THE AGE OF REVOLUTION
1789-1861

Volume 3 of “AN ESSAY IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY”

From an Orthodox Christian Point of View

Vladimir Moss

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The French monarchy must decline into despotism or become a democracy - two opposite kinds of revolution, but both calamitous.
The Princes of the Blood to King Louis XVI.

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven! O times,
In which the meager, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance.

O Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!
Manon Roland (1793).

Lo, thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor’d; Light dies before thy uncreating word: Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall; And Universal Darkness buries All.
Alexander Pope, Dunciad.

Thou art a man, God is no more:
Thy own humanity learn to adore.
William Blake.

I am the new Prometheus, chained to the rock to be gnawed by vultures. Yes, I have stolen the fire of Heaven, and made a gift of it to France. The fire has returned to its source, and I am here.
Napoleon Bonaparte on St. Helena (1821).

Out of the tomb of the murdered Monarchy in France, has arisen a vast, tremendous, unformed spectre, in a far more terrific guise than any which ever yet overpowered the imagination and subdued the fortitude of man,
Edmund Burke, Letters on a Regicide Peace (1797).

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

God is love, but God is not equality.
St. Nikolai Velimirovich.

He who serves the revolution ploughs the sea…
Simon Bolivar.

The cry “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity or Death!” was much in vogue during the Revolution. Liberty ended by covering France with prisons, Equality – by multiplying titles and decorations, and Fraternity – by dividing us. Death alone prevailed.
Louis de Bonald (1817).
We have no government capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion… Our constitution was made for a moral and religious people.
  
President John Adams.

Nationality exists in the minds of men… its only conceivable habitat… Outside men’s minds there can be no nationality, because nationality is a manner of looking at oneself not as an entity an sich. Common sense is able to detect it, and the only human discipline that can describe and analyse it is psychology… This awareness, this sense of nationality, this national sentiment, is more than a characteristic of a nation. It is nationhood itself.
  
G.J. Renier.

After Orthodoxy, faithfulness to the Tsar is our first Russian duty and the chief foundation of true Christian piety.
  
St. Seraphim of Sarov.

Freedom is the new religion, the religion of our time. If Christ is not the god of this new religion, he is nevertheless a high priest of it, and his name gleams beatifically into the hearts of the apostles. But the French are the chosen people of the new religion, their language records the first gospels and dogmas. Paris is the New Jerusalem, the Rhine is the Jordan that separates the consecrated land of freedom from the land of the Philistines.
  
Heinrich Heine.

The King reigns, but does not rule.
  
Adolphe Thiers (1830).

Up to the moment before this palace of folly and illusion vanishes into the gulf of universal ruin, human beings will boast about the progress of civilization and the prospects of society. Nevertheless, reason will decay before men’s eyes. The simplest truths will appear strange and remarkable and will scarcely be tolerated.
  
Abbé de Lamennais.

I may say without any vainglorious boast that we stand at the head of moral, social and political civilization. Our task is to lead the way and direct the march of other nations.
  
Lord Palmerston (1848).

The human I, wishing to depend only on itself, not recognizing and not accepting any other law besides its own will - in a word, the human I, taking the place of God, - does not, of course, constitute something new among men. But such has it become when raised to the status of a political and social right, and when it strives, by virtue of this right, to rule society. This is the new phenomenon which acquired the name of the French revolution in 1789.
  
F.I. Tiutchev, Russia and the Revolution (1848).

In democracy there lies a terrible power of destruction.
  
Alexander Herzen.
Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another, and this is the teaching which is gathering substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion, as true. It teaches that all are to be tolerated, for all are matters of opinion.

Cardinal Newman, Biglietto Speech.

Come to me, Lucifer, Satan, whoever you may be! Devil whom the faith of my fathers contrasted with God and the Church. I will act as spokesman for you and will demand nothing of you.

Proudhon, Idée générale de la revolution.

Some people by the word “freedom” understand the ability to do whatever one wants ... The more people have allowed themselves to be enslaved to sins, passions and defilements the more often than others they appear as zealots of external freedom, wanting to broaden the laws as much as possible. But such a man uses external freedom only the more to burden himself with inner slavery. True freedom is the active ability of a man who is not enslaved to sin, who is not pricked by a condemning conscience, to choose the better in the light of God’s truth, and to bring it into actuality with the help of the gracious power of God. This is the freedom of which neither heaven nor earth are restrictors.

St. Philaret of Moscow, Sermon on the Birthday of Emperor Nicholas I, 1851.

The root elements of our Russian life have been characterized long ago, and they are so powerfully and completely expressed by the familiar words: Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality. That is what we must preserve! When these principles become weaker or fail, the Russian people will cease to be Russian. It will then lose its sacred three-coloured flag.

St. Theophan the Recluse, Letters, VII, p. 289.
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INTRODUCTION

This book represents a continuation of my earlier books, *An Essay in Universal History, Part 1: The Age of Faith* (to 1453) and *Part 2: The Age of Reason* (1453-1789). It follows the theme of the struggle between Christian political power and its enemies into the age of revolution - that is, the age beginning with the storming of the Bastille in 1789 and ending on the eve of the American Civil War and the Emancipation of the Russian serfs in 1861. Of course, the revolution neither began nor ended in this period. But it may be called the revolutionary age *par excellence* insofar as it presented all the main ideas of the revolution in their classical French expression, and provided the major themes and symbolism of the later, and still greater Russian revolution.

As in the previous volume in this series, this book is divided into alternating sections on the East and the West. In the first section, we see the first French revolution, its continuation and internationalization under the despotism of Napoleon I. In the second section we see Autocratic Russia, "the Gendarme of Europe", both administering the decisive blow to Napoleon I, and forming the Holy Alliance of monarchist states that kept the revolution in check; and we examine the impact of the Greek and Serbian revolutions. The third section outlines the story of the French revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and their offshoots in other European countries, while discussing the development of political and economic liberalism in England and America, and of nationalism throughout Europe. The fourth section describes Tsar Nicholas I's policy of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationhood", and continues with the Crimean War and the Peace of Paris, while examining the Russian Slavophile movement.

After the Gregorian revolution of the eleventh century, the Humanist-Protestant revolution of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the English revolution of the seventeenth century and the Enlightenment Programme of the eighteenth century, the French revolution of 1789 marks the fifth major turning-point in Western life and thought. In some countries - England, for example, and still more America - some of the less radical ideas of the French revolution were already being put into effect, at least partially, well before 1789; while in others - Russia and China, for example - they did not achieve dominance until the twentieth century.

Eventually, however, the French revolutionary ideals of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" and "the Rights of Man", combined with an essentially secularist and utilitarian attitude to religion, became the dominant ideology, not only of Europe and North America, but of the whole world. For, as Eric Hobsbawn writes, "alone of all the contemporary revolutions, the French was ecumenical. Its armies set out to revolutionize the world; its ideas actually did so."

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The French revolution was the decisive event in sweeping away the restraints of Christianity and feudalism on public and private life and in paving the way for emergence of totalitarian despotism on the European continent in the twentieth century. For, as Francis Fukuyama writes, “Early Chinese kings exercised tyrannical power of a sort that few monarchs in either feudal or early modern Europe attempted. They engaged in wholesale land reforms, arbitrarily executed the administrators serving them, deported entire populations, and engaged in made purges of aristocratic rivals... This kind of unconstrained violence became much more prevalent only after the French Revolution, when modernization swept away all of the ancient inherited legal constraints of the old European order.”

The period 1789-1815 can be compared, for its profound impact on the destinies of the world, only with the period 1914-45. Both periods are dominated by a national revolution with enormous international ramifications - the French in the earlier period, the Russian in the later - and by international war on a previously unprecedented scale. In both periods the main victors were an Anglo-Saxon nation (Britain in the earlier period, America in the later), on the one hand, and Russia (Tsarist Russia in the earlier period, Soviet Russia in the later), on the other. At the end of each period Russia became the dominant political power on the continent of Europe, while the Anglo-Saxon nation became the dominant power outside Europe, going on to dominate the world economically through its exploitation of important scientific and technological discoveries...

As in my previous volumes, I acknowledge a great debt to many authors, both Orthodox and Western. I should like to mention particularly three holy ideologists of the Orthodox Autocracy: St. Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, St. Ignaty (Brianchaninov), Bishop of the Black Sea, and St. Theophan the Recluse, Bishop of Tambov. Among western writers, I have especially learned from the writings of Sir Steven Runciman, Robert Tombs, Norman Davies, Sir Richard Evans, Sir Isaiah Berlin, Larry Siedentop, Philip Bobbitt, Bernard Simms, Adam Zamoyski, Niall Ferguson, Francis Fukuyama, Henry Kissinger, Misha Glenny and Yuval Noah Harari.

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

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I. THE WEST: THE MAN-GOD ARISES (1789-1830)
1. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Western civilization since its fall from Orthodoxy in the eleventh century has been a tale of constant contrasts, of constant veering from one extreme to the other in the religious, political and cultural spheres. Like a spinning top, which as it slows down creates ever-widening circles or parabolas, threatening a complete crash and irreversible immobility and death, so western civilization has changed its ideological and political and aesthetic fashions with ever-increasing and more alarming rapidity. We can look on these transitions in a positive sense: if the one extreme were not replaced by the other, complete collapse would indeed be inevitable. But there is also a negative aspect to this dynamic process: that each transition, while necessary, took the civilization further away from its blessed origins in the Orthodox Christian tradition. We can see this most clearly in the transition from Catholicism to atheism, from despotism to democracy, and from classicism to romanticism, that took place in “progressive” European society during the nineteenth century as a result of that archetypally giant step for “progress” that was the French revolution.

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

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

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

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3 Mann, op. cit, p. 35.
king's request led to a constitutional monarchy, the overthrowing of the State Church, the execution of the king, increased radicalization and the Great Terror, wars with both internal and external enemies, and finally a military dictatorship under Napoleon that restored order while consolidating many of the results of the revolution.

But the French Revolution went much further than the English in the number of its victims, in the profundity of its effects, not only on France but also on almost every country in Europe, and in its extreme radicalism, even anti-theism. It truly marked – as the revolutionaries intended it to be – a new, unprecedentedly evil beginning in the history of mankind.

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From a sociological point of view, France in 1789 had not changed in essence since the twelfth century; it was an agrarian, hierarchical society consisting of four classes or Estates: those who prayed (the clergy), those who fought (the nobility), those who talked (the bourgeoisie the lawyers and the intellectuals) and those who worked (the rest, mainly peasants). The ideas of the Enlightenment and Masonry had infected a narrow stratum of the more educated classes. But the mass of the population lived and thought as they had lived and thought for centuries.

It is customary to explain the French revolution as the product of corrupt political, social and economic conditions, and in particular of the vast gap in wealth and power between the ancien régime and the people. Discontent with social and economic injustices undoubtedly played a large part in fuelling this horrific atheist and anti-theist outburst. But it was not the king who was primarily to blame for these injustices; even the revolutionary Marat accepted that he was an essentially a good man, assisted by good ministers. In the years 1745-89 he and his ministers made numerous attempts at economic reform and a more equitable redistribution of the tax burden. But they were always foiled by opposition at court and in the Parlements from the aristocrats, who paid no tax.

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4 However, “The Jacobins,” writes Andre Marr, “killed nothing like as many people as did later revolutionaries. It has been estimated that forty-five thousand people died in ‘the Terror’, by public execution or to mob violence; regional fighting beyond Paris saw roadside executions, hanginss and mass drownings in hulk. The death toll runs into hundreds of thousand if civil war and famine are included right across France, but this was not the liquidation of an entire class, at least physically. At the time, France had around 250,000 male aristocrats: the carnage barely starts to compare to the millions killed by the Bolsheviks and the Chinese Communists” (A History of the World, London: Pan, 2012, pp. 366-367).

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

6 Marr, op. cit., p. 368.

7 It is a striking fact that tax questions – in other words, Mammon – played such an important part in all three of the early modern revolutions. Thus Roger Bootle writes: “The English Civil War, which saw Charles I lose his head and England briefly become a republic, began initially as a result of Parliament’s objections to Charles raising taxes to fund his wars. The French
Thus when five of his minister Turgot's Six Edicts were rejected by the Paris Parlement in 1776, Louis XVI observed: "I see well that there is no-one here but M. Turgot and myself who love the people."\(^8\)

This prompted Alexis de Tocqueville's famous words: "The social order destroyed by a revolution is almost always better than that which preceded it; and experience shows that the most dangerous moment for a bad government is generally that in which it sets about reform. Only great genius can save a ruler who takes on the task of improving the lot of his subjects after long oppression."\(^9\)

The aristocrats claimed that their opposition was an expression of Montesquieu's doctrine of the necessity of checks on executive power. In fact, however, they were trying to replace a royal "despotism" with their own aristocratic one. For, As Hobsbawm writes, "the Revolution began as an aristocratic attempt to recapture the state."\(^10\) And here, as so often in history, the "despotism" of one man standing above the political fray turned out to be less harmful to the majority of the population than the despotism of an oligarchical clique pursuing only one class or factional interest or purely personal interests. Indeed, the problem with the French monarchy was not its excessive strength, but its weakness, its inability to impose its will on the privileged class.

However, there was much more to the Revolution than a conflict between king and nobility, letting in the Third Estate that destroyed them both...

In seeking the antecedents of the revolution, writes Richard Pipes, “a brilliant if little-known French historian, Augustin Cochin... was led to [investigate] the social and cultural circles formed in France in the 1760s and 1770s to promote ‘advanced’ ideas. These circles, which he called sociétés de pensée, were made up of literary associations, Masonic lodges, academies, as well as various ‘patriotic’ and cultural clubs. According to Cochin, the sociétés de pensée insinuated themselves into a society in which the traditional estates were in the process of disintegration. To join them required severing connections with one’s social group and dissolving one’s class (estate) identity in a community bound exclusively by a commitment to common ideas. Jacobinism was a natural product of this phenomenon: in France, unlike England, the movement for change emanated not from parliamentary institutions but from literary and philosophical clubs.

Revolution of 1789 was similarly partly inspired by a rejection of punitive taxation. The American Revolution of 1776 was also spurred by the issue of taxation, with the revolutionaries' cry being ‘no taxation without representation’” (The Trouble with Europe, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2013, p. 40).


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

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

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

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

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

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

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The spirit of the Revolution was “inexplicable” to Tocqueville precisely because it was not human, but a spirit from hell. For it was not simply atheist, but anti-theist, against God. For the essential conflict between the revolutionaries and the ancien regime was a conflict between two ideas of the origin of authority:

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between the idea that it comes from above - ultimately, from God, and the idea that it comes from below - ultimately from what the Masons called "Nature", but which more religious called Satan, the original revolutionary.

“It is, in my view, impossible,” writes Sir Roger Scruton, “to understand the French Revolution if one does not see it as primarily a religious phenomenon. The inner compulsion was to dethrone the gods of the monarchical order, and to erect a new community in its place – but a community demanding sacrifice, devotion, and slaughter, establishing a right to obedience through the spilling of blood. The leading revolutionary St-Just could say, in 1794, that a republic ‘is constituted by the total destruction of that which is opposed to it, so abolishing at a stroke the century of political thinking that had come to fruition in revolutionary France. Membership, as St-Just’s remark makes clear, means the establishment of a ‘we’, and the easiest way to invent this ‘we’ is through a fight to the death with ‘them’. The French Revolution was prodigal of opponents – some of them real, as in the Vendée uprising, some of them imaginary, like the quasi-supernatural émigrés, crystallizing now in this person or club or gathering, now in that, and everywhere the object of the most violent suspicion and enmity. There is no need to dwell on the parallels with subsequent revolutionary movements and their demons: the émigrés were simply the first in a long line of victims – kulaks, Jews, the bourgeoisie – prepared as sacrificial offerings on behalf of a new form of social membership. It is from a deficit of membership that the urge to revolution arises, and when people are hungry for membership, collective violence issues as a matter of course.

“The French Revolution sought to replace one religion with another: hence its fanaticism and exterminating zeal. But the new religion of the nation was demonic, fraught with contradictions and self-hatred, with no power to survive. It quickly gave rise to the Napoleonic project of empire, through which violence was externalized and a rule of law re-established at home. In place of the attempt to build a religious form of membership with the nation as the Supreme Being, there came the desire for a political form of membership, in which the nation was the precondition of citizenship rather than the object of worship. France emerged from Bonaparte’s defeat as a territorial jurisdiction based in national identity, rather than in a religion or a crown. Though both religion and monarchy had been restored under Bonaparte’s regime, in altered and republicanized versions, it was the code napoleon and its promise of equal citizenship that confirmed the new identity of France. France gained what America had effortlessly bestowed on itself thirty years earlier: a concept of citizenship within a sovereign state ruled by a secular law.”

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The satanic spirit of the revolution was not single, but trifold, like those “three unclean spirits” of the Apocalypse, “like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon” (Revelation 16.13).

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These three spirits correspond to the three main phases of the revolution and infuse the three main forms of revolutionary humanism: liberalism, socialism (communism) and nationalism (fascism).

For “as it spread and evolved,” writes Yuval Noah Harari, “humanism fragmented into several conflicting sects. All humanist sects believe that experience is the supreme source of authority and meaning, yet they interpret human experience in different ways.

“Humanism split into three main branches. The orthodox branch holds that each human being is a unique individual possessing a distinctive inner voice and a never-to-be-repeated series of experiences. Every human being is a singular ray of light that illuminates the world from a different perspective, and that adds colour, depth and meaning to the universe. Hence we ought to give as much freedom as possible to every individual to experience the world, follow his or her inner voice and express his or her inner truth. Whether in politics, economics or art, individual free will should have far more weight than state interests or religious doctrines. The more liberty individuals enjoy, the more beautiful, rich and meaningful is the world. Due to this emphasis on liberty, the orthodox branch of humanism is known as ‘liberal humanism’ or simply as ‘liberalism’.

“It is liberal politics that believes that the voter knows best. Liberal art holds that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Liberal economics maintains that the customer is always right. Liberal ethics advises us that if it feels good, we should go ahead and do it. Liberal education teaches us to think for ourselves, because we will find all the answers within.

“During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as humanism gained increasing social credibility and political power, it sprouted two very different offshoots: socialist humanism, encompassed a plethora of socialist and communist movements, and evolutionary humanism, whose most famous advocates were the Nazis. Both offshoots agreed with liberalism that human experience is the ultimate source of meaning and authority. Neither believed in any transcendental power or divine law book. If, for example, you had asked Karl Marx what was wrong with ten-year-olds working twelve-hour shifts in smoky factories, he would have answered that it makes the kids feel bad. We should avoid exploitation, oppression and inequality not because God said so, but because they make people miserable.

“However, both socialists and evolutionary humanists pointed out that the liberal understanding of the human experience is flawed. Liberals think the human experience is an individual phenomenon. But there are many individuals in the world, and they often feel different things and have contradictory desires. If all authority and meaning flows from individual experiences, how do you settle contradictions between different such experiences?”

There are two possible ways out of this conundrum from the humanist perspective. One is to subordinate the “rights” and “validity” of the individual experience to that of the collective. That is the way of socialist humanism.

“That’s why socialists discourage self-exploration and advocate the establishment of strong collective institutions – such as socialist parties and trade unions – that aim to decipher the world for us. Whereas in liberal politics the voter knows best, and in socialist economics the party knows best, and in socialist economics the trade union is always right. Authority and meaning still come from human experience – both the party and the trade union are composed of people and work to alleviate human misery – yet individuals must listen to the party and the trade union rather than to their personal feelings…

“Evolutionary humanism has a different solution to the problem of conflicting human experiences. Rooting itself in the firm [!] ground of Darwinian evolutionary theory, it insists that conflict is something to applaud rather than lament. Conflict is the raw material of natural selection, which pushes evolution forward. Some humans are simply superior to others, and when human experiences collide, the fittest humans should steamroll everyone else. The same logic that drives humankind to exterminate wild wolves and to ruthlessly exploit domesticated sheep also mandates the oppression of inferior humans by their superiors. It’s a good thing that Europeans conquer Africans and that shrewd businessmen drive the dim-witted to bankruptcy. If we follow this evolutionary logic, humankind will gradually become stronger and fitter, eventually giving rise to superhumans. Evolution didn’t stop with Homo Sapiens – there is still a long way to go. However, if in the name of human rights or human equality we emasculate the fittest humans, it will prevent the rise of the superman, and may even cause the degeneration and extinction of Homo Sapiens.

“Who exactly are these superior humans who herald the coming of the superman? They might be entire races, particular tribes or exceptional individual geniuses. Whoever they may be, what makes them superior is that they have better abilities, manifested in the creation of new knowledge, more advanced technology, more prosperous societies or more beautiful art. The experience of an Einstein or a Beethoven is far more valuable than that of a drunken good-for-nothing, and it is ludicrous to treat them as if they have equal merit. Similarly, if a particular nation has consistently spearheaded human progress, we should rightly consider it superior to other nations that contributed little or nothing to the evolution of humankind…”

Is there any correspondence between the famous slogan of the French revolution, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”, and these three kinds of humanist religion? Certainly liberal humanism emphasizes liberty, and socialist humanism – equality. It is more difficult, however, to see how evolutionary humanism – or any kind of humanism, for that matter – fulfills the ideal of fraternity.

Now there is a kind of fraternity in liberals’ supposed respect for every individual human. And “Workers of the world, unite!” presupposes a universal fraternity of workers. And the unity of all Germans, say, can be called fraternal.

Nevertheless, it is striking how little place love holds in all three forms of humanism. Nineteenth-century English liberalism co-existed very well with total indifference to the fate of factory workers in Manchester or peasants in Ireland or opium addicts in China or textile workers in India. Twentieth-century liberalism belatedly corrected itself somewhat in these areas. But the hatred of liberals for unborn children, for example, is still prevalent – because it conflicts with the “right” of women to “control their own bodies”.

As for socialism, it has proved itself to be the most barbarous and bloody belief system yet known to man. The revolutions of the nineteenth century were bloody enough. Those of the twentieth century were much worse…

Nothing better could be expected of evolutionary humanism. For it is founded on the bloody and utterly egoistic doctrine of the survival of the fittest. Love for the superman or the super-nation appears necessarily to go together with hatred of the sub-humans of inferior nations. Thus the humanisms begotten by the French revolution and its German counter-revolutionary antithesis have proved themselves to be completely contradictory to Christianity. This has not stopped modernist Christians from trying to clothe these revolutionary creeds in Christian clothes. But the wolf in the sheep’s clothing still manages to snarl from behind its mask of meekness. For the humanist religion that found its first organized and political expression in the French revolution remains, for all its Christian-sounding ideals, the religion of the man-god, not the God-man.
2. FREEMASONRY AND ILLUMINISM

The organizational force of the revolution came, in its first, more moderate phase, from Freemasonry, and in its later, more radical phase, from Illuminism, an offshoot of Masonry. Let us examine how this evolution took place.

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

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

This difference between English and Continental Masonry has been denied by some writers. And of course, from a religious point of view, at least until Grand Orient Masonry officially adopted atheism in 1877 and was “excommunicated” by the Grand Lodge of England, there was little significant difference between the two. Nevertheless, from a political point of view the distinction is both valid and important; for English Masonry, linked as it was with the nobility and the monarchy from the beginning, dissociated itself from the revolutionary activities of its brother lodges on the Continent, and as late as 1929 reaffirmed the ban on discussion of politics and religion within the lodge.

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

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

The murderous potential of Masonry is seen especially in the 30th degree of the Scottish rite, the Kadosch degree. Here the myth that forms the core of the earlier degrees, the murder of Hiram or Adoniram, the supposed architect of Solomon’s Temple, is replaced by the myth of Jacques de Molay, the last great master of the order of the Templars, who was burned alive on the orders of King Philippe the Fair of France and Pope Clement V in 1314, and who was supposed to have founded four Masonic lodges on his deathbed. The initiates of the Kadosch degree avenge the death of the Templars’ leader by acting out the murder of the French king and the Pope.

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

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16 Ivanov, Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do nashikh dnei (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry: from Peter I to our Days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, p. 82.
"The king and the pope are symbols, and by these symbols we are given to understand the struggle to the death against 'civil and ecclesiastical despotism'."17

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

The Illuminist order was founded by a Jewish professor of canon law at the Catholic University of Ingolstadt in Bavaria called Adam Weishaupt, who assumed the name of "Brother Spartacus" (from the slave who rebelled against Rome in the first century BC). Illuminism arose out of the dissatisfaction of a group of Masons with the general state of Masonry. Thus another founder member, Count Mirabeau, noted in the same year of 1776: "The Lodge Theodore de Bon Conseil at Munich, where there were a few men with brains and hearts, was tired of being tossed about by the vain promises and quarrels of Masonry. The heads resolved to graft on to their branch another secret association to which they gave the name of the Order of the Illuminés. They modelled it on the Society of Jesus, whilst proposing to themselves something diametrically opposed."19

According to Mike Hanson, he "recruited five freemasons from prestigious Masonic lodges to form the Order of Perfectibilists, commonly known as the Bavarian Illuminati, on May 1, 1776.20 The recruitment of Baron Knigge (a.k.a Adolf Francis), a major player in the European Masonic scene, is considered to be his greatest coup; under Knigge's guidance, the ranks of the Illuminati grew to over 3,000. At this point, however (1785), it was declared an outlaw conspiracy by the Bavarian government, and Weishaupt quickly disappeared. According to John Robison's Proofs of a Conspiracy, the Illuminati organization survived in a somewhat altered form and was the driving force behind the French Revolution."21

The goals of Illuminism, writes Niall Ferguson, "were lofty... As one member of the Order recalled its founder saying, it was intended to be: 'an association that, through the most subtle and secure methods, will have as its goal the victory of virtue and wisdom over stupidity and malice; an association that will

17 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 64.
19 Nesta Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, Christian Book Club of America, 1924, p. 205. According to his second-in-command, Baron von Knigge, Weishaupt, had a "Jesuitical character" and his organization was "such a machine behind which perhaps Jesuits may be concealed" (Webster, op. cit., p. 227).
20 May 1, which has been adopted as International Labour Day by the Socialists, was a feast, as O.A. Platonov writes, "of satanic forces - witches, sorcerers, evil spirits, demons" (Ternovij Venets Rossii (Russia's Crown of Thorns), Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, p. 194). It was called "Walpurgisnacht" in Germany after the eighth-century English missionary to Germany, St. Walburga, whose feast is May 1. (V.M.)
make the most important discoveries in all fields of science, that will teach its members to become both noble and great; that will assure them of the certain prize of their complete perfection in this world, that will protect them from persecution in all its forms.' The Order’s ultimate objective was to ‘enlighten the understanding by the sun of reason, which will dispel the clouds of superstition and of prejudice.’ ‘My goal is to give reason the upper hand,’ declared the Order’s founder. ‘The sole intention of the league,’ according to its General Statutes (1781) was ‘education, not by declamatory means, but by favouring and rewarding virtue.’ Yet the Illuminati were to operate as a strictly secret fraternity. Members adopted codenames, often of ancient Greek or Roman provenance: the founder himself was ‘Brother Spartacus’. There were to be three ranks or grades of membership – Novice, Minerval and Illuminate Minerval – but the lower ranks were to be given only the vaguest insights into the Order’s goals and methods. Elaborate initiation rites were devised - among them an oath of secrecy, violation of which would be punished with the most gruesome death. Each isolated cell of initiates reported to a superior, whose real identity they did not know.”

"Our strength," wrote Weishaupt, "lies in secrecy. Therefore we must without hesitation use as a cover some innocent societies. The lodges of blue masonry are a fitting veil to hide our real aims, since the world is accustomed to expecting nothing important or constructive from them. Their ceremonies are considered pretty trifles for the amusement of big children. The name of a learned society is also a magnificent mask behind which we can hide our lower degrees."23

"Weishaupt constructed his organization on several levels, revealing his most radical plans only to his chosen co-workers. Weishaupt chose the members of his organization mainly amidst young people, carefully studying each candidature.

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

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

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

23 Platonov, op. cit., p. 195.
"After his initiation the new member was given a distinguishing sign, gesture and password, which changed depending on the rank he occupied.

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

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

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

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

"Do you realize sufficiently," he wrote in the discourse of the reception of the Illuminatus Dirigens, "what it means to rule - to rule in a secret society? Not only over the lesser or more important of the populace, but over the best men, over men of all ranks, nations, and religions, to rule without external force, to unite them indissolubly, to breathe one spirit and soul into them, men distributed over all parts of the world?"

The supposed aim of the new Order was to improve the present system of government and to abolish "the slavery of the peasants, the servitude of men to the soil, the rights of main morte and all the customs and privileges which abase humanity, the corvées under the condition of an equitable equivalent, all the corporations, all the maîtrises, all the burdens imposed on industry and commerce by customs, excise duties, and taxes... to procure a universal toleration for all religious opinions... to take away all the arms of superstitions, to favour the liberty of the press, etc."

This was almost exactly the same programme as that carried out by the Constituent Assembly at the beginning of the revolution in 1789-91 under the leadership of, among others, the same Count Mirabeau - a remarkable coincidence!

However, this liberal democratic programme was soon forgotten when Weishaupt took over control of the Order. For "Spartacus" had elaborated a much more radical programme, a programme that was to resemble the socialism of the later, more radical stages of the revolution. "Weishaupt had made into an absolute theory the misanthropic gibes [boutades] of Rousseau at the invention of

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25 Webster, op. cit., p. 221.
26 Webster, op. cit., p. 205.
property and society, and without taking into account the statement so distinctly
formulated by Rousseau on the impossibility of suppressing property and
society once they had been established, he proposed as the end of Illuminism the
abolition of property, social authority, of nationality, and the return of the
human race to the happy state in which it formed only a single family without
artificial needs, without useless sciences, every father being priest and
magistrate. Priest of we know not what religion, for in spite of their frequent
invocations of the God of Nature, many indications lead us to conclude that
Weishaupt had, like Diderot and d'Holbach, no other God than Nature
herself..."27

Weishaupt used the religious forms of Masonry, and invented a few
"mysteries" himself. But his aim was the foundation of a political secret
organization controlled by himself. His political theory, according to Webster,
was "no other than that of modern Anarchy, that man should govern himself
and rulers should be gradually done away with. But he is careful to deprecate all
ideas of violent revolution - the process is to be accomplished by the most
peaceful methods. Let us see how gently he leads up to the final conclusion:

"The first stage in the life of the whole human race is savagery, rough nature,
in which the family is the only society, and hunger and thirst are easily
satisfied... in which man enjoys the two most excellent goods, Equality and
Liberty, to their fullest extent. ... In these circumstances... health was his usual
condition... Happy men, who were not yet enough enlightened to lose their
peace of mind and to be conscious of the unhappy mainsprings and causes of
our misery, love of power... envy... illnesses and all the results of imagination.'

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

"As families increased, means of subsistence began to lack, the nomadic life
ceased, property was instituted, men established themselves firmly, and through
agriculture families drew near each other, thereby language developed and
through living together men began to measure themselves against each other,
etc... But here was the cause of the downfall of freedom; equality vanished. Man
felt new unknown needs...' And in the passages that follow we find adopting the old ruse of representing
Christ as a Communist and as a secret-society adept. Thus he goes on to explain
that 'if Jesus preaches contempt of riches, He wishes to teach us the reasonable
use of them and prepare for the community of goods introduced by Him,' and in
which, Weishaupt adds later, He lived with His disciples. But this secret doctrine
is only to be apprehended by initiates...

"Weishaupt thus contrives to give a purely political interpretation to Christ's
teaching:

27 Henri Martin, Histoire de France (History of France), XVI, 533; in Webster, op. cit., p. 207.
"The secret preserved through the *Disciplina Arcani_, and the aim appearing through all His words and deeds, is to give back to men their original liberty and equality... Now one can understand how far Jesus was the Redeemer and Saviour of the world."

"The mission of Christ was therefore by means of Reason to make men capable of freedom: 'When at last reason becomes the religion of man, so will the problem be solved.'

"Weishaupt goes on to show that Freemasonry can be interpreted in the same manner. The secret doctrine concealed in the teaching of Christ was handed down by initiates who 'hid themselves and their doctrine under the cover of Freemasonry,' and in a long explanation of Masonic hieroglyphics he indicates the analogies between the Hiramic legend and the story of Christ. 'I say then Hiram is Christ.'... In this manner Weishaupt demonstrates that Freemasonry is hidden Christianity... But this is of course only the secret of what Weishaupt calls 'real Freemasonry' in contradistinction to the official kind, which he regards as totally unenlightened."28

But the whole of this religious side of Weishaupt's system is in fact simply a ruse, a cover, by which to attract religious men. Weishaupt himself despised religion: "You cannot imagine," he wrote, "what consideration and sensation our Priest's degree is arousing. The most wonderful thing is that great Protestant and reformed theologians who belong to [Illuminism] still believe that the religious teaching imparted in it contains the true and genuine spirit of the Christian religion. Oh! men, of what cannot you be persuaded? I never thought that I should become the founder of a new religion."29

Only gradually, and only to a very few of his closest associates, did Weishaupt reveal the real purpose of his order - the revolutionary overthrow of the whole of society, civil and religious. Elements of all religions and philosophical systems, including Christianity and Masonry, were used by Weishaupt to enrol a body of influential men (about 2500 at a time30) who would obey him in all things while knowing neither him personally nor the real aims of the secret society they had been initiated into. The use of codes and pseudonyms, and the pyramidal structure of his organization, whereby nobody on a lower level knew what was happening on the one above his, while those on the higher levels knew everything about what was happening below them, was copied by all succeeding revolutionary organizations.

In 1782 Weishaupt convened a Universal Congress of *Illuminati* in Wilhelmsbad, and was well on the way to taking over Freemasonry (under the guise of its reform).

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28 Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-217.
29 Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219.
30 Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 115. Ferguson says that the Order numbered only sixty members in 1779, rising to more than 1,300 a few years later (*op. cit.*, p. 4).
By this time, writes Ferguson, “the Illuminati network extended throughout much of Germany. Moreover, an impressive list of German princes had joined the Order: Ferdinanc, prince of Brunwick-Lüneberg-Wolfenbüttel; Charles, prince of Hesse-Cassel; Ernest II, duke of Saxe-Coburg-Altenburg; and Charles August, grand duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach; as well as dozens of noblemen such as Franz Friedrich von Ditfurth, and the rising star of the Rhineland clergy, Theodor von Dalberg. Serving many of the most exalted Illuminati as advisers were other members of the Order. Intellectuals, too, became Illuminati, notably the polymath Johann Wolfgang Goethe, the philosophers Johann Gottfried Herder and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, the translator Johann Joachim Christoph Bode, and the Swiss educationalist Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Though he did not join, the dramatist Friedrich Schiller based the republican revolutionary character of Posa in his Don Carlos (1787) on a leading member of the Illuminati. The influence of Illuminism has sometimes been detected in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s opera The Magic Flute (1791).”

In July, 1785, an Illuminatus was struck by lightning and papers found on him led to the Bavarian government banning the organisation. “Some fled Babaria. Others lost their jobs or were exiled. At least two were imprisoned. The founder himself sought refuge in Gotha. For all intents and purposes the Illuminati had ceased to function by the end of 1787. Nevertheless, their infamy long outlived them. King Frederick William II of Prussia was warned that the Illuminati remained a dangerously subversive force throughout Germany.”

Ferguson believes that the Illuminati were easily crushed and had no significant effect on the French Revolution. Others, however, believe that Weishaupt transferred the centre of his operations to France, where his influence continued to spread. Thus the Parisian lodge of the Amis Réunis, renamed the Ennemis Réunis, gathered together all the really radical Masons from various other lodges, many of which were still royalist, and turned them, often unconsciously, into agents of Weishaupt. These adepts included no less than thirty princes. For it was characteristic of the revolution that among those who were most swept up by the madness of its intoxication were those who stood to lose most from it. Some far-sighted men, such as the Apostolic Nuncio in Vienna and the Marquis de Luchet, warned against Illuminism, and de Luchet predicted almost exactly the course of events that the revolution would take on the basis of his knowledge of the order. But no one paid any attention. But then, in October, 1789 a pamphlet was seized in the house of the wife of Mirabeau's publisher among Mirabeau's papers and published two years later.

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

"We must overthrow all order, suppress all laws, annul all power, and leave the people in anarchy. The law we establish will not perhaps be in force at once,

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31 Ferguson, op. cit. p. 4.
32 Ferguson, op. cit. p. 5.
but at any rate, having given back the power to the people, they will resist for the sake of the liberty which they will believe they are preserving. We must caress their vanity, flatter their hopes, promise them happiness after our work has been in operation; we must elude their caprices and their systems at will, for the people as legislators are very dangerous, they only establish laws which coincide with their passions, their want of knowledge would besides only give birth to abuses. But as the people are a lever which legislators can move at their will, we must necessarily use them as a support, and render hateful to them everything we wish to destroy and sow illusions in their path; we must also buy all the mercenary pens which propagate our methods and which will instruct the people concerning their enemies which we attack. The clergy, being the most powerful through public opinion, can only be destroyed by ridiculing religion, rendering its ministers odious, and only representing them as hypocritical monsters & Libels must at every moment show fresh traces of hatred against the clergy. To exaggerate their riches, to make the sins of an individual appear to be common to all, to attribute to them all vices; calumny, murder, irreligion, sacrilege, all is permitted in times of revolution.

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

"After describing how the soldiers are to be seduced from their allegiance, and the magistrates represented to the people as despots, 'since the people, brutal and ignorant, only see the evil and never the good of things,' the writer explains they must be given only limited power in the municipalities.

"Let us beware above all of giving them too much force; their despotism is too dangerous, we must flatter the people by gratuitous justice, promise them a great diminution in taxes and a more equal division, more extension in fortunes, and less humiliation. These phantasies [vertiges] will fanaticise the people, who will flatten out all resistance. What matter the victims and their numbers? Spoliations, destructions, burnings, and all the necessary effects of a revolution? Nothing must be sacred and we can say with Machiavelli: "What matter the means as long as one arrives at the end?"

"In 1797," continues Ferguson, "the eminent Scottish physicist John Robison published Proofs of a Conspiracy against All the Religions and Governments of Europe, carried out in the Secret Meetings of the Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies, in which he claimed that, 'through a course of fifty years, under the specious pretexts of enlightening the world by the torch of philosophy, and of dispelling the clouds of civil and religious superstition', an 'association' had been 'exerting itself zealously and systematically, till it had become almost irresistible', with the

33 Webster, op. cit., pp. 241-242.
goal of ‘ROOTING OUT ALL THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS, AND OVERTURNING ALL THE EXISTING GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPE’. The culmination of the association’s efforts, according to Robison, was nothing less than the French Revolution. In 1797, a former French Jesuit named Augustin de Barruel made the same allegation, ‘Even to the most horrid deeds perpetrated during the French Revolution, everything was foreseen and resolved on, was combined and premeditated... the offspring of deep-thought villainy.’ The Jacobins themselves, Barruel maintained, were the heirs of the Illuminati. These allegations – which won the praise of Edmund Burke – quickly found their way to the United States, where they were adopted by, amongst others, Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale. For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Illuminati played an unintended role as Ur-conspirators in what Richard Hofstadter memorably called the ‘paranoid style’ in American politics, exponents of which invariably claimed to be defending the dispossessed against a ‘vast, insidious, preternaturally effective international conspiratorial network designed to perpetrate act of the most fiendish character.’ To give just two examples the Illuminati featured in the anti-communist John Birch Society’s literature and in the Christian conservatism of Pat Robertson’s book New World Order (1991).”

As an example of this conspiratorial type of reasoning, let us quote Mike Hanson: “Many believe that a powerful group of Illuminati Freemasons manipulated and won the War of Independence in 1776 and then took control of the new United States of America. They believe that this Secret Brotherhood has never conceded that control to this day. It is interesting to note the design for the Great Seal of the United States, which contains magical symbols dating to ancient Egypt and beyond, including the pyramid and all-seeing eye of Horus. Above and below this symbol are two Latin phrases, *Annuit Coeptis* and *Novus Ordo Seclorum*. These translate as ‘Announcing the birth, creation, or arrival’ of ‘A Secular [Non-Religious] New Order of Ages’. In other words, they were announcing the creation of the New World Order.

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

“Today, the Secret Brotherhood’s conspiratorial network includes the mysterious Bilderberg Group; Yale University’s prestigious Skull & Bones Society, the clandestine Black Lodges of Freemasonry, and the secretive Knights

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of Malta. Its diabolical influence reaches into the corridors of power at the White House, the CIA, the Federal Reserve, even the Vatican…”35

“According to Neil Wilgus in The Illuminati, George Washington had read Proofs and felt that the allegations contained therein deserved further investigation. Washington’s own correspondence with fellow Masons clearly indicates that he was well aware of subversive forces at work within rival branches of masonic lodges in Europe, and expressed concern that the curse had spread to American lodges. Wilgus also writes that Thomas Jefferson was at least somewhat familiar with Weishaupt’s works and felt an admiration for him. It appears Jefferson disagreed with Washington’s point of view that the Illuminati had infiltrated American Freemasonry; Jefferson believed that such a thing could no possibly happen in America, since our freedom of speech would have made secrecy unnecessary. Obviously, Jefferson was either a member of the secret brotherhood, or else he was just painfully misguided in this belief, for the Illuminati continues to secretly guide American foreign and domestic policy to this very day…”36

Hanson’s argument is not convincing. It is highly unlikely that the Illuminati were numerous enough to engineer any revolution as early as 1776, let alone across the ocean… Nevertheless, it would be foolish to deny that even America, the land of the free, could succumb to an Illuminati-type revolution, especially when we consider the vast increase in the power of the State. Moreover, the power of Revivalism is weaker now, and hardly an adequate defence against the “swamp” that central government has become…

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35 Hanson, Bohemian Grove: Cult of Conspiracy, Austin, Texas: RiverCrest Publishing, 2012, p. 44.
36 Hanson, op. cit., p. 63.
3. THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The first stage of the French Revolution, from 1789 to 1791, was almost entirely dominated by Masons, whose numbers grew at an astonishing rate in the pre-revolutionary years. Adam Zamoyski writes that "there were 104 lodges in France in 1772, 198 by 1776, and a staggering 629 by 1789. Their membership included virtually every grandee, writer, artist, lawyer, soldier or other professional in the country, as well as notable foreigners such as Franklin and Jefferson - some 30,000 people." 37

"Between 800 and 900 masonic lodges," writes William Doyle, "were founded in France between 1732 and 1793, two-thirds of them after 1760. Between 1773 and 1779 well over 20,000 members were recruited. Few towns of any consequence were without one or more lodges by the 1780s and, despite several papal condemnations of a deistic cult that had originated in Protestant England, the élite of society flocked to join. Voltaire was drafted in on his last visit to Paris, and it was before the assembled brethren of the Nine Sisters Lodge that he exchanged symbolic embraces with Franklin." 38

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

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

"It was these fiercer elements, true disciples of the Illuminati, who were to sweep away the visionary Masons dreaming of equality and brotherhood. Following the precedent set by Weishaupt, classical pseudonyms were adopted by these leaders of the Jacobins, thus Chaumette was known as Anaxagoras, Clootz as Anacharsis, Danton as Horace, Lacroix as Publicola, and Ronsin as

38 Doyle, The Oxford History of the French Revolution, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 64-65. Franklin, as we have seen, was an American mason, a famous scientist, and a major player in the American revolution in which French and Americans had co-operated in overthrowing British monarchical rule. The American revolution had demonstrated that the ideas of the philosophes were not just philosophical theory, but could be translated into reality. And the meeting of Franklin and Voltaire showed that science and philosophy could meet in the womb of Masonry to bring forth the common dream - liberty and "the pursuit of happiness".
Scaevoila; again, after the manner of the *Illuminati*, the names of towns were changed and a revolutionary calendar was adopted. The red cap and loose hair affected by the Jacobins appear also to have been foreshadowed in the lodges of the *Illuminati*.

