fathers, for they [the three] have already been chosen by the Council, and all three have been recognized as worthy of the Patriarchy. The king assists the Council in its actions as the anointed of the Lord, having become the defender and servant of the Church, since during the anointing he gave a promise of such assistance. De jure there can be no question of arbitrariness on the part of the king in the choosing of the Patriarch, or of encroachment on the rights and freedom of choice [of the Hierarchs].’”

Another imperial right was that of handing the Patriarch his staff. This should not be interpreted as if the emperor bestowed the grace of the Patriarchy. Nor was it the same as the ceremony of “lay investiture” in the West. The emperor did this, according to Simeon of Thessalonica, “because he wishes to honour the Church, implying also at the same time that he personally accepts the individual now consecrated as his own pastor whom God has chosen for him.”

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405 Runciman, op. cit., p. 27.
“Simeon of Thessalonica explains that in this act the king only witnesses to the fact of his agreement with the installation of the new Patriarch, and after the bestowal of the staff he witnesses to his spiritual submission... by the bowing of his head, his asking for a blessing from the Patriarch and his kissing of his hand. By the grace and action of the Hierarchy, the Patriarch does not differ from the Metropolitans and Bishops. But in the dignity of his see, and in his care for all who are under his authority, he is the father and head of all, consecrating Metropolitans and Bishops, and judging them in conjunction with the Council, while he himself is judged by a Great Council, says Simeon of Thessalonica. The king was present at both the consecration and the enthronement of the Patriarch in the altar...; but the consecration and enthronement were acts of a purely ecclesiastical character, and the king’s participation in them was no longer as active as in the first stages of the process, when he convened the Hierarchical Council, chose one of the three elected by the Council and witnessed to his recognition of him in the act of προβάλλεις [which gave the Patriarch his rights in Byzantine civil law]. In the act of consecration [assuming that the candidate to the Patriarchy was not already a bishop] Hierarchical grace was invoked upon the man to be consecrated by the Metropolitan of Heraclea, while in the act of enthronement he was strengthened by abundant grace to greater service for the benefit, now, of the whole Church, and not of one Diocese [only].”

These rights of the emperor in the Church were paralleled by certain rights of the Church in the State, especially the Patriarch’s right of intercession (Russian: pechalovanie). “The Patriarch was called to intercede for the persecuted and those oppressed by the authorities, for the condemned and those in exile, with the aim of easing their lot, and for the poor and those in need with the aim of giving them material or moral support. This right of intercessory complaint, which belonged by dint of the 75th canon of the Council of Carthage to all Diocesan Bishops, was particularly linked with the Patriarch of Constantinople by dint of his high position in the Byzantine State with the king.”

Also, State officials “were obliged to help the Bishop in supporting Church discipline and punishing transgressors. Sometimes the emperors obliged provincial officials to tell them about Church disturbances which depended on the carelessness of the Bishop, but the emperors gave the Bishops the right to keep an eye on officials, while the Bishops, in carrying out this obligation imposed on them by the civil law, did not thereby become State officials... In the Byzantine laws themselves the Church was distinguished from the State as a special social organism, having a special task distinct from that of the State; these laws recognized the Church as the teacher of the faith and the establisher of Church canons, while the State could only raise them to the status of State laws; Church administration and Church courts were recognized as being bound up with the priestly rank.”

“In reviewing Byzantine ideas on royal power, we must recognize the fact that, in spite of the influence of pagan traditions, in spite of Saracen Muslim influences leading to a confusion of powers, in spite of the bad practices of arianizing and

408 Zyzykin, op. cit., part I, pp. 120-121.
409 Zyzykin, op. cit., part I, p. 121.
410 Zyzykin, op. cit., part I, p. 137.
iconoclast emperors, it remained a dogma of Byzantine law to recognize the Church of Christ as a special society, parallel to the State, standing separate and above the latter by its aims and means, by dint of which the supreme head of the State was by no means the head of the other, ecclesiastical union, and, if he entered into it in the position of a special sacred rank, it was far from being the higher, but was only equal to the deacon’s, being subject thereby to the canons which established the Church as a Divine institution having its own legislation, administration and court...”

The State is rooted in the family, so that the head of the State, the Emperor or King, is like the Father of all his citizens. However, if the Emperor is the father of his people, the Patriarch is the father of the Emperor, and was so called in Byzantium and in all her daughter-autocracies: Serbia, Bulgaria, Georgia and Russia. Thus Emperor Theodosius the Great, embraced St. Meletius, president of the Second Ecumenical Council, as his father. In Serbia, this spiritual relationship was even paralleled by physical paternity: St. Symeon, the first Nemanja king, was the physical father of the first archbishop, St. Savva, but at the same time his spiritual son. Again, in Russia the first Romanov Tsar, Mikhail Fyodorovich, was the spiritual and natural son of Patriarch Philaret. This emphasized that Christian politics, as represented by the Emperor or Tsar, should ideally be conformed to - even “begotten by” - the other-worldly spirit and aims of Christian spirituality, as represented by the Patriarch.

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Before turning to the Third Rome, Russia, let us briefly examine two further examples of Orthodox autocracy in the period of the Second Rome - England and Serbia.

The monarchy had always been a sacred institution among the English. Both the king and the archbishop were “the Lord’s Anointed” - the archbishop in order to minister the sacraments of salvation, and the king so that, as St. Bede wrote “he might by conquering all our enemies bring us to the immortal Kingdom”. The king was sometimes compared to God the Father and the bishop – to Christ. Thus in his letter to Charlemagne Cathwulf compared the king to the Father and the bishop to the Son. He was the shepherd and father of his people and would have to answer for them at the Last Judgement. According to King Aethelred’s law-code of 1014, “a Christian king is Christ’s deputy in a Christian people”.

The Church strongly preached the people’s duty of loyalty to the king. Thus Abbot Aelfric wrote: “The people can choose whomever they like as king. But after he is consecrated as king, then he has dominion over the people, and they cannot shake off his yoke from their neck.” For, as Archbishop Wulfstan of York wrote: “Through what shall peace and support come to God’s servants and to God’s poor, save through Christ, and through a Christian king?”

411 Zyzykin, op. cit., part I, p. 139.
412 St. Bede the Venerable, Commentary on Acts.
413 Abbot Aelfric, Catholic Homily on Palm Sunday.
414 Archbishop Wulfstan, Institutes of Christian Polity (1023).
“Indeed the pre-eminence of the monarchy, for all the political vicissitudes involving changes of dynasty, is the outstanding feature that strikes the careful student of eleventh-century England. To all who wrote or legislated, the king was supremely the symbol of the nation. It is sometimes forgotten how many sides of the life of the community were brought together under royal surveillance: the coinage, supervision of general administration of justice through shire and hundred and tithing, provision of good title to land by means of charters, and protection of the Church. It might be said of England in the tenth and eleventh centuries that king and community grew together. There is evidence of strong loyalty to the monarchy, and the Church helped to encourage this feeling. During the tenth century coronation rites were introduced that made the coronation of Edgar a splendid and symbolic moment in the life of the nation. The promises given by King Edgar at his coronation reappeared in the Coronation Charter of Henry I; indeed in essentials the ritual of this Anglo-Saxon ceremony remains the core around which has been constructed the elaborate detail of modern coronations…”

Although, as we have seen, King Aethelred at a low point in his reign considered some kind of constitutional arrangement with his people, there is no hint of democratism in Anglo-Saxon concepts of government. For, as Deacon Alcuin of York wrote, “the people should be led, not followed, as God has ordained… Those who say, ‘The voice of the people is the voice of God,’ are not to be listened to, for the unruliness of the mob is always close to madness.” So democratism was definitely rejected by the early English.

The killing of the king was seen as an especially heinous crime, which could be atoned only by the suffering of the whole nation. That is why the murder of St. Edward (and later, that of Prince Alfred, brother of St. Edward the Confessor), as well as the expulsion of King Aethelred, were seen as so ominous, and closely connected with the disasters that followed them. Thus in the eyes of Archbishop Wulfstan, “Aethelred’s expulsion from his kingdom in 1013 seemed a crime heinous enough to account for the ills with which God was punishing the English.”

Indeed, according to the archbishop in his famous “Sermon of the Wolf to the English” (1014), it was disloyalty at every level of English society that led to the disasters suffered at the hands of the Danes: “For there are here in the land great disloyalties towards God and towards the state, and there are also many here in the country who are betrayers of their lords in various ways. And the greatest betrayal in the world of one’s lord is that a man betray his lord’s soul; and it is also a very great betrayal of one’s lord in the world, that a man should plot against his lord’s life or, living, drive him from the land; and both have happened in this country. They plotted against Edward and then killed him...

“Many are foresworn and greatly perjured, and pledges are broken over and again; and it is evident in this nation that the wrath of God violently oppresses us…”

418 Archbishop Wulfstan, “The Sermon of ‘Wolf’ to the English”, in Michael Swanton, Anglo-Saxon

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However, the veneration due to the Lord’s Anointed went together with definite responsibilities on his part. St. Dunstan had close personal relationships with six kings, and crowned and anointed three of them. He also probably played an important part in the composition of the rite itself.\textsuperscript{419}

Instead of a constitution, in tenth-century England the king had to submit to an oath, or Promissio. Thus St. Dunstan, gave the following Promissio to King Aethelred to read at his coronation at Kingston in 979\textsuperscript{420}:

"In the Name of the Holy Trinity, I promise three things to the Christian people and my subjects: first, that God's Church and all Christian people of my dominion hold true peace; the second is that I forbid robbery and all unrighteous things to all orders; the third, that I promise and enjoin in all dooms justice and mercy, that the gracious and merciful God of His Everlasting Mercy may forgive us, who liveth and reigneth."

The saint then commented on this: “The Christian king who keeps these engagements, earns for himself worldly honour, and the Eternal God also is merciful to him, both in the present life and in the eternal life that never ends. But if he violate that which was promised to God, then shall it forthwith right soon grow worse among his people, and in the end it all turns to the worst, unless he in life first amend it. Ah! dear lord, take diligent heed to thyself by all means; often call to mind this, thou wilt have at God's judgment to produce and lead forth the flock of which thou hast been made the shepherd in this life, and then give account how thou heldest that which Christ afore purchased with His Own Blood.

“The duty of an anointed king is that he judge no man unjustly, defend and protect widows and orphans and strangers, forbid stealing, correct unlawful intercourse, and annul and altogether forbid incestuous unions, extirpate witches and magicians, drive out of the land killers of relatives and perjurers, feed the needy with alms, have old and wise and sober men as counselors, and install righteous men as stewards. For in the day of judgement he will have to give an account for whatever injustice they have committed which is his responsibility.”\textsuperscript{421}

Crimes against the Church or her servants were seen as crimes against the king, and duly punished. The king saw it as his duty to look after the Church and enforce her laws with secular penalties. And yet the relationship between Church and State in England was “symphonic”, not caesaropapist; for the kings did nothing without consulting their bishops and senior nobles – all meetings of the witan were attended by bishops as well as nobles. Indeed, according to Archbishop Wulfstan, it was the monarchy that depended on the faith and the Church, not the other way round. “It is true what I say: should the Christian faith weaken, the kingship will immediately


\textsuperscript{420} The stone upon which King Aethelred was crowned can still be seen in the centre of Kingston (meaning, of course, “king’s stone”) in Surrey. So the root of true kingship, drenched in the true anointing chrism of the Orthodox monarchy, still exists in this land.

\textsuperscript{421} William Stubbs, \textit{Memorials of St. Dunstan}, Rolls series, 1874, pp. 356-357.
Thus, as Frank Barlow says, “a true theocratic government was created, yet one, despite the common charge of confusion against the Anglo-Saxon Church, remarkably free of confusion in theory. The duality of the two spheres was emphatically proclaimed. There were God’s rights and the king’s rights, Christ’s laws and the laws of the world. There was an independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction under the control of the bishop, but there was also the helping hand of the secular power which the church had invoked and which it could use at its discretion.”

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In 1219 The Byzantines granted the Serbian Church autocephaly in the person of her first archbishop, St. Savva. This was a unique event in that full autocephaly, - as opposed to, for example, the semi-autocephaly of the Bulgarian Church centred at Ohrid, - had never been granted before to any Church by the Byzantines. (The Georgian Church had been granted autocephaly from Antioch in one of the Ecumenical Councils.) As Alexander Dvorkin writes, St. Savva “received practically complete independence from Constantinople and jurisdiction ‘over all the Serbian and coastal lands’ (an unambiguous reference to Zeta [Montenegro], which had left to join the Latins). Thus the status of the Serbian Church was in essence equivalent to that of a patriarchate or to the autocephalous Churches of today. The one link with Constantinople that was demanded of it was the commemoration of the Ecumenical Patriarch in the Eucharistic prayer (“Among the first, O Lord, remember…”). The autocephalous status of the Serbian Church became in many ways a new formula...

“The establishment of the Serbian demonstrated a subtle, but very important evolution in the meaning of the concept of autocephaly. Before that, with the single exception of Georgia, all the autocephalous Churches had been in the Empire and had acquired juridical status by a one-man decision of the emperor or by a decree of an Ecumenical Council. The new autocephalies (that is, Serbia and Bulgaria) were created by means of bilateral agreements between two civil governments. This reflected the new tendency to view ecclesiastical autocephaly as the mark of a national state, which undoubtedly created a precedent for ecclesiastical relations in recent history, when increasingly passionate nationalist politics – both in the Balkans and in other places – turned the struggle for national autocephalies into the phenomenon which we know today as ecclesiastical phyletism…”

And yet the Serbian autocephaly was neither motivated by phyletism, nor were its consequences in the medieval period anything other than good. For the Serbs proceeded to create one of the most perfect examples of Church-State symphony in Orthodox history. Both in the fact that the first king, St. Stefan, and the first archbishop of the Nemanja dynasty, St. Savva, were father and son, and that the son became the spiritual father of his physical father, we see a profound symbol of the autocephalous status of the Serbian Church.

422 Wulfstan, The Institutes of Polity, 4.
424 Dvorkin, Ocherki po Istori Vselenskoj Pravoslavnoj Istori (Sketches on the History of the Universal Orthodox Church), Nizhni- Novgorod, 2006, pp. 688, 690.
true relationship between Church and State, in which the physical pre-eminence of the State is controlled and purified by the spiritual pre-eminence of the Church.

Moreover, St. Savva enshrined the ideal in his Zakonopravilo or Kormchija, “a code,” as Dmitrije Bogdanovich writes, “written in 1220 and consisting of a selection of Byzantine legal texts, to be enforced in the Serbian Church and State life. Under the title of ‘The Law of the Holy Fathers’, they were enforced throughout the Middle Ages; to a certain extent, they were valid even later, during the reign of the Ottoman empire. It is a known fact that the reason behind the drafting of this code was the planned establishment of an independent, autocephalous Serbian Church. On his way back from Nicaea, where in 1219 he succeeded in having the autocephaly recognized, thus securing the preconditions for the organization of a new Church, Serbia’s first archbishop St. Sava, aided by a group of collaborators and working on Mount Athos and in Salonika, put together a selection of Byzantine Church laws, relying on the existing nomocanon but taking a highly characteristic course. Instead of following the existing nomocanonic codes, where certain commentators opposed the original symphony of the political and ecclesiastical elements, subordinating the latter to the former, Sava selected texts which, as opposed to the ideas and relations then obtaining in Byzantium (‘Caesaropapism’, the supremacy of the State over the Church), constituted a return to the old, authentic relation, i.e. the original Orthodox, early Byzantine political philosophy.

“‘St. Sava’, as S. Troitsky puts it, ‘rejected all the sources containing “traces of the Hellenic evil” in the form of the theory of Caesaropapism’, since that theory went against the dogmatic and canonical doctrine of the episcopate as the seat of Church authority, as well as the political situation in Serbia, where imperial authority had not yet been established at the time. He also rejected the theory of “Eastern Papism”, which, according to Troitsky, imposes the supremacy of the Church of Constantinople over all the other local Churches of the Orthodox oecumene – and which was, moreover, at variance with the dogmatic doctrine of the Council as the supreme organ of Church authority, with the canonical doctrine proclaiming the equality of the heads of the autocephalous Churches, and with the position of the Serbian Church itself, which met the fundamental canonical condition of autocephaly (that of independently electing its own bishops), so that any interference of the Patriarch of Constantinople in its affairs would have been anticanonical. Sava therefore left out of the Nomocanon any work from the Byzantine canonical sources in which either the centripetal ideology of Caesaropapism or the Eastern Papism theory was recognized; he resolutely ‘stood on the ground of the diarchic theory of symphony’, even to the extent of amending it somewhat…”425

“Serbian history,” writes Bishop Nikolai, “never knew of any struggle between Church and state. There were no such struggles, but bloody wars have filled the history of Western nations. How does one explain the difference between the two cases? The one is explained by theodulia [the service of God]; the other by theocracy.

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425 Bogdanovich, “The Political Philosophy of Medieval Serbia”, in 1389-1989, Boj na Kosovu (The Battle of Kosovo), Belgrade, 1989, p. 16. St. Savva’s Zakonopravilo has only recently been published in full by Professor Miodrag M. Petrovich – not in Serbia, where the official hierarchy discouraged its publication, but in Greece.
“Let us take two tame oxen as an example, how they are both harnessed to the same yoke, pull the same cart, and serve the same master. This is theodulia. Then let us take two oxen who are so enraged with each other that one moment the ox on the left pulls himself out from the yoke and gores the other one, goading him on to pull the cart alone, while the next moment the ox on the right does the same to his companion on the left. This is theocracy: the war of the Church against the state and the war of the state against the Church; the war of the pope against kings and the war of kings against the pope. Neither ox wished to be yoked and serve the Master; each of them wanted to play the role of the Master and drive his companion under the yoke. Thus the Master’s cart has remained stationary and his field uncultivated and has eventually become completely overgrown with weeds. This is what happened in the West.”\textsuperscript{426}

“In those days the problem of relations between the Church and the State did not disquiet people as it does in our days, at least not in the Orthodox countries. It had been regulated as it were by itself, through long tradition. Whenever Caesaropapism or Papocaesarism tried to prevail by force, it had been overcome in a short time. For there existed no tradition in the Church of the East of an augustus [emperor] being at the same time Pontifex Maximus, or vice-versa. There were unfortunate clashes between civil and ecclesiastical authorities on personal grounds, but those clashes were temporary and passing. Or, if such clashes and disagreements arose on matters of religious doctrines and principles, threatening the unity of the Christian people, the Councils had to judge and decide. Whoever was found guilty could not escape condemnation by the Councils, be he Emperor or Patriarch or anybody else.

“Savva’s conception of the mutual relations between Church and State was founded upon a deeper conception of the aim of man’s life on earth. He clearly realized that all rightful terrestrial aims should be considered only as means towards a celestial end. He was tireless in pointing out the true aim of man’s existence in this short life span on earth. That aim is the Kingdom of Heaven according to Christ’s revelation. Consequently, both the Church and the State authorities are duty-bound to help people towards that supreme end. If they want to compete with one another, let them compete in serving people in the fear of God and not by quarrelling about honors and rights or by grabbing prerogatives from one another. The King and the Archbishop are called to be servants of God by serving the people towards the final and eternal aim…”\textsuperscript{427}

The most powerful of the Serbian kings, under whom the autocracy reached its fullest development, was Tsar Dushan. He published an “Archangelic Charter”, whose introduction set out his political theology in impressive style. The foundation of all power is the Lord God, Who dwells in eternal light. The earthly ruler is a lord only for a time; he does not dwell in eternal light; and his splendour is only a reflection of the splendour of the Lord God. The incarnation of God the Word, His humiliation and descent, is imitated by the earthly ruler in his constant self-correction and the thought of death: “I am reminded of the terrible hour of death, for


all the prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and saints, and emperors died in the end; none of them remained, all were buried, and the earth received them all like a mother”. At the same time, the ruler, if he protects Orthodoxy and is guided by love for God, earns the titles “holy lord”, “patriot”, “enlightener of Serbia” and “peace libator”. In accordance with this dual character of the ruler’s power, his subjects are obliged, on the one hand, to obey him, in accordance with St. Paul’s word, and on the other to criticise him if he departs from the true path. For while power as such is from God, those in power may act in accordance with God’s will or against it.428

Dushan’s code, writes Rebecca West, “brought up to date the laws made by the earlier kings of the Nemanyan dynasty and was a nicely balanced fusion of Northern jurisprudence and the Byzantine system laid down by Justinian. It coped in an agreeable and ingenious spirit with the needs of a social structure not at all to be despised even in comparison with the West.

“There, at this time, the land was divided among great feudal lords who ruled over innumerable serfs; but here in Serbia there were very few serfs, so few that they formed the smallest class in the community, and there was a large class of small free landowners. There was a National Diet which met to discuss such important matters as the succession to the throne or the outbreak of civil war, and this consisted of the sovereigns, their administrators, the great and small nobility, and the higher clergy; it was some smaller form of this, designed to act in emergencies that met to discuss whether John Cantacuzenus should receive Serbian aid. All local government was in the hands of the whole free community, and so was all justice, save for the special cases that were reserved for royal jurisdiction, such as high treason, murder, and highway robbery. This means that the people as a whole could deal with matters that they all understood, while the matters that were outside common knowledge were settled for them by their sovereign and selected members of their own kind; for there were no closed classes, and both the clergy and the nobility were constantly recruited from the peasantry.” 429

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Let us turn now to the greatest example of Orthodox autocracy – Russia, the Third Rome.

The whole of Russian history from Riurik to Nicholas II (862-1917) was the history of only two, interrelated dynasties – the Riuriks and the Romanovs. Only in the Time of Troubles (1598-1612) was that dynastic continuity briefly interrupted. This continuity of the hereditary principle in Russian history has no parallel in world history with the possible exception of the very different case of China.

And yet the Troubles themselves cannot be understood if we do not take into account the continuing importance of the hereditary principle in the Russian mind in that period. According to V.O. Kliuchevsky, the soil for the Time of Troubles “was prepared by the harassed state of the people’s minds, by a general state of discontent with the reign of Ivan the Terrible – discontent that increased under Boris Godunov.

428 Bogdanovich, op. cit., pp. 16-17.
The end of the dynasty and the subsequent attempt to revive it in the persons of the pretenders provided a stimulus for the Troubles. Their basic causes were, first, the people’s view of the old dynasty’s relation to the Muscovite state and consequently their difficulty in grasping the idea of an elected tsar, and secondly – the political structure of the state, which created social discord by its heavy demands on the people and an inequitable distribution of state dues. The first cause gave rise to the need of reviving the extinct ruling line, and thus furthered the pretenders’ success; the second transformed a dynastic squabble into social and political anarchy.”

The Russian people understood the state to be the personal property of the tsar and of his blood descendants. They could not conceive of a non-hereditary tsar, a legitimate ruler who was not the heir by blood of the previous tsar; hence the confusion when the last Riurik tsar, Theodore, died without issue. Boris Godunov was related to the Riuriks by marriage – but may have killed the Tsarevich Dmitri. So he, in the end, was rejected by the people. Tsar Vasili Shuisky was not a Riurik, but was “the boyars’ tsar”. So he, too, was not acceptable. The pretenders were followed because they claimed to be the Tsarevich. But their claims were of course false.

The tsar had to be a “born tsar”, “born in the purple”, as the Byzantines put it. Only Michael Romanov fitted that role because his family was related to the Riuriks through Ivan IV’s first wife, Anastasia Romanova. And so in almost all his proclamations Michael called himself the grandson of Ivan the Terrible. During his coronation Michael declared that “Russia had suffered terrible trials in the fifteen years since the death of the last rightful tsar, his cousin Fyodor, son of Ivan the Terrible. Now Russians must restore peace and order…”

Since the hereditary principle is commonly considered to be irrational insofar as it supposedly places the government of the State “at the mercy of chance”, it will be worth examining its significance in Russian Orthodox statehood more closely.

Some points need emphasizing. First, the hereditary principle was upheld by a still deeper principle: that the tsar had to be Orthodox. The second False Dmitri and the Polish King Sigismund’s son Vladislav were both rejected by St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow, because they were Catholics.

Secondly, after electing the first Romanov tsar, the people retained no right to depose him or any of his successors. On the contrary, they elected a hereditary dynasty, and specifically bound themselves by an oath to be loyal to that dynasty forever. Hence the peculiar horror and accursedness of their rejection of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917…

It follows that the hereditary tsar’s rule is inviolable. As Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow writes: “A government that is not fenced about by an inviolability that is venerated religiously by the whole people cannot act with the whole fullness of power or that freedom of zeal that is necessary for the construction and preservation

of the public good and security. How can it develop its whole strength in its most beneficial direction, when its power constantly finds itself in an insecure position, struggling with other powers that cut short its actions in as many different directions as are the opinions, prejudices and passions more or less dominant in society? How can it surrender itself to the full force of its zeal, when it must of necessity divide its attentions between care for the prosperity of society and anxiety about its own security? But if the government is so lacking in firmness, then the State is also lacking in firmness. Such a State is like a city built on a volcanic mountain: what significance does its hard earth have when under it is hidden a power that can at any minute turn everything into ruins? Subjects who do not recognize the inviolability of rulers are incited by the hope of licence to achieve licence and predominance, and between the horrors of anarchy and oppression they cannot establish in themselves that obedient freedom which is the focus and soul of public life."\(^{432}\)

Thirdly, while the Zemsky Sobor of 1613 was an election, it was by no means a democratic election, but rather a recognition of God’s election of a ruler on the model of the Israelites’ election of Jephtha (Judges 11.11). For, as Fr. Lev Lebedev writes: “Tsars are not elected! And a Council, even a Zemsky Sobor, cannot be the source of his power. The kingdom is a calling of God, the Council can determine who is the lawful Tsar and summon him.”\(^{433}\) Again, as Ivan Solonevich writes, “when, after the Time of Troubles, the question was raised concerning the restoration of the monarchy, there was no hint of an ‘election to the kingdom’. There was a ‘search’ for people who had the greatest hereditary right to the throne. And not an ‘election’ of the more worthy. There were not, and could not be, any ‘merits’ in the young Michael Fyodorovich. But since only the hereditary principle affords the advantage of absolutely indisputability, it was on this that the ‘election’ was based.”\(^{434}\)

St. John Maximovich writes: “It was almost impossible to elect some person as tsar for his qualities; everyone evaluated the candidates from his own point of view…."

“What drew the hearts of all to Michael Romanov? He had neither experience of statecraft, nor had he done any service to the state. He was not distinguished by the state wisdom of Boris Godunov or by the eminence of his race, as was Basil Shuisky. He was sixteen years old, and ‘Misha Romanov’, as he was generally known, had not yet managed to show his worth in anything. But why did the Russian people rest on him, and why with his crowning did all the quarrels and disturbances regarding the royal throne come to an end? The Russian people longed for a lawful, ‘native’ Sovereign, and was convinced that without him there could be no order or peace in Russia. When Boris Godunov and Prince Basil Shuisky were elected, although they had, to a certain degree, rights to the throne through their kinship with the previous tsars, they were not elected by reason of their exclusive rights, but their personalities were taken into account. There was no strict lawful succession in their case. This explained the success of the pretenders. However, it was almost impossible to elect someone as tsar for his qualities. Everyone evaluated the candidates from their point of view. However, the absence of a definite law which would have provided an heir...

\(^{432}\) Metropolitan Philaret, Sochinenia (Works), 1848, vol. 2, p. 134; Pravooslavnaia Zhizn’ (Orthodox Life), 49, N 9 (573), September, 1997, p. 6.

\(^{433}\) Lebedev, Velikorossia, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 126.

\(^{434}\) Solonevich, Narodnaia Monarkhia (Popular Monarchy), Minsk, 1998, pp. 82-83.

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in the case of the cutting off of the line of the Great Princes and Tsars of Moscow made it necessary for the people itself to indicate who they wanted as tsar. The descendants of the appanage princes, although they came from the same race as that of the Moscow Tsars (and never forgot that), were in the eyes of the people simple noblemen, ‘serfs’ of the Moscow sovereigns; their distant kinship with the royal line had already lost its significance. Moreover, it was difficult to establish precisely which of the descendants of St. Vladimir on the male side had the most grounds for being recognized as the closest heir to the defunct royal line. In such circumstances all united in the suggestion that the extinct Royal branch should be continued by the closest relative of the last ‘native’, lawful Tsar. The closest relatives of Tsar Theodore Ioannovich were his cousins on his mother’s side: Theodore, in monasticism Philaret, and Ivan Nikitich Romanov, both of whom had sons. In that case the throne had to pass to Theodore, as the eldest, but his monasticism and the rank of Metropolitan of Rostov was an obstacle to this. His heir was his only son Michael. Thus the question was no longer about the election of a Tsar, but about the recognition that a definite person had the rights to the throne. The Russian people, tormented by the time of troubles and the lawlessness, welcomed this decision, since it saw that order could be restored only by a lawful ‘native’ Tsar. The people remembered the services of the Romanovs to their homeland, their sufferings for it, the meek Tsaritsa Anastasia Romanova, the firmness of Philaret Nikitich. All this still more strongly attracted the hearts of the people to the announced tsar. But these qualities were possessed also by some other statesmen and sorrowers for Rus’. And this was not the reason for the election of Tsar Michael Romanov, but the fact that in him Rus’ saw their most lawful and native Sovereign.

“In the acts on the election to the kingdom of Michael Fyodorovich, the idea that he was ascending the throne by virtue of his election by the people was carefully avoided, and it was pointed out that the new Tsar was the elect of God, the direct descendant of the last lawful Sovereign.”

Fourthly, the tsar is above the law. As Solonevich writes: “The fundamental idea of the Russian monarchy was most vividly and clearly expressed by A.S. Pushkin just before the end of his life: ‘There must be one person standing higher than everybody, higher even than the law.’ In this formulation, ‘one man’, Man is placed in very big letters above the law. This formulation is completely unacceptable for the Roman-European cast of mind, for which the law is everything: dura lex, sed lex. The Russian mind places, man, mankind, the soul higher than the law, giving to the law only that place which it should occupy: the place occupied by traffic rules. Of course, with corresponding punishments for driving on the left side. Man is not for the sabbath, but the sabbath for man. It is not that man is for the fulfilment of the law, but the law is for the preservation of man...

“The whole history of humanity is filled with the struggle of tribes, people, nations, classes, estates, groups, parties, religions and whatever you like. It’s as Hobbes put it: ‘War by everyone against everyone’. How are we to find a neutral point in this struggle? An arbiter standing above the tribes, nations, peoples, classes, estates, etc.? Uniting the people, classes and religions into a common whole?

Submitting the interests of the part to the interests of the whole? And placing moral principles above egoism, which is always characteristic of every group pushed forward to the summit of public life?”

But if the tsar is above the law, how can he not be a tyrant, insofar as, in the famous words of Lord Acton, “power corrupts, and absolute power absolutely corrupts”?

In order to answer this question we must remember, first, that as we have seen, the tsar’s power is not absolute insofar as he is limited by the law of God and Orthodoxy.

Secondly, it is not only tsars, but rulers of all kinds that are subject to the temptations of power. Indeed, these temptations may even be worse with democratic rulers; for whereas the tsar stands above all factional interests, an elected president necessarily represents the interests only of his party at the expense of the country as a whole. “Western thought,” writes Solonevich, “sways from the dictatorship of capitalism to the dictatorship of the proletariat, but no representative of this thought has even so much as thought of ‘the dictatorship of conscience’.”

“The distinguishing characteristic of Russian monarchy, which was given to it at its birth, consists in the fact that the Russian monarchy expressed the will not of the most powerful, but the will of the whole nation, religiously given shape by Orthodoxy and politically given shape by the Empire. The will of the nation, religiously given shape by Orthodoxy will be ‘the dictatorship of conscience’ Only in this way can we explain the possibility of the manifesto of February 19, 1861 [when Tsar Alexander II freed the peasants]: ‘the dictatorship of conscience’ was able overcome the opposition of the ruling class, and the ruling class proved powerless. We must always have this distinction in mind: the Russian monarchy is the expression of the will, that is: the conscience, of the nation, not the will of the capitalists, which both French Napoleons expressed, or the will of the aristocracy, which all the other monarchies of Europe expressed: the Russian monarchy is the closest approximation to the ideal of monarchy in general. This ideal was never attained by the Russian monarchy – for the well-known reason that no ideal is realizable in our life. In the history of the Russian monarchy, as in the whole of our world, there were periods of decline, of deviation, of failure, but there were also periods of recovery such as world history has never known.”

Now State power, which, like power in the family or the tribe, always includes in itself an element of coercion, “is constructed in three ways: by inheritance, by election and by seizure: monarchy, republic, dictatorship. In practice all of these change places: the man who seizes power becomes a hereditary monarch (Napoleon I), the elected president becomes the same (Napoleon III), or tries to become it (Oliver Cromwell). The elected ‘chancellor’, Hitler, becomes a seizer of power. But in general these are nevertheless exceptions.

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436 Solonevich, op. cit., pp. 84, 85.
437 Solonevich, op. cit., pp. 85-86.
438 Solonevich, op. cit., p. 86.
“Both a republic and a dictatorship presuppose a struggle for power – democratic in the first case and necessarily bloody in the second: Stalin – Trotsky, Mussolini-Matteotti, Hitler-Röhm. In a republic, as a rule, the struggle is unbloody. However, even an unbloody struggle is not completely without cost. Aristide Briand, who became French Prime Minister several times, admitted that 95% of his strength was spent on the struggle for power and only five percent on the work of power. And even this five percent was exceptionally short-lived.

“Election and seizure are, so to speak, rationalist methods. Hereditary power is, strictly speaking, the power of chance, indisputable if only because the chance of birth is completely indisputable. You can recognize or not recognize the principle of monarchy in general. But no one can deny the existence of the positive law presenting the right of inheriting the throne to the first son of the reigning monarch. Having recourse to a somewhat crude comparison, this is something like an ace in cards... An ace is an ace. No election, no merit, and consequently no quarrel. Power passes without quarrel and pain: the king is dead, long live the king!”

We may interrupt Solonevich’s argument here to qualify his use of the word “chance”. The fact that a man inherits the throne only because he is the firstborn of his father may be “by chance” from a human point of view. But from the Divine point of view it is election. For, as Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov writes: “There is no blind chance! God rules the world, and everything that takes place in heaven and beneath the heavens takes place according to the judgement of the All-wise and All-powerful God.” Moreover, as Bishop Ignaty also writes, “in blessed Russia, according to the spirit of the pious people, the Tsar and the fatherland constitute one whole, as in a family the parents and their children constitute one whole.” This being so, it was only natural that the law of succession should be hereditary, from father to son.

Solonevich continues: “The human individual, born by chance as heir to the throne, is placed in circumstances which guarantee him the best possible professional preparation from a technical point of view. His Majesty Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich was probably one of the most educated people of his time. The best professors of Russia taught him both law and strategy and history and literature. He spoke with complete freedom in three foreign languages. His knowledge was not one-sided... and was, if one can so express it, living knowledge...