"Yet faithfully as the Terrorists carried out the plan of the *Illuminati*, it would seem that they themselves were not initiated into the innermost secrets of the conspiracy. Behind the Convention, behind the clubs, behind the Revolutionary Tribunal, there existed, says Lombard de Langres, that 'most secret convention [*convention sécrétissime*] which directed everything after May 31, an occult and terrible power of which the other Convention became the slave and which was composed of the prime initiates of Illuminism. This power was above Robespierre and the committees of the government, it was this occult power which appropriated to itself the treasures of the nation and distributed them to the brothers and friends who had helped on the great work."^39^

Weishaupt has been credited with founding the idea of world revolution.\(^40\) That may well be so. Certainly, Weishaupt's Illuminism represents perhaps the first clearly organised expression of that philosophy which Hieromonk Seraphim Rose called "the Nihilism of Destruction".\(^41\) Fr. Seraphim considered that this philosophy was unique to the twentieth century; but the evidence for its existence already in the eighteenth century is overwhelming. With Illuminism, therefore, we enter the atmosphere of the twentieth-century totalitarian revolutions....

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The revolution proper began on June 17, 1789, when the Third Estate gathered a so-called National Assembly, of which they declared: "To it, and it alone, belongs the right to interpret and express the general will of the nation. Between the throne and this Assembly there can exist no veto, no power of negation."\(^42\)

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

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^39^ Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-245.  
"Pandemonium ensued. At court, the King's conciliatory ministers fell out with their more aggressive colleagues. On 11 July [the chief minister] Jacques Necker, who had received a rousing welcome at the opening of the Estates General, was dismissed. Paris exploded. A revolutionary headquarters coalesced round the Duc d'Orléans at the Palais Royal. The gardens of the Palais Royal became a notorious playground of free speech and free love. Sex shows sprang up alongside every sort of political harangue. 'The exile of Necker,' screamed the fiery orator Camille Desmoulins fearing reprisals, 'is the signal for another St. Bartholomew of patriots.' The royal garrison was won over. On the 13th a Committee of Public Safety was created, and 48,000 men were enrolled in a National Guard under General Lafayette. Bands of insurgents tore down the hated barrières or internal customs posts in the city, and ransacked the monastery of Saint-Lazare in the search for arms. On the 14th, after 30,000 muskets were removed from the Hôtel des Invalides, the royal fortress of the Bastille was besieged. There was a brief exchange of gunfire, after which the governor capitulated. The King had lost his capital.\textsuperscript{43}

Power appeared to have passed from the king to the National Assembly and the Third Estate; but already at this early stage of the revolution (as in February, 1917 in Russia), real power was neither with the king nor with any of the Estates, but with the mob - or rather, with those who incited and controlled the mob. Thus on July 20 Arthur Young wrote: "I hear nothing of their [the Assembly's] moving from Versailles; if they stay there under the control of an armed mob, they must make a government that will please the mob; but they will, I suppose, be wise enough to move to some central town, Tours, Blois or Orléans, where their deliberations may be free. But the Parisian spirit of commotion spreads quickly..."\textsuperscript{44}

So quickly, in fact, that a year later Antoine, Comte de Rivarol could write: "Three million armed peasants, from one end of the kingdom to the other, stop travellers, check their papers, and bring the victims back to Paris; the town hall cannot protect them from the fury of the patriotic hangman; the National Assembly in raising Paris might well have been able to topple the throne, but it cannot save a single citizen. The time will come... when the National Assembly will say to the citizen army: 'You have saved me from authority, but who will save me from you?' When authority has been overthrown, its power passes inevitably to the lowest classes of society... Such is today the state of France and its capital."\textsuperscript{44} I

It happened as the Princes of the Blood had prophesied to Louis XVI: "The French monarchy must decline into despotism or become a democracy - two opposite kinds of revolution, but both calamitous."\textsuperscript{45}


\textsuperscript{45} Quoted in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 515.
The success of the Revolution was assured by the weakness of the King; for when "he who restrains" stops restraining, "then," as Dostoyevsky said, "everything is permitted". William Doyle writes: "News of the king's surrender to popular resistance broke all restraints. His acquiescence in the defeat of the privileged orders was taken as a signal for all his subjects to take their own measures against public enemies. The prolonged political crisis has spawned countless wild rumours of plots to thwart the patriotic cause by starving the people. Monastic and noble granaries, reputedly bulging with the proceeds of the previous season's rents, dues, and tithes, seemed obvious evidence of their owners' wicked intentions. Equally suspicious were urban merchants scouring country markets far beyond their usual circuits to provide bread for hungry townsmen. Besides, the roads were thronged with unprecedented numbers of men seeking work as a result of the slump. Farmers had good reason to dread the depredations of bands of travelling vagrants, and now took little persuading that the kingdom was alive with brigands in aristocratic pay. It was just a year since the notorious storms of July 1788, and as a promising harvest began to ripen country people were particularly nervous. All this produced the 'Great Fear', a massive panic that swept whole provinces in the last weeks of July and left only the most peripheral regions untouched. Peasants assembled, armed themselves, and prepared to fight off the ruthless hirelings of aristocracy. Seen from a distance, such armed bands were often taken for brigands themselves, and so the panic spread.

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

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

In his pamphlet What is the Third Estate? published in that year, Abbé Sieyès asked: What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been in the political order up to the present? Nothing. What does it demand? To become something…"

Now, after August 4, the Third Estate was something. Rarely, if ever, in political history has a single act had such a huge and immediate effect (the abdication of the Tsar in February, 1917 is perhaps the only parallel).

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

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

“Social convention held that the ‘Rights of Man’ automatically subsumed the rights of women. But several bold souls, including Condorcet, disagreed, arguing that women had simply been neglected. [The omission was soon rectified.47] In due course the original Declaration was joined by new ideas, in 1791 Olympe de Gouges wrote *The Rights of Women and the Citizen*, in which she declared: “1. Woman is born free, and remains equal to Man in rights… 4. The exercise of Woman’s natural rights has no limit other than the tyranny of Man’s opposing them… 17. Property is shared or divided equally by both sexes.” (Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 518). In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in which she denies that there are any specifically feminine qualities. Thus “I here throw down my gauntlet, and deny the existence of sexual virtues, not excepting modesty” (Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 483). In spite of rejecting marriage as a form of legalized prostitution, this proto-feminist married the British anarchist, William...
notably about human rights in the social and economic sphere. Article XXI of the revised Declaration of June 1793 stated: 'Public assistance is a sacred obligation [dette]. Society owes subsistence to unfortunate citizens, whether in finding work for them, or in assuring the means of survival of those incapable of working.' Slavery was outlawed in 1794. Religious toleration was guaranteed.”

Pope Pius VI condemned the Declaration of Human Rights. In particular he condemned the idea of “absolute liberty”, a liberty “which not only assures people of the right not to be disturbed about their religious opinions but also gives them this licence to think, write and even have printed with impunity all that the most unruly imagination can suggest about religion. It is a monstrous right…”

*For God also has rights*, said the Pope: “What is more contrary to the rights of the Creator God Who limited human freedom by prohibiting evil, than ‘this liberty of thought and action which the National Assembly accords to man in society as an inalienable right of nature’?”

There are two innovations in this revolutionary philosophy. First, the source of authority in society is proclaimed to be neither God, nor any existing political authority, but “the nation”. Hence nations are to be seen as free agents with rights, and the source of all particular rights in their own societies.

But what constitutes the nation? The essence of the nation, and the source of its rights, is what Rousseau called “the General Will” – a very vague term which anybody can claim to represent. At the same time, this “nation” or “General Will” ascribes to itself the most complete power, so that “no body of men, and no individual, can exercise authority which does not emanate directly therefrom.” This immediately destroys the authority, not only of the king, but also of the Church – and indeed, of every other person and body.

Nation-worship, or the self-deification of the Nation, which developed over the course of the next one hundred and fifty years, led directly to the nationalist nightmares that have plagued the world to this day. 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…”

The second innovation is the concept of “rights” that are “unprescriptible” – that is, prescribed neither by God nor by man. Man, according to the Declaration, has the unprescriptible “right” to do anything he likes – providing he doesn’t harm others (article 4).

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Godwin, by whom she had a daughter, Mary, who married the famous poet Shelley and became the author of *Frankenstein*… (V.M.)

48 Davies, op. cit., pp. 713-714.

However, this latter qualification is not elaborated on, and was in practice ignored completely in the French revolutionary tradition. Thus man is in principle free to do anything whatsoever. The only limitation on his freedom is other men’s freedom: their right not to be limited or restricted by him – but there is no mention of that in the French declaration...

The development of the philosophy of human rights still had a long way to go. But its essence is already discernible in the French Declaration.

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

Meanwhile, while the Assembly passed a large number of laws, it completely failed to solve the problems that had propelled it to power - the financial insolvency of the country. It simply printed money that rapidly deteriorated in value, fuelling inflation, and in 1791 collected only 249 livres in taxes against 822.7 livres expended.

In spite of these problems, the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, witnessed an extraordinary celebration of the revolution in which even the king took part. As Zamoyski writes: "It was to be a kind of Rousseauist troth-pledging, at which the nation would come together and symbolically constitute itself as a body, simultaneously paying homage to itself as such - the first of many acts of political onanism. Bailly [the mayor of Paris] suggested that the solemnity should take the form of a 'National Federation', with delegations from

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50 Rejection was probably his more constant and sincere opinion. In October, 1789 he wrote to the Spanish King, his cousin, protesting "against all the decrees contrary to royal authority to which I have been compelled by force to assent, since 15th July of this year. I beg your Majesty to keep my protest secret until its publication becomes necessary" (Mark Almond, Revolution, London: De Agostini Editions, 1996, p. 74). See also Munro Price, "Countering the Revolution", BBC History Magazine, vol. 3, N 7, July, 2002, pp. 18-20.

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

52 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 86. Here Tsar Nicholas II provides a sharp contrast. He neither tried to flee his country, as did Louis, nor did he make the slightest concession to revolutionary ideology.

53 Hunt, op. cit., p. 34.
every corner of France meeting in Paris while those from surrounding villages congregated in every provincial town. Lafayette steered the whole exercise into the military sphere, substituting companies of National Guards from every part of the country for civilian delegates.

“The capital was to be decked out in a fitting manner to greet those making their long pilgrimage. Half the population of Paris spent three days in the pouring rain putting up triumphant arches and decorations. The Champ-de-Mars was transformed into a vast elliptical arena surrounded by grass banks on which seats were erected for spectators. At the end nearest the École Militaire there was a stand draped in the tricolor for the members of the Assembly and important guests. At the opposite end, nearest the River Seine, was the entrance, through a triple triumphal arch in the Roman style. Between the two stood a podium with a throne for the king and seats for the royal family, and, towering above everything else, a great square plinth with steps on all four sides, on which stood an altar.

“The morning of 14 July was wetter than ever, and the feet of the 300,000 Parisians soon turned the Champ-de-Mars into a quagmire. This did not make the event any easier to manage, but good humour triumphed. As they waited in the rain, people made jokes about being baptized in the national rain, and groups from different parts of the country showed off regional dances to each other.

“The king and queen arrived at noon, but it took a long time for them to be settled into their stand. Then came a march-past by 50,000 National Guards. It was not until four in the afternoon that the Bishop of Autun, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, attended by four hundred priests wearing the tricolor, began to celebrate mass. The altar at which he officiated was not a traditional liturgical mensa, but a circular neoclassical affair redolent of burnt offerings in ancient Rome. It was not the altar of God, on which sacrifice was offered up to the Almighty, it was the autel de la patrie, on which citizens pledged their devotion to the motherland.

“Lafayette was much in evidence all day on his white charger, and when the mass was over, he took centre stage. As if by a miracle, the weather cleared and the sun came out, bathing the whole scene in a soft luminous aura. While trumpets blared, Lafayette ascended the steps of the altar. As he began to swear loyalty to the king, the nation and the law, he drew his sword with a flourish and laid it on the altar. Fifty thousand National Guardsmen then repeated the same oath, followed by the king. Next came the singing of the Te Deum specially composed by François Gossec, during which people of all stations embraced tearfully in a hundred thousand acts of national fraternity. Lafayette was carried by the crowd to his white horse, on which he majestically left the field, with people kissing his hands and his clothes...

“The Fête de la Fédération represented a reconciliation of all the people living in France, and their betrothal as one nation. It mimicked Rousseau’s vision of the Corsicans coming together to found their nation through a common pledge The
festival was also a recognition that the Marquis de Lafayette and the humblest peasant in France were brothers, both as members of a biological family and through the ideological kinship represented by the oath. At the same time, the celebration exposed a new reality. It showed how far the concept of nationhood had altered from the Enlightenment vision of a congeries living in consensus to something far more metaphysical and inherently divine…”

\[54\] Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 60-62.
4. BURKE ON THE REVOLUTION

The ideas of the French revolution posed a great threat to the British. Although they prided themselves on being the home of liberty, the British saw that French revolutionary “liberty” would speedily destroy their own. Already the American revolution had shown that libertarianism and empire made an uncomfortable fit; and the fit would look still worse in India and Ireland as the French ideas filtered through to the subject peoples there.

Moreover, the first effects of the industrial revolution on the industrial poor, and of the “dark, satanic mills” of England’s “green and pleasant land”, threatened to arouse revolutionary passions among the poor. “‘Two causes, and only two, will rouse a peasantry to rebellion,’ opined Robert Southey, a radical turned Tory: ‘intolerable oppression, or religious zeal’. But that moderately comforting scenario no longer applied: ‘A manufacturing poor is more easily instigated to revolt: they have no local attachments... they know enough of what is passing in the political world to think themselves politicians’. England’s rulers must pay heed: ‘If the manufacturing system continues to be extended, I believe that revolution inevitably must come, and in its most fearful shape’.”

Already during the years of the American revolution, 1778-83, a debate had begun on whether the liberal ideas of John Locke that had inspired that revolution, had been right after all. In 1783 the Baptist Noel Turner wondered whether the “present national propensity” was the deployment of Locke on behalf of the “many-headed majesty” of “king-people”. And in the same year Josiah Tucker published his “On the Evil Consequences Arising from the Propagation of Locke’s Democratic Principles”.

Again, Tucker’s disciple Soame Jenyns refuted the Lockean philosophy of the Whigs, writing:

I controvert these five positions
Which Whigs pretend are the conditions
Of civil rule and liberty;
That men are equal born – and free –
That kings derive their lawful sway
All from the people’s yea and nay –
That compact is the only ground,
On which a prince his rights can found –
Lastly, I scout that idle notion,
That government is put in motion,
And stopt again, like clock or chime,
Just as we want them to keep time.

That said, when the first, Lockean phase of the French revolution broke out in 1789, it was generally accepted by men across the whole political spectrum, from the Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger to the leader of the Whigs, Charles Fox, who exclaimed: “How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world! And how much the best!” Dissenters and poets were especially enthusiastic. William Wordsworth wrote:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven!

And “a Unitarian student at Cambridge, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, burned ‘Liberty’ and ‘Equality’ with gunpowder onto the velvety lawns of St. John’s and Trinity. Dissenting intellectuals scrutinized political events for their prophetic meaning, with ‘the Declaration of the Rights of Man in one hand, and the Book of Revelation in the other, as Joseph Priestly put it.”

However, as the news of the first atrocities filtered across the Channel, the mood changed. In 1798 Coleridge repented of his previous enthusiasm:

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared  
And with that oath, which smote air, earth and sea,  
Stamped her strong foot, and said she would be free,  
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared!...  
Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!

The earlier debate on Locke – the acknowledged ideologue of the first phase of the French revolution – was now renewed. Could the ideas of the urbane and civilized Locke really have led to such barbarism? William Jones thought so. He said that “with Mr. Locke in his hand”, that “mischievous infidel Voltaire” had set about destroying Christianity. And Locke was “the oracle of those who began and conducted the American Revolution, which led to the French Revolution; which will lead (unless God in his mercy interfere) to the total overthrow of religion and government in this kingdom, perhaps in the whole Christian world.”

The most famous debate that took place in England over the revolution was between two men who had been on the same, liberal side during the American Revolution, but now found themselves on opposing sides. Thomas Paine had displayed his radical credentials and oratorical skill in the famous anti-monarchist tract Common Sense (1776), and now enthusiastically backed his revolutionary colleagues in France, who read his tracts in the National Assembly. His opponent was the Anglo-Irish thinker and Whig parliamentarian Edmund Burke, who could hardly be accused of being an enemy of freedom, for he had defended the freedom of America and Ireland.

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58 Goldie, op. cit., p. 36.
59 Witness his famous remark: “Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together” (Cohen and Major, History in Quotations, p. 503).
In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), written just one year after the Declaration of the Rights of Man appeared, Burke attacked the liberal doctrine of universal rights as being precisely the cause of the greatest tyranny. Burke, write Ofir Haivry and Yoram Hazony, endorses “Selden’s argument that universal rights, since they are based only on reason rather than ‘positive, recorded, hereditary title,’ can be said to give everyone a claim to absolutely anything. Adopting a political theory based on such universal rights has one obvious meaning: that the ‘sure inheritance’ of one’s nation will immediately be ‘scrambled for and torn to pieces’ by ‘every wild litigious spirit’ who knows how to use universal rights to make ever new demands.

“Burke’s argument is frequently quoted today by conservatives who assume that his target was Rousseau and his followers in France. But Burke’s attack was not primarily aimed at Rousseau, who had few enthusiasts in Britain or America at the time. The actual target of his attack was contemporary followers of Grotius and Locke - individuals such as Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, Charles James Fox, Charles Grey, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson. Price, who was the explicit subject of Burke’s attack in the first pages of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, had opened his *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty* (1776) with the assertion that ‘the principles on which I have argued form the foundation of every state as far as it is free; and are the same with those taught by Mr. Locke.’ And much the same could be said of the others, all of whom followed Locke in claiming that the only true foundation for political and constitutional thought was precisely in those ‘general theories concerning the rights of men’ that Burke believed would bring turmoil and death to one country after another.

“The carnage taking place in France triggered a furious debate in England. It pitted supporters of the conservatism of Coke and Selden (both Whigs and Tories) against admirers of Locke’s universal rights theories (the so-called New Whigs). The conservatives insisted that these theories would uproot every traditional political and religious institution in England, just as they were doing in France. It is against the backdrop of this debate that Burke reportedly stated in Parliament that, of all the books ever written, [Locke’s] *Second Treatise* was ‘one of the worst.’”

Burke foresaw that the revolution would bring in its train, not freedom, but tyranny. And “the tyranny of a multitude is a multiplied tyranny”. The result would be: “laws overturned; tribunals subverted; industry without vigour; commerce expiring; the revenue unpaid, yet the people impoverished; a church pillaged, and a state not relieved; civil and military anarchy made the constitution of the kingdom; every thing human and divine sacrificed to the idol of the public credit, and national bankruptcy the consequence.” The main problem with radical revolutionaries was that they did not take human nature into account. They “are so taken up with their theories about the rights of man,

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61 Burke, *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791).
62 Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.
that they have totally forgotten his nature.” For him, “the touchstone of all theories which regard man and the affairs of men” was: “Does it suit his nature in general? Does it suit his nature as modified by habit?”

Before the revolution Burke had written: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. United in prayer and our Faith, we must together bear witness to the Truth in our troubling times, as martyrs and confessors did in theirs."63 These Christian sentiments were prophetic. "We cannot, if we would, delude ourselves about the true state of this dreadful contest. It is a religious war. It includes in its object undoubtedly every other interest of society as well as this; but this is the principal and leading feature. It is through this destruction of religion that our enemies propose the accomplishment of all their other views. The French Revolution, impious at once and fanatical, had no other plan for domestick power and foreign empire. Look at all the proceedings of the National Assembly from the first day of declaring itself such in the year 1789, to this very hour, and you will find full half of their business to be directly on this subject. In fact it is the spirit of the whole. The religious system, called the Constitutional Church, was on the face of the whole proceeding set up only as a mere temporary amusement to the people, and so constantly stated in all their conversations, till the time should come, when they might with safety cast off the very appearance of all religion whatsoever, and persecute Christianity throughout Europe with fire and sword. This religious war is not a controversy between sect and sect as formerly, but a war against all sects and all religions."64

So the real question that the Revolution sought to answer was not political or economic, but theological or ideological, not: who pays the taxes?, but: who rules the universe? Is it the God-Man, Jesus Christ, or the man-god, humanity or the nation? The ancien regime declared the first; the revolution – the second.

King Louis XVI had stated the Christian principle: "I have taken the firm and sincere decision to remain loftily, publicly and generously faithful to Him Who holds in His hand kings and kingdoms. I can only be great through Him, because in Him alone is greatness, glory, majesty and power; and because I am destined one day to be his living image on earth."65 This firm, but humble statement of the doctrine, not so much of the Divine right of kings, as of their Divine dependence on the King of kings, was opposed by the satanic pride of the revolution. For, as De Mounier declared: “The Revolution... claims to found society on the will of man instead of founding it on the will of God, which puts the sovereignty of human reason in the place of the Divine law."66

63 Burke, Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents (1770)
Burke agreed with the French Catholic monarchist Joseph de Maistre in calling the revolution “satanic”. And, as we have seen, he called the war that broke out between revolutionary France and Britain in 1793 “a religious war”. For it was a war between two opposed ideas of who rules human society: God or the people — or what Noel Turner called the “many-headed majesty” of “king-people”. Moreover, it was war against monarchy in all its forms: “No Monarchy, limited or unlimited, nor any of the old Republics, can possibly be safe as long as this strange, nameless, wild, enthusiastic thing is established in the Centre of Europe.”

Bradley Birzer writes: “Burke asked exactly how one might categorize the revolutionary government. Is it a monarchy of the democracy, a democracy of the monarchy, some form of pure democracy, or a nasty oligarchy? Whatever it claims to be, Burke continued, the intelligent person can simply dismiss that label as a manifestation of, at best, poor thinking, and, at worst, malicious and willful falsehood. Certainly, the revolutionary government and society had veered far away from the course of nature, creating nothing but a mere contrivance and shadow of reality.

“The Anglo-Irish statesman and philosopher noted that it is worth considering the notion that Revolutionary France is a modern attempt at democracy. Drawing explicitly upon the writings of Aristotle, Burke asked what the real difference was between a monarchy and a democracy: ‘Of this I am certain, that in a democracy, the majority of its citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority, whenever strong divisions prevail in that kind of policy, as they often must.’ However constituted, few forms of government are more oppressive than a democracy armed with self-righteous fury at all who oppose the will of the majority.

“In his own analysis written at the very beginning of the revolution, Burke followed Plato and anticipated… Alexis de Tocqueville.

“Because the king is only one man, several things will restrain him (relatively speaking, of course, for a monarch can easily go bad). First, by tradition, he will recognize that while he might have mastery over things temporal, he cannot fully control things spiritual. Second, by being one person, he cannot extend his imagination beyond his own ego, thus having the limitations of his own mind and his own experience. None of this is to suggest that a king cannot be ruthless, brutal, and ferocious. Of course, he can, as Burke well understood. After all, Burke had just spent a considerable amount of time writing and speaking on the evils and follies of Henry VIII. Still, no matter how far the king goes in each of these things, he will encounter limits. For the ‘hive’ that is the democratic mindset, however, the very spirit of democracy pushes its adherents to surmount such limits, and to behave as one man with the will of a god. The very animalistic thought process of the collective lends it toward a righteous stand against any opposition, internally or externally. When opposed, they react with ‘fury’…”
“Armed with the insane fury of the democratic will, the revolutionaries believe themselves pure enough to pass absolutist judgments against the corrupt. While the corrupt might be only eighty to ninety percent corrupted, it is easiest for the presumed pure to claim it totally corrupt, destroy it utterly, and begin anew. There is no cost to claiming the need to begin anew because there yet exists no basis by which to judge that which has yet to come. As that which has yet to come does not exist—except in the hearts of men—it therefore has no weight or substance. By definition, that which has yet to come must be perfect, as it exists only in our perfect thought and hopes, not in reality. How then, can one ever compare that which is unreal but perfect with that very real thing which, by its very existence in a fallen world, must be imperfect? Wisdom would and should allow us to realize this, but democratic fury and passion dismiss such reason as doubtful, traitorous, and, perhaps, insane.

“Listening to its opponents, one might think the French monarchy akin to the bloodthirsty god-kings of the ancient Orient or, perhaps, to Satan himself (though many of the revolutionaries, of course, did not believe in such ‘superstitions’ as God and the Devil). In the descriptions of the contemporary French monarchy, one might envision a world at constant war, ignorant of all arts and sciences, devoid of any economic securities—in manufacturing and agriculture—and ‘where the human race itself melts away and perishes under the eye of the observer.’

“Though not a proponent of the monarchy, Burke could not in good conscience look away from the goodness—however limited—to be found in much of France’s religion, laws, manners, and opinions. Could not some corrective to the corruption of the monarchy be found in these? Why did men fail to see the good and focus only on the evil?

“What sort of madness had gripped the revolutionaries? The madness of democracy and its arrogant totalitarianism.”

“Burke,” writes Tombs, “was angry that revolution was being treated as ‘a spectator sport for middle-class intellectuals, tempted to believe that they can proclaim governments illegitimate without anyone getting hurt’—anyone who mattered, anyway. He insisted that 1688 had not tried to invent an ideal system from scratch—the dangerous French error. Every political community was slowly shaped by ‘the wisdom of unlettered men’, in a permanent ‘partnership’ of the living, the dead and the yet unborn. A free society relied on voluntary respect for its institutions, which ‘the longer they have lasted… the more we cherished them.’ He insisted that revolution entailed suffering and loss, and was ‘the very last resource of the thinking and the good… I cannot conceive how any man can have brought himself to that pitch of presumption to consider his country as nothing but carte blanche, upon which he may scribble whatever he pleases.’ Burke’s position was historical and philosophical, not religious, unlike

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that of his opponents, whom he considered Puritan ‘bigots’. Many were shocked that Burke, a leading Whig intellectual, supporter of American rights and religious tolerance, and nemesis of the East India Company, should attack the French Revolution. But his ideas were consistent. He had long dismissed abstract theory – ‘the fairy hand of philosophy’ – as the basis for social organization. Societies, he believed, grew organically, including by ‘sympathy’ and ‘imagination’. He denounced usurpations in which greed and intellectual arrogance (by people who ‘have no respect for the wisdom of others; but… a very full measure of confidence in their own’) destroyed legitimate authorities, ancient rights, social relationships, and laws embodying the history and culture of unique societies. Hence he regarded oppression by the British in India and Ireland (he was a Dubliner) and oppression by the revolutionary authorities in France as morally identical. ‘I do not like to see any thing destroyed; any void produced in society; any ruin on the face of the land.’

“Reflections met a chorus of denunciation. ‘Cursed Stuff’, exclaimed his old friend and ally Fox. Pitt thought it too extreme. Young idealists such as Coleridge, Wordsworth and Keats continued to admire the French Revolution as a revival of the ‘Good Old Cause’ of Sidney and ‘others who called Milton friend’. Dozens of rebuttals were written, including by Priestley, the historian Catherine Macaulay, and Mary Wollstonecraft in her Vindication of the Rights of Man (1790) and Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792), maintaining that ‘God-given reason’ was the only source of legitimate authority. By far the most widely read reply to what he called Burke’s ‘thundering attack’ was Paine’s The Rights of Man (1791), dedicated to George Washington. Paine’s style was dogmatic reiteration. He did not engage with Burke’s ideas, which he dismissed as foolish, incomprehensible (‘all this jargon’) or dishonest. His position was exactly what Burke rejected: judging political systems on ideological, not pragmatic grounds. The new French constitution was ‘a rational order of things’; whereas the English system [much admired by many French liberals] was tainted by originating in conquest in 1066 by [William of Normandy] ‘the son of a prostitute and the plunderer of the English nation’68, and it was stained by ‘the filth of rotten boroughs’, where ‘every man has his price’. Monarchy (‘the enemy of mankind’), a hereditary peerage and an established Church were the roots of evil. The remedy was simple: ‘For a nation to be free, it is sufficient that she wills it.’

“… In June 1792, Paine was summoned for seditious libel, and escaped to Paris to sit in the National Assembly. But Burke’s version of English history as a long collective ‘partnership’ was no less influential, endowing its institutions with a powerful legitimizing pedigree’.”69

Burke’s emphasis on the importance of tradition was important at a time when the rage was all for the destruction of everything that was old and

68 We may agree with Paine’s estimate of the Norman Conquest while differing fundamentally from his radical views. (V.M.)

69 Tombs, op. cit., pp. 385-386. Paine was soon cast into prison by the Jacobins and barely escaped the guillotine. None the wiser for his experience, he fled to America, where he died in poverty and unpopularity.
venerable. In this respect (although not in others) he went against one of the main presuppositions of the English social contract theorists, following rather in the line of thought of the German Counter-Enlightenment thinkers Hamann and Herder. As Sir Isaiah Berlin writes: “Burke’s famous onslaughts on the principles of the French revolutionaries was founded upon the selfsame appeal to the myriad strands that bind human beings into a historically hallowed whole, contrasted with the utilitarian model of society as a trading-company held together by contractual obligations, the world of ‘sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators’ who are blind and deaf to the unanalysable relationships that make a family, a tribe, a nation, a movement, any association of human beings held together by something more than a quest for mutual advantage, or by force, or by anything that is not mutual love, loyalty, common history, emotion and outlook.”

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

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

Burke rejected the idea that the French Revolution was simply the English Revolution writ large. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was not a revolution in the new, French sense, because it left English traditions, including English traditions of liberty, intact: it “was made to preserve our ancient indisputable laws and liberties, and that ancient constitution of government which is our only security for law and liberty... We wished at the period of the Revolution, and do

now wish, to derive all we possess as an inheritance from our forefathers… All the
reformations we have hitherto made, have proceeded upon the principle of
reference to antiquity.”73 In fact, far from making the people the sovereign
power, the English parliament in 1688 had sworn “in the name of the people” to
“most humbly and faithfully submit themselves, their heirs and posterities” to
the Monarchs William and Mary “for ever”.

The French Revolution, by contrast, rejected all tradition. “You had,” he told
the French, “the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished…; but you chose to act as if you have never been moulded into civil
society, and had everything to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by
despising everything that belonged to you.” “Your constitution, it is true,…
suffered waste and dilapidation; but you possessed in some parts the walls and,
in all, the foundations of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired
those walls; you might have built on those old foundations. Your constitution
was suspended before it was perfected.” “Rage and frenzy will pull down more
in half an hour, than prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in an
hundred years.”74 The French Revolution was just another disaster “brought
upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy,
un governed zeal”. The “rights of man” were just a “pretext” invented by the
“wickedness” of human nature.75

“It was Burke’s Reflections,” writes G.P. Gooch, “which overthrew the
supremacy of Locke [for the time being], and formed the starting-point of a
number of schools of thought, agreeing in the rejection of the individualistic
rationalism which had dominated the eighteenth century. The work is not only
the greatest exposition of the philosophic basis of conservatism ever written, but
a declaration of the principles of evolution, continuity, and solidarity, which
must hold their place in all sound political thinking. Against the omnipotence
of the individual, he sets the collective reason; against the claims of the present, he
sets the accumulated experience of the past; for natural rights he offers social
rights; for liberty he substitutes law. Society is a partnership between those who
are living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born.”76

To Burke belongs the famous dictum: “The only condition for the triumph of
evil is that good men do nothing.” He certainly never underestimated the evil of
the French revolution, nor its ability to spread throughout Europe while good
men did nothing, or very little. Moreover, he showed remarkable perspicacity in
foreseeing how the instrument of its spread would be a military man –
Napoleon.

As William Doyle writes, he attributed the fall of the old order “to a
conspiracy. On the one hand were the ‘moneyed interest’, resentful at their lack
of esteem and greedy for new profits; on the other, and even more important,

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

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The English debate over the French revolution was no means brought to an end by the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. English radicals continued to feed on the ideas of the revolution, while as late as 1989 the Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher refused to attend the 200th anniversary of the revolution in Paris. The huge debate that rages over Brexit today may be seen as, in some respects, an echo of that primary debate.

Not all radicals accepted the idea of human rights. One critic was the leader of the “Philosophical Radicals”, Jeremy Bentham, famous for his “greatest happiness” principle: the best action is the one that involves the greatest balance of pleasure over pain for the greatest number of people. In 1843 Bentham declared that the authors of the Declaration of Human Rights were sowing “the seeds of anarchy” and that the rights doctrine was ‘execrable trash... nonsense upon stilts. He called the Declaration “a metaphysical work – the ne plus ultra of metaphysics.” Its articles, he said, could be divided into three classes: (1) those that are unintelligible, (2) those that are false, (3) those that are both.”

As for the idea that all men were born free: on the contrary, said Bentham, “all men... are born in subjection, and the most absolute subjection – the subjection of a helpless child to the parents upon whom he depends every moment of his existence...” “This was the case,” writes Joanna Bourke, interpreting Bentham, “when you looked at the relationship of apprentices to their masters, or of wives

to their husbands. Indeed, ‘without subjection and inequality’ the institution of marriage could not exist, ‘for of two contradictory wills, both cannot take effect at the same time’. Bentham ridiculed the idea that rights belonged to ‘all human creatures’. In his words, this would mean that women would have to be included, as well as ‘children – children of every age’, because, his sarcastic analysis continued, ‘if women and children are not part of the nation, what are they? Cattle?’ For him, this was nothing more than ‘smack-smooth equality, which rolls so glibly out of the lips of the rhetorician.’”

The second principle, that of equality, is no less difficult to establish. Men differ vastly in their talents and abilities, and above all in their moral worth. Indeed, according to C.S. Lewis, another campaigner against the idea of human rights, “equality is a purely social conception. It applies to man as a political and economic animal. It has no place in the world of the mind. Beauty is not democratic; she reveals herself more to the few than to the many, more to the persistent and disciplined seekers than to the careless. Virtue is not democratic; she is achieved by those who pursue her more hotly than most men. Truth is not democratic; she demands special talents and special industry in those to whom she gives her favours. Political democracy is doomed if it tries to extend its demand for equality into these higher spheres. Ethical, intellectual, or aesthetic democracy is death…”

Human rightists see inequality, especially in social life, as a scandal. But the “scandal” for our ancestors was not so much in the obvious and inescapable fact of inequality in every sphere of life, as in the fact that life so often does not seem to distribute rewards in accordance with natural inequality: “the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the learned, nor favour to the skilful” (Ecclesiastes 9.11). So life is unjust, not so much because it contains inequalities, as because the natural order of inequality is not rewarded as it should be from a human point of view… However, the injustice of life is not a scandal to religious people because they believe in “the God of justice” (Malachi 2.17) Who will put all injustices to right at the Last Judgement and reward all men according to their deeds. And this means unequal rewards for unequal men; for apart from the fact that some men will be sent to heaven and others to hell, even among those who are saved there are different rewards. For, as the Apostle Paul says, “there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another in glory” (I Corinthians 15.41).

As regards the third principle, that of fraternity, that was easily unmasked. The behaviour of the revolutionaries themselves showed that they had no conception of true love or fraternity. The revolution bitterly divided Frenchmen against each other, and Frenchmen against the other nations of Europe upon whom they tried to impose their “fraternity” at the edge of a sword…

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The truth is that the ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity have real content and application only in the context of the Christian faith. All men are born free in the sense that they are created in the image of God, which means they are free to do the will of God or reject it. If they do His will, then they become truly free in the sense that they become like God, free from sin and passion, whereas “he who commits sin is the slave of sin” (John 8.32). Then, having becoming truly free, they are truly equal to all other men who are spiritually free, being equal possessors of the original, immaculate human nature that is given to us in the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, having become free and equal in Jesus Christ, we all participate in the love of brothers, that true fraternity, which exists only in the Church of Christ...

The revolution began by imposing freedom and equality at the point of a gun: it was never really concerned with fraternity at all. But the Christian way is the reverse: the path to true freedom and equality is through love, and only through love. For love in the great liberator and equalizer; it does not remove natural subjections and inequalities, but makes them as it were irrelevant.

This was beautifully expressed in the seventh century by St. John the Almsgiver, Patriarch of Alexandria. As we read in his Life: “If by chance the blessed man heard of anybody being harsh and cruel to his slaves and given to striking them, he would first send for him and then admonish him very gently, saying: ‘Son, it is come to my sinful ears that by the prompting of our enemy you behave somewhat too harshly towards your household slaves. Now, I beseech you, do not give place to anger, for God has not given them to us to strike, but to be our servants, and perhaps not even for that, but rather for them to be supported by us from the riches God has bestowed on us. What price, tell me, must a man pay to purchase one who has been honoured by creation in the likeness and similitude of God? Or do you, the slave’s master, possess anything more in your own body than he does? Say, a hand, or foot, or hearing, or a soul? Is he not in all things like unto you? Listen to what the great light, Paul, says: ‘For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus’. If then we are equal before Christ, let us become equal in our relations with another; for Christ took upon himself the form of a servant thereby teaching us not to treat our fellow-servants with disdain. For there is one Master of all Who dwells in heaven and yet regards the things of low degree; it does not say ‘the rich things’ but ‘things of low degree’. We give so much gold in order to make a slave for ourselves of a man honoured and together with us bought by the blood of our God and Master. For him is the heaven, for him the earth, for him the stars, for him the sun, for him the sea and all that is in it; at times the angels serve him. For him Christ washed the feet of slaves, for him He was crucified and for him endured all His other sufferings. Yet you dishonour him who is honoured of God and you beat him mercilessly as if he were not of the same nature as yourself.”

5. THE JACOBIN TERROR

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

The rhetoric became increasingly bloody. On April 25, the "Marseillaise" was composed for the army of the Rhine; it spoke about "impure blood" drenching the tracks of the conquering French armies. On the same day the new invention of the Guillotine claimed its first victim... On June 20 the sansculottes ("without breeches"), invaded the Tuileries. "By sheer weight of numbers," writes Zamoyski, "the crowd pushed through the gates of the royal palace and came face to face with Louis XVI in one of the upstairs salons, where the defenceless monarch had to endure the abuse of the mob. Pistols and drawn sabres were waved in his face, and he was threatened with death. More significantly, he was made to don a red cap [symbol of the revolution] and drink the health of the nation - and thereby to acknowledge its sovereignty. By acquiescing, he toasted himself off the throne."82

For a brief moment, on July 14, the third anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, it looked as if constitutional monarchy could be saved. Louis was called "king of the French" and "father of his country". But on the same day Marie Antoinette's nephew, Francis II, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in Frankfurt in a ceremony that reaffirmed with great splendour the monarchical principle. Between the French revolution and the German monarchy there could be no compromise: the centre, constitutionalism, could not hold...

Pressure mounted on the Assembly to declare the dethronement of the king. Finally, on August 10, the Tuileries was again invaded, 600 Swiss guards were brutally massacred, and the king was imprisoned. The Assembly "had little alternative but to 'invite' the French people to form a convention 'to assure the sovereignty of the people and the reign of liberty and equality. The next day it decreed that the new assembly was to be elected by manhood suffrage, without distinction between citizens. Only servants and the unemployed had no vote."83

82 Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
83 Doyle, op. cit., p. 193.
Paris was ruled by the mob now. In September the prisons were opened and suspected royalists slaughtered. On September 20 the Prussian army was turned back – more precisely, betrayed - at Valmy. It is difficult to say that it was defeated when there were only 160 German casualties to the French army’s 300. Rather, it was betrayed by the leader of the Prussian army, the Duke of Brunswick, who also happened to be the leader of German Masonry, and who quite clearly betrayed his country and an overwhelmingly superior position in order to let the forces of the revolution win. The next day the monarchy was officially abolished.

It was at this point that the Jacobin dictatorship, which was much closer to Illuminism than conventional Masonry, simply cast the Masons aside, even though several of the leading Jacobins were adepts. Philippe d’Orléans, seeing the way the tide was moving against the order, renounced it - but this did not save him from the guillotine. The brotherhoods were considered outposts of counter-revolution, many disbanded themselves, some members emigrated, others stopped all work. Only after the coming to power of Napoleon, who protected the order, was its activity renewed and even broadened.

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

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

84 Tim Williamson, “Battle of Valmy”, All about History, p. 59; L.A. Tikhomirov, Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii (The Religious-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, pp. 460-461,
85 O.F. Soloviev, Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veke (Masonry in World Politics in the 20th Century), Moscow: Rosspen, 1998, p. 22. The Mason Christopher Hodapp writes: “It was rumoured for many years that Napoleon Bonaparte was a Freemason, but there is no historic proof of it. Still, many of his military officers, members of his Grand Council for the Empire, and 22 of the 30 Marshals of France were. So were his four brothers, three of whom were made kings by Napoleon. The Emperor's wife, Empress Josephine, was even admitted into a French female lodge in 1804. Regardless of whether Napoleon was ever made a Mason, he did adopt the title Protector of Freemasonry, along with the lengthy list of other titles he assumed when he became emperor in 1804” (Freemasonry for Dummies, Indianapolis: Wiley, 2005, p. 42).
whatever way, is a step back towards royal and constitutional despotism; it is a counter-revolutionary idea; because it puts the Revolution itself in the dock. After all, if Louis can still be put on trial, Louis can be acquitted; he might be innocent. Or rather, he is presumed to be until he is found guilty. But if Louis can be presumed innocent, what becomes of the Revolution?"  

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

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

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

Who was Jacob? Jewry? Were the French now baptised into the ever-restless spirit of the Jewish revolution?... Or was the execution of the king revenge on the French monarchy for the execution of Jacques de Molet, last head of the Templars?...

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88 Ridley, op. cit., pp. 136-137.
89 Eliphas Levi, in Fomin, op. cit., p. 38. Who was Jacob? There are various theories. Some think it was Jacob Molet, the leader of the Templars who was executed by the Catholic Church. Others think it refers to Masons of the Scottish rite who were supporters of the Stuart Jacobites. Others think it was a reference to the Patriarch Jacob’s “struggle with God” in Genesis 32.
“Traditionally,” writes Zamoyski, “the death of a king of France was announced with the phrase: ‘Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi!’, in order to stress the continuity of the institution of monarchy. When the king’s head, was held aloft on that sunless day, the crowd assembled around the scaffold shouted: ‘Vive la Nation!’ The message was unequivocal. The nation had replaced the king as the sovereign and therefore as the validating element in the state. The dead king’s God had been superseded by ‘Our Lord Mankind’, to use the words of one prominent revolutionary.”\(^{90}\)

“The condemnation of the king,” wrote Albert Camus, “is the crux of contemporary history. It symbolizes the secularization of our history and the disincarnation of the Christian God. Up to now, God played a part in history through the medium of kings. But His representative in history has been killed...”\(^{91}\)

The execution of the king was the signal for the abandonment of all restraint. Robespierre proclaimed “the Terror”, which, as Simon Jenkins points out, “was a specific policy, not a later description of anarchy. Robespierre said, ‘The foundations of popular government in a revolution are virtue and terror; terror without virtue is disastrous; virtue without terror is powerless. The Government of the Revolution is the despotism of liberty over tyranny.’ This phraseology became the thinking of dictators down the ages...”\(^{92}\)

In February, 1793, after the British broke off relations because of the execution of the king, the Convention declared war on the British and the Dutch, and in effect “bade defiance to the whole of Europe. ‘They threaten you with kings!’ roared Danton to the Convention. ‘You have thrown down your gauntlet to them, and this gauntlet is a king’s head, the signal of their coming death.’ ‘We cannot be calm,’ claimed the ever-bombastic Brissot, ‘until Europe, all Europe, is in flames.’”\(^{93}\)

No matter that the Declaration of the Rights of Man had declared for the freedom of every nation: revolutionary casuistry interpreted sovereignty to be the right only of revolutionary nations; all others deserved to become slaves of the Republic. On December 15, 1792 “generals were authorized in all occupied territories to introduce the full social programme of the French Republic. All existing taxes, tithes, feudal dues, and servitudes were to be abolished. So was nobility, and all types of privilege. The French motto would be, declared some deputies, War on the castles, peace to the cottages! In the name of peace, help, fraternity, liberty and equality, they would assist all people to establish ‘free and popular’ governments, with whom they would then co-operate.”\(^{94}\)

\(^{90}\)Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 1-2.
\(^{91}\)Camus, The Rebel, New York, 1956, p. 120.
\(^{93}\)Doyle, op. cit., p. 201.
\(^{94}\)Doyle, op. cit., p. 199.
But practice did not match theory: the theory of cosmopolitan universalism too often gave way to the practice of imperialist nationalism. Thus when Holland was conquered by the revolutionary armies, “it was compelled to cede various southern territories, including control of the mouth of the Scheldt, and pay for the upkeep of a French occupying army of 25,000 men. Finally, it was forced to conclude an alliance with the French Republic whose chief attraction was to place the supposedly formidable Dutch navy in the balance against Great Britain. This, then, was what the fraternity and help of the French Republic actually meant: total subordination to French needs and purposes.”

As Bernard Simms writes, “the ‘reason’, ‘fraternity’, ‘equality’ and ‘liberty’ offered by France were rejected not only because they were an outside imposition, but because they were highly oppressive in practice. ‘I attest,’ Napoleon’s foreign minister, Talleyrand, cautioned, ‘that any system which aims at taking freedom by open force to other peoples will only make that freedom hated and prevent its triumph.”

However, the revolutionary army under Dumouriez was defeated by the Austrians at Neerwinden. Dumouriez then changed sides, and it was only the army’s refusal to co-operate that prevented him from marching on Paris to restore the constitution of 1791 with Louis XVII as king.

Imperialism abroad was matched by despotism at home, forced conscription and crippling taxes. And now for the first time there was massive resistance: the peasants in the western regions of Brittany and the Vendée rebelled, and were crushed with great cruelty and the loss of about 250,000 lives, about ten times more than were claimed by the guillotine.

General Westermann reported to the Convention: “The Vendée is no more... I have buried it in the woods and marshes of Savenay... According to your orders, I have trampled their children beneath our horses’ feet; I have massacred their women, so they will no longer give birth to brigands. I do not have a single prisoner to reproach me. I have exterminated them all. The roads are sown with corpses. At Savenay, brigands are arriving all the time claiming to surrender, and we are shooting them non-stop... Mercy is not a revolutionary sentiment”

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

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97 Doyle, op. cit., p. 227.
98 Jenkins (op. cit) claims that there were up to 400,000 death.
99 Westermann, in Davies, op. cit., p. 705.
100 Doyle, op. cit., p. 226.
However, the counter-revolution in other parts of the country, and especially among the bourgeoisie of such large cities as Marseilles, Lyons and Bordeaux, was less principled and therefore much less effective. As one general reported of the Bordelais: “They appeared to me determined not to involve themselves in Parisian affairs, but more determined still to retain their liberty, their property, their opulence… They don’t want a king: they want a republic, but a rich and tranquil republic.”¹⁰¹ This difference in motivation between different parts of the counter-revolution, and the failure of many of its leaders to condemn the revolution in toto and as such, doomed it to failure in the long term. As long as the revolutionaries held the centre, and were able to use the methods of terror and mass conscription to send large armies into the field against their enemies, the advantage lay with them. Again, we see a close parallel with the Russian Civil War, where the Reds won because they held the centre and were more united ideologically than the Whites.

Between May 31 and June 2, 1793 a coup was carried out against the Girondists. Then, “in July 1793,” writes Jasper Ridley, “a young Girondin woman, Charlotte Corday, gained admission to Marat’s house by pretending that she wished to give him a list of names of Girondins to be guillotined. Finding him sitting as usual in his bath to cure his skin disease, she stabbed him to death.”¹⁰² She was guillotined, and the Girondin party was suppressed.

“In Lyons, the Girondins had gained control of the Freemasons’ lodges. In the summer of 1793 the Girondins there defied the authority of the Jacobin government in Paris, and guillotined one of the local Jacobin leaders. The Lyons Freemasons played a leading part in the rising against the Paris Jacobins; but the Jacobins suppressed the revolt, and several of the leading Girondin Freemasons of Lyons were guillotined.”¹⁰³

And so the Revolution was frenziedly devouring its own children.¹⁰⁴ That is, the Masons were devouring their own brothers; for the struggle between the Girondists and the Montagnards was in fact, according to Lev Tikhomirov, a struggle between different layers of Masonry.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Doyle, op. cit., p. 242.
¹⁰² David’s painting of the dead Marat in his bath gave the revolution an “iconic” representation of its first martyr. (V.M.)
¹⁰³ Ridley, op. cit., p. 140.
¹⁰⁴ As Pierre Vergniaud said before the Convention in March, 1793: “It must be feared that the Revolution, like Saturn, will devour its children one after the other” (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 522).
¹⁰⁵ Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 458. “In the period of the terror the majority of Masonic lodges were closed. As Louis Blanc explains, a significant number of Masons, though extremely liberal-minded, could still not, in accordance with their personal interests, character and public position, sympathize with the incitement of the maddened masses against the rich, to whom they themselves belonged. In the hottest battle of the revolution it was those who split off into the highest degrees who acted. The Masonic lodges were replaced by political clubs, although in the political clubs, too, there began a sifting of the revolutionaries into the more moderate and the extremists, so that quite a few Masons perished on the scaffolds from the hands of their
Now the Terror went into overdrive. The guillotine fell on traitors, backsliders, suspects, speculators and “egoists”. “The spirit of moderation,” declared Leclerc, needed to be expunged.

On September 17 a comprehensive Law of Suspects was passed, which empowered committees “to arrest anyone who ‘either by their conduct, their contacts, their words or their writings, showed themselves to be supporters of tyranny, of federalism, or to be enemies of liberty’, as well as a number of more specific categories such as former nobles ‘who have not constantly manifested their attachment to the revolution.’ Practically anybody might fall foul of such a sweeping law. In the weeks following even everyday speech acquired a sansculotte style. Those who refused to call each other ‘citizen’ rather than the deferential ‘Monsieur’, and to use the familiar form of address (tutoiement), fell under automatic suspicion. Then on 29 September the Convention passed a General Maximum Law which imposed price controls on a wide range of goods defined as of first necessity from food and drink to fuel, clothing, and even tobacco. Those who sold them above the maximum would be fined and placed on the list of suspects. The Revolutionary Army was at last set on foot…”

The Committee of Public Safety\(^{107}\) now took over control of the government, subject only to the oversight of the Convention. This anti-democratic move was said to be temporary and justified by the emergency situation. “It is impossible,” said Saint-Just in the Committee’s name, “for revolutionary laws to be executed if the government itself is not constituted in a revolutionary way.”\(^{108}\) As Lenin was to say: “You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs”…

The revolution now took terrible revenge on its defeated enemies. On October 12 the Committee “moved a decree that Lyons should be destroyed. Its very name was to disappear, except on a monument among the ruins which would proclaim ‘Lyons made war on Liberty. Lyons is no more.’”\(^{109}\) Lyons was not completely destroyed, but whole ranges of houses were burnt and thousands were guillotined and shot. “The effect… was designed to be a salutory one. ‘What cement for the Revolution!’ gloated Achard in a letter to Paris.”\(^{110}\)

In order to carry out its totalitarian programme of control of the whole population, the government issued “certificates of civisme – identity cards and testimonials of public reliability all in one. Originally only foreigners had been required to carry these documents, but the Law of Suspects made the requirement general [thereby showing that for the revolutionary government all citizens were aliens]. Those without them were liable to arrest and

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106 Doyle, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 251-252.
107 In Russian: \textit{Komitet gosudarstvennoj bezopasnosti} (KGB).
108 Doyle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 252.
109 Doyle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 254.
110 Hunt, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 63.
imprisonment; and in fact up to half a million people may have been imprisoned as suspects of one sort or another during the Terror. Up to 10,000 may have died in custody, crowded into prisons never intended for such numbers, or makeshift quarters no better equipped. These too deserve to be numbered among the victims of the Terror, although not formally condemned. So do those who were murdered or lynched without trial or official record during the chaotic, violent autumn of 1793, when the supreme law of public safety seemed to override more conventional and cumbersome procedures. Altogether the true total of those who died under the Terror may have been twice the official figure – around 30,000 people in just under a year... Nor is it true that most of those killed in the Terror were members of the former ‘privileged orders’, whatever the Revolution’s anti-aristocratic rhetoric might suggest. Of the official death sentences passed, less than 9 per cent fell upon nobles, and less than 7 per cent on the clergy. Disproportionately high as these figures may have been relative to the numbers of these groups in the population as a whole, they were not as high as the quarter of the Terror’s victims who came from the middle classes. And the vast majority of those who lost their lives in the proscriptions of 1793-4 – two-thirds of those officially condemned and doubtless a far higher proportion of those who disappeared unofficially – were ordinary people caught up in tragic circumstances not of their own making, who made wrong choices in lethal times, when indifference itself counted as a crime.”

The incarnation of the revolution in this, its bloodiest phase was Robespierre. He said: “I am not a flatterer, a conciliator, an orator, a protector of the people; I myself am the people.”

111 Doyle, op. cit., pp. 258, 259. For precise figures with breakdown according to class and sex, see Hunt, op. cit., p. 70.
6. THE REVOLUTION AND RELIGION

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

The weakened position of the Church encouraged the Protestants, and in June 300 died in clashes between Catholics and Protestants in Nîmes. Meanwhile, 150,000 papal subjects living in Avignon and the Comtat agitated for integration with France. Pope Pius VI rejected this, and in his letter Quod Aliquantum of March 29, 1791 he condemned the Declaration of the Rights of Man and all the religious legislation so far passed in the Assembly - “this absolute liberty which not only assures people of the right not to be disturbed about their religious opinions but also gives them this licence to think, write and even have printed with impunity all that the most unruly imagination can suggest about religion. It is a monstrous right, but it would seem to the Assembly to derive from the equality and freedom natural to all men. But what could be more senseless than to establish among men equality and this unbridled freedom which seems to quench reason... What is more contrary to the rights of the Creator God Who limited human freedom by prohibiting evil, than ‘this liberty of thought and action which the National Assembly accords to man in society as an inalienable right of nature?’

On July 12 a Civil Constitution for the Clergy was passed, rationalising the Church’s organisation, putting all the clergy on the State’s pay-roll and decreeing the election of the clergy by lay assemblies who might included Protestants and Jews as well as Catholics. The Pope had already, on July 10, pleaded with the King to veto the Civil Constitution, but the king, advised by weak bishops (although only 7 out of 160 took the oath), reluctantly agreed to it. The acceptance or rejection of the Civil Constitution now became a test of faith for Catholics. As opinion polarised, on October 30 thirty bishops from the Assembly signed an Exposition of Principles, explaining that, as Doyle writes, “they could not connive at such radical changes without consulting the Church through either a council or the Pope. Nevertheless patriots saw it as an incitement to disobey the law, and local authorities, clamorously supported by Jacobin clubs, began to enforce it. Bishops began to be expelled from suppressed sees; chapters were dissolved. In October and early November the first departmental bishops were elected. But this time the clergy did not meekly accept its fate. There were protests. ‘I can no more’, declared the incumbent of the doomed see of Senez, ‘renounce the spiritual contract which binds me to my

112 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 64.
Church than I can renounce the promises of my baptism... I belong to my flock in life and in death... If God wishes to test his own, the eighteenth century, like the first century, will have its martyrs.’ The first elected bishop, the deputy Expilly, who was chosen by the Finistère department, was refused confirmation by the archbishop of Rennes. In Soissons, the bishop was dismissed by the departmental authorities for denouncing the Civil Constitution. It was impossible to dismiss all the 104 priests of Nantes who did the same, but their salaries were stopped. Evidently there was to be no peaceful transition to a new ecclesiastical order, and indignant local authorities bombarded the Assembly with demands for action. Eventually, on 27 November, action was taken. The deputies decided, after two days of bitter debate, to dismiss at once all clerics who did not accept the new order unequivocally. And to test this acceptance they imposed an oath. All beneficed clergy were to swear after mass on the first available Sunday ‘to be faithful to the nation, the King and the law, and to uphold with all their power the constitution declared by the National Assembly and accepted by the king.’ All who refused were to be replaced at once through the procedures laid down in the Civil Constitution.

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

There is a bitter irony in these events. How often, since the eleventh century, had Popes bent western kings to their evil will! However, as present events now demonstrated, these were pyrrhic victories, which, in weakening the Monarchy, ultimately weakened the Church, too, in that Church and Monarchy are the two essential pillars of every Christian society. Right up to the Reformation the Popes had failed to understand that attacks on the throne were also attacks on the altar, and that an accusation of “royal despotism” would almost invariably be linked with one of “episcopal despotism”. The Counter-Reformation Popes

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114 Doyle, op. cit., pp. 143-144, 145.
were more careful to respect monarchical authority, and Louis XIV’s abrupt about-turn from Gallicanism to Ultramontanism witnessed to their continuing influence. But the constant political intrigues of the papal Society of the Jesuits, which made them a kind of “state within the state”, led to their being banned by all the governments of Western Europe - a severe blow from which the power of the Popes never fully recovered and which was an important condition of the success of the revolution. The Masons and even more radical groups like the Illuminati were quick to take the place of the Jesuits as the main threat to established authority, while using the Jesuits’ methods. And now, at the end of the eighteenth century, when papism was in full retreat before the onslaught of enlightened despots like Joseph II and revolutionary democrats like the French National Assembly, and the Popes were desperately in need of the support of “Most Catholic Kings” such as Louis XVI, they paid the price for centuries of papal anti-monarchism. Indeed, since it was Papism that destroyed the Orthodox symphony of powers, and thereby created the conditions for the revolution, there was reason in Catherine II’s suggestion that the European powers “embrace the Greek religion to save themselves from this immoral, anarchic, wicked and diabolical plague…”

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

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

It should be understood that this was not simply an expression of patriotism, but a new faith to replace all existing faiths. For “the nation, as Abbé Siéyès put it, recognized no interest on earth above its own, and accepted no law or authority other than its own – neither that of humanity at large nor of other nations”

115 Catherine II, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 520.
116 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 523.
117 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 35.
118 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 80.
nor, it goes without saying, of God. The nation therefore stood in the place of God; in the strict sense of the word, it was an idol. As Hobsbawm rightly comments: “‘The people’ identified with ‘the nation’ was a revolutionary concept; more revolutionary than the bourgeois-liberal programme which purported to express it.”119

But what precisely was the nation? To this question the prophet of nationalism, Rousseau, had provided the answer. The nation, he said, is revealed in the general will, which was not to be identified with the will of any individual, such as the king, or group, such as a parliamentary majority, but only in some spontaneous, mystical upswelling of emotion that carried all before it - was a “holy madness”, to use Lafayette’s phrase.120

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

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

“A precondition of this was the total elimination of Christianity. Being a sentimental person, Rousseau could not remain entirely unmoved by what he saw as the ‘sublime’ core of Christianity. But the existence of a morally independent religion alongside the civil institutions was bound to be destructive. ‘Far from binding the hearts of the citizens to the state, it detaches them from it, as from all earthly things,’ he writes: ‘I can think of nothing more

119 Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 80.
120 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 88.
contrary to the social spirit.’ It forced on people ‘two sets of laws, two leaders, two motherlands’, subjecting them to ‘contradictory duties’ and preventing them from being ‘both devout practitioners and good citizens’. Christianity demanded self-denial and submission, but only to God, and not to any creation of Man’s. A Christian’s soul could not be fused with the ‘collective soul’ of the nation, challenging the very basis of Rousseau’s proposition. His assertion that ‘a man is virtuous when his particular will is in accordance in every respect with the general will’, was heresy in Christian terms, according to which virtue consists in doing the will of God. There was no room for someone whose ultimate loyalty was to God in Rousseau’s model, which substituted the nation for God.”

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

A programme known as de-christianization was now launched. The calendar and festivals of the old religion were replaced by those of the new, civic religion of the nation. Thus July 14, August 10, January 21 (the day of the execution of Louis XVI) and May 31 (the day of the establishment of the Jacobin tyranny) were commanded to be celebrated as feast-days. As Bamber Gascoigne writes: “August 10th was the first anniversary of the day on which the Paris mob had stormed the Tuileries and had put an effective end to the monarchy. The occasion was celebrated with a Festival of Regeneration, also known by the even more uninspiring name of Festival of the Unity and Indivisibility of the Republic. Among the ruins of the Bastille Jacques-Louis David had built a huge figure of a seated woman. She was Mother Nature. From her breasts there spurted two jets of water, at which delegates filled their cups and drank libations. Three months later there was a Festival of Reason, in which an actress from the opera played the Goddess of Reason and was enthroned in the cathedral of Notre-Dame – with the red bonnet of Liberty on her head and a crucifix beneath one of her elegant feet.”

All the churches in Paris were closed, and the royal tombs destroyed. Then there arrived in the Nièvre in September, 1793 the representative Fouché, who “transformed it into a beacon of religious terror. Fouché, himself a former priest, came from the Vendée, where he had witnessed the ability of the clergy to inspire fanatical resistance to the Revolution’s authority. Christianity, he concluded, could not coexist in any form with the Revolution and, brushing aside what was left of the ‘constitutional’ Church, he inaugurated a civic religion

121 Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
of his own devising with a ‘Feast of Brutus’ on 22 September at which he denounced ‘religious sophistry’. Fouché particularly deplored clerical celibacy: it set the clergy apart, and in any case made no contribution to society’s need for children. Clerics who refused to marry were ordered to adopt and support orphans or aged citizens. The French people, Fouché declared in a manifesto published on 10 October, recognized no other cult but that of universal morality; and although the exercise of all creeds was proclaimed to be free and equal, none might henceforth be practised in public. Graveyards should exhibit no religious symbols, and at the gate of each would be an inscription \textit{Death is an eternal sleep.} Thus began the movement known as dechristianization. Soon afterwards Fouché moved on to Lyons; but during his weeks in Nevers his work had been watched by Chaumette, visiting his native town from Paris. He was to carry the idea back to the capital, where it was energetically taken up by his colleagues at the commune.

“Other representatives on mission, meanwhile, had also taken to attacking the outward manifestations of the Catholic religion. At Abbeville, on the edge of priest-ridden Flanders, Dumont favoured forced public abjuration of orders, preferably by constitutional clergy whose continued loyalty to the Revolution could only now be proved by such gestures. On October 7 in Rheims, Ruhl personally supervised the smashing of the phial holding the sacred oil of Clovis used to anoint French kings. None of this was authorized by the Convention: on the other hand the adoption on 5 October of a new republican calendar marked a further stage in the divorce between the French State and any sort of religion. Years would no longer be numbered from the birth of Christ, but from the inauguration of the French Republic on 22 September 1792. Thus it was already the Year II. There would be twelve thirty-day months with evocative, seasonal names; each month would have three ten-day weeks (décades) ending in a rest-day (décadi). Sundays therefore disappeared and could not be observed unless they coincided with the less-frequent décadis. The introduction of the system at this moment only encouraged representatives on mission to intensify their lead; and dechristianization became an important feature of the Terror in all the former centres of rebellion when they were brought to heel. Once launched it was eminently democratic. Anybody could join in smashing images, vandalizing churches (the very word was coined to describe this outburst of iconoclasm), and theft of vestments to wear in blasphemous mock ceremonies. Those needing pretexts could preach national necessity when they tore down bells or walked off with plate that could be recast into guns or coinage. Such activities were particular favourites among the Revolutionary Armies. The Parisian detachments marching to Lyons left a trail of pillaged and closed churches, and smouldering bonfires of ornaments, vestments, and holy pictures all along their route. Other contributions took more organization, but Jacobin clubs and popular societies, not to mention local authorities, were quite happy to orchestrate festivals of reason, harmony, wisdom, and other such worthy attributes to former churches; and to recruit parties of priests who, at climactic moments in these ceremonies, would renounce their vows and declare themselves ready to marry. If their choice fell on a former nun, so much the better.
“When Chaumette returned from Nevers, the Paris Commune made dechristianization its official policy. On 23 October the images of kings on the front of Notre-Dame were ordered to be removed: the royal tombs at Saint-Denis had already been emptied and desecrated by order of the Convention in August. The word Saint began to be removed from street names, and busts of Marat replaced religious statues. Again the Convention appeared to be encouraging the trend when it decreed, on 20 October, that any priest (constitutional or refractory) denounced for lack of civisme by six citizens would be subject to deportation, and any previously sentenced to deportation but found in France should be executed. Clerical dress was now forbidden in Paris, and on 7 November Gobel, the elected constitutional bishop, who had already sanctioned clerical marriage for his clergy, came with eleven of them to the Convention and ceremonially resigned his see. Removing the episcopal insignia, he put on a cap of liberty and declared that the only religion of a free people should be that of Liberty and Equality. In the next few days the handful of priests who were deputies followed his example. Soon Grégoire, constitutional bishop of Blois, was the only deputy left clinging to his priesthood and clerical dress. The sections meanwhile were passing anti-clerical motions, and on 12 November that of Gravilliers, whose idol had so recently been Jacques Roux, sent a deputation to the Convention draped in ‘ornaments from churches in their district, spoils taken from the superstitious credulity of our forefathers and repossessed by the reason of free men’ to announce that all churches in the section had been closed. This display followed a great public ceremony held in Notre-Dame, or the ‘Temple of Reason’, as it was now redesignated, on the tenth. On this occasion relays of patriotic maidens in virginal white paraded reverently before a temple of philosophy erected where the high altar had stood. From it emerged, at the climax of the ceremony, a red-capped female figure representing Liberty. Appreciatively described by an official recorder of the scene as ‘a masterpiece of nature’, in daily life she was an actress; but in her symbolic role she led the officials of the commune to the Convention, where she received the fraternal embrace of the president and secretaries.

“However carefully choreographed, there was not much dignity about these posturings; and attacks on parish churches and their incumbents (who were mostly now popularly elected) risked making the Revolution more enemies than friends. Small-town and anti-religious Jacobin zeal, for example, provoked a minor revolt in the Brie in the second week in December. To shouts of Long live the Catholic Religion, we want our priests, we want the Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, crowds of peasants sacked the local club. Several thousands took up arms and joined the movement, and only a force of National Guards and sansculottes from the Revolutionary Army restored order in a district whose tranquillity was vital to the regular passage of food supplies to the capital from southern Champagne. But even before this the Committee of Public Safety was growing anxious about the counter-productive effects of dechristianization. Robespierre in particular, who believed that religious faith was indispensable to orderly, civilized society, sounded the alarm. On November 21 he denounced anti-religious excesses at the Jacobin club. They smacked of more fanaticism than
they extinguished. At the same time he persuaded the Committee to circularize popular societies warning them not to fan superstition and fanaticism by persecution. On 6 December, finally, the Convention agreed to reiterate the principle of religious freedom in a decree which formally prohibited all violence or threats against the ‘liberty of cults’. But by then it was too late. The example of Paris had encouraged Jacobin zealots everywhere, and with the repression of revolt in full swing and the role of priests in the Vendée particularly notorious, the remaining trappings of religion were too tempting a target to ignore. The commune’s response to Robespierre on 23 November had been to decree the closing of all churches in the capital; and soon local authorities were shutting them wholesale throughout the country. By the spring, churches were open for public worship only in the remotest corners of France, such as the Jura mountains. By then, perhaps 20,000 priests had been bullied into giving up their status, and 6,000 had given their renunciation the ultimate confirmation by marrying. In some areas, such as Provence, dechristianization only reached its peak in March or April 1794.

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

Robespierre was still alive, preaching the new, revolutionary definition of virtue and religion. A cult of the goddess reason was instituted, and by the Decree of 18 Floréal (7 May) it was declared that the French people recognised a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul, and that a cult worthy of the Supreme Being was the fulfilment of a man’s civic duties. Thus the emphasis was still on man’s civic duties: religion had no independent function outside the State, in accordance with the words of Abbé Guillaume Raynal in 1780: “The State, it seems to me, is not made for religion, but religion for the State.” It was the same with morality, which was now defined to include among the highest virtues “the hatred of bad faith and tyranny, the punishment of tyrants and traitors, help to the unhappy, respect for the weak, protection to the oppressed, to do all the good possible to others and to be unjust to nobody.”

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124 He said: “There are people who are superstitious in perfectly good faith. They are sick people whom we must restore to good health by winning their confidence. A forced curé would drive them to fanaticism. Priests have been denounced for saying the Mass. They will continue to do so all the longer if you try to prevent them. He who wants to prevent them is more fanatical than the priest himself” (in Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 214). (V.M.).
125 He said: “Atheism is aristocratic; the idea of a great being who watches over oppressed innocence, is altogether popular... If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him” (Hunt, op. cit., p. 68). (V.M.)
127 Roland, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 523.
128 Raynal, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 518.
129 Hunt, op. cit., p. 66.
On 20 Prairial (8 June), Robespierre moved that “the nation should celebrate the Supreme Being. Thus every locality was given a month to make its preparations. The fact that 8 June was also Whit Sunday [Pentecost] may or may not have been a coincidence; if not, it could have been conceived either as a challenge or as an olive branch to Christianity. In the event little direction was given to the localities on how to organize the festival. Some adopted the props of all-too-recent festivals of reason, merely painting out old slogans with new ones. Others used the opportunity to allow mass to be said publicly for the first time in months. But in Paris the organization of the occasion was entrusted to the experienced hands of the painter David, himself a member of the Committee of General Security. He built an artificial mountain in the Champ de Mars, surmounted by a tree of liberty, and thither a mass procession made its way from the Tuileries. At its head marched the members of the Convention, led by their president, who happened that week to be Robespierre. He used the opportunity to deliver two more eulogies of virtue and republican religion, pointedly ignoring, though not failing to notice, the smirks of his fellow deputies at the posturings of this pseudo-Pope. Others found it no laughing matter. ‘Look at the bugger,’ muttered Thuriot, an old associate of Danton. ‘It’s not enough for him to be master, he has to be God.’”

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

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

130 Doyle, op. cit., p. 277.
131 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 67.
signs of religious affiliation in the form of priestly dress, ceremonies, or church bells remained strictly forbidden. The faithful would have to buy or rent their own places of worship and pay their own priests or ministers…”  

132 Doyle, op. cit., p. 288.
Let us summarize the effects of the revolution so far... As regards the Church, writes Comby, it was deprived of its autonomous position within the State and its geography "was completely reshaped. The dioceses were reduced from 135 to 185, one per department, of which ten were archdioceses. There was to be one parish for every 6000 inhabitants. Bishops and priests would be elected by the same electors, including non-Catholics, who elected the various officials of the department or district. In this way, the legislators thought to return to the origins of the church. A bishop would require his metropolitan (archbishop) to install him; he would write to the pope only to inform him of his appointment and to assure him that he was in communion with him."¹³³

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

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

"The revolution did not 'give the land to the peasants'. They already possessed about a quarter of it, although most of them did not own enough to be self-sufficient. The Church lands were mostly snapped up by the wealthier farmers or by outside speculators... The prevailing economic theories persuaded the various assemblies to concentrate very heavily on direct taxation, most of which fell on the land. Requisitioning of food, horses and carts was borne exclusively by the peasants....

¹³³ Comby, op. cit., p. 112.
"Once again the revolution greatly increased the impact of the state on the
day-to-day life of the community. This was especially obvious where religion
was concerned."\textsuperscript{134}

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

"With the Directory," writes Edmund Wilson, "the French Revolution had
passed into the period of reaction which was to make possible the domination of
Bonaparte. The great rising of the bourgeoisie, which, breaking out of the feudal
forms of the monarchy, dispossessing the nobility and the clergy, had presented
itself to society as a movement of liberation, had ended by depositing the wealth
in the hands of a relatively small number of people and creating a new conflict of
classes. With the reaction against the Terror, the ideals of the Revolution were
allowed to go by the board. The five politicians of the Directory and the
merchants and financiers allied with them were speculating in confiscated
property, profiteering in army supplies, recklessly inflating the currency and
gambling on the falling gold louis. And in the meantime, during the winter of
1795-96, the working people of Paris were dying of hunger and cold in the
streets."\textsuperscript{135}

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

“While Babeuf was in jail, his seven-year-old daughter died of hunger. He
had managed to remain poor all his life. His popularity had been all with the
poor. His official posts had earned him only trouble. Now, as soon as he was free
again, he proceeded to found a political club, which opposed the policies of the
Directory and which came to be known as the Society of the Equals. They
demanded in a \textit{Manifesto of the Equals} (not, however, at that time made public)
that there should be ‘no more individual property in land; the land belonged to
no one… We declare that we can no longer endure, with the enormous majority
of men, labor and sweat in the service and for the benefit of a small minority. It

\textsuperscript{134} Hampson, \textit{op. cit}, pp. 235, 238.
\textsuperscript{135} Wilson, \textit{To the Finland Station}, London: Phoenix, 2004, p. 71.
is has now been long enough and too long that less than a million individuals have been disposing of that which belongs to more than twenty millions of their kind... Never has a vaster design been conceived or put into execution. Certain men of genius, certain sages, have spoken of it from time to time in a low and trembling voice. Not one of them has had the courage to tell the whole truth... People of France! Open your eyes and your heart to the fullness of happiness. Recognize and proclaim with us the Republic of Equals!'

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

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

“Babeuf’s ‘insurrectionary committee’ had agents in the army and the police, and they were doing such effective work that the government tried to send its troops out of Paris, and, when they refused to obey, disbanded them. During the early days of May, 1796, on the eve of the projected uprising, the Equals were betrayed by a stool pigeon and their leaders were arrested and put in jail. The followers of Babeuf made an attempt to rally a sympathetic police squadron, but were cut down by a new Battalion of the Guard which had been pressed into service for the occasion.
“Babeuf was made a public example by being taken to Vendôme in a cage – an indignity which not long before had filled the Parisians with fury when the Austrians had inflicted it on a Frenchman…

“[At this trial] the vote, after much disagreement, went against Babeuf. One of his sons had smuggled in to him a tin dagger made out of a candlestick, and when he heard the verdict pronounced, he stabbed himself in the Roman fashion, but only wounded himself horribly and did not die. The next morning (May 27, 1797) he went to the guillotine. Of his followers thirty were executed and many sentenced to penal servitude or deportation.”136

"The Babeuf plot of 1796," writes Malcolm Crook, "was a reflection of the scant popular support that former Jacobins were now able to muster. The imposition of a new order from above seemed to have replaced the vision of a people seizing power for themselves from below…”137

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The Directory gave Napoleon his chance to seize power. Napoleon was a Corsican who first showed his revolutionary mettle on October 5 1795 (13 Vendémiaire), when he mowed down hundreds of moderate anti-Jacobins who were trying to take over the city centre. In reward for this ruthless act, the revolution gave him command of the Army of Italy, where he first showed his military genius by comprehensively defeating the Austrians and occupying Venice in May, 1797. For a time he rested on his laurels, while studying and cultivating the cultural leaders of Paris. Then, on 19 Brumaire (November 10), 1799, his chance came. He overthrew the Directory, describing parliamentarism as “hot air”, and frightened the two elective assemblies into submission. On December 13 a new constitution was proclaimed with Bonaparte as the first of three Consuls with full executive powers. And on December 15 the three Consuls declared: “Citizens, the Revolution is established upon its original principles: it is consummated…”138

Paul Johnson writes: “The new First Consul was far more powerful than Louis XIV, since he dominated the armed forces directly in a country that was now organized as a military state. All the ancient restraints on divine-right kingship – the Church, the aristocracy and its resources, the courts, the cities and their charters, the universities and their privileges, the guilds and their immunities – all had been swept away by the Revolution, leaving France a legal blank on which Bonaparte could stamp the irresistible force of his personality.”139

136 Wilson, op. cit., pp. 72-74, 79.
137 Crook, Napoleon comes to power, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996, p. 30.
138 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530.
8. NAPOLEON AND THE ENGLISH

As Eric Hobsbawm notes, the Anglo-French conflict had “a persistence and stubbornness unlike any other. [Embittered by the many wars they had already fought in the eighteenth century,] neither side was really prepared to settle for less than total victory” – a rare thing in those days, though a common one today. The first legacy of the revolution, therefore, was total war: war between classes, war between nations, war between religions (for the revolution, as have seen, must be counted as a religion). 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 during Napoleon’s revolutionary wars. Such was the “fraternity” created by the revolution...

Napoleon had a particular animus against the English, that “nation of shopkeepers”, as he contemptuously called them, the one nation he never succeeded in defeating on the battlefield, that fought him longer than any other, and in whose captivity on the island of St. Helena he finally died. The origin of this animus may have been Britain’s temporary conquest of his own native land of Corsica.

But let us begin at the beginning of this titanic struggle... Tombs writes: “The Royal Navy sailed into France’s base at Toulon in August 1793 to support rebels there, but had to withdraw under the cannon fire of a young artillery officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, in December, after capturing or torching the French Mediterranean fleet. A landing at Quiberon Bay in July 1795 of a force of émigrés to help other rebels in western France ended in massacre. Financial aid by Britain to resurgent royalist parties in France, and the recruitment of agents at the heart of the republican regime – even its police and army – by British secret agents, came to nothing when the same General Bonaparte crushed a royalist uprising in Paris in October 1795. Corsican patriots threw out the French and asked to join the British Empire, but the island could not be held long and was evacuated in 1796. The dynamic Bonaparte marched into Italy in 1796 and crushingly defeated the Austrians, who were forced to yield control of northern Italy to France and accept French annexation of the Austrian Netherlands and the Rhineland. Britain’s naval bases in Italy were threatened, and in 1797 the Royal Navy had to evacuate the Mediterranean. Pitt was willing to make peace with a reasonable French republic, if such emerged. As early as December 1795 the King’s Speech had hinted at negotiations, but the French returned an ‘insolent’ response demanding the return of all colonies and acceptance of its huge territorial expansion. [The Prime Minister William] Pitt was left hoping for ‘the return of reason to our deluded enemy’. Though he won a general election in 1796, he and the Cabinet were close to despair over the war: ‘We shall be left to sustain alone the conflict with France and Holland, probably joined by Spain, and perhaps favoured more or less openly by the Northern powers,’ and though

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with proper exertion we can make our party good against them all,’ victory seemed inconceivable.

“In 1798, hope suddenly dawned. Bonaparte led an invasion of Egypt, aiming to dominate the Mediterranean and perhaps march on India: ‘Truly to overthrow England,’ he argued, ‘we must occupy Egypt’. But his fleet was annihilated by Nelson at the battle of the Nile in August: eleven out of thirteen warships were destroyed or captured, and Bonaparte abandoned his army in Egypt and escaped back to France. This gave a fillip to all France’s enemies, and a ‘Second Coalition’ of Austria, Russia, Turkey and Britain prepared a final effort. The revolution now seemed doomed: revolts erupted throughout the occupied territories and in western and southern France, while pro-French rebels in Ireland and Naples were bloodily crushed. In 1799 the Russians and Austrians advanced through Italy, Switzerland and Germany. British and Russian troops landed in Holland and captured the Dutch fleet. Bonaparte seized dictatorial power as First Consul in November 1799, telling his troops that the politicians were in British pay. He offered peace terms, which were promptly rejected. London thought he was playing for time: ‘The whole game is in our hands now, and it wants little more than patience to play it well, to the end.’ The final push was set for the summer of 1800, with coordinated invasions of France from several directions. But everything unraveled as the allies fell out and the French rallied. Consul Bonaparte showed himself to be more than just another ambitious general, when he ended internal rebellion by force and concession and then marched an army rapidly over the Alps to defeat the surprised Austrians at Marengo on 14 June. This effectively finished off the shaky Second Coalition. Bonaparte sent a letter to the Austrian emperor, supposedly written on the field of Marengo ‘surrounded by 15,000 corpses’, offering peace and blaming the war solely on the greed of England – an explanation that many in Europe found plausible.

“Now it was Britain that suddenly faced defeat. Austria and Russia sought peace. Bonaparte was preparing all alliance with Spain to attack Ireland, Portugal and India. Prussia occupied Hanover, the last British foothold in Europe. Russia, Denmark and Sweden were forming an ‘Armed Neutrality’ and excluding British ships from the Baltic. Gold reserves dwindled and bread prices rose to three times their 1798 level. Oxford students were rationed; others less fortunate starved. A wave of riots tied down a large part of the army. Demands for peace became deafening. Pitt, on the edge of a breakdown, resigned in March 1801 when the king refused to extend equal right to Catholics following the union with Ireland. The English now lived their recurring nightmare: an enemy dominating the Continent. This had to be pre-empted by what a minister called ‘one brilliant act of British enterprise [that] would intervene to check and soften the uniformity of calamity and defeat’. In fact there were two. In March 1801 General Abercrombie forced a landing in Egypt and went on to defeat a larger French army – a remarkable success for the despised Redcoats. In April Nelson, at the first battle of Copenhagen, destroyed the Danish fleet, threatened to bombard the city, and forced Denmark to withdraw from the ‘Armed
Neutrality’, whose other members prudently did likewise. The pro-French Tsar Paul was assassinated, and Russian rapprochement with France halted.

“So the unwinnable war could be ended. In November 1801, Pitt made a frank admission to the Commons, if not of defeat, certainly of partial failure: ‘[Our] great object… was defence in a war waged against most of the nations of Europe, but against us with particular malignity… I had hopes of our being able to put together the scattered fragments of that great and venerable edifice [the French monarchy] in the stead of that mad system which threatened the destruction of Europe… This, it is true, has been found unsustainable.’ Britain concluded the Treaty of Amiens in March 1802, in which it agreed to return most overseas conquests except Trinidad and Ceylon, and effectively recognized the Continental hegemony of a much enlarged France, including even control of the Low Countries. No agreement in our modern history, except that of Munich in 1938, has been so vilified and so welcomed. Food prices fell precipitously and rioting subsided. A jubilant Lambeth publican gave away all his beer. The London Corresponding Society wrote an adulatory letter to Bonaparte declaring their devotion to France and thanking him that ‘peace reigns on earth, and this is the work of Frenchmen.’ Charles James Fox owned that ‘the Triumph of the French government over the English does in fact afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise.’ Tourists streamed across the Channel to see what post-Revolutionary France was like: they found ruined churches and chateaux, and lots of soldiers. Politicians (eighty-two MPs and thirty-one peers) went in the hope of sizing up the charismatic Bonaparte. Dissenters identified him as God’s latest instrument, in the words of one radical MP, ‘the Great Man of the People of France, the Liberator of Europe’. Intellectuals admired him as a macho version of themselves. Fox found him rather a bore, yet praised him in the Commons as ‘the most stupendous monument of human wisdom’.”

142 Tombs, op. cit., pp. 396-398.
9. NAPOLEON THE MAN-GOD

What was it about this man that caused even Fox, who had fought against him for years, to adore him as “the most stupendous monument of human wisdom”?! 

That Napoleon was a man of astonishing energy who from a secular point of view achieved great things – and not only on the battlefield – is undeniable. Indeed, Napoleon’s primary significance may be seen in his having spread the ideas of the Enlightenment throughout Continental Europe. Andrew Roberts writes: “Goethe himself said that Napoleon was ‘always enlightened by reason… He was in a permanent state of enlightenment’. A child of the Enlightenment who became an exponent of the rationalism of Rousseau and Voltaire as a youth, Napoleon believed that Europeans were on the cusp of the most important scientific and cultural developments since the Renaissance. His correspondence with astronomers, chemists, mathematicians and biologists expressed a respect for their work to be expected from a member of the Institut, the headquarters of the French Enlightenment of which he was so proud to have been elected a member.”\footnote{Roberts, “Why Napoleon Merits the Title ‘the Great’”, BBC History Magazine, November, 2014, pp. 36-38.}

As Marr writes, his greatest civil achievement “was the French legal code, or Code Napoléon, a radical simplification and rationalization of old laws, producing a single coherent system, it reshaped France and was influential across the continent. At its height the Napoleonic Empire would reach as far as the Duchy of Warsaw, the tip of Italy and the Balkans, stripping away old aristocratic rights, ending religious discrimination – including against the Jews – and spreading its new laws and the metric system.”\footnote{Marr, op. cit., p. 370.}

But what good he may have done was far outweighed by the evil – the evil of a true forerunner of the Antichrist…

The Holy Fathers teach that the Antichrist will come at a time of anarchy, which he will use in order to consolidate his power, presenting himself to the world as its saviour. Napoleon, as “the forerunner of the Antichrist”, as the Russian Holy Synod proclaimed him in 1806, came to power at just such a period… Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the French revolution appeared to have lost its way, consumed by poverty, corruption and both civil and international war. It was saved, as Edmund Burke had predicted, by a “popular general” - Napoleon Bonaparte. He was as sincerely faithful to the spirit of the French revolution as Cromwell had been to the spirit of the English revolution. Madame de Stael called him Robespierre on horseback. After all, he came from Corsica, which in 1755 had successfully rebelled from Genoa, and for which Rousseau had written one of his most seminal works, Project de
constitution pour la Corse, in 1765. But, like Cromwell (and Caesar), Napoleon found that in order to “save” the republic he had to take control of it and rule it like the most despotic of kings.

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

But, again like Caesar and Cromwell, he could never confess to being a king in the traditional sense. Under him, in Davies’ phrase, “a pseudo-monarchy headed pseudo-democratic institutions.” The falseness and contradictoriness of it was illustrated by French coinage of the time that bore the phrase: République Française – Napoléon empereur.

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

Moreover, Napoleon spread his kind of monarchy everywhere, replacing the Holy Roman Empire, which dissolved itself in 1806, as the “super-monarchy” of Europe. Thus the kingdoms and Grand Duchies of Italy, Venice, Rome, Naples, Lucca, Dubrovnik, Holland, Mainz, Bavaria, Württemburg, Saxony, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Westphalia and Spain were all established or re-established and all ruled by Napoleon’s relations by blood or marriage. As Simon Winder writes, “many bishops, knights, dukes, abbesses and petty oligarchs lost out, but others cleverly adapted. There is a funny painting of the young Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian IV Joseph, all dolled up in his wig and jewels, the acme of rococo flummery, which can be contrasted with the surprisingly different painting of him as the brand new (from 1806) King of Bavaria. Maximilian I, thanks to Napoleon, sporting his own hair, cut short and severe, and dressed in

145 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 531.
147 Davies, op. cit., p. 701.
a dark blue, almost undecorated uniform, faking the stern mien of the simple soldier. This sort of graceless rebranding was going on everywhere.”

“The problem,” writes Niall Ferguson, “was that no matter how much he wrapped himself in the trappings of legitimate rule, appropriating Egyptian, Roman and Habsburg regalia and iconography, Napoleon could never achieve the one thing on which hierarchical systems of rule depend (and insist upon: legitimacy.” Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow called him a “not-born-in-the-purple” (neporfirorodnij) – in other words, illegitimate - emperor, who destroyed kingdoms in one place only to build others in another.

So, as J.M. Roberts writes, while Napoleon reinstalled monarchy, “it was in no sense a restoration. Indeed, he took care so to affront the exiled Bourbon family that any reconciliation with it was inconceivable. He sought popular approval for the empire in a plebiscite and got it.

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

According to Stendhal, Napoleon’s court “totally corrupted” him “and exalted his amour propre to the state of a disease... He was on the point of making Europe one vast monarchy.” “The French empire shall become the metropolitan of all other sovereignties,’ Napoleon once said to a friend. ‘I want to force every king in Europe to build a large palace for his use in Paris. When an Emperor of the French is crowned, these kings shall come to Paris, and they shall adorn that imposing ceremony with their presence and salute it with their homage.”

“As one of his secretaries Baron Meneval wrote, he saw himself as ‘the pillar of royalty in Europe’. On January 18th, 1813, he wrote to his brother Jerome that his enemies, by appealing to popular feeling, represented ‘upheavals and revolutions... pernicious doctrines.’ In Napoleon’s opinion his fellow monarchs

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153 The result of the plebiscite was 3,571,329 ‘yes’ votes to 2,570 ‘noes’. As Johnson points out, “Bonaparte was the first dictator to produce faction figures.” (op. cit., pp. 49-50). (V.M.)
155 Stendhal, in Mansel, op. cit., p. 43.
were traitors to ‘their own cause’ when in 1813 they began to desert the French Empire, or in 1814 refused to accept his territorial terms for peace...”

Thus Napoleon represents in his own person the clearest demonstration of the inner relationship between democracy and despotism. He came to power as a supporter of the revolution, and there was a liberal stamp to his legislation. He often held plebiscites, that instrument of liberal democracy – but regularly rigged them, which is a characteristic of despots. For if the revolution means power to and from the people, it can just as well mean power to one man representing the people. The deification of the people naturally leads to the deification of one man from the people. What it cannot mean is power coming from God or the Church. This was symbolized above all by Napoleon’s coronation in 1804. Unlike Charlemagne one thousand years earlier, who allowed himself to be crowned by the Pope, Napoleon took the crown out of the Pope’s hands and crowned himself. In other words, he did not know his power or legitimacy to anyone or anything except himself...