“The Russian tsar was in charge of everything and was obliged to know everything - it goes without saying, as far as humanly possible. He was a ‘specialist’ in that sphere which excludes all specialization. This was a specialization standing above all the specialisms of the world and embracing them all. That is, the general volume of erudition of the Russian monarch had in mind that which every philosophy has in mind: the concentration in one point of the whole sum of human knowledge. However, with this colossal qualification, that ‘the sum of knowledge’ of the Russian tsars grew in a seamless manner from the living practice of the past and

439 Solonevich, op. cit., p. 87.
441 Brianchaninov, Pis’ma (Letters), Moscow, 2000, p. 781.
was checked against the living practice of the present. True, that is how almost all philosophy is checked – for example, with Robespierre, Lenin and Hitler – but, fortunately for humanity, such checking takes place comparatively rarely….

“The heir to the Throne, later the possessor of the Throne, is placed in such conditions under which temptations are reduced… to a minimum. He is given everything he needs beforehand. At his birth he receives an order, which he, of course, did not manage to earn, and the temptation of vainglory is liquidated in embryo. He is absolutely provided for materially – the temptation of avarice is liquidated in embryo. He is the only one having the Right – and so competition falls away, together with everything linked with it. Everything is organized in such a way that the personal destiny of the individual should be welded together into one whole with the destiny of the nation. Everything that a person would want to have for himself is already given him. And the person automatically merges with the general good.

“One could say that all this is possessed also by a dictator of the type of Napoleon, Stalin or Hitler. But this would be less than half true: everything that the dictator has he conquered, and all this he must constantly defend – both against competitors and against the nation. The dictator is forced to prove every day that it is precisely he who is the most brilliant, great, greatest and inimitable, for if not he, but someone else, is not the most brilliant, then it is obvious that that other person has the right to power…

“We can, of course, quarrel over the principle of ‘chance’ itself. A banal, rationalist, pitifully scientific point of view is usually formulated thus: the chance of birth may produce a defective man. But we, we will elect the best… Of course, ‘the chance of birth’ can produce a defective man. We have examples of this: Tsar Theodore Ivanovich. Nothing terrible happened. For the monarchy ‘is not the arbitrariness of a single man’, but ‘a system of institutions’, - a system can operate temporarily even without a ‘man’. But simple statistics show that the chances of such ‘chance’ events occurring are very small. The chance of ‘a genius on the throne’ appearing is still smaller.

“I proceed from the axiom that a genius in politics is worse than the plague. For a genius is a person who thinks up something that is new in principle. In thinking up something that is new in principle, he invades the organic life of the country and cripples it, as it was crippled by Napoleon, Stalin and Hitler…

“The power of the tsar is the power of the average, averagely clever man over two hundred million average, averagely clever people… V. Klyuchevsky said with some perplexity that the first Muscovite princes, the first gatherers of the Russian land, were completely average people: - and yet, look, they gathered the Russian land. This is quite simple: average people have acted in the interests of average people and the line of the nation has coincided with the line of power. So the average people of the Novgorodian army went over to the side of the average people of Moscow, while the average people of the USSR are running away in all directions from the genius of Stalin.”

442 Solonevich, op. cit., pp. 87-88, 89-90, 91-92.
Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow expressed the superiority of the hereditary over the elective principle as follows: “What conflict does election for public posts produce in other peoples! With what conflict, and sometimes also with what alarm do they attain the legalization of the right of public election! Then there begins the struggle, sometimes dying down and sometimes rising up again, sometimes for the extension and sometimes for the restriction of this right. The incorrect extension of the right of social election is followed by its incorrect use. It would be difficult to believe it if we did not read in foreign newspapers that elective votes are sold; that sympathy or lack of sympathy for those seeking election is expressed not only by votes for and votes against, but also by sticks and stones, as if a man can be born from a beast, and rational business out of the fury of the passions; that ignorant people make the choice between those in whom wisdom of state is envisaged, lawless people participate in the election of future lawgivers, peasants and craftsmen discuss and vote, not about who could best keep order in the village or the society of craftsmen, but about who is capable of administering the State.”

“Thanks be to God! It is not so in our fatherland. Autocratic power, established on the age-old law of heredity, which once, at a time of impoverished heredity, was renewed and strengthened on its former basis by a pure and rational election, stands in inviolable firmness and acts with calm majesty. Its subjects do not think of striving for the right of election to public posts in the assurance that the authorities care for the common good and know through whom and how to construct it.”

“God, in accordance with the image of His heavenly single rule, has established a tsar on earth; in accordance with the image of His almighty power, He has established an autocratic tsar; in accordance with the image of His everlasting Kingdom, which continues from age to age, He has established a hereditary tsar.”

An elected president is installed by the will of man, and can be said to be installed by the will of God only indirectly, by permission. By contrast, the determination of who will be born as the heir to the throne is completely beyond the power of man, and so entirely within the power of God. The hereditary principle therefore ensures that the tsar will indeed be elected – but by God, not by man.

Thus Professor I.M. Andreyev has characterized the three forms of statehood as follows: “Of the three forms of state power – monarchy, democracy and despotism – strictly speaking, only the first (monarchy) is based on a religious-ethical principle, the second (democracy) is based on an a-religious-ethical principle, and the third (despotism) is based on an anti-religious (satanic) principle.”

October 13/26, 2017.

Uncovering of the Relics of St. Edward the Confessor, King of England.

444 Metropolitan Philaret, Sochinenia (Works), 1877, vol. 3, p. 442; Pravoslavnaja Zhizn’ (Orthodox Life), 49, N 9 (573), September, 1997, p. 5.
Napoleon decided to invade Russia after a gradual cooling in relations between the two countries that ended with Alexander’s withdrawal, in 1810, from the economically disastrous Continental System that Napoleon had established against England. By May, 1811, Tsar Alexander was showing a much firmer, more realistic, attitude to the political and military situation. As he said to Caulaincourt: “Should the Emperor Napoleon make war on me, it is possible, even probable, that we shall be defeated. But this will not give him peace... We shall enter into no compromise agreements; we have plenty of open spaces in our rear, and we shall preserve a well-organized army... I shall not be the first to draw my sword, but I shall be the last to sheathe it... I should sooner retire to Kamchatka than yield provinces or put my signature to a treaty in my conquered capital which was no more than a truce...”

“Caulaincourt was impressed: ‘People believe him to be weak but they are wrong’ he informed Paris. ‘His amenable personality has limits and he won’t go beyond them: these limits are as strong as iron.’ When Caulaincourt returned to Paris, he spent five hours trying to convince Napoleon not to attack Russia. ‘One good battle,’ retorted Napoleon, ‘will see the end of all your friend Alexander’s fine resolutions.’…

“‘The horizon grows darker and darker,’ Alexander wrote to Catiche on 24 December [1811]. Napoleon, ‘the curse of the human race, becomes daily more abominable.’ In February 1812, Napoleon told Alexander: ‘I cannot disguise from myself that Your Majesty no longer has any friendship for me.’

“‘Neither my feelings nor my politics have changed,’ replied Alexander. ‘Am I not allowed to suppose it is Your Majesty who has changed to me?’ But he ended ominously: ‘If war must begin, I will know how to sell my life dearly.’

“In early 1812, War Minister Barclay warned him that he must wind up the Ottoman war: Napoleon was coming. Kutuzov forced the surrender of the Ottoman army in March, then negotiated the Peace of Bucharest, in which Russia gained Bessarabia and returned Wallachia…”

Napoleon’s invasion probably saved Russia from a union with Catholicism, which by now had made its Concordat with Napoleon and was acting, very probably, on Napoleon’s orders in approaching the Russian Church. For in 1810 Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, as K.A. Papmehl writes, “became the recipient of ecumenical overtures by the French senator Grégoire (formerly Bishop of Blois), presumably on Napoleon’s initiative. In a letter dated in Paris in May of that year, Grégoire referred to the discussions held in 1717, at the Sorbonne, between Peter I and some French bishops, with a view of exploring the prospects of re-unification. Peter apparently passed the matter on to the synod of Russian bishops who, in their turn, indicated that they could not commit themselves on a matter of such importance without consulting the Eastern Patriarchs. Nothing had been heard from the Russian side since then. Grégoire nevertheless assumed that the consultation must have taken place and asked for copies of the Patriarchs’ written opinions. He concluded his letter...
by assuring Platon that he was hoping and praying for reunification of the Churches…

“Platon passed the letter to the Synod in St. Petersburg. In 1811 [it] replied to Grégoire, with Emperor Alexander’s approval, to the effect that a search of Russian archives failed to reveal any of the relevant documents. The idea of a union, Platon added, was, in any case ‘contrary to the mood of the Russian people’ who were deeply attached to their faith and concerned with its preservation in a pure and unadulterated form.”

Only a few years before, at Tilsit, the Tsar had said to Napoleon: “In Russia I am both Emperor and Pope – it’s much more convenient.” But this was not true: if Napoleon was effectively both Emperor and Pope in France, this could never be said of the tsars in Russia, damaged though the Orthodox symphony of powers had been by a century of semi-absolutism. And the restraint on Alexander’s power constituted by what remained of that symphony of powers evidently led him to think again about imitating the West too closely, whether politically or ecclesiastically. That the symphony of powers was still intact was witnessed at the consecration of the Kazan cathedral in St. Petersburg on September 27, 1811, the tenth anniversary of Alexander’s coronation. “There was an ‘immense crowd’ of worshippers and onlookers. Not for many years had the people of St. Petersburg witnessed so solemn a ceremony symbolizing the inter-dependence of Church and State, for this essential bond of Tsardom was customarily emphasized in Moscow rather than in the newer capital. To some it seemed, both at the time and later, that the act of consecration served Alexander as a moment of re-dedication and renewal, linking the pledges he had given at his crowning in Moscow with the mounting challenge from across the frontier. For the rest of the century, the Kazan Cathedral remained associated in people’s minds with the high drama of its early years, so that it became in time a shrine for the heroes of the Napoleonic wars.”

It was from the Kazan Cathedral that Alexander set out at the start of the campaign, on April 21, 1812. As Tsaritsa Elizabeth wrote to her mother in Baden: “The Emperor left yesterday at two o’clock, to the accompaniment of cheers and blessings from an immense crowd of people who were tightly packed from the Kazan Church to the gate of the city. As these folk had not been hustled into position by the police and as the cheering was not led by planted agents, he was – quite rightly - moved deeply by such signs of affection from our splendid people!... ‘For God and their Sovereign’ – that was the cry! They make no distinction between them in their hearts and scarcely at all in their worship. Woe to him who profanes the one or the other. These old-world attitudes are certainly not found more intensively anywhere than at the extremes of Europe. Forgive me, dear Mamma, for regaling you

with commonplaces familiar to everyone who has a true knowledge of Russia, but one is carried away when speaking of something you love; and you know my passionate devotion to this country.”

And so Napoleon’s invasion of Russia acquired a significance that the other Napoleonic wars in continental Europe did not have: it became a struggle, not simply between two countries of not-so-different political systems, but between two radically opposed faiths: the faith in the Revolution and the faith in Orthodoxy. 1812 produced an explosion of Russian patriotism and religious feeling. God’s evident support for the heroic Russian armies, at the head of which was the “Reigning” icon of the Mother of God, reanimated a fervent pride and belief in Holy Russia.

However, not in everybody and not at the beginning of the campaign, when, as Sir Geoffrey Hosking writes, “Alexander ordered that half a battalion, 300 men, should be stationed in each guberniia, to be reinforced from the neighbouring guberniia if things got out of hand. Sure enough, soon after the invasion the excitable Count Rostopchin reported to the Committee of Ministers that an ‘Old Believer sect’ in Smolensk guberniia had enrolled about 1,500 serfs by promising them freedom from the landowners when Napoleon arrived. In the provinces of Lithuania and Belorussia the invasion sparked off widespread unrest: peasants, apparently under the impression that Napoleon would soon free them, refused to be called up for military service, sacked manor houses and drove out the pomeshchiki. In one village, as the French approached, the assembly took the decision to murder the local landowner, who was notorious for his cruelty, burn down his manor house, and divide up his property among themselves.

“In these regions, of course, most of the landowners were Polish, so that one might interpret the peasants’ as patriotic. But there were some similar disorders further east: for example, in Smolensk, where in one uezd peasants proclaimed themselves French citizens, and a punitive detachment had to be sent to restore obedience. Overall it seems clear that the hope of emancipation was the main motive for peasant unrest, and indeed the disorders died away as it became apparent that the French Emperor was reacting just as the Russian one would have done by sending in punitive expeditions and restoring the landowners. By doing so, Napoleon converted the war into a simple issue of national survival. The feelings aroused in peasants by that fact can be summarized by a proclamation issued by a peasant partisan leader to his followers: ‘You are people of the Russian faith, you are Orthodox (pravoslavnye) peasants! Take up arms for the faith and for your Tsar!’”

As K.N. Leontiev writes: “It was ecclesiastical feeling and obedience to the authorities (the Byzantine influence) that saved us in 1812. It is well-known that many of our peasants (not all, of course, but those who were taken unawares by the invasion) found little purely national feeling in themselves in the first minute. They robbed the landowners’ estates, rebelled against the nobility, and took money from the French. The clergy, the nobility and the merchants behaved differently. But

452 That same icon which was to reappear miraculously on March 2, 1917.
immediately they saw that the French were stealing the icons and putting horses in our churches, the people became harder and everything took a different turn..."454

An important aspect of the campaign was the Polish factor. As Serhii Plokhy writes, “Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812 was officially called the Polish campaign – the second Polish campaign, to be precise. In the first (1806-1807), Napoleon had defeated the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian troops and carved the Duchy of Warsaw out of the Prussian share of the Polish partition. The official goal of the second campaign was to restore the Kingdom of Poland, now including lands from the Russian sphere of the partitions. The implicit and, many believe, primary goal was to stop the Russian Empire from trading with Britain and thereby tighten the French economic blockade of Napoleon’s British enemy. But an economic issue could hardly serve as a battle cry for the French armies or for potential allies in the region, who were ordered or asked to invade the Russian Empire and march all the way to Moscow. The undoing of a major historical injustice through the restoration of the Polish state could and did rouse the martial spirit, inspiring mass Polish participation in Napoleon’s invasion of Russia and lending international legitimacy to the war.

“Although the third partition had wiped Poland off the political map of Europe, and the partitioning powers had agreed not to use the country’s name in their titles or in the official names of the lands annexed as a result of the partitions, Poland had retained its place on the mental map of many Europeans – first and foremost, of course, the Poles themselves. Legend has it that upon his defeat at the hands of Russian troops in 1794, the leader of the Polish uprising, Tadeusz Kościuszko, exclaimed in desperation: ‘Finis Poloniae!’ He later denied having said those words, and many Poles indeed refused to consider their country lost. Some of them joined Napoleon’s revolutionary army, fighting in the West Indies, Italy, and Egypt alongside the future emperor. Their marching song, later to become the national anthem of the restored Polish state, began with the words: ‘Poland is not dead as long as we are alive’.

“Napoleon never forgot the loyalty of the Polish legionaries or the ultimate goal for which they were fighting. Addressing the Diet of the Duchy of Warsaw just before the invasion of Russia in June 1812, the emperor recalled the bravery of the Polish detachments in his army and his own readiness to fight for their cause. ‘I love your nation,’ declared the French emperor. ‘For sixteen years now, I have seen your warriors fighting along with me on the fields of Italy and Spain. I applaud your deeds. I approved of all the efforts that you intend to make, and I will do everything in my power to support your intentions. If your endeavours are unanimous, then you may nourish the hope of forcing your enemies to recognize your rights.’

“The intentions and rights Napoleon had in mind were reflected in the appeal prepared a few days earlier by the Polish Diet. It read: ‘We are restoring Poland on the basis of the right given to us by nature; on the associations of our ancestors; on the sacred right, acknowledged by the whole world, that was the baptismal font of the human race. It is not we alone, tasting the sweetness of Poland’s resurrection, who are restoring her, but all the inhabitants of various lands awaiting their

liberation... Regardless of their lengthy separation, the inhabitants of Lithuania, White Rus’, Ukraine, Podolia, and Volhynia are our brethren. They are Poles, just as we are, and they the right to call themselves Poles.’ Napoleon told the deputies that he could not violate the promises he had given to Austria and the peace he had concluded with her; hence, restoring the Austrian partition to Poland was out of the question. But there seemed to be no problem with the Russian one. ‘Let Lithuania, Samogitia, Vitebsk, Polatsk, Mahilioü, Volhynia, Ukraine, and Podolia,’ said Napoleon, ‘be inspired with the same spirit that I encountered in Great Poland, and Providence will crown your sacred cause with success.’

“Later that month, Napoleon’s Grand Army crossed the Russian border and began its march through the territories annexed by Catherine II from Poland, aiming at the Russian hinterland. As far as the Warsaw Poles were concerned, the war for the restoration of their fatherland and reunification with their Polish brethren in the Russian partition was on. Close to 100,000 Poles entered Napoleon’s army – every sixth soldier serving in his Russian campaign was a Pole. Not surprisingly, the first major military encounter, in late June 1812, took place not between French and Russian troops but between Polish and Russian detachments. What the outside observer saw as the first test of forces between Napoleon and Alexander was in fact a battle between Polish cavalrymen and Cossacks. They were continuing their age-old struggle on familiar turf – the eastern provinces of the former Commonwealth. Although the Cossacks won, they had to retreat. Their whole operation was meant to gain time for the main Russian armies to withdraw to the interior, eventually leading Napoleon to the gates of Moscow...”

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After a long retreat, the Russian commander Kutuzov chose to stand and fight at the village of Borodino, ninety miles from Moscow...

“The slaughter,” writes Montefiore, “was astonishingly intense, ‘the bloodiest battle in the history of warfare’ until the First World War: the French lost 35,000 wounded or dead, the Russians 45,000... Just as the battle might possibly have been won, Napoleon was asked to throw in his reserves. He refused to commit his elite Imperial Guards. As night fell, both dazed commanders believed uneasily that they had just won; Kutuzov felt sure that the battle would extend into a second day – but it was Napoleon who had failed to win a clear victory out of a lack of both imagination and boldness, two qualities which he had never lacked before.

“’The battle was the bloodiest of recent times,’ Kutuzov reported to Alexander, declaring that the Russians had kept possession of the battlefield, definition of victory. ‘I defeated Napoleon,’ he boasted to his wife. The tsar promoted Kutuzov to marshal and awarded him 100,000 rubles. As the news of the butcher’s bill came in, Kutuzov realized that his plant to fight on the next day was impossible. ‘Our extraordinary losses, especially the wounding of key generals, forced me to withdraw down the Moscow road.’ During the night – and contrary to his report to Alexander – Kutuzov pulled back several miles. Napoleon claimed victory: the road to Moscow was open, and he dubbed Borodino ‘the battle of Moscow’. Ultimately
both Napoleon and Kutuzov saw that Borodino had been a ghastly draw. ‘I ought to have died at the battle of Moscow,’ Napoleon later admitted in exile, but it did decide the fate of the city.

“On 1 September, Kutuzov held a war council in a peasant hut in Fili, where the old general understood that, now facing the choice of losing the army or Moscow, he must save the army. ‘Napoleon is a torrent but Moscow is the sponge that will soak him up.’ Kutuzov took the decision but this was exactly the choice that Alexander had avoided by leaving the army, and it would have been impossible for a monarch to make. Kutuzov marched his army through the streets of Moscow and out the other side; he abandoned the ancient capital, without fully informing the governor-general Count Rostopchin, who ordered the evacuation of the entire population. Captured capitals from Vienna to Berlin, had usually greeted Napoleon with cowed aristocratic politeness. This was a sign that this was a new national war à l’outrance. In scenes of dystopic exodus, the roads teemed and seethed with the long-suffering, trudging masses, carts heaped with a lifetime’s belongings, as multitudes, half a million people, the entire Muscovite population, fled the city, heading eastwards. Rostopchin opened the jails and, as the city emptied, he decided that ‘If I am asked, I won’t hesitate to say, “Burn the capital rather than deliver it to the enemy”.’ Kutuzov and his generals had already blown up ammunition stores as they left. At a secret meeting in the governor’s house, Rostopchin and Prime Minister Balashov ordered the building of further buildings, which started an unstoppable conflagration that tore through the wooden structures. Embarrassingly, Rostopchin’s two city mansions were among the few buildings that did not catch fire. Afterwards, when the French approached his estate at Voronovo, a palace packed with French luxuries and Roman antiquities, Rostopchin ordered it burned, leaving a sign that read: ‘Frenchmen, I abandon to you my two houses in Moscow… with their contents worth half a million rubles. Here you will find only ashes.’

“On 3 September, as Kutuzov headed south-westwards and set up a well-placed camp on the Old Kaluga road, no one greeted Napoleon at the gates of Moscow. Only a few French tutors, actresses and lethiferous hands of looters haunted the streets as Moscow burned for six days. Napoleon was spooked by what he saw. He should have withdrawn at once; his presence in Moscow broke his cardinal rule that he must conquer armies, not cities – but he had not been able to resist the storied city of golden domes. He moved into the Kremlin and waited to negotiate from within a city of ashes…”

Of particular significance was the fact that it had been Moscow, the old capital associated with Orthodoxy and the Muscovite tsars, rather than the new and westernized capital of St. Petersburg, which had borne the brunt of the suffering. For it was not so much the indecisive battle of Borodino, a contest in which, according to Napoleon, “the French showed themselves worthy of victory and the Russians that they are invincible”, as the burning of Moscow, which destroyed 80% of dwellings in the city, and Alexander’s refusal to surrender even after that, which proved the decisive turning-point, convincing Napoleon that he could not win...

456 Montefiore, The Romanovs, pp. 304-305.
The decision to burn down Moscow was highly controversial. It has been argued that Rastopchin had the nobility evacuated from the city with their families because he was well aware of their pro-Napoleonic, potentially seditious sentiments. Thus according to the Martinist Runich said: “Rastopchin, acting through fear, threw the nobility, the merchants and the non-gentry intellectuals out of Moscow in order that they should not give in to the enticements and influence of Napoleon’s tactics... He saved Russia from the yoke of Napoleon.”

On the other hand, it was a savage decision. Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes that as a result of the fire of Moscow 15,000 Russian soldiers who were recovering from wounds suffered at Borodino in the military hospitals of the city were burned alive.

The leadership on both sides made serious mistakes, but it was the French who suffered most from their mistakes. In this, as in many other ways, God was clearly on the side of the Orthodox (both in Great Russia and in the former Polish lands). Thus early in the campaign terrible rain storms killed thousands of horses that were desperately needed by Napoleon. Then terrible heat killed many soldiers. The late onset of winter tempted Napoleon to stay too long in Moscow - but then, when the winter did come, it was savage...

The terrible sufferings of the French on their return march are well-known. There was even cannibalism, - a sure sign of apocalyptic times, - as the soldiers of the Great Army began to put their fellow-soldiers in the stew pots. Out of the vast army - nearly 600,000 men, only about half of whom were French - that set out for Russia, only 120,000 returned, 35,000 of them French. The Russians lost 400,000, but they had saved their homeland. Orthodoxy had triumphed...

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However, as Ivanov writes, the Russian victory was almost foiled by the intrigues of the Masons, including the commander-in-chief of the army Kutuzov, who, according to Sokolskaia, was initiated into Masonry at the “Three Keys” lodge in Regensburg, and was later received into lodges in Frankfurt, Berlin, Petersburg and Moscow, penetrating into the secrets of the higher degrees.

The Tsar was against Kutuzov’s appointment, but said: “The public wanted his appointment, I appointed him: as regards myself personally, I wash my hands of him.” He was soon proved right in his premonition. The Russian position at the battle of Borodino was poorly prepared by Kutuzov, and he himself took little part in

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460 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 261.
it. The previous commander-in-chief, Barclay, took the lead and acted heroically, but gained little credit for it.

“The fire of Moscow started the people’s war. Napoleon’s situation deteriorated from day to day. His army was demoralised. The hungry French soldiers wandered round the outskirts of Moscow searching for bread and provisions. Lootings and murders began. Discipline in the army declined sharply. Napoleon was faced with a threatening dilemma: either peace, or destruction.

“Peace negotiations began. On September 23 at Tarutino camp Kutuzov met Napoleon’s truce-envoy Lauriston. Kutuzov willingly accepted this suggestion and decided to keep the meeting a complete secret. He told Lauriston to meet him outside the camp, beyond the line of our advance posts, on the road to Moscow. Everything was to be done in private and the project for a truce was to be put forward very quickly. This plan for a secret agreement between Napoleon and the Masonic commander-in-chief fell through. Some Russian generals and especially the English agent attached to the Russian army, [General] Wilson, protested against the unofficial secret negotiations with Napoleon. On September 23 Wilson made a scene in front of Kutuzov; he came to him as the representative of the general staff and army generals and declared that the army would refuse to obey him. Wilson was supported by the Duke of Wurtemburg, the Emperor’s uncle, his son-in-law the Duke of Oldenburg and Prince Volkonsky, general-adjutant, who had arrived not long before with a report from Petersburg. Kutuzov gave way, and the meeting with Lauriston took place in the camp headquarters.

“Kutuzov’s failure in securing peace did not stop him from giving fraternal help to Napoleon in the future.

“After insistent urgings from those close to him and at the insistence of his Majesty, Kutuzov agreed to attack near Tarutino.

“The battle of Tarutino [on October 6] revealed the open betrayal of the commander-in-chief.

“’When in the end the third and fourth corps came out of the wood and the cavalry of the main army was drawn up for the attack, the French began a general retreat. When the French retreat was already an accomplished fact and the French columns were already beyond Chernishina, Bennigsen moved his armies forward.

“The main forces at the moment of the French retreat had been drawn up for battle. In spite of this, and the persuasions of Yermolov and Miloradovich, Kutuzov decisively refused to move the armies forward, and only a part of the light cavalry was set aside for pursuing the enemy, the rest of the army returned to the Tarutino camp.

“Bennigsen was so enraged by the actions of the field-marshal that after the battle he did not even consider it necessary to display military etiquette in front of him and, on receiving his congratulations on the victory, did not even get off his horse.
“In private conversations he accused Kutuzov not only of not supporting him with the main army for personal reasons, but also of deliberately holding back Osterman’s corps.

“For many this story will seem monstrous; but from the Masonic point of view it was necessary: the Mason Kutuzov was only carrying out his obligations in relation to his brother (Murat), who had been beaten and fallen into misfortune.

“In pursuing the retreating army of Napoleon Kutuzov did not have enough strength or decisiveness to finish once and for all with the disordered French army. During the retreat Kutuzov clearly displayed criminal slowness.

“‘The behaviour of the field-marshal drives me mad,’ wrote the English agent General Wilson about this.”

For “the Masonic oath was always held to be higher than the military oath.”

After the war, Tsar Alexander would change his mind about Masonry and ban it...

After the closely-fought battle of Maloyaroslavets on October 11-12, as Montefiore writes, ‘Napoleon sent a peace offer to Alexander. ‘Peace?’ replied Alexander. ‘But as yet we’ve not made war. My campaign is only just beginning.’ He was frustrated by Kutuzov’s slow pursuit. On 3-6 November, Kutuzov bruised the passing French at Krasnyi in a rolling skirmish in which he took over 20,000 prisoners and killed a further 10,000. ‘Yet another victory,’ Kutuzov told his wife, but he was keen to avoid more battles. ‘I’m by no means sure,’ said Kutuzov, ‘the total destruction of Napoleon would be of such benefit.’

“His forces were down to fewer than 60,000 men and he let the other armies, under the German-born general, Prince Peter Sayn-Wittgenstein from the north and Admiral Chichagov from the south, take over the pursuit. Kutuzov had let Napoleon escape. ‘It is with extreme sadness that I realize that the hope of wiping away the dishonor of Moscow’s loss by cutting off the enemy’s retreat has been lost,’ wrote Alexander, thanks to Kutuzov’s ‘inexplicable inactivity’. Kutuzov offered to resign. When he occupied Smolensk, Alexander bit his lip and awarded him a resounding new title: prince of Smolensk.

“As two Russian armies converged on him, Napoleon and the remnants of his army, harried by Cossacks and facing total destruction, raced to cross the Berezina River. In a feat of French engineering, luck, courage and Russian incompetence, Napoleon crossed the Berezina and then, abandoning his men to Russian winter and revenge, he raced for Paris. ‘It seems the All-Powerful has brought on the head of this monster all the miseries he intended for us,’ Alexander wrote with grim satisfaction to both Arakcheev and [his sister] Catiche as Napoleon’s retreat turned to rout in the first week of November...

“Kutuzov had no intention of pursuing Napoleon into Europe, in which he was supported by the dowager empress and Catiche. Russia had lost 150,000 men; the army was down to 100,000. But Alexander had a different vision of a personal and national mission, one that was now decisive in European history. He left Nikolai Saltykov, that relic of the reigns of Elizaveta and Catherine, in Petersburg, and advanced into Europe to destroy Napoleon. ‘You have saved not just Russia,’ he told his soldiers, ‘but all of Europe’…” 462

October 14/27, 2017.
Anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, when Martyr-King Harold of England was killed together with thousands of English Orthodox warriors.

35. THE MILLENNIAL MORALITY

The world is moving astonishingly fast, and not least in the realm of morality. Since 2000 at the latest, we have seen a new morality gaining the upper hand in the West, which we may call “the millennial morality”. The millennial generation of young (very young) people appears to be at ease with it: those born in earlier generations – much less so.

It is surprisingly difficult to define this new morality, for it is such a mass of contradictions! On the one hand, extreme permissiveness to the extent of perversity. And on the other – extreme intolerance for the most trivial of things. The millennial leaders are indeed “blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel” (Matthew 23.24)!

Now it is customary to see the West as hedonistic, and it certainly is. However, “pure” hedonism probably reached its peak in the 1960s and in the following decades. “The Swinging Sixties” has a lot to answer for. Everything was permitted – and those who still claimed that not everything was permitted were shouted down as “old fogies”. The older generation that still clung on to the remnants of Christian morality were terrified of being seen to be old-fashioned. So they, too, indulged – if with feelings of guilt no longer felt by their children. Since they, too, were indulging, they were hardly in a position to rebuke their children for indulging. In any case, even for those who remained faithful to their husbands and wives, “judgementalism” was out: “love” was in… “All you need is love,” sang John Lennon – and even the older generation began to believe it. Using this criterion, certain taboos were removed: against sex before marriage, against nudity and overt sexuality in films and theatre, against contraception and abortion.

The taboo on homosexuality took longer to remove. And not surprisingly; for unnatural sex feels unnatural to normal people; it is a natural object of disgust. But as more and more famous people were “outed”, the fury against “homophobia” rose higher and higher. When the AIDS epidemic began to cut down the homosexuals, famous actors and actresses publicly showed their sympathy for AIDS sufferers, and still more publicly opened their wallets for the scientific attempt to find a cure. The obvious threat to public health was played down – the most that public authorities would do was exhort people to have “safe sex”. But if they did not, they were not punished… It was forbidden to see in this epidemic the judgement of God on sinners – God forbid!

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463 Peter LaBerbera writes: “More than 9 in 10 new HIV cases among young men and boys ages 13 to 24 in the U.S. occur among homosexuals and bisexuals, according to a new report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The April 25 CDC report, ‘HIV Among Gay and Bisexual Men,’ offers stark evidence of the extreme health risks associated with male homosexual sex, in particular receptive anal sex.” (“Gay teens make up 92 percent of HIV cases in their age group”, Life Site, May 9, 2017).
However, no society, even the most sinful, can live without a moral code: almost as strong as the sexual impulse is the desire to appear “good”. So a new morality was devised. All sex, natural and unnatural, was good, BUT it had to be between consenting adults. Fornication (to those who understood what that word meant) was good, BUT adultery was wrong. The basis for this way of thinking is: what two people do with each other in private is their business, provided no pain to either person or to a third person is involved. Non-consensual sex (rape) and adultery do involve pain, so they are wrong.

The problem is: a large proportion of the human race commits adultery... The pain this causes can perhaps be assuaged, if not completely removed, by a very liberal approach to divorce and the commitments of marriage in general. Nevertheless, the pain caused by adultery, or by unfaithfulness in unmarried couples, remains a major problem for the new morality. Human beings become so foolishly attached to each other! When will they learn to keep their emotions and jealousies out of their sexual lives!

Of course, the teaching that sexuality is a purely biological function can go some way to solving this problem. Open marriages, legitimized prostitution and online pornography from an early age also “help”. Recently, however, scientists have begun to understand how these practices desensitize human beings to the ineluctably personal nature of sexual relations, causing huge problems later in life for those brought up in this way.

One of the biggest problems that has emerged is paedophilia on a vast scale. Now this, as we have seen, is counter even to the hedonist morality, which assumes – rightly, of course - that sex with children cannot be consensual. So a ban on paedophilia remains one of the red lines that modern society continues to draw. And yet even this taboo appears to be weakening: Some paedophiles argue that even paedophilia can be “loving” and “consensual”, especially if preceded by sensitive “grooming”. Others have argued that it is contradictory to allow and even “celebrate” homosexuality while condemning homosexual relations with an underage child – and they point to the practice of Ancient Greece where such liaisons were quite normal.

Even more harmful for children is the LGBT revolution and especially the fashion for transgenderism. This is causing real psychological harm to many children, who are encouraged to change sex, or be sexless: they don’t know who they are any longer. So we have the spectacle of lesbian couples bringing up a little boy and then dressing him as a girl...

Just recently, however, some brave people have been sounding the alarm about this. For a good 70% of people who have changed gender regret it later, and seek to go back to their original gender. Even the founder of transgender surgery at John Hopkins university is renouncing the practice, declaring that the desire to change sex is a mental illness...

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And now among the millennials a remarkable about-face is taking place: having been brought up to welcome even the most extreme perversities, they are taking umbrage at the slightest sexual transgression.

Thus just recently the British Minister of Defence was forced to resign because years ago he made a sexist comment to a fellow minister of a kind that was (and probably still is) commonplace in pubs and parties throughout the land. The newly prudish political class seized on it and forced his resignation, although he was well-respected in the armed forces... So we have extremes of perversity combined with extremes of prudishness and the destruction of lives for an offence that would have been counted trivial not long ago... We also see permission to do anything if it doesn’t harm others combined with extreme intolerance of dissenting opinions. How are we to explain these contradictions?

First we must understand that complete freedom has never been, and never will be, even a remote possibility in human society. And this not only because it destroys society in the end: it also destroys the individual, going against human nature. For man being made in the image of God will always have a moral sense, a feeling that some things are right and others wrong. If he permits himself to do something that he considers right, then he will attempt to deny himself (and even more, others) in something else that he considers wrong. And the more license and perversity he practices, the more strongly he will seek something to condemn and feel self-righteous about: complete amorality (as opposed to immorality) is impossible.

The philosophy of human rights – that “nonsense on stilts”, as Jeremy Bentham called it – declares that in effect everything that human beings want they have a right to have. But in order to accommodate the ineluctably moral nature of human nature, the human rightists have to supplement their (constantly changing and expanding) list of human rights with an equally impressive list of human wrongs. If liberalism was strong on rights, Marxism was strong on wrongs. And Cultural Marxism has become stronger than both.