However, this did not prevent him pretending to have received the crown from the people. “I have not at all usurped the crown,” he said. “I picked it up from the gutter. The people put it on my head. We have to respect its acts!”

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

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

157 Mansel, op. cit, p. 43.
159 Johnson writes: “He liked the vague and abstract notion of Rousseau’s concept, the General Will, offering a ruling elite that knew its business the opportunity to harness the people to a national effort without any of the risks of democracy. In practice an elite always formed itself into a pyramid, with one man at its summit. His will expressed the General Will... and gave it decisiveness, the basis for action. Constitutions were important in the sense that window-dressing was important in a shop. But the will was the product to be sold to the nation and, once sold, imposed” (op. cit, p. 17). (V.M.)
“Police control and limitations on personal freedom had been a focus of condemnation by the Philosophes before the Revolution, but had not been entirely efficient: a whole industry of importing and distributing banned texts had flourished in the 1770s and 1780s. Bonaparte’s police were more thorough, and so swingeing were the penalties that self-censorship rapidly became the safest path for a newspaper to take. Bonaparte closed down sixty of the seventy-three newspapers in Paris in January, 1800, and had a weekly summary prepared of all printed material, but he was soon able to tell his Chief of Police, Fouché, ‘They only print what I want them to.’¹⁶⁰ In the same way, the hated lettres de cachet appear limited and inefficient when compared to Bonaparte’s and Fouché’s record of police spies, trials without jury and imprisonment without trial. Bonaparte’s brief experience as a Jacobin leader in Ajaccio had taught him how to recognise, and deal with, potential opponents.¹⁶¹

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

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

“When a Royalist bomb plot was uncovered in December, 1800, Bonaparte seized the opportunity to blame it on the Jacobins, and many were guillotined, with over a hundred more being exiled or imprisoned. The regime of the Terror had operated in similar ways to remove large numbers of potential or actual opponents. Press censorship and the use of police spies ensured that anti-

¹⁶⁰ As he said to Metternich: “You see me master of France; well, I would not undertake to govern her for three months with liberty of the press” (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530). (V.M.)

¹⁶¹ Johnson writes: “Fouché, who operated the world’s first secret police force, and who was the prototype of Himmler or Beria, was an important element in Bonaparte’s legacy of evil, for some of his methods were widely imitated in Austria and Prussia, where they became permanent, and even in harmless Sweden, where they were carried out by Bonaparte’s marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte” (op. cit., p. 105). (V.M.)
government opinions were not publicly aired. The Declaration of the Rights of Man had guaranteed freedom of expression; but this freedom had already been eroded before Bonaparte’s coup. The Terror had seen both moral and political censorship, and the Directory had on several occasions exercised its constitutional right to censor the press. Bonaparte appears merely to have been more efficient…

“Bonaparte certainly held power without consulting the French people; he took away many of the freedoms they had been guaranteed in 1789; he taxed them more heavily than they had been taxed before. [In 1803 he wrote: ‘I haven’t been able to understand yet what good there is in an opposition. Whatever it may say, its only result is to diminish the prestige of authority in the eyes of the people’.”162

In 1806, writes Simon Jenkins, he “established a ‘continental system’ of European customs controls, aimed at excluding British goods from continental markets. In an intriguing premonition of the twentieth-century European Union, he announced, ‘There is not enough sameness among the nations of Europe’. There should be a single dominant power ‘with enough authority to force [the nations] to live in harmony with one another’. That power should, of course, be France…”163

As Schroeder put it, the decade of Napoleonic hegemony in Europe was an exercise in European colonization…164

However, writes Adam Zamoyski, “it was not so much a matter of France ‘über alles’. ‘European society needs a regeneration,’ Napoleon asserted in conversation in 1805. ‘There must be a superior power which dominates all the other powers, with enough authority to force them to live in harmony with one another – and France is the best placed for that purpose.’ He was, like many a tyrant, utopian in his ambitions. ‘We must have a European legal system, a European appeal court, a common currency, the same weights and measures the same laws,’ Napoleon once said to Joseph Fouché: ‘I must make of all the peoples of Europe one people, and of Paris the capital of the world.’”165 And yet “at bottom,” as Johnson notes, “Bonaparte despised the French, or perhaps it would be more exact to say the Parisians, the heart of the ‘political nation’. He thought of them, on the basis of his experience during the various phases of the Revolution, as essentially frivolous.”166

So Napoleon was undoubtedly a despot, but a despot who could claim many precedents for his despotism in the behaviour of the Jacobins and Directory. And if he was not faithful to the forms of the revolution in its early phase, replacing

163 Jenkins, A Short History of Europe, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, p. 188.
165 Zamoyski, 1812, p. 9.
166 Johnson, op. cit., p. 119.
democracy (of a despotic kind) with monarchy (of a populist kind), he nevertheless remained faithful to its fundamental principles - the principle, on the one hand, that nobody and nothing should be independent of the State (the principle of totalitarianism), and on the other, the principle that the Nation was the supreme value, and serving and dying for the Nation - the supreme glory.

The territorial states of the eighteenth century fought limited wars, and formed a balance of power to prevent the emergence of any hegemonic power. Since their primary motive was commerce, and since commerce is advanced by peace, they aimed to avoid wars by calculated concessions and adjustments. But Napoleon reverted to the absolutist tradition of Louis XIV, aiming at complete dominance of his neighbours. The basis of his power was therefore no kind of right, dynastic or otherwise, but might. He came to power through military might and retained only so long as he continued to win wars.

As Bernard Cornwell writes, Napoleon “was a superb administrator, but that was not how he wanted to be remembered. Above all, he was a warlord. His idol was Alexander the Great. In the middle of the nineteenth century, in the American Civil War. Robert E. Lee, the great Confederate General, watched his troops executing a brilliant and battle-winning maneuver and said, memorably, ‘It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.’ Napoleon had grown too fond of it, he loved war. Perhaps it was his first love, because it combined the excitement of supreme risk with the joy of victory. He had the incisive mind of a great strategist, yet when the marching was done and the enemy outflanked he still demanded enormous sacrifices of his men. After Austerlitz, when one of his generals lamented the French lying dead on that frozen battlefield, the Emperor retorted that ‘the women of Paris can replace those men in one night’.167 When Metternich, the clever Austrian Foreign Minister, offered Napoleon honourable peace terms in 1813 and reminded the Emperor of the human cost of refusal, he received the scornful answer that Napoleon would happily sacrifice a million to gain his ambitions. Napoleon was careless about the lives of his troops, yet his soldiers adored him because he had the common touch. He knew how to speak to them, how to jest with them and how to inspire them. His soldiers might adore him, but his generals feared him. Marshal Augereau, a foul-mouthed disciplinarian, said, ‘This little bastard of a general scares me!’, and General Vandamme, a hard man, said he ‘trembled like a child’ when he approached Napoleon. Yet Napoleon led them all to glory. That was his drug, la Gloire! And in search of it he broke peace treaty after peace treaty, and his armies marched beneath their Eagle standards from Madrid to Moscow, from the Baltic to the Red Sea. He astonished Europe with victories like Austerlitz and Friedland, but he also led his Grande Armée to disaster in the Russian snow. Even his defeats were on a gargantuan scale…”168

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167 In this he was very different from Wellington, who hated war and wept over the deaths of his soldiers. (V.M.)  
The truth is, therefore, that it was neither the State nor the Nation that Bonaparte exalted above all, – although he greatly increased the worship of both in later European history, – but himself. So the spirit that truly reigned in the Napoleonic era can most accurately be described as the spirit of the man-god, of the Antichrist, of whom Bonaparte himself was a forerunner.

As Tsaritsa Elizabeth wrote to her mother when her husband, Tsar Alexander I, was still under Napoleon’s spell: “You know, Mamma, this man seems to me like an irresistible seducer who by temptation or force succeeds in stealing the hearts of his victims. Russia, the most virtuous of them, has defended herself for a long time; but she has ended up no better than the others. And, in the person of her Emperor, she has yielded as much to charm as to force. He [Alexander] feels a secret attraction to his enticer which is apparent in all he does. I should indeed like to know what magic it is that he [Napoleon] employs to change people’s opinions so suddenly and so completely…”

This antichristian, seductive, serpent-like quality comes out also in Madame De Staël’s characterization: “I had the disturbing feeling that no emotion of the heart could ever reach him. He regards a human being like a fact or a thing, never as an equal person like himself. He neither hates nor loves… The force of his will resides in the imperturbable calculations of his egotism. He is a chess-master whose opponents happen to be the rest of humanity… Neither pity nor attraction, nor religion nor attachment would ever divert him from his ends… I felt in his soul cold steel, I felt in his mind a deep irony against which nothing great or good, even his own destiny, was proof; for he despised the nation which he intended to govern, and no spark of enthusiasm was mingled with his desire to astound the human race…”

Hegel also saw this antichristian, man-god quality. Just before the Battle of Jena in 1806, he saw Napoleon riding out to reconnoiter the battlefield, and wrote: “I saw the Emperor – this world-soul – riding out of the city on reconnaissance. It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual who, concentrated here at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it.”

This is the nub of it: a “world-soul”, such as Napoleon or Hitler or Stalin, has to conquer the whole world. The mastery of one nation, even the greatest, will not satisfy him. In order to affirm and justify his quasi-divine essence, he has to compel the assent and/or worship of all men. In fact, he has to become not only a man-god, but the Antichrist, the ruler of the world. And since, as Dostoyevsky pointed out, universal brotherhood in the worship of one man is the innermost desire of all men, then those who do not worship the one true God, the God who became man, will inevitably worship the man who aspires to be god.

169 Quoted in Palmer, op. cit., p. 148.
170 De Staël, in Johnson, op. cit., p. 119.
10. FROM TRAFALGAR TO AUSTERLITZ

As long as the human spirit is not completely corrupted and some flicker of conscience remains alive in it, it will, with God’s help, detect the falsehood of the Antichrist, albeit obscurely and without full understanding at first, and will seek to escape his coils. This is what happened in England from 1803, in Germany from 1806 and in Russia from 1807, in relation to that true forerunner of the Antichrist, Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon’s global ambitions, writes Tombs, “explain why peace [with England] broke down after less than a year over the seemingly minor issue of Malta. Its inhabitants had requested British aid to expel the French. The Treaty of Amiens required Britain to evacuate the island. But Valetta’s fortified Grand Harbour barred the way to Egypt and Asia, and the British stayed on. Negotiations came to nothing, and on 12 May 1803, after an ultimatum, Britain declared war. Ordinary people on both sides of the Channel were horrified, foreseeing years of hunger, taxation, conscription and impressment. Seamen sought safer jobs in coal mines and quarries. Landmen rioted when ballots for militia service were ordered. In France, men married elderly widows to gain exemption, chopped off their trigger fingers, or headed for the hills. Both countries faced a deadly war of attrition. British ministers were remarkably confident that France would crack first.

“The political climate in England changed. Many who had supported the revolution in 1789 had been disillusioned, and had even less sympathy for Bonaparte’s dictatorship. One minister actually appealed in the Commons for support from English Jacobins, ‘as men of spirit, of lovers of what they call liberty... [are they] content to be put under the yoke and crushed by France?’ France’s invasion of peaceful Switzerland in 1798 had already turned Wordsworth against the revolution, even if his endorsement of England’s cause was distinctly grudging: ‘O grief that Earth’s best hopes rest all with Thee!’ Many – including Wordsworth and Coleridge – took a grim pride that the country stood alone. Most Dissenting Congregations now supported a defensive war against a militaristic dictatorship...

“Like his predecessors in 1745, 1759 and 1779, the emperor Napoleon... decided on invasion: ‘The Channel is a ditch which will be crossed when someone has the boldness to try it.’ While still at peace he had started building 2,500 gunboats and landing craft, and he marshaled an Army of England of 165,000 men strung out between the Channel ports with its headquarters at Boulogne. He was confident that ‘foggy weather and some luck will make me master of London, of parliament and of the Bank of England.’...

“Was invasion possible? Napoleon thought so: ‘If we control the crossing for twelve hours, England is dead.’ But some French naval officers feared that many of his overloaded landing craft would sink even without the intervention of the Royal Navy. In August 1805, Napoleon, Napoleon summoned his battle fleet up...
the Channel to cover the invasion, but his naval commander, Admiral Villeneuve, shied away from what he considered certain disaster, and later committed suicide. Napoleon angrily abandoned the invasion and marched his army off ‘to fight England in Germany,’ defeating the Austrians and the Russians with chilling efficiency at Ulm on 20 October and Austerlitz on 2 December. Meanwhile, on 21 October, the French and Spanish fleets were no less efficiently destroyed at Cape Trafalgar. This long remained in the forefront of national memory as the victory that decisively ended the recurring threat of invasion. England had expected that ‘every man will do his duty’, following the example given by its most charismatic sailor, Horatio Nelson, who gave his life and created a model hero for the age, combining audacity, vulnerability and pathos (and, though this was played down, a rather turbulent private life). Trafalgar was in reality a one-sided battle, as was now invariably the case when the totally dominant Royal Navy got to grips with its enemies, inferior in training, morale and physical health: two-thirds of the Franco-Spanish fleet of thirty-three ships of the line were captured or destroyed by the twenty-nine British at a cost of only 448 British lives. French casualties were appalling. The Redoutable, for example, battered by the larger Victory and two other ships, had 571 of her 643 crew killed or wounded. Of 15,000 Frenchmen engaged, only 4,000 escaped. Napoleon did not give up: he soon ordered the construction all over Europe of a massive fleet, with Antwerp chosen as the main base for future invasion...

“By the last decades of the century, England was safe from invasion for the first time in its history, and so it remained. The French in 1779 had shown that a major landing might still have been possible, but Napoleon’s failure in 1805 showed that it no longer was. At the same time, the Royal Navy extended its dominance round the globe. Sailing fleets in distant seas required roomy, deep and sheltered anchorages, stores of spars, rope, sails and ammunition, and a large hinterland for fresh food and water. The British secured bases round the globe – Gibraltar, Malta, Halifax, Bermuda, Jamaica, Antigua, St. Helena, Capetown, Mauritius, Bombay, Calcutta, Sydney – making a constant naval presence possible. As France and its allies lost their bases, they lost the very possibility of naval action. Domination of the European seas and the ability to project invincible power across the oceans, and hence to exert pressure over the world’s commercial and economic life, was the foundation of a power which no other state or combination of states would seriously challenge until the Fascist Axis of the Second World War.

“But direct British power stopped at the Channel and North Sea coasts: strategically and politically, the French dominated the Continent, and the British could do nothing in Europe without allies. When Napoleon signed the Treaty of Tilsit with defeated Russia in 1807, Britain was alone. But there remained economic warfare. Britain’s economy was doing rather well out of the conflict. Since 1790 overseas trade had grown by nearly 60 percent, and colonial re-exports, mainly sugar and coffee, by 187 percent. Domestic demand was strong. Agriculture had increased the acreage under the plough. The City had received a flood of capital and people seeking security and become truly international: rival
financial centres, notably Amsterdam and Frankfurt, have never caught up since. Britain’s finances seemed able to withstand war indefinitely, and subsidize other countries willing to fight the French. The French resorted to the guerre de course, attacks on merchant shipping. This inflicted damage on British trade, but it could not defeat Britain, which lost only 2 percent of its merchant fleet during the Napoleonic Wars. The French themselves suffered far more: in 1803 they had 1,500 ocean-going merchant ships, but by 1812 only 179 – compared with Britain’s 24,000. So Napoleon ordered a land blockade. In November 1806 his ‘Berlin Decrees’ prohibited all trade with Britain from France and its satellites, and ordered the seizure of all British merchandise. This ‘Continental System’ aimed to wreck British trade and increase that of France: ‘England will end up weeping tears of blood’. London retaliated with Orders in Council in November 1807 forbidding any ship from any country to trade with Napoleonic Europe unless it first passed through a British port and paid a 25 percent duty.”

11. NAPOLEON AND RELIGION

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

Napoleon’s attitude towards religion was on the one hand respectful and on the other hand manipulative and utilitarian. His respectfulness is revealed in the following perceptive remark: “There are only two forces in the world: the sword and the spirit; by spirit I mean the civil and religious institutions; in the long run the sword is always defeated by the spirit.”172 On the other hand, his essentially unbelieving, utilitarian attitude is revealed in the following: “I see in religion not the mystery of the Incarnation but the mystery of order in society”.173 “What is it that makes the poor man take it for granted that ten chimneys smoke in my palace while he dies of cold, that I have ten changes of raiment in my wardrobe while he is naked, that on my table at each meal there is enough to sustain a family for a week? It is religion, which says to him that in another life I shall be his equal, indeed that he has a better chance of being happy there than I have.”174

In other words, religion was powerful, and as such had to be respected. But it was powerful not because it was true, but because it was a – perhaps the – major means of establishing order in society. More particularly, it was the major means of establishing obedience to his, Napoleon’s rule – which is why he issued an Imperial Catechism whose purpose was to “bind by religious sanctions the conscience of the people to the august person of the Emperor”175:

**Q**: Why are we bound in all these duties towards our Emperor?

**A**: Because God… has made him the agent of His power on earth. Thus it is that to honour and serve our Emperor is to honour and serve God Himself.176

Napoleon, writes Doyle, “never made the mistake of underestimating either the power of religion or the resilience of the Church. Under orders in the spring of 1796 to march on Rome to avenge the murder by a Roman mob of a French

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173 Napoleon, in Cronin, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
176 Napoleon, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 532. In 1816 Napoleon gave another, less honest account of his motives: “As soon as I had power, I immediately re-established religion. I made it the groundwork and foundation upon which I built. I considered it as the support of sound principles and good morality, both in doctrine and in practice. Besides, such is the restlessness of man, that his mind requires that something undefined and marvellous which religion offers; and it is better for him to find it there, than to seek it of Cagliostro, of Mademoiselle Lenormand, or of the fortune-tellers and imposters” (Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 532).
envoy, he was confronted by a Spanish emissary from the pontiff. ‘I told him
[the Spaniard reported], if you people take it into your heads to make the pope
say the slightest thing against dogma or anything touching on it, you are
deceiving yourselves, for he will never do it. You might, in revenge, sack, burn
and destroy Rome, St. Peter’s etc. but religion will remain standing in spite of
your attacks. If all you wish is that the pope urge peace in general, and
obedience to legitimate power, he will willingly do it. He appeared to me
captivated by this reasoning…’ Certainly he continued while in Italy to treat the
Pope with more restraint than the Directory had ordered: and when, early the
next year, the Cispadane Republic was established in territories largely taken
from the Holy See, he advised its founders that: ‘Everything is to be done by
degrees and with gentleness. Religion is to be treated like property.’ Devoid of
any personal faith, in Egypt he even made parade of following Islam in the
conviction that it would strengthen French rule. By the time he returned to
Europe, it was clear that Pope Pius VI would not after all be the last...

“This approach bore one important fruit: in his Christmas sermon for 1797 the
new Pope, Pius VII, declared that Christianity was not incompatible with
democracy – a very major concession to the revolution that later Popes would
take back.

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

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

Napoleon’s remark about gaining a hold in Egypt by turning Mohammedan
was literally true. He “promised respect for the Islamic religion, even discussing
with the leading ulama the terms on which a mass conversion of his army might
be considered (circumcision proved a stumbling block).”

It is in this astonishingly cynical attitude to religion that Napoleon reveals his
modernity, making him perhaps the closest forerunner to the Antichrist that had

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177 Doyle, op. cit., pp. 385-386.
178 Cronin, op. cit., p. 212; Ivan Ilyin, “O Monarkhii i Respublikanstve” (On Monarchy and
Republicanism), Sobranie Sochinenii (Collected Works), Moscow, 1994, vol. 4, p. 492.
yet appeared on the stage of world history, closer even, in some ways, than Lenin or Stalin. For the Antichrist will not – at first – persecute religion; he will rather try to be the champion of all religions – in order to subdue them all to his will. And he will rebuild Solomon’s temple…

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

“This document,” writes Cronin, “opens with a preamble describing Roman Catholicism as ‘the religion of the great majority of the French people’ and the religion professed by the consuls. Worship was to be free and public. The Pope, in agreement with the Government, was to re-map dioceses in such a way as to reduce their number by more than half to sixty. The holders of bishoprics were to resign and if they declined to do so, were to be replaced by the Pope. The First Consul was to appoint new bishops; the Pope was to invest them. The Government was to place at the disposal of bishops all the un-nationalized churches necessary for worship, and to pay bishops and curés a suitable salary.

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

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

In April, 1802, Napoleon reopened the churches in France, which proved to be one of his most popular measures, and it enabled him to enlist the Church in support of his government – as did, of course, his coronation by the Pope. Moreover, notes Johnson, “by making peace with the Church, he prepared the way for a reconciliation with the old landowners and aristocrats who had been driven into exile by the Revolution, and whom he wanted back to provide further legitimacy to his regime.”

“But even while seeking the Church’s support,” writes Cronin, “Napoleon kept firmly to the principle that the temporal and spiritual are two separate

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181 Johnson, op. cit., p. 48.
 realms, and had to be kept separate in France. He might easily have used his
growing authority to subordinate the Church to the State, but although he was
occasionally tempted to do so, he quickly drew back... Equally, Napoleon
refrained from subordinating the State to the Church. When bishops urged him
to shut all shops and cabarets on Sundays so that the faithful should not be
enticed from Mass, Napoleon replied: ‘The curé’s power resides in exhortations
from the pulpit and in the confessional; police spies and prisons are bad ways of
trying to restore religious practices.’”

However, while Napoleon wanted the Church to flourish, it could do so only
under the general control of the State. This was made abundantly clear at his
coronation in 1804, when instead of allowing the Pope to crown him, he took the
crown from his hands and crowned himself! “For the pope’s purposes,” he
said to Cardinal Fesch, “I am Charlemagne... I therefore expect the pope to
accommodate his conduct to my requirements. If he behaves well I shall make
no outward changes; if not, I shall reduce him to the status of bishop of Rome...”
Not for nothing did Napoleon say: “If I were not me, I would like to be Gregory VII”.
Gregory had secularized the papacy by making it into a secular kingdom. Napoleon had done the same from the opposite direction...

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

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182 Cronin, op. cit., p. 220.
183 Again, there is a resemblance to Cromwell. “It was said that, in bringing to an end to
‘Barebone’s Parliament’, Cromwell took the crown from Christ and put it on his own head”
184 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 532.
186 When Napoleon removed the pope from his status as temporal ruler (in exchange for a
handsome salary), he said to him: “Our Lord Jesus Christ,” he said, “although a descendant of
David, did not want an earthly kingdom...” Pius then excommunicated Napoleon for his
“blasphemy” and refused to invest his nominees to vacant bishoprics.

In 1811 Monsieur Emery, the director of Saint-Sulpice, defended the Pope, reminding
Napoleon “that God had given the Pope spiritual power over all Christians. ‘But not temporal
power,’ objected Napoleon. ‘Charlemagne gave him that, and I, as Charlemagne’s successor,
intended to relieve him of it. What do you think of that, Monsieur Emery?’ ‘Sire, exactly what
Bossuet thought. In his Declaration du clergé de France he says that he congratulates not only
the Roman Church but the Universal Church on the Pope’s temporal sovereignty because, being
independent, he can more easily exercise his functions as father of all the faithful.’ Napoleon
replied that what was true for Bossuet’s day did not apply in 1811, when western Europe was
ruled by one man, not disputed by several” (Cronin, op. cit., pp. 220-223) (V.M.)
authorities in Paris, who were cooperative. The Roman cardinals who were in Paris refused to attend the wedding, which took place in 1810.

“In order to get out of the impasse caused by having dioceses without bishops, Napoleon summoned a national council in Paris in 1811. The bishops affirmed their loyalty to the pope but did not want to incur the emperor’s displeasure, and undertook to win over Pius VII. However, he would not give way. Napoleon had him taken to Fontainebleu in June 1812. When subjected to force the pope made some concessions (the Concordat of Fontainebleu) which he very quickly went back on. Military disasters led the emperor to send the pope to Rome, where he made a triumphal entrance on 24 May 1814.”

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

\[187\] Comby, op. cit., p. 119.
France under Napoleon, writes Philip Bobbitt, became the first example of a new species, the "state-nation", which must be clearly distinguished from the later "nation-state". "A state-nation, is a state that mobilizes a nation - a national, ethno-cultural group - to act on behalf of a State. It can thus call on the revenues of all society, and on the human talent of all persons. But such a state does not exist to serve or take direction from the nation, as does the nation-state. This is quite clear in the case of Napoleonic France, which incorporated many nations within its territory, but suppressed nationalism wherever it encountered it outside France. It is equally true of the British Empire. By contrast, the nation-state, a later phenomenon, creates a state in order to benefit the nation it governs. This, of course, raises the familiar late-nineteenth century (and twentieth century) question of self-determination: when does a nation get a state? This question is nonsense to the state-nation. One might say that the process of decolonization in the twentieth century was the confrontation of nascent nation-states like Ireland or India or Indochina with state-nation forms, like Britain and France...

"Thus Bonaparte's handling of the continental states arrayed against him reflected a shrewd appreciation of their constitutional basis. So long as he faced territorial states, he could outmaneuver their coalitions by offering one of their members substantial territorial cessions; that state realized that if these were refused, another state might accept offers made to it, thus bringing down the coalition and weakening the bargaining power of the resisting state. Russia, Prussia, and Austria each revealed a willingness to settle with France if offered a sufficient territorial inducement. This tactic had been well understood by Frederick the Great, but in him it was deployed for the limited territorial objectives of the territorial state. With Bonaparte, this technique was used in service of the unlimited, imperial objectives of the state-nation."

"France was transformed into a new constitutional entity... Bonaparte declared: 'Citizens, the Revolution is now settled in the principles which started it,' meaning that a new state had been created that embodied these principles. That state, however, was far different from what had been envisioned in the heady days of 1789. A referendum was now proposed to determine whether Bonaparte should be consul for life. This plebiscite resulted in an enthusiastic endorsement for a quasi-imperial regime. Fresh hostilities that reopened against England in May 1803 moved France further along the constitutional path of the state-nation. The French Senate in 1804 sent an address to Bonaparte after an assassination attempt, urging that the Consulate for Life be changed to an hereditary empire subject to a new public referendum. 'The government of the Republic,' the address stated, 'is now entrusted to an emperor. Napoleon Bonaparte, first consul, is Emperor of the French.'"

"To repeat: the nation-state takes its legitimacy from putting the State in the service of its people; the state-nation asks rather that the people be put in the service of the State. The state-nation is not in the business of maintaining the
welfare of the people; rather it is legitimated by forging a national consciousness, by fusing the nation with the State. Consider Napoleon's speech to the troops before entering Italy: 'All of you are consumed with a desire to extend the glory of the French people, all of you long to humiliate those arrogant kings who dare to contemplate putting us in fetters; all of you desire to dictate a glorious peace, one which will indemnify the Patrie for the immense sacrifices it has made; all of you wish to be able to say with pride as you return to your villages: “I was with the victorious army of Italy!”'

"This change forged a form of the State that apotheosized its glory within a system of great powers, bending the energies of often diverse national peoples to its service. Napoleon unsentimentally realized this source of his legitimacy: 'My power depends on my glory and my glories on the victories I have won. My power will fail if I do not feed it on new glories and new victories. Conquest has made me what I am and only conquest can enable me to hold my position.’"

Indeed, for all his achievements as a politician, it is as a warrior that Napoleon is most famous. He recruited his 26 marshals on a strictly meritocratic basis; many of them were from plebeian backgrounds. Under superior leadership, and stirred up by the promise of glory, the soldiers were formed into a superb fighting force that had no equal in Europe.

This was unquestionably the most martial era yet in European history. As Harvey Sachs writes, “Between 1789 and 1815, the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars had torn Europe apart. From the Atlantic’s eastern shores all the way to Moscow, clashing ideologies had been transferred into clashing armies: the liberty-fraternity-equality banner was quickly bloodied by the revolutionaries’ excesses, and its motto was then subverted by Napoleon, who used the ideal of exporting the Revolution as a tool for achieving domination of the whole Continent. However shocking the effects of the infant French Republic’s guillotine may have been, the eighteen to forty thousand chopped-off heads that it produced during the Terror of 1792-96 were a statistical trifle in comparison with the results of the foreign wars that followed. Between 1796 and 1815, an estimated two and a half million soldiers and one million civilians met their deaths in the Napoleonic Wars. During virtually any of Napoleon’s major battles, two or three times as many people were killed as had been executed by order of the Committee of Public Safety or other French Revolutionary groups throughout their existence. In the battle of Borodino alone, on September 7, 1812, the opposing armies of Russia and France lost far more soldiers than the United States would lose during a dozen years of fighting in Vietnam, and the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars lasted twice as long as the Vietnam War, four times as long as the First World War.”

Sir Richard Evans has even higher estimates of the numbers of lives lost. “It used to be thought,” he writes, “that the damage inflicted by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was relatively light compared to the

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devastation wrought by later conflicts. Yet altogether, in twenty-three years of more or less continuous warfare that had swept back and forth across Europe in the wake of the French Revolution, an estimated five million people had died; compared to Europe’s population as a whole, this was proportionately as many as, if not more than, those who died during the First World War. One in five Frenchmen born between 1790 and 1795 had perished during the conflicts…”

This huge increase in war and bloodshed was the direct result of two factors: first, the sheer ruthlessness of the revolutionary ideology, which removed many of the inhibitions on killing in war, and secondly the rise of mass armies representing the whole nation. The American revolution, and then the Battle of Valmy in 1792, had seen the appearance of the citizen army, which now came to replace the aristocratic armies of the eighteenth century. Thus Barbara Ehrenreich writes: “If the mass armies of the early modern period had proletarianized the foot soldier, reducing him from the status of peasant to that of a cog in a machine, the revolutionary armies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries now ‘noble-ized’ him. He too had a shot at glory; he too had ‘honor’ to defend; and he too possessed what had once been the trappings of the nobly born – a flag, for example, which now symbolized a vast population rather than a single dynasty. According to Vagts, ‘The tricolor [flag of France] gratified emotions previously enjoyed only by the nobility. In short, the whole nation had become the nobility.’

“The trade-off for this elevation in status was that the average male now risked a much higher chance of dying in battle than had his peasant ancestors in the era of knightly combat. Napoleon was particularly wanton in his squandering of men as ‘cannon fodder’, expecting them not just to stand and shoot but to charge fearlessly at the enemy’s artillery positions. He fielded the largest armies Europe had ever seen, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, and lost a total of 1.3 million to 1.5 million of his own men in the course of his campaigns – enough to leave a lasting dent in the population of the nation whose interests he supposedly fought to advance. In exchange for being ‘noble-ized’ by the new revolutionary ethos, the soldier was expected to more willingly ‘give’ his life, and in exchange for giving his life he would be given a share of glory.

“But the ‘democratized glory’ accessible to the average soldier was a strangely depersonalized version of the glory sought by members of the traditional warrior elite. The knight or samurai wanted glory for himself as an individual, or at most for his noble lineage. It was his own name that he announced in his battlefield challenge to the enemy, his own name that he hoped would be remembered forever in epics and chansons. But the kind of glory held out to men in the armies of George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte, and all military leaders since their time can be thoroughly anonymous glory, of the kind celebrated in the peculiar institution of the tomb of the ‘unknown soldier’. As Benedict Anderson writes: ‘No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The

public ceremonial reverence accorded those monuments precisely because no one knows who lies inside them, has no precedent in earlier times.

“This new kind of glory attached not to the individual but to a new kind of entity, the hypothetical collectivity which the French revolutionaries heralded as la nation. If the revolutionary armies encouraged individual initiative, they were still mass armies, like those of the old regime. Revolution may have empowered the individual, but the revolutionary armies were still a far cry from being collections of knights each charging off on his own pursuit of personal glory. Napoleon understood the difference and reserved the nation of ‘glory’ for the old knightly tradition; modern soldiers were not to confuse ‘love of the fatherland’ with ‘love of glory’. To one of Napoleon’s admirers, the Prussian philosopher Hegel, ‘true valour’ was not ‘knightly valour’ but, rather, ‘the true valour of civilized nations is their readiness for sacrifice in the service of the state, so that the individual merely counts as one among many. Not personal courage, but integration into the universal is the important factor here.’ And ‘the universal’, meaning the nation and, for Hegel, even more mystical entities beyond that, was in the first instance the modern mass army…”

“In Benedict Anderson’s memorable phrase,” writes Ehrenreich, “nations are not natural but ‘imagined communities’, whose imagining has taken a great deal of conscious effort. In the European cases, intellectuals had to resurrect the folklore and epics which could be used to give people a sense of a common past. The printing press, along with the new market in what we now call ‘information’, had to publicize these findings to increasingly literate publics. State-sponsored schools had to impose a common vernacular language on what was often a hodge-podge of dialects and then educate people to literacy in it. Equally strenuous efforts were required in the third world, where national boundaries had often been laid down arbitrarily, for the convenience of the European colonialists.

“The work of Anderson, and of historian Eric Hobsbawm, has much to tell us about the creation of nations as a purely cognitive undertaking... What these scholars fail to explain, however, are the passions that attach themselves to the idea of the nation – the emotions of nationalism. In Imagined Communities, Anderson seems to promise at the beginning to explain the religious power of the nation over its citizens, but we are quickly immersed in the relatively bloodless business of ‘imagining’ – the construction of common languages and ‘traditions’, and so forth. The reason for this oversight, it seems to me, is that these writers, like most who owe something to the Marxist tradition, pay almost no attention to war as a factor shaping human societies. But what is France if not as defined against England or Germany? What is Serbia if not as defined against Germany or Croatia [or Ottoman Turkey]? From the very beginning, as the military historian Michael Howard has written, ‘the principle of nationalism was almost indissolubly linked, both in theory and practice, with the idea of war.’

“... In the mass armies of pre-revolutionary and pre-nationalist Europe... the individual soldier knows that he is threatened by distant forces, foreigners who wish him dead. He knows too that he is, as an individual, helpless in the face of this threat. But he is not just an individual; he is a unit – as the constant drilling, if nothing else, convinces him – of something far larger and more powerful than himself. What he feels, as a result, is very different from the anomie sense, common to mass societies, of being only ‘one of many’, because in this case the many add up to something greater than the sum of the parts. What he feels is the confidence drawn from collective strength, which can amount, even in the face of death, to a kind of joy...

“Nationalism, however, is experienced not only by soldiers in armies. It is experienced, and often more strongly, by civilians who are far from any real danger and who have never drilled or fought. Nazi ‘philosopher’ Alfred Rosenberg understood the connection between civilian nationalism and the intense community forged in armies, writing in 1937: ‘The German nation is just now about to find its style of life for good... It is the style of the marching column, regardless of where and for what purpose this marching column is to be sued... It is a mark of the German style of life that no German wants nowadays to feel himself a private person.’

“In the age of nationalism, patriotic ceremonies begin to be designed, consciously or not, to give civilians the feeling that they, too, constituted a kind of ‘army’, united by common danger and bonded by rhythmic activities analogous to the drill. George L. Mosse observes that the nineteenth century saw ‘the introduction of rhythm into all ceremonies – marches, parades, and festivals – in order to transform the undisciplined masses into a disciplined crowd’. The ‘Marseillaise’ was the first national anthem set to a marching beat; in imitation, other nations began to sing their anthems to similarly infectious and militant rhythm. By ‘joining in the national liturgy [and] singing national anthems,’ Mosse writes, large numbers of people now had the experience of ‘sublimating themselves to the great national community.’”...

It should be remembered that, for Christians, there was always a larger supra-national community into which the individual could merge – his Church. However, faith was sharply in decline throughout Europe. National Churches might bolster that faith, although this created the danger that the National Church would become an appendage of the Nation, and the primacy and universalism of the faith would be weakened. Moreover, if faith declined beyond a certain point, then the cult of the Nation took its place – which is what happened in Western Europe in this period. This meant a stand-off between the Nation and the Church, leading to, for example, the confiscation of the Papal States in Italy, and Bismarck’s Kulturkampf against the Church.

192 Ehrenreich, op. cit., pp. 196-198. The Marseillaise was not only martial, but also very bloodthirsty: Aux armes, citoyens! / Formez vos bataillons! / Marchez! Marchez! / Qu’un sang impur / Abreuve nos sillons!
“This awareness of ‘something larger’ into which the individual might merge is repeatedly expressed in nineteenth-century philosophical writings. Where economically oriented thinkers like Marx saw only the isolation and anomie induced by the capitalist economy, others, like Hegel before him and the philosopher J.G. Fichte, saw the emergence of a new collective identity through which, as Fichte put it, ‘each single person becomes part of an organized whole and melts into one with it.’ No doubt the two perspectives are, as Marx might say, dialectically connected: As the average citizen experienced an ever greater economic reality of individual isolation, he or she became more open to – and perhaps even eager for – the feeling of submergence within some larger community, no matter how vague and imaginary that community might be.

“… What is this new entity that men – and women, insofar as they also achieve the status of citizens – profess themselves willing to die for?

“The first clue is that the nation is not a static community, but one that is imagined as existing in time. As Anderson puts it, rather ornately, the nation is ‘a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time’. It has a past; it is nothing, in fact, without a past. Even brand-new nations attempt to situate themselves within some long-standing tradition (the human struggle for freedom and self-determination, for example) or recurring necessity (‘When, in the course of human events…’). Much of the work of ‘imagining’ the nation as a community lies in the effort to resurrect or invent a national past, and this past is in most cases defined by war: Serbs look back to the battle of Kosovo in 1389; Americans look to Lexington and Bunker Hill. As Michael Howard has written: ‘France was Marengo, Austerlitz and Jena: military triumph set the seal on the new-found national consciousness. Britain was Trafalgar – but it had been a nation for four hundred years, since those earlier battles Crécy and Agincourt. Russia was the triumph of 1812… Italy was Garibaldi and the ‘Thousand… Could a Nation, in any true sense of the word, really be born without a war?’ The nation, then, is our imagined link to the glorious deeds – or the terrible atrocities still awaiting revenge – that were performed by others long ago.”

Now this thesis needs heavy qualification. Not only were all the nations mentioned here created a long time before the battles mentioned: their national identity was not created by war. What is true is that the new concept of nationhood that emerges after the French revolution places particular emphasis on war and on the decisive battle that, in their imagination, forged the nation. Again, loyalty to collectivities, as opposed to kings or dynasties, and the special glory of dying for one’s country, is not a new phenomenon: Dulce e st pro patria mori is a motto going back to classical antiquity. Nevertheless, it is true that the French revolution, culminating in Napoleon’s despotism, introduced a pathological element of nation-worship that was certainly new in the context of the Catholic and Protestant West. Napoleon managed to persuade his fellow-

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194 A sense of English nationhood, for example, is discernible at least as early as King Alfred the Great or even the Venerable Bede in about 700… Bede entitled his most famous work A History of the English Church and People, although there was as yet no unified English state.
countrymen that everything he did was for the glory of France, and that nothing was more important to him than that glory. And so while his despotism angered some Frenchmen, for most of them the boost to their pride was ample compensation for the loss of their freedom. “As Frenchmen accorded more and more weight to Napoleon’s wishes,” writes Cronin, “so the notion of honour came to the fore in the French Republic: honour and its sister concept, glory, patriotism à outrance and the chivalry that had made Napoleon crown Josephine.”

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

But it was not long before such noble sentiments were being transformed into a purely pagan pride. “‘You are, among the nations, what Hercules was amongst the heroes,’ Robespierre assured his countrymen. ‘Nature has made you sturdy and powerful; your strength matches your virtue and your cause is that of the gods.’ France was unique in her destiny, she was La Grande Nation, and all interests were necessarily subordinate to hers. Her service was the highest calling, since it naturally benefited mankind.” Soon it became evident to other nations, whether those bordering France or her overseas colonies, that the French believed not so much in the Nation (i.e. any and every nation) as the Nation (one particular nation, the only truly Great Nation) – which could only be France. Thus Napoleon created a swath of suffering and destruction throughout Europe from Lisbon to Moscow that had not been seen since the invasions of the Huns and the Goths. In retrospect, the seemingly irrational and chaotic system of old Europe, whereby kings could buy and sell territories to which they were quite unrelated by birth or upbringing, turned out to have kept

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196 Christ Himself, according to a revolutionary pamphlet of 1790-91, “was a true sans-culotte, a full-blooded republican. He developed all the principles of moral equality and the purest patriotism. He faced every danger; he rebelled against the great who in all periods have abused their powers. He castigated the harshness of the rich; he attacked the pride of kings and priests. The Son of God rebelled against the aristocrats of the nation” (in Comby, op. cit., p. 114).
197 Davies, op. cit., p. 675.
198 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 110.
the peace far better than the system of more clearly defined, homogeneous 
nation-states that emerged as a result of the Napoleonic wars. This is not to say, 
of course, that there were no wars under the old system. But they tended to be 
short in duration, with relatively few casualties, which were mainly confined to 
the warrior class. And they were very quickly patched up by some redistribution 
of territories among the monarchs. By contrast, the revolutionary wars that 
began after 1792 were more like the religious wars of pre-1648 vintage: much 
bloodier and crueler, involving far greater casualties among the civilian 
populations. Moreover, they never came to a real end, since the losers felt 
bound to recover the territories lost and avenge the wounds inflicted on their 
national or regional pride. After all, if the people, and not the king, was now 
sovereign, victory in war had to be won over the people (or rather, the 
“enemies” of “the people”) as well as the king. Thus as Napoleon exported the 
ideals of Freedom, Equality and Fraternity into neighbouring countries, their 
freedom was destroyed, their equality with their “brothers” who had “liberated” 
them was jettisoned, and the dream of universal brotherhood became the 
nightmare of universal war. For “abroad, liberty simply meant French rule.”

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

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

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

Doyle, op. cit., p. 419.
Unless, that is, they all recognized France, the revolutionary nation *par excellence*, as their own. And there were some who did this. Thomas Jefferson, for example, the American ambassador to Paris, said: “Every man has two countries – his own, and France.”

Others, while not going that far, nevertheless welcomed the conquering French armies into their own land. Thus as late as 1806 the German philosopher Hegel called Napoleon “the world spirit” and hoped that he would defeat his opponents: “Everyone prays for the success of the French army”. Such a substitution of loyalty to the messianic revolutionary nation of the time rather than one’s own was to manifest itself again in the twentieth century, when millions of people around the world betrayed their own country for the sake of the greater glory of the Soviet Union...

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

We have seen that there was a religious element in the nationalism of the early nineteenth century. Or rather, in many cases it was a new religion to take the place of the old – usually Catholicism – in which the nationalists had lost faith. As Adam Zamoyski writes: "Lafayette and his peers were natural believers. Most of them left the Christian Church at some stage, but they never eradicated God from their minds. They sought Him in nature, in art, in everything but religion. Some found Him in humanity, as represented by the nation. Robespierre described this faith as a 'tender, imperious, irresistible passion, the torment and delight of magnanimous souls', just as the great ecstatic saints had described their love of God. For him, 'this sacred love of the Patrie, this most sublime and holy love of humanity,' would one day find its spiritual consummation in the contemplation of 'the ravishing spectacle of universal happiness'. For Michelet, faith in the nation meant 'the salvation of all by all'. He hated Catholicism because it saved people individually, thereby undermining the love of the nation. 'No more individual salvation; God in all and all Messiahs!' he preached. In other words, salvation could only be achieved by, with and through the nation. 'We shall bring about the freedom of nations all over the world,' wrote Slowacki in November of the terrible year 1848, 'our blood and our body is the property of the world and will be its nourishment, strengthening those who have grown weak under oppression.'