Thus old-fashioned Marxism derived its emotional power from fury at the wrongs of the rich committed against the working classes. The rich now had to be overthrown or destroyed... This soon mutated into fury at the wrongs of the white, colonialist nations. These now had to grovel before their former slaves, repent of the sins of their ancestors, and provide unlimited access to migration and all the benefits of civilized society... This is turn mutated into fury at the wrongs of the oppressive, male half of human society. All men now had to feel inferior to the newly empowered women, satisfy their every whim, emasculate themselves, renounce their patriarchal rights to have children (if their women want to abort them) – best of all, become women themselves! Thus when an old-fashioned feminist like Germaine Greer (a revolutionary herself in her pre-millenial heyday) had the temerity to think that a man who has undergone a sex-change operation still remains a man in essence, the students whom she was teaching rose up against her and condemned her to the outer darkness reserved for all pre-millenial thinkers! So the word has come to pass: “As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.” (Isaiah 3.12).
Truly, as Andrew J. Bacevich writes, the rifts in western society now run deep: “In one camp are those waging a fierce rear-guard action in favor of a social order now in tatters; in the other are those mandating compliance with precepts such as diversity and multiculturalism.”\textsuperscript{464}

Nor will the oppression imposed by the millennial morality be any milder than previous oppressions; the spirit of the revolution is cruel in all its metamorphoses. One only has to look at the wild fury and extreme leftism of the younger generation of voters in Britain and America – the supporters of Jeremy Corbyn, on the one hand, and Bernie Sanders and “Antifa” on the other. The revolution in its latest and craziest form is on the verge of triumphing even in the former bastions of liberalism.

As Elder Ignaty of Harbin said: “What began in Russia will end in America…”

\textit{October 22 / November 4, 2017; revised October 26 / November 8, 2017.}

36. THE ORTHODOX THEORY OF EVERYTHING

The pagan Greeks and Romans believed in the goddess Chance (Tyche in Greek, Fortuna in Latin). They also believed in what would appear to be its precise opposite, Fate (Fatum). More precisely, they believed in the Fates (plural), the three goddesses, Atropos, Clotho, and Lachesis, who were supposed to determine the course of human life in classical mythology.

Christianity rejected this belief, as we can see in the witness of two holy bishops. Thus St. Basil the Great, probably the most learned man of his time, wrote: “Do not say, ‘This happened by chance, while this came to be of itself.’ In all that exists there is nothing disorderly, nothing indefinite, nothing without purpose, nothing by chance... How many hairs are on your head? God will not forget one of them. Do you see how nothing, even the smallest thing, escapes the gaze of God.” Again, in the nineteenth century, the scientifically trained St. Ignaty Brianchaninov wrote: “There is no blind chance! God rules the world, and everything that takes place in heaven and beneath the heavens takes place according to the judgement of the All-wise and All-powerful God.”

However, modern cosmology, in addition to being essentially atheist – it does not believe in “the judgement of the All-wise and All-powerful God” - is also pagan. For it has the same paradoxical combination of faith both in radical determinism and in an equally radical indeterminism – fate and chance – as did the ancient Greeks and Romans. For on the one hand, it believes that in most of the sciences there reigns the most absolute, iron-like dominion of natural law without any exceptions in the form of miracles; that is, it believes in fate. On the other hand, as regards the most fundamental science of all, quantum physics, the study of the smallest units of matter and energy, it believes that no determinist laws in fact exist, but only indeterminism – that is, chance. This creates a radical schism, an unbridgeable gulf, between the two halves of what has been called “the Theory of Everything” (TOC).

Let us briefly examine the indeterminism of quantum physics through the words of the physicist Carlo Rovelli: “The two pillars of twentieth-century physics – general relativity and quantum mechanics – could not be more different from each other. General relativity is a compact jewel: conceived by a single mind, based on combining previous theories, it is a simple and coherent vision of gravity, space and time. Quantum mechanics, or quantum theory, on the other hand, emerges from experiments in the course of a long gestation over a quarter of a century, to which many have contributed; achieves unequalled experimental success and leads to applications which have transformed our everyday lives...; but, more than a century after its birth, it remains shrouded in obscurity and incomprehensibility...”

The reality this theory has unveiled, continues Ravelli, has three aspects: granularity, indeterminism and relationality. Granularity is not directly relevant to our theme: we shall come to the relationality of quantum theory later. With regard to indeterminism, the problem for the physicists lies in the following. The British

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physicist Paul Dirac discovered the equations enabling us to compute the velocity, energy, momentum and angular momentum of an electron with great accuracy. However, these equations are statistical and probabilistic in nature: in spite of their accuracy, they provide us with no certain knowledge of what will be. And not only because all scientific hypotheses are uncertain and provisional, but in principle. Thus quantum physics, the most successful theory in the history of science, declares that reality at the most basic, fundamental level does not follow law; it is lawless. Thus “we do not know with certainty where the electron will appear, but we can compute the probability that it will appear here or there. This is a radical change from Newton’s theory, where it is possible, in principle, to predict the future with certainty. Quantum mechanics bring probability to the heart of the evolution of things. This indeterminacy is the third cornerstone of quantum mechanics: the discovery that change operates at the atomic level. While Newton’s physics allows for the prediction of the future with exactitude, if we have sufficient information about the initial date and if we can make the calculations, quantum mechanics allows us to calculate only the probability of an event. This absence of determinism at a small scale is intrinsic to nature. An electron is not obliged by nature to move towards the right or the left; it does so by chance. The apparent determinism of the macroscopic world is due only the fact that microscopic randomness cancels out on average, leaving only fluctuations too minute for us to perceive in everyday life.”

The greatest minds in science have wrestled with this problem, trying to get rid of it if they possibly could. Even Einstein – who considered Dirac a great genius, albeit one bordering on madness - could not be reconciled with the theory at first: “God does not play with dice,” he declared. And yet he, too, was finally reconciled with what appeared to be undeniable reality, confirmed by the extraordinary predictive accuracy of quantum physics.

However, it took a non-scientist, an Oxford professor of philosophy and medieval literature, the famous Christian apologist C.S. Lewis, to express the full, shattering implications of quantum indeterminism for the nature of science and scientific laws – and the possibility of miracles. “The notion that natural laws may be merely statistical results from the modern belief that the individual unit obeys no laws. Statistics were introduced to explain why, despite the lawlessness of the individual unit, the behaviour of gross bodies was regular. The explanation was that, by a principle well known to actuaries, the law of averages leveled out the individual eccentricities of the innumerable units contained in even the smallest gross body. But with this conception of the lawless units the whole impregnability of nineteenth-century Naturalism has, it seems to me, been abandoned. What is the use of saying that all events are subject to laws if you also say that every event which befalls the individual unit of matter is not subject to laws. Indeed, if we define nature as the system of events in space-time governed by interlocking laws, then the new physics has really admitted that something other than nature exists. For if nature means the interlocking system then the individual unit is outside nature. We have admitted what may be called the sub-natural. After this admission what confidence is left us that there may not be a supernatural as well? It may be true that the lawlessness of the little events fed into nature from the sub-natural is always ironed out by the law

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of averages. It does not follow that great events could not be fed into her by the supernatural: nor that they also would allow themselves to be ironed out…”

The great mystery is this: why should the essential lawlessness of every single microscopic subatomic event translate, at higher levels of macroscopic perception – those of atoms, molecules, organs, objects, planets, galaxies – into law-governed things and events? In other words, why does indeterminism become determinism, chance become fate – not in time, but simultaneously, and not only in some places but everywhere? The answer, I would suggest, can only be that God, Who is subject neither to chance nor to fate but is supremely free and omnipotent and beyond all space, time and matter, decrees every single event in the universe in order to give the impression of chance and indeterminism at one level of perception and fate at the other. Thus Ravelli’s declaration: “An electron is not obliged by nature to move towards the right or the left; it does so by chance” should be changed to read: “An electron is not obliged by nature to move towards the right or the left; it does so by the command of God”.

So is God deliberately deceiving the scientists? By no means! They are deceiving themselves!

This is most obvious at the macroscopic level. Since ancient times human beings, even primitive, uneducated ones, have always known that nature is governed by laws. And the great majority of them have drawn the obvious conclusion: that there is a Law-giver who commands things to happen in an orderly, lawful way - “He spake and they came into being; He commanded, and they were created” (Psalm 32.9). At the same time, it was obvious to all human beings in ancient times, both primitive and sophisticated, that there were exceptions to natural law – what we call miracles. For if He speaks and they come into being, why should He not at some times not speak so that they do not come into being? Or why should He not change a law of nature for a longer or shorter period for reasons known to Him alone? Indeed, any unprejudiced observer of history will accept that while some “miracles” are fake, there is a vast number of well-attested events whose only explanation must be God’s temporary suspension of the laws He Himself created.

It was this belief in laws and the Law-giver, combined with intellectual curiosity, that was the main motivation of modern science from the seventeenth century onwards. Newton was such a believer (he also believed in the Holy Scriptures); even Einstein appears to have been one. But then the new belief arose that we can study the laws of nature without positing a Law-giver; that is, “the God hypothesis” is unnecessary. And yet God remains the elephant in the room of modern physics. Why else would they call the most recent discovery in particle physics – that of the Higgs Boson – “the God particle”? It would be hard to imagine a more inappropriate name for a newly discovered particle. Or are they in fact still obsessed by “the God hypothesis”, and are subconsciously trying to reduce the massive invisible elephant behind their back to the smallest visible particle in front their nose?

Be that as it may, the fact is that science before the advent of quantum theory believed only in fate, absolute, iron necessity and determinism at every level of

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reality, a necessity that was lawful (and awful) but did not presuppose (in the
scientists’ opinion) a Law-giver. That is why the recent enthronement of chance, the
exact opposite of fate, at the centre of physics is such a shock to the whole system.
But it is no shock to the Christian scientist. For if an electron is not obliged to move to
the right or to the left by any law – in fact, the laws we have suggest that such
predictions and prescriptions are in principle impossible – why should that be a
problem for the Law-giver? Thus the discovery of chance at the heart of the fate-
based system of pre-quantum theory physics actually restores God to the heart of
that system, destroying its from within and banishing both fate and chance in favour
of the Providence of God.

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Let us now turn to the second major aspect of quantum theory: relationality…

As we have seen, the quantum wave function that is the fundamental unit of the
modern physicist’s universe is not a thing or an event, but a spectrum of possible
things or events. Moreover, it exists as such only while it is not being observed.
When the wave function is observed (by a physical screen or a living being), it
collapses into one and one only of the possibilities that define it.

Now this idea creates hardly less serious problems for the classical view of the
world as the idea of indeterminism. For it suggests that the objective existence of the
world is tied up to an extraordinary, almost solipsistic extent with the subjective
perception of that world. Indeed, the fundamental unit of objective reality, the
quantum wave function, becomes real – that is, a single actual event, as opposed to a
multiple spectrum of possible events – only when it is observed, that is, when it
becomes part of subjective reality, when it is in a relationship with an observer…

That this continues mightily to disturb the minds of scientists is witnessed by a
very recent cover story in the prestigious scientific weekly New Scientist: “Before
observation, such quantum objects are said to be in a superposition of all possible
observable outcomes. This doesn’t mean that we exist in many states at once, rather
that we can only say that all the allowed outcomes of measurement remain possible.
This potential is represented in the quantum wave function, a mathematical
expression that encodes all outcomes and their relative possibilities.

“But it isn’t at all obvious what, if anything, the wave function can tell you about
the nature of a quantum system before we make a measurement. That act reduces all
those possible outcomes to one, dubbed the collapse of the wave function – but no
one really knows what that means either. Some researchers think it might be a real
physical process, like radioactive decay. Those who subscribe to the many-worlds
interpretation think it is an illusion conjured by the splitting of the universe into each
of the possible outcomes. Others still say that there is no point in trying to explain it –
and besides, who cares? The maths works, so just shut up and calculate.

“Whatever the case, wave function collapse seems to hinge on intervention or
observation, throwing up some huge problems, not least about the role of
consciousness in the whole process. This is the measurement problem, arguably the
biggest headache in quantum theory. ‘It is very hard,’ says Kelvin McQueen, a philosopher at Chapman University in California. ‘More interpretations are being thrown up every day, but all of them have problems.’

This debate reminds the present writer of the work of the Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, who hypothesized that children are not born with a belief in the continued existence of objects when they are not being observed. It is only from about the age of five that they acquire the belief that an object such as a ball continues to exist even when it is hidden behind a sofa so that they cannot see it any longer. Can it be that contemporary scientists are regressing, as it were, to a state of childlike solipsism, of unbelief in the existence of reality when nobody is observing it? If they are, then there is a simple remedy for this form of madness: belief in God. For St. Paul’s “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17.28) is not merely a pretty poetic phrase. On the contrary, it bears the very precise meaning that we exist only by God’s continual upholding every particle in our body and every movement of our soul by the word of His power. If He withdrew this upholding of us, even for one moment, we would immediately revert to the nothingness from which we came.

This brings us to the question of the origins of the universe and whether anything can be made out of nothing.

According to the most famous of contemporary scientists, Stephen Hawking, the universe owes its origin to a chance quantum fluctuation. In a book on Hawking, David Wilkinson, a physicist and Methodist minister, writes that the universe arose by “a chance quantum fluctuation from a state of absolute nothing… Quantum theory deals with events which do not have deterministic causes. By applying quantum theory to the universe, Hawking is saying that the event that triggered the Big Bang did not have a cause. In this way, science is able not only to encompass the laws of evolution but also the initial conditions.”

However, there are huge problems with this idea. First, if in the beginning there was only a wave function, a spectrum of possibilities, then, as we have seen, someone had to observe it if that wave function was to collapse and bring a single objective reality – our universe – into being. Who could that “someone” have been if not God? After all, did not the great Newton himself talk about space being God’s sensorium? Secondly, the idea that the whole, vast, infinitely varied, infinitely complex and highly organized universe should come from a chance quantum fluctuation is unbelievable (and strictly undemonstrable). Still less believable, thirdly, is the idea that the quantum fluctuation itself should come out of nothing. This is positing nothing as the cause of everything, an obviously nonsensical proposition. For, as King Lear tells the Fool, “Nothing can be made of nothing” (King Lear IV, 4, 126).

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469 Actually, the present writer with C.C. Russell demonstrated in an undergraduate experiment at Oxford in 1970 that this ability is present in children much earlier, from at least the age of three. But this is not relevant to the present argument.
Wilkinson’s assertion that the quantum fluctuation is not deterministically caused does not resolve the problem. He, as a Christian minister, should have known that existing things can owe their existence only to “Him Who Is” (Exodus 3.14) essentially and from before all time, Who is “the Beginning of every beginning” (1 Chronicles 29.12), and that “without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1.3).

Wilkinson continues: “Many people find difficulty in imagining where the matter of the universe comes from to begin with. Surely, they say, there must be an amount of matter or a ‘primeval atom’ with which to go bang? As Einstein’s famous equation $E=mc^2$ implies that energy ($E$) is equivalent to mass ($m$) multiplied by the square of the speed of light ($c$), the question can be translated to where does the energy come from?

“Now energy has the property that it can be either positive or negative. Two objects attracted by the force of gravity need energy to pull them apart, and therefore in that state we say that they have negative gravitational energy.

“It turns out that the energy in matter in the universe is the same amount as the negative energy in the gravitational field of the universe. Thus the total energy of the universe is zero. In this way you can have something from nothing in terms of the matter in the universe. No problem here for the Big Bang…”

But this is simply attempting to solve the problem by sleight of hand. Positive energy is something, and negative energy is something. They are not *numbers* that cancel each other out as in the equation: $1-1=0$. They are *things*, and the existence of things needs to be explained. And something cannot come out of nothing except through the creative energy of “Him Who is”, God.

Actually, some of the most famous physicists of our time, while not endorsing the idea that God created the heavens and the earth, nevertheless admit that the concept of God is not entirely irrelevant here. Thus Stephen Hawking writes: “It is difficult to discuss the beginning of the Universe without mentioning the concept of God. My work on the origin of the Universe is on the borderline between science and religion, but I try to stay on the scientific side of the border. It is quite possible that God acts in ways that cannot be described by scientific laws. But in that case one would just have to go by personal belief.”

It is amazing to what lengths scientists will go to deny the obvious fact that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the now fashionable idea of the “multiverse”, that is, the idea that all the possibilities in the original wave function actually exist in other universes. Frank Close, professor of physics at Oxford University, explains that the idea of the “multiverse” is, together with string theory, one of the “two leading theories that attempt to explain the most fundamental characteristics of the physical world”. But Close readily admits that it has one or two problems...

473 Close, “The Limits of Knowledge”, *Prospect*, June, 2015, p. 64.
The first is that it is untestable, which makes it, strictly speaking, not science at all. “As there is no possibility of communication between us and other universes, there is no empirical way to test the multiverse theory. George Ellis makes the point explicitly: ‘In a general multiverse model, everything that can happen will happen somewhere, so any data whatever can be accommodated. Hence it cannot be disproved by an observational test at all.’ By implication, the multiverse concept lies outside science.”474

So one of the two main mega-theories of contemporary physical science is not science at all. (Close thinks that the situation is a little better with the other mega-theory, string theory, but only just! Besides, string theory, it is claimed, is really understood by only about six people in the whole world!) Physics was meant to exclude the need for metaphysics, untestable philosophy. But it seems that metaphysics is making a come-back!

And this is not the only problem. According to Close, the different universes of the “multiverse” can “implement different laws of physics”, with the consequence that “if such diverse regions of space exist, then the ‘universe’ as we’ve defined it is not the whole of reality… Ellis and his cosmologist colleague Joe Silk, a professor at the Université de Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris, call this ‘a kaleidoscopic multiverse comprising a myriad of universes’. They, as proxy for many physicists, then pose the basic challenge: the suggestion that another universe need not have the same fundamental constants of nature as ours inspires the question of what determines the values in our universe. Of the variety of universes that could exist, the conditions for the narrow range of parameters for which intelligent life could exist are trifling. The odds that we exist are therefore so vanishingly small, that multiverse theory claims that there is a ‘landscape’ of universes ‘out there’ in which all possible values of these parameters exist. Thus one universe will exist somewhere with conditions just right for life, and we are the proof…”475

This reveals what is perhaps the main motivation for multiverse theory in physics: to help out evolution theory in biology in what should be the very first and easiest step in the ladder of evolution: the origin of life. The problem is that, as the physicist Close readily admits, – most biologists are much less sincere, - “the odds that we exist are vanishingly small” because the odds on the existence of all of the ten major constants that make life on earth possible (for example, the distance of the earth from the sun) are also “vanishingly small”. So in order to help out their biological colleagues in their little difficulty (of course, this is only the beginning of the vast difficulties faced by Darwinist theory), the physicists are forced to resort to the fantastical theory that all possible universes exist somewhere in the “multiverse” – including our own fantastically unlikely universe with its life-bearing planet, the Earth.

The Lord said that with God all things are possible. But He did not say that all possibilities will in fact become actual. In fact, He definitively excluded certain

474 Close, op. cit., p. 65.
475 Close, op. cit., p. 65.
possibilities: for example, that falsehood should finally triumph over truth, or good over evil, or that the world will not be brought to an end by His Second Coming. God can do anything – except contradict His own all-holy will. It is His will that decrees which possibilities become reality, and which will never be fulfilled – in any universe.

The concept of free will – Divine, human or angelic - is crucial here. For what is an act of will if not the elimination of a range of possibilities in favour of one reality? As I write these words, I am excluding all other verbal possibilities from being actualized. Thus freedom to will this as opposed to that is the freedom to create reality out of mere possibility. As I write these words I am not simply banishing the things I am not writing to some other universe in which they exist on equal terms with what I am writing: I am excluding the very possibility of their being written anywhere.

If, on the other hand, I assert, as the multiverse theorists seem to be asserting, that I am writing an infinite number of other versions of this article in an infinite number of other universes, the very concept of “I”, of personal identity, seems to disappear. Physicists have become reconciled to the idea – enormously paradoxical though it is - that a sub-atomic particle can exist in two places at the same time. But this paradox is as nothing by comparison with the idea that there is an infinity of universes in which I write an infinite number of different versions of this article. Some of these alternative versions will be gibberish, or represent something completely different from what I actually believe. How, then, can they be said to be what I write? Will they not in fact be the products of completely different people? Indeed, if different universes comprise different possibilities that cannot communicate with each other, and which may obey completely different laws of nature, what basis is there for saying that the I who am writing this article in this universe am the same as any of the Is who are writing it in other universes?

Let us remind ourselves of the first difficulty Close finds in multiverse theory: that there is no empirical evidence for the existence any other universe than our own – that is, the one single concatenation of events in space and time that all human beings with the exception of some contemporary physicists consider to be reality and not mere possibility. Indeed, not only is there no empirical evidence for other universes: even theoretically there cannot be any such evidence. For if there were, it would show that those other universes were interacting with our own and therefore formed part of our reality. As for there being an infinity of other universes, this is even more out of the question. For as the German mathematician David Hilbert says: “Although infinity is needed to complete mathematics, it occurs nowhere in the physical universe.”

Scientists used to pride themselves on their hard-headedness, on their insistence on facts, facts that can be empirically seen, heard or touched. Now, however, they deal, not in facts, but in possibilities, infinite numbers of them, none of which is more real than any other. They have become other-worldly to the most extreme degree, indulging in fantasies about other universes no less real - or unreal - than our ours but with which we can have no communication and about which we can have no information whatsoever.

476 Hilbert, in Close, op. cit., p. 66.
The idea of multiple universes is an old one: we find it in Hinduism, and we find it in the dualistic religions of the Middle East.

Just as the idea is old, so is its refutation. As early as the second century, the Holy Fathers rejected the idea put forward by the heretic Marcion that there are two universes, one ruled by a good God and the other by a bad one, each universe following different laws. C.S. Lewis discerns in all forms of the dualistic (and by inference, multiverse) error two major difficulties, one metaphysical and the other moral. The metaphysical difficulty consists in the fact that neither of the two worlds “can claim to be the Ultimate. More ultimate than either of them is the inexplicable fact of their being there together. Neither of them chose this tête-à-tête. Each of them therefore is conditioned – finds [itself] willy nilly in a situation; and either that situation itself, or some unknown force which produced that situation, is the real Ultimate. Dualism has not yet reached the ground of being. You cannot accept two conditioned and mutually independent beings as the self-grounded, self-comprehending Absolute.” In trying to understand the dualistic multiverse in pictorial terms, we cannot avoid “smuggling in the idea of a common space in which they can be together, and thus confessing that we are not yet dealing with the source of the universe but only with two members contained in it. Dualism is a truncated philosophy.”

The moral difficulty is similar. It consists in the fact that if one universe has one system of values, which we from our point of view would call good, and the other a completely different, or contradictory one, which we would call bad, there is no basis on which to judge between the two. “In what sense can one party [or universe] be said to be right and the other wrong? If evil has the same kind of reality as good, the same autonomy and completeness, our allegiance to good becomes the arbitrarily chosen loyalty of a partisan. A sound theory of value demands something very different…”

It does indeed. However, physicists do not generally concern themselves with moral questions, or the origins of morality; so one might argue that this consequence of their theory is irrelevant to physical truth. But this would be disingenuous; for physical, cosmological theories are so ambitious that they quite unashamedly claim to be “Theories of Everything” (TOEs). Everything is everything. You cannot claim to have a theory of everything if “everything” excludes life, consciousness, conscience, art and morality…

Not to mention God… But then we have come to expect that “theories of everything” would exclude God. The irony is that in the brave new world of modern science, in which everything that is remotely possible must be true in some universe or other, the possibility of God remains firmly excluded…

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478 Lewis, op. cit., p. 94.
The motto of most contemporary physicists should be an inversion of Dostoyevsky’s dictum: “Everything is possible, so God does not exist.” Only the determination not to believe in God can explain how they would prefer the most fantastical of all theories to the knowledge of God… It is truly the fool that has said in his heart: there is no God.

Now human thought, both scientific (in the Big Bang Theory) and commonsensical and religious, sees the history of the universe as going back to a first cause. For if there were no first cause, there would be nothing to set the causal nexus going. However, the first cause must be in some sense outside the causal nexus taken as a whole; and so it must itself be uncaused (and immaterial and non-spatiotemporal). Otherwise, if it were part of the causal nexus, it would itself require a causal explanation. This is recognized by religious thought, which calls God the Uncaused Cause and “Beginning of all beginnings”. But modern cosmological thought cannot accept this. If it accepts a first cause, it is only in the sense of the first of the causes, the big bang itself. It cannot accept that the big band itself must have a cause.

David Berlinski, a distinguished American academic with qualifications in the fields of physics, mathematics, biology and philosophy who is also a secular Jew and an agnostic, writes: “The universe, orthodox cosmologists believe, came into existence [about 13.8 billion years ago] as the expression of an explosion – what is now called the Big Bang. The word explosion is a sign that words have failed us, as they so often do, for it suggests a humanly comprehensible event – a gigantic explosion or a stupendous eruption. But this is absurd. The Big Bang was not an event taking place at a time or in a place. Space and time were themselves created by the Big Bang, the measure along with the measured…

“If the Big Bang expresses a new idea in physics, it suggests an old idea in thought: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. This unwelcome juxtaposition of physical and biblical ideas persuaded the astrophysicist Fred Hoyle, an ardent atheist [and believer in the steady state theory], to dismiss the Big Bang after he had named it. In this he was not alone. Many physicists have found the idea that the universe had a beginning alarming. ‘So long as the universe had a beginning,’ Stephen Hawking has written ‘we could suppose it had a creator.’ God forbid!...

“For more than a century, physicists had taken a manful pride in the fact that theirs was a discipline that celebrated the weird, the bizarre, the unexpected, the mind-bending, and the recondite. Here was a connection that any intellectual primitive could at once grasp: The universe had a beginning, thus something must have caused it to happen. Where would physics be, physicists asked themselves, if we had paid the slightest attention to the obvious?...

“If both theory and evidence suggested that the universe had a beginning, it was natural for physicists to imagine that by tweaking the evidence and adjusting the theory, they could get rid of what they did not want [God]. Perhaps the true and the good universe – the one without a beginning – might be reached by skirting the Big Bang singularity, or bouncing off it in some way? But in the mid-1960s, Roger
Penrose and Stephen Hawking demonstrated that insofar as the backward contraction of the universe was controlled by the equations of general relativity almost all lines of conveyance came to an end.

“The singularity was inescapable.

“This conclusion encouraged the theologians but did little to ease physicists in their own minds, for while it strengthened the unwholesome conclusion that Big Bang cosmology had already established, it left a good deal else in a fog. In many ways, this was the worst of all possible worlds. Religious believers had emerged from their seminars well satisfied with what they could understand; the physicists themselves could understand nothing very well.

“The fog that attended the Penrose-Hawking singularity theorems (there is more than one) arose spontaneously whenever physicists tried to determine just what the singularity signified. At the singularity itself, a great many physical parameters zoomed to infinity. Just what is one to make of infinite temperature? Or particles that are no distance from one another? The idea of a singularity, as the astronomer Joseph Silk observed, is ‘completely unacceptable as a physical description of the universe... An infinitely dense universe [is] where the laws of physics, and even space and time, break down.’”

The Big Bang theory posits a beginning state of the universe that is contrary to the laws of physics. In other words, it is physically impossible. This is an enormous problem for atheist physics, which assumes the law-governed nature of all things, while rejecting a Law-giver, but not for traditional religious thought, which recognizes a Law-giver as well as the law. For if God is the Cause of the entire spatio-temporal universe, then the causality joining God to the universe, as it were, must itself be beyond space and time and not subject to physical laws. For this is not the link between a material cause and a material effect, which expresses a physical law, but the link between the Creator and the whole of His physical creation, that is, all material causes and effects taken together as a single system. In fact, the “causality” that brought the heavens and the earth into being is not empirical causality at all, but more like the causality that every rational being experiences every time he exercises his free will; it is the free will of God.

Berlinski argues that the fact that “causes in nature come to an end” shows that “the hypothesis of God’s existence and the facts of contemporary cosmology are consistent.” However, in order for God’s existence and the supposed facts of contemporary cosmology to be consistent, more is required. Above all, the existence of a form of non-empirical causality, free will, must be admitted – both the free will of God in creating and continuing to uphold the universe, and the free will of men who choose to believe or not to believe in that fact. And surely any sane physicist would accept that he is free in this sense. Otherwise, if all their words and thoughts are just the determined or underdetermined products of fate or chance, why should we believe them?

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480 Berlinski, p. 80.
Why does the universe exist at all? “Oxford’s Peters Atkins has attempted to address this issue. ‘If we are to be honest,’ he argues, ‘then we have to accept that science will be able to claim complete success only if it achieves what many might think impossible: accounting for the emergence of everything from absolutely nothing.’ Atkins does not seem to recognize that when the human mind encounters the thesis that something has emerged from nothing, it is not encountering a question to which any coherent answer exists. His confidence that a scientific answer must nonetheless be forthcoming needs to be assessed in other terms, possibly those involving clinical self-delusion.”

The theologists say that God created the universe out of nothing; the physicists say that it “emerged” from nothing. The first explanation is more plausible than the second, for while we cannot know how God created everything out of nothing, the idea itself is nevertheless comprehensible - first because the idea of a Creator Who is incomprehensible to His creatures is in itself quite comprehensible (and logical), and secondly because God is at any rate something and not nothing. Besides, it provides plausible answers to the question “Why?” in the sense of “For what purpose?” We can say, for example, that God created the universe because his nature is love, and He wants creatures to exist in order to share in His love.

The second explanation, however, not only provides no conceivable answer to the questions “How?” and “Why”. It is itself nonsensical. For out of nothing nothing can come... And so: “Quantum cosmology is a branch of mathematical metaphysics. It provides no cause for the emergence of the universe, and so does not answer the first cosmological question [how?], and it offers no reason for the existence of the universe, and so does not address the second [why?]. If the mystification induced by its modest mathematics were removed from the subject, what remains does not appear appreciably different in kind from various creation myths in which the origin of the universe is attributed to sexual congress between primordial deities.”

For modern cosmology appears to have veered off towards a sophisticated form of Hinduism, whose creation myth tells of a quasi-sexual explosion of multiple seeds of universes through the union of Brahma, “the germ of all being”, with his consort Saraswathi. For is not “the sea of indeterminate probability” or “wave function of the universe” a kind of modern version of “the germ of all being”, which explodes out of potential being into a multitude of actual universes after coming into contact with an observer? (But who could this observer be if not a God who is not Brahma?) It looks as if the physicists, who so pride themselves on their rationality, have regressed even further into the mists of magical, pre-scientific paganism.

To conclude: there is only one philosophy that truly embraces everything: Orthodox Christianity. One of the early Christian martyrs, St. Justin the philosopher, said: “Only Christianity is a reliable and useful philosophy. Only thus and for this reason can I be a philosopher.” Modern science has reverted to a way of thinking that recalls many non-Christian religions and heresies, but is essentially simply a stubborn refusal to accept the “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1.3) of the existence of

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481 Berlinski, pp. 95-96.
482 Berlinski, pp. 106-107.
the invisible God from His visible creation – for which unbelief, as St. Paul says, “there is no excuse” (Romans 1.20). It has fulfilled the prophecy of St. Nilus the Myrrh-Gusher (+1596) about the twentieth century: “[The Antichrist], the dishonourable one, will so complete science with vainglory that it will lose its way and lead people to unbelief in the existence of the God in three Persons.”

St. Nilus points to vainglory as the motive of this pseudo-science (Dostoyevsky called it “half science” in The Devils) because leaving God out of every equation enables the scientists to demonstrate the brilliance of their own minds, to earn the plaudits of their colleagues and receive the glory of a world that craves the gold of wisdom but receives only the husks of “the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called science” (I Timothy 6.20). Therefore the way back to true knowledge and wisdom can only be through humility, through submitting to “the Power of God and the Wisdom of God”, the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1.24), “in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2.3) - but Who enlightens only those who ask him in humility. So let the model for the scientists be the humility of Solomon, the wisest of men, who said: “I am Thy slave and the son of Thy handmaid, a man who is weak and short-lived, with little understanding of judgement and laws; for even if one is perfect among the sons of men, yet without the wisdom that comes from Thee he will be regarded as nothing... For a perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind. We can hardly guess at what is on earth, and what is at hand we find with labour. But who has traced out what is in the heavens, and who has learned Thy counsel, unless Thou give him wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from on high?” (Wisdom of Solomon 9.5-6, 15-17)

* Let us return to the concepts of freewill and causality. There are three types of causality: empirical, human and Divine.

Let us begin with empirical causality, which is the weakest, most insubstantial form of causality. For, strange as it may seem, we never actually see an empirical causal bond. What we see is events of class A being regularly followed by events of class B. We then infer that there is something forcing this sequence of events, or making it happen; and this we call causality. But, as David Hume pointed out, we never actually see this force, this bond uniting A and B: we only see regular sequences of events. We say that A causes B, but all we actually ever see is events of classes A and B in regular, predictable succession to one another, not the force that joins A to B.483

In fact, our only direct experience of causality is when we cause our own actions. Thus when I decide to open the door, I have a direct experience of myself making my

483 To say that A causes B is to take a jump of faith, which is at the same time a jump of reason. For it posits an invisible something that connects A with B. For, as C.S. Lewis writes, “the assumption that things which have been conjoined in the past will always be conjoined the future is the guiding principle not of rational but of animal behaviour. Reason comes in precisely when you make the inference ‘Since always conjoined, therefore probably connected’ and go on to attempt the discovery of the connection. When you have discovered what smoke is you may then be able to replace the mere expectation of fire by a genuine inference” (Miracles, London: Collins, 2012, p. 30).
hand go towards the door-knob and turning it. This experience of causality is quite different from watching events of class A “causing” events of class B in empirical nature. I do not see the exercise of my will being constantly followed by the opening of doors. I know by direct, irrefutable, non-sensory (what the philosophers call phenomenological) experience that the cause of that door opening was I. This is the second type of causality, human causality; and our knowledge of it, unlike our knowledge of any empirical causality, is both direct and certain.

Moreover, - and this, as we shall see, is a very significant point for the so-called science of psychology - I know that my decision to open the door was uncaused in the scientific, empirical sense. Even if a man were standing behind me with a gun and ordering me to open the door, this would not take away from the uncaused nature of my action. It might explain why I decided to open the door at that moment; but, as the philosophers have demonstrated, to give the reasons for an action is not the same as describing the causes of an event; to confuse reasons with causes is a “category mistake”. Only if the man with a gun took away my power of decision - that is, hypnotized me to open the door, or took hold of my hand and placed it on the door-knob and then turned my hand, would it be true to say that my action was caused. Or rather, then it would no longer be my action, for my action can only be the free result of my will: it would be the action of another person: he would be the cause (the uncaused cause) of the action.

Both human and empirical causality are caused by God, Who brings all things, both rational and irrational, into being. Thus it is the Divine Causality which causes events of type A to be followed always (or almost always – the exception is what we perceive to be miracles) by events of type B: He is the Cause of all empirical causation. But Divine Causality is closer to human causality, in Whose image it was made, insofar as It, too, is (a) empirically uncaused, and (b) personal, whereas every empirical cause is (a) empirically caused (because God has caused it to be so), and (b) impersonal.

We experience Divine Causality in moments of grace. It has this effect on human causality that it does not violate the latter’s free and uncaused nature; It informs it without compelling it. Thus when a saint speaks under the influence of God’s grace, he retains complete control over his own words while submitting to the influence of God’s Word. This is incomprehensible within the scientific world-view. But since the scientists cannot see even the empirical causes they postulate, why should this concern us?…

One of the very few Orthodox thinkers who attempted really to come to grips with these issues was the Serbian Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, who died in exile in America in 1956. A polymath with several degrees in Western universities, he was well qualified to challenge the underlying assumptions of western thought. One of his most important essays was on the nature of causality; in it he demonstrated that empirical causality as scientists understand it is insubstantial by comparison with the only true, personal causality, which belongs only to God, men and the angelic world:-

“One of the fundamental points of doctrine in which our Orthodox Faith differs from all the philosophical systems as well as from some non-Orthodox
denominations is the conception of causality, i.e., of causes. Those outside are prompt to call our faith mysticism, and our Church the Church of mystics. By the unorthodox theologians we have been often rebuked on that account, and by the atheists ridiculed. Our learned theologians neither denied nor confirmed our mysticism, for we never called ourselves mystics. So, we listened in wonderment and silence, expecting the outsiders to define clearly their meaning of our so-called mysticism. They defined it as a kind of oriental quietism, or a passive plunging into mere contemplation of the things divine. The atheists of our time, in Russia, Yugoslavia and everywhere do not call any religion by any other name but mysticism which for them means superstition. We listen to both sides, and we reject both definitions of our orthodox mysticism, which is neither quietism nor superstition.

“It is true, however, that contemplative practice - not quietism though - is a recommendable part of our spiritual life, but it is not an all embracing rule. Among the great Saints we find not only the contemplative Fathers of the desert and seclusion, but also many warriors, benefactors, missionaries, sacred writers, sacred artists, and other persons of great activities and a sacrificial mode of Christian life. . . And what is our answer to the atheists who call our mystical Faith superstition? Least of all they have the right to call it superstition since, by denying God and the soul and all the higher intelligences, they are indeed bearers of a thoughtless and nefarious superstition which never existed in the history of mankind, at least not on such a scale and with such fanaticism. Now, while those who speak of our mysticism are unable to give a satisfactory explanation of this word, let us ourselves look to it and explain to them from our point of view how should they understand our so-called mysticism. Our religious mysticism is nothing misty, nothing nebulous, nothing obscure or mystified. It is our clear and perennial doctrine of causality. If we have to call this doctrine by an ism, we may call it personalism.

“Every day and everywhere people talk of causes. They say: 'This is caused by that, and that is caused by this.' That is to say: the next preceding thing, or event, or fact, or accident is the cause of the next succeeding one.

“This is indeed a superficial and short-sighted notion of causality. We don't wonder about this superficiality of some ignorant persons, especially of the busy people of great cities who have little time for deep and calm thinking. But we are astonished to find the same superficiality with the learned and philosophically minded, as the materialists, naturalists and even deists. And because we call their theory of causes naive and fatalistic, they call us mystics. We consider that all those persons, be they ignorant or learned, who believe in natural and physical causes as definite, are fatalists. Both naturalism and materialism are teaching a blind fatalism without a smallest door of escape or a smallest window for sunshine. We orthodox Christians must resist this blind fatalism, as all Christians should do, and defend our intelligent doctrine of personal causality of and in the world.

“This doctrine means that all causes are personal. Not only the first cause of the world is personal (as the deists think), but personal are all the causes of all things, of all facts, of all happenings and changes in all the world. When we say personal, we mean intelligent, conscious and intentional. Yea, we mean that some sort of personal beings are causing all, or better to say, are the causes of all. That is what personal
means. I know that at this my first statement some non-orthodox would remark: ‘That doctrine you are probably drawing from your copious orthodox tradition, for which we do not care, and not from the Holy Scripture, which we take as the only infallible source of all truths.’ To this I answer: no, not at all; this doctrine is so evident in the Holy Scripture, from the first page to the last, that I have no need this time to quote our tradition at all.

"On the first pages of the sacred Bible a personal God is specified as the First cause, or better to say the First Causer of the world visible and invisible. That God the Creator is personal, this is a professed and upheld dogma not only by all Christian denominations, but by some other religions too. We Christians, however, are privileged to know the inner being of God, i.e., God as Trinity in persons and Oneness in essence. We have learned to know this mystery through the momentous revelation in the New Testament. The dogma of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost means that God is trebly personal, yea supremely personal.

"But not God alone is personal. Personal are also the angels, personal is Satan with his perverse hosts of demons, and finally personal are men. If you carefully read the Bible, without the prejudices of so-called 'natural laws' and the supposed 'accidental causes', you will find three causal factors, and all the three personal. They are: God, Satan and Man. They are, of course, not equal in personal attributes, and there is no parity among them. Satan has lost all his positive attributes of an angel of light, and has become the chief enemy of God and Man, but still he has remained a personal being, bent though to do evil. Man, since the original of sin, has darkened his glory and deformed God's image in himself; yet, he has remained a personal being, conscious, intelligent and purposefully active, wavering between God and Satan, with his free choice to be saved by the first or destroyed by the second.

"God is activity itself. Not only does He interfere now and then with His wonders and miracles in the life of men and nations, but He is constantly and unceasingly active in supporting and vivifying His creation. ‘Being near to everyone of us’, (Acts 17.27) and ‘knowing even the thoughts of man’ (Psalm 94.11) He eagerly acts and reacts in human affairs: givs or withholds children, gives or withholds good harvest, approves or threatens, grants peace to the faithful and excites war against the devil worshippers. He commands all the elements of nature, fire and water, hail and storms, either to aid the oppressed righteous or to punish the godless. He calls the locust, caterpillars and worms ‘my great army’ (Joel 2.25), which He orders to devour the food of the sinners. He ‘is able to destroy both soul and body in hell’ (Matthew 10.28) He knows ‘the number of our hairs’, and ‘not a sparrow shall fall on the ground’ without His will and His knowledge. All this is testified by many instances in the Bible. And this is not all. There is no page in the Scripture which does not refer to God, yea a personal God, His will and His diverse activities. The whole Bible affirms that God is not only the First Causer of the world but also that He is all the time the personal All-ruler - Pantokrator - of the world, as we confirm in the first article of our Creed.

"Another causal factor is Satan, God's adversary, with his hosts of fallen spirits. He is the personal causer of all evil. Ever since his fall as Lucifer from the glory of 'an anointed cherub (Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14) to the dark pit Hell', he is unceasingly trying
to infiltrate evil and corruption into every part of God's creation, specially into man. Envious of God and man, he is the hater of both. Christ called him ‘a murderer from the beginning’ (John 8.44) and also ‘a liar and the father of it [lies]’. He is a mighty ruler of evil and darkness, but still subordinate, unwillingly though, to the all-powerful God. Only with God's permission is he able to harm men and to cause illness, confusion, pain, discord, death and destruction. But the more a person or a people sin against God, the greater power Satan gets over that person or that people. At the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ the whole world was lying in evil because of Satan's terrible grasp over the bedevilled mankind. The world then was teeming with evil spirits as never before. Therefore, Satan dared to offer Christ all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them as his own. A robber and liar!

“The third causal factor in this world, according to the Bible, is man. With all his littleness and weaknesses man is the greatest prize for which Satan is relentlessly and desperately fighting, and for which God from the beginning was ready to die. Staggering between God and. Satan, man is supported by God and beguiled by Satan, vacillating hither and thither, groping for light, life and happiness in his short span of existence on this planet. Yet, with all his seeming insignificance in this mammoth universe, man is able to change it by his conduct. Confucius said: ‘The clouds give the rain or give it not according to men's conduct’. Much more valid is this observation in Christianity with its belief in a personal God, the Giver of rain.

“By his faith and virtues, specially by his obedience to God, man regains the dominion over all the created nature which God in creating him entrusted to him. But by his apostasy and corruption he dethrones himself and comes under the dominion of physical nature and becomes its slave. Instead of commanding he is obeying the mute nature, and fighting it for his mere existence, as you see it still now happening in our own generation. And instead of having God as his only Master, he got two masters over himself, Satan and nature, both tyrannizing him... By his faith and virtue, man could have removed the mountains, tamed the wild beasts, defeated the aggressor, shut the heaven, stopped calamities, healed the sick, raised the dead. And by his sins and vices, specially by his apostasy from God, his only loving and powerful Friend, he could have caused the destruction of cities and civilizations, the earthquakes, floods, pestilence, eclipse of the sun, famine and all the innumerable evils, pleasing Satan and saddening God. Thus, following God man becomes god, and following the devil, he becomes devil. But be he with God or with God's adversary, man has been from the beginning and is now the focus point of this planet and one of the three most important causes of events and changes in the world. And thus, whatever happens on this world's stage, it happens either by God's benevolent will, or by Satan's evil will, or by man through his free choice between good and evil, right and wrong.

“Now, when we mention only these three causal factors: God, Satan, and Man, you should not think of mere three persons, but of terrific forces behind each of them. Behind God - a numberless host of angels of light, so much so that each man and nation has its own angel guardian; behind Satan - a horrible locust swarm of evil spirits, so much so that a whole legion of them are used to torment one single man, that one of Gadara; behind Man, since Christ's emptying of Hades and His Resurrection, there are by now billions of human souls who, from the other world,
from the Church Triumphant, by their intercession and love, are helping us, the many millions of Christ’s faithful; they are still fighting against the Satanic forces for Christ and our own salvation. For our chief fight in this world is not against natural and physical adversities which is by comparison a small fight befitting animals rather than men, but as the visionary Paul says: ‘Against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world’ (Ephesians 6.12) i.e., the satanic forces of evil. And we Christians have been, and always shall be, victorious over these satanic forces through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Why through Him? Because love is a greater power than all other powers, visible and invisible. And Christ came to the earth and went down below to the very hellish nest of the satanic hosts to crush them in order to liberate and save men for sheer love of men. Therefore, He could at the end of His victorious mission say: ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth’ (Matthew 28, 18) When He says ‘all power’, He means it literally, all power - in the first place the power over Satan and his satanic forces, then the power over sinners, sin and death. First of all over Satan, the causer of sin and death. ‘For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil’ (I John 3.8) Therefore, we rejoice in our belief that our Lord Jesus Christ is the irresistible Lord. We are acknowledging this belief in every liturgy by stamping the sacred bread for the Holy Communion with the words IC -XC-NI-KA.

“Read and reread the Gospel as much as you like, you will find in Christ’s words not the slightest suggestion of natural and physical causes of anything or any event. Clear as the shining sun is Christ’s revelation and teaching, that there are only three causal factors in this world: God, Man and Satan. His chief obedience was to His heavenly Father; His chief loving work was the healing of men's bodies and soul, and His chief dispute with the Pharisees was about His power of driving the evil spirits out of men and the forgiving of sins. As to nature and the so-called natural order and laws, He showed an unheard-of absolute dominion and power. He vigorously impressed His followers that they were ‘not of the world’, but, said He, ‘I have chosen you out of the world’ (John 15.19). Now, since the Christians are not of this world, they certainly cannot accept the theory of the men of this world about the impersonal, unintelligent and accidental causes of the process of things and events. Also in our liturgical book you find the same three personal causal factors as in the Gospel. The same in the Life of Saints too. The same in the conviction and consciousness of the masses of our Orthodox people.

“Therefore, whoever speaks of impersonal causes of things, happenings and changes in this world, is limiting God’s power, ignoring the powers of darkness, and despising the role and significance of man. The Scripture does not know, and does not mention any impersonal and blindly accidental cause of anything in the world. The Bible teaches us quite clearly, that the causes of all things, facts, events and changes, come from higher personal beings and personal intelligences. And we stick to this teaching of the Holy Book. Therefore we make no concessions to the secular, or scientific theories about impersonal, unintelligent, unintentional or accidental causality in the world. When I say we, I do not think only of the great Fathers of the Church, nor of the Doctors of Divinity, nor of the learned teachers of religion, but also of the masses of our Orthodox people all over the world. Our Orthodox people would not say: a wolf caused the death of somebody’s sheep; nor: a falling stone caused the injury of a boy; nor: a tornado was the cause of the destruction of
somebody's house; nor: good weather was the cause of an abundant crop. Our people look through the screen of the physical world into a spiritual sphere and there seek the true causes of those events. They always seek a personal cause, or causes. And though this is in accord with the Bible's teaching, some outsiders call us mystics, and our Faith mysticism or superstition. In fact, our mysticism is nothing else than a deeper insight into the spiritual realities, or intelligences, which are personally causing whatever there is or happens, using the natural things and elements only as their instruments, tools, channels, symbols, or signals.

“All this leads us to the following conclusions. First of all, Christianity is a religion not so much of principles, rules and precepts, but primarily and above all of personal attachments, in the first place an affectionate attachment to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through Him to other members of His Church, the living and the dead.

“Secondly, our Orthodox doctrine of personal causality on the whole range of nature and world's history is beyond any doubt the biblical doctrine. It was wholly adopted and explained by the Fathers of the Church, and it is kept lucidly in the consciousness of the Orthodox people.

“The benefits we draw from such personalism in the doctrine of causality are manifold. By it we stir our mind to pierce through the visible events into the realm of the invisible intelligences that caused and dominate the whole drama of the world. It sharpens more than anything else our thinking power, our own intelligence. By it we are constantly made aware of the presence of our Friend, Christ the Saviour, to whom we pray, and also of our arch-enemy, Satan, whom we have to fight and avoid. It helps us enormously towards educating and forming strong personal, or individual, characters. It inspires us with spirit of optimistic heroism in suffering, in self-sacrifice, and in the endurance of martyrdom for Christ's sake beyond description, as testified by our Church history.

“All these and other benefits are not possessed by the follower of the doctrine of impersonal causality; not even the greatest of all benefits - the knowledge of the truth.”

October 30 / November 12, 2017; revised November 7/20, 2017.

Velimirovich, “The Orthodox Doctrine of Causality”,
37. TO REBEL OR NOT TO REBEL

The Christian teaching on society is based on the concept of order: “the powers that be are established by God” (Romans 13.1), and social order consists in each member of society knowing his place in the hierarchy of power and carrying out the obligations that attach to that place. Salvation does not consist in this order alone: if the hierarchy does not extend on upward to the Church, “the pillar and ground of the Truth” (I Timothy 3.15) and from there to the Truth Himself, the Head of the Church and the Word of God, then this “order” must be counted disorder in essence insofar as this societal order is not subject to the fount and founder of all true order, God. Rebellion against it can in certain circumstances be justified, but only on the grounds that society is now “out of order”, has lost its bearings and anchorage in the true order, and can only be returned to it by stepping out and protesting against the new, disorderly order and, in extreme cases, overturning it altogether.

The first rebel against the true order was Lucifer, and the first rebel against the disorder created by him was the holy Archangel Michael. Lucifer believed himself to be like God, and even equal to him; to which the Archangel Michael responded: “Who is like unto God?” St. Michael was considerably lower than Lucifer in the angelic hierarchy: Lucifer was a cherub in the very first rank of the nine angelic ranks, while Michael was an archangel in the eighth of the nine ranks. However, God blessed him to fight against Lucifer in order to cast out the rebel and restore the true Order and Hierarchy of Being. He was successful; for, as the Lord Himself said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10.18: cf. Revelation 12.7-8).

Today, there is no society on earth that preserves the true order. The general tendency in the world today is for all natural hierarchical relationships to be despised and destroyed; nobody knows his place any more, and almost everyone lays claim to privileges and powers and places that are not his by right or nature. Some of these disordered societies openly rebel against God and His commandments – these are mainly the societies of the contemporary West. Others claim that they are following God, but this “god” is a false one – such are, for example, the Muslim societies of Iran and Saudi Arabia. A third category of states claims to believe in the True God, Jesus Christ, but only as a cover for their continuation of an earlier rebellion – such is, for example, the contemporary Russian Federation, which is ruled by the greatest anti-Christian organization in history, the KGB (FSB).

So is rebellion justified? Undoubtedly. Indeed, passive rebellion is mandatory for every True Orthodox Christian if he wishes to remain grounded in the true Order. In no way is a Christian allowed to disobey God for the sake of obedience to an earthly authority. For “whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge” (Acts 4.19).

However, active rebellion – that is, revolution, taking up arms against a sea of troubles - is another matter. New Hieromartyr Mark (Novoselov), Bishop of Sergiev Posad, wrote: “I am an enemy of Soviet power - and what is more, by dint of my religious convictions, insofar as Soviet power is an atheist power and even anti-theist. I believe that as a true Christian I cannot strengthen this power by any
means... [There is] a petition which the Church has commanded to be used everyday in certain well-known conditions... The purpose of this formula is to request the overthrow of the infidel power by God... But this formula does not amount to a summons to believers to take active measures, but only calls them to pray for the overthrow of the power that has fallen away from God.”

Active rebellion against the existing New World Disorder (NWD) cannot be undertaken on a personal whim (most likely it would in fact be demonic prelest’), but only at the express call of God and/or with the blessing of the Church or her chosen prophets or elders. An example of the first is God’s summoning of Righteous Gideon to lead the Israelites to throw off the Midianite yoke (interestingly, Gideon is commemorated on November 8/21, the feast of the Archangel Michael). An example of the second is the blessing given by St. Sergius of Radonezh, perhaps the greatest saint of Russian history, to the Russian army of Prince Dmitri Donskoj at Kulikovo field in 1389, and again (in a vision to the Greek Bishop Arsenius) to the Russian liberation army outside Moscow in 1612. A more ambiguous example is the Greek revolution of 1825, when Patriarch Gregory V of Constantinople did not bless the uprising, while Metropolitan Germanos of Patras did. The result: the murder of St. Gregory and a schism in the Greek Church that lasted for more than thirty years. Another ambiguous example: in the Russian Civil War of 1918-22 Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow did not bless the Whites to fight the Bolsheviks (although according to one account he did bless Admiral Kolchak), and the Elder Aristocles of Moscow said that “the spirit was not right” in the White ranks; whereas Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), first head of the Russian Church Abroad, did. The result was: the defeat of the White cause, and the continuation of the Bolshevik holocaust, the greatest in Christian history, for the best part of a century.

Any such revolution may seem wildly unlikely at the present time, and with no chance of success in any region of the world with the possible exception of Russia – the primary fount of disorder throughout the world since the abdication of the Tsar in 1917. However, it is necessary to think about the possibility for three major reasons. First, there are several prophecies of the saints that prophesy just such a revolution (i.e. counter-revolution) in Russia, that will bring a True Orthodox Tsar to the throne who will restore order to the Orthodox Church. Secondly, to judge from the extraordinarily rapid collapse of true piety even in the supposedly Orthodox countries, unless something dramatic happens very soon to save Orthodoxy, the reign of the Antichrist is upon us... And thirdly, “with God all things are possible”, and He is perfectly capable of raising a new Moses to overthrow the new Pharaoh now.

In that case we must be ready to follow him immediately, as the Israelites followed Moses on the night of the first Pascha. For St. Paul admonishes us: “See that you do not refuse Him Who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him Who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him Who speaks from heaven, Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven’” (Hebrews 12.25-26).

St. Joannicius the Great.
38. THE RESURRECTION OF ISRAEL

This year, 2017, marks the one hundredth anniversary both of the Balfour declaration and of the October Russian revolution. The real significance of the Balfour Declaration, and its relationship to the Russian revolution, was concealed in its timing. Divine Providence drew the attention of all those with eyes to see to this sign of the times when, in one column of newsprint in the London Times for November 9, 1917, there appeared two articles, the one announcing the outbreak of revolution in Petrograd, and the other – the promise of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine (the Balfour declaration).

This showed that the two events were different aspects - the internationalist-atheist and nationalist-theist aspects respectively, - of a single event, the Jewish revolution. In fact, both the Bolshevik and the Zionist revolutionaries came from the same region of Western Russia, often from the same families. Thus Weizmann’s own mother was able to witness Chaim’s triumph in Zionist Jerusalem, and that of another son – in Bolshevik Moscow...485 As M. Heifetz pointed out, “a part of the Jewish generation goes along the path of Herzl and Zhabotinsky. The other part, unable to withstand the temptation, fills up the band of Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin...”486

Since 1917, the history of the Jews has been to the highest degree eventful and stormy for the Jews both inside and outside their homeland/state of Israel, which was promised to them in 1917 and became a reality in 1948. The question posed here is: what is the destiny of the Jews? As a framework for our discussion we shall take the intriguing article by an anonymous author entitled “How to Understand the Jews as Being a Chosen People”487, together with the still-unfulfilled prophecies of the destiny of the Jews that are contained in Holy Scripture.

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The central thought of the article’s author, an Orthodox Christian, is that whereas “Christians are the chosen nation of God, holy, redeemed by the Lord”, and although the Jews, as a nation, have fallen away from their spiritual calling, nevertheless “the covenant concluded with them carnally, that is by descent from Abraham, could not be annulled even in the face of spiritual apostasy”. That covenant consists essentially in the promise of survival. Since in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek” (Galatians 3.28), the Jews would not have survived as a truly separate nation if they had believed in Christ and joined the chosen nation of God, which is the Church. However, “the covenant with the Jewish people made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is never revoked, and therefore, in remaining a ‘special, different’ people, since they did not accept Christianity, they repudiated their being the chosen people of God”. But at the same time they guaranteed their survival as a

Thus, it may be that the very preservation until now of the Jewish people is a result not of their being ‘chosen’, but as a result of their apostasy...” For the covenant was not only with Abraham’s son through Sarah, Isaac, but also with his son through Hagar, Ishmael. To Isaac and his Seed – by which, as St. Paul explains in Galatians, is meant Christ and the Christian, is promised salvation. But to Ishmael and his seed is promised survival. And spiritually speaking, the Jews who reject Christ are of the seed of Abraham through Ishmael, not Isaac.

The Lord said on the eve of His Passion: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12.24). These words are applicable, first of all, to Christ, Who died in order to rise again, and to individual Christians, who must die to their egoism in order to live spiritually. But it also applies to nations...

The Jews killed Christ because they saw in Him a threat to their national survival. As the chief priests said: “If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation” (John 12.48). For they had plans to rebel against Rome.

However, Christ rejected such mistaken zealotry. He recognized the authority of Rome over Israel politically, insisting that His Kingdom was universalist, not nationalist in essence, and even “not of this world”. Knowing this, and knowing that the people were ready to follow Him if given the chance, Caiaphas insisted: “It is expedient for us that one man [Christ] should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not” (John 12.50).

And indeed, as the Evangelist John points out, Christ did die for the nation. He died so that the chosen nation of God, the Christians, should not die spiritually, but live eternally. That nation would include both Jews and Gentiles, but it would not consist of nations in the ordinary, worldly sense of the word, being a “peculiar” nation of a quite different kind.

But Caiaphas was right also in his own terms. For if the Jews were to survive as a distinct nation in the worldly sense, they had to be united around a nationalist creed that put the nation above every other value, even loyalty to the God of Israel. Christ with His universalist vision was an obstacle on that path, and so He had to be killed.

So, having killed Christ, the Jews have miraculously survived as a nation in spite of the most terrible catastrophes that would have destroyed any other nation. In spite of the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century; in spite of being exiled from Babylonia in the eleventh century, and England in the thirteenth century, and Spain in the fifteenth century; in spite of the Nazi holocaust in the first half of the twentieth century; and in spite of the uncompromising hostility and overwhelming numerical superiority of the Arabs in the second half of the twentieth century, they have survived, and not only survived, but even prospered. And prospered mightily: the Rothschild century has turned into the Rockefeller century, and now in the twenty-first century the Jews rule the world as never before.
Since the two peoples of the covenant come from the same father, there is a family likeness between them, their destinies in history are intertwined, and the transition of individuals and groups from one people to the other is easier than to any third category or people outside the covenant (pagans or atheists). Thus the conversion of the Arabs, the original physical Ishmaelites, to Orthodox Christianity in the early Christian centuries (before Mohammed) is an example of transition from the spiritual category of unbelieving Ishmael to the spiritual category of believing Israel. Again, while the Jews have never converted en masse to Christianity, there have been individual conversions throughout the centuries.

More common, alas, has been the reverse movement, the falling away of Christians into various forms of Judaizing heresy. We see this already in the Early Church – St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians is essentially a tract against the Judaizing of Christianity – and explicitly or implicitly Judaizing movements in Christianity have appeared many times since then. Islam, for example, contains many Judaizing elements. In fact, when Christians fall away from the True Faith, if they do not become complete pagans or atheists, they usually acquire traits of Judaism; for, as an anonymous Russian Christian writes, “Christianity without Christ reverts to Judaism.”

We see this, for example, in Roman Catholicism: at the time of the falling away of the Roman Church in the eleventh century, the Romans adopted wafers – that is, unleavened bread (azymes) - in the liturgy instead of the leavened bread of the Orthodox – a relapse from the New Testament to the Old. Thus St. Nicetas Stethatos, a monk of the Studite monastery in Constantinople, wrote to the Latins: “Those who still participate in the feast of unleavened bread are under the shadow of the law and consume the feast of the Jews, not the spiritual and living food of God… How can you enter into communion with Christ, the living God, while eating the dead unleavened dough of the shadow of the law and not the yeast of the new covenant…?”

The same Judaizing process is still more evident in Protestantism. Thus the Protestants adopted as their Old Testament Bible, not the Septuagint until then in use throughout the whole of Christendom, but the Massoretic text of the Jewish rabbis. Again, the Protestants’ chapel worship is similar to the Jews’ synagogue worship: in both we find the exaltation of Scripture reading and study above liturgical worship (although this is more principled in Protestantism – in Judaism it is necessitated by the destruction of the Temple in which alone, according to the Law, liturgical worship can take place). Again, the relationship between Church and State in many Calvinist communities was modeled on the Old Testament Israel in the period of Moses and the Judges. Thus A.P. Lopukhin writes: "On examining the structure of the Mosaic State, one is involuntarily struck by its similarity to the organization of the state structure in the United States of Northern America." "The tribes in their administrative independence correspond exactly to the states, each of which is a democratic republic." The Senate and Congress "correspond exactly to the two higher groups of representatives in the Mosaic State - the 12 and 70 elders." "After settling in Palestine, the Israelites first (in the time of the Judges) established a union republic, in which the independence of the separate tribes was carried
through to the extent of independent states." Indeed, for the Pilgrim Fathers, their colonization of America was like Joshua’s conquest of the Promised Land. Just as the Canaanites had to be driven out from the Promised Land, so did the Red Indians from America. And just as Church and State were organically one in Joshua’s Israel, so it was in the Pilgrim Fathers’ America.

Protestantism, especially in America, also acquired the distinctly Judaist trait of the deification of materialism, the pursuit of material prosperity, not simply for its own sake, but as a proof that God is with you. “This Jewish materialistic approach,” writes the anonymous Russian Christian, “openly or more subtly, under the appearance of various social theories and philosophical systems, encroaches upon the consciousness of Christians, breaking down the Christian nations. In particular the penetration into the Christian consciousness of this Judaist idea explains many heresies, the rise of Islam, the substitution of Christianity with humanism, altruism, Marxism and separatist nationalism. Nationalism, which at times takes on an anti-Semitic character, at other times ends up in union with Judaism; in any event it is the reverse side of Jewish philosophy. A nation is truly attractive only in that part of it which is Christian. On the other hand, separatist nationalism, that is the extolling of a nation because it is a particular nation, refers back to the incorrect and prideful Jewish understanding of their chosenness, when they boast, ‘We are the children of Abraham’.

“This activity of Judaist philosophy is responsible for the striving towards the worldly in Christian societies, the wasting of spiritual talents for the worldly, that is, the burying of them, which explains the direction of present-day civilization towards ‘progress’, the ruining of our planet, modern pagan art, and so on.

“Thus the Jews may obtain supremacy, resulting from the breakdown of the Christian peoples, that is, from an open or subtle falling away from Christianity, which can be viewed as a direct influence of Jewish philosophy. In the end they will bring forth from their midst the Antichrist, their messiah, upon whom they hope…”

In still more recent times, Western Christianity as a whole has adopted another, still more fundamental trait of Judaism: its adogmatic character, making it, like Judaism, a religion, not so much of faith, as of works. Thus L.A. Tikhomirov writes: “It is now already for nineteen centuries that we have been hearing from Jewish thinkers that the religious essence of Israel consists not in a concept about God, but in the fulfilment of the Law. Above were cited such witnesses from Judas Galevy. The very authoritative Ilya del Medigo (15th century) in his notable Test of Faith says that ‘Judaism is founded not on religious dogma, but on religious acts’.

“But religious acts are, in essence, those that are prescribed by the Law. That means: if you want to be moral, carry out the Law. M. Mendelsohn formulates the idea of Jewry in the same way: ‘Judaism is not a revealed religion, but a revealed Law. It does not say ‘you must believe’, but ‘you must act’. In this constitution given by God the State and religion are one. The relationships of man to God and society are merged. It is not lack of faith or heresy that attracts punishment, but the violation of the civil order. Judaism gives not obligatory dogmas and recognizes the freedom of inner conviction.’
“Christianity says: you must believe in such-and-such a truth and on the basis of that you must do such-and-such. New [i.e. Talmudic] Judaism says: you can believe as you like, but you have to do such-and-such. But this is a point of view that annihilates man as a moral personality…”

Of course, the works prescribed by Talmudic Judaism are very different from those prescribed by Christ: the one kind enslaves and debases while the other liberates and exalts. However, in the last resort works without faith, according the Gospel, are useless; for works are only valuable as the expression of faith, faith in the truth – it is the truth that sets man free (John 8.32). So contemporary Christians’ adoption of the Jewish ethic of works, and loss of zeal for dogmatic truth, is a kind of slow but steady spiritual suicide…

The logical conclusion of the apostasy of the Christian world and its reversion to Judaism will be the appearance of “the man of sin”, the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.3). He will become the king of the Jews, will rebuild the Temple and reintroduce the Mosaic Law and Temple worship, with the worship of himself as Messiah and God as its centre and culminating point. But he will be destroyed by Christ at His Second Coming.

And so Judaism will finally acquire a positive dogma, that the Antichrist is God, to supplement its negative dogma, that Jesus Christ is not God; and the Christian world, the spiritual Israel, will finally dissolve into the carnal Israel – with the exception of a heroic remnant.

Although the spiritual Israel is blessed, while the carnal Israel is accursed, an important promise is given to the carnal Israel: it will live in accordance with Abraham’s petition: “Let this Ishmael live before Thee” (Genesis 17.18). This life cannot be spiritual, because that is promised only to the spiritual Israel. So it must be carnal – physical survival and worldly power. At the same time, St. Ambrose admits the possibility that Abraham’s powerful petition could win spiritual life for some of the Jews – but only, of course, if they cease to belong to the carnal Israel and join the spiritual Israel through faith in Christ. For “it is the attribute of the righteous man [Abraham] to intercede even for sinners; therefore, let the Jews believe this too, because Abraham stands surety even for them, provided they will believe…”

The promise of physical life and prosperity has certainly been fulfilled in the extraordinary tenacity of the Jewish race, its survival in the face of huge obstacles to the present day, and - since its gradual emancipation from the ghetto in the nineteenth century, - its domination of world politics and business in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. However, the successes of the Jews in worldly terms have been so great that many Evangelical Protestants have been tempted to ascribe it, not to God’s promise to Ishmael, but to his promise to Isaac. Reversing the interpretation of the Apostle Paul, they have made of the carnal Israel “the chosen people”, “the blessed seed” - and this in spite of the fact that this “chosen people” not only does not believe in Christ, but has been the foremost enemy of those who do believe in Christ for the last two thousand years! In fact, “it may be,” as the anonymous

488 St. Ambrose, On Abraham, 88.
Russian writer has suggested, “that the very preservation up until now of the Jewish people is a result not of their being ‘chosen’, but as a result of their apostasy”. For, having renounced their birthright, the Kingdom of God, they have received a “mess of pottage” instead – the promise of physical survival and worldly power. “If the Jews, having repented of the crime committed on Golgotha, would have become Christian, then they would have made up the foundation of a new spiritual nation, the nation of Christians. Would they have begun to strive in this case to preserve their nationality and government? Would they not have dispersed among other nations as the missionaries of Christianity just as the Apostles? Would they not have been strangers in a foreign land, not having a fatherland, like unto Abraham, but in this case with a higher spiritual meaning? All this happened with the Jews, that is, they became wanderers, not in a positive spiritual sense, but due to a curse, that is, not of their own will, but due to the will of chastising Providence since they did not fulfil that which God intended for them. Would they not have been exterminated en masse during persecutions as the main preachers of Christianity? Would they not have been assimilated among other peoples, so that the very name ‘Jew’, ‘Hebrew’, as a national name, would have disappeared and would have only remained in the remembrance of grateful nations as the glorious name of their enlighteners? Yes, and the very Promised Land and Jerusalem were given to the Hebrews not as a worldly fatherland, for which they are now striving, but as a prefiguration of the Heavenly Kingdom and the Heavenly Jerusalem, as a token of which Abraham and through him all the Hebrew nation coming out of Haran, renounced their earthly fatherland. For this reason the very significance of Jerusalem and the idea as a prefiguring would have passed away for the Jews, as soon as the Kingdom of God and the Heavenly Jerusalem would have become obtainable for them and would have become for them, as they are now for us, Christian holy places.”

By elevating the carnal Israel into the spiritual Israel, the Protestants fill up a major emotional gap in their world-view; for, having rejected both the concept of the Church, and the reality of it in the Orthodox Church, they have to find a substitute for it somewhere else. And so we have the paradoxical sight of the State of Israel, one of the main persecutors of Christianity in the contemporary world, which is based on the rabidly anti-Christian Talmud, which forbids conversions of Jews to Christianity, and which has driven out the majority of the Orthodox Christian population, being ardently supported by the Evangelical Protestants of the Anglo-Saxon countries. There have even been several attempts by Evangelicals to blow up the mosque of the Dome of the Rock, in order to make it possible for the Jews to build their Temple again – the Temple of the Antichrist!

Before dismissing the Evangelicals’ delusion out of hand, we need to study their arguments in favour of it. One of the most important of these is that Israel’s success has been prophesied and blessed by God in the Abrahamic Covenant. In particular, they argue that God promised to the descendants of Abraham the whole land of Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates, which promise has been almost fulfilled since the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, and that this would be their heritage forever (Genesis 13.15, 15.18).

In reply to this argument, we may note the following:-
1. God’s prophecies are never fulfilled approximately, but always exactly. The prophecy of the Jews’ winning control of the whole area from the Nile to the Euphrates was fulfilled exactly in the time of Kings David and Solomon (II Kings 8.3, II Chronicles 9.26). But the modern-day Jews have not emulated this feat: in 1967 they very briefly reached the Suez Canal, but not the Nile, and have never reached the Euphrates.

2. Even if the boundaries of the State of Israel were to extend this far at some point in the future, this would still be an achievement of the carnal Israel (unless the State of Israel would have become officially Christian by that time), and therefore would not be something to rejoice in as if it were blessed by God, but rather to be bemoaned as an extension of the kingdom of the Antichrist.

3. According to St. Philaret of Moscow, the Hebrew word translated as forever (I will give it to thee and to thy seed forever” (13.15)) can mean no more than an indefinite period of time. Even if we accept St. John Chrysostom’s interpretation, that it means in perpetuity, this can only mean until the end of the world. For it is only “the meek” – that is, the Christians - who “will inherit the earth” in the age to come...