"These were no mere rebels; they aspired to emulate Christ by immolating themselves for the sake of humanity. And they offered hope, not political solutions. The wars and revolutions they started or embraced were acts of faith. They were for the most part born of vague longing not specific grievance, and that was why they lingered on in the memory as glorious acts however dismal their outcome: grievances can fail to be righted, but hope can never be defeated.
"Devotion to the cause became the only and all-embracing purpose of their lives, more important than the achievement of its end. They sublimated the mission itself. They accepted its purpose without question, because to question it would have made nonsense of their sacrifices and their whole lives. This made them fear and denounce everything that smacked of lukewarm belief or heresy. In order to fortify themselves in the faith, they leaned on ritual, invoked exemplars and martyrs, and venerated relics. They had, in fact, created a faith and a church of their own, with all the trappings of the Christian one they affected to despise. And, as with all faiths, the ultimate longing, because it provided escape into another, and necessarily better, world, was death in the service of the cause. They were certainly all a little mad, but theirs was a devoted and holy madness."\textsuperscript{201}

Napoleon was finally defeated by two enormous mistakes elicited by the same cause: frustration at the failure of his economic war against Britain. First, he invaded Spain and Portugal, because Lisbon was the weak point in his Continental System; it was through that city that Britain continued to trade with a continent that still coveted the goods that only the English could supply them with. But the Spanish and Portuguese were conservative nations that did not succumb to the lure of French revolutionary ideals; so, with English support, they fought a cruel but effective guerrilla war against the invaders that became a running sore in Napoleon’s western flank. The other mistake was Napoleon’s disastrous invasion of Russia in revenge for Tsar Alexander’s reneging on the anti-British alliance the two emperors had agreed on at Tilsit. When the tsar announced that he would again allow his nation to trade with Britain, Napoleon was humiliated and insulted. (He once admitted in a letter that his inability to endure insults was a major weakness in his character.202) He was especially humiliated by his failure to defeat Britain, which he called, in a letter written after Waterloo to King George III, “the most powerful, most constant and most generous of my enemies”.203

“Napoleon’s Continental System,” writes Tombs, “required control of the whole European coastline to try to exclude British imports. But the result was vast organized smuggling to supply Europe’s insatiable appetite for tobacco, cotton cloth, sugar, coffee, tea, chocolate, spices and manufactures. France’s customs revenue collapsed. To close off access, Napoleon tried to take over Portugal and Spain in 1807-08, provoking resistance in both countries, notably the 2 May uprising in Madrid, immortalized by Goya’s painting. Despite Whig opposition, Britain gave swift financial, naval and military assistance, eventually under the highly capable control of the indomitable Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, dismissed by Napoleon as the ‘sepoy general’ as he had gained his military experience in India. The peninsula was reduced to bloody chaos, becoming in Napoleon’s phrase an ‘ulcer’ sapping French strength. Perhaps twice as many of his soldiers would die there as in the disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812. For the first time since Marlborough, Britain exerted significant military power on the Continent, and five years of hard campaigning created an army eventually as good as the French. It was a very British army: only 20 percent were English, and there were large Irish and Scottish contingents. But it was at first small – around 30,000 men – and depended on Spanish and Portuguese allies to divide enemy strength by constant guerrilla warfare. This enabled Wellington to sally forth in 1809 from his base in Portugal, where he was supplied by the navy, retreat back to it in 1810 when the French mustered superior forces, and then mount decisive advances into Spain in 1812 and 1813. The British army was, to put it mildly, hard-bitten, and it acquired a fearsome reputation for drunkenness, looting and rape. Fortunately, Wellington and his staff were capable administrators and usually maintained adequate supplies, because, as the adjutant general put it, ‘A British army on short commons is no

202 Andrew Roberts, in his BBC documentary on Napoleon.
203 Jenkins, op. cit., p. 196.
easy thing to govern... heroic in action... and when he is well fed, but in retreat where subsistence is short, [our soldier] becomes cross, unmanageable and too much disposed to give the thing up.’ Some of its men were, in Wellington’s words, the scum of the earth, but it also included adventurous or patriotic men of some education, whose letters and diaries left some of the earliest pictures of everyday campaigning. Victories in the peninsula, including at Talavera, Salamanca and Vitoria, raised the status of both the army and the aristocracy in public eyes.

“Once Britain was their ally, exports to Portugal, Spain and their South American colonies increased. Yet English textile industries were still inevitably affected by the barriers to trade imposed by the Continental System, and a peace campaign again drew support. As in the 1790s, it fed off economic distress, on a belief, strongest among the Dissenters, that the war was futile and immoral, and of lingering admiration for the revolution and Napoleon. The crisis years were 1811-1812, when bad weather ravaged harvests, further damaging the economy and government finances. Weavers, knitters and croppers in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, symbolically led by the folklore ‘Ned Ludd’, began selective breaking of new machinery, which was threatening their jobs. They were violently opposed by employers. Pitched battles took place. Thousands of troops were deployed. Some subsequent historians have seen this as an insurrection with revolutionary potential...

“... Disputes with the United States about its trade with Napoleonic Europe led to an American attack in July 1812 and continual naval skirmishing. An invasion of Canada was beaten off by a British-Shawnee alliance. A small British force of 3,700 landed on American soil and burned Washington. The Americans made peace in 1814, but fighting continued for some time before the news arrived, and another small British force was defeated at New Orleans.

“Napoleon’s characteristically reckless invasion of Russia in 1812 because it refused to ‘act as my second in my duel with England’, and in which his Grand Army of 220,000 was almost annihilated by Russian resistance, disease and weather, marked the beginning of the end of his brilliant and destructive career. Allies abandoned him and defeated enemies resumed the struggle, now fuelled by unprecedented amounts of British money. This was made possible by the new income tax, by trade with India and North and South America, by taxes levied in India, and by selling government bonds abroad. Money and weapons flooded onto the Continent: within a year £10m and a million muskets were distributed among thirty countries from Denmark to Sicily at around £1 per soldier per month – still vastly less than British armies cost. Russia, Prussia and Austria were enabled to field 700,000 men. Between 16 and 19 October 1813, the multi-national armies clashed at Leipzig, the ‘Battle of the Nations’, the biggest and bloodiest battle before the First World War. The French alone lost 60,000 men, and were forced to withdraw from Germany.

“Britain’s involvement in Europe was now more than merely financial. Many Europeans believed that Britain was indifferent to their sufferings while it made money; ‘we must not hide the fact from ourselves,’ wrote a British minister,
George Canning, ‘we are hated throughout Europe.’ Viscount Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary from 1812, wanted to show that Britain was no longer willing to leave the Continent in flames while it amassed colonial conquests and trading profits. This required more generous cash handouts. Castlereagh, moreover, built a partnership to guarantee a more secure Europe after Napoleon’s defeat. He persuaded the allies to pledge peace for twenty years – ‘a systematic pledge of preserving concert among the leading Powers’, he wrote, and ‘a refuge under which all the minor states... may look forward to find their security.’

“Allied armies converged on France in later 1813 and early 1814 and support for Napoleon dissolved. Wellington’s army, now 100,000 strong, crossed the Pyrenees and were welcomed as liberators – not least because on Wellington’s strict orders they paid hard cash for supplies, and he backed up those orders with the lash and the noose... Napoleon’s faithful Marshal Soult, still trying to resist Wellington’s advance, ‘was ashamed... that a town of 100,000 souls [Bordeaux] could get away with refusing to be defended and should greet a few thousand Englishmen with acclamation.’ He met the same problem at Toulouse: ‘Practically the whole city is against being defended.’ But defend it he did, and the battle of Toulouse on 10 April 1814 was the last real battle in the south, costing 4,500 Allied casualties and 2,700 French. Soult marched away unpursued, and the British were greeted by the mayor, a band, and a crowd of citizens who gave them a banquet. Napoleon had already abdicated on 6 April. On the initiative on Tsar Alexander I, the ex-emperor was given as compensation the island principality of Elba, off the Italian coast...”

“On September 13 1814,” writes Montefiore, “Alexander was greeted by Emperor Francis outside Vienna, where in perhaps the most self-indulgent international junket of all history, a congress of two emperors, five kings, 209 reigning princes, about 20,000 officials, from marshals and ministers to clerks and spies, and just about every gold-digger, mountebank and prostitute in Europe, maybe 100,000 in all, bargained, blackmailed and fornicated their way through banquets and balls, to reshape a continent after twenty years of war.”

In spite of all that, the peace achieved at the Congress was “a sensible, pragmatic settlement, much more enduring than its twentieth-century equivalent, the unrealistic and idealistic Treaty of Versailles of 1919...”

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However, as Sir Richard Evans writes, “before the victorious European powers could get very far in drawing a line under the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic past, they were confronted by the sudden return of Napoleon from his enforced exile... The restored French monarchy under Louis XVIII (1755-1824), brother of the executed Louis XVI (1754-93), had run into trouble almost immediately, overwhelmed by the need to pay for the legacy of the war. It retained the unpopular taxes imposed by Napoleon, imposed cutbacks in

expenditure on the army, and reimposed censorship after decades of impassioned debate. The proclamation of a militant Catholicism as the state religion alienated many educated Frenchmen. There were widespread fears that the king would try to restore lands confiscated by the Revolution to their original clerical and aristocratic owners. Napoleon’s return thus triggered an outburst of popular sentiment in favour of preserving the legacy of the Revolution. ‘The people of the countryside,’ reported a local official in central France, ‘are manifesting an extraordinary sense of enthusiasm [for Napoleon]; fires are lit every evening on elevated positions, and there are public celebrations in many communes.’ And, he concluded, ‘It is commonly asserted that if the emperor had not returned to put the aristocrats in their place they would have been massacred by the peasants.’

‘Such outbursts, compounded by demonstrations of support from Parisian workers, alienated many bourgeois notables, and the former emperor faced serious hostility among the clergy. In areas such as the Vendée, the Midi and Brittany, traditionally favourable to the royalists, he was unable to win much support. It was above all among his former soldiers, angered by the mass dismissals and economic measures imposed by the restored monarchy, that Napoleon was popular. ‘I only have the people and the Army up to captain level for me,’ he remarked. ‘The rest are scared of me but I cannot rely on them.’ His arrival exposed the deep divisions in French society left by a quarter of a century of revolutionary change. However, within weeks of landing in France on 1 March 1815, he was able to muster 100,000 men, as the provincial administrators, mostly appointed by him, did their job of recruitment as before, and veterans rallied to the imperial flag. Breaking off their peace negotiations, the Allies acted swiftly, fearing that if he remained in power the ex-emperor would quickly resume his career of conquest and the pursuit of glory. Within a few weeks they too managed to raise a formidable military force, consisting of 112,000 British, Dutch and German troops under Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852). They held back Napoleon’s army at the village of Waterloo on 18 June 1815 until 116,000 Prussians under the veteran General Lebrecht von Blücher (1742-1819), whom Napoleon wrongly thought he had disposed of at the Battle of Ligny two days before, arrived at 4 o’clock in the afternoon. Blücher rescued the British and joined with them in a final assault that drove the French from the battlefield and Napoleon into another enforced exile, this time safely on the remote Atlantic island of St. Helena, where he died on 5 May 1821.

‘Napoleon left behind a political legend that quickly developed into a potent myth among liberal writers, politicians, army officers and students, who were encouraged by his own turn (whether genuine or not) to liberal ideas during the ‘Hundred Days’ before Waterloo in an attempt to broaden his support. Very much aware of the weakness of his situation, Napoleon had gone to some lengths to reassure the world that his dreams of conquest were over, and the French that he would respect the rights and liberties of the citizen and no longer behave like an imperial dictator. He continued in the same vein in his writings in exile before his death. In subsequent decades the legend of the ‘liberal Emperor’ gained still further in potency. ‘During his life,’ remarked the writer François René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), ‘the world slipped through his grasp, but in
death he possessed it.' In France, 'Bonapartism' came to stand for patriotism, universal manhood suffrage, the sovereignty of the nation, the institution of an efficient, centralized, bureaucratic administration that dealt equally with all citizens, the periodic consultation of the people by its government through plebiscites and referendums, and an implicit contract between Frenchmen and the state that provided social order and political stability, national pride, and military glory. Not so far removed from Republicanism, Bonapartism differed from it by its greater emphasis on strong leadership and military prowess. But like Republicanism, it struck deep roots in significant parts of the French population...

“...For many people outside France, too, the cult of Napoleon stood for the achievements of the Revolution, translated into purposeful reform after the excesses of the terror in the early 1790s. Irish republicans and Polish nationalists looked to Napoleon for inspiration in their political struggles. The Venezuelan liberator of large swathes of South America from Spanish rule, Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), admired Napoleon so much that he had made the journey to Milan to see his hero crowned King of Italy. In China and Madagascar, Napoleon was worshipped by some as a god...”

“One of the most remarkable and panoramic descriptions of the battle of Waterloo,” writes Sachs, “unfolds in The Charterhouse of Parma, a novel written in 1839 by Marie-Henri Beyle – better known by his nom de plume – Stendhal – who had been attached to the French army off and on throughout Bonaparte’s rule as first consul and reign as Emperor Napoleon I... Early in Charterhouse, Fabrice del Dongo, the novel’s impetuous young protagonist runs away from his aristocratic, ultraconservative father’s home to serve Napoleon; he observes the battle that puts a decisive end to his hero’s career; then wonders how he can possibly make something of himself now that the revolutionary-imperial adventure has been snuffed out. And the same predicament dominates the lives of the wholly different young male protagonists of Stendhal’s two other, earlier, fictional masterpieces, The Red and the Black and the unfinished Lucien Leuwen. All three characters seem to be consciously or subconsciously obsessed with one question: What do we do, now that Napoleon is gone and all the enthusiasm-engendering excitement is over?

“Stendhal, who was born in 1783, was curious about how the Napoleonic era, viewed as a bygone epic, would affect post-Waterloo youths, because he knew so very well what the emperor’s reign – which he called ‘the despotism of glory’ – had meant to young people of his own generation. He had witnessed and subscribed to the initial idealism, to the notion that France’s mission was not only to repulse the armies of the foreign monarchies allied against the forces of the Revolution but also to liberate all of Europe from the tyranny of absolutism. As the wars dragged on, however, he had seen those ideals subverted, reduced to hollow, meaningless slogans and used as an excuse for conquest, with all of its accompanying devastation. Later, in the aftermath of Napoleon’s defeat, Stendhal became one of the first literary figures to perceive the relationship

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206 Evans, op. cit., pp. 11-12, 13.
between the death of the Revolution and the flowering of Romanticism – Romanticism understood as a sublimation of the liberating principles of a revolution that had first exploded across Europe and then imploded on itself...”

The idea that dominated immediately after the final defeat of Napoleon was reaction.

But, as Evans points out, “Putting the genie of revolutionary change back into the bottle of history was not easy. For the destructiveness of the wars fought by Napoleon and his predecessors since the early 1790s was not merely physical. Napoleon had redrawn the map of Europe several times, annexing large swathes of it to France, from the Hanseatic cities in the north through the Low Countries to north-west Italy in the south, creating a French Empire that at its height covered 290,000 square miles and counted 44 million people as its inhabitants [compared with 30 million inhabitants of the Russian Empire]. He had surrounded this with a ring of satellite states, often ruled by his relatives, including the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Westphalia. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, created by Charlemagne in 800, had come to an inglorious end in 1806. Many of these changes would have been reversed in 1815, but Napoleon showed that borders were not immutable. There were other changes, too. The power of the Church had been reduced, with vast swathes of land secularized and ecclesiastical states swept off the map. The registration of births, marriages and deaths had been assigned to secular authorities. Monasteries had been dissolved, and the power of the Church had been further reduced in many areas by the introduction of freedom of religion, civil marriage and divorce, secular education and the state appointment of clergy. The Church had also been pressured into introducing freedom of worship and a measure of equal rights for non-Christians, notably Jews.

“Everywhere that Napoleon ruled he had replaced encrusted custom and privilege with rationality and uniformity. While the emperor’s armies rampaged across Europe, his bureaucrats had moved in silently behind, reorganizing, systematizing, standardizing. In the areas that France annexed and the borderlands where it established its client states, notably western Germany, northern Italy and the Low Countries, a new generation of professional administrators had emerged to run things while Napoleon was away waging his never-ending military campaigns. Local and regional jurisdictions, such as those exercised by hundreds of imperial knights in the Holy Roman Empire, and by Church and seigneurial courts, had been supplanted by a system of centralized uniformity administered by a judicial bureaucracy. In all those areas, the Napoleonic Law Code had disposed of existing, often tradition-bound laws and ordinances, introducing a key element of equality before the law, even if in some respects this central principle of the French Revolution had been modified by Napoleon’s more conservative outlook on issues such as the rights and duties of women. Property rights were guaranteed wherever the Code applied, as they had not been in many areas before. The Code adhered to many of the key ideas of the French Revolution, including the freedom of the individual, and, as Napoleon himself proclaimed in his testament, equality of opportunity, ‘career open to talent’, and ‘the rule of reason’. Weights and measures had been at least
to some extent standardized, internal customs tolls abolished, guilds and other manifestations on the free movement of labour swept away, serfs freed (including in Poland). Everywhere Napoleon had brought change, and as he departed for his final exile on St. Helena in 1815, it was clear that much of it could not be reversed.”

But some things could and had to be reversed. And that was the job of the representatives of the victorious powers who met at a reconvened Congress of Vienna after the shock-interlude of Napoleon’s Hundred Days.

As Davies writes, they met in chastened mood and “could not be accused, as in the previous year, of ‘dancing instead of making progress’. They were ready to risk nothing. They were determined, above all, to restore the rights of monarchy – the sacred institution considered most threatened by the Revolution. In so doing they paid little attention to the claims either of democracy or of nationality….

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

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

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The Tsar’s ultimate aim was much higher than just a political settlement; it was the restoration not just of monarchism, but of Christianity as the guiding principle of European politics. Henry Kissinger writes: “He was convinced, as he wrote to a confidante in 1812, that triumph over Napoleon would usher in a new and harmonious world based on religious principles, and he pledged: ‘It is to the cause of hastening the true reign of Jesus Christ that I devote all my earthly glory.’ Conceiving of himself as an instrument of divine will, the Czar arrived in Vienna in 1814 with a design for a new world order in some ways even more radical than Napoleon’s in its universality: a ‘Holy Alliance’ of princes sublimating their national interests into a common search for peace and justice, forswearing the balance of power for Christian principles of brotherhood. As Alexander told Chateaubriand, the French royalist intellectual and diplomat, ‘There no longer exists an English policy, a French, Russian, Prussian or Austrian policy; there is now only one common policy, which, for the welfare of all, ought to be adopted in common by all states and all peoples.’ It was a forerunner of the American Wilsonian conception of the nature of world order, albeit on behalf of principles dramatically the opposite of the Wilsonian vision.”

Perhaps the best measure of the Tsar’s victory was the Orthodox Divine Liturgy celebrated on his namesday, September 12, 1815, on seven altars on the Plaine de Vertus, eighty miles east of Paris, in the presence of all the leading political and military leaders of the allied nations and a huge Russian army of 160,000 troops. Neither before nor since in the modern history of Europe has there been such a public, universal witness, by all the leaders of the Great Powers, to the true King of kings and Lord of lords and His true religion, Orthodox Christianity. And if this was just a diplomatic concession on the part of the non-Orthodox powers, it was much more than that for Alexander. His Orthodox spirit, so puzzling to the other leaders of Europe, was manifested in a letter he wrote that same evening: “This day has been the most beautiful in all my life. My heart was filled with love for my enemies. In tears at the foot of the Cross, I prayed with fervour that France might be saved…” A few days later Alexander presented his fellow sovereigns with a treaty designed to bind them in a union of faith and virtue, requiring them “to take as their sole guide the precepts of the Christian religion” and insisting that the treaty be dedicated “to the Holy and Indivisible Trinity” in Paris - because it was the most irreligious of all Europe’s capital cities.

Only the King of Prussia welcomed the idea. The Emperor of Austria was embarrassed, and in private agreed with his chancellor, Metternich, that Alexander was mad. On the British side, the Duke of Wellington confessed that he could hardly keep a straight face; he and the British Foreign Minister Lord Castlereagh mocked it in private.

212 Palmer, op. cit., p. 335.
Alexander’s own supporters joined in the spirit of the enterprise in spite of its ecumenist overtones. Thus Golitsyn wrote about the Alliance in positively chiliasm terms: “This act cannot be recognized as anything other than a preparation for that promised kingdom of the Lord which will be upon the earth as in the heavens.” And Archimandrite Philaret, the future Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, wrote: “Finally the kingdoms of this world have begun to belong to our Lord and His Christ.”

Stella Ghervas writes that the tsar “wrote the preliminary notes in pencil and then gave them to his Head of Chancery, Count John Capodistrias, so that he could render them in a diplomatic language. In his turn, Capodistrias passed the document to a brilliant and cultivated secretary [a Phanariot Greek] named Alexandre Stourdza. Stourdza later provided a detailed explanation of the text of the treaty in an unpublished piece called Considérations sur l’acte d’alliance fraternelle et chrétienne du 14/26 septembre 1815…

“In his Considérations, Stourdza sought to demonstrate that the pact was grounded on a solid theoretical and ideological base, in order to overcome the suspicions of those who opposed the pact and to refute their objections. In his theoretical construction, Napoleon was the heir of French Revolution, and his fall the end of an epoch of social and political disorder. Referring to the recent victory of the Allies following the Hundred Days, Stourdza wrote, ‘the principle of subversion against all religious and social institutions has just been slain a second time.’ This European unrest found its origin, according to him, in the Seven Years’ War (1765) and included the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the succeeding Napoleonic epoch. Hence the sole solution was to restore a principle of order in public life, and therefore to ‘proclaim […] the sole conservative principles, which had been too long relegated to the subordinate sphere of domestic life.’ There lies the explanation for the intentional but otherwise incomprehensible [!] intrusion of Christian principles into the political sphere. In fact the Tsar had already expressed that very idea nine months earlier, on December 31, 1814, in a diplomatic note that he had sent to the plenipotentiaries of the three great powers… More generally, the feeling

215 Philaret, quoted in Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ mitropolita Filareta (The Life and Activity of Metropolitan Philaret), Tula, 1994, p. 121.

Philaret appears to have been influenced by the ecumenism of his sovereign at this time. For in 1815 he wrote in his Conversations between one testing and one convinced of the Orthodoxy of the Greco-Russian Church: “Insofar as the one [the Eastern Church] and the other [the Western Church] confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, in this respect they have a common Spirit, which ‘is of God’… Know that, holding to the above-quoted words of Holy Scripture, I do not dare to call any Church which believes ‘that Jesus is the Christ’ false” (Snychev, op. cit., pp. 402, 408). However, in defense of the holy metropolitan, it should be pointed out that in the above-quoted work he rejected the heresies of papism, and that he never served with heterodox hierarchs or sought union with the heterodox churches. And he revered his mentor, Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, who during his journey to Kiev and other Russian cities in 1804 reproached “the Russian authorities for following ‘that new-fangled mode of thinking which is called tolerance’ in their relations with the Jesuits, and blamed the Jews for the impoverishment of the Christian population in the areas in which they are numerous” (Papmehl, Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, p. 81).
from many contemporaries that they had just escaped a near-apocalyptic experience largely explains the wave of mysticism that washed over Europe in those years.

“Stourdza’s testimony thus confirms that the Holy Alliance did pursue a conservative, religious, and counter-revolutionary agenda. For all that, it would be a mistake to call it a reactionary or ultra-royalist manifesto. Between these two extremes, there existed not only a vast spectrum of ideas, but also profound divergences. We should sooner speak of a middle ground, a ‘defensive modernization,’ which sparked a storm of criticism from both sides…” 216

The more cynical attitude of the western statesmen was not unexpected. After all, religion had long ceased to be seen as the basis of political life in the West. True, the monarchs protected religion as a foundation of their own monarchical power; but in the post-1815 settlement the Catholic Church received few of its lands back, which showed their true attitude to it. The fact was that Tsar Alexander was now the most powerful man in Europe, and the others could not afford to reject his religio-political project out of hand. So, led by Metternich 217, they set about discreetly editing the treaty of its more mystical elements until it was signed by the monarchs of Russia, Austria and Prussia (the British and the Turks opted out, as did the Pope of Rome) on September 26. Thus the original draft read: “Conformably to the word of the Holy Scriptures, the three contracting Monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity, and considering each other as fellow countrymen, they will on all occasions, and in all places led each other aid and assistance; and regarding themselves towards their subjects and armies as fathers of families, they will lead them, in the same fraternity with which they are animated to protect religion, peace and justice.” 218

But Metternich modified the first part to remove the phrase “by the bonds of a true fraternity” to read: “The three monarchs will remain united”.

Again, the original draft stated that the three Powers were three provinces of a single Christian nation. But Metternich changed this to present them as three branches of the same family.

“Metternich,” continues Ghervas, “having obviously grasped that there was an attempt to pass political reformism under the guise of religious rhetoric (both of which he disliked), had therefore been quick to temper the enthusiasm of the

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217 “Discreetly, Metternich set about changing the form of the ‘Holy Alliance’, ridding the draft [treaty] of those phrases which implied penitence for past imperfections; contrition smacked too strongly of revolutionary presumption to satisfy those who identified the truths of religion with orderly and conservative government. Their only doubt was whether the Tsar would accept major modifications in a document which he seemed to treat as a new dispensation of Holy Writ.” (Palmer, op. cit., p. 334)

Tsar. His was also the paternalist idea that the monarchs were ‘benevolent fathers.’ However, the idea that Europe represented a ‘Christian nation’ still made it into the final version of the text.

“It is obvious from the original proposition that Alexander I had sought to found a European nation ‘essentially one’ and living in peace, of which the various states would be provinces. We can easily guess the reason for Metternich’s amendments: the original wording would have united the peoples of Europe in a position, so to speak, “over the heads of the sovereigns,” while placing unprecedented constraints on the monarchs; the text would have smacked of a constitution. The original version even provided that the military forces of the respective powers would have to be considered as forming a single army—130 years before the aborted project of the European Defense Community of the early 1950s! Even though Tsar Alexander I had initially envisaged a sort of league of nations united under the authority of the sovereigns, what eventually emerged was an alliance of kings.

“At this point of view, the pact of the Holy Alliance stemmed from a line of thought of the Enlightenment. We should keep in mind that the monarchs and ministers of the post-Napoleonic era considered themselves as heirs of that movement as a matter of course: after all, they were the direct descendants of the sovereigns Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine of Russia, and Joseph II of Austria, all of whom had surprised their epoch with their intellectual audacity and rivaled one another to host in their courts philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Kant, much to the chagrin of the conservative minds of their respective kingdoms. On the other hand, the three sovereign signatories of the Holy Alliance rejected the French Revolution with the utmost energy…”

As we have seen, the great monarchical powers pledged themselves not to take major decisions on the international stage without consulting each other. Their alliance was therefore a kind of United Nations Assembly. But thanks to the Tsar - albeit modified by Metternich, - it was a consciously Christian United Nations.

Strikingly, however, it was a Christian United Nations that did not include the Pope… This was a second blow to the Pope’s political power after the insult he received from Napoleon.

As Ghervas writes, “the concept of a ‘Christian nation’ in Europe, an ecumenism embracing the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox faiths was, in fact, an insidious attack aimed at the Holy See. Somewhat surprisingly, it has not been noted that the Pope of Rome, a major political actor of European history for centuries, was now being banned from the continental chess game of the Congress of Vienna and would never recover his former status.

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219 Ghervas, op. cit., p. 60.
“In fact, the statement in the treaty of the Holy Alliance that ‘the three sovereigns make up a single nation with the same Christian faith’ amounted to a notice of liquidation of the thousand-year-old political system of Western Europe, which had been founded (at least ideologically) on the alliance between the Catholic Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. By putting Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy on equal footing, thus making the political organization of Christian Europe ‘non-confessional,’ the sovereigns of the three powers were plainly declaring that the Pope’s claim to supremacy in Europe was null and void. From that angle, it takes the aspect of a backstage revolution. Napoleon had already damaged the prestige of the Sovereign Pontiff with his own sacrilegious coronation in 1804. Two years later, the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire had sealed the bankruptcy of the temporal side of the fellowship between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. In 1815, it was the turn of the spiritual side to be liquidated. As a result, the political role of the Sovereign Pontiff was reduced to that of a sovereign of an Italian state. This ideological backlash profoundly upset Pope Pius VII; therein lies the reason why the Holy See refused to sign the pact of the Holy Alliance.

“Why had the sovereigns of the great powers engaged in such a radically anti-clerical maneuver that deliberately ousted the Pope from European politics? … From Alexander’s point of view, a Patriarch of Rome who not only considered himself independent of the sovereigns, but historically claimed to be their suzerain, was a contestant on the European political scene that had to be remorselessly shoved out of the way.

“That rather unfriendly attitude toward the Catholic Church was shared, but for entirely different reasons, by the Protestant king of Prussia (a hereditary enemy of Roman supremacy) and the sovereign of Austria—the same who had liquidated the Holy Roman Empire and crowned himself emperor of Austria under the name of Francis I. The latter was also the nephew of the archduke Joseph II (1741–90), who had applied a policy known as Josephism, aimed precisely at subordinating the Church to the State and at restraining pontifical power. Hence, beyond the mysticism of the epoch, would it be appropriate to speak of a strand of mystification in the Holy Alliance, especially when considering the amendments from a character as down-to-earth as Metternich? In any case, there was a shared interest on the part of the three Powers to put the final nail in the coffin of Papal political authority.

“In firm opposition to the Holy Alliance, there arose, naturally enough, representatives of Roman Catholic thought, such as the Jesuits, as well as Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. In defiance of all odds, they kept advocating an alliance of sovereigns under the auspices of the Pope, as well as a return to the prerogatives of the aristocratic class. It is those views that most impressed minds in France, especially the alliance of the Bourbon monarchy and the Church of Rome, despite the fact that both were now only secondary pieces on a rather complicated European chessboard. In addition, Maistre knew the Tsar well, since he had spent several years in Saint Petersburg; if he mistrusted him, it was not for failing to know him. Maistre wrote about the Holy Alliance, even before its publication: ‘Let us note that the spirit behind it is not Catholic, nor

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Greek or Protestant; it is a peculiar spirit that I have been studying for thirty years, but to describe it here would be too long; it is enough to say that it is as good for the separated Churches as it is bad for Catholics. It is expected to melt and combine all metals; after which, the statue will be cast away.’ Maistre was exposing what he had rightly perceived as a cunning maneuver: by adopting the Christian religion as the guiding principle, but diluting it at the same time into a vague whole, the three sovereigns had meant to undermine the Pope’s sphere of influence. By a process that our age would call ‘embrace, extend, and extinguish,’ they had deliberately opened the door to a European political sphere that would henceforth be free of ecclesiastical influence (though not of religion).

“Finally, the wording Christian family’ offered yet another advantage in the geopolitical context of the time: it covered all states of Europe, but left out the Ottoman Empire, a Muslim state. Russia, which had concluded a war with Turkey only three years before, had been entertaining definite ambitions over it since the epoch of Peter the Great. Thus the Holy Alliance potentially gave the Russian Empire a free hand on the rather complex Eastern Question—in other words, the competition among the great powers to partition the territory of the declining Ottoman Empire.”

“To protect the new overall territorial settlement,” writes Kissinger, “the Quadruple Alliance of Britain, Prussia, Austria, and Russia was formed. A territorial guarantee – which was what the Quadruple Alliance amounted to – did not have the same significance for each of the signatories. The level of urgency with which threats were perceived varied significantly. Britain, protected by its command of the seas, felt confident in withholding definite commitments to contingencies and preferred waiting until a major threat from Europe took specific shape. The continental countries had a narrower margin of safety, assessing that their survival might be at stake from actions far less dramatic than those causing Britain to take alarm.

“This was particularly the case in the face of revolution – that is, when the threat involved the issue of legitimacy. The conservative states sought to build bulwarks against a new wave of revolution; they aimed to include mechanisms for the preservation of legitimate order – by which they meant monarchical rule. The Czar’s proposed Holy Alliance provided a mechanism for protecting the domestic status quo throughout Europe. His partners saw in the Holy Alliance – subtly redesigned – a way to curb Russian exuberance. The right of intervention was limited because, as the eventual terms stipulated, it could be exercised only in concert; in this manner, Austria and Prussia retained a veto over the more exalted schemes of the Czar.

“Three tiers of institutions buttressed the Vienna system: the Quadruple Alliance to defeat challenges to the territorial order; the Holy Alliance to overcome threats to domestic institutions; and a concert of powers institutionalized through periodic diplomatic conferences of the heads of government of the alliances to define their common purposes or to deal with

emerging crises. This concert mechanism functioned like a precursor of the United Nations Security Council. Its conferences acted on a series of crises, attempting to distill a common course: the revolutions in Naples in 1820 and in Spain in 1820-23 (quelled by the Holy Alliance and France, respectively) and the Greek revolution and war of independence of 1821-32 (ultimately supported by Britain, France, and Russia). The Concert of Powers did not guarantee a unanimity of outlook, yet in each case a potentially explosive crises was resolved without a major-power war.”

“In 1814-15,” writes Dominic Lieven, “the European great powers formed what can justly be called a system of international relations rooted in some conception of common norms, interests, and restraint. They could do this in part because all had suffered from a generation of warfare and dreaded its recurrence. The continental powers were also united by what might be described as an antidemocratic peace theory. With some justice – particularly as regards France – they believed that revolution would bring to power regimes bent on external aggression and certain to further destabilize the Continent. Britain never fully subscribed to this theory nor to the European concert, partly out of liberal principles and partly because of its traditional wish to keep the continental powers divided.”

Thus almost from the beginning the British worked to undermine the Holy Alliance’s stand against liberal nationalism. For, as Norman Davies writes, “in each of the subsequent Congresses held at Troppau (1820), Laibach (1821), and Verona (1822), the British held strong reservations about the successive expeditions for crushing revolution in Naples, Greece, and Spain. On the critical issue of the revolt of Spain’s South American colonies, the British Foreign Secretary, George Canning, joined the US President, James Monroe, in forbidding any sort of European intervention in the Americas. ‘I called the New World into existence,’ he told the House of Commons in 1826, ‘to redress the Balance of the Old.’ In effect, he killed the Congress System stone dead. ‘Things are getting back to a wholesome state,’ he remarked shortly before his death. ‘Every nation for itself, and God for us all’.”

The British, led by Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh pursued a balance-of-power politics with Britain playing the part of “balancer”. Castlereagh committed suicide in 1822, but his policy survived him. As Ferguson writes, “Although Britain’s ‘continental commitment’ was intermittent over the coming century, it was sufficient – until 1914 – to prevent any one power on the Continent from challenging, as France under Napoleon, the fundamental legitimacy of the pentarchical order. In essence, European stability was based on a balance between the four continental powers, which Britain preserved by occasional diplomatic or military intervention.”

221 Kissinger, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
224 Ferguson, The Square and the Tower, p. 131.
Although this system had its flaws – for example, the resentment of some of the lesser powers against the five great powers – “there was no denying that something new had been established – and no denying that it worked. In the century between the Utrecht settlements (1713-15) and the Congress of Vienna, there had been thirty-three European wars involving some or all of the eleven acknowledged powers of the period (which included Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Saxony). For the 1815-1914 period, there were seventeen such wars, even if Spain and Sweden are still counted as powers. The probability of war participation by any power declined by roughly a third. There were, in effect, world wars in the eighteenth century as in the twentieth – the Seven Years’ War was a truly global conflict – but there was no world war in the nineteenth century…”

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The most important achievement of the Holy Alliance was the re-establishment of the monarchical principle, and in particular of Christian hereditary monarchism (excluding papal monarchy)…

Now we have seen that even Napoleon’s regime had acquired monarchical trappings; but he had failed to make it truly hereditary. Thus when an obscure general called Malet had announced Napoleon’s death in Russia in October, 1812, the Emperor had been startled by how close the mutiny came to success. What touched a particularly raw nerve in him, writes Zamoyski, “was that the news of his death in Russia, announced by Malet, had led those who believed it to consider a change of regime, instead of making them proclaim the succession of his son, the King of Rome. ‘Our forefathers rallied to the cry: “The King is dead, long live the King!” he reminded them, adding that ‘These few words encompass the principal advantages of monarchy.’ That they had not been uttered on the night of 23 October revealed to him that for all its trappings, the monarchy he had created lacked consistency, and he was still just a general who had seized power, a parvenu with no title to rule beyond his ability to hold on to it. He felt this setback personally, and the sense of insecurity it induced would have a profound effect on how he behaved over the next two years, making him more aggressive and less amenable, and leading inexorably to his downfall…”

A hereditary monarch may not be an admirable person, and may suffer many defeats in the field; but he is the king, and in a society that still believes in kingship, this gives his regime solidity and strength. And if he fails or dies, his son will succeed him, and command the same reverence and loyalty. But once Napoleon had been defeated, and the magical aura of invincibility surrounding him began to fade, it was the end both for him and for his upstart dynasty – as he himself recognized after Waterloo.

However, while the Congress of Vienna succeeded in re-establishing the principle of hereditary monarchism as the only true principle of political

\(^{225}\) Ferguson, The Square and the Tower, p. 132.

\(^{226}\) Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, p. 5.
legitimacy, in practice hereditary monarchs by no means always recovered their thrones and territories. The great powers, as was to be expected, did not restore the map of Europe to what it had been before 1792. They increased their own power, and many hundreds of smaller rulers, especially in Germany, were partially or wholly dispossessed in the complex negotiations and horse-trading that took place between them in Vienna and Paris.

Moreover, millions of ordinary people, especially in Germany and Italy, now found themselves under new rulers. This created almost as much disruption and discontent as had the Napoleonic invasions. And this in turn created a kind of nostalgia for the Napoleonic times in some.

In addition to this, in spite of the defeat of the French revolution, the idea of nationalism that the revolution had spawned continued to grow in influence. This was the idea that not only the rulers, but also the nations over which they ruled, had rights and privileges, and that a nation represented an organic and even moral unity that could not be simply cut up and parcelled out as, for example, Poland was. The settlement of 1815, and the congresses of the great powers that took place in the decade that followed, have been much criticized for not taking sufficient account of these new developments, and of vainly trying to resist an unstoppable development by crude police methods and repression.

An eloquent exponent of this point of view is Adam Zamoyski, who writes: “The Vienna settlement imposed an orthodoxy which not only denied political existence to many nations; it enshrined a particularly stultified form of monarchical government; institutionalised social hierarchies as rigid as any that had existed under the ancient regime; and preserved archaic disabilities – serfdom was not abolished in Russia until half a century after the congress. By excluding whole classes and nations from a share in its benefits, this system nurtured envy and resentment, which flourished into socialism and aggressive nationalism. And when, after the ‘Concert of Europe’ had fought itself to extinction in the Great War, those forces were at last unleashed, they visited on Europe events more horrific than the worst fears Metternich or any of his colleagues could have entertained.

“It would be idle to propose that the arrangements made in 1815 caused the terrible cataclysms of the twentieth century. But anyone who attempted to argue that what happened in Russia after 1917, in Italy and Germany in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, and in many other parts of central and southern Europe at various other moments of the last century had no connection with them would be exposing themselves to ridicule…”227

And yet, as Zamoyski admits, the peacemakers of 1815 “did face a formidable task, one that defied any ideal solution. Just because certain arrangements they made turned out to have evil consequences, it does not follow that the opposite course would have yielded more benign results.”228

227 Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, p. 569.
228 Zamoyski, Rites of Peace, p. 566.
Indeed, the opposite course of giving in to the propaganda of the French revolution might well have brought the cataclysm of 1914-45 forward by several decades. The kernel of truth in Zamoyski’s argument is that the great powers did not cure the disease of Europe, but only arrested or repressed it by crude counter-revolutionary measures that were often counter-productive. But the only real cure for the disease was for the peoples of Europe to accept the true faith from their liberator, Russia – a near-impossible task, since the attitude of the Europeans to Russia was one of supercilious condescension and non-comprehension, while Russia would soon herself begin struggling to contain the revolutionary disease within herself.

In this context, the attempt of Tsar Alexander to save Europe by preaching the faith to his fellow monarchs – even if that faith was seen through the prism of an Enlightenment education - acquires an extra poignancy. He failed because his fellow monarchs and their peoples were not interested in the faith. But his failure was less his than that of Europe as a whole; for the only hope for a real resurrection of Christian and monarchical Europe lay in accepting the lead of Russia in both the spiritual and the political spheres...

In the final analysis, the defeat of Napoleon and the re-establishment of monarchical order proved the viability of traditional kingship in the face of the most powerful and determined attempt to overthrow it yet seen in European history. It established an order that, in spite of many upheavals and changes, remained essentially in place until 1914, when the anti-monarchical movements of revolutionary socialism and nationalism finally destroyed the old order. That the old order survived for as long as it did was owing to no small degree to that former-freethinker-turned-Orthodox-monarchist, Tsar Alexander the Blessed...
15. GOETHE AND BEETHOVEN

Probably the most famous artists of the early Romantic period were the poet Goethe and the composer Beethoven. And yet they were not typical romantics. They displayed a mixture of Romantic passion and Classical restraint that raised their work to a pinnacle from which both the greatness of the Classical past and the madness of the Romantic future was clearly visible.

Goethe was perhaps the first romantic. His novel, The Sorrows of Young Werther (1774), was the world’s first “best-seller”; its tale of unrequited love and suicide created a taste for passion, as it were, that has never since departed from the subconscious of western civilization. “What set Goethe’s book apart from other such novels was its expression of unbridled longing for a joy beyond possibility, its sense of defiant rebellion against authority, and of principal importance, its total subjectivity: qualities that trail-blazed the Romantic movement.”

But shortly after Werther Goethe made his famous trip to Italy, which imbued him with such a love of the Classics as to leave a permanent imprint on his art and his beliefs. Of course, he was not alone in this attraction of the Romantics to what appeared to be their artistic opposites. Byron loved Greek classicism and died in the liberation of Greece. And John Keats wrote his “Ode on a Grecian Urn” which summed up that glimpse of eternity in time that so many English-speaking poets discerned in Greek art:

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou sayst,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," – that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

As for Goethe, he was not only the first romantic but also the author of “Weimar classicism”, a period in his art that extended well into the nineteenth century.

It was probably his classical tastes that enabled Goethe to escape that terrible disease of the early Romantic generation – the worship of the French revolution. He correctly called the French revolution “the most dreadful of all events”, and remained firmly committed to the old regime’s aristocratic and hierarchical model of politics. There may have been personal reasons for this: since 1775 he had been a leading figure at the court of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, and so had much to lose from the revolution. Moreover, he had been present at the battle of Valmy in 1792, when the revolution won its first victory over the Germans; he had witnessed the siege of Mainz, and the barbarism of Napoleon’s troops when they ransacked his house in Weimar in 1806...

However, while not fooled by the revolution, Goethe was fooled by its nemesis and apotheosis, Napoleon. Mistakenly thinking that he was the reverser

rather than the continuer of the revolution, “he persisted,” as Professor Ritchie Robertson writes, “in admiring Napoleon, the invader of Germany and conqueror of Prussia, whom patriots denounced as a devil risen from hell. For him, Napoleon was the hero who had defeated the French Revolution and replaced anarchy with a social order which Goethe hoped would prove permanent. More than that, Napoleon was a superhuman figure, ‘the highest phenomenon that was possible in history’. ‘His life was the striding of a demi-god from battle to battle and from victory to victory’, Goethe later said to Eckermann (11 March 1828). Goethe’s meeting with Napoleon [at Napoleon’s request] at Erfurt on 2 October 1808, and again in Weimar on 6 October, was one of the supreme moments of his life. Napoleon awarded him the Légion d’Honneur, which he proudly wore at every opportunity. Hence he deeply disliked the often furious German nationalism that grew up during Napoleon’s occupation, triumphed over his downfall, and would flourish for the next century and a half.”

Goethe showed his affinities with the rationalist eighteenth century rather than the romantic nineteenth also in his aversion to nationalism. Again, there may have been personal motives for that. A man who in his literary career had been deeply influenced by foreign writes, from the English Shakespeare to the Greek Euripides to the Persian Hajiz, and spent much of his time translating them, was hardly likely to think that all truth and beauty was in one nation.

“Although often requested to write poems arousing nationalist passions, Goethe would always decline. In old age, he explained why this was so to Eckermann: ‘How could I write songs of hatred when I felt no hate? And, between ourselves, I never hated the French, although I thanked God when we were rid of them. How could I, to whom the only significant things are civilization [Kultur] and barbarism, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated in the world, and to which I owe a great part of my own culture? In any case this business of hatred between nations is a curious thing. You will always find it more powerful and barbarous on the lowest levels of civilization. But there exists a level at which it wholly disappears, and where one stands, so to speak, above the nations, and feels the weal or woe of a neighboring people as though it were one’s own.’”

Goethe’s attitude to religion was similarly rationalist. He was not anti-religious: he objected to Voltaire’s mockery of religion, his works contain sympathetic portrayals of religious people, and he counted sincere Christians among his friends. But he was too much of an Enlightenment man to believe in the literal truth of Christian dogma; he particularly disliked the doctrine of original sin, and didn’t believe in miracles.

And he was an ecumenist, who believed in no institutional religion. As Robertson explains, his real religion was probably a kind of nature-worship. “He told Lavater firmly: ‘You consider the Gospel the most divine truth; even a loud

voice from heaven wouldn’t convince me that water burns and fire puts it out, that a woman bears a child without a man, or that a man can rise from the dead; instead, I consider those beliefs to be blasphemies against the great God and his revelation in nature.’ He thought it self-evident that there was a God who was manifested in the order of nature. Natural religion therefore did not require any effort of faith; it was only particular religions that did so. Natural religion sprang from ‘the dialogue in our bosom with nature’; it depended on feeling and could not be implanted by rational argument. Hence what Faust professes to Gretchen is natural religion.”

One aspect of Goethe’s private religion may have been a product of his interest in Eastern religion. This was a kind of amorality, an anticipation of Nietzsche’s Beyond Good and Evil: a belief that good and evil went together in the world like Yin and Yan, as two aspects of one reality. As he put it: nature was “an organ on which our Lord plays and the Devil treads the bellows”.

Thus according to Goethe, writes Ellendea Proffer, “at the heart of everything lies a contradiction – attraction and repulsion, creation and destruction – that men see as good and evil, heaven and hell. Goethe felt that moral concepts were really only one facet of the whole, a whole in which immorality and amorality are at least equally represented. The main thing is activity – the surge of life, an everlasting repetition that never progresses, good never really does triumph over evil, but the movement in itself is what is important. All these contradictions are inseparable from one another and from God Himself.”

In accordance with his views on morality, Goethe paid little attention to the fairly strict contemporary views on sexual life, and had a string of affairs. “Many of Goethe’s works, especially Faust, the Roman Elegies, and the Venetian Epigrams, depict erotic passions and acts. For instance, in Faust, the first use of Faust's power after signing a contract with the devil is to seduce a teenage girl. Some of the Venetian Epigrams were held back from publication due to their sexual content. Goethe clearly saw human sexuality as a topic worthy of poetic and artistic depiction, an idea that was uncommon in a time when the private nature of sexuality was rigorously normative. Still worse, Goethe was a pederast: ‘I like boys a lot, but the girls are even nicer. If I tire of her as a girl, she’ll play the boy for me as well’. Goethe also defended pederasty: ‘Pederasty is as old as humanity itself, and one can therefore say that it is natural, that it resides in nature, even if it proceeds against nature. What culture has won from nature will not be surrendered or given up at any price.’”

An important aspect of Romanticism was its subtle devaluation of science – the god of the Enlightenment – by comparison with art. Goethe was a true Romantic in this respect. For, though a scientist as well as a poet, he approached

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232 Robertson, op. cit., pp. 105-106.
his science in a distinctly non-empirical way, fearing an excessively abstract approach to nature.

As Professor Robertson writes, “Given his fear of abstraction, Goethe was inevitably hostile to the most successful model of scientific research in his time: the conception of the universe as a great machine, operating by regular laws, and capable of being described in quantitative and mathematical terms. Goethe knew little of mathematics: in 1786 he tried to learn algebra, with limited success. He says that mathematics is all very well in its place, dealing with those restricted areas where exactitude is possible, but should abandon its claim to ‘universal monarchy’. The study of nature needs to emancipate itself from mathematics and ‘seek with all loving, reverent, devout energies to penetrate nature and its holy life’. Although he occasionally used a microscope to examine micro-organisms, and enjoyed looking at the moon through a telescope, Goethe generally deplored the use of instruments such as microscopes, on the grounds that they distorted the natural relation between the observer and the world.

“Despite rejecting mathematical abstraction, Goethe did not confine himself to the empirical study of phenomena. His cogently criticized the empirical method advocated early in the 17th century by Francis Bacon and practiced after 1660 by the Royal Society in London. Empirical studies need to be guided by principles, otherwise they will just lead to millions of isolated and insignificant facts. The Royal Society, though claiming to study nature without preconceptions, in fact assumed that the universe was really a great machine. The investigator, in Goethe’s view, needed to remember that there were no raw facts, independent of the viewer’s preconceptions.

“However, when Goethe writes, ‘The supreme goal would be to grasp that everything factual is already theory,’ he does not mean ‘theory’ in any recognizable present-day sense. He rejects ‘theory’ in the sense of mathematical abstraction. Nor has he any interest in causal explanations for phenomena. After all, since everything in nature is interrelated, a causal account merely privileges one set of relationships, a historical one, at the expense of innumerable others. Often he uses the word ‘theory’ in the original sense of Greek theoria, meaning ‘looking’... Ultimately all you can do with phenomena is contemplate them. There is nothing behind them, nothing to be explained. The aphorism just quoted continues: ‘The blue of the sky reveals to us the basic law of chromatics. Do not look for anything behind the phenomena: they themselves are the doctrine’. Even to express phenomena in words requires caution, since language is just another phenomenon; we must use language with self-awareness and irony if we are not to fall into mere abstraction.”

Combining the roles of statesman, poet, scientist and philosopher, Goethe was the nineteenth-century equivalent of the Renaissance man and represents, perhaps better than anybody else, the paradoxes of western civilization and the

essence of its apostasy. We can understand this better if we study his most famous and influential work, *Faust*. As we read in a Wikipedia article on the play, "*Faust Part One* takes place in multiple settings, the first of which is Heaven. The demon Mephistopheles makes a bet with God: he says that he can lure God's favourite human being (Faust), who is striving to learn everything that can be known, away from righteous pursuits. The next scene takes place in Faust's study where Faust, despairing at the vanity of scientific, humanitarian and religious learning, turns to magic for the showering of infinite knowledge. He suspects, however, that his attempts are failing. Frustrated, he ponders suicide, but rejects it as he hears the echo of nearby Easter celebrations begin. He goes for a walk with his assistant Wagner and is followed home by a stray poodle (the term then meant a medium-to-big-size dog, similar to a sheep dog).

“In Faust's study, the poodle transforms into Mephistopheles. Faust makes an arrangement with him: Mephistopheles will do everything that Faust wants while he is here on Earth, and in exchange Faust will serve the Devil in Hell. Faust's arrangement is that if he is pleased enough with anything Mephistopheles gives him that he wants to stay in that moment forever, then he will die in that moment.

“When Mephistopheles tells Faust to sign the pact with blood, Faust complains that Mephistopheles does not trust Faust's word of honor. In the end, Mephistopheles wins the argument and Faust signs the contract with a drop of his own blood. Faust has a few excursions and then meets Margaret (also known as Gretchen). He is attracted to her and with jewellery and with help from a neighbor, Martha, Mephistopheles draws Gretchen into Faust's arms. With Mephistopheles' aid, Faust seduces Gretchen. Gretchen's mother dies from a sleeping potion, administered by Gretchen to obtain privacy so that Faust could visit her. Gretchen discovers she is pregnant. Gretchen's brother condemns Faust, challenges him and falls dead at the hands of Faust and Mephistopheles. Gretchen drowns her illegitimate child and is convicted of the murder. Faust tries to save Gretchen from death by attempting to free her from prison. Finding that she refuses to escape, Faust and Mephistopheles flee the dungeon, while voices from Heaven announce that Gretchen shall be saved – ‘Sie ist gerettet’ – this differs from the harsher ending of *Urfaust* [the earliest draft of *Faust*] – ‘Sie ist gerichtet!’ – ‘she is condemned.’

“Rich in classical allusion, in Part Two the romantic story of the first Faust is forgotten, and Faust wakes in a field of fairies to initiate a new cycle of adventures and purpose. The piece consists of five acts (relatively isolated episodes) each representing a different theme. Ultimately, Faust goes to Heaven, for he loses only half of the bet. Angels, who arrive as messengers of divine mercy, declare at the end of Act V: ‘He who strives on and lives to strive/ Can earn redemption still’ (V, 11936–7).”

It is this quality of restless striving that is so characteristic of what we may call Faustian man, *Homo Occidentalis*. As Mephistopheles puts it:

*He serves you [God] in a very curious way indeed.*
It isn’t earthly nourishment he seems to need;
His fevered mind is in a constant ferment.
Half-conscious of his folly, in his pride
On all the joys of earth he wants to feed,
And pluck from heaven the very brightest star.
He searches high and low, and yet however far
He roans, his restless heart remains dissatisfied. (ll. 300-307)

Again, Faust himself says:

Listen: it’s not on happiness I’m bent.
I want a frenzied round of agonizing joy,
Of loving hate, of stimulating discontent.
Learning and knowledge now I leave behind;
I shall not flinch from suffering or despair,
And in my inners self I wish to share
The whole experience of mankind,
To seek its heights, its depths, to know
Within my heart its joys and all its woe,
Identify myself with other men and blend
My life with theirs, and like them perish in the end. (ll.1765-1775)

Of course, this lust for experience, “the whole experience of mankind”, was a typically Romantic attitude. But it goes back well before the Romantic period to the Renaissance, when this lust was first revealed in Western culture. Only Goethe stands above this lust - or pretends to. He sees it as a temptation posed by the devil himself, which leads inexorably to disaster. It can be construed as a striving of man for God – but a true meeting never takes place, just as God and Adam in Michelangelo’s famous fresco in the Sistine Chapel stretch out their hands towards each other but never quite meet. For

Reason and knowledge, the highest powers of mankind,
You have rejected, to oblivion consigned.
Now let the Prince of lies confuse you,
With magic spells and fantasies delude you –
And I will have you then once and for all.
For fate has given him a mind
So restless, so impetuous, so unconfined
That his impatient spirit, like a waterfall,
Pours headlong over all the pleasures life can give.
I’ll plunge him into such distraction, he will live
A life so futile, so banal and trite,
He’ll flap and flutter like a bird stuck tight.
He is unsatiable, and so I’ll tantalize
Him, dangle food and drink before his greedy eyes.
In vain he’ll beg relief on bended knee,
And even if he hadn’t pledged himself to me,
He’d still be damned for all eternity! (ll. 1851-1867)
So Faust is a parable of the fall of man, employing many religious themes, but from the point of view of a sceptic. Just as Adam strove for deification through tasting of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so Western, Faustian man strives for knowledge (experience) and power. To that end he embraces science, magic, art and the senses – but betrays his true love. Gretchen is redeemed for her simple faith, refusing to escape from prison with aid of the devil. But the sceptic Faust, who escapes with Mephistopheles, should be damned. He is not, because Faust has an inauthentic sequel in which Faust is saved in spite of his bargain with the devil. Goethe is moving away from authentic tragedy. For, as Robertson writes, “after the intense agony of the ‘Prison’ scene, an unspecified time passes, and at the beginning of Part II we find Faust lying on an Alpine meadow, attended by charming spirits who pity his distress and sing him to sleep. When he wakes the next morning, Faust is refreshed and ready to continue his career, thanks to the healing power of nature. Now this may seem unfair, indeed morally offensive. After all, Faust is responsible for Gretchen’s misery and death. One might feel that he should be punished. However, it seems that he has been punished enough by the agony of confronting Gretchen in prison. Thereafter his moral failure is treated as a medical problem. Not atonement, but healing, is prescribed. A spectacular act of atonement would do no good: it wouldn’t bring Gretchen back to life, and it would only prevent Faust from achieving his potential and, perhaps, doing more good in the world. Goethe is here moving beyond catharsis and beyond tragedy.”

Tragically, European man followed the path Goethe’s Faust had laid out. In striving to “achieve his potential” he lost his soul - and soulmate. Henceforth there would be no tragedies with a Divine, let alone a Christian dimension. The tragic heroes of later European Kultur would be “redeemed” by suffering and striving alone – in other words, by works, not by faith. Their justification would be the same as Faust’s: striving, which would give a quality of dynamism to Western civilization, but never of peace. At most, “redemption” would be achieved by the death of all the guilty, including the hero, as in the final scene of Hamlet or the battlefields of World War I – a most unsatisfactory ending, providing no real catharsis and certainly no joy. Like the spires of the medieval Gothic cathedrals, - interest in which, not coincidentally, Goethe revived in his early essay, “On German Architecture” (1772), - Faustian man strives always upwards and outwards, knowing that the Kingdom of heaven is no longer within him... This in contrast to the curves and domes of Eastern Orthodox architecture, which as it were keep the Kingdom inside the building. No striving, no achievement of potential, is needed there, only obedience in love...

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) greatly admired Goethe, but he was a very different man whose legacy pointed in a very different direction. What he shared with Goethe was his being a Classical Romantic. His classicism came with his education: he was, after all, the pupil of Haydn and Mozart, the greatest of the classical composers; and his “Early Period” (roughly 1795-1802) could best

236 Robertson, op. cit., pp. 98-98.
be characterized as “Haydnesque” (especially the First Symphony) with some Mozartean interludes (such as the Second Piano Concerto). Only in his piano works could something radically new be detected even at this early stage (for example, in the famous “Pathétique” and “Moonlight” sonatas).

One event appears to have triggered the transition to his earth-shaking “Middle Period” (roughly 1803-1813). This was the discovery that he was going deaf – a terrible affliction especially for a composer, which he movingly recorded in his famous “Heiligenstadt Testament” (1802). Then, with the writing of his “Eroica” symphony in 1803 he embarked upon that colossal series of masterpieces that smashed the conventions followed by Haydn and Mozart, a period, writes Harvey Sachs, “leaves one with a sense of wonder bordering on disbelief: the Third (‘Eroica’), Fourth, Fifth, Sixth (‘Pastoral’), Seventh and Eighth symphonies; Leonora (the name he gave to the first and second versions of his only opera); the Fourth and Fifth (‘Emperor’) piano concertos; the Violin and Triple concertos; the ‘Waldstein’, ‘Appassionata’ and ‘Les Adieux’ piano sonatas; the Ninth (‘Kreutzer’) and Tenth (G Major) violin sonatas; the Third Cello Sonata, op. 69; the String Quartets, op. 59 nos. 1 to 3 (‘Razumovsky’), and op. 74 (‘Harp’); the ‘Ghost’ and ‘Archduke’ trios for piano, violin and cello; the Coriolan, Egmont and three Leonore overtures; the Choral Fantasy for piano, orchestra, and chorus; and the Mass in C Major. Probably only Mozart and Schubert, in the last ten years of their brief lives, produced in a single decade as much that is still performed frequently all over the world as Beethoven between 1803 and 1813. During the same period, Hegel wrote his University of Jena lectures, later published as Phänomenologie des Geistes (Phenomenology of the Spirit or of the Mind), which were crucial to establishing his reputation as a philosopher; Goethe gave the world Faust, Part One; Schiller produced Wilhelm Tell; and Blake’s Milton and the first two cantos of Byron’s Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage appeared. But none of these works – not even Faust – occupied as much space in its specific area as Beethoven’s works of that decade have occupied in theirs.

“These were the works that gave birth to the familiar image of Beethoven as a tempestuous genius who shook his fist at fate and, Jove-like, loosed musical lightning bolts that welded the rationalistic Enlightenment ideals of the just-ended eighteenth century, in which he had spent roughly the first half of his life, to the stormy Romantic individualism of the newborn nineteenth. By the time he reached middle age, his startling originality had made him a European musical icon, and his much-discussed intransigence and eccentricity had become a symbol of untrammeled artistic freedom.”

If Beethoven’s Early Period showed him as a Classical artist, albeit a highly unusual and talented one, in the Middle Period he was predominantly the Romantic artist – indeed, the prototypical Romantic. Apart from the features mentioned by Sachs, we may point to his extremely high estimate of the role of art in general and music in particular, which was so typical of the romantics. “Music,” he said, “is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy. Music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks and invents.”

For the romantics, as we have seen, the artistic genius as a God-seer or demi-god, lighting the path through the storm and stress and darkness of earthly life to the Divine Light of Heaven, was a familiar theme. We find the same idea in Goethe, who wrote: "As a temporal gospel, true poetry announces itself by knowing how to liberate us, through internal serenity and external pleasure, from the earthly burdens that weigh us down. Like a balloon, it lifts us and the ballast that we carry, into higher regions, leaving earth’s tangled paths lying spread out before us in a bird’s-eye view."

But even at the height of his most Romantic, Middle Period, Beethoven displays important differences from Goethe. Thus the latter’s amorality with starkly at odds with Beethoven’s stern moralism. For if for Goethe sin was not natural and inevitable, and therefore not really sinful, Beethoven was quite different. Thus his struggle to obtain the wardship of his nephew Karl because of the immoral behaviour of Karl’s mother was a struggle that lasted many years and cost him a great deal both financially and emotionally. Again, he was appalled by the popularity of the "frivolous" Rossini’s operas; for him, music was too intensely serious and important to be used in such a way – the later Romantic attitude of "art for art’s sake" was profoundly foreign to him. Again, his only venture into opera scrupulously avoided the sensuality and illicit love of almost all great operas from Monteverdi’s L’Incoronazione di Poppaea to Mozart’s Don Giovanni, from Verdi’s La Traviata to Puccini’s La Bohème, being a hymn to marital fidelity.

Beethoven was different also in his more conventional but at the same time more authentic, religiosity. Sachs argues, on the contrary, that Beethoven shared the ideas expressed in "Benjamin Constant’s treatise, De la religion, in which the French writer and statesman essentially equated true religion with spirituality – a quality natural to all human beings, he said – whereas formal, imposed religion is inimical to the human spirit. ‘Religion has been disfigured,’ Constant wrote. ‘Man has been pursued right to his last place of asylum, to this intimate sanctuary of his existence. Persecution provokes rebellion… There is a principle in us that becomes indignant at every intellectual fetter. This principle can be whipped into a furor; it can be the cause of many a crime; but it is connected to everything that is noble in our nature. Surely Constant’s anti-dogmatic, anti-Establishment, nondoctrinaire, informal, open-minded, and indeed Romantic approach to spirituality is closely linked to Beethoven’s beliefs…”

However, in his Late Period Beethoven enters a deeply religious phase of his career, which, while still revolutionary, cannot easily be described in such terms. The critical transition from the Middle to the Late Period in Beethoven’s music – the relatively fallow years 1813-1823 – went in parallel with, and may well have been influenced by, an important political transition: the defeat of Napoleon and the Revolution and the return of Divine right monarchy in the form of the Bourbon Kings Louis XVIII and Charles X. Unlike so many romantic artists of the period, Beethoven appears to have been in no way upset by this turn of

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238 Sachs, op. cit., p. 131.
events, and gladly composed two anti-revolutionary pieces ("The Glorious Moment" and "Wellington’s Victory") that he performed before all the crowned heads of Europe at the Congress of Vienna in November, 1814. It would be going beyond the evidence we have to say that Beethoven the lover of freedom, who had removed Napoleon from the dedication of his Eroica symphony when he became Emperor because of his despotic tendencies, had now repented of his earlier liberalism and become a reactionary. Nevertheless, there is marked return to classicism, if not in form, at any rate in spirit, in his Late Period works which seems to parallel the return to older forms of government in Europe as a whole. Only this is a revolutionary, new form of classicism which appears to combine classicism with romanticism in a unique – and uniquely religious – mixture.

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Beethoven’s Last Period begins with the Missa Solemnis, a setting of the Catholic Mass. Elements in the musical style hark back to earlier, more Christian ages, such as the Bachian fugues\(^{239}\), and Donald Tovey remarks that “Not even Bach or Handel can show a greater sense of space and of sonority. There is no earlier choral writing that comes so near to recovering some of the lost secrets of the style of Palestrina. There is no choral and no orchestral writing, earlier or later, that shows a more thrilling sense of the individual colour of every chord, every position, and every doubled third or discord.”

More important, however, than these formal characteristics is the content. Not since the stupendous Kyrie of Bach’s B Minor Mass had the West produced a work of such unequivocally sincere faith. And if sincere, then it cannot, of course, be described as undogmatic, especially in the Credo. It is significant that the work was first performed in 1824 in Orthodox St. Petersburg, not Catholic Vienna, under the patronage of Prince Nikolai Golitsyn, who commissioned many of his late sonatas and string quartets.

In the same year of 1824 Beethoven published his most famous work, the Ninth Symphony. The first three movements constitute as it were a summing up of his Middle Period – the tragic drama in the first movement, the colossal energy in the second, the profound lyricism in the third. But in the fourth, after the orchestra repeats the beginning of each of the first three movements, these are rejected in turn in order to make way for a new theme, the famous “Joy” melody that has become the “national anthem” of the European Union. This is followed by the soloists and chorus singing Schiller’s Ode to Joy – evidently this is the “new word” by which Beethoven means to characterize his new music, the music of his Late Period.

All creatures drink Joy
At Nature’s breast;
All the good, all the bad
Follow her rose-bedecked trail.

\(^{239}\) The use of this “old-fashioned” stylistic form is characteristic of Beethoven’s late works, as in the “Hammerclavier” piano sonata or the Grosse Fuge for strings.
We might be tempted at first to think that the Joy in question is some sort of nature-worship. But Beethoven’s God is not the same as Goethe’s pantheist deity. First of all, the passage ends with the word “God” thundered out at length in a huge *fortissimo*. And secondly, this God is clearly a personal God, as both the words and the “solemn, even liturgical” music, ending in a mysterious *pianissimo*, indicate:

*Be embraced, you millions!*
*By this kiss for the whole world!*
*Brothers, a loving Father must live*
*Above the canopy of the stars.*

So for Beethoven the message is that joy is possible for all, but not in the worship of nationalist-imperialist heroes such as Napoleon, but in a truly universalist union under the one, personal and transcendent God; the saviour is not nature, as Goethe thought, but the Creator of nature. Could Beethoven’s meeting with Tsar Alexander, whom he met in 1814 and who had a very similar vision of pan-European unity under the one Christian God, have influenced him? Perhaps; and it is indeed intriguing that Beethoven’s encounter with the Tsar and his relationship with his devoted Russian patrons (Count Razumovsky and Prince Nikolai Golitsyn) took place at this time.

It was a unique and decisive moment in European history, when the Orthodox East stretched out its hand to the Catholic/Protestant West, and the White Tsar entered Berlin and Vienna - even godless Paris and London. But the decision went the wrong way: intrigued, and briefly grateful to their “barbarian” liberators, the Europeans nevertheless continued along their Faustian path. “The Gendarme of Europe” continued to defend them against the real barbarians – but, a generation later, there was none of the former curiosity or gratitude...

As for Beethoven, increasingly isolated from society, sick, misunderstood and lonely, he entered deep within himself, producing some of the most profoundly poignant and original works of Western music. (His great contemporary, Schubert, called for Beethoven’s String Quartet in C sharp minor, opus 131, to be played at his deathbed.) Critics have called these works “mystical”, but of course there can be no true mysticism where there is not the mystery of the true faith and the True Church. Nevertheless, we may be confident that Beethoven rejected the path of Faustian man; for his heart thirsted, not for the ephemeral goals of the Faustian dream, but for the living God...

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The Age of Revolution was also the Age of Romanticism, and the one is incomprehensible without the other. Of course, political and religious change has always been reflected in artistic change. But the relationship is closer than usual here. The image of the Decembrist revolutionary Ryleev ascending the scaffold with a volume of Byron in his hand encapsulates that relationship: the revolutionaries were impelled to their acts of violence by their visionary Romanticism. Their love of political freedom was seen as being born from the love of freedom expressed in their Romantic art; the theoria of the one engendered the praxis of the other.

The revolutionary nature of Romanticism inevitably meant that it was linked to the revolution in politics. “During the 1820s,” writes Sir Richard Evans, in spite of the conservative reaction imposed by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, “writers and thinkers began to move towards a more liberal point of view. Victor Hugo, who in 1824 declared that literature should be ‘the expression of a religious and monarchical society’, was by 1830 propounding the principle that ‘Romanticism, taken as a whole, is only liberalism in literature… Freedom in art and liberty in society are the twin goals to which all consistent and logical thinkers should march in step.’ In 1827 the French art critic August Jal (1795-1873) declared that Romanticism was ‘the echo of the cannot shot of 1789’, and as if to prove his point, Eugène Delacroix produced in 1830 what is probably the most famous representation of revolution in any artwork, Liberty Leading the People. For many Romantic poets and writers, the Greek uprising was a turning point, symbolized by Byron’s death at Missolonghi. The opera that launched the Belgian revolution in 1830 was only one example of a new trend, begun in Italy, of portraying ancient struggles for liberty in words and music in such a way that their contemporary relevance was unmistakeable.”

The connection between the revolution and romanticism became especially clear and strong during the July Days of the 1830 revolution, as Adam Zamoyski notes: “‘People and poets are marching together,’ wrote the French critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve in 1830. ‘Art is henceforth on a popular footing, in the arena with the masses.’ There was something in this. Never before or since had poetry been so widely and so urgently read, so taken to heart and so closely studied for hidden meaning. And it was not only in search of aesthetic or emotional uplift that people did so, for the poet had assumed a new role over the past two decades. Art was no longer an amenity but a great truth that had to be revealed to mankind, and the artist was one who had been called to interpret this truth, a kind of seer. In Russia, Pushkin solemnly declared the poet’s status as a prophet uttering the burning words of truth. The American Ralph Waldo Emerson saw poets as ‘liberating gods’ because they had achieved freedom themselves, and could therefore free others. The pianist and composer Franz Liszt wanted to recapture the ‘political, philosophical and religious power’ that he believed music had in ancient times. William Blake claimed that Jesus and his disciples were all artists, and that he himself was following Jesus through his art.

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‘God was, perhaps only the first poet of the universe,’ Théophile Gauthier reflected. By the 1820s artists regularly referred to their craft as a religion, and Victor Hugo represented himself alternately as Zoroaster, Moses and Christ, somewhere between prophet and God.”

The forty years or so between the First and the Second French Revolutions (in 1789 and 1830 respectively) are among the most decisive and profound transition-periods in the history of the world. The changes are most obvious, of course, in politics; and there is no question but that the French revolution constitutes the vital link between the English revolution of the seventeenth century and the Russian revolution of the twentieth century, constituting the break-through that destroyed the old, and created the new world that we live in now. However, it could be argued that the political revolution was less profound and all-embracing than the revolution in thought and feeling that we call the Romantic movement, and that gave the revolution its long-term vitality.

Romanticism was influenced by Rousseau’s concept of the “natural man”, which, as George L. Mosse writes, emphasized “that the individual was good and virtuous when removed from the fetters of civilization. In such an ideal state heart and head were unspoiled and therefore functioned properly. For Rousseau and other eighteenth-century thinkers this meant that humans were both reasonable and virtuous. However, the element of human reason in the state of nature played, for Rousseau, a lesser part than the goodness of the heart. This foreshadowed the romantic belief in the essential rightness and virtue of mankind’s proper emotions when they are left to develop freely. The concept of natural man became a widespread fad in the eighteenth century: Louis XVI and his queen had a rural village built for themselves behind their palace of the Trianon where they could play at ‘natural’ man and wife. Moreover, this image was associated with rural life, the kind of Arcadia which writer had idealized for centuries. It should be kept in mind that the ideal of natural man associated with rural life was not only a background for the romantic movement, but also went into the making of one of the most important preconceptions of the nineteenth century, indeed of modern times: namely, that the peasant represents the greatest virtues in a society which is growing ever more industrial and urban.

“The concept of ‘natural man’ was not the only element which went into the making of the romantic atmosphere. Evangelicalism in England and pietism in Germany provided important stimuli for romanticism, just as they were to be important in the making of the new middle-class morality. Both stressed ‘piety of the heart’ – religion as an emotional experience. Pietism was more temperate than the evangelical movement; nevertheless, the emotional appeal was present. Evangelicalism with its outright appeal to emotional conversion, ‘coming to Christ’, implanted an emotionalism in all classes of the English population. The emphasis upon hymn singing together with preaching as the chief outward appeals of faith played an important part. Nor can the increasing stream of oratory and moral exhortations which marked both movements be neglected. Many other causes, like the Temperance League and the Society Against Vice,

Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 255.
depended on similar methods. All over Europe the reading public was increasing; and what they read, above all, were books of edification or moral exhortation to lead a good life. Education by exhortation was prominent in the making of middle-class morality, as Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby can show, but it also created an atmosphere congenial to life viewed as an emotional experience.

“Though Rousseau foreshadowed the romantic mood in France and evangelicalism did much to encourage it in England, Germany seemed at the head of the movement during the eighteenth century. Not only German pietism, but particularly a literary movement known as the storm and stress (Sturm und Drang, 1765-1785) set the romantic tone. Making its home in Weimar, the movement’s importance for the cultural revival in Germany was equal to its contribution to romanticism. Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), in particular, portrayed his heroes in terms of their inner responses to life, abstracting people from their environment. In depicting the Robbers, for example, he made their inner conflicts and the resulting tragedy take precedence over the morality or the effects of their actions. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), the greatest German man of letters of that century, passed through the Enlightenment and classicism to a romantic period. The narrative of his journeys to Italy did much to stimulate a new emphasis upon nature as emotional and sentient rather than as imprisoned within rational laws of nature.”

Another aspect of Romanticism is its seeking of the unusual and the exotic, even the mad and the criminal, in human experience. Thus, as Evans writes, “a number of early Romantic works were written under the influence of opium, including, famously the poem Kubla Khan (1816) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who became a serious addict, consuming up to four quarts of laudanum (tincture of opium) a week. The drug’s impact was recorded in detail by Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859) in his Confessions of an English Opium Eater (1821). Opium distorted perception of time and space and heightened emotional experience, something that strengthened its appeal to the Romantics. Whereas the Enlightenment had stressed the need to subordinate the emotions to the intellect, Romanticism instead stressed feeling as the fundamental source of truth and authenticity and their expression in art.”

“It Romanticism,” writes Jacques Barzun, “thought and feeling are fused; its bent is toward exploration and discovery at whatever risk of error or failure; the religious emotion is innate and demands expression. Spirit is a reality but where it is placed varies and is secondary: the divine may be reached through nature or art. The individual self is a source of knowledge on which one must act; for one is embarked – engagé, as the 20C Existentialists say. To act, enthusiasm must overcome indifference or despair; impulse must be guided by imagination and reason. The search is for truths, which reside in particulars, not in generalities; the world is bigger and more complex than any set of abstractions, and it includes the past, which is never fully done with. Meditating on past and

present leads to the estimate of man as great and wretched. But heroes are real and indispensable. They rise out of the people, whose own mind-and-heart provides the makings of high culture. The errors of heroes and peoples are the price of knowledge, religion, and art, life itself being a heroic tragedy.”

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Romanticism was born as a reaction to the Enlightenment and, more generally, to the whole classical concept of civilization. For the dry, rationalist world-view of the Enlightenment, while it influenced everybody, left many with a feeling that an important part of the truth – especially that truth of the heart which is accessible only to intuition and the emotions - had been left out by it. Moreover, the Scottish philosopher David Hume had demonstrated, by purely logical arguments, that the empirical, rationalist view of the world had, paradoxically, no rational foundations; for it led to a denial of the objective existence of God, the soul, morality and even of the external world, thereby literally cutting the ground from under its feet. It was Hume’s withering criticism that drew Immanuel Kant out of his “dogmatic slumbers”; by his Critique of Pure Reason and other works, he re-established, at least to his own satisfaction, the necessity of believing in God, the soul, causality, free will and the external world. Ultimately, however, he begat, not a rebirth of empiricism on rational foundations, but the German philosophy of idealism, which turned everything on its head by defining the material world as spirit, the objective as the subjective, the irrational as the rational.

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

The Romantic conception of a dynamic, unfinished world undermined faith in eternal values and verities, and, combined with the idea of ever-oscillating

\[245\] Barzun, From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 491.

polarities, paved the way for the Hegelian schema of thesis-antithesis-synthesis – albeit usually without the synthesis.

Sir Isaiah Berlin’s definition is also illuminating: “Since the Greeks, and perhaps long before them, men have believed that to the central questions about the nature and purpose of their lives, and of the world in which they lived, true, objective, universal and eternal answers could be found. If the answers could not be discovered by me, then perhaps by someone more expert or wiser than I; if not in the circumstances in which I found myself, then in others more propitious: in an innocent and happy past – a Garden of Eden from which our ancestors had for their sins been expelled, or perhaps in a golden age that still lay in the future, which posterity (perhaps after much labour and suffering) would, or at any rate could, one day reach. It was assumed that all the truly central problems were soluble in principle even if not in practice. Somewhere true answers to all genuine questions must exist, if not in the minds of men, then in the mind of an omniscient being – real or imaginary, material or ideal, a personal deity, or the universe come to full consciousness of itself.

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

“This, too, is the source of the doctrine that work is sacred as such, not because of its social function, but because it is the imposition of the individual or collective personality, that is, activity, upon inert stuff. The activity, the struggle is all, the victory nothing: in Fichte’s words, ‘Frei sein ist nichts – frei werden ist der
Himmel’ (‘To be free is nothing – to become free is very heaven’). Failure is nobler than success. Self-immolation for a cause is the thing, not the validity of the cause itself, for it is the sacrifice undertaken for its sake that sanctifies the cause, not some intrinsic property of it.

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

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The central false dogma of the Romantic era was the moral superiority and godlike status of the artist (like Byron) and/or the revolutionary (like Napoleon), standing alone and above the world. The political or artistic genius was truly a “genie” who, once let out of his bottle by his divine imagination, could create heaven or hell on earth – and for his worshippers, it didn’t really matter which. Revolutionaries and artists both saw visions unattainable to the ordinary mortal, and for that they were venerated as God-seers if not as gods.

For Imagination for the Romantics was much more than the ability to fantasize. As Jacques Barzun writes: “Out of the known or knowable, Imagination connects the remote, interprets the familiar, or discovers hidden realities. Being a means of discovery, it must be called ‘Imagination of the real’. Scientific hypotheses perform that same office; they are products of imagination.

“This view of the matter explains why to the Romanticists the arts no longer figured as a refined pleasure of the senses, an ornament of civilized existence, but as one form of the deepest possible reflection on life. Shelley, defending his art, declares poets to be the ‘unacknowledged legislators of the world’. The arts convey truths; they are imagination crystallized; and as they transport the soul they reshape the perceptions and possibly the life of the beholder. To perform this feat requires genius, because it is not a mechanical act. To be sure, all art makes use of conventions, but to obey traditional rules and follow set patterns will not achieve that fusion of idea and form which is properly creation. It was Romanticist discussion that made the word creation regularly apply to works of art…

“Those Romanticist words, recharged with meaning, helped to establish the religion of art. That faith served those who could and those could not partake of the revived creeds. To call the passion for art a religion is not a figure of speech or a way of praise. Since the beginning of the 19C, art has been defined again and again by its devotees as ‘the highest spiritual expression of man’. The dictum leaves no room for anything higher and this highest level is that which, for other human beings, is occupied by religion. To 19C worshippers the arts form a treasury of revelations, a body of scriptures, the makers of this spiritual testament are prophets and seers. And to this day the fortunate among them are treated as demigods…”

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We may conclude that the long-term effects of Romanticism were disastrous, as disastrous as the political revolutions it inspired, even if in the shorter term they provided a much-needed corrective to the rationalism of the Enlightenment epoch.

As Bertrand Russell writes, “Rousseau and the romantic movement extended subjectivity from theory of knowledge to ethics and politics, and ended, logically, in as complete anarchism as that of Bakunin. This extreme of subjectivism is a form of madness…”

Not for nothing was Adam Zamoyski’s excellent study of Romanticism entitled Holy Madness. And indeed, much of early nineteenth century history can be seen as a chronicle of madmen. By the middle of the century, reactionaries had succeeded in imposing straitjackets on them. But by the end of the century the madmen – Nietzsche is the most important example - were beginning to take control of the asylum.

17. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (1) ITALY

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

Early nineteenth-century nationalism of the French type was – or claimed to be - romantic, altruistic and universalist in the sense that it longed for the liberation of all nations, not just one’s own. However, the nationalism of the later decades of the nineteenth century was more hard-nosed, anti-religious and particularist. The two nationalisms are typified by Mazzini and Garibaldi.

The most important Italian nationalist was Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872). He joined the secret society of the Carbonari, which vowed to overthrown absolutism in Italy, but in 1830 he was betrayed to the police, arrested, and interned at Savona. There he had the idea of creating a new nationalist movement to replace the Carbonari.

“To him,” writes M.S. Anderson, "nationality was truly a religion; national unity must be based upon religious belief and be itself a form of religious belief. The fundamental truths he thought of as known intuitively, leaving to reason only a subordinate function. The duties of men were more important than their rights; for individuals existed to fulfill a mission in the service of humanity, and liberty was no more than the ability to choose between different ways of doing this. Nations could be constituted only by the will of the individuals composing them, by those individuals recognizing a common duty and its consequences and affirming a common purpose. Each had its own specific moral mission to perform. 'Every nation has a mission, a special office in the collective work, a special aptitude with which to fulfill it: this is its sign, its legitimacy.' A world of sovereign nation-states, each fulfilling its God-given task, would therefore be one of peace and happiness. Mazzini was much more than a selfish or parochial nationalist. His ideas were always at bottom universalist. To him the idea that the nations of Europe as soon as they had gained their freedom would spontaneously unite in some form of association was fundamental; and his last significant work, the Politica Internazionale (1871) was a vision of a Europe of free peoples thus voluntarily associated. The national state was to him the norm towards which all political life and action should tend, not merely a panacea for specific grievances. 'The nation,' he wrote, 'is the God-appointed instrument for the welfare of the human race.'"

Mazzini, writes Evans, “believed in a United States of Europe, composed of free and independent peoples in a voluntary association with each other. The disunity of the 1831 urban insurrections in northern Italy and their easy suppression by the Austrians convinced him that the carbonari, to which he belonged, had to be replaced by a truly national organization, dedicated above all to organizing the expulsion of the Austrians from the peninsula. Living secretly in Marseille, he founded an association called Young Italy, possibly in imitation of the literary movement Young Germany founded shortly before. Despite its conspiratorial trappings, Young Italy had a clear programme – Italian unification on a democratic and republican basis. It also compiled membership lists, charged subscriptions, and employed a courier service to keep members in various towns and cities in touch with one another. Soon the members of Young Italy numbered thousands, inspired by Mazzini’s tireless campaigning, his incessant pamphleteering, and the fact that he was apparently the ‘most beautiful being, male or female’ that people who encountered him said they had ever seen. Metternich declared membership punishable by death. Carlo Alberto, the King of Piedmont-Sardinia, had twelve army officers who were involved in a plot to stage a military uprising under Mazzini’s influence early in 1833 publicly executed. Mazzini himself was condemned to death in absentia and the sentence read out in front of his family house in Genoa. Metternich succeeded in getting him expelled from France, but Mazzini continued to run Young Italy from Switzerland. He now focused his numerous plots on Piedmont: one of them, like so many betrayed by the Piedmontese authorities, involved a young naval officer, Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had joined Young Italy after meeting a member on a trading expedition to the Black Sea. Also condemned to death in absentia,

Garibaldi fled to South America, where he took part in the ‘War of the Ragamuffins’ in Brazil before fighting in the Uruguayan Civil War.

“Working through correspondence, conducted after 1837 from London, Mazzini created individual national movements under the aegis of Young Italy, Young Austria, Young Bohemia, Young Ukraine, Young Tyrol and even Young Argentina came briefly into being. Young Poland played a significant role in the 1830 uprising. The most enduring and important organization of this kind was Young Ireland, a term mockingly attached by the English Press to a movement founded in 1840 by Daniel O’Connell (1775-1847); it had nothing to do with Mazzini, who did not think that Ireland should be independent; it eschewed violence and insurrection, and it dedicated itself not to the creation of a new nation but to the repeal of the Act of Union with England passed in 1800. But through the organization he actually did found, Mazzini had changed the terms and tactics of nationalism. Nationalists had learned to co-ordinate their efforts within each particular country, and a strong dose of realism had entered their discourse, causing all but the Poles to recognize their insurrections were unlikely to succeed by themselves, and that the formation of secret societies was not leading anywhere: nationalists needed a programme and a formal organization, equipped with a propaganda apparatus and aimed at securing democratic support.

“Under the leadership of Metternich, the Habsburg Empire continued indeed to be the major obstacle that lay in the path of nationalist movements – in Italy, Bohemia, Germany, Hungary and – along with Russian and Prussia – in Poland. Austria had led the European states in the overthrow of Napoleon; for thirty years, from 1815 to 1845, Austrian dominance in Europe was unquestionable. The Emperor Franz I refused to introduce any new constitutional arrangements to his domains in northern Italy. ‘My Empire,’ he remarked, ‘resembles a ramshackle house. If one wishes to demolish a bit of it one does not know how much will collapse.’ In central Italy, Gregory XVI, who was elected in 1831, ruled the Papal States through a militia of ‘centurions’ who suppressed all criticism of the corruption and inefficiency of his administration. So chaotic was the state of affairs in his dominions that the papal government did not even manage to prepare a state budget for the last ten years of his pontificate. In Piedmont-Sardinia throughout the 1830s and the first half or more of the 1840s, the fear of conspiracy and revolution kept Carlo Alberto of Piedmont on the Austrians’ side in northern Italy. Yet he was pessimistic in the longer run. ‘The great crisis,’ he wrote in 1834, ‘can only be more or less delayed, but it will undoubtedly arrive.’

“Avoiding it was one of the aims of the moderate liberal reformers who arrived on the political scene in the 1840s. As with similar figures elsewhere in Europe, they looked above all to Britain as an example. The Milanese reformer Carlo Cattaneo (1801-69), an ex-carbonaro who had turned to more moderate ways, thought that ‘peoples should act as a permanent mirror to each other, because the interests of civilization are mutually dependent and common’. In Piedmont, the most influential of the moderates in the long run was Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour (1810-61), a Protestant who had travelled widely in Britain and France and supported economic progress, railway-building and the
separation of Church and State. As liberal sentiment spread among the educated classes, above all in northern Italy, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston warned the Austrian ambassador in London that it was time to make concessions: ‘We think ourselves conservative in preaching and advising everywhere concessions, reforms, and improvements, where public opinion demands them; you on the contrary refuse them.’ But change in Italy seemed to be heralded by the election of Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti (1792-1878) as Pope Pius IX on 16 June 1846. The new Supreme Pontiff amnestied political prisoners, relaxed the censorship rules, and appointed commissions to improve the Papal States’ administration, laws, and educational provision. His summoning of a consultative assembly sent shock waves through the Italian states. Others followed suit. In Tuscany censorship was partially abolished in May 1847, a legislature was convened following demonstrations in a number of cities, and in September 1847 the Grand Duke Leopold II (1797-1870) appointed a moderate liberal government. In Piedmont, Carlo Alberto granted elected communal councils and limitations on censorship in October 1847. In the Habsburg Monarchy, Metternich’s refusal to relax the censorship rules in 1845 had no effect since nationalist and liberal literature poured in from outside, including French, English and German newspapers. The crisis seemed to be coming. ‘We are now,’ warned the former civil servant Viktor Baron von Andrian-Werburg (1813-58), author of an influential, pessimistic book on the future of the multinational monarchy, ‘where France was in 1788.’

Mazzini’s nationalism invoked the name of God and was universalist; that is, it believed in the nationalist cause in every nation. As he declared: "I believe in the immense voice of God which the centuries transmit to me through the universal tradition of Humanity; and it tells me that the Family, the Nation and Humanity are the three spheres within which the human individual has to labour for a common end, for the moral perfecting of himself and of others, or rather of himself through others and for others."\textsuperscript{253}

Such universalism was possible in the first half of the 19th century, when nationalism was still closely integrated with the romantic reaction against the destructive, anti-traditional Enlightenment programme, when thinkers were trying to combine universalism with local traditions and the sacredness of the individual. "In practice, however," writes Anderson, "it was inevitable that the idea of national mission should normally be put forward in support of the demands and grievances of some specific national group."\textsuperscript{254} And as the century progressed, and as the nationalism of one country became opposed to that of another, universalism became rarer. Religious idealism gave way to atheistic cynicism.