Nevertheless, we cannot deny that the re-establishment of the State of Israel nearly two thousand years after its destruction is a miracle which defies a purely naturalistic explanation. This was admitted even by that determinedly secular and non-nationalist Jew, Sir Isaiah Berlin. In 1953 he wrote that the existence of the State of Israel overturns all materialist theories of history “because it shows the power of ideas, and not merely of economic and social pressures. It upsets materialist theories of history according to which environment, or economic factors, or the collision of classes is mainly responsible for what happens. It upsets the various doctrines in accordance with which Israel could not have arisen at all; the doctrines which the German Marxists and Russian Bundists used to adduce in order to prove the impossibility of a Jewish State, and all the various doctrines about the inevitable assimilation of the Jews, advanced by both Jews and Gentiles on the basis of some set of cut and dried premises, or historical theory, or sociological law or system. Nor did the empiricists in the foreign offices of the Great Powers do much better. Very few of the chancelleries of Europe or America seriously believed in the possibility of the rise of even a short-lived ‘independent State of Israel’. Very few believed that it would ever have the fighting strength, the unity of spirit which would enable it to triumph over so many obstacles. A great many of the prophets were I the grip of various obsolete theories of how nations rise and fall, or simply of powerful prejudice and emotion; and on the whole they tended to discount too much the sheer power of human idealism and human will-power.

“Israel is not a large-scale experiment. It occupies a very small portion of the earth’s surface; the number of persons comprising its population is relatively small. But its career confutes a number of deterministic theories of human behavior, those offered both by materialism and by the fashionable brands of anti-materialism. And that, I will not deny, is a source of great satisfaction to those who have always believed such theories to be false in principle, but have never before, perhaps, found evidence quite so vivid and quite so convincing of their hollowness. Israel remains a living witness to the triumph of human idealism and will-power over the allegedly
inexorable law of human evolution. And this seems to me to be to the eternal credit of the entire human race…”

In other words, the existence of the State of Israel is a miracle. And yet Berlin is wrong to locate this miracle in the human spirit alone, or even. The existence of the modern State of Israel is a miracle of God. Even while admitting that its re-establishment was brought about with the devil’s help – for it is the work of the carnal Israel, – we must nevertheless admit that it has been allowed by God and even prophesied by Him. Nor, as we shall see now, are the Evangelicals wrong in claiming that these prophecies do not speak only of demonic events, such as the enthronement of the Antichrist, but also of supremely positive ones, such as the conversion of the Jews to Christ.

Some Orthodox Christians reject the Evangelical interpretation of some of these passages on the grounds that all the as-yet-unfulfilled Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel in fact refer to the New Testament Israel, the Church. However, it is impossible to allegorize these prophecies to such an extent that all references to the race of the Jews and to the physical land of Israel are excluded. Thus there are several Old Testament prophecies that speak of the return of the Jews to Israel after a long “captivity” (e.g. Jeremiah 3.16-18; Zephaniah 3.10-13, 18-20; Joel 3; Zechariah 12-14). Some interpreters have understood these prophecies allegorically, as referring to the New Testament Church of the Gentiles; others, as referring to other historical events, both in the past and in the future. However, a close examination of these texts makes it impossible to understand them in any other way than as referring to some future event that has not yet taken place involving the gathering of the Jews from many foreign lands back into Israel, where they undergo, first, a crushing military defeat from a northern power, and then a spiritual revival during which they return to Christ and enter His Church.

Perhaps the most striking and detailed of these prophecies is that of the holy Prophet Ezekiel. In chapter 36 he describes how the Jews will be gathered back into the land of Israel, and there converted and baptized: “For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you [baptism], and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses... And you shall be My people, and I will be your God” (36.24-25, 28). Then comes the famous vision of the dry bones (ch. 37), which is an allegorical description of the resurrection of the Jews to true faith when they appear to be completely devoid of it. Then comes the invasion of Israel by Gog and Magog led by “the prince of Rosh” (ch. 38), and the description of how the Jews will spend seven months clearing up after the destruction of the invaders (ch. 39). And then the Prophet says: “All the nations shall know that the house of Israel was led captive because of their sins, because they rebelled against Me, and I turned My face from them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions did I deal with them, and I turned My face from them. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Now will I turn back captivity in Jacob, and will have mercy on the house of Israel, and will be jealous for the sake of My holy name” (39.23-25).

The fact that the “Rosh” of Ezekiel’s prophecy is spelt, in the Greek of the Septuagint, in exactly the same way as the ancient word for “Russia” (Ρωσ), has led many people to identify Gog and Magog with Russia and its allies. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that Gog and Magog are said to come from the extreme north, which can only mean Russia, and in the last times. Thus St. Ignaty Brianchaninov writes: “In the 38th and 39th chapters of the Prophet Ezekiel is described the power and numerosness of a northern people called Ross; this people must attain a huge level of material development before the end of the world, and by its end will bring to an end the history of the wandering of the human race on earth. A reference is made to these chapters of Ezekiel in the 20th chapter of the Apocalypse…”

Again, in chapters 12 and 13 of the Prophet Zechariah we see how the Jews, at the height of a disastrous war, come to a profound repentance for their apostasy from Christ: “I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and compassion; and they shall look on Me Whom they pierced” (i.e. the Crucified Christ), “and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns over a first-born” (12.10). “In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness [baptism]” (13.1). In chapter 14 a great disaster overtakes the people, and “half the city shall go into captivity” (14.2). But the Lord will fight for Israel, and finally, after a great war, “it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (14.16).

Now the mention of the feast of Tabernacles may lead to the thought that this is a Judaic feast, and so the context is the whole world going up to Jerusalem to pray at the Judaic feast – perhaps even to worship the Antichrist! However, in the context of the prophecy it is much more natural to interpret this as being a true, Christian feast, probably the Christian fulfillment of the feast of Tabernacles…

New Testament confirmation of this miraculous return of the Jews to Israel and then their conversion to Christ is to be found in the holy Apostle Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (11.15, 25-27): “For if their [the Jews’] being cast away is the reconciling of the world [the Gentiles’ conversion], what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?... For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved.”

Origen explains this passage well: “Now indeed, until all the Gentiles come to salvation, the riches of God are concentrated in the multitude of [Gentile] believers, but as long as Israel remains in its unbelief it will not be possible to say that the fullness of the Lord’s portion has been attained. The people of Israel are still missing from the complete picture. But when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and Israel comes to salvation at the end of time, then it will be the people which, although it existed long ago, will come at the last and complete the fullness of the Lord’s

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490 Brianchaninov, letter to N.N. Muraviev-Karsky, May 14, 1863.
portion and inheritance.” ⁴⁹² For, as St. Cyril of Alexandria says, “Although it was rejected, Israel will also be saved eventually… Israel will be saved in its own time and will be called at the end, after the calling of the Gentiles.” ⁴⁹³

What does “all Israel” mean? Blessed Theodoret of Cyr writes: “‘All Israel’ means all those who believe, whether Jews… or Gentiles.” ⁴⁹⁴ So when “the fullness of the Gentiles” has been gathered into the granary of the Church, and then “the fullness of the Jews”, we will be able to say that “all Israel” has been saved – that is, the whole of “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6.16), the Church of Christ. For, as Holy New Hieromartyr Mark (Novoselov) writes, “if the rejection of the Apostle Paul’s fellow-countrypmen was, in his words, ‘the reconciliation of the world [with God], what will be their acceptance if not life from the dead’ (Romans 11.15).” ⁴⁹⁵

Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov agrees with this interpretation, linking it with certain verses from the Book of Revelation: “Is this conversion of the Jews that salvation of ‘all Israel’ that the Apostle Paul foretold? In the Apocalypse it is said that the saved will come ‘of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie’. But not the whole of the ‘synagogue’ will come, but only ‘of the synagogue’, that is, a part of it. But even here, where the Apostle Paul says that ‘the whole of Israel will be saved’, he means only a part: ‘for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel… They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed’ (Romans 9.6, 8).

“The opinion is widespread among us that the conversion of the Jews will take place at the very appearance of the Saviour, when they shall cry out: ‘Blessed is He That cometh in the name of the Lord’ [cf. Matthew 23.39]. But this is not evident from the Apocalypse. But if the Philadelphian conversion will bring ‘all Israel’ that is to be saved to Christ, then this will, of course, be a great event, fully explaining the rejoicing of the Heavens. Israel is a chosen people with whom it will not be possible to find a comparison when he begins to do the work of God. The Jews will, of course, multiply the forces of Christianity for the resistance against the Antichrist. ‘If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world,’ says the Apostle Paul, ‘what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?’ (Romans 11.15).” ⁴⁹⁶

As indicated above, another New Testament confirmation of the Old Testament prophecies is to be found in the book of Revelation (3.8): “Behold, says the Lord to the Angel of the Church of Philadelphia, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and make obeisance before they feet, and to know that I have loved thee.”

St. Mark comments on this: “[St. John] with complete clarity speaks about the conversion of the God-fighting people to the Church of Christ, when she, few in numbers and powerless from an external point of view, but powerful with an inner

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⁴⁹² Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.
⁴⁹⁵ Hieromartyr Mark, Pisma k Druziam (Letters to Friends), Moscow, 1994, p. 125. See also pp. 103-104.
⁴⁹⁶ Tikhomirov, Religioznie-Filosofskie Osnovy Istori (The Religious-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, p. 570.
strength and faithfulness to her Lord (Revelation 3.8) will draw to herself the ‘remnant’ of the God-fighting tribe.

“Gazing with the eye of faith at what the Lord has done before our eyes, and applying the ear of our heart and mind to the events of our days, comparing what we have seen and heard with the declarations of the Word of God, I cannot but feel that a great, wonderful and joyous mystery of God’s economy is coming towards us: the Judaizing haters and persecutors of the Church of God, who are striving to subdue and annihilate her, by the wise permission of Providence will draw her to purification and strengthening, so as ‘to present her as a glorious Church, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but so that she should be holy and blameless’ (Ephesians 6.27).

“And in His time, known only to the One Lord of time, this... ‘synagogue of Satan’ will bow before the pure Bride of Christ, conquered by her holiness and blamelessness and, perhaps, frightened by the image of the Antichrist…”

Another important witness is Revelation 7.4: “And I heard the number of those who were sealed; and there were sealed a hundred and forty and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” “This sealing,” writes Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Jordanville, “will begin with the Israelites, who before the end of the world will be converted to Christ, as St. Paul predicts (Romans 9.27, 11.26). In each of the twelve tribes there will be twelve thousand sealed, and 144,000 in all. Of these tribes only the tribe of Dan is not mentioned, because from it, according to tradition, will come the Antichrist. In place of the tribe of Dan is mentioned the priestly tribe of Levi which previously had not entered into the twelve tribes. Such a limited number is mentioned, perhaps, in order to show how small is the number of the sons of Israel who are saved in comparison with the uncountable multitude of those who have loved the Lord Jesus Christ from among all the other formerly pagan people of the earth.”

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So the carnal Israel can and will be saved. But only, it must be emphasized again, by ceasing to be the carnal Israel and becoming part of the spiritual, the Church of Christ. For the carnal and the spiritual Israels, though related through their common father, Abraham, and constantly intertwined in history, are mutually incompatible, eternal enemies, as were Jacob and Esau...

We are now in a better position to understand the relationship between the two “great nations” who come from Abraham and who are given promises in the Abrahamic Covenant.

For clarity’s sake we shall refer to two covenants, or promises, the one referring to the spiritual Israel and the other to the carnal Israel. The two covenants are both complementary and contrary to each other. The spiritual Israel is promised spiritual

blessings: salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven, while the carnal Israel is promised carnal blessings: survival and the kingdom of this world; for this is what the Jews confessed that they belonged to when they declared to the ruler of this world: “We have no other king than Caesar” (John 19, 15). And so it has turned out in history: the children of the spiritual Israel, consisting of people from many nations, both Jews and Gentiles, have been given salvation in Christ, while the children of the carnal Israel, having lost salvation, have nevertheless survived many centuries of oppression and humiliation, and have achieved worldly power – and power over the spiritual Israel, too, in places like Israel and Soviet Russia.

The worldly power of the carnal Israel is destined to reach its peak at the end of the world, in the time of the Jewish Antichrist. At the same time, however, - or perhaps before – the spiritual Israel will achieve her greatest victory – the conversion of many, perhaps most of the children of the carnal Israel to Christ.

Since the carnal Israel was promised physical life and power, it is no wonder that since the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and especially since the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, it has regained power over the land of Israel, driving out most of the Christians in the process, and may well recapture all the land from the Nile to the Euphrates, as was promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. But it is important to understand that such a re-conquest, if it takes place, will not be by virtue of the Jews being the chosen people, as they and their Evangelical allies believe, but by virtue of the exact opposite: of their being the accursed people. For of the two covenant peoples the people that is carnal is given physical gifts that are appropriate to its carnal desires.

As for the spiritual Israel, the meek and righteous Israel, “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6.16), it is not in this age that she will inherit the earth, as was promised by God. It will be given to her only after this present world has perished in its present form, and has been renewed and transformed into the conditions of the original Paradise. For “we, according to the promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (II Peter 3.13). That is the Promised Land of the Saints. Moreover, since corruptible “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom” (I Corinthians 15.50), they will receive it, not in corruptible bodies, but in that “earth”, the incorruptible bodies of the resurrection, that they will inherit at the Second Coming...

Finally, a discussion of the destiny of Israel would be incomplete without returning to the destiny of that other country whose fall in 1917 coincided exactly with the rise of Israel to worldly power and statehood - Russia. For most of the last thousand years Tsarist Russia had been the leading national expression and protector of the spiritual Israel, the Church of Christ. But in 1917 Russia fell – and the main agents of her fall were precisely the Jews, who rose to power as the Orthodox Russians fell from it.

At the time of writing, it looks as if Putin’s neo-Soviet Russia may well be that Gog and Magog from the extreme north that destroys the State of Israel before being destroyed itself, as Ezekiel says, “on the mountains of Israel”.

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If so, then, as the prophecies also appear to indicate, Russia and Israel will serve each for the other’s judgement/crucifixion, and then - resurrection from the dead… St. Seraphim of Sarov prophesied that at the end of the world there would be only two important nations: the Russians and the Jews, and that the Antichrist would be a Jew born in Russia. How fitting, then, that the Russian nation, which has suffered most from the antichristian Jews in the terrible Russian-Jewish revolution, should finally convert them to Christianity (one sixth of the present-day population of Israel is Russian-speaking), so that the former bitter enemies, reconciled in the Body of Christ, “the Israel of God”, should fight together against the Russian-Jewish Antichrist!

39. IS METROPOLITAN PHILARET OF MOSCOW A SAINT?

Exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow peacefully departed to the Lord. The son of a poor village priest of Kolomna, he was consecrated a bishop at the age of 35 in 1817; he became Metropolitan of Moscow in 1821, serving there for nearly fifty years – fifty! – until his death in 1867. His reputation in Russia was immense: from his fellow hierarchs and the holy Elders of Optina to the simple people who sought his miracle-working help, he was revered as a great saint, the Russian equivalent of St. Photius the Great. And yet in the twentieth century there arose some who contended that he was not only not holy, but a heretic, a “scholastic”. Without examining this charge in detail (which would require a book-length exposition), let us recall some excerpts from his life and teaching.

Elena Kontzevich writes: “The turning point in the spiritual life of Metropolitan Philaret was his first encounter with Fr. Anthony [Medvedev], then abbot of a poor hermitage who came to him to pay a visit to his ruling bishop. Fr. Anthony was quite outspoken in condemning the unorthodox and harmful ‘mysticism’ propagated by the masonic Bible Society, which was in vogue during the reign of Alexander I. Metropolitan Philaret hoped to have the Bible translated for the first time into modern Russian and thus supported the Society without really being able to see the danger in its ideas. At this meeting he heard for the first time the Orthodox Patristic teaching of the inward activity (Jesus Prayer) and, probably, about Saint Seraphim. He was deeply impressed, and as soon as he could he placed Fr. Anthony as head of the Holy Trinity Lavra, which was in his diocese. After this a great spiritual friendship developed between him and Fr. Anthony, who became his Starets, and without his advice he made no important decision, whether concerning a diocesan matter, governmental affairs, or his personal spiritual life.

“Fr. Anthony had been absolutely devoted to St. Seraphim from the time he entered monastic life at Sarov at a young age. Contact with the Saints revealed to him the realm of Orthodox spirituality and the path to acquire it. St. Seraphim foresaw that he would become ‘abbot of a great Lavra’ and instructed him how to meet the challenge.

“Metropolitan Philaret went through the way of the inward activity, the prayer of the heart, under the guidance of St. Seraphim’s disciple, and he thereby acquired great gifts in the spiritual life: gifts of vision, of prophecy, of healing the afflicted. Thus he himself became one of the forces of the great spiritual revival in Russia. He saved the institution of Startsi in Optina Monastery when Starets Lev was persecuted, protected the nuns of St. Seraphim’s Diveyevo Convent, patronized Starets Makary’s publication of Paissy Velichkovsky’s translations, founded the Gethsemane Skete of cave-dwellers near the Lavra. He himself functioned as a Starets. There is a clear indication also that he foresaw the Russian Revolution.”\footnote{Kontezevich, “Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow”, St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, p. 195.}
Thus he feared “storm-clouds coming from the West”, and advised that rizas should not be made for icons, because “the time is approaching when ill-intentioned people will remove the rizas from the icons.”

During the Masonic Decembrist rebellion that followed on the supposed death of Tsar Alexander I in 1825, Metropolitan Philaret’s wise refusal to reveal the contents of Tsar Alexander’s will immediately helped to guarantee the transfer of power to his brother, Tsar Nicholas I. In view of this, Philaret’s views on the Autocracy, and on the relationship between the Church and the State, are particularly important. Indeed, according to Robert Nicols, it is perhaps Philaret, who “should be credited with the first efforts [in the Russian Church] to work out a theory of church-state relations that insisted on the legitimacy of divinely instituted royal authority without endorsing the seemingly unlimited claims of the modern state to administer all aspects of the lives of its citizens.”

According to Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), Philaret said that "it was necessary for there to be a close union between the ruler and the people - a union, moreover, that was based exclusively on righteousness. The external expression of the prosperity of a state was the complete submission of the people to the government. The government in a state had to enjoy the rights of complete inviolability on the part of the subjects. And if it was deprived of these rights, the state could not be firm, it was threatened with danger insofar as two opposing forces would appear: self-will on the part of the subjects and predominance on the part of the government. 'If the government is not firm,' taught Philaret, 'then the state also is not firm. Such a state is like a city built on a volcanic mountain: what does its firmness signify when beneath it is concealed a force which can turn it into ruins at any minute? Subjects who do not recognize the sacred inviolability of the rulers are incited by hope of self-will to attain self-will; an authority which is not convinced of its inviolability is incited by worries about its security to attain predominance; in such a situation the state wavers between the extremes of self-will and predominance, between the horrors of anarchy and repression, and cannot affirm in itself obedient freedom, which is the focus and soul of social life.'

"The holy hierarch understood the [Decembrist] rebellion as being against the State, against itself. 'Subjects can themselves understand,' said Philaret, 'that in destroying the authorities they are destroying the constitution of society and consequently they are themselves destroying themselves.'"  

Philaret "did not doubt that monarchical rule is 'power from God' (Romans 13.1) in its significance for Russian history and statehood, and more than once in his sermons expressed the most submissively loyal feelings with regard to all the

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501 Snychev, Zhizn’ i Deiatel’nost’ Filareta, Mitropolita Moskovskogo (The Life and Activity of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow), Tula, 1994, p. 177.
representatives of the Royal Family. But he was one of the very few archpastors who had the courage to resist the tendency - very characteristic of Russian conditions - to reduce Orthodoxy to 'glorification of the tsar'. Thus, contrary to many hierarchs, who from feelings of servility warmly accepted Nicholas I's attempt to introduce the heir among the members of the Synod, he justly saw in this a manifestation of caesaropapism..., and in the application of attributes of the Heavenly King to the earthly king - a most dangerous deformation of religious consciousness..., and in such phenomena as the passing of a cross procession around statues of the emperor - a direct return to paganism."

Metropolitan Philaret, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, "distinctly and firmly reminded people of the Church's independence and freedom, reminded them of the limits of the state. And in this he sharply and irreconcilably parted with his epoch, with the whole of the State's self-definition in the new, Petersburgian Russia. Philaret was very reserved and quiet when speaking. By his intense and courageous silence he with difficulty concealed and subdued his anxiety about what was happening. Through the vanity and confusion of events he saw and made out the threatening signs of the righteous wrath of God that was bound to come. Evil days, days of judgement were coming - 'it seems that we are already living in the suburbs of Babylon, if not in Babylon itself,' he feared... 'My soul is sorrowful,' admitted Metropolitan Philaret once. 'It seems to me that the judgement which begins at the house of God is being more and more revealed... How thickly does the smoke come from the coldness of the abyss and how high does it mount'... And only in repentance did he see an exit, in universal repentance 'for many things, especially in recent years'.

"Philaret had his own theory of the State, of the sacred kingdom. And in it there was not, and could not be, any place for the principles of state supremacy. It is precisely because the powers that be are from God, and the sovereigns rule by the mercy of God, that the kingdom has a completely subject and auxiliary character. 'The State as State is not subject to the Church', and therefore the servants of the Church already in the apostolic canons are strictly forbidden 'to take part in the administration of the people'. Not from outside, but from within must the Christian State be bound by the law of God and the ecclesiastical order. In the mind of Metropolitan Philaret, the State is a moral union, 'a union of free moral beings' and a union founded on mutual service and love - 'a certain part of the general dominion of the Almighty, outwardly separate, but by an invisible power yoked into the unity of the whole'... And the foundation of power lies in the principle of service. In the Christian State Philaret saw the Anointed of God, and before this banner of God's good will he with good grace inclined his head. 'The Sovereign receives the whole of his lawfulness from the Church's anointing', that is, in the Church and through the Church. Here the Kingdom inclines its head before the Priesthood and takes upon itself the vow of service to the Church, and its right to take part in ecclesiastical affairs. He possesses this not by virtue of his autocracy and authority, but precisely by virtue of

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his obedience and vow. This right does not extend or pass to the organs of state administration, and between the Sovereign and the Church there cannot and must not be any dividing wall or mediation. The Sovereign is anointed, but not the State. The Sovereign enters into the Church, but the State as such remains outside the Church. And for that reason it has no rights and privileges in the Church. In her inner constitution the Church is completely independent, and has no need of the help or defence of the secular authorities - 'the altar does not fear to fall even without this protection'. For the Church is ruled by Christ Himself, Who distributes and realizes 'his own episcopacy of souls' through the apostolic hierarchy, which 'is not similar to any form of secular rule'.

"The Church has her own inviolable code of laws, her own strength and privileges, which exceed all earthly measures. 'In His word Jesus Christ did not outline for her a detailed and uniform statute, so that His Kingdom should not seem to be of this world'... The Church has her own special form of action - in prayer, in the service of the sacraments, in exhortation and in pastoral care. And for real influence on public life, for its real enchurchment, according to Metropolitan Philaret's thought, the interference of the hierarchy in secular affairs is quite unnecessary - 'it is necessary not so much that a bishop should sit in the governmental assembly of grandees, as that the grandees and men of nobles birth should more frequently and ardently surround the altar of the Lord together with the bishop'... Metropolitan Philaret always with great definiteness drew a firm line between the state and ecclesiastical orders. Of course, he did not demand and did not desire the separation of the State from the Church, its departure from the Church into the arbitrariness of secular vanity. But at the same time he always sharply underlined the complete heterogeneity and particularity of the State and the Church. The Church cannot be in the State, and the State cannot be in the Church - 'unity and harmony' must be realized between them in the unity of the creative realization of God's commandments.

"It is not difficult to understand how distant and foreign this way of thinking was for the State functionaries of the Nicholaevan spirit and time, and how demanding and childish it seemed to them. Philaret did not believe in the power of rebukes and reprimands. He did not attach great significance to the external forms of life - 'it is not some kind of transformation that is needed, but a choice of men and supervision', he used to say. And above all what was necessary was an inner creative uplift, a gathering and renewal of spiritual forces. What was needed was an intensification of creative activity, a strengthening and intensification of ecclesiastical and pastoral freedom. As a counterweight to the onslaught of the State, Metropolitan Philaret thought about the reestablishment of the living unity of the local episcopate, which would be realized in constant consultative communion of fellow pastors and bishops, and strengthened at times by small congresses and councils, until a general local Council would become inwardly possible and achievable.503 Metropolitan Philaret

503 "Already in the reign of Alexander I the hierarch used to submit the idea of the restoration of Local Councils and the division of the Russian Church into nine metropolitan areas. At the command of Emperor Alexander he had even composed a project and given it to the members of the Synod for examination. But the Synod rejected the project, declaring: 'Why this project, and why have you not spoken to us about it?' 'I was ordered [to compose it]' was all that the hierarch could reply, 'and speaking about it is not forbidden!' (Snychev, op. cit., pp. 226). (V.M.)"
always emphasized that 'we live in the Church militant'... And with sadness he recognized that 'the quantity of sins and carelessness which have mounted up in the course of more than one century almost exceeds the strength and means of correction'... Philaret was not a man of struggle, and was weighed down 'by remaining in the chatter and cares of the city and works of men'. He lived in expectation of that eternally secure city, from which it will not be necessary to flee into any desert', He wanted to withdraw, to run away, and beyond the storm of affairs to pray for the mercy and longsuffering of God, for 'defence from on high'."504

The State was "a union of free moral beings, united amongst themselves with the sacrifice of part of their freedom for the preservation and confirmation by the common forces of the law of morality, which constitutes the necessity of their existence. The civil laws are nothing other than interpretations of this law in application to particular cases and guards placed against its violation."505

Philaret emphasized the rootedness of the State in the family, with the State deriving its essential properties and structure from the family: "The family is older than the State. Man, husband, wife, father, son, mother, daughter and the obligations and virtues inherent in these names existed before the family grew into the nation and the State was formed. That is why family life in relation to State life can be figuratively depicted as the root of the tree. In order that the tree should bear leaves and flowers and fruit, it is necessary that the root should be strong and bring pure juice to the tree. In order that State life should develop strongly and correctly, flourish with education, and bring forth the fruit of public prosperity, it is necessary that family life should be strong with the blessed love of the spouses, the sacred authority of the parents, and the reverence and obedience of the children, and that as a consequence of this, from the pure elements of family there should arise similarly pure principles of State life, so that with veneration for one's father veneration for the tsar should be born and grow, and that the love of children for their mother should be a preparation of love for the fatherland, and the simple-hearted obedience of domestics should prepare and direct the way to self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness in obedience to the laws and sacred authority of the autocrat."506

If the foundation of the State is the family, and each family is both a miniature State and a miniature monarchy, it follows that the most natural form of Statehood is Monarchy - more specifically, a Monarchy that is in union with, as owing its origin to, the Heavenly Monarch, God. Despotic monarchies identify themselves, rather than unite themselves, with the Deity, so they cannot be said to correspond to the Divine order of things. In ancient times, the only monarchy that was in accordance with the order and the command of God was the Israelite autocracy. The Russian autocracy was the successor of the Israelite autocracy, was based on the same principles and received the same blessing from God through the sacrament of anointing to the kingdom.

504 Florovsky, "Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij" (Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow), in Vera i Kul'tura (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 261-264.
In 1851, Metropolitan Philaret preached as follows: "As heaven is indisputably better than the earth, and the heavenly than the earthly, it is similarly indisputable that the best on earth must be recognized to be that which was built on it in the image of the heavenly, as was said to the God-seer Moses: 'Look thou that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount' (Exodus 25.40). In accordance with this, God established a king on earth in the image of His single rule in the heavens; He arranged for an autocratic king on earth in the image of His almighty power; and He placed an hereditary king on earth in the image of His imperishable Kingdom, which lasts from ages to ages.

"Oh if only all the kings of the earth paid sufficient attention to their heavenly dignity and to the traits of the image of the heavenly impressed upon them, and faithfully united the righteousness and goodness demanded of them, the heavenly unsleeping watchfulness, purity of thought and holiness of intention that is in God's image! Oh if only all the peoples sufficiently understood the heavenly dignity of the king and the construction of the heavenly kingdom in the image of the heavenly, and constantly signed themselves with the traits of that same image - by reverence and love for the king, by humble obedience to his laws and commands, by mutual agreement and unanimity, and removed from themselves everything of which there is no image in the heavens - arrogance, disputes, self-will, greediness and every evil thought, intention and act! Everything would be blessed in accordance with the heavenly image if it were well constructed in accordance with the heavenly image. All earthly kingdoms would be worthy of being the antechamber of the Heavenly Kingdom.

"Russia! You participate in this good more than many kingdoms and peoples. 'Hold on to that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown' (Revelation 3.11). Keep and continue to adorn your radiant crown, ceaselessly struggling to fulfil more perfectly the crown-giving commandments: 'Fear God, honour the king' (I. Peter 2.17).

"Turning from the well-known to that which has perhaps been less examined and understood in the apostle's word, I direct our attention to that which the apostle, while teaching the fear of God, reverence for the king and obedience to the authorities, at the same time teaches about freedom: 'Submit', he says, 'to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether to the king, as being supreme, or to governors as being sent through him... as free'. Submit as free men. Submit, and remain free...

"But how are we more correctly to understand and define freedom? Philosophy teaches that freedom is the capacity without restrictions rationally to choose and do that which is best, and that it is by nature the heritage of every man. What, it would seem, could be more desirable? But this teaching has its light on the summit of the contemplation of human nature, human nature as it should be, while in descending to our experience and actions as they are in reality, it encounters darkness and obstacles.
"In the multiplicity of the race of men, are there many who have such an open and educated mind as faithfully to see and distinguish that which is best? And do those who see the best always have enough strength decisively to choose it and bring it to the level of action? Have we not heard complaints from the best of men: 'For to will is present in me, but how to perform that which is good I find not' (Romans 7.18)? What are we to say about the freedom of people who, although not in slavery to anybody, are nevertheless subject to sensuality, overcome by passion, possessed by evil habits? Is the avaricious man free? Is he not bound in golden chains? Is the indulger of his flesh free? Is he not bound, if not by cruel bonds, then by soft nets? Is the proud and vainglorious man free? Is he not chained, not by his hands, and not by his legs, but by his head and heart, to his own idol?

"Thus does not experience and consciousness, at least of some people in some cases, speak of that of which the Divine Scriptures speak generally: 'He who does sin is the servant of sin' (John 8. 34)?

"Observation of people and human societies shows that people who to a greater degree allow themselves to fall into this inner, moral slavery - slavery to sin, the passions and vices - are more often than others zealots for external freedom - freedom broadened as far as possible in human society before the law and the authorities. But will broadening external freedom help them to freedom from inner slavery? There is no reason to think that. With greater probability we must fear the opposite. He in whom sensuality, passion and vice has already acquired dominance, when the barriers put by the law and the authorities to his vicious actions have been removed, will of course give himself over to the satisfaction of his passions and lusts with even less restraint than before, and will use his external freedom only in order that he may immerse himself more deeply in inner slavery. Unhappy freedom which, as the Apostle explained, 'they have as a cover for their envy'! Let us bless the law and the authorities which, in decreeing and ordering and defending, as necessity requires, the limits placed upon freedom of action, hinder as far they can the abuse of natural freedom and the spread of moral slavery, that is, slavery to sin, the passions and the vices.

"I said: as far as they can, because we can not only not expect from the law and the earthly authorities a complete cutting off of the abuse of freedom and the raising of those immersed in the slavery of sin to the true and perfect freedom: even the law of the Heavenly Lawgiver is not sufficient for that. The law warns about sin, rebukes the sinner and condemns him, but does not communicate to the slave of sin the power to break the bonds of this slavery, and does not provide the means of blotting out the iniquities committed, which lie on the conscience like a fiery seal of sinful slavery. And in this consists 'the weakness of the law' (Romans 8.3), to which the Apostle witnesses without a moment's hesitation.

"Here the question again arises: what is true freedom, and who can give it, and - especially - return it to the person who has lost it through sin? True freedom is the active capacity of the man who has not been enslaved to sin and who is not weighed down by a condemning conscience, to choose the best in the light of the truth of God and to realize it with the help of the power of God's grace.
"Only He Who gave this freedom to sinless man at his creation can give it back to the slave of sin. The Creator of freedom Himself declared this: 'If the Son will set you free, then you will truly be free' (John 8.36). 'If you remain in My words, you will truly be My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free' (John 31.32). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having suffered and died for us in the nature He received from us, by His 'Blood has cleansed our conscience from dead works' (Hebrews 9.14), and, having torn apart the bonds of death by His resurrection, has torn apart also the bonds of sin and death that bind us, and, after His ascension to heaven, has sent down the Spirit of truth, giving us through faith the light of His truth to see what is best, and His grace-filled power to do it.

"This is freedom, which is restrained neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by hell, which has as its limit the will of God, and this not to its own diminution, because it also strives to fulfill the will of God, which has no need to shake the lawful decrees of men because it is able to see in these the truth that 'the Kingdom is the Lord's and He Himself is sovereign of the nations' (Psalm 21.28), which in an unconstrained way venerates lawful human authority and its commands that are not contrary to God, insofar as it radiantly sees the truth that 'there is no power that is not of God, the powers that be are ordained of God' (Romans 13.1). And so this is freedom, which is in complete accord with obedience to the law and lawful authority, because it itself wishes for that which obedience demands..."507

However, as Nicols writes, the holy metropolitan “became disenchanted with Russia’s growing regimentation under Tsar Nicholas I and his officials. For Filaret, this was a period of ‘crisis’, and his response to it shows him to be a follower of the Orthodox ascetical and contemplative approach to the tasks of personal and social reconstruction in the Christian life. This approach decisively defined his outlook as a churchman, for it suggested to him that beyond the decisions of Synods, the education of seminaries and academies, the unity found in political and ecclesiastical formulations, the only adequate means for combating a new irreligious and secular age could be found in the healing power of the Holy Spirit most effectively mediated through those perfected by asceticism, prayer, and silence. Just as in the arduous age of St Anthony the Great in the Egyptian desert, or the dangerous one of St. Sergius of Radonezh, sufficient power for healing, renewal, and salvation could only be acquired by those cloistered in the ‘wilderness’ of Russia’s Northern Thebaid. The divisions of the raskol and the Unia, the theological differences between Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants, the inadequate knowledge of Scripture and Christian teaching by ordinary Russians could not be surmounted by formal decrees of secret committees or specially trained missionaries and dogmatists working in the Nicholaevan spirit of military discipline and regimentation. Christianity required an inner freedom and vitality that was immediately suspected as a subversive current pulling against the official tide. ‘In such circumstances,’ Filaret warned, ‘no amount of caution will suffice, but nonetheless assiduous caution is necessary.’ Filaret’s criticisms and actions in the 1840s brought him into official disfavor, and his private papers at one point were secretly examined for damaging and incriminating evidence against him. He was forced to leave St Petersburg and the Holy Synod.

507 Metropolitan Philaret, “Slovo v den’ Blagochestivejshego Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia Pavlovich” (Sermon on the day of his Most Pious Majesty Emperor Nicholas Pavlovich).
under a dark cloud. He did not return again until after the emperor’s death in 1855...”

Metropolitan Philaret’s courage in relation to the strictest and most powerful of the Tsars is illustrated by the following incident, which he related to his Starets, Fr. Anthony. “In Moscow,” as Kontzevich relates the story, “the newly erected Triumphal Gate was to be dedicated by the Metropolitan, for which occasion Emperor Nicholas I himself was to come. Since there were statues of pagan gods on it, Metropolitan Philaret refused to consecrate it. The Tsar was greatly angered, and society disapproved of his action. Although he had obeyed his pastoral conscience and Fr. Anthony, he was not at peace over this and prayed fervently all night. ‘I fell asleep,’ he said, ‘and it was already close to five when I heard a noise at the door. I awoke and sat up. The door, which I usually lock, opened quietly and in walked St. Sergy, a thin, gray-haired old man of medium height, in his monk’s habit and without epitrachelion. Bending over the bed, he said to me: “Do not be upset, all will pass”... And he disappeared.’ St. Sergy of Radonezh, under whose protection the Metropolitan lived all his life, had personally come from another world to console the sorrowing heart of his servant.”

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On returning to favour under Tsar Alexander II, Philaret was immediately entrusted again with the most onerous duties. Thus the composition of the manifesto proclaiming the most important act of Alexander’s reign, the Emancipation of the Serfs, on February 19, 1861, was entrusted to him. This extraordinary act – probably the largest-scale act of political liberation in world history, and accomplished without any of the bloodshed caused in the contemporary American Emancipation - was in general well received. Thus St. Ignaty Brianchaninov saw it as "a most happy initiative, a majestic order amazing Europe". The radicals, on the other hand, said that the reform provided "inadequate freedom". However, the real problem was not so much "inadequate freedom" as the fact that emancipation introduced "the wrong kind of freedom". The very composer of the manifesto, Metropolitan Philaret, while recognizing the nobility of the act, had doubts about emancipation. True freedom, according to the Metropolitan, "is Christian freedom - internal, not external freedom, - moral and spiritual, not carnal, - always doing good and never rebellious, which can live in a hut just as comfortably as in an aristocrat's or tsar's house, - which a subject can enjoy as much as the master without ceasing to be a subject, - which is unshakeable in bonds and prison, as we can see in the Christian martyrs". This freedom was not lost under serfdom. Rather, it was emancipation that threatened this true Christian freedom by introducing the demand for another, non-Christian kind.

In view of the important role played by Metropolitan Philaret in the emancipation manifesto, it is not surprising that his advice should have been solicited in other reforms, too, including, of course, Church reform. And yet, as Gregory Frazee writes, “from the very onset of the Great Reforms, Philaret expressed deep reservations about ambitious plans for a radical reconstruction of Russian state and society. In a

sermon delivered at Chudovo Monastery in 1856 (and ostensibly directed at more radical perspectives, but implicitly applicable to those with excessive ambitions for reform), Philaret upbraided those who ‘work on the creation and establishment of better principles (in their opinion) for the formation and transformation of human cities. For more than half a century, the most educated part of mankind, in places and times, see their transformation efforts in action, but as yet, never and nowhere, have they created a “calm and tranquil life”. They know how to disturb the ancient buildings of states, but not how to create something solid. According to their blueprints, new governments are suddenly built – and just as quickly collapse. They feel burdened by the paternal, reasonable authority of the tsar; they introduce the blind and harsh authority of the popular crowd and endless fights among those seeking power. They seduce people by assuring that they will lead them to freedom, but in reality they lead them away from lawful liberty to wilfulness, and then subject them to oppression.’

“Philaret was still more candid in his private correspondence. The same year, 1856, after receiving a far-reaching proposal to restore the Church’s prerogatives, Philaret warned that ‘it is easy to discern what should be improved, but not so easy to show the means to attain that improvement.’ His experience over the next few years only intensified his abiding scepticism. In February 1862, he wrote a close confidante that ‘now is not the time to seek new inventions for Church authority. May God help us to preserve that which has not been plundered or destroyed’.”

Appeals were even made, writes Fr. Alexis Nikolin, “for the summoning of a Local Council of the Russian Church. However, conditions for that had not yet ripened. The Russian Church, in the opinion of the holy hierarch Philaret (Drozdov), was not yet ready for it at that time. His words are well-known: ‘The misfortune of our time is that the quantity of sins and carelessnesses that have piled up in the course of more than one century almost exceed the strength and means of correction.’ The holy hierarch Philaret considered that a change in the situation could take place as a result of a Church initiative, but not from State supervision…”

Why should Philaret, the churchman par excellence, turn down the opportunity to increase the Church’s independence in relation to the State? Partly because “the Great Reforms… entailed a relaxation of the oppressive censorship of the Nikolaevan era, primarily to stimulate public involvement in the reform process and to complement and correct the activities of officialdom. But glasnost’ – as it was then termed – also entailed an unprecedented discussion of the Church and its problems. Philaret, understandably, found this critical comment in the press deeply disturbing, partly because it revealed the transparent animus of the educated and privileged toward the Church, but also because the government – ostensibly duty bound to defend the Church – allowed such publications to circulate. Even a conservative newspaper like Moskovskie Vedomosti elicited sharp complaints from Philaret, but far worse was to appear in the moderate and liberal press. The flow of antireligious publications made Philaret increasingly suspicious: ‘Is there not a conspiracy striving

512 Nikolin, Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo (Church and State), Moscow, 1997, p. 124.
to bring everything honourable into contempt and to undermine the convictions of faith and morality so that it will be easier to turn everything into democratic chaos?”

Philaret’s archconservatism was especially manifested in his reaction to the proposals for Church reform put forward by the minister of the interior, P.A. Valuev. “In the summer of 1861,… Valuev wrote the emperor that he would like to prepare a memorandum on the matter, but because this sphere lay outside his jurisdiction, first asked permission to undertake the task. The issue had long been of concern to Valuev; while still a provincial governor, he had criticized the Church for its weaknesses and its tendency to resort to state coercion to shield believers from other confessions. Permission granted, Valuev then prepared a comprehensive memorandum that essentially became the blueprint for ecclesiastical reform in the 1860s.

“Entitled ‘On the Present Condition of the Orthodox Church and Orthodox Clergy’, his report argued that earlier proposals for Church reform in the Western provinces were doomed to failure, for the fundamental problems were structural, not regional. In Valuev’s opinion, the Orthodox Church had fallen into such an abject condition that it could not combat apostasy without relying on the coercive apparatus of the state – a practice that was ineffective for the Church and troublesome for the state officials charged with prosecuting religious dissenters. Like many in the government, Valuev wanted the Church to provide support for the state, but now found the relationship one-sided: although the Church relies upon state power, ‘the government cannot enjoy reciprocal assistance from ecclesiastical authorities, because their influence is too insignificant.’ In Valuev’s opinion, not only the Church as an institution, but its servitors (above all, the rank-and-file parish clergy) were in dire straits: ‘One cannot help feeling profound sorrow when seeing the conditions which the Orthodox clergy, the closest representatives and the pastors of the Church, occupy among other classes of the population. Everywhere one notices a lack of feeling of respect and trust toward [the clergy], and a feeling of profound, bitter denigration is apparent among them.’ Much of the problem, he contended, derived from the deep animus between the black and white clergy. In Valuev’s view, all this resulted from the social isolation of the bishops: ‘The diocesan bishops for the most part lead the life of involuntary recluses, avoiding the secular world around them, neither understanding nor knowing its needs.’ Valuev further asserted that the bishops ‘are primarily concerned not with the flock entrusted to them, but with the lower pastors subordinated to them,’ and that they reign over the latter ‘like the most brutal despots’. He stressed that this despotism is all the more onerous, since it unleashes ‘the avarice of the diocesan chancelleries and consistories’, who subject the parish clergy to merciless abuse: ‘The priests are obliged to pay them tribute. If the tribute is deemed insufficient, they are punished by endless, ruinous relocations from one parish to another. Not a single priest is secure against such relations by the most zealous performance of his duties, the most impeccable life.’ While not denying that the bishops were ‘in general worthy of every respect in terms of their personal qualities,’ Valuev complained that the prelates often fell under the sway of their chancelleries. The result is ‘a certain hardening of feelings’ and inaccessibility compounded by ‘advanced age and illness’, which left them unfit for

513 Frazee, op. cit., pp. 157-158.
‘intensified independent work’. These problems, warned Valuev, caused parish clergy not only to despise their superiors but to exhibit an attraction to radical, even Protestant ideas: ‘The white clergy hates the black clergy, and with the assistance of this hatred there is already beginning to spread not only democratic, but even socialist strivings, but also a certain inclination toward Protestantism, which with time could lead to a convulsion within the bosom of the Church. The white clergy is poor, helpless, and lacking with respect to its own means of existence and the fate of their families. For the most part it stands at a low level of education and lives under conditions that efface the traces of that inadequate education which they acquired in the ecclesiastical seminaries and academies; it does not constitute and organized soslovie (estate) in the state, but a caste of Levites; it sees no hope for an improvement in its material existence, because it understands that, given its very large numbers, it cannot count on significant generosity on the part of the government. That explains why part of the parish priests live at the expense of the schism, which they pander to, and the other resorts to extortion from parishioners, or languishes in need that often extinguishes its mental and moral powers.

“Not surprisingly, he concluded, the Church had proven incapable of combating the steady inroads by the schism, sects, and other confessions.

“To address these problems, Valuev proposed systematic, fundamental reform. One was to dismantle the hereditary clerical estate (dukhovnoe soslovie), at a minimum by permitting the clergy’s sons – who normally remained within the hereditary clerical estate – to choose their own career path, but perhaps by excluding them from inclusion in the estate altogether. Valuev also urged a ‘radical transformation’ of the seminary curriculum in order to provide an education that would facilitate mobility into secular careers. No less important was the problem of material support for the clergy: a combination of gratuities (a source of humiliation and endless conflict) and agriculture (a distraction from the clergy’s spiritual duties). Since the state was in position to provide salaries, Valuev could only suggest a traditional remedy (set reasonable fees to preclude haggling over rites), surplus state land (where available), and the merger of parishes (to form larger, more economically viable units). More attractive to the clergy, no doubt, was Valuev’s proposal ‘to give the parish clergy an honorable, active, and independent participation in public education’, a measure that would simultaneously provide them with additional income and help draw them ‘closer to the other educated classes’. No less important, in Valuev’s view, was the need to involve the bishops in worldly matters: ‘This improvement [in relations between prelates and priests], in turn, is hardly possible so long as the prelates of our church will remain alien to all everyday relations, all the civil needs of their flock. It is desirable to draw them [the bishops] closer to the latter; for this rapprochement, it is almost necessary to give them the opportunity, even if in some cases, to participate in the civil affairs of their fatherland, to show them the path along which they can acquire the right to this participation. The summoning of several members of the Holy Synod to the State Council, with the right to participate in discussions of all the matters brought before it (except criminal cases), would open this opportunity and indicate this path to the upper members of our clergy.’
“Fully aware of the sensitive nature of these proposals, Valuev proposed that he first hold private discussions with the venerable metropolitan of Moscow, Philaret, and seek to gain his approval – a critical step in securing the Church’s approval and cooperation... His principal concern was to secure Philaret’s support for a joint Church-state committee, an intrusion into the ecclesiastical domain likely to raise the hackles of this determined tserkovnik. In part, Valuev hoped that the emperor’s special solicitude toward Philaret would carry the day; he later reported to Alexander that ‘the attention and trust shown by Your Majesty to the opinion of His Grace Philaret was obviously pleasant and flattering for him.’

“Valuev did in fact win Philaret’s general assent, but met with resistance on several issues. First, although Valuev tactfully avoided ‘using the phrases “closed estate” (zamknutoe soslovie) and “break up the estate” (razomknut’ soslovie), Philaret understood perfectly what the minister had in mind. He denied that the clergy constituted a caste and cited his own vicar – born into the nobility – to demonstrate the point. Second, Philaret showed little enthusiasm for allotting the clergy additional land, but appeared to withdraw his objection in view of the state’s inability to provide salaries. Third, Philaret categorically opposed permitting a joint Church-state committee to reform ecclesiastical schools, a matter falling exclusively within the Church’s competence. Finally, Philaret rejected the idea of including Synod members in the State Council. He feared that the latter might treat the prelates with condescension and attempt to raise issues about Church finances (an allusion to the issue of the Church budget, an issue still unresolved at this point). In cases where the State Council needed the Synod’s view, declared Philaret, it could simply invite them to special sessions – as had been done in the past...

“Although the government did not further consult Philaret, it did pare back the original vision. Thus Valuev jettisoned his scheme for Synodal membership in the State Council, but still tried to give the new committee a broad range of authority, even over spheres that Philaret had explicitly precluded. Thus, a Valuev draft proposal of January 1862 still gave the committee the power to deal not only with the ‘clerical question’, but also with the reform of ecclesiastical schools. More important still, Valuev wanted the committee determine ‘the degree and means for the participation of parishioners in the economic governance of the affairs of the parish church’. That was a highly sensitive issue, given the laity’s strong aversion to the diversion of local resources to finance general Church needs. In the teeth of clerical opposition, however, Valuev eventually trimmed back the original charge to the matters condoned by Metropolitan Philaret.

“Thus, while Philaret acceded to the inclusion of several ranking state officials in the mixed commission..., he had greatly reduced the broad mandate that Valuev originally sought. He defended the Church’s authority (in the issue of ecclesiastical schools) and defeated the scheme to include Synodal members in the State Council. While Philaret could hardly deny the need for reform, he was adamant about preserving the Church’s institutional integrity and privileges.”

514 Frazee, op. cit., pp. 172-178.
In the last years of Philaret’s life, his influence waned and the secular principles he so feared began increasingly to penetrate Church life.\textsuperscript{515} Thus “from 1865,” writes Nikolin, “the over-procurator of the Holy Synod became Count Demetrius A. Tolstoy, who combined this post with the post of minister of popular enlightenment, as if renewing the experiment of the ‘double ministry’ of Prince Golitsyn. However, in contrast to the supra-confessional mysticism of the latter, Count Tolstoy demonstrated an idiosyncratic supra-confessional indifferentism. A man of conservative views and well-versed in matters of common and internal politics, Count Tolstoy showed himself to be a radical and an innovator in ecclesiastical matters, but an innovator who was far from an understanding of Church life. He worked out a series of liberal reforms in various spheres of the ecclesiastical order. Thus, immediately after the publication of the \textit{Juridical Statutes}, the over-procurator raised the question of the suitability of reforming the Church courts on the same principles on which the civil courts had been reformed. This and other projects of Count Tolstoy suggested the reconstruction of Church life in accordance with the rules of secular consciousness, and not on the basis of the canonical self-consciousness of the Church.”\textsuperscript{516}

Again, “despite earlier promises of including the parish clergy into the new system of elementary public education, the central government ultimately abdicated a primary role and left the responsibility with the community, zemstvo, or Ministry of Education – not the Church. As Philaret acidly complained to a close confidante: ‘But then came the new minister of education. And they say that it is already decided that rural schools will be secular, and that millions of rubles have been allotted for them. A single act of grace was given to us: the priests are not forbidden to keep their schools, without any assistance for them.’ As a result, the parish schools that clergy had so fervently opened in the 1850s came upon hard times, their number sharply dropping, until the government renewed its support – and financing – in the 1880s…”\textsuperscript{517}

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While in his life as a hierarch, Metropolitan Philaret encountered many obstacles and sorrows, in two other spheres he went from strength to strength: in his preaching and theological work, and in his work as a pastor.

Already as a young man, Philaret had been noted for his superb preaching. Metropolitan Platon of Moscow said of him: “I give sermons like a man, but he speaks like an angel.” He was the automatic choice to preach on all great occasions, and he was especially noted for his profound teaching on the Cross of Christ during Passion Week, and on the intertwining of Love and Justice in the Economy of salvation.

\textsuperscript{515} He did achieve one major victory, however. His project of translating the Bible into Russian, which had been successfully resisted under Alexander I, was finally approved under Alexander II, even if it was not realized in Philaret’s lifetime. 
\textsuperscript{516} Nikolin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 124. 
\textsuperscript{517} Frazee, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 184-185.
However, after his death Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) accused the holy Philaret of “scholasticism” in precisely this sphere, arguing that his teaching on the Cross and the role of Justice in the Divine Economy was harsh and Roman Catholic. Thus in the mystery of the Cross, says Metropolitan Philaret, is expressed “the crucifying love of the Father, the crucified love of the Son, and the love of the Holy Spirit triumphant in the power of the Cross. For God so loved the world...” On which Metropolitan Anthony commented dismissively: “This is a most unpersuasive sophism, a mere juggling of words. What sort of love is it that crucifies? Who needs it?”

The whole world needed it. And Russia needed the preaching of Metropolitan Philaret, who expounded the mystery of redemption with unequalled grace, but in very traditional language, never departing from the language and teaching of the New Testament. But let us judge for ourselves whether the holy metropolitan’s teaching on this theme was really “scholastic” by one more quotation from his work.

“Draw closer,” he says, “and examine the threatening face of God’s justice, and you will exactly discern in it the meek gaze of God’s love. Man by his sin has fenced off from himself the everlasting source of God’s love: and this love is armed with righteousness and judgement – for what? – to destroy this stronghold of division. But since the insignificant essence of the sinner would be irreparably crushed under the blows of purifying Justice, the inaccessible Lover of souls sends His consubstantial Love, that is, His Only-begotten Son, so that He Who ‘upholds all things by the word of His power’ (Hebrews 1.3), might also bear the heaviness of our sins, and the heaviness of the justice advancing towards us, in the flesh of ours that He took upon Himself: and, having Alone extinguished the arrows of wrath, sharpened against the whole of humanity, might reveal in his wounds on the Cross the unblocked springs of mercy and love which was to the whole land that had once been cursed - blessings, life and beatitude. Thus did God love the world.

“But if the Heavenly Father out of love for the world gives up His Only-begotten Son; then equally the Son out of love for man gives Himself up; and as love crucifies, so is love crucified. For although ‘the Son can do nothing of Himself’, neither can he do anything in spite of Himself. He ‘does not seek His own will’ (John 5.19 and 31), but for that reason is the eternal heir and possessor of the will of His Father. ‘He abides in His love’, but in it He Himself receives into His love all that is loved by the Father, as he says: ‘As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you’ (John 15.9). And in this way the love of the Heavenly Father is extended to the world through the Son: the love of the Only-begotten Son of God at the same time ascends to the Heavenly Father and descends to the world. Here let him who has eyes see the most profound foundation and primordial inner constitution of the Cross, out of the love of the Son of God for His All-holy Father and love for sinful humanity, the two loves intersecting with, and holding on to, each other, apparently dividing up what was one, but in fact uniting the divided into one. Love for God is zealous for God – love for man is merciful to man. Love for God demands that the law of God’s righteousness should be observed – love for man does not abandon the transgressor of the law to perish in his unrighteousness. Love for God strives to strike the enemy of God – love for man makes the Divinity man, so as by means of love for God

mankind might be deified, and while love for God ‘lifts the Son of man from the earth’ (John 12.32 and 34), love for man opens the embraces of the Son of God for the earthborn, these opposing strivings of love intersect, dissolve into each other, balance each other and make of themselves that wonderful heart of the Cross, on which forgiving ‘mercy’ and judging ‘truth meet together’, God’s ‘righteousness’ and man’s ‘peace kiss each other’, through which heavenly ‘truth is sprung up out of the earth, and righteousness’ no longer with a threatening eye ‘hath looked down from heaven. Yea, for the Lord will give goodness, and our land shall yield her fruit’ (Psalm 84.11-13).”

As for the metropolitan’s pastoral work, “still during his lifetime many people asked his prayers and blessing for the sick, and there were cases of healing from his prayers. One eight-year-old paralyzed girl began at once to walk as soon as her mother carried her to receive a blessing from the Metropolitan. A girl who had been dumb for thirteen years began to talk when Metropolitan Philaret asked her, ‘What is your name?’ and forced her on the spot to read the Lord’s Prayer. One merchant had gangrene on his arm and the doctors decided to amputate it, but the sick man through his parish priest asked with faith for the prayers of Metropolitan Philaret, and after this he saw a dream in which the Metropolitan blessed him; when he awoke he felt better and when the doctors came for the operation they found, to their astonishment, that the arm was normal and no surgery was necessary... And there have been many more cases of his intercession...”

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The metropolitan’s death was as Grace-filled as his life had been. Two months before, “his long-dead father appeared to him and said, ‘Beware the 19th’, and he began to prepare for his death. On November 19 he served the Divine Liturgy with exceptional feeling and tears. At two in the afternoon he was found dead in his cell. His righteous death, as also his life, was concealed from men.

“Literally the whole of Moscow participated in the burial of the great hierarch, hundreds of thousands of people accompanying him to his final resting place in the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergy.”

Although the reputation of Metropolitan Philaret has continued to grow, and he is considered a saint by very many, there are still some parts of the Russian Church, which, understandably not wishing in any way to question the judgement or undermine the reputation of his main critic, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), have hesitated to glorify him. That is a pity. But we must join ourselves to the hope expressed by E. Sumarokov, that “if a Christian government will be restored to Russia, one may hope that Metropolitan Philaret will be canonized and added to the ranks of the Fathers of the Church.”

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520 Kontzevich, op. cit., p. 196.
521 Kontzevich, op. cit., p. 196.
522 Sumarokov, Lectures on the History of the Russian Church, Harbin, 1945, volume 2.
November 19 / December 2, 2017.
St. Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow.
For many Western converts to the Orthodox Faith, it is a cause of great joy, comfort, and a strengthening of their faith, to discover that their new-found Orthodoxy is not, historically speaking, the exclusive possession of East European and Middle Eastern peoples – Greeks, Russians, Serbs, Bulgars, Romanians and Arabs – but also of their own Western ancestors – English, Irish, French, Spanish, Italians and Germans – who lived during the first millennium of Christianity before the Western Church fell away from Holy Orthodoxy in 1054. The question, therefore, of a Menologion of the Western saints is of great interest and importance to them – as it should be to all Orthodox Christians, of whatever nationality they may be, who love to worship God Who is wondrous in His saints, and in Whom is neither Greek nor Jew, neither Easterner nor Westerner. So the further question naturally arises: what should be the criteria upon which to base our estimate of who should be included in this Menologion?

The simple answer to this would seem to be: all those men and women of Western origin who died before 1054 and who were officially venerated as saints before that date, are to be accepted as such by the Orthodox Church today. However, this immediately raises a serious problem. It is well-known that heretical tendencies were present in the West long before the schism of 1054. For example, the Filioque – that clause which amends the Creed of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils to proclaim that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son – spread to many parts of the West well before 1054, becoming part of the Roman Church’s official Creed in 1009. How is it possible to accept as a saint someone whose confession contained a heretical interpolation which has been anathematized by the Orthodox Church?

To give our inquiry more specificity we shall consider the case of St. Edward the Martyr, King of England, who was killed at Corfe Castle, Dorset in 979. His body was found incorrupt, and many miracles were wrought at his tomb. This led to his canonization by a Council of the All-English Church in 1008. It has been claimed that the Filioque was recited in English churches during his reign. So can he be accepted as a true saint?

Now let us go back to the first appearance of the Filioque in the West – in mid-seventh century Rome. (It used to be thought that it was first introduced at the Council of Toledo in Spain in 589, but this is now thought to have been a later, papist forgery.) In his letter to a priest of Cyprus called Marinus, St. Maximus the Confessor wrote that “a synodical letter of the present Pope” – that is, of Pope St. Martin (649-655) – had been challenged by the Church of Constantinople because it said that “the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son”. St. Maximus, while recognizing that the Filioque was false and should be removed, nevertheless claimed that the Romans “were far from making the Son the Cause of the Spirit [the essence of the heresy], for they recognize the Father as the one Cause of the Spirit: the former by generation, the latter by procession”. Maximus went on to say that the Romans’ use of the Filioque
was an attempt “to express the Spirit’s going forth through the Son” and the indivisible unity of their Substance.”

Two important principles can be derived from St. Maximus’ remarks. First, the Orthodox Church has already accepted a saint who expressed this heresy in synodal form. And secondly, the heresy could be, and probably was, expressed without heretical intent. This leaves open the possibility that the West’s use of the Filioque before the schism of 1054 was not – or, at any rate, not always – heretical in intent. This would explain why the Orthodox Church waited so long after its first appearance, and even after it had been officially anathematized at the Great Council of Constantinople in 879-80, before breaking communion with the West.

Fr. Athanase Fradeaud-Guillemot considers the cases of Saints Isidore, Bishop of Seville, and Anschar, Bishop of Hamburg, both of whom accepted the Filioque (unless this evidence, too, is a papist forgery). And he argues that, because of this blemish on their faith, they are not accepted as saints by the Orthodox Church today. “In doing this,” however, “we do not dare to prejudge the Judgement of God. So it is very possible that St. Anschar or St. Isidore of Seville are glorified by God for their numerous exploits. But, if we do not include them in the menology (santoral), this is because we can neither adopt them as examples to be imitated, nor propose them in this sense to the Christian people for fear that their confession of faith may contain germs of non-Orthodoxy. The Church does this, not from a human strictness of view, but from a legitimate maternal anxiety which does everything that the faith of the Orthodox Christian people may not be tarnished.”

As a matter of fact, St. John Maximovich, Archbishop of Western Europe in the 1950s, added St. Anschar to the Menology of the Russian Church; so for this great hierarch in any case, no danger, but only good, could come from commemorating these supposedly dubious saints of the West. Nor is this the only example of saints venerated by the Orthodox Church who have been the subject of doubt concerning their doctrinal Orthodoxy. For example, St. Gregory of Nyssa was accused of teaching Origen’s doctrine of apocatastasis. Again, the famous St. Augustine of Hippo has been suspected of errors in relation to predestination, and of arguing in favour of the Filioque. And yet he was proclaimed a saint at the Fifth Ecumenical Council.

With regard to these holy Fathers, St. Photius the Great said: “If [these] Fathers had spoken in opposition when the debated question was brought before them and fought it contentiously and had maintained their opinion and had persevered in this false teaching, and when convicted of it had held to their doctrine until death, then they would necessarily be rejected together with the error of their mind. But if they spoke badly, or, for some reason not known to us, deviated from the right path, but no question was put to them nor did anyone challenge them to learn the truth, we admit them to the list of Fathers, as if they had not said it - because of their righteousness of life and distinguished virtue and faith; faultless in other respects. We

do not, however, follow their teaching in which they stray from the path of truth... We, though, who know that some of our holy Fathers and teachers strayed from the faith of true dogmas, do not take as doctrine those areas in which they strayed, but we embrace the men. So also in the case of any who are charged with teaching that the Spirit proceeds from the Son, we do not admit what is opposed to the word of the Lord, but we do not cast them from the rank of the Fathers."

This moderate and tolerant criterion is the more striking in that it was advocated by the greatest champion of Orthodoxy against the Filioque. For nobody could accuse St. Photius of being in the slightest indifferent to the heresy: it was he who excommunicated Pope Nicholas I in 867 probably for that reason, and who, in 879, convened the Great Council of Constantinople which, as we have seen, explicitly anathematized it (and which, in its first canon, decreed that the Pope did not have jurisdiction over the Eastern Churches). The legates of Pope John VIII signed the acts of this Council, thereby ending the schism between Rome and Constantinople.526

A little later, Pope John wrote to St. Photius reaffirming his condemnation of the Filioque, but also asking for time and patience while he attempted to extirpate it from his vast patriarchate.527 For the Roman Patriarchate in the early Middle Ages encompassed a very large area in which communications were slow and difficult, and where the general level of education was low. This must be taken into account when considering whether an outlying province, such as England, was in heresy or not, and when the heresy could be said to have taken such firm root in a province or the patriarchate as a whole that it must be considered to have fallen finally away from Orthodoxy.

St. Photius remained in communion with Pope John for the rest of his life, calling him “my John”. But in 903 the Ecumenical Patriarch St. Nicholas the Mystic was forced to break communion with Pope Christopher (903-904) because the latter introduced the Filioque into the Creed. However, communion seems to have been restored between succeeding Popes and Patriarchs until the year 1009.

During the whole of that period (and, indeed, until the end of the eleventh century, when Anselm became archbishop of Canterbury), there is no evidence that the issue of the Filioque was even so much as discussed in England. (The only Englishman who even discussed the matter before Anselm, to the present writer’s knowledge, was the famous Alcuin of York, who lived in France in about 800 and expressed himself strongly against the heresy in a letter to the brothers of Lyons: "Do not try to insert novelties in the Symbol of the Catholic Faith, and in the church services do not decide

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527 “I think your wise Holiness knows how difficult it is to change immediately a custom which has been entrenched for so many years. Therefore we believe the best policy is not to force anyone to abandon that addition to the Creed. But rather we must act with wisdom and moderation, urging them little by little to give up that blasphemy. Therefore, those who claim that we share this opinion are not correct. Those, however, who claim that there are those among us who dare to recite the Creed in this way are correct. Your Holiness must not be scandalized because of this nor withdraw from the sound part of the body of our Church. Rather, you should aid us energetically with gentleness and wisdom in attempting to convert those who have departed from the truth…” (P.G. 102, 813; in Haugh, op. cit., pp. 129-130, 137).
to become fond of traditions unknown in ancient times.”) Most confessions of faith of newly elected English bishops neither affirmed nor denied the Filioque, stating simply: “I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, [the Son] being born and having suffered for the salvation of the human race.” Shortly, after the middle of the ninth century, however, probably under the influence of Pope Nicholas I, the Filioque began to appear – as, for example, in the professions of the Bishops of London, Hereford and Dunwich to Archbishop Ceolnoth of Canterbury. But in the same period, and in the same metropolitan province, the professions of the Bishops of Winchester (including the famous St. Swithun) did not contain the innovation.528

In 1009, Pope Sergius IV introduced the Filioque into the Roman Creed (it was also used at the coronation of Emperor Henry I in Rome in 1014); whereupon the Ecumenical Patriarch removed his name from the diptychs of the Great Church of Constantinople. But publicly communion still continued between Latins and Greeks; a Greek archbishop called Constantine retired to the English monastery of Malmesbury529; there were Latin churches in Constantinople and a Latin monastery on Mount Athos; and Western pilgrims poured in every-increasing numbers to the Holy Places of the East, where they were received as Orthodox.530

Even after Rome and Constantinople anathematized each other in 1054, communion continued in some places, and the Byzantine emperor asked the blessing of the abbot of Monte Cassino, while Russian Great-Princes continued to take Western princesses as brides (although Metropolitan John of Kiev expressed himself against this in 1077).

Indeed, many have doubted that the schism of 1054 was the real cut-off point. Thus a Byzantine council of 1089 acted as if the schism had not taken place.531 Again, Alexander Dvorkin writes that “the popular consciousness of that time in no way accepted the schism as final: nobody pronounced a ban on mutual communion, and concelebrations of priests and hierarchs of the two halves of Christianity continued even after 1054. The name of the pope of Rome was commemorated in the diptychs of other Eastern Churches (at any rate, sometimes). In our [Russian] lists of saints there were western saints who died after 1054.”532

Nevertheless, the balance of evidence remains in favour of the traditional dating.533 For after 1054, there is a sharp and noticeable change in the papacy’s policies and attitudes to dissidents in Church and State. The bloody destruction of

Orthodox England in 1066-70 completely transformed the character of English Christianity and statehood. It was followed by the less violent subjection of Churches throughout Western Europe. Meanwhile, the “Gregorian Reform” introduced various heretical innovations: compulsory celibacy for the clergy, the universal jurisdiction and infallibility of the papacy; the subjection of all kings to papal rule. Then came the papal blessing of the Norman invasion of Greece in the 1080s and the first of the crusades – which did so much damage to Eastern Orthodox Christendom - in 1095. In 1098 the Pope presided over the pseudo-council of Bari, at which the Greeks of southern Italy were persuaded to accept the Filioque...

Returning now to the specific case of St. Edward the Martyr, it should be clear that St. Edward, who lived long before the schism of 1054, and even before the removal of the Roman papacy from the diptychs in 1009, must be considered a saint of the Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, in the later 1970s Archbishop Mark (Arndt) of Great Britain contested this fact when the possibility arose of St. Edward’s relics being give to the Russian Church. His main argument rested on the argument – contested, as we have seen, in the present article - that England officially accepted the Filioque in his reign.

However, a Synodical decision of the Russian Church Abroad declared in favour of St. Edward, and the doubting hierarch "agreed with the former decision after having been acquainted with the historical information compiled by His Grace, Bishop Gregory, who cited a list of names of Western saints of the same period who have long been included in our list of saints (among whom are St. Ludmilla, St. Wenceslaus of Czechia, and others)."

In conclusion, if we accept the public rupture of communion with the Orthodox Church to be the criterion of a Church’s falling away from grace, then any Westerner saint who died before 1054 should be accepted into the Orthodox calendar. For those who died before that date, and were officially venerated as saints before that date, and who did not fight for the Filioque or any other heresy in conscious opposition to the champions of the truth, may without damage to Orthodoxy be accepted as holy intercessors for the Church Militant today. Indeed, it would be damaging to Orthodoxy if we, whether explicitly or implicitly, rejected those whom God has glorified with signs, whom our Orthodox ancestors glorified with public veneration, and who reposed in peace in the bosom of our common mother, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

41. DOSTOYEVSKY ON PAPISM AND SOCIALISM

The simultaneous defeat in 1870-71 of both the most reactionary and the most revolutionary regimes in Europe (the Papacy and the Paris Commune) raised the question: might there be a connection between these seeming opposites? Following the suggestion of some French socialist thinkers, Dostoyevsky saw a link between the two antichristian systems. "Present-day French Socialism," he wrote, "is nothing but the truest and most direct continuation of the Catholic idea, its fullest, most final consequence which has been evolved through centuries. French Socialism is nothing else than the compulsory union of mankind - an idea which dates back to ancient Rome and which was fully expressed in Catholicism."

Papism, according to Dostoyevsky, was the beginning of western atheism. As Prince Myshkin says in *The Idiot* (1868): "Roman Catholicism believes that the Church cannot exist on earth without universal temporal power, and cries: *Non possumus!* In my opinion, Roman Catholicism isn't even a religion, but most decidedly a continuation of the Holy Roman Empire, and everything in it is subordinated to that idea, beginning with faith. The Pope seized the earth, an earthly throne and took up the sword; and since then everything has gone on in the same way, except that they've added lies, fraud, deceit, fanaticism, superstition wickedness. They have trifled with the most sacred, truthful, innocent, ardent feelings of the people, have bartered it all for money, for base temporal power. And isn't this the teaching of Antichrist? Isn't it clear from Roman Catholicism itself! Atheism originated first of all with them: how could they believe in themselves? It gained ground because of abhorrence of them; it is the child of their lies and their spiritual impotence! Atheism! In our country it is only the upper classes who do not believe, as Mr. Radomsky so splendidly put it the other day, for they have lost their roots. But in Europe vast numbers of the common people are beginning to lose their faith - at first from darkness and lies, and now from fanaticism, hatred of the Church and Christianity!"

And since Socialism is "above all an atheistic question, the question of the modern integration of atheism", Papism is its parent, too: "Socialism, too, is the child of Catholicism and the intrinsic Catholic nature! It, too, like its brother atheism, was begotten of despair, in opposition to Catholicism as a moral force, in order to replace the lost moral power of religion, to quench the spiritual thirst of parched humanity, and save it not by Christ, but also by violence! This, too, is freedom by violence. This, too, is union through the sword and blood. 'Don't dare to believe in God! Don't dare to have property! Don't dare to have a personality of your own! Fraternité ou la mort! Two million heads!" So akin is Socialism to Papism that Papism "will tell the people that Christ also preached everything that the Socialists are preaching to them. Again it will pervert and sell them Christ as it has sold Him so many times in the past."