In Italy we see this change especially in Garibaldi. Thus Zamoyski writes of a decorative poster produced by the Garibaldini in 1864 headed "The Doctrine of

\textsuperscript{252} Evans, op. cit., pp. 178-181.
\textsuperscript{253} Mazzini, in Biddiss, "Nationalism and the Moulding of Modern Europe", History, 79, N 257, October, 1984, p. 420.
\textsuperscript{254} Anderson, op. cit., p. 211.
Giuseppe Garibaldi": "This opens with the words: 'In the name of the Father of the Nation', shamelessly substituting Garibaldi for God, and the service of Italy for Catholic practice. The catechetical question of how many Garibaldis there are elicits the answer that there is only one Garibaldi, but that there are three distinct persons in him: 'The Father of the Nation, the Son of the People, and the Spirit of Liberty'. Garibaldi was, of course, made man in order to save Italy, and to remind her sons of the ten commandments, which are:

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\begin{align*}
I & \text{ am Giuseppe Garibaldi, your General.} \\
\text{Thou shalt not be a soldier of the General's in vain.} \\
\text{Thou shalt remember to keep the National Feast-days.} \\
\text{Thou shalt honour thy Motherland.} \\
\text{Thou shalt not kill, except those who bear arms against Italy.} \\
\text{Thou shalt not fornicate, unless it be to harm the enemies of Italy.} \\
\text{Thou shalt not steal, other than St. Peter's pence in order to use it for the redemption of Rome and Venice.} \\
\text{Thou shalt not bear false witness like the priests do in order to sustain their temporal power.} \\
\text{Thou shalt not wish to invade the motherland of others.} \\
\text{Thou shalt not dishonour thy Motherland.} \\
\end{align*}
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"The poster contains an 'Act of Faith' to be recited daily, as well as an act of contrition for those who have transgressed the commandments and offended the Father. There is also a travesty of the Lord's Prayer which contains such gems as 'Give us today our daily cartridges'."\textsuperscript{255}

Here we see that the “holy madness” of early nineteenth century nationalism had become distinctly unholy without ceasing to be mad...

\textsuperscript{255} Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 408-409.
18. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (2) ISRAEL

The French revolutionary and nationalist spirit dominated the nineteenth century, spreading even to the European colonies in Central and South America. This spirit unleashed by the French revolution was never put back in the bottle. From now on, the whole world would have to struggle against its spirits – a struggle that is by no means over at the present time.

Among the nationalisms ignited by the French revolution perhaps the most important in the long term was that of the Jews...

“Before the great secularization in Europe,” writes Shlomo Sand, “Jewish believers clung to the religious axiom that sustained them through times of trouble: they were the ‘chosen people’, God’s sacred congregation, destined to ‘illuminate the nations’. In reality, they knew that as minority groups existing in the shadow of other religions, they were subordinated to the stronger powers. The passion for proselytizing that had characterized these communities in the past had all but disappeared through the ages, largely from fear of the dominant religions. Over the centuries, thick layers of distrust and fear of propagating their faith padded the self-identification of the believers and bolstered the communal isolation that eventually became their distinguishing mark. In the Middle Ages, the exclusive belief in the ‘unique nation that dwells apart’ also served to prevent large-scale desertion to the other monotheistic religions.”

However, the Enlightenment and its universalist ideas began to erode this kind of thinking, among both Jewish and Gentile intellectuals. And the first major breach in the Jewish ghetto walls was made by the French revolution. Pouring through that breach, the Jews burst into the forefront of world politics for the first time since the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

In 1789 there were 39,000 Jews in France; most (half according to one estimate, nine-tenths according to another) were Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazim living in Alsace and Lorraine, which France had acquired under the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

“It is important,” writes Nesta Webster, “to distinguish between these two races of Jews [the Ashkenazi and the Sephardim] in discussing the question of Jewish emancipation at the time of the Revolution. For whilst the Sephardim had shown themselves good citizens and were therefore subject to no persecutions, the Ashkenazim by their extortionate usury and oppressions had made themselves detested by the people, so that rigorous laws were enforced to restrain their rapacity. The discussions that raged in the National Assembly on the subject of the Jewish question related therefore mainly to the Jews of Alsace.”

257 Doyle, op. cit., p. 411.
258 Webster, op. cit., p. 247.
The eighteenth century had already witnessed some important changes in the relationship between the State and Jewry. In England, the Jews had achieved emancipation _de facto_, if not _de jure_. This was helped by the relatively small number of Jews in Britain, and the non-ideological approach of the British government.

It was a different matter on the continent, where a more ideological approach prevailed. In 1782 the Masonic Austrian Emperor Joseph II published his _Toleranzpatent_, whose purpose was that “all Our subjects without distinction of nationality and religion, once they have been admitted and tolerated in our States, shall participate in common in public welfare,... shall enjoy legal freedom, and encounter no obstacles to any honest way of gaining their livelihood and of increasing general industriousness... Existing laws pertaining to the Jewish nation... are not always compatible with these Our most gracious intentions.”

Most restrictions on the Jews were removed, but these new freedoms applied only to the “privileged Jew” – that is, the Jew whom the State found “useful” in some way – and not to the “foreign Jew”. Moreover, even privileged Jews were not granted the right of full citizenship and craft mastership. For Joseph wanted to grant _tolerance_ to the Jews, but not full _equality_.

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

In their first debate on the subject, on September 28, 1789, they made a further important distinction between the nation and the individuals constituting the nation. Thus Stanislas Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre argued that “there cannot be a nation within a nation”, so “the Jews should be denied everything as a nation but granted everything as individuals.” A separate _nation_ of the Jews could not be allowed to exist within France. For “virtually all – moderates no less than radicals, Dantonists no less than Robespierists, Christians as well as deists, pantheists, and atheists – held that equality of status in the state they were in their various ways intent on establishing was bound up of necessity with

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260 Webster, _op. cit._, p. 247.
the elimination of all groups, classes, or corporations intermediate (and therefore mediating) between the state itself and the citizen.” \(^{262}\)

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

“"As a nation the Jews must be denied everything, as individuals they must be granted everything; their judges can no longer be recognized; their recourse must be to our own exclusively; legal protection for the doubtful laws by which Jewish corporate existence is maintained must end; they cannot be allowed to

\(^{262}\) Vital, op. cit., p. 49.
create a political body or a separate order within the state; it is necessary that they be citizens individually.’

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

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

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

“’They have never been labourers, Maury continued, not even under David and Solomon. And even then they were notorious for their laziness. Their sole concern was commerce. Would you make soldiers of them, the abbé asked. If you did, you would derive small benefit from them: they have a horror of celibacy and they marry young. He knew of no general who would wish to command an army of Jews either on the Sabbath – a day on which they never gave battle – or indeed at any other time. Or did the Assembly imagine that they could make craftsmen of them when their many festivals and sabbath days presented an insurmountable obstacle to such an enterprise. The Jews held 12 million mortgages in Alsace alone, he informed his colleagues. Within a month of their being granted citizenship they would own half the province outright. In ten years’ time they would have ‘conquered’ all of it, reducing it to nothing more than a Jewish colony – upon which the hatred the people of Alsace already bore for the Jews would explode.
“It was not that he, Maury, wished the Jews to be persecuted. ‘They are men, they are our brothers; anathema on whoever speaks of intolerance!’ Nor need their religious opinions disturb anyone [!!!!]. He joined all others in agreeing that they were to be protected. But that did not mean that they could be citizens. It was as individuals that they were entitled to protection, not as Frenchmen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The power of the Jewish minority was revealed especially during the reign of terror under Robespierre, when 2300 Catholic churches were converted into “temples of Reason”.

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

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

“Nevertheless,” as Paul Johnson writes, “the deed was done. French Jews were now free and the clock could never be turned back. Moreover, emancipation in some form took place wherever the French were able to carry the revolutionary spirit with their arms. The ghettos and Jewish closed quarters were broken into in papal Avignon (1791), Nice (1792) and the Rhineland (1792–

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265 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 365.
3). The spread of the revolution to the Netherlands, and the founding of the Batavian republic, led to Jews being granted full and formal rights by law there (1796). In 1796-8 Napoleon Bonaparte liberated many of the Italian ghettos, French troops, young Jews and local enthusiasts tearing down the crumbling old walls.

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

However, the above picture of the Jewish struggle for emancipation in Paris and, later, Bayonne should not obscure the fact that there was still very strong opposition to the idea of emancipation from within Jewry itself led especially by the rabbinic leaders of Ashkenazi Jewry in Poland.

Thus Zalkind Hourwitz was a Polish Jew who won a prize for an essay advocating Jewish emancipation from the Royal Society for Arts and Sciences at Metz in 1787.

Nevertheless, as Vital writes, he “made no bones about his view of the internal constraints to which Jews in all parts were subject through the workings of the rabbinical-Talmudic system: of the limits it set upon their worldly freedom, of the manner in which it effectively barred their entry into society on a basis of equality. The social liberation of the Jews was conditional, he believed, on the power that the rabbis and the parnassim [chief synagogue officials] jointly exercised over ordinary people in their daily lives being terminated – in great matters as in small. ‘Their rabbis and syndics [i.e. parnassim] must be strictly forbidden to assume the least authority over their fellows outside the synagogue, or refuse honours to those who have shaved off their beards, or curled their hair, or who dress like Christians, go to the theatre, or observe other customs that bear no actual relation to their religion, but derive from superstition alone as a means of distinguishing them from other peoples.’”

In France, it had been the socially marginalized Jews who had pressed for emancipation. Even the more acculturated Sephardic Jews of Bourdeaux and Bayonne had been slow to ask for emancipation, first, because they feared that they might have to pay for liberties which they already enjoyed de facto, and secondly, because they wanted to be clearly delineated from the Ashkenazi Jews of Alsace. The latter, continues Vital, “had been slower still to ask for liberation. There is no evidence of their authorized representatives pressing for anything remotely of the kind before the Revolution; and when they made their own first approach to the new National Assembly it was to ask for no more than an end to the special taxes laid upon them and the abolition of the residential, and travel...

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restrictions to which they were subject. The greatest anxiety of the Alsatians was to retain their own internal communal autonomy – to which end, with only rare exceptions, they (at all events, their authorized representatives) were prepared to forgo emancipation altogether. Only when they learned that other branches of French Jewry, the small community in Paris among them, were prepared to yield to the demand that they give up their ancient corporate status did the Alsatians and Lorainers fall, reluctantly, into line.”

The question: to emancipate or not to emancipate? was to cause bitter divisions in Jewry that have continued to the present day. It brought into sharp focus another question: was it possible for the Jews, while remaining Jewish, ever to become an integral part of non-Jewish society? And if not, how were they to live – as a separate nation with its own homeland and language as the other Gentile nations, or in some other way? The extreme zeal of the champions of Jewish emancipation, on the one hand, and the equally extreme ghetto-creating mentality of the opponents of emancipation, on the other, suggested that there was no easy solution to this problem, even with the best intentions of the Gentile and/or Christian rulers. For, as Norman Davies points out, “Jewish emancipation was a double-edged operation. It required a fundamental change in the conduct and the attitudes both of the host societies and of the Jews themselves. It demanded the dismantling not only of the constraints imposed on Jews from outside but also of the ‘internal ghetto’ in Jewish minds. Modern concern with the roots of anti-Semitism sometimes overlooks the severity of the Jews’ own laws of segregation. Observant Jews could not hold to the 613 rules of dress, diet, hygiene and worship if they tried to live outside their own closed community; and intermarriage was strictly forbidden. Since Judaic law taught that Jewishness was biologically inherited in the maternal line, Jewish women were jealously protected. A girl who dared to marry out could expect to be disowned by her family, and ritually pronounced dead. Extreme determination was needed to withstand such acute social pressures…”

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If the French revolution gave the Jews their first political victory, Napoleon gave them their second. On May 22, 1799, the Paris Moniteur published the following report from Constantinople on April 17: “Buonaparte has published a proclamation in which he invites all the Jews of Asia and Africa to come and place themselves under his flag in order to re-establish ancient Jerusalem. He has already armed a great number and their battalions are threatening Aleppo.”

This was not the first time that the Jews had persuaded a Gentile ruler to restore them to Jerusalem. The Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate had allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and start rebuilding the Temple. However, fire came out from the foundations and black crosses appeared on the workers'
garments, forcing them to abandon the enterprise. And the Jews were to be thwarted again now: British sea-power prevented Napoleon from reaching Jerusalem and making himself, as was reported to be his intention, king of the Jews. The Jews would have to wait until 1917 before another Gentile power (the British this time) again offered them a return to Zion.

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

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

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

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

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

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to let the keys of France, Strasbourg and Alsace, fall into the hands of a population of spies who are not at all attached to the country.\textsuperscript{271}

Napoleon eventually decided on an extraordinary measure: to convene a 111-strong Assembly of Jewish Notables in order to receive clear and unambiguous answers to the following questions: did the Jewish law permit mixed marriages; did the Jews regard Frenchmen as foreigners or as brothers; did they regard France as their native country, the laws of which they were bound to obey; did the Judaic law draw any distinction between Jewish and Christian debtors? At the same time, writes Johnson, Napoleon "supplemented this secular body by convening a parallel meeting of rabbis and learned laymen, to advise the Assembly on technical points of Torah and halakhah. The response of the more traditional elements of Judaism was poor. They did not recognize Napoleon's right to invent such a tribunal, let alone summon it."\textsuperscript{272}

However, if some traditionalists objected, other Jews received the news with unbounded joy. "According to Abbé Lemann," writes Nechvolodov, "they grovelled in front of him and were ready to recognize him as the Messiah. The sessions of the Sanhedrin [composed of 46 rabbis and 25 laymen from all parts of Western Europe] took place in February and March, 1807, and the \textit{Decision of the Great Sanhedrin} began with the words: 'Blessed forever is the Lord, the God of Israel, Who has placed on the throne of France and of the kingdom of Italy a prince according to His heart. God has seen the humiliation of the descendants of ancient Jacob, and He has chosen Napoleon the Great to be the instrument of His mercy& Reunited today under his powerful protection in the good town of Paris, to the number of seventy-one doctors of the law and notables of Israel, we constitute a Great Sanhedrin, so as to find in us a means and power to create religious ordinances in conformity with the principles of our holy laws, and which may serve as a rule and example to all Israelites. These ordinances will teach the nations that our dogmas are consistent with the civil laws under which we live, and do not separate us at all from the society of men."\textsuperscript{273}

"The Jewish delegates," writes Oleg Platonov, "declared that state laws had the same obligatory force for Jews, that every honourable study of Jewish teaching was allowed, but usury was forbidden, etc. [However,] to the question concerning mixed marriages of Jews and Christians they gave an evasive, if not negative reply. 'Although mixed marriages between Jews and Christians cannot be clothed in a religious form, they nevertheless do not draw upon them any anathema.'\textsuperscript{274}

On the face of it, the convening of the Sanhedrin was a great triumph for Napoleon, who could now treat Jewry as just another religious denomination, and not a separate nation, "appropriating for the state what had traditionally

\textsuperscript{271} Nechvolodov, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 221-222.
\textsuperscript{272} Johnson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 310.
\textsuperscript{273} Nechvolodov, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 225-226.
\textsuperscript{274} O.A. Platonov, \textit{Ternovij Venets Rossii (Russia’s Crown of Thorns)}, Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, p. 266.

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been a subversive institution". However, the Jews did not restrain their money-lending and speculative activities, as Napoleon had pleaded with them. On the contrary, only one year after the convening of the Great Sanhedrin, when it became evident that their financial excesses were continuing, Napoleon was forced to adopt repressive measures against them. Moreover, he created rabbinic consistories in France having disciplinary powers over Jews and granted rabbis the status of state officials - a measure that was strengthen the powers of the rabbis over their people. In time Jewish consistories on the French model were created all over Europe. Then, writes Platonov, "began the stormy propaganda of Judaism amidst Jews who had partially fallen away from the religion of their ancestors, organised rabbinic schools and spiritual seminaries for the education of youth in the spirit of Talmudic Judaism. Everywhere local and general union (brotherhoods) were created to united the Jews in their struggle for their national interests. In the middle of the 19th century the formerly secret tip of the Jewish iceberg came out from the shadows and began to elevate itself openly over the Christian world. In 1860 was created L’Alliance Israélite Universelle, whose leader, A. Cremier, almost openly formulated the criminal aims of the Hews. “We,’ declared Cremier, ‘do not have fellow citizens, but only religious followers. Our nationality is the religion of our fathers, we do not recognize any other nationality… The faith of our ancestors is our only patriotism. We live in foreign lands, but, in spite of all our external nationalities, we remain and will remain Jews, one single nation… The Israelites, although you are scattered to all corners of the earthly globe, remain always members of the chosen people!... Only Judaism represents the religious and political truth!”

Moreover, as Tikhomirov points out, "no laws could avert the international links of the Jews. Sometimes they even appeared openly, as in Kol Ispoel Khaberim (Alliance Israélite Universelle), although many legislatures forbad societies and unions of their own citizens to have links with foreigners. The Jews gained a position of exceptional privilege. For the first time in the history of the diaspora they acquired greater rights than the local citizens of the countries of the dispersion. One can understand that, whatever the further aims for the resurrection of Israel might be, the countries of the new culture and statehood became from that time a lever of support for Jewry.”

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275 Eliane Glaser, "Napoleon's Jews: A Law unto Themselves", BBC History Magazine, vol. 8, no. 8, August, 2007, p. 36. This did not mean, however, that the complaints of the citizens of Alsace were ignored. According to the "infamous decree" of March 17, 1808, writes Vital, “existing debts to Jews [in Alsace] were to be heavily and arbitrarily reduced. But the stipulations of the decree went a great deal further. Restrictions were to be levelled on the freedom of Jews to engage in a trade of their choice and to move from one part of the country to another without special permission. They were to submit to special commercial registration. They were not to employ the Hebrew language in their commercial transactions. Unlike all other citizens, they were to be forbidden to offer substitutes in case of conscription for military service. And the entry of foreign Jews into France was to be conditional either on military performance or on satisfaction of specified property qualifications.” (op. cit., p. 59). The decree lasted for ten years, but was not then renewed by the Restoration government.


277 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 366.
Indeed, the main result of the Great Sanhedrin, writes Nechvolodov, "was to unite Judaism still more. "Let us not forget from where we draw our origin,' said Rabbi Salomon Lippmann Cerfbeer on July 26, 1808, in his speech for the opening of the preparatory assembly of the Sanhedrin: 'Let it no longer be a question of "German" or "Portuguese" Jews; although disseminated over the surface of the globe, we everywhere form only one unique people.'"

After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, the Congress of Vienna decreed that "it was incumbent on the members of the German Confederation to consider an 'amelioration' of the civil status of all those who 'confessed the Jewish faith in Germany.'" Gradually, though not without opposition, Jewish emancipation spread throughout Europe…

278 Nechvolodov, op. cit., p. 226.
"The wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century," writes Evans, "had been not merely European but global in scale. They had shattered existing global empires and paved the way for a new relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. British rule in much of North America had already been destroyed in the American War of Independence. In their turn, however, the British had broken what remained of French power in Canada and India, and had taken over Dutch and Spanish colonies in the Caribbean as well as annexing Mauritius, the Cape of Good Hope, Singapore and Ceylon. Republican movements, inspired by the French Revolution and backed by the British, sprang up all over Latin America. Their leading figure, Simon Bolívar, raised a series of irregular armies from the mixed-race and Native American population to defeat the royalists and establish a set of independent states corresponding to the old Spanish provinces – Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru – while similar events further south had led to the creation of Chile and Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay as independent or autonomous states. Between 1812 and 1824 the Spanish Empire in the Americas was destroyed. Spain had been weakened too much by the devastating Peninsular War (1807-14) to be able to raise enough troops to assert itself: and in any case, of the 42,000 soldiers it did send between 1811 and 1819, only 23,000 were left by 1820, the rest having succumbed to disease and desertion. Spain’s fleet, destroyed at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805), was unable to blockade rebel ports or defeat the rebel fleet commanded by the radical ex-naval officer Lord Thomas Cochrane (1775-1660). Sea power was vital to the South American independence movement, and it was British sea power that tipped the balance.

"The British government, while remaining ostensibly neutral, turned a blind eye to men like Cochrane and their securing of supplies from Britain. It was very much in its interest to open up Latin America to free trade, and when Britain recognized the new states in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine proclaimed by the US government, which opposed any European intervention in the Americas, put an end to any further action. In 1826 the British Foreign Secretary George Canning (1770-1827) justified the long years of British support for Bolivar: ‘I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.’ By this time, Brazil had also become independent from Portugal, again as a result of the Napoleonic Wars. When the French conquered Portugal in 1807, the regent Dom João (1767-1826), acting for Queen Maria the Mad (1734-1816), sailed to Rio de Janeiro and set up court there, proclaiming Brazil a full sovereign state with all the rights and privileges that went with it. This reduced Portugal to the status of a province of Brazil, especially when Dom João, becoming king after Maria’s death in 1816, decided to stay on in Rio. In 1820, Dom João was forced by political upheavals in Portugal to return to Lisbon as king. He was also obliged to accept the policy of reimposing mercantilist restrictions on trade with Brazil. This in turn led his son Dom Pedro (1798-1834), now regent in Rio, to bow to Brazilian mercantile pressure and become king of an independent constitutional monarchy in Brazil in 1822. Portuguese interference was defeated by Admiral
Cochrane’s fleet, and the British recognized Brazilian sovereignty in 1825.

“The end of the European empires in the Americas was thus bound up inexorably with events in Europe: the ferment of ideas generated by the French Revolution; the assertion of British sea power in the drive to open up mercantilist-controlled areas of South America to free trade; the severing of connections between the Americas and European colonial metropoles by war; and the insistence of European states on imposing tight and in some cases new economic regulations and taxes on increasingly prosperous and autonomous American colonies. At the same time, events in the Americas also had a profound effect on Europe. For European liberals, radicals and revolutionaries, Latin America (with the exception of Brazil, where slavery continued virtually unchanged through the following decades) became a classic example of the success of movements of emancipation and liberation…”

It was especially in Latin America that the figure of Napoleon had a decisive impact, as the heroic object of the fantasies and dreams of a whole generation of young men. The specifically Latin American species of nationalism owed its origins to the impact of Napoleon on certain young men, who then tried to imitate Napoleon’s impact on society as a whole. These were generally ambitious adventurers who managed by hook or by crook to impose themselves on weakened government structures and then claim for themselves the mandate of the people, as if their individual will represented the “general will” of the people. Simple despotism, in other words, disguised as liberation from despotism. Very often these “liberated” peoples had no idea that they had been a distinct nation before, and would have been much happier without any “liberator”. They were indeed “forced to be free”, in Rousseau’s phrase.

The most famous of the “liberators” was Simon Jose Antonio de la Santissima Trinidad de Bolivar. Bolivar is a good example of the terrible spiritual damage done to a whole generation of young men by the heroic image of Napoleon. Just as Napoleon himself stood between the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the passion of the Romantic age, uniting them in the image of himself fighting for both the ideals of the Enlightenment and the death-defying glory of the romantic hero, so did Bolivar and a host of similar adventurers in Central and South America aspire to unite national “liberation” with personal glory.

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

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279 Evans, op. cit., pp. 15-17.
280 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 151.
Bolivar seized his chance after Napoleon deposed King Ferdinand VII of Spain, which unleashed a strong nationalist backlash in Spain – but not before the legal links between Spain and its colonies had been broken. Returning to Venezuela, Bolivar proceeded to win, lose and finally reconquer Caracas from the Spaniards in a series of civil wars distinguished by appalling savagery on both sides. Although the Venezuelan Republic had been proclaimed on a whites-only franchise in 1811, thereby excluding all Indians and blacks from “the nation”, and although Bolivar himself was a slave-owner and to all intents and purposes Spanish, on reconquering Caracas in 1813 he immediately likened all royalist Spaniards to wandering Jews, to be “cast out and persecuted”, and declared: “Any Spaniard who does not work against tyranny in favour of the just cause, by the most active and effective means, shall be considered an enemy and punished as a traitor to the country and in consequence shall inevitably be shot. Spaniards and Canarios, depend upon it, you will die, even if you are simply neutral, unless you actively espouse the liberation of America.”

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

Like his idol Napoleon, and many Latin American strongmen since, Bolivar did not like the people expressing its will in elections, which he called “the greatest scourge of republics [which] produce only anarchy”. The liberator of Mexico, Agustin de Iturbide, agreed, proclaiming himself Emperor in 1822. But such unrepublican immodesty was nothing compared to Bolivar’s, who “hung in the dining room of his villa outside Bogota a huge portrait of himself being crowned by two genii, with the inscription: ‘Bolivar is the God of Colombia’.”

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

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281 Almond, op. cit., p. 89.
282 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 156.
283 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 229.
284 Quoted in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 546.
The truth of this saying appears to be borne out by the history of Argentina, whose war of independence (1810-1818) led to the liberation, not only of Argentina, but also of the whole of the South of South America from Spanish rule. Argentine rulers tended to be caudillos, strong men. In general, we may say that the wars of liberation from supposed tyrants are almost always led by “strong men” with tyrannical tendencies...

Despotism also prevailed in another “liberated” country of the region, Paraguay, where it became a “secular replacement” for the former “Jesuit communist empire”.286 “After independence,” writes David Landes, “like other debris states of the great Hispanic empire, Paraguay had fallen almost immediately under the control of dictators. The laws said republic, but the practice was one-man rule – a mix of benevolent despotism and populist tyranny. The first of these dictators…, Dr. Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia, was something special. A Jacobin ideologue, and like many of the French variety, a lawyer by training, Francia was committed to a republic of equals and him more equal than the rest. He was he was the ‘organic leader’, the elitist embodying the popular will… Dr. Francia and his successors, Lopez father and son, would turn the country into an enlightened Sparta – egalitarian, literate, disciplined, and brave.”287

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

“Slavery was finally abolished in the former Spanish colonies in the late 1850s, but economic slavery remained endemic throughout the region. The manner in which independence and nationhood were forced upon these societies gave rise to systemic instability. The various Liberators could not count on devotion to a cause to animate their troops and supporters, as the cause was imaginary. Nor could they mobilize one whole section of the population on behalf of a specific interest for any length of time. And they certainly could not depend on colleagues, who were bound, sooner or later, to contest their authority. They therefore had to keep rearranging alliances and decapitating any faction that grew too strong. In order to enlist the loyalty and sympathy of the lower orders, they would make a point of drawing these into the army. But as such recruits became professionals, they cut their links with the classes they came from and grew into arrogant Praetorians who carried with them an element of incipient mutiny.”288

286 Horton Box, The Origins of the Paraguayan War, University of Illinois, 1927.
20. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (4) GERMANY

“The idea of the nation as a political-cultural expression,” write Sebag Sebastian Montefiore, “had been propagated by the French Revolution, yet ironically it was the war of liberation against Napoleon that had really legitimized nationalism as the authentic spirit of a people.”

In his book *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944), Hans Kohn, a Zionist of Czech-German background, made an important distinction between two dominant categories of nationalism – French-style, or Western European nationalism, and German-style, or Central and East European nationalism.

These two types of nationalism have been summarized by Shlomo Sand as follows: “Western nationalism, with an essentially voluntarist approach, which developed on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, bounded on the east by Switzerland; and the organic national identity that spread eastward from the Rhine, encompassing Germany, Poland, the Ukraine and Russia.

“Nationalism in the West, except in Ireland, is an original phenomenon that sprang from autochthonous sociopolitical forces, without outside intervention. In most cases it appears when the state, which is engaged in modernization, is well established or is being established. This nationalism draws its ideas from the traditions of the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment, and its principles are based on individualism and liberalism, both legal and political. The hegemonic class that engenders this national consciousness is a powerful, secular bourgeoisie, and it constructs civil institutions with political power that play a decisive role in the formation of liberal democracy. It is a self-confident bourgeoisie, and the national politics it fosters tend generally toward openness and inclusiveness. Becoming a citizen of the United States, Britain, France, the Netherlands or Switzerland depends not only on origin and birth but also on the will to join. For all the differences between national perceptions, anyone naturalized in these countries is seen, legally and ideologically, as a member of the nation, with the state as the common property of the citizenry.

“According to Kohn, the nationalism that developed in Central and Eastern Europe (the Czech case being something of an exception) was, by contrast, a historical product catalyzed principally from outside. It came into being during Napoleon’s conquests and began to take shape as a movement of resistance against the ideas and progressive values of the Enlightenment. In these countries, the national idea arose before, and in fact was unconnected with, the consolidation of a modern state apparatus. In these political cultures the middle classes were weak, and the civil institutions they founded were deferential toward the central and aristocratic authorities…”

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German-style nationalism was deeply influenced by Romanticism; in fact, it may be called the collective analogue of Romantic individualism. For, as M.S. Anderson writes: "From one point of view, to be a romantic was to stress the individual and the unique, genius, originality, spontaneity. Yet at the same time the romantic sense of history emphasized the impossibility of escaping completely from the past and asserted that the development of human institutions was continuous, not something that proceeded by jumps. Moreover the populism which some of the more politically radical romantics affected, like the organic conception of the state and the emphasis on corporate bodies and peasant communities which appealed to others, did not square easily with assertive individualism." 291

"For Byronic romantics," writes Berlin, "'I' is indeed an individual, the outsider, the adventurer, the outlaw, he who defies society and accepted values, and follows his own - it may be to his doom, but this is better than conformity, enslavement to mediocrity. But for other thinkers 'I' becomes something much more metaphysical. It is a collective - a nation, a Church, a Party, a class, an edifice in which I am only a stone, an organism of which I am only a tiny living fragment. It is the creator; I myself matter only in so far as I belong to the movement, the race, the nation, the class, the Church; I do not signify as a true individual within this super-person to whom my life is organically bound. Hence German nationalism: I do this not because it is good or right or because I like it - I do it because I am a German and this is the German way to live. So also modern existentialism - I do it because I commit myself to this form of existence. Nothing makes me; I do not do it because it is an objective order which I obey, or because of universal rules to which I must adhere; I do it because I create my own life as I do; being what I am, I give it direction and I am responsible for it. Denial of universal values, this emphasis on being above all an element in, and loyal to, a super-self, is a dangerous moment in European history, and has led to a great deal that has been destructive and sinister in modern times; this is where it begins, in the political ruminations and theories of the earliest German romantics and their disciples in France and elsewhere." 292

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In its early stages Kant, Hegel and Goethe had all praised the Revolution; and Kant’s disciple, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, had even declared that “henceforth the French Republic alone can be the country of the Just”. Friedrich Schlegel did not see France and Germany as rivals, but wanted “a relationship of mutual cooperation and fulfillment. Novalis too wanted to overcome national rivalries in a Christian Europe. The magazine Europa (1803-5) was also dedicated to the same end. It was edited by Friedrich Schlegel, whose brother August Wilhelm spoke of ‘European patriotism’." 293

Even Prussia’s overwhelming defeat by Napoleon at Jena in 1806 did not immediately dim the Germans’ enthusiasm for their conqueror. Hegel called him “that world spirit”, and the Swiss historian Johannes von Müller declared: “I see that God has given [Napoleon] dominion over the world; never has that been clearer to me than in this war.” And his worship of Napoleon led to him being made secretary of state for Westphalia in 1807.

However, in the same year of 1807 there began one of the decisive, truly revolutionary turning-points in the history of ideas, when the secular, rationalist cult of the nation on the French model acquired an irrational, quasi-religious, Germanic Romantic passion that was, over the next century and more, to set much of Europe on fire. The cause was undoubtedly, as Zamoyski writes, the same event that had elicited Hegel’s and von Müller’s eulogies - “Napoleon’s crushing defeat of the Prussians at the Battle of Jena in 1806. The humiliation of seeing the prestigious army created by the great Frederick trounced by the French led to painful self-appraisal and underlined the need for regeneration. But it also stung German pride and dispelled the last shreds of sympathy for France – and, with them, the universalist dreams of the previous decade.”

The origins of Fascist nationalism go back to this reaction against the French revolution that took place in Germany after Napoleon had marched through it as a conquering and destroying hero... Against the French insistence that they were “the great nation”, the universal nation, and therefore were allowed to impose themselves on all others, 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.

The reaction began with a powerful movement for reform in the army. As Philip Bobbitt writes, "The Prussian military reforms from 1807 on were designed to effect this change. Here it is enough to say that the Prussian force that fought from 1813 onward waged war with the same patriotic motivation as that which inspired the French. As Clausewitz wrote, it was 'a war of the people'... In 1809 the playwright Heinrich von Kleist called Napoleon “a spirit of destruction who rises from hell”, and the Germans were now prepared to reply to violence with violence... The German Masons also changed. As Tikhomirov writes, “having betrayed their fatherland at first, they raised their voices against the French, by virtue of which the German national movement arose”...

But the decisive factor was that the Germans at last found a voice, a prophetic voice sounding in the wilderness of German defeat. This was the voice of Fichte in Addresses to the German Nation (1807), which used Ezekiel’s vision of the dry

294 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 534.
295 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 166.
298 Cohen and Major, op. cit.,
299 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 455.
bones to describe the future regeneration of Germany: “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.”

Fichte’s quest for resurrection for the German nation owed less to the resurrection of Christian faith than to the resurrection of paganism, and of the myths of the pagan German gods; whose final burial would come over a century later, in the ruins of Nazi Berlin...

Joseph Görres described this pagan creed as follows: “Let the nation learn to trace itself to its source, delve into its roots: it will find in its innermost being a fathomless well-spring which rises from subterranean treasure; many minds have already been enriched by drawing on the hoard of the Niebelungen; and still it lies there inexhaustible, in the depths of its lair...”

“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.’

“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

300 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 535.
301 Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 535.
moral order’, to be determined by the state’s convenience, was to find
to 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.”

The link between Fichte’s egoistic metaphysics and his nationalism
was indicated by Bertrand Russell. Fichte was also 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”.

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“As the revolution progressed,” writes Zamoyski, “the feeling grew in
Germany that the French, with their habitual shallowness, had got it all wrong.
They had allowed the pursuit of liberty to degenerate into mob rule and mass
slaughter of innocent people because they perceived liberty in mechanical terms.
German thinkers were more interested in ‘real liberty’, and many believed that it
was the ‘corrupt’ nature of the French that had doomed the revolution to failure.
Such conclusions allowed for a degree of smugness, suggesting as they did that
the French Enlightenment, for all its brilliance, had been flawed, while German
intellectual achievements had been more profound and more solid.

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

“It had been central to Herder’s argument that each nation, by virtue of its
innate character, had a special role to play in the greater process of history. One
after another, nations ascended the world stage to fulfil their ordained purpose.
The French were crowding the proscenium, but there was a growing conviction

304 Thus Fichte said: “The genius of foreigners will be like the amiable hummingbird [or] the
industrious and skillful bee which gathers in the honey… but the German spirit will be the eagle
which will lift his heavy body on powerful wings and, through a long and exciting flight, climbs
ever higher and higher towards the sun” (*Addresses to the German Nation*). (V.M.)
that Germany’s time was coming, and her destiny was about to unfold. The Germans certainly seemed ready for it. The country was awash with under-employed young men, and since the days of the proto-romantic movement of *Sturm und Drang* the concept of action, both as a revolt against stultifying rational forces and as a transcendent act of self-assertion, had become well established. Fichte equated virtually any action, provided it was bold and unfettered, with liberation.

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

“But in the absence of clear geographical or political parameters, Germany’s national existence was ultimately dependent on some variant of the racial concept. And this began to be stated with increasing assertiveness. ‘In itself every nationality is a completely closed and rounded whole, a common tie of blood relationship unites all its members; all... must be of one mind and must stick together like one man’, according to Joseph Görres, who had once been an enthusiastic internationalist. ‘This instinctive urge that binds all members into a whole is a law of nature which takes preference over all artificial contracts... The voice of nature in ourselves warns us and points to the chasm between us and the alien’.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

305 Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 162, 163-165.
only after that, perhaps, spiritual fellowship under the rule of the Pope as the potentate of this world.

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

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

“Finally, the Germans protested most vehemently, deriving their formula of protest from the innermost spiritual, elemental foundation of the Germanic world: they proclaimed the freedom of inquiry, and raised Luther’s banner. This was a terrible, universal break: the formula of protest had been found and filled with a content; even so it still was a negative formula, and the new, positive word was not yet uttered.
“And now, the Germanic spirit, having uttered this ‘new word’ of protest, as it were, fainted for a while, quite parallel to an identical weakening of the former strictly formulated unity of the forces of his adversary. The outermost Western world, under the influence of the discovery of America, of new sciences and new principles, sought to reincarnate itself in a new truth, in a new phase.

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

Let us return to the narrative of Germany’s War of Liberation… “The French,” continues Zamoyski, “became villains, and Napoleon himself was even portrayed as the Antichrist, a focus for the crusading struggle of deliverance that would regenerate Germany. Poets composed patriotic verse and anti-Napoleonic songs…

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And of liberalism, too… Under the impact of the new collectivist nationalism, individualist liberalism withered. As George L. Mosse writes: “Even a devoted Liberal like Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) came, in the end, to the conclusion that ‘there are only two realities, God and the nation.’ At first he tried to combine individualism with a confrontation of the national problem as Fichte had done, but he, too, came to the realization that ‘man is nothing by himself except through the force of the whole with which he tries to fuse himself.’ Such romanticism swept before it the older cosmopolitan and humanitarian ideas of the last century. The old Goethe, who still proclaimed such sentiments and who

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307 Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 166, 167-168, 169-170. In the same year of 1813, and in the same city of Leipzig, where Napoleon was finally defeated by Prussia, the composer Richard Wagner was born. We shall see that he, too, was to make an important contribution to German nationalism…
derided the new nationalism, was as isolated a figure in Weimar as, a century later, the old Benedetto Croce was to be an isolated figure in the new Italy. His concept of liberal freedom was as outdated then, so it seemed, as Goethe’s was after the German wars of liberation against the French. Friedrich Ludwig Jahn was the wave of the future. His book *Volkstum* (1810) glorified the German *Volk* who represented the whole of humanity and whose task it was to civilize the world by force. But the *Volk* must keep itself pure and undefiled as a race; Rome had fallen because races had mixed. Here already we can see the leanings of the glorification of the *Volk* toward an explicit racism. The state formed by the *Volk* would be democratic – Jahn as yet kept representative institutions and did not push the mystical unity of the *Volk* to the point where it superseded all representative forms of government.

“The ‘force of the whole’ was the German nation singled out by God as the only valid *Volk*. Jahn organized the *Turnerschaft* to keep the people fit for the war that was coming. Significantly, the word *turnen* came from the medieval tournaments, but gymnastics were practical tasks to enable young men to be the soldiers of tomorrow. From their founding (1811) these *Turnerschaften* became centres of German nationalism; so did the *Burschenschaften* which Jahn was also instrumental in founding (1815). Students were united in them irrespective of their province or social class. Non-Germans, like the Jews, were excluded from the fraternities. These became instruments for German unity, meeting at the Wartburg in Thuringia, the constant symbol of a glorious German past. Here Luther worked and here the old Minnesaenger had held their festivals of song. Wagner was to put this spirit on the stage in his *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* and in *Tannhauser* as well. This romantic nationalism was directed, above all, against France which had so recently occupied the country. Jahn’s diatribes against that nation were violent, just as Wagner later castigated French perfidy in the last lines of the Meistersinger. This nationalism, then, was inspired by the romantic movement. It was ‘total’ in the sense that it was not concerned with boundaries or even with blueprints for a government, but with ‘culture’ as a whole. Jahn addressed his *Turners* in uniforms representing an age long past, symbolizing the organic *Volk* which has its own and superior way of life.”

From now on, European man would only rarely be induced to die for God or Church or Sovereign. But he could be induced to die for his country; for the nation was now seen to incarnate the highest value, whether that value was defined as simply racial superiority (Germany), or cultural eminence (France), or the rule of law in freedom (England).

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21. BRITISH NATIONALISM AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

After 1815, writes Jenny Uglow, most people in Britain “shared a feeling of being ‘British’ which had not existed before. The threat of invasion... the propaganda and parades, the raising of the volunteers and the fireworks at every victory on sea and land had fostered a spirit of nationhood... The mass mobilization of the war years and the huge demonstrations of the peace movement had made everyone feel involved with the affairs of the nation, and the effect on the political culture was transformative: governments and politicians had to adapt to the world of the popular press and mass opinion, in the knowledge that they could never return to the old deferential culture. This change was born of the wars, almost without people knowing it... Everyone shared in the wars...”

British nationalism was fostered in the coming century by the seemingly inexorable growth of the British Empire, which made Britain into the world’s first truly global super-power.

Although the Congress of Vienna had established five great powers, whose consultations and joint actions controlled the geopolitical situation, there was only one truly global power – Britain. “The end of the titanic struggle with France in 1815,” writes Tombs, “left Britain the first global hegemon in history, a position only otherwise occupied by the United States in 1989. Its naval power maximized its strength, enabling some 45 percent of its forces to be deployed overseas at the end of the war. Yet there were limits to its power, some self-imposed. Policy after Waterloo was defensive: ‘It is not our business to collect trophies,’ wrote the Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, to the Prime Minister, ‘but to try [to] bring the world back to peaceful habits.’ An unwitting tribute was paid by Napoleon: ‘Castlereagh had the Continent at his mercy... And he made peace as if he had been defeated. The imbecile!’... There was irresistible pressure to reduce taxation and debt. The navy was rapidly cut back to a peacetime footing, with nearly 90 percent of its officers unemployed, and the number of ships in commission falling from 713 in 1814 to 121 in 1818. All governments throughout the century were as parsimonious as they could be, pressed by lobbied that combined equal devotion to peace and cheap government. Gladstone’s Liberal government in the 1860s, for example, was so keen to reduce the costs of empire that it was happy to contemplate ‘friendly relaxation’ of links with the colonies, or even ‘separation’, and it shrugged off the queen’s complaint that Britain was being reduced to ‘a second-rate power’. Military spending was generally 2-3 percent of national income – about the same as today – but Britain’s wealth meant that this represented more money than in any other state except sometimes France. Yet it often seemed (as a senior officer admitted in 1899) that Britain was ‘attempting to maintain the largest empire the world has ever seen with instruments and reserves that would be insufficient for a third-class Military Power’.

Uglow, In these Times: Living in Britain through Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815, London: Faber & Faber, 2014.
“With limited material forces, it had to deal with robustly independent and relatively powerful European states. The navy, master of the oceans, had 40,000 - 50,000 men in mid-century, about the same as today. Its reach, as was often wryly observed, depended on there being water. The army was never more than a sizeable colonial police force by comparison with those of the other Great Powers. In 1857, on he eve of the Great Mutiny, there were only 23,000 British soldiers in the whole of northern India from the Khyber Pass to Rangoon, fewer than in Northern Ireland in the 1980s; and there were more British troops in Afghanistan in 2012 than in any of the Victorian Afghan wars. So the army was often over-exposed, sometimes disastrously so: 700 British troops, 3,800 Indian and 12,000 civilians were massacred in Afghanistan in 1841, another 1,700 men wiped out at Isandlwana in Zuzuland in 1879, and half a brigade lost at Marwand in Afghanistan in 1880. The Foreign Office in the 1820s had a staff of 36, and the separate Diplomatic Service remained unchanged between the 1860s and the 1910s at under 150 men, compared with a combined total of over 6,000 today. The Colonial Office numbered 113 clerks in 1903 – half the U.K. Ministry of Defence’s press office today – to oversee an empire that consisted of over 100 separated political units (not including some 600 Indian princely states). The Indian civil service in the late nineteenth century numbered no more than 2,000 – smaller than OFSTED, the school inspection service, today. Many, at the time and since, have emphasized the fragility and even the illusory nature of British power during the once-vaunted ‘Pax Britannica’.