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Peter Verkhovensky in *The Devils* (1871) even envisages the possibility of the Pope becoming the leader of the Socialists: "Do you know, I was thinking of delivering the world up to the Pope. Let him go barefoot and show himself to the mob, saying, 'See what they have brought me to!' and they will all follow him, even the army. The Pope on top, we all round him, and below us - the Shigalev order. All we need is that the Internationale should come to an agreement with the Pope; this will come about. The old boy will agree at once. He can't do anything else. Mark my words."538

"The Western Church," wrote Dostoyevsky, "has distorted the image of Christ, having been transformed from a Church into a Roman state and incarnated it again in the form of the papacy. Yes, in the West there is in truth no longer Christianity and the Church, although there are still many Christians - yes, and they will never disappear. Catholicism is truly no longer Christianity, and is passing into idol-worship, while Protestantism with giant steps is passing into atheism and a slippery, shifting, inconstant (and not age-old) teaching on morality. The Empire accepted Christianity, and the Church - the Roman law and state. A small part of the Church departed into the desert and began to continue its former work: Christian communities appeared again, then monasteries. But then the remaining, huge part of the Church divided, as we know, into two halves. In the western half the state finally overcame the Church completely. The Church was annihilated and was reincarnated finally into a state. There appeared the papacy - a continuation of the ancient Roman Empire in a new incarnation."208

Dostoyevsky saw in Germany's victory over France at Sedan in 1871 an attempt to crush Socialism, and thereby Papism, and foresaw the time when the madness of Papist individualism would seek to unite itself with the madness of socialist collectivism: "By depriving France of her political existence, Prince Bismarck hopes to deliver a blow at socialism. Socialism, as a heritage of Catholicism, and France are most hateful to a genuine German. It is excusable that Germany's representatives believe that it is so easy to master socialism by merely destroying Catholicism - as its source and beginning.

"However, this is what is most probably going to happen should France fall politically: Catholicism will lose its sword, and for the first time will appeal to the people whom it has been despising for so many centuries, ingratiating itself with worldly kings and emperors. Now, however, it will appeal to the people, since there is nowhere else to go; specifically, it will appeal to the leaders of the most worldly and rebellious element of the people - the socialists. Catholicism will tell the people that Christ also preached everything the socialists are preaching to them. Once more it will pervert and sell them Christ as it has Him so many times in the past for earthly possessions, defending the rights of the Inquisition which, in the name of loving Christ, tortured men for freedom of conscience - in the name of Christ to Whom only that disciple was dear who came to Him of his free accord and not the one who had been bought or frightened.

"Catholicism sold Christ when it blessed the Jesuits and sanctioned the righteousness of 'every means for Christ's cause'. However, since time immemorial, it has converted Christ's cause into a mere concern for its earthly possessions and its future political domination over the whole world. When Catholic mankind turned away from the monstrous image in which, at length, Christ had been revealed to them, - after many protests, reformations, etc., at the beginning of this century - endeavours arose to organize life without God, without Christ. Devoid of the instinct of a bee or an ant, unmistakably and with utmost precision constructing their hive and ant-hill, men sought to create something on the order of an unmistakable anthill. They rejected the unique formula of mankind's salvation, derived from God and announced through revelation to man: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', and substituted for it practical inferences, such as 'Chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous' ('Each one for himself and God for all'), or scientific axioms, such as 'the struggle for existence'.

"Bereft of the instinct which guides animals and enables them to organize their life faultlessly, men haughtily sought to rely upon science, forgetting that for such a task as the creation of society, science is still, so to speak, in swaddles. Dreams ensued. The future tower of Babylon became the ideal but also the dread of humanity. But after these dreams there soon appeared other simple doctrines, intelligible to everybody, for instance: 'to rob the rich, to stain the world with blood, after which somehow everything will again be settled of its own accord'.

"Finally, even these teachers were outstripped: there appeared the doctrine of anarchy, after which - if it could be put into effect - there would again ensue a period of cannibalism, and people would be compelled to start all over again as they started some ten thousand years ago. Catholicism fully understands all this, and it will manage to seduce the leaders of the underground war. It will say to them: 'You have no centre, no order in the conduct of the work; you are a force scattered all over the world, and now, after the downfall of France [Dostoyevsky is referring to the fall of the Commune in 1871] - also an oppressed force. I shall be your rallying center, and I shall attract to you all those who still believe in me.

"One way or another, the alliance will be formed. Catholicism does not wish to die, whereas social revolution and the new social period in Europe are indubitable: two forces, unquestionably, will have to come to understanding, to unite. It stands to reason that slaughter, blood, plunder, even cannibalism would be advantageous to Catholicism. Precisely then it may hope to catch once more its fish in troubled waters, foreseeing the moment when, finally, mankind, exhausted by chaos and lawlessness, will fall into its arms. Then, once more, it will become in reality the sole and absolute 'earthly ruler and universal authority', sharing its power with no one. Thereby it will attain its ultimate goal."

Although not an exact prophecy, this accurately identified the general trend in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For there has been an increasing tendency for the papacy, if not to identify with the revolution (although its "liberation theologians" did precisely that in Central and South America in the 1980s), at any

539 Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, November, 1877, pp. 910-912.
rate to accept many of their premises and strive to work with them rather than against them. Thus the papacy has fitted easily into the modern liberal-socialist structure of the European Union, and Pope Francis I has recently met with Castro in Cuba and called for a single world government…

In *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881), Dostoyevsky underlined the link between Papism and Socialism by making the leading proponent of Socialism a Papist Inquisitor. After his disillusionment with Papism, Western man could not be satisfied with the atomic individualism of the societies that replaced it, but yearned for the brotherhood of all men in obedience to one Father that Papism provided, albeit in a perverted form. "For the chief concern of these miserable creatures," says the Inquisitor, "is not only to find something that I or someone else can worship, but to find something that all believe in and worship, and the absolutely essential thing is that they should do *all together*. It is this need for *universal* worship that is the chief torment of every man individually and of mankind as a whole from the beginning of time. For the sake of the universal worship they have put each other to the sword..."

Over forty years later, on the death of Lenin in 1924, the Social-Revolutionary leader Victor Chernov confirmed Dostoyevsky's analysis of the relationship between Papism and Socialism when he compared Lenin to the most famous of Inquisitors: "His love of the proletariat was the same despotic, exacting, and merciless love with which, centuries ago, Torquemada burned people for their salvation..."540

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There are several basic problems that any attempt to reconcile Holy Scripture with evolutionism comes up against:

(i) Evolutionism rests on the idea of chance - both mutation and natural selection, the engines of evolution, are said to take place by chance. However, the Holy Fathers from St. Basil the Great to St. Ignaty Brianchaninov all rejected this idea. “Theological evolutionists” try to combine the ideas of chance and Divine creation. But an event is either “caused” by chance or it is caused by God – it cannot be both! Even if “chance” is redefined in terms of probability and conditionality, as some evolutionists try to do, this does not make nature any the less a chance phenomenon. But if we accept that nature came into being by chance, we are denying that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. Creation and chance, however redefined, are incompatible categories.

(ii) Holy Scripture says that “God did not create death” (Wisdom 1.13), that He created all species as “very good” from the beginning and so did not need to keep changing them by means of evolution over billions of years. Death was not there in the beginning, and appeared only as the result of the sin of Adam: “Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin death” (Romans 5.12). So without sin, and without the possibility of the commission of sin by a free, morally responsible man, death would not have appeared (animals cannot sin). Evolutionism, on the other hand, asserts that death was there immediately there appeared organic matter that was capable of dying (for inorganic matter is already dead), and that death was the very engine of evolution insofar as mutation and natural selection are in essence destructive, death-dealing processes. So for Holy Scripture life proceeded from Life, and death intervened only when the man turned away from Life, whereas for evolutionism life proceeded from death, the creation of life from the destruction of life. To the present writer’s knowledge, no attempt to reconcile this contradiction has yet been made that is in the slightest degree plausible. From a commonsensical, logical point of view, it makes much more sense to suppose that life proceeds from Life, rather than that life comes from death...

(iii) At a certain point, according to both Holy Scripture and evolutionism, the first fully human man appeared on earth. For Holy Scripture, he was made from clay, water and the inbreathing of God. For the evolutionists, however, he must have appeared through the sexual intercourse of two apes (or Neanderthals). The contradiction is obvious, and cannot be obviated by supposing that the clay and water of the Scriptural account were in fact the embryo of the first man in the womb of his mother. Moreover, for the continuance of the new species, Homo Sapiens, it was necessary, according to the evolutionist account, for both a male and a female of the new species to come into being at the same time and place in order to mate and produce
offspring. But, the creation of a male of the new species requires very many specific genetic changes (mutations), and the creation of a female of the species equally requires very many specific genetic changes – but different ones, ones that must be complementary to those of the male. The likelihood of this ever happening by chance – that is, all the complementary genetic changes of both the male and the female taking place in one generation – is extraordinarily small. But if all these multiple and complementary genetic changes do not take place in one generation, then the reproductive process cannot take place and the species dies out immediately. Moreover, we are talking here only about the very many differences between the sexual reproductive apparatus of the higher apes and man. As we know, there are very many other differences – not least in the size and capacity of the human brain, which is much larger than the chimp’s - that distinguish the two species and which have to come into being at the same time and place in both a male and a female of the old species. Generally speaking, sexuality is one of the most powerful arguments against evolutionism. By comparison, the Scriptural account of the creation of Eve from Adam by parthenogenesis (a process found in other animal species) looks much simpler and more plausible.

(iv) The difficulties of harmonizing the Scriptural account of the creation of man with the evolutionist account are so great that most theological evolutionists abandon the idea that Adam and Eve were specific people. However, it is clear from the Scriptures that Christ, St. Paul and St. John all believed in Adam and Eve as real people and not as abstractions for male and female humanity. The question then becomes a question of authority: whose authority is greater: that of Christ and the Apostles, or that of Darwin and his followers? For a Christian who believes that Christ is none other than the Way, the Truth and the Life, God incarnate, there is only one possible answer. To think that Christ could be mistaken about anything whatsoever is equivalent to rejecting Christianity altogether…

(v) If Adam and Eve were not real people, as most theological evolutionists are forced to conclude, then the further question arises: when did the roll-call of names in the genealogy of Luke 3, for example, cease to refer to abstractions or fictions and begin to refer to real people? With Noah? Or Abraham? Or Moses? But again, the Lord, the Truth incarnate, referred to Noah, Abraham and Moses as real people. And the Apostles John and Jude referred to Cain and Abel, and to Enoch, as real people… It seems that the evolutionist who does not reject the early chapters of Genesis or Luke 3 as no more than an instructive fairy-tale has to draw an entirely arbitrary line beyond which symbols and abstractions suddenly became real people…

(vi) The case of Noah and the universal flood of his time – confirmed as fact by the Lord and the Apostle Peter – is especially critical, because the existence of the flood provides a much simpler and more comprehensive account of the fossil evidence than does Darwinism. Moreover, the plausibility of Darwinism rests on the assumption of uniformitarianism, that is, on the idea
that no universal, cataclysmic events like the flood have taken place since the earth was formed. For if such events did occur, then the dating methods the evolutionists use to date the fossils have to be discarded, since they rest on uniformitarian assumptions... But St. Nektary of Optina (+1928) pointed out that fossils had been found on the tops of the mountains, which appears to presuppose the existence of a universal flood that deposited them there. And creationist scientists in our time have pointed to a mass of evidence from various scientific disciplines that confirms the historicity of the flood.

43. THE FALL OF OLD ROME

St. Constantine’s transfer of his capital from Old Rome to the New Rome of Constantinople marked the beginning of the end of the Western Empire. For the old capital, weighed down by its pagan past, was in no position to defend and unify the newly Christianized empire, and would soon prove incapable of defending even herself. As for the new capital, in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, it was to be “a bond of union between East and West to which the most distant extremes from all sides were to come together, and to which they look up as the common centre and emporium of their faith.”

Hoping in this way to make a fresh start for the Christian empire, St. Constantine implicitly admitted that the old capital was irredeemable. The symbolism of his act was clear: if the state, like the individual man, was to be redeemed and enjoy a long and spiritually fruitful life, it, too, had to make a complete break with the past, renounce the demonic sacrifices and pagan gods and philosophies that it had loved, and receive a new birth by water and the Spirit. (The fact that New Rome quickly filled up with the statues and monuments of paganism did not change the aim and the symbol.)

For Old Rome, in contrast to many of her individual citizens, had never been baptized. There was a pagan rottenness at the heart of the western empire that even its Christian head, the Emperor, was not able to cut out. And so its doom was sealed.

“As the Oxford historians Peter Heather and Bryan Ward-Perkins have argued, the final breakdown in the Western Roman Empire began in 406, when Germanic invaders poured across the Rhine into Gaul and then Italy. Rome itself was sacked by the Goths in 410. Co-opted by an enfeebled emperor, the Goths then fought the Vandals for control of Spain, but this merely shifted the problem south. Between 429 and 439, Genseric led the Vandals to victory after victory in North Africa, culminating in the fall of Carthage. Rome lost its southern Mediterranean bread-basket and, along with it, a huge source of tax revenue. Roman soldiers were just barely able to defeat Attila’s Huns as they swept west from the Balkans. By 452, the Western Roman Empire had lost all of Britain, most of Spain, the richest provinces of North Africa, and southwestern and southeastern Gaul. Not much was left besides Italy. Basiliscus, brother-in-law of [the Eastern] Emperor Leo I, tried and failed to recapture Carthage in 468. Byzantium lived on, but the Western Roman Empire was dead. By 476, Rome was the fiefdom of Odoacer, king of the Goths.

“What is most striking about this history,” writes Niall Ferguson, “is the speed of the Roman Empire’s collapse. In just five decades, the population of Rome itself fell by three-quarters. Archaeological evidence from the late fifth century – inferior housing, more primitive pottery, fewer coins, smaller cattle – shows that the benign influence of Rome diminished rapidly in the rest of western Europe. What Ward-Perkins calls ‘the end of civilization’ came within the span of a single generation.” 544

The fall of the city itself took seventy years, from Alaric’s invasion in 406 to the deposition of the last emperor, Romulus Augustulus, in 476, when a barbarian officer in the Roman army, Odoacer, killed the father and uncle of Romulus and sent Romulus himself into retirement. But then, instead of taking the imperial crown himself, he did a remarkable thing; he declared that there was no need of a divided rule and that one, shared emperor was sufficient for both [Eastern and Western imperial] territories. And then he sent the imperial cloak and diadem to the Eastern Emperor Zeno... The old empire of Old Rome was dead, long live the new empire of New Rome! 545

When Rome fell for the first time, Blessed Jerome wrote from Bethlehem: “At the news my speech failed me, and sobs choked the words that I was dictating. She has been captured – the City by whom the whole world had once been taken captive. She dies of hunger before dying by the sword – scarcely do any men survive to be led off into captivity. The fury of the starving fastens on to nourishment unspeakable; they tear each other to pieces, the mother not sparing even the infant at her own breast.” 546

Cannibalism had taken place also during the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. It was a characteristic sign of God’s turning away from His people. Therefore a theological and historiosophical explanation that reflected the spiritual, no less than the political and social gravity of the situation was required...

Tertullian had said: “In the Emperor we reverence the judgement of God, Who has set him over the nations” 547. It followed that the fall of the western emperor had to express the reversal of God’s judgement, His guilty verdict against the Romans, perhaps the whole oikoumene. Indeed, for patriotic Romans like Jerome, the fall of the City of Old Rome was equivalent to the fall of the whole of humanity: “The flame of the world has been extinguished and in the destruction of a single city, the whole human race has perished!” 548

547 Tertullian, Apologeticum, 32.
548 St. Jerome, Commentary on Ezekiel, prologue.
The emphasis was somewhat different among the Holy Fathers in the eastern half of the empire. They emphasized heavenly patriotism, the patriotism of the City who “Builder and Maker is God” (Hebrews 10.10) over any earthly patriotism, even Roman patriotism; for “here we have no continuing city, but seek one to come” (Hebrews 13.14). Thus St. John Chrysostom wrote: “If you are a Christian, no earthly city is yours....

“Though we may gain possession of the whole world, we are withal but strangers and sojourners in it all.

“We are enrolled in heaven: our citizenship is there! Let us not, after the manner of little children, despise things that are great, and admire those which are little!

“Not our city’s greatness, but virtue of soul is our ornament and defense.

“If you suppose dignity to belong to a city, think how many persons must partake in this dignity, who are whoremongers, effeminate, depraved and full of ten thousand evil things, and at last despise such honor!

“But that City above is not of this kind; for it is impossible that he can be a partaker of it, who has not exhibited every virtue.”

The pagans were quick to come forward with their own explanation of the fall of Rome: Rome had fallen because she had deserted her gods. They pointed out that it was precisely since the ban on pagan practices imposed by Theodosius the Great in 380 that the barbarians had begun to overwhelm the empire. To refute this notion, and to show that the disasters suffered by the empire were allowed by God to chasten and purify His people, Augustine wrote the first five books of his City of God, written shortly after Alaric’s sack of Rome. “God’s providence,” he wrote, “constantly uses war to correct and chasten the corrupt morals of mankind, as it also uses such afflictions to train men in a righteous and laudable way of life. It removes to a better state those whose life is approved, or keeps them in this world for further service.”

In the second part of the work, he describes the origin, history and final destiny of two Cities - the City of God, which is holy and destined for eternal bliss, and the City of Man, which is sinful and destined for the eternal fire. The Roman Empire, like the Church herself of which it is the ally, contains citizens of both Cities, both wheat and tares. When the state is ruled by a truly Christian ruler, like Theodosius, one can see “a faint shadowy resemblance between the Roman Empire and the Heavenly City”; which is why one must obey the law and render one’s patriotic and civic duty to the State.

549 St. John Chrysostom, On the Statutes.
However, this view was juxtaposed, in Augustine’s thought, with a more radical, apolitical and even anti-political view. Thus at one point he calls Rome a “second Babylon”. He points out that there was always a demonic element at the heart of the Roman state, which has not been eliminated even now. Sin, fratricide – Romulus’ murder of Remus – lie at the very root of the Roman state, just as sin and fratricide – Cain’s murder of Abel – lie at the beginning of the history of fallen humanity.

Therefore it should not surprise us that the Roman Empire should decline and fall. “If heaven and earth are to pass away, why is it surprising if at some time the state is going to come to an end? If what God has made will one day vanish, then surely what Romulus made will disappear much sooner.” “As for this mortal life, which ends after a few days’ course, what does it matter under whose rule a man lives, being so soon to die, provided that the rulers do not force him to impious and wicked acts?” For it is the Jerusalem above that is our real Fatherland, not Rome here below.

Augustine’s purpose was to wean men away from trust in political institutions, whether pagan or Christian, and to trust in God alone. Christian rulers were, of course, better than pagan ones. But politics in general was suspect. The empire had been built up through a multitude of wars, many of them quite unjust. And yet “without justice what are governments but bands of brigands?” It was not that Augustine was not a loyal Roman citizen, but the fall of Old Rome contributed to an atmosphere of introspection and self-criticism that sought explanations for the fall in sin, both at the individual and at the collective level. Thus Augustine distanced himself from a too close identification of Romanitas (Romanness) and Christianitas (Christianity). As F. van der Meer interprets his thought: “Compared with Christianity, what significance was there in things, admittedly good in themselves, like the order, unity and authority of the Roman Empire?”

However, “the order, unity and authority of the Roman Empire” was of value. Even the barbarian conquerors of Rome recognized that. Thus Ataulf, the son of the famous Alaric, said: “To begin with, I ardently desired to efface the very name of the Romans and to transform the Roman Empire into a Gothic Empire. Romania, as it is commonly called, would have become Gothia; Ataulf would have replaced Caesar Augustus. But long experience taught me that the unruly barbarism of the Goths was incompatible with the laws. Now, without laws there is no state. I therefore decided rather to aspire to the glory of restoring the fame of Rome in all its integrity, and of increasing it by means of the Gothic strength. I hope to go down to posterity as the restorer of Rome, since it is not possible that I should be its supplanter.”

551 St. Augustine, The City of God, XVIII, 2.
552 St. Augustine, The City of God, V, 17.
553 St. Augustine, The City of God, IV, 4.
555 Ataulf, in Grant, op. cit., p. 127.
The Romans attached enormous importance to law. As Peter Heather writes, “Roman imperial state ideology had long since identified the existence of written law as the single factor which distinguished the Roman world as a higher order of divinely inspired human society, far superior to that of any known or conceivable neighbour.”\(^{556}\) Thus in the second preface to his Judicial Code the Emperor Justinian wrote: “The maintenance of the integrity of the government depends upon two things, namely, the force of arms and the observance of the laws: and, for this reason, the fortunate race of the Romans obtained power and precedence over all other nations in former times, and will do so forever, if God should be propitious; since each of these has ever required the aid of the other, for, as military affairs are rendered secure by the laws, so also are the laws preserved by force of arms.”

The Goths (not only Ataulf, but also the Ostrogothic King Theoderic later in the century) bought in to this vision, to the extent of seeing themselves as restorers, rather than supplacers, of Rome and the upholders of her laws. Even the Huns, who were still more barbaric than the Goths, respected the greatness of Rome. Thus Attila was turned back from sacking Rome in 452 by the eloquent embassy of Pope Leo I and a vision of Saints Peter and Paul, who appeared in a vision with St. Leo and threatened the Hun with death.\(^{557}\)

Augustine believed Rome had not been destroyed, but chastized. By this tribulation God was purifying the Roman nation, as He had purified Israel in Old Testament times. Rome would emerge from this period of affliction cleansed and better able to carry out her civilising mission in the world… But the catastrophe of 410 did not produce the regeneration of Rome that Augustine had hoped for. If it was still true at the beginning of the century that Rome was being chastized, not destroyed, by the end it had to be admitted that the disease was more serious and chronic, and the treatment more radical, than Augustine had recognised…

For the sad fact was that Old Rome was still not profiting from the opportunity presented by the conversion of St. Constantine to regenerate herself. She remained throughout the fifth century in a situation of spiritual and political crisis not dissimilar to that in the time of Diocletian. As Christopher Dawson writes: “It was literally Rome that killed Rome. The great cosmopolitan city of gold and marble, the successor of Alexandria and Antioch, had nothing in common with the old capital and rural Latin state. It served no social function, it was an end in itself, and its population drawn from every nation under heaven existed mainly to draw their Government doles, and to attend the free spectacles with which the Government provided them. It was a vast useless burden on the back of the empire which broke at last under the increasing strain.”\(^{558}\)

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556 Heather, op. cit., p. 118.
558 Dawson, Progress and Decay.
The real rulers of the later western empire when the emperor was campaigning against the barbarians, were the senators. Snobbish and immensely rich, they had much to lose from the empire’s fall. However, as a visitor to Rome remarked, they did not want to serve the State, “preferring to enjoy their property at leisure”.  

“In spite of frequent lip-service to the romantic concept of Eternal Rome,” writes Grant, “many noblemen were not prepared to lift a finger to save it... They also undermined the state in a very active fashion. For of all the obstacles to efficient and honest administration, they were the worst. They forcibly ejected collectors of taxes, harboured deserters and brigands, and repeatedly took the law into their own hands... They often remained hostile to the Emperor, and estranged from his advisers. For a long time many were pagans while their ruler was Christian.”

The free poor of Rome did not come far behind the senators in corruption. Although the Christian Emperor Honorius had supposedly abolished the circuses in 404, Grant writes that “a hundred and seventy-five days of the year were given up to public shows, as opposed to a mere hundred and thirty-five two centuries earlier; moreover the fabric of the Colosseum was restored as late as 438. It is also true that in the mid-fourth century 300,000 Romans held bread tickets which entitled them to draw free rations from the government; and even a century later, when the population of the city had greatly diminished, there were still 120,000 recipients of these free supplies. Certainly the population of Rome was largely parasitic. However, the city proletariat played little active part in guiding the course of events which brought the later Roman Empire to a halt.

“It was, on the other hand, the ‘free’ poor of the rural countryside upon whom the government, struggling to raise money for the army, imposed the full rigours and terrors of taxation. Although technically still distinguishable from slaves, they were no better off and perhaps worse off, since they often found themselves driven into total destitution. Between these rustic poor and the government, the relationship was that of oppressed and oppressor, of foe and foe.

“This is perhaps the greatest of all the disunities that afflicted the Western Empire. The state and the unprivileged bulk of its rural subjects were set against each other in a destructive and suicidal disharmony, which played a very large and direct part in the downfall that followed. It was because of this rift that the taxes that were needed to pay the army could not be raised. And because they could not be raised, the Empire failed to find defenders, and collapsed.”

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559 Grant, op. cit., p. 74.
560 Grant, op. cit., pp. 75, 76, 78.
561 Grant, op. cit., p. 60. Another reason that enough taxes could not be raised was that more and more barbarian groups occupied more and more of the taxable agricultural land.
But there was a still greater disunity... Professor Mary Beard has argued that the main cause of the *rise* of Rome to mastery over the ancient world was its ability to co-opt the conquered peoples as fellow citizens and then send them out to fight for an empire in which they now had a big stake. In other words, it was “boots on the ground” that won Rome her empire; she was simply able to put more men in the field than any of her rivals.\(^\text{562}\)

If we accept this thesis, then we can put forward an analogous thesis for the *fall* of the empire – namely, that Rome fell when she began to fail to co-opt her conquered peoples. One of the greatest and most enduring legacies of Roman civilization was the principle – enshrined in law in 222 - that every citizen is equal before the law, whatever his nationality or faith. This was no empty principle, as we see as early as the career of St. Paul, who, though a member of the despised race of the Jews, was able to win a trial in Rome because he was a Roman citizen. But by the fifth century this principle was no longer being applied; universalism had given way to a new kind of tribalism. And this in spite of the fact that the official religion of Rome was now Christianity, the most universalist of faiths.

It was not the Emperors that were to blame: although there were no really distinguished Emperors after Theodosius I, they remained Orthodox.\(^\text{563}\) The burdens they imposed on the people were not imposed willingly, but because of the desperate situation of the empire. They failed because Roman society was divided both against itself and against her non-Roman subjects and foederati - and a divided house cannot stand...

In the past Rome had not been too proud to learn from, and unite with, the nations whom she conquered. The classic example was the Classical Greeks who conquered Rome culturally while submitting to her politically. Nor, centuries later, had she despised the humble fishermen who preached a Jewish God Whom they themselves had crucified. The success of the apostles even among the emperor’s own family was witnessed by St. Paul, who declared: “My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace [of the emperor]” (*Philippians* 1.13), and came to fruition with the conversion of St. Constantine. Even when the last pagan Roman emperor, Julian the apostate, tried to reverse the Constantinian revolution, the momentum proved unstoppable. Like all the previous persecutors of the Christians, he perished in agony, crying, “You have triumphed, Galilean!” And when the last Emperor to unite East and West, Theodosius the Great, bowed in penitence before a Christian bishop, Ambrose of Milan, it seemed as if Ambrose’s dream of a Rome purged of its pagan vices and unifying its traditional virtues to the Cross of Christ – a Rome truly invicta and æterna because united to the invincible and eternal God - had been realized.


\(^\text{563}\) Thus Emperor Honorius abolished gladiatorial contests after he witnessed the martyrdom of the Syrian monk Telemachus on January 1, 404, for his opposition to the contests.
For, as St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, said, addressing Rome: “[The Apostles] promoted thee to such glory, that being made a holy nation, a chosen people, a priestly and royal state, and the head of the world through the blessed Peter's holy See thou didst attain a wider sway by the worship of God than by earthly government. For although thou wast increased by many victories, and didst extend thy rule on land and sea, yet what thy toils in war subdued is less than what the peace of Christ has conquered… That state, in ignorance of the Author of its aggrandisement, though it ruled almost all nations, was enthralled by the errors of them all, and seemed to itself to have fostered religion greatly, because it rejected no falsehood [an excellent definition of ecumenism]. And hence its emancipation through Christ was the more wondrous in that it had been so fast bound by Satan.”

Of course, there is a big difference between conquering a nation and then magnanimously giving the conquered people certain privileges, on the one hand, and being invaded by a nation and having to suffer various atrocities and indignities at their hands, on the other. Nevertheless, even among the pagans there were those who understood that magnanimity pays – even if you are now the invaded people. Thus the senator and philosopher Themistius, writing in about 370, said that “it is the task of kings – those who have a right to that title – rather than rooting out completely this surfeit of human temperament whenever they restrain the insurgent barbarians, to safeguard and protect them as an integral part of the empire. For this is how things are: he who harries the barbarians to no good purpose sets himself up as king of the Romans alone, while he who shows compassion in his triumph knows himself to be king of all men, especially over those whom he protected and watched over when he had the chance to destroy them utterly.”

However, after the first sack of Rome, the gulf between the Romans and the barbarians was becoming too great. Not that the barbarians, who settled in the empire through necessity to escape the hordes that pressed on them from the east, were always resolved to destroy it. On the contrary, as we have seen, they came to admire and emulate it. But the Romans themselves were not interested in converting or integrating them. Empire had gone to their heads; they despised the German hordes. Thus the Christian poet Prudentius, who had once declared that the peoples of the empire were “equals and bound by a single name”, now despised the barbarians:

As beasts from men, as dumb from those who speak,  
As from the good who God’s commandments seek,  
Differ the foolish heathen, so Rome stands  
Alone in pride above barbarian lands.

564 St. Leo, Sermon LXXXII, on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.  
565 Themistius, Oration 10; in M.J. Cohen and John Major, History in Quotations, London: Cassel, 2004, p. 113  
566 Prudentius, in Grant, op. cit., p. 132.
In the last analysis it was this pride, more than any purely political or economic factors, that destroyed Old Rome. Rome ceased to be the universal ruler when she abandoned her own tradition of universalism, transmuted now into Christian universalism. By refusing to come to terms with Alaric because he was a Goth (albeit a Christian Goth), although he was not seeking to destroy Rome but only find a place for his people within her empire, the Romans provoked the first sack of Rome in 410, which weakened the State and made later, still more catastrophic sacks inevitable.

Not all Romans were so proud, of course: churchmen such as the Italian St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, the Spanish priest Orosius and the Gallic priest Salvian of Marseilles, were hopeful that a new Romano-Germanic order could be constructed. After all, the fall of Rome could be seen, not just as God’s wrath against the Romans, but also His mercy towards the barbarians, by creating an unprecedented opportunity to bring them to the Christian Faith. For as Orosius, a priest from Braga who fled to Hippo from the Vandals, wrote: “It would seem that the mercy of God ought to be praised and glorified in that so many [barbarian] nations are receiving, even at the cost of our own weakening, a knowledge of the truth which they never could have had but for this opportunity.” Moreover, they had the example of the Gothic Martyrs Sabbas (+372) and Nicetas (+378), and the very early translation of the Bible into the Gothic language, to show that a real conversion of the barbarians was possible.

And so, while the Western Empire died, Christian Romanitas itself did not die. Although the Antichrist took its place temporarily in the sense that pagan and heretical rulers took the place of Orthodox ones, under the rubble of the old empire new kingdoms were arising that were to restore Orthodoxy and reincarnate the spirit of Christian Rome, uniting both Romans and barbarians in the One, Holy and Catholic Church. As Peter Heather writes, “new rulers at the head of politically reasonably coherent bodies of military manpower, which had within living memory originated from beyond the imperial frontier, were now masters of the bulk of the old Roman west. Alongside Odovacar, Anglo-Saxon kings controlled most of central and southern Britain, their Frankish counterparts ran northern and eastern Gaul, Visigothic monarchs controlled south-western Gaul and Spain, Burgundian dynasts the Rhone valley, and the richest lands of Roman North Africa were in the hands of the Vandalic Hasding dynasty. Groups from the old north-central zone of Europe as it had stood at the birth of Christ thus generated a huge revolution on Roman soil, replacing the old monolithic empire with a series of successor states.”

567 Orosius, Seven Books of History against the Pagans, VII, 41.
568 Unfortunately, most of the Goths were converted to Arianism rather than Orthodox Christianity, in spite of the intense efforts of St. John Chrysostom (+407) to draw them to the truth faith... See J.W.C. Wand, A History of the Early Church to A.D.500, London: Methuen, 1982, pp. 181-184.
569 Heather, op. cit., p. xvii.
Moreover, the memory of Old Rome and her achievement did not die; it was to remain profoundly influential for centuries to come. And there continued to be great native Romans, such as St. Gregory the Great, who remained passionately attached to bringing the glorious traditions of Rome – both Old and New – to the unenlightened barbarians. Even the twentieth-century atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell concluded: “The problem of a durable and satisfactory social order can only be solved by combining the solidity of the Roman Empire with the idealism of St. Augustine’s City of God…”570

44. THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

The English revolution - “that grand crisis of morals, religion and government”, as Coleridge called it571 - was, as Charles George calls it, “the first major breech in Absolute Monarchy and the spawning of the first major, secular, egalitarian and liberal culture in the modern world”.572 The conflict was between King Charles I and the English Parliament. When the disputes could not be resolved by talking, both sides began to arm.

Thus on July 12, 1642 the Earl of Essex was placed in charge of a parliamentary army, and a “committee of safety” was set up to organize soldiers, weaponry and supplies. Such “committees of safety” have been the first sign of revolution ever since. The French Jacobins had such a committee, as did the Russian Bolsheviks (the KGB, “Komitet Gosudarsvennoj Bezopasnosti”, literally means: “Committee of State Security”).

The king was not far behind his opponents. On August 22, 1642 he marched into Nottingham and unfurled a banner which read: “Give Caesar his due”. But what was Caesar’s according to the king encroached on what was God’s according to his opponents...

The English revolution was, together with the French revolution of 1789 and the Russian revolution of 1917, the most important event of modern European history. Like the later revolutions, if not to the same degree, it replaced a mild and moral monarch with a bloody and immoral tyrant – but one reigning now in the name, not of God, but of “the people”. Like them, too, it elicited a very broad range of arguments on the fundamental questions of the origin and nature of the State and its relationship to the Church and people. With the single exception of the Orthodox symphony of powers – which, however, received a powerful contemporary advocate in the person of Patriarch Nikon of Moscow – the pros and cons of all the major forms of government were exhaustively discussed, often by men such as John Milton who were of undoubted, if not well-balanced, genius.

The English revolution was a “revolution” not only in the sense that it overthrew the powers that be, but also in the older sense of a cyclical movement. For it brought things back to the status quo ante formally, if not essentially. Thus from 1642 to 1688, England underwent successively: an Anglican monarchy, a Calvinist parliamentocracy, the beginnings of a communist revolution, a military dictatorship, the restoration of the Anglican monarchy, a Catholic absolute monarchy, and the second restoration of the Anglican (now constitutional) monarchy under new (Dutch) leadership.

Like all modern revolutions, the English revolution was extremely bloody. Ann Hughes writes: “At least one in 10 – or perhaps as many as one in five –

571 Coleridge, Table Talk, 9 November, 1833.
men in England and Wales fought in the Civil War. It has been calculated that loss of life, in proportion to the national population of the time, was greater than in the First World War. Perhaps 85,000 people, mostly men but also women camp followers, died in combat. Up to 130,000 people were killed indirectly, primarily as a result of disease spread by troops."

The country was split down the middle; even families were divided. Most of the peers, landowners and gentry were royalist, as were the north and west and the Roman Catholics and “Arminian” (non-Calvinist) Anglicans. The roundheads (nickname for the Parliamentarians) dominated the south-east and London, and were allied with the Scots.

The disputes between King Charles I and Parliament were both financial (the King wanted money for the army from Parliament, which Parliament did want to give him), religious (Parliament did not like the king’s “popish” ways, and wanted to introduce “Low Church” reforms against the king’s will) and political (each side has a different answer to the question: who is the true sovereign of England – the King or Parliament?).

The question arises, therefore: was the English revolution essentially religious or political? Insofar as it was a Calvinist revolution it was both; for Calvinism represented a rebellion against all traditional authority, both ecclesiastical and secular. Nevertheless, we may agree with the French Prime Minister in a less religious age, François Guizot, that “Taking everything together, the English revolution was essentially political; it was brought about in the midst of a religious people and in a religious age; religious thoughts and passions were its instruments; but its chief design and definite aim were political, were devoted to liberty, and the abolition of all absolute power.”

John Milton, the great poet who came to the fore at precisely this time, used similarly religious language to clothe his revolutionary message: “Why else was this nation chosen before any other, that out of her as out of Zion should be sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of reformation to all Europe? Now once again, by all concurrence of signs and the general instinct of holy and devout men, God is decreeing to begin some new and great reformation in his Church, even to the reforming of the Reformation itself. What does He, then, but reveal Himself to His servants, and (as His manner is) first to His Englishmen?”

However, the use of religious language does not mean that the motivation of the parliamentarians was primarily religious. Rachel Foxley writes: “In a

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574 Some of the leading revolutionaries, such as John Milton, were also Arians. See C.S. Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost, New Delhi: Atlantic, 2012, pp. 82-83.
576 Milton, To the Lords and Commons of England, 1644.
speech from 1655 when looking back at the war, Cromwell said: ‘Religion was not the thing at the first contested for, but God brought it to that issue at last and gave it to us by way of redundancy, and at last it proved that which is most dear to us.’ Historians have often dismissed this as a mistake or hindsight on Cromwell’s part, but I think he was quite serious: it was God, not people, who had the power to bring religious reform out of civil war. The godly could not set out to fight a war of religion.

“So parliamentarians and Puritans like Cromwell were quite careful to avoid saying that religion could be a justification for war. Instead, they justified their war by saying they were fighting for a set of liberties protected by law and that Charles I, in their view, had been attacking. They didn’t think it was legitimate to fight for religion with the sword because religion could only be fought for with spiritual weapons. But they did think it legitimate to take up arms against a ruler who was breaking the law of the land. Along with political liberties and rights, this also included religion because the English Reformation had been established through parliamentary statute…”

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The royalists’ political doctrine was the Divine Right of Kings – that is, the supposed right of the King to impose his will in religious as in political matters. This doctrine was well summed up in an address presented by the elders of Cambridge University to King Charles II in 1681: “We still believe and maintain that our Kings derive not their title from the people, but from God; that to Him only they are accountable; that it belongs not to subjects either to create or censure, but to honour and obey their sovereign, who comes to be so by a fundamental hereditary right of succession, which no religion, no law, no fault or forfeiture can alter or diminish.”

It should be pointed out that this is an absolutist doctrine, which contradicts the Orthodox doctrine of the Symphony of Powers being worked out at just that time by Patriarch Nikon of Moscow in one vital point: it denies what the Orthodox assert, that the king can forfeit his power by apostasy from the True Faith or the True Church. I

In all other respects, though, the principle that the king is not accountable to men is “a logical inference,” writes Barzun, “from sovereignty itself: the ultimate source of law cannot be charged with making a wrong law or giving a wrong command. Modern democracies follow the same logic when they give their lawmakers immunity for anything said or done in the exercise of their duty; they are members of the sovereign power. Constitutions, it is true, limit lawmaking; but the sovereign people can change the constitution. There

578 Nicolson, op. cit., p. 194.
is no appeal against the acts of the sovereign unless the sovereign allows, as when it is provided that citizens can sue the state.

“Of course, the monarch can do wrong in another sense – in a couple of senses. He can add up a sum and get a wrong total and he can commit a wrongful act morally speaking – cheating at cards or killing his brother. To make clear this distinction between sovereign and human being, theorists developed quite early the doctrine that ‘the king has two bodies’; as a man he is fallible, as king he is not. Similarly in elective governments, a distinction is made between the civil servant acting in his official capacity and as a private citizen...”

An important aspect of royalist thinking was what may be called the patriarchal theory of royal authority. Charles’ father, James I, had argued that just as God is the Father of mankind, “so the style of Pater patriae was ever, and is commonly applied to Kings.” As such, the King does not merely represent his people: he embodies them – which is why in his edicts he says We, not I.

In its fully developed form, writes Ashton, “the patriarchal theory of royal authority was to prove a powerful argument both against the idea that government originated in a political contract between ruler and ruled and against the far more influential notion that representative government and the limitations which it placed on the royal exercise of power were immemorial features of the constitution....

“Just as kings were little Gods, so were fathers little monarchs. He who does not honour the king, maintained Thomas Jordan, cannot truly honour his own parents, as the fifth commandment bids him. So, in his speech on the scaffold in February, 1649, the royalist Lord Capel affirmed ‘very confidently that I do die here... for obeying that fifth commandment given by God himself.’... ‘For this subordination of children is the foundation of all regal authority, by the ordination of God himself.’”

For when man is defined in Genesis as being in the image of God, he is told to have dominion over the whole earth and everything in it. In other words, he is to be a king in the image of God’s Kingship. And if man as a species is king of the earth, every father in particular is king of his family, and every political leader is king of his tribe or nation. Kingship and hierarchy are part of the nature of things...

The idea that kingship is in the image of God was current from the early fourth century (cf. Eusebius’ Life of Constantine), and it was also an important

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581 Barzun, op. cit., p. 249.
582 Ashton, op. cit., pp. 7, 8.
idea at the time of the English revolution. Within a week of the execution of King Charles in 1649, *Eikon Basilike* ("The Royal Icon") was published by the royalists, being supposedly the work of Charles himself. This enormously popular defence of the monarchy was countered by the revolutionaries with the argument that the king was not an icon or likeness of God, so veneration of the king was idolatry, so it was right to kill the king. "Every King is an image of God," wrote N.O. Brown. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Revolutionary republicanism seeks to abolish effigy and show." 583

Milton, too, came out against *Eikon Basilike* with his *Eikonklastes*, in which the destruction of the icon of the king was seen as the logical consequence of the earlier iconoclasm of the English Reformation. For, as Hill explains: "An ikon was an image. Images of saints and martyrs had been cleared out of English churches at the Reformation, on the ground that the common people had worshipped them. Protestantism, and especially Calvinism, was austerely monotheistic, and encouraged lay believers to reject any form of idolatry. This 'desacralisation of the universe' in the long run was its main contribution to the rise of modern science." 584

The best known defence of the Divine Right of Kings was Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarchia* or *The Natural Power of Kings*, which was written under Cromwell and published in 1680, during the reign of Charles II. His thinking was based on the idea that Adam was the first father and king of the whole human race. "He believed," writes J.R. Western, "that God had given the sovereignty of the world to Adam and that it had passed by hereditary descent, through the sons of Noah and the heads of the nations into which mankind was divided at the Confusion of Tongues, to all the modern rulers of the world. Adam was the father of all mankind and so all other men were bound to obey him: this plenary power has passed to his successors." 585

The problem with this view, according to John Locke in his *First Treatise of Civil Government* (1681), as interpreted by McClelland, is that "the book of Genesis does not actually say that God gave the world to Adam to rule; Adam is never referred to as king." However, this is not a powerful objection, because, God does say to Adam that he is to have "dominion over... every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1.28).

But "Locke then goes on to say: suppose we concede, for which there is no biblical evidence, that Adam really was king by God's appointment. That still leaves the awkward fact that Genesis makes no mention of the kingly rights of the sons of Adam; there is simply no reference to the right of hereditary succession. Locke then goes on to say: suppose we concede both Adam's title


to kingship and the title of the sons of Adam, for neither of which there is biblical evidence, how does that help kings now to establish their titles by Divine Right? Despite the biblical concern with genealogy, the line of Adam’s posterity has become hopelessly scrambled. How can any king at the present time seriously claim that he is in the line of direct descent from Adam?... Because the genealogy since Adam is scrambled, it is perfectly possible that all the present kings are usurpers, or all the kings except one. Perhaps somewhere the real, direct descendant of Adam is alive and living in obscurity, cheated of his birth-right to universal monarchy by those pretending to call themselves kings in the present world.”

Locke’s objection here is very weak. The point is that just as the headship of the father in a family is natural, and therefore Divine in origin, so the headship of a society or nation by a single man, who derives it by right of succession from his father, is natural and Divinely instituted. And all kings, just as all men in general, come from Adam, the father of the whole human race. “That which is natural to man exists by Divine right,” writes Filmer; and “kingship is natural to man. Therefore kingship exists by Divine right.”

The people, on the other hand, “are not born free by nature” and “there never was any such thing as an independent multitude, who at first had a natural right to a community [of goods].”

As Harold Nicolson writes: “‘This conceit of original freedom’, as he said, was ‘the only ground’ on which thinkers from ‘the heathen philosophers’ down to Hobbes had built the idea that governments were created by the deliberate choice of free men. He [Filmer] believed on the contrary, as an early opponent put it, that ‘the rise and right of government’ was natural and native, not voluntary and conventional’. Subjects therefore could not have a right to overturn a government because the original bargain had not been kept. There were absurdities and dangers in the opposing view. ‘Was a general meeting of a whole kingdom ever known for the election of a Prince? Was there any example of it ever found in the world?’ Some sort of majority decision, or the assumption that a few men are allowed to decide for the rest, are in fact the only ways in which government by the people can be supposed to have been either initiated or carried on. But both are as inconsistent as monarchy with the idea that men are naturally free. ‘If it be true that men are by nature free-born and not to be governed without their own consents and that self-preservation is to be regarded in the first place, it is not lawful for any government but self-government to be in the world... To pretend that a major part, or the silent consent of any part, may be interpreted to bind the whole people, is both unreasonable and unnatural; it is against all reason for men to bind others, where it is against nature for men to bind themselves. Men that boast so much of natural freedom are not willing to consider how

586 McClelland, op. cit., p. 232. Rousseau also pointed out, in The Social Contract, that since every man is equally a descendant of Adam, it was not clear which descendants of Adam were to exercise lordship over others.
contradictory and destructive the power of a major part is to the natural liberty of the whole people.’ The claims of representative assemblies to embody the will of the people are attacked on these lines, in a manner recalling Rousseau. Filmer also points out that large assemblies cannot really do business and so assemblies delegate power to a few of their number: ‘hereby it comes to pass that public debates which are imagined to be referred to a general assembly of a kingdom, are contracted into a particular or private assembly’. In short ‘Those governments that seem to be popular are kinds of petty monarchies’ and ‘It is a false and improper speech to say that a whole multitude, senate, council, or any multitude whatsoever doth govern where the major part only rules; because many of the multitude that are so assembled... are governed against and contrary to their wills.’”

We turn now to the more radical, anti-monarchical sects, who believed in the Sovereignty of the People. They must be sharply distinguished from the Parliamentarians, who were men of property who “associated liberty exclusively with property or Parliament”. But for the poor the law was the enemy – and they joined the sects.

The Levellers were the most important because they had very considerable influence in the Army and formed a kind of left-wing opposition to Cromwell from within his own power base. They “were so called,” write Taylor Downing and Maggie Millman, “because they insisted that since all men were equal before God so should they be equal before the law. They were never a political party in the modern sense, but they put forward a number of Leveller programmes. On the basis of these programmes, the Levellers gained support and allies, particularly in London where most of their activities were centred. They were able to raise thousands of signatures for their petitions and thousands turned out for their demonstrations; their support ranged from religious radicals to craftsmen, small masters and shopkeepers. In the same tradition as many religious radicals, they appealed for freedom of religious belief. In pamphlets and petitions they demanded liberty of conscience, the disestablishment of the Church and the abolition of compulsory tithes. As time went on, their outlook became more secular with demands for legal reforms and for equal application of the laws, the end of imprisonment for debt, the abolition of trade monopolies and the end of press censorship. They appealed to many people who had expected and hoped that the end of the war [the first Civil War, which ended in 1646] would herald a new order but instead were faced with high taxes, economic depression and a Parliament which abused its powers.

“The truly revolutionary programme of the Levellers emerged from their attack on the unrepresentativeness of England’s constitution. They looked

back to the period when the Norman conquerors had imposed their tyrannical laws on the people of England and looked forward to a new order in which the sovereignty of the people was central and when representative institutions were democratically elected.\textsuperscript{589}

Another revolutionary sect was the Diggers, whose appearance coincided almost exactly with the killing of the king. Thus “the introductory letter to The New Law of Righteousness, the tract in which Wistanley announced his communist programme, was dated four days before the execution of Charles I. A fortnight before the digging started the Act of 17 March 1649 abolished kingship; two months later (19 May) another Act declared England to be a commonwealth and free state. Anything seemed possible, including the Second Coming of Jesus Christ…”\textsuperscript{590}

They acquired their name for the following reason. “In April 1649,” write Downing and Millman, “a group of poor men and women collected on the common on St. George’s Hill in Surrey and began to dig up the land and form a squatter community. Led by the charismatic Gerrard Winstanley their actions symbolized the assumption of ownership of common land. Winstanley believed in universal salvation and in what we would now call communist theories, that all property should be held in common. His visions of common ownership, rather than private property, also extended to equality between the sexes. Drawing on a theory of natural rights, Winstanley also quoted the Bible to support his arguments. Rejecting the traditional teachings of the Church, his was a visionary form of spirituality.\textsuperscript{591}

“The Digger colony on St. George’s Hill was not unique; there were others in Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Gloucestershire and Nottinghamshire, as well as in other parts of the country. The Diggers of ‘True Levellers’ produced specific demands that confiscated Church, Crown and Royalists’ lands be turned over to the poor. Set out in The Law of Freedom, Winstanley challenged existing property relations in the name of true Christian freedom and put forward his hopes for a communist Utopia. Earlier had had written: ‘they had resolved to work and eat together, making the earth a common treasury, doth join hands with Christ to lift up the creation from bondage, and restores all things from the curse.’ Almost inevitably, the Digger colonies failed, some harassed by local residents, others by local justices. However, their ideas lay in their ideas and their actions…”

Every revolution has its antinomian, anarchist element. In the English revolution they were the Diggers...


\textsuperscript{590} Hill, op. cit., pp. 273-274.

\textsuperscript{591} Thus among Winstanley’s “revelations” “was one, That the earth shall be made a common Treasury of livelihood to whole mankind, without respect of persons; and I had a voice within me declare it all abroad, which I did obey…” (Watch Word to the City of London). (V.M.)
As Ackroyd writes, the Ranters “believed that to the pure all things were pure; Laurence Clarkson, ‘the Captain of the Rant’, professed that ‘sin had its conception only in imagination’. They might swear, drink, smoke and have sex with impunity. No worldly magistrate could touch them.” 592

“The Ranters pushed toleration to the limit. In no way a sect nor an organized congregation, this loose group of individuals provoked fear and hostility quite out of proportion to their numbers. As individuals they were undeniably provocative; taking their belief in the individual’s personal relationship with God to its extreme, they broke with all traditions and moral constraints. By the standards of their day they appeared sexually and socially immoral….

“Mainstream Protestantism was, however, to face its biggest challenge from the Quakers. The Quakers of the seventeenth century had little in common with the Friends of today, known for their pacifism and quietism. The Quakers originated in the north of England and found adherents among farmers and artisans as well as the poor. Like the Diggers, they believed in universal salvation and the notion of Christ within the individual. Their success in evangelising is proved by the numbers of converts: in 1652 they numbered about 500, by 1657 there were perhaps 50,000. Their leaders were often flamboyant and aggressive in their beliefs; Quakers also demanded religious freedom alongside calls for social reforms. They were to be found disrupting services in the ‘steeplehouses’, their name for parish churches. They refused to pay tithes and challenged the authority of local magistrates. Their belief in equality of all men in the sight of God led them to eschew traditional forms of deference; they refused ‘hat-honour’, the removing of hats in front of figures of authority…” 593

“The Fifth Monarchy men and women were actively preparing the reign of Christ and His saints that was destined to supersede the four monarchies of the ancient world; the reign of Jesus would begin in 1694. They would clap hands and jump around, calling out: ‘Appear! Appear! Appear!’; they would be joined by travelling fiddlers and ballad-singers until they were in an emotional heat.

“The Muggletonians also had apocalyptic and millenarian tendencies. They believed that the soul died with the body and would be raised with it at the time of judgement, and that God paid no attention to any earthly activities. They also asserted that heaven was 6 miles above the earth and that God was between 5 and 6 feet in height…” 594

The Muggletonians had that suspicion of the law and lawyers that ran through all the sects insofar as “radical Puritan theology converges with

592 Ackroyd, op. cit., p. 313.
593 Downing and Millman, op. cit., pp. 119-121, 125.
politics in opposition to law”\textsuperscript{595}. Thus “Ludowick Muggleton accepted that ‘the poor... can have no law at all, although his cause be ever so just, no judge will hear him, nor no lawyer will give him any counsel, except he hath monies in his hand; nor no judge will do the poor any justice, except he go in the way of the law, and that the poor cannot do’. ‘So that if the birthright of the poor be ever so great or just, it must be lost for want of monies to fee lawyers’. Although ‘the government of this world hath brought a necessity of the use of lawyers’, none of the saints should enter that profession. Lawyers will be condemned to hell in the last judgement. The 169th Song in \textit{Divine Songs of the Muggletonians} rejoiced that lawyers ‘are damned without mercy to all eternity’ – a sentence which Milton reserved for bishops...”\textsuperscript{596}

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The outcome of the Civil War was determined above all by the victories of the parliamentary forces at Marston Moor (1644) and Naseby (1645). The decisive element was the presence on the parliamentary side of the embryo (at least) of a standing army, formed and commanded by Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell. The revolutionary aspect of this army, which made it so powerful, was that the soldiers were chosen on a meritocratic basis, not on the basis of rank or nobility, and were paid on a regular basis as professionals.

Cromwell belonged to a distinct strand among the Protestants, the Independents, who were distinguished from the Presbyterians, who dominated parliament, by, on the one hand, a greater tolerance in religious matters, and on the other hand, a greater intolerance in political matters. The Presbyterians were prepared to come to some kind of accommodation with the king after he fell into captivity. Cromwell, however, after trying and failing to come to an agreement with him, came to the conclusion that it was impossible and decided to kill him. Not that he was anti-monarchist as such: “he was no republican: his enemies described him as ‘king-ridden’. Early in 1648 Cromwell and his friends annoyed the republican Ludlow by refusing to commit themselves to a preference for monarchy, aristocracy or democracy: ‘Any of them might be good in themselves, or for us, according as providence should direct us.’ The farthest Olive would go was to say that a republic might be desirable but no feasible – and one suspects that he only said that to please Ludlow. As late as 12 January 1649 Cromwell opposed a motion to abolish the House of Lords, with the highly characteristic argument that it would be madness at a time when unity was so essential. Political practice was always more important to him than constitutional theory. He subsequently justified the abolition of King and Lords not on any ground of political principle but ‘because they did not perform their trust’.”\textsuperscript{597}

\textsuperscript{595} Hill, \textit{Liberty against the Law}, p. 216.
\textsuperscript{596} Hill, \textit{Liberty against the Law}, pp. 266-267.
Moreover, the king had to be removed in a judicial or quasi-judicial manner; for Cromwell was no Leninist. Nevertheless, there was something reminiscent of Lenin’s dismissal of the Constituent Assembly in 1918 in the way Cromwell used the army, which he controlled, to purge parliament of its less radical members; the result was the so-called Rump Parliament that tried and beheaded King Charles. This was the first ideologically motivated and judicially executed regicide in history. Before then, kings had been killed in abundance, and many Popes since Gregory VII had presumed to depose kings. But Charles I was not deposed by any Pope, nor was he the victim of a simple coup: he was charged with treason against the State by his subjects.

Treason by a king rather than against him?! As Christopher Hill writes: “high treason was a personal offence, a breach of personal loyalty to the King: the idea that the King himself might be a traitor to the realm was novel” - to say the least... The king himself articulated the paradoxicality of the revolution during his trial, declaring: “A King cannot be tried by any superior jurisdiction on earth.” As a supposedly Shakespearean verse put it:

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\begin{align*}
\text{For to the king God hath his office lent} \\
\text{Of dread of justice, power and command,} \\
\text{Hath bid him rule and willed you to obey;} \\
\text{And to add ampler majesty to this,} \\
\text{He hath not only lent the king his figure,} \\
\text{His throne and sword, but given him his own name,} \\
\text{Calls him a god on earth. What do you, then,} \\
\text{Rising ‘gainst him that God himself installs} \\
\text{But rise ‘gainst God?}
\end{align*}
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The Earl of Northumberland declared concerning the passing of an “ordinance” to try the king for treason: “Not one in twenty people in England are yet satisfied whether the king did levy war against the Houses first, or the Houses first against him; and besides, if the King did levy war first, we have no law extant that can be produced to make it treason in him to do so; and, for us, my Lords, to declare treason by an Ordinance when the matter of fact is not yet proved, nor any law to bring to judge it by, seems very unreasonable.”

Trevor Royle comments: “Just as there had been doubts about the legality of trying a monarch in Mary [Queen of Scots]’s case, so did the same arguments re-emerge in the House of Lords some sixty-two years later, and the ordinance was duly rejected. Under normal circumstances the Commons could not have proceeded further, but the times were out of joint and a streak of ruthlessness appeared in public affairs; on 4 January, using language that presaged the birth of the United States of America a century later, the Rump passed three further resolutions stating the legality of its position: ‘That the

people are, under God, the original of all just power: that the Commons of England, in Parliament assembled, being chosen by and representing the people, have the supreme power in this nation; that whatsoever is enacted or declared for law by the Commons in Parliament assembled, hath the force of law, and all the people of this nation are concluded thereby, although the consent and concurrence of King or House of Peers be not had thereunto.' The resolution showed England what politics would be like without a king and without the checks and balances provided by the upper house. Two days later, on 6 January, the ordinance became law as an act of parliament and the way was open to begin the legal proceedings against the king."

At his trial Charles said: “If they can do this to me [regicide], which of you is safe?” “For if a power without law may make laws, may alter the fundamental laws of the kingdom, I do not know what subject can be sure of his life, or of anything that he calls his own.” As for the people, “truly I desire their liberty and freedom, as much as anybody whomsoever; but I must tell you that their liberty and their freedom consists in having of government those laws by which their life and their goods may be most their own. It is not for having share in government, sir, that is nothing pertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clean different things...”

Charles presented his case well; through his death – he was beheaded in front of Westminster Hall - he believed that he went, as he put it, “from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown”, and did so with great courage and dignity. And yet the new ideas of political liberty and anti-monarchism no longer seemed paradoxical and unnatural. They had entered the bloodstream of human thought...

Traditionally, it had been the aristocrats who reined in tyrannical kings; and when King Charles was brought to trial the parallel with Magna Carta was in many minds. Thus the court’s first meeting was held in the Painted Chamber at the Palace of Westminster where the nobles traditionally put on their robes. For, writes Sean Kelsey, “the revolution was portrayed as a new chapter in the history of that aristocratic constitutionalism which had long sustained English traditions of resistance to royal authority. In the course of proceedings, John Bradshaw, Lord President of the High Court of Justice, recalled the ‘Barons’ Wars’, ‘when the nobility of the land did stand up for the liberty and property of the subject and would not suffer the kings that did invade to play the tyrant freely... But... if they do forbear to do their duty now and are not so mindful of their own honour and the kingdom’s good as the barons of England of old were, certainly the Commons of England will not be so unmindful of what is for their preservation and for their safety.’”

Unlike the barons in 1215, however, the Parliamentarians in 1649 were already a “rump”, purged by the army radicals; and this rump knew that if they did not do what the army wanted, they would be swept away...

John Milton set himself the task of justifying the revolution (Engels called him “the first defender of regicide”) in theological terms. He began, in his Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, with a firm rejection of the Divine Right of Kings. “It is lawful and hath been held so through all ages for anyone who has the power to call to account a Tyrant or wicked King, and after due conviction to depose and put him to death.” Charles I was to be identified with the Antichrist, and in overthrowing him the English people had chosen God as their King. Moreover, it was now the duty of the English to spread their revolution overseas (Cromwell had begun the process in Scotland and Ireland in 1649-51), for the saints in England had been “the first to overcome those European kings which receive their power not from God but from the Beast”.

“No man who knows aught,” wrote Milton, “can be so stupid as to deny that all men naturally were born free”. Kings and magistrates are but “deputies and commissioners of the people”. “To take away from the people the right of choosing government takes away all liberty”. Milton attributed the dominance of bishops and kings to the Norman Conquest, and he bewailed men’s readiness “with the fair words and promises of an old exasperated foe… to be stroked and tamed again into the wonted and well-pleasing state of their true Norman villeinage.”

Had the Norman conquerors finally been conquered in the revolution? By no means: absolutism had indeed been introduced into England by the Normans, but Normans and Saxons had long since been merged into a single nation of the English, and the revolution in no way restored the faith and customs of Anglo-Saxon England. This historical argument was simply a cloak for that root cause of all revolutions – pride, the pride that Milton himself had so convincingly portrayed in Satan in Paradise Lost (262-263):

To reign is worth ambition though in hell:  
Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven...

And just as Satan is no democrat, so the English revolutionaries – like their followers Robespierre in 1793 or Lenin in 1917 – had no intention of giving the rule to the demos. Of course, they thought, the “inconstant, irrational and image-doting rabble”, could not have the rule. The better part – i.e. the gentry, people like Milton himself, like Cromwell – must act on their behalf.

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602 For, as Sir Edmund Leach writes, “at different times, in different places, Emperor and Anarchist alike may find it convenient to appeal to Holy Writ” (“Melchisedech and the Emperor: Icons of Subversion and Orthodoxy”, Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Society, 1972, p. 6).

603 Quoted in Hill, Milton and the English Revolution, p. 167.

But the problem was: how could the better part stop the worser part from taking over? For, as history was to show in 1789 and again in 1917, the revolution never stops half way: once legitimacy has been taken from the King by the Lords, it does not remain with them, but has to pass on to the Commons, and from the Commons to the people. And to the lowest of the people at that; for, as Denzill Holles, once a leading opponent of the king, wrote already in 1649: “The meanest of men, the basest and vilest of the nation, the lowest of the people have got power into their hands; trampled upon the crown; baffled and misused the Parliament; violated the laws; destroyed or suppressed the nobility and gentry of the kingdom...”

And then there was a further problem, one raised by Filmer, that even if we accept that “the sounder, the better and the uprighter part have the power of the people... how shall we know, or who shall judge, who they can be?” But Milton brushed this problem aside... Like so many later republicans he could not answer the question: if not the king, then who will rule, and how can we be sure that they really are “the better and the uprighter part”?

Indeed, is it not much more likely that a man who comes to power by violence and intrigue is likely to be much worse - and more tyrannical - that the one who receives the throne, not by violence, but by hereditary right, and having been trained for the role throughout his preceding life?


605 Quoted in Almond, op. cit., p. 51.
606 Quoted in Hill, op. cit., p. 169.
Easily the most prominent aspect of Western material and cultural civilization today is the very rapid development of technology. Of course, all civilizations have had technologies; and the daily life of all in all ages has been influenced by them. What distinguishes our civilization from previous ones has been the extremely rapid – and ever-accelerating – change in technologies during the lifetime of a single person. Whereas before the industrial revolution a man could expect to pass through the whole of his life using the same instruments as an old man that he used as a young man, with only minor changes, in our time we have to adapt to several radical changes in that same time-frame. The most obvious changes today have been wrought by the computer and communications revolutions, whose possibilities – and dangers – appear unlimited.

However, it is not the material, or the political and economic, but the psychological, the social and above all the spiritual consequences of the technological revolution that are the most alarming… We are familiar, already since the 1950s, with the concept of built-in obsolescence of cars and other objects, which are built, not with a view to maximum longevity and reliability, as in past ages, but to precisely the opposite – to their breaking down and becoming old and rusty, so that the consumer will be forced to buy a new model within a few years. Today obsolescence no longer needs to be built in: the rapid development of technology means that, however carefully a car, say, is built, with good, long-lasting materials, reliable electrics and up-to-date computerized devices, within a short time it will be obsolescent. Even if it continues to work well, it will be, as it were, overtaken by events and fashions and technologies, that will force the affluent customer to buy a new car with still better, more up-to-date technologies. The same applies, to an even greater degree, to computers and smart phones. This phenomenon is most striking, perhaps in the military sphere: a plane or an aircraft carrier or an anti-missile defence system may become almost immediately obsolescent and a sitting target for the enemy because of the development of some new kind of stealth technology or anti-submarine tracking device.

This causes headaches for all kinds of planners and forecasters. But less obvious and more insidious is the idea that this subconsciously plants in the masses: that everything changes, nothing is eternal, time is the king of all. And the first casualties of this mind-set will, of course, be the traditional religion: ideas of an eternal God, unchanging truths and dogmas, and unbending morality. Modern man is so overwhelmed by the changes all around him, and so anxious to keep up with those changes if he is not to lose his job or his place in society and the respect of others, that he forgets to STOP, take stock, and perhaps say NO to some proposed change. Dostoyevsky wrote that if God does not exist, then everything is permitted; but for modern man the inference is the opposite: everything changes, everything is possible, therefore God does not exist…
And yet there is a profound irony here. For as the rate of change accelerates, so the nostalgia for the unchanging increases in intensity. Scientists and biotech companies are intensifying their search for the elixir of immortal life, the cure for ageing – the obsolescence that God, not man, has built into the system in order to remind us that time and change come to an end, so that we must place our thoughts and our hopes on eternity. Why anyone should want to continue living in a constant whirlwind of change in which nothing that we value of the past continues into the present and the future is mystifying. Perhaps this is a symptom of the same extreme restlessness that characterizes our civilization: the only way to keep up with change, we think, is for our souls and bodies to change with it, at an equal rate that enables us to dictate the change rather than be dictated by it. So if robots are soon going to be more intelligent and powerful than us, there is nothing for it: we have to become as robotic and computerized and stuffed with silicon as possible – a change seriously contemplated and welcomed by Yuval Noah Harari in his recent book, *Homo Deus*.

Another profound irony lies in the fact that, while our civilization becomes more and more wrapped up in and engulfed by time and change, modern physics since the Special Theory of Relativity (1905) appears to be dispensing with the concept of time altogether. Indeed, time appears to be a less fundamental concept in modern physics than matter and energy. Some physicists even believe that it does not exist…

At the same time, physics does have one absolute: light. Thus for Polchinski the constant speed of light “provides a reference of both space and time. A light ray always moves at one unit of space per unit of time – a constant diagonal on any graph of space against time. ‘The direction that light rays travel is in neither space nor time; we call it “null”. ‘It’s on the edge between space and time,’ says Polchinski. ‘A lot of people have this intuition that in some sense the existence of these null directions might be more fundamental than space or time.’” 607

Now light is a very important reality and symbol in Orthodox theology. It is the very first creation of God (Genesis 1.3), which by its unchanging value mirrors or symbolizes the unchanging Creator Himself, Who is above space and time because He created them. But we can say more than that: the Creator Himself “dwells in unapproachable Light” (I Timothy 6.16), and at His Transfiguration revealed Himself to be Light in His Divine, Uncreated Energies. Christ said: “I am the Light of the world”; He is “Light of Light, true God of true God”. For that reason “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13.8). He is the unchanging criterion of all things created; it is against His uncreated Light that all faiths and moralities are measured. And he has created light with its unchanging properties in relation to everything that passes to teach us that some things never change…

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Western philosophy began with the writings of two philosophers who said absolutely contradictory things. On the one hand was Parmenides, who said that “being is uncreated and imperishable, whole, unique, unwavering, and complete”. And on the other hand was Heraclitus, who said that “All is flux, nothing stands still, nothing endures but change”. From the light-filled vantage point of Christianity, we can say that both were right, but that Parmenides was more fundamentally right than Heraclitus. Hence the Platonic tradition in Western philosophy, which sees eternity and the eternal ideas as being logical prior and morally superior to the ever-changing world of material things. For everything does indeed change in this material, temporal world. But just as created light does not change even while time itself charges, so there will come a time “when time shall be no more” (Revelation 10.6), when there will be no rush to keep up with the latest fashions and technologies and doctrinal innovations of men but all will be caught up to be judged forever and without appeal in the unchanging Light of eternity.

In a sense we are in a race against time between God and technology. God has laid down the eternal, principles of existence, and certain moral laws that can be defied by men, but only at the cost of great suffering in this life (not to speak of the next). Take, for example, the eternal principles laid down by God concerning his highest creation, man, and in particular the laws relating to the two modes of human existence, male and female (Genesis 1.27). Man has always been free to defy these laws – but always also at a clear cost to himself. Most societies, recognizing this, laid down their own human laws to mirror God’s laws to a greater or lesser degree. However, our technological civilization, intoxicated by its own seemingly boundless abilities, has taken upon itself, not only to defy the moral laws to a hitherto unprecedented degree, but also to try and change the very principles on which human nature is based, and in particular the difference between male and female; that is, it seeks to change ontology as well as morality.

So modern man now claims that he can change male into female and vice-versa, and even create trans-gender and mixed gender and no-gender human beings. In this way he appears to himself to be justifying his desire to defy God’s laws on the basis of man’s supposed mastery of scientific laws and nature itself. It is as if he says: “I can do it (through science and technology), so I am allowed to do it.” Thus wherever God erects barriers to defend men against the consequences of violating nature, science delights in trying to cast them down. For example, immorality always cost a great deal, even in purely temporal terms: broken marriages, suffering children, social shame, social dislocation, sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, etc. But modern, technological man first destroys the institution of marriage, then the shame of fornication and abortion, then the diseases. Finally, as the only truly radical solution to the continuing problem of sex – the fact that boys will be boys, and girls – girls - sex itself must be destroyed (but not, of course, the pleasure of it, which will be supplied by electrode implants in the brain)…
An enormous problem remains, however: the mental suffering of children, many of whom now have no idea of who they really are - boys? girls? robots? animals? aliens? who knows? Whole generations appear to be on the verge of growing up as schizophrenics or in other ways mentally ill. Let us remember that gender fluidity was defined only recently as a mental illness... But then modern society, despite its protestations, is not made for children (still less unborn babies)... That is why it has no future - unless God wins the race against technology...

But we can be assured of this: God will win the race, nature and the Creator of nature will always win out in the end. God allowed the Tower of Babel to be built, and for the sons of God to mix with the daughters of men - but in the end He destroyed both the one and the other. As W.B. Yeats put it in his “The Four Ages of Man”:

He with body waged a fight:
But body won; it walks upright.

Then he struggled with his heart:
Innocence and peace depart.

Then he struggled with the mind:
His proud heart he left behind.

Now his wars on God begin:
At stroke of midnight God will win.

And so, as St. Athanasius the Great says, “we must keep up, not with the times, but with God”.