“Yet if we look from the outside, as if from Paris, St. Petersburg or Constantinople, the picture is different. Britain was effectively invulnerable: all other major states, including the United States and Japan, were invaded during the nineteenth century, some several times. But no potential enemy since Napoleon has ever seriously prepared an invasion of Britain, and he would probably have failed if he mounted it; Hitler got no further than aspiration. No one between 1815 and 1914 dreamed of threatening its security in Europe. No major state until Japan in 1941 calculatedly attacked its empire. All were deterred by its naval power, its huge financial and economic capacity, and its ability to strike without being struck. Its dominance of the seas many any repetition of the global conflicts of the eighteenth century impossible, and restrained the imperialist ambitions of European powers. Simon Bolivar, the early-nineteenth-century South American revolutionary leader, declared that ‘only England, mistress of the seas, can protect us against the united force of European reaction.’ Despite continual complaints about excessive naval spending over the century, the Royal Navy maintained overwhelming superiority: in the 1880s it had thirty-eight large battleships, while all other navies combined had only forty; and although the numerical superiority declined later in the century as other countries built, it still maintained a ‘two-power standard’, a navy larger than those of the two next strongest naval powers combined. A striking sign of power is that in major areas Britain got its way, and even got more than it wanted. It had not wanted to rule Egypt, for example, but eventually did; the French did want it, but could not get it. It obtained practically all it wanted economically in South America without needing major political intervention. The most important international consequence of British naval power was to provide a guarantee of open
international trading conditions for everyone, fostering an economic
globalization in many ways more complete than in the twenty-first century, and,
unlike previous periods of partial globalization, driven more by technology than
by violence.”

But could it be argued that the British Empire, as the first exemplar of what
Simon Schama calls “the empire of good intentions”, did more good than evil?
One of these supposed good intentions was the overthrow of evil regimes, and it
is probably true that in most cases the regimes that were overturned by British
imperialism were venal and cruel. Thus François Bernier, physician to two
Mughal princes, wrote: “The country is ruined by the necessity of defraying the
enormous charges required to maintain the splendor of a numerous court, and to
pay a large army maintained for the purpose of keeping the people in subjection.
No adequate idea can be conveyed of the sufferings of the people. The cudgel
and the whip compel them to incessant labour for the benefit of others…”

It helped the British – in India, as elsewhere - that many of these venal
regimes were weak. Indeed, as Tombs writes, “British power and influence in
the century following Waterloo – vastly more extensive than those of those of the
United States since 1945 - are explicable in large part by the fluidity and fragility
of much of the globe. The fragmentation of the Mughal Empire following
Persian and Afghan invasions in the early eighteenth century was the condition
of British power in India. The Chinese empire entered into a crisis in the mid-eighteenth century. The Persian Empire collapsed in the 1720s. The Ottoman
Empire began its long agony after defeat by Austria and Russian in the late
eighteenth century and Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798. The Napoleonic
Wars also finished off the Spanish Empire, fragmented the Portuguese, and
enfeebled the Dutch. New and sometimes aggressive polities were appearing in
Africa and Asia, such as the Asante and Zulu kingdoms, the caliphate of Sokoto,
the Sikh and Maratha confederations, and the kingdom of Siam. In other parts of
the world, organization and identity were still local: there were 150 ‘nations’
west of the Mississippi; over 200 language groups in Australia; hundreds of
polities and thousands of language groups in Africa.

“In these circumstances, resistance to British power was weak, and its
hegemonic position could be maintained on a shoestring. Many of the
inhabitants of a pre-nationalist world were more or less acquiescent, and even
cooperative…”

Nevertheless, the acquisition of vast areas of other people’s land and property
– probably the biggest land-grab in history – required a justification stronger
than the weakness of the opposition...

32.
312 Tombs, op. cit., pp. 543-544.
Moreover, the British Empire presents us with a puzzling moral paradox: how could a country whose ideology was liberalism, and which had fought, and would continue to fight, under the banner of freedom from tyranny for all peoples, then set about creating the largest empire the world had ever seen, enslaving – or, at any rate, enserfing - hundreds of millions of people to itself? Of course, there are many very different kinds and qualities of empire. A major argument of this series of books is that one kind in particular – the Orthodox Christian Empire, based on the symphony of powers between the Orthodox Autocrat and the Orthodox Church – is in fact the best form of government yet devised for the attainment of the supreme end of man: the salvation of his immortal soul. The British Empire was not of this type, although it also claimed to be bringing salvation in Christ to heathen peoples.

That the British Empire, like all great empires, had a religious underpinning is illustrated by William Blake’s hymn *Jerusalem* – so popular even to this day in England:

> And did those feet in ancient time,  
> Walk upon England’s mountains green:  
> And was the holy Lamb of God,  
> On England’s pleasant pastures seen!  
> And did the Countenance Divine,  
> Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
> And was Jerusalem builded here,  
> Among these dark Satanic Mills?  
> Bring me my Bow of burning gold;  
> Bring me my Arrows of desire:  
> Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!  
> Bring me my Chariot of fire!  
> I will not cease from Mental Fight,  
> Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:  
> Till we have built Jerusalem,  
> In England’s green & pleasant Land.

Of course, Blake was speaking about the building of Jerusalem in England, not in a global empire. But subconsciously the two ideas merged into one. If England had been visited by Christ (by tradition, as a twelve-year-old boy, in the company of St. Joseph of Arimathaea), and was the New Jerusalem, then Englishmen had the right – nay, the duty - to export their dominion throughout the world… There were echoes here of the Third Rome messianism of Russian Orthodox: England was the Third Rome, and there would be no fourth. And truly, “the British saw themselves as having duties as well as interests, and, like other powerful peoples, saw their interests as the interests of all, spreading Christian civilization, breaking down vested interests, encouraging toleration, opening communications, and promoting international commerce. Governments upheld what they saw as the national interest and very rarely allowed themselves to be dictated by lobbies: they manipulated business interests rather than being manipulated by them. The broad aim was to project a favourable image of Britain as embodying constitutional freedoms, humanitarian rights and
the rule of law. British politicians often felt moral pressure to intervene where states were failing or non-existent, most extensively in India and Africa. Inaction was seen as a shameful dereliction of duty. It was strongly felt to be an obligation to provide leadership and assist the forces of progress, preferably by peaceful means, but by force if necessary against ‘barbarity’. The moralizing, missionary aspect of nineteenth-century politics should not be underestimate, despite Cecil Rhodes’s cynical quip that empire was philanthropy plus 5 percent profit. So Britain was diplomatically very active and at war somewhere most of the time. There was lethal arrogance here, combined with naïvely optimistic generosity believing that the freedom and prosperity England had recently secured should be spread…

“The ideological foundations of foreign policy were above all Whig ideas of English history as the triumph of Progress. This led Charles James Fox to commit the Whigs to supporting ‘civil and religious liberties all over the world’. Tories – often accused from Castlereagh onwards of complicity with reactionary regimes – did tend to be less assertive and ‘ethical’, though these were differences of degree. For generations, much of the energy came from evangelical Anglicans the Nonconformist conscience – what we might call the ‘religious left’. Radicals, both secular and Christian, believed in the universality of progressive values, which they considered Britain had a duty to uphold. The most pugnacious exponent of this muscular liberalism was Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784-18650, whose career spanned six decades. He was Secretary of War as early as 1809, Foreign Secretary from 1830 to 1741 and 1846 to 1851, and Prime Minister from 1855 to 1741 and 1859 to 1863 – the zenith of British power and overseas activity. Palmerston was a cosmopolitan Anglo-Irishman who liked to play John Bull: he could say unashamedly that inferior states needed to feel his stick across their shoulders from time to time, and also say that the extinction of the Atlantic slave trade was the greatest moment of his career. The brutality and the humanitarianism emerged from the same frame of mind.”

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

“Many charges can of course be leveled against the British Empire; they will not be dropped in what follows. I do not claim, as John Stuart Mill did, that British rule in India was ‘not only the purest in intention but one of the most beneficent in act ever known to mankind’; nor, as Lord Curzon did, that ‘the British Empire is under Providence the greatest instrument for good that the world has seen’; nor, as General Smuts claimed, that it was ‘the widest system of organized human freedom which has ever existed in human history’. The

313 Tombs, op. cit., pp. 544-545.
Empire was never so altruistic. In the eighteenth century the British were indeed as zealous in the acquisition and exploitation of slaves as they were subsequently zealous in trying to stamp slavery out; and for much longer they practiced forms of racial discrimination and segregation that we today consider abhorrent. When imperial authority was challenged – in India in 1857, in Jamaica in 1831 or 1865, in South Africa in 1899 – the British response was brutal. When famine struck (in Ireland in the 1840s, in India in the 1870s) their response was negligent, in some measure positively culpable. Even when they took a scholarly interest in oriental cultures, perhaps they did subtly denigrate them in the process.

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

Of course, this begs the question whether “the free movement of goods, capital and labour” is such an indubitable good. In England for generations, it was argued by many, it was an indubitable evil, in that it plunged much of the working population into terrible, soul-destroying poverty, while increasing the pride, cruelty and hypocrisy of the governing class to a proverbial degree (“Victorian hypocrisy” is still a byword). But, as we shall see in more detail later, if weighed on the scale of that utilitarian principle of Jeremy Bentham, “the greatest happiness of the greatest number”, it is not clear whether the pros or the cons of the principle have the edge – for England, at any rate.

It is difficult to see how it could have been a boon for anyone else unless we are looking at the very long term. Thus the destruction of the indigenous Indian textile industry by competition with the factories of Northern England doomed millions of Indian peasants to even greater poverty. And while the British administration was indeed less venal than the Mughal one that it replaced, this was a relatively small benefit to place in the scale against the five million dead in the Bengal famine of 1773-74 and the famines that periodically recurred thereafter.

But if it is argued that such suffering was justified in that it was a necessary stage “on the path to modernity” and the modern, democratic India, then we are back with the Jesuit principle that the end justifies the means, and the idea that the sufferings of one generation, undertaken unwillingly at the hands of foreigners, can compensate for the relatively greater prosperity of another, much later one that has imbibed the foreigners’ world-view.

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

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

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

But prohibit it they did. Because for all their talk of liberty and equality, the British believed that they were superior to the peoples they governed, and therefore entitled to deprive them of their liberty indefinitely. So not only did the “liberal Empire” of Britain introduce the benefits of liberalism by illiberal means – coercion and conquest; these benefits, according to the racist views of the conquerors, could never really be absorbed or applied by the natives because they were naturally slaves. This was because, as Ferguson admits, the spreading of liberalism was not the real motivation for the creation of the Empire, but rather commercial gain from the import of sugar, spices, cotton, etc., and the export of manufactures, financial services, etc. When that commercial gain was threatened for one reason or another, the British response was to send in the gunboats or the redcoats, and annex the territory in question before introducing those western institutions – property rights, contractual law – that would guarantee a stable, long-term trading relationship. And so “the rise of the British Empire, it might be said, had less to do with the Protestant work ethic or English individualism than with the British sweet tooth.” And when the end of the Empire came, after the Second World War, it came not so much as result of the British at length deciding that the natives were now mature enough to govern

315 Ferguson, op. cit., pp. xxiii-xxiv.
316 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 13.
themselves, nor even because the natives’ demand for self-government had acquired an unstoppable momentum, but simply because the Empire was now broke and could no longer afford its colonies: Mammon, not God or liberalism, had decided the issue…\textsuperscript{317}

\textsuperscript{317} Ferguson, \textit{op. cit.}, chapter 6.
France was readmitted to the concert of nations during the Congress of Vienna because the victorious powers judged that it was the ideology rather than the nation that was the real enemy, while former revolutionaries who no longer practised revolution could be forgiven. For, as Eric Hobsbawm writes, “it was now known that revolution in a single country could be a European phenomenon; that its doctrines could spread across the frontiers and, what was worse, its crusading armies could blow away the political systems of a continent. It was now known that social revolution was possible; that nations existed as something independent of states, peoples as something independent of their rulers, and even that the poor existed as something independent of the ruling classes. ‘The French Revolution,’ De Bonald had observed in 1796, ‘is a unique event in history.’ The phrase is misleading; it was a universal event. No country was immune from it. The French soldiers who campaigned from Andalusia to Moscow, from the Baltic to Syria – over a vaster area than any body of conquerors since the Mongols, and certainly a vaster area than any previous single military force in Europe except the Norsemen – pushed the universality of their revolution home more effectively than anything else could have done. And the doctrines and institutions they carried with them, even under Napoleon, from Spain to Illyria, were universal doctrines, as the governments knew, and as the peoples themselves were soon to know. A Greek bandit and patriot expressed their feelings completely: “According to my judgement,’ said Koloktrones, ‘the French Revolution and the doings of Napoleon opened the eyes of the world. The nations knew nothing before, and the people thought that kings were gods upon the earth and that they were bound to say that whatever they did was well done. Through this present change it is more difficult to rule the people.’”

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

“Thus violence acquired moral standing and the public was terrorized for its own good. Many years before, Samuel Johnson, in upholding the rights of authority, had qualified his defense by pointing to a corresponding and inherent human right to resist oppression: ‘Why all this childish jealousy of the power of

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

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

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

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

320 Johnson, op. cit., p. 662.
Moreover when uprisings did take place and governments were overthrown, as in Spain in 1820, Buonarrotti – like Marx, and indeed Lenin, later – was taken completely by surprise…

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

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

And yet making concessions was only a short-term solution. For appeasement can never tame a really determined enemy, but rather whets his appetite for more. So it was no use saying, as Friedrich von Gentz, Metternich’s secretary, said to the Laibach Congress of the Holy Alliance, 1821: “Revolution must be

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321 Johnson, op. cit., pp. 665-666. The highest members of the Carbonari swore the following oath: “Property boundaries shall be erased, all possessions shall be reduced to communal wealth, and the one and only patria, most gentle of mothers, shall furnish food, education and work to the whole body of her beloved and free children. This is the redemption invoked by the wise. This is the true recreation of Jerusalem. This is the manifest and inevitable decisions of the Supreme Being” (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 547). (V.M.)
322 In Spain, for example, the left-wing and Masonic Isabelinos “were supported by Palmerston and by the British Legion of volunteers from Britain…. They were also supported by the government of Louis Philippe [of France]. Metternich and Tsar Nicholas were not in a position to help the Carlists” (Jasper Ridley, The Freemasons, London: Constable, 1999, p. 200).
323 Johnson, op. cit., p. 691.
324 Hobshawm, op. cit., p. 129.
325 “Suddenly the door opened; and silently there entered vice leaning on the arm of crime, M. de Talleyrand supported by Fouché… the trusty regicide, kneeling, put the hand which had made Louis XVI’s head roll in the hands of the martyred king’s brother; the apostate bishop stood surety for the oath” (Viscount de Chateaubriand, Mémoires d’Outremer, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 543).
fought with flesh and blood. Moral weapons are manifestly powerless.”\textsuperscript{326} The truth was precisely the opposite: it was moral weapons that had to be found.\textsuperscript{327}

Some oppression was unavoidable; but it could not succeed for long on its own. Thus, as John Bew writes, “Even Castlereagh’s brother, Charles Stewart, ambassador in Vienna and otherwise sympathetic to Metternich, complained about his ‘Inordinate Taste for Spies and Police’, which tended to ‘put the Employer more oftener on the wrong, rather than the right scent.’ ‘Your politics of oppression, which tolerates no resistance, is a fatal one and leads as surely to an explosion as a hermetically sealed cauldron which has no safety valve,’ Lord Palmerston, British foreign secretary, told Metternich at the moment of his downfall in 1848.”\textsuperscript{328}

What was needed was another, more powerful spirit to oppose the corrupt spirit of the times, a positive doctrine of religious and political authority that was deeper and truer than the revolutionary doctrine. But none of the great powers was able to provide a positive teaching to reinforce and justify their alternately conciliatory and repressive measures, for the simple reason that none of them – with the exception of Russia – was Orthodox, and very few, even in Russia, were capable of communicating that positive message to those infected with the revolutionary contagion.

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The solutions that were offered harked back to failed ideologies of the Enlightenment and Medieval periods. The first was Kant’s \textit{Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch} (1795), which contained the following axiom: ”The law of nations shall be founded on a federation of free states”. This was the Enlightenment answer to the problem of war: a world government.

Henry Kissinger writes that “Kant dared to see in the general upheaval [caused by the French revolution] the faint beginnings of a new, more peaceful international order.

“Humanity, Kant reasoned, was characterized by a distinctive ‘unsocial stability’: the ‘tendency to come together in society, coupled, however, with a continual resistance which constantly threatens to break this society up.’ The

\textsuperscript{326} Genz, in Cohen and Major, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 542.
\textsuperscript{327} Genz knew this as well as anyone. For he understood that the cause of the revolution lay in the changing religious beliefs of men, from the true religion to Protestantism to revolutionary secularism, even if he misidentified the true religion with Catholicism: “Protestantism is the first, the true, the only source of all the vast evils under which we groan today. Had it merely confined itself to reasoning, we might have been able and obliged to tolerate it, for a tendency to argue is rooted in human nature. However, once governments agreed to accept Protestantism as a permitted form of religion, an expression of Christianity, a right of man; once they… granted it a place in the State beside, or even on the ruins of, the only true church, the religious, moral and political order of the world was immediately dissolved... The entire French Revolution, and the even worse revolution which is about to break over Germany, have sprung from this same source.” (in Hobbsawm, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 282).
problem of order, particularly international order, was ‘the most difficult and the last to be solved by the human race’. Men formed states to constrain their passions, but like individuals in the state of nature each state sought to preserve its absolute freedom, even at the cost of ‘a lawless state of savagery’. But the ‘devastations, upheavals and even complete inner exhaustion of their powers’ arising from interstate clashes would in time oblige men to contemplate an alternative. Humanity faced either the peace of ‘the vast graveyard of the human race’ or peace by reasoned design.

“The answer, Kant held, was a voluntary federation of republics pledged to non-hostility and transparent domestic and international conduct. Their citizens would cultivate peace because, unlike despotic rulers, when considering hostilities, they would be deliberating about ‘calling down on themselves all the miseries of war.’ Over time the attractions of the compact would become apparent, opening the way toward its gradual expansion into a peaceful world order. It was Nature’s purpose that humanity eventually reason its way toward ‘a system of united power, hence a cosmopolitan system of general political security’ and ‘a perfect civil union of mankind’.” 329

This purely rationalist answer to the problem of world peace has been tried in our time with the League of Nations and the United Nations. It has not worked. And the reason is not far to find: mankind is not as rational, either in its individual or collective forms, as to seek, let alone be satisfied with, a peaceful solution of its conflicting desires. There is an irrational, demonic element in fallen man that seeks, not life, but death, not peace, but war. This demonic element burst out in the French revolution, and was checked – but by no means exorcised completely – only by defeat on the battlefield.

The other solution on offer was a return to submission to the Roman Catholic Church, a fervently anti-revolutionary power that was trying to make up for its lapse in the time of Napoleon. Thus in 1814 the Jesuit order was re-established. And in his encyclical Mirari vos (1832), Pope Gregory XVI declared that antimonarchism was a crime against the faith, and that liberty of conscience flowed from “the most fetid fount of indifferentism”.

The Vatican was supported by such writers as Chateaubriand, who in his Genius of Christianity (1802), an immensely influential book, combined Catholic Christianity with Romanticism around the idea of unity. “For Chateaubriand,” writes George L. Mosse, “all things were interrelated, just as in the new music drama all arts had to cooperate in order to produce a unity of feeling. Christ reflected a harmony between God and humanity which was also reflected in nature. When he wrote about church bells he went on to link the effect they produced with the effect produced by winds, seas, volcanoes, and the voice of a whole people. All these caused a thousand hearts to feel the sentiment, the same unity of the emotions. This was what Chateaubriand called the sublime and the beautiful. ‘There is one God, the grasses of the valleys and the trees of the mountains bless him, the elephant salutes him at the dawn of day, the birds sing

in the foliage, the ocean declares his immensity.’ Though romantic religion had a strong element of pantheism in it, Chateaubriand was not a pantheist. He believed that Christianity was reflected in a divine institution which operated on earth, the Catholic church.

“Catholicism was defended not on historical or even theological grounds, but because it reflected the harmony of all things. From the center at Rome branched out, in an orderly manner, missions, bishops, and the other services of the church which extended over the whole earth. Moreover, its liturgy contained the divine mysteries which, together with its centralized organization, reflected the cosmos which was Christian. Protestantism in contrast was chaos. It must be clear why Chateaubriand subtitled the book the Beauty of Christianity, for its truth was sublime by the standards of romanticism…

“Chateaubriand’s justification of Catholicism was not an isolated phenomenon. Romanticism had a preference for this form of Christianity. It fitted in not only with the kind of ideology which Chateaubriand put forward, but also with the Romantics’ Gothic vision of history…”

According to Zamoyski, Chateaubriand “vindicated Christianity and presented it in a way that appealed to modern intellectuals. His vision of a spiritually refreshed Catholicism emerging from the blood and suffering of the revolution with a chivalric monarchism rising above the power struggles of the recent past, inspired most of the French Romantics. But submission to the will of God was no longer appealing to generations that had become used to the concept of the centrality of Man in the universe…”

A more hard-headed Catholic vision was presented by two French aristocrats, Count Joseph de Maistre, a former envoy of Sardinia to Russia, and Viscount Louis de Bonald. Thus De Maistre wrote: “All grandeur, all power, all subordination rests on the executioner: he is the horror and bond of human association. Remove this incomprehensible agent from the world, and at that moment order gives way to chaos, thrones topple, and society disappears. God, Who is the author of sovereignty, is the author also of punishment.” Between God, the ultimate executioner, and kings, there is the power of the pope – the highest on earth. “Without the pope Christianity is no longer, and as an inevitable consequence, the social order is smitten in the heart. The church must be governed like any other organization; otherwise there would no longer be aggregation, cohesion, unity. This government is therefore by nature infallible, that is to say absolute; otherwise the pope would not govern… There is nothing shocking about the idea of all Christian rulers united by religious brotherhood in a kind of universal republic under the measured supremacy of the supreme spiritual power.”

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331 Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 179.
Here is the idea of medieval Christendom reborn! And De Maistre’s exaltation of the papacy and opposition to any kind of power independent of it was supported by De Bonald, who wrote: “Today... who does not see the danger of granting anyone and everyone... the terrible liberty to indoctrinate, in religion and in politics, a public which everywhere is made up largely of mistaken, ignorant, and violent men?... There is no true liberty of the press... except under the guarantee of censorship to prevent licence of thought. There is no civil liberty without laws to prevent actions that create disorder.”

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

“... The doctrines of Joseph de Maistre... formed the spearhead of the counter-revolution in the early nineteenth century in Europe. Maistre held the Enlightenment to be one of the most foolish, as well as the most ruinous, forms of social thinking. The conception of man as naturally disposed to benevolence, co-operation and peace, or, at any rate, capable of being shaped in this direction by appropriate education or legislation, is for him shallow and false. The benevolent Dame Nature of Hume, Holbach and Helvétius is an absurd figment. History and zoology are the most reliable guides to nature: they show her to be a field of unceasing slaughter. Men are by nature aggressive and destructive; they rebel over trifles – the change to the Gregorian calendar in the mid-eighteenth century, or Peter the Great’s decision to shave the boyars’ beards, provoke violent resistance, at times dangerous rebellions. But when men are sent to war, to exterminate beings as innocent as themselves for no purpose that either army can grasp, they go obediently to their deaths and scarcely ever mutiny. When the destructive instinct is evoked men feel exalted and fulfilled. Men do not come together, as the Enlightenment teaches, for mutual co-operation and peaceful happiness; history makes it clear that they are never so united as when given a common altar upon which to immolate themselves. This is so because the desire to sacrifice themselves or others is at least as strong as any pacific or constructive impulse.

“Maistre felt that men are by nature evil, self-destructive animals, full of conflicting drives, who do not know what they want, want what they do not want, do not want what they want, and it is only when they are kept under

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constant control and rigorous discipline by some authoritarian elite – a Church, a State, or some other body from whose decisions there is no appeal – that they can hope to survive and be saved. Reasoning, analysis, criticism shake the foundations and destroy the fabric of society. If the source of authority is declared to be rational, it invites questioning and doubt; but if it is questioned it may be argued away; its authority is undermined by able sophists, and this accelerates the forces of chaos, as in France during the reign of the weak and liberal Louis XVI. If the State is to survive and frustrate the fools and knaves who will always seek to destroy it, the source of its authority must be absolute, so terrifying, indeed, that the least attempt to question it must entail immediate and terrible sanctions; only then will men learn to obey it. Without a clear hierarchy of authority – awe-inspiring power – men’s incurably destructive instincts will breed chaos and mutual extermination. The supreme power – especially the Church – must never seek to explain or justify itself in rational terms; for what one man can demonstrate, another may be able to refute. Reason is the thinnest of walls against the raging seas of violent emotion: on so insecure a basis no permanent structure can ever be erected. Irrationality, so far from being an obstacle, has historically led to peace, security and strength, and is indispensable to society: it is rational institutions – republics, elective monarchies, democracies, associations founded on the enlightened principles of free love – that collapse soonest; authoritarian Churches, hereditary monarchies and aristocracies, traditional forms of life, like the highly irrational institutions of the family, founded on life-long marriage – it is they that persist.

“The philosophes proposed to rationalise communications by inventing a universal language free from the irrational survivals, the idiosyncratic twists and turns, the capricious peculiarities of existing tongues; if they were to succeed, this would be disastrous, for it is precisely the individual historical development of a language belonging to a people that absorbs, enshrines and encapsulates a vast wealth of half-conscious, half-remembered collective experience. What men call superstition and prejudice are but the crust of custom which by sheer survival has shown itself proof against the ravages and vicissitudes of its long life; to lose it is to lose the shield that protects men’s national existence, their spirit, the habits, memories, faith that have made them what they are. The conception of human nature which the radical critics have promulgated and on which their whole house of cards rests is an infantile fantasy. Rousseau asks why it is that man, who was born free, is nevertheless everywhere in chains; Maistre replies, ‘This mad pronouncement, Man is born free, is the opposite of the truth.’ ‘It would be equally reasonable,’ adds the eminent critic Émile Faguet in an essay on Maistre, ‘to say that sheep are born carnivorous, and everywhere nibble grass.’ Men are not made for freedom, nor for peace. Such freedom and peace as they have had were obtained only under wisely authoritarian governments that have repressed the destructive critical intellect and its socially disintegrating effects. Scientists, intellectuals, lawyers, journalists, democrats, Jansenists, Protestants, Jews, atheists – these are the sleepless enemy that never ceases to gnaw at the vitals of society. The best government the world has ever known was that of the Romans: they were too wise to be scientists themselves; for this purpose they hired the clever, volatile, politically incapable Greeks. Not the luminous intellect, but dark instincts govern man and societies; only elites which
understand this, and keep the people from too much secular education, which is bound to make them over-critical and discontented, can give to men as much happiness and justice and freedom as, in this vale of tears, men can expect to have. But at the back of everything must lurk the potentiality of force, of coercive power.

“In a striking image Maistre says that all social order in the end rests upon one man, the executioner. Nobody wishes to associate with this hideous figure, yet on him, so long as men are weak, sinful, unable to control their passions, constantly lured to their doom by evil temptations or foolish dreams, rest all order, all peace, all society. The notion that reason is sufficient to educate or control the passions is ridiculous. When there is a vacuum, power rushes in; even the bloodstained monster Robespierre, a scourge sent by the Lord to punish a country that had departed from the true faith, is more to be admired – because he did hold France together and repelled her enemies, and created armies that, drunk with blood and passion, preserved France – than liberal fumbling and bungling. Louis XIV ignored the clever reasoners of his time, suppressed heresy, and died full of glory in his own bed. Louis XVI played amiably with subversive ideologists who had drunk at the poisoned well of Voltaire, and died on the scaffold. Repression, censorship, absolute sovereignty, judgements from which there is no appeal, these are the only methods of governing creatures whom Maistre described as half men, half beasts, monstrous centaurs at once seeking after God and fighting him, longing to love and create, but in perpetual danger of falling victims to their own blindly destructive drives, held in check by a combination of force and traditional authority and, above all, a faith incarnated in historically hallowed institutions that reason dare not touch.

“Nation and race are realities; the artificial creations of constitution-mongers are bound to collapse. ‘Nations,’ said Maistre, ‘are born and die like individuals’; they ‘have a common soul’, especially visible in their language. And since they are individuals, they should endeavour to remain of one race. So too Bonald, his closest intellectual ally, regrets that the French nation has abandoned its racial purity, thus weakening itself. The question of whether the French are descended from Franks or Gauls, whether their institutions are Roman or German in origin, with the implication that this could dictate a form of life in the present, although it has its roots in political controversies in the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, now takes the colour of mystical organicism, which transcends, and is proof against, all forms of discursive reasoning. Natural growth alone is real for Maistre. Only time, only history, can create authority that men can worship and obey: mere military dictatorship, a work of individual human hands, is brutal force without spiritual power; he calls it bâtonocratie, and predicts the end of Napoleon.

“In similar strain Bonald denounces individualism whether as a social doctrine or an intellectual method of analysing historical phenomena. The inventions of man, he declared, are precarious aids compared to the divinely ordained institutions that penetrate man’s very being – language, family, the worship of God. By whom were they invented? Whenever a child is born there are father, mother, family, language, God; this is the basis of all that is genuine
and lasting, not the arrangements of men drawn from the world of shopkeepers, with their contracts, or promises, or utility, or material goods. Liberal individualism inspired by the insolent self-confidence of mutinous intellectuals has led to the inhuman competition of bourgeois society, in which the strongest and the fastest win and the weak go to the wall. Only the Church can organise a society in which the ablest are held back so that the whole of society can progress and the weakest and least greedy also reach the goal.

“...doctrines became the inspiration of monarchist politics in France, and together with the notion of romantic heroism and the sharp contrast between creative and uncreative, historic and unhistoric, individuals and nations, duly inspired nationalism, imperialism, and finally, in their most violent and pathological form, Fascist and totalitarian doctrines in the twentieth century.”

And yet Berlin was wrong in this last paragraph: one cannot attribute fascism and communism to the monarchical backlash against the French Revolution. Fascism, it is true, was based on worship of the people, its historical tradition and its State; but where did the worship of the people originate if not in the French Revolution? It would be truer to say that the roots Fascism lay in both Enlightenment, rationalist and Counter-Enlightenment, irrationalist traditions. As for the Russian and other communist revolutions, they were in every way the descendants of the universalist and internationalist French Revolution.

But de Maistre was also wrong in thinking that the Catholic idea, the idea that the evil passions can be tamed by blind obedience to an unquestioned, absolute authority, could stop the revolution. The Catholic idea was now dead – Napoleon killed it when he took the crown from the Pope and crowned himself. Moreover, as we shall see, the conservative monarchs who defeated Napoleon and formed their “Holy Alliance” in 1815 placed themselves firmly against it...

Sir Richard Evans has argued that “figures like de Bonald and de Maistre were in fact marginal extremists”. He is right in the sense that their views were by this time minority opinions (at least in educated circles), and also in the sense that traditional Christianity has been on the retreat in Europe from that time to the present day. However, the revolution will always elicit some kind of counter-revolution; revolutionary atheism will always produce some kind of traditionalist religious reaction; for human nature made in the image of God – not to speak of God Himself - remains the same whatever the passing doctrines of those who would seek to distort or destroy it...

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336 Evans, op. cit., p. 81.
23. THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORICISM

Now the Catholic idea stood for unchanging truth. It was opposed, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, by the idea of the development of truth, or historicism. This went together with a greatly increased interest in history.

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

“What emerged, then, from Vico’s thought was a concept of liberty which worked as a natural law in history and through history. ‘Everything is history,’ the Neapolitan maintained, a remark Croce was fond of repeating later on. While accepting the primacy of the spirit in the human struggle for liberty, the adherents of the religion of liberty abandoned the cyclical rhythm of history in favor of a concept of progress based, as it was, on the optimistic belief of the Enlightenment in the triumph of reason. Now, however, this concept of progress was combined with an awareness of the importance of historical development. Human progress developed through the laws of history and not through the inevitable triumph of reason alone. A concept of liberty was central to this human progress in the sense of liberty’s progress as a part of man’s progress through history.

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

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Now French liberals such as Madame de Staël or Benjamin Constant might speak about the historical process. But their understanding of that process was something quite different from what it meant to the new wave of romantic philosophers that were beginning to make their reputations across the Rhine...  

By contrast with the Age of Reason, which had sought to elucidate truths that were valid for all cultures and all times, for the Age of Revolution truth was ineluctably historical. And this meant not simply that the truth about a person or nation can be understood only in his or its historical context. It meant that truth itself changes with time. Thus God for the romantics was a dynamic, evolving being indistinguishable from nature and history, always overcoming contradictions and rising to ever higher unities.  

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

This schema was developed by Friedrich Schelling, who distinguished "the three ages of history - the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Holy Spirit which correspond to the events of creation, redemption and consummation. Schelling believed that Christianity was now passing through 'the second age' which Christ 'incarnated' almost two millennia ago.  

"In the vocabulary of the Romantics, Christ brought 'the Idea of Christianity' with Him. An 'Idea' is the invisible, unchangeable, and eternal aspect of each thing. (Plato was probably the first to teach 'Idealism'.) Phenomena are visible, changeable, and temporary. Put another way, the Idea of Christianity ('one Church') is what the historical institution will become when it finishes growing, or, as Schelling would say, when God becomes fully God. One may compare its Idea to wheat and historical Christianity (the Idea) to what Protestantism,
Roman Catholicism and Eastern Christianity will become. When the multiplicity of churches grows into the ecumenical Church, then, the Idea of Christianity, of ‘one church’, will have been actualised in space and time. It will be actualised in the coming of ‘the third age’, ‘the age of the Spirit’, ‘the age of consummation’.339

The desire to keep always “in step with the times” was manifestly especially by a third Friedrich, Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), who, as Sir Richard Evans writes, “grew up in south-west Germany under the influence of the Enlightenment, was an admirer of the French Revolution, and of Napoleon. Whom he witnessed entering Jena after the winning the battle of 1806. Following a variety of teaching positions, Hegel was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy in Berlin in 1818, where he remained until his death of cholera in 1831. An atheist, he replaced the concept of God with the idea of the ‘World Spirit’ of rationality, which he believed was working out its purposes in a process he called ‘dialectical’, in which one historical condition would be replaced by its antithesis, and then the two would combine to create a final synthesis. As he became more conservative, Hegel began to regard the state of Prussia after 1815 as a ‘synthesis’ requiring no further alteration. Not surprisingly, he was soon known as ‘the Prussian state philosopher’. But his core idea of ineluctable historical progress held a considerable appeal for radicals in many parts of Europe...”340

Hegel’s dialectical philosophy of history is important not only for an understanding of future movements, especially Marxism and Fascism, which borrowed much from Hegel, but also in that it constitutes a kind of synthesis of the two major movements of western thought that we have just examined: rationalism, with its political child, liberal democracy, and romanticism, with its offspring, the more collectivist and authoritarian forms of political life.

Hume had demonstrated the irrationality of rationalism, of “pure” empiricism. Kant had demonstrated that the application of reason presupposes a spirit transcending the empirical world, but could not explain how this free realm of spirit related to the causally determined world of matter. Hegel expanded the realm of spirit to engulf everything, making it into a kind of pantheistic god called the Absolute Idea or the World Spirit. To this Spirit, which is the All and can only be understood, like an organism, from the point of view of the All, he gave all the attributes that romanticism had rescued from the maw of devouring rationalism: emotion, mystery, dynamism, history, even nationalism. Thus to the bright empiricist-rationalist thesis, and its dark romantic-idealist antithesis, Hegel supplied a cloudy, metaphysical, empiricist-rationalist and romantic-idealist synthesis.

339 Azkoul, op cit., pp. 77-78. Schleiermacher saw the essence of religion in the supposed fact that “it resigns at once all claims on anything that belongs either to science or morality. In essence it is neither thought nor action but intuitive contemplation and sentiment” (Speeches on Religion to its Cultured Despisers, 1799, Second Speech; in Comby, op cit., p. 126).
And a nonsensically self-contradictory one at that. Thus Karl Popper writes: “Hegel... teaches that everything is in flux, even essences. Essences and Ideas and Spirits develop; and their development is, of course, self-moving and dialectical... History, as he sees it, is the thought process of the ‘Absolute Spirit’ or ‘World Spirit’. It is the manifestation of this Spirit. It is a kind of huge dialectical syllogism; reasoned out, as it were, by Providence. The syllogism is the plan which Providence follows; and the logical conclusion arrived at it’s the end which Providence pursues – the perfection of the world. ‘The only thought,’ Hegel writes in his Philosophy of History, ‘with which Philosophy approaches History, is the simple conception of Reason; it is the doctrine that Reason is the Sovereign of the World, and that the History of the World, therefore, presents us with a rational process. This conviction and intuition is... no hypothesis in the domain of Philosophy. It is there proven... that Reason... is Substance; as well as Infinite Power;... Infinite Matter...; Infinite Form...; Infinite Energy... That this “Idea” or “Reason” is the True, the Eternal, the absolutely Powerful Essence; that it reveals itself in the World, and that in that World nothing else is revealed but this and its honour and glory – this is a thesis which, as we have said, has been proved in Philosophy, and is here regarded as demonstrated.’ This gush does not carry us far...” 341

“For Hegel as for Kant,” writes Niall Ferguson, “‘human arbitrariness and even external necessity’ had to be subordinated to ‘a higher necessity’. ‘The sole aim of philosophical inquiry,’ as he put it in the second draft of his Philosophical History of the World, was ‘to eliminate the contingent... In history, we must look for a general design, the ultimate end of the world. We must bring into history the belief and conviction that the realm of the will is not at the mercy of contingency.’ However, Hegel’s ‘higher necessity’ was not material but supernatural – indeed, in many ways it closely resembled the traditional Christian God, most obviously when he spoke of ‘an eternal justice and love, the absolute and ultimate end [of] which is truth in and for itself’. Hegel just happened to call his God ‘Reason’. Thus his basic ‘presupposition’ was ‘the idea that a reason governs the world and that history therefore is a rational process’: ‘That world history is governed by an ultimate design... whose rationality is... a divine and absolute reason – this is the proposition whose truth we must assume; its proof lies in the study of world history itself, which is the image and enactment of reason... Whoever looks at the world rationally will find that it assumes a rational aspect... The overall content of world history is rational and indeed has to be rational; a divine will rules supreme and is strong enough to determine the overall content. Our aim must be to discern this substance, and to do so, we must bring with us a rational consciousness.’ This somewhat circular argumentation was the second possible way [the first was Kant’s theory of phenomenal and noumenal realities] of dealing with the Cartesian claim that determinism did not apply to the non-material world. Hegel had no desire to give precedence to materialism: ‘The spirit and the course of its development are the true substance of history,’ he maintained; and the role of ‘physical nature’ was emphatically subordinate to the role of ‘the spirit’. But ‘the spirit’, he argued, was just as subject to deterministic forces as physical nature.

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

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

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

A central pillar - perhaps the central pillar - of German romantic philosophy was the cult of the personality, freedom and creativity. Paradoxically, however, the most romantic of German philosophies, that of Hegel, denies personal freedom and creativity. As Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "The romantic cult of personality, unrepeatable, autonomous and self-sufficient, which itself ascribes

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its own laws, the Fichte pathos of the freedom of moral creativity, Schelling's aestheticism of genius, Schleiermacher's religion of feeling and mood - all this is too well known. And this whole series is completed by Hegelianism, in which freedom, the freedom of creative self-definition becomes the main theme of cosmic development. And yet at the same time, in these individualistic systems, personality, strictly speaking... disappears, there is no place in them for the creative personality. We shall not understand the real reason for this unexpected event if we search for it in the 'pantheism' of the world-feeling of the time: after all, it was not a matter of dissolving the personality in nature, but of finding the whole of nature within oneself, as in an autonomous 'microcosm'. The resolution of the enigma must be sought, not in a world-feeling, but in a world-understanding. Logical providentialism - that is how best to express the characteristic trait of this world-understanding; and it is precisely this idea of the sheer logicalness of the world, the rationality of history, so to speak, the rational transparency of the cosmic process that is the profound source of the inner dissonances of idealistic individualism.

"The world, both in its stasis and in its movement, is seen as the realization of a certain reasonable plan. Moreover, - this is very essential, - this plan is recognized as not exceeding the power of human attainment. Every moment of historical development is presented as the incarnation of some ‘idea’ that admits of an abstract formulation. Also in the succession of these ‘epochs’ is revealed a definite logical order, and the whole series is oriented in the direction of a certain accomplished structure in which the fullness of its reasonable content is revealed. That necessity with which the whole system of affirmations in space proceeds in its smallest details as from the axioms of geometry, is also seen in cosmic evolution, in the advancing pace of human history. The role of axioms is played here by the elementary motifs of the Reason that creates the universe, which are accepted as something accessible to human knowledge, so that, proceeding from them, we can as it were divine in advance every bend in the evolutionary flow. The course of history turns out to be unambiguously determined. And thought does not stop at the ‘beginning’ of the world, but also penetrates into the mysteries of that ‘which was when there was nothing’, and demonstrates the fated necessity of the building of the Absolute First-Cause of all itself. It demonstrates that the world could not fail to arise, and moreover could not fail to arise precisely as we know it. Thus the ‘thinking through’ of history, carried to its conclusion, leads to inevitable determinism: every ray of freedom or creativity dies in the vice of iron logic. Nothing ‘new’ in essence can arise; only the inescapable conclusions from pre-eternal postulates come into being – come into being in and of themselves.

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

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

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

“For Hegel, and for a good many others, though by no means all, among the philosophers and poets of the romantic movement, history is a perpetual struggle of vast spiritual forces embodied now in institutions – Churches, races, civilisations, empires, national States – now in individuals of more than human stature – ‘world-historical figures’ – of bold and ruthless genius, towering over, and contemptuous of, their puny contemporaries. For Marx, the struggle is a fight between socially conditioned, organised groups – classes shaped by the

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

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

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

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Hegel’s philosophy, according to Arthur Schopenhauer, was “a colossal piece of mystification which will yet provide posterity with an inexhaustible theme for laughter at our times, that it is a pseudo-philosophy paralyzing all mental powers, stifling all real thinking, and, by the most outrageous misuse of language, putting in its place the hollowest, most senseless, thoughtless, and, as is confirmed by its success, most stupefying verbiage.” And again: “The height of audacity in serving up pure nonsense, in stringing together senseless and extravagant mazes of words, such as had been only previously known in madhouses, was finally reached in Hegel, and became the instrument of the most barefaced, general mystification that has ever taken place, with a result which will appear fabulous to posterity, as a monument to German stupidity.”

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

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345 Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality; Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy*.
346 Hegel, in Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 790. (V.M.)
with the future as Hegel. What he hinted at, or what followed from his doctrine, was that the future would be something entirely different from the past. For philosophy comes late, at the end of an epoch. It does not come to change or improve, but merely to understand and to express; it constructs in the realm of the spirit what has already been constructed in the realm of reality. ‘When philosophy paints its picture in grey on grey, it means that a form of life has grown old, and by painting it grey on grey it cannot be restored to its youth, but is only recognised...’ This applies to all true philosophies, and is most valid for the philosophy of all philosophies, namely the Hegelian, which brings to an end the epoch of all epochs: the age of Protestantism, enlightenment and revolution. What was still to come? Hegel shrugged his shoulders sadly at this question. His philosophy gave no answer, and given its nature could not venture to attempt one. ‘The spirit is in its full essence in the present...’ But this philosophy of fulfilment, this song of praise of Man-God contains an element of pessimism: after 1815 nothing further is to be expected.

“Though Hegel’s philosophy as a whole contains rest, fulfilment and finality, it is full of unrest and struggle, both in the realm of the spirit and of reality. The spirit is never content with what has been achieved, it always seeks new conflicts, it must struggle to find and express itself anew. States and peoples are never at rest, they come into conflict and one of them must give way. The world spirit advances by catastrophes, and its path is marked by forms that are used up, emptied, and jettisoned. Quiet is only apparent quiet, lull before a new storm; as mere rest it is of no interest to the historian. ‘Epochs of happiness are empty pages in the history of the world.’ History does not exist for the happiness, the idyllic contentment of the individual. The goal is set high: the reconciliation of all contradictions, absolute justice, complete knowledge, the incarnation of reason on earth, the presence of God. The road to it is one of exertion and ever new confusion. But what has happened is the only thing that could have happened and how it happened was right. Terrible things occurred; the rise of the Roman Empire was terrible and terrible was its fall. But everything had a purpose and was as it should be. Julius Caesar was murdered after he had done what the age wanted from him; the Roman Empire collapsed after it had completed its historical mission. Otherwise how could it have fallen? It is useless to lament the abysses of history, the crimes of power, the sufferings of good men. The world spirit is right in the end, its will will be obeyed, its purpose fulfilled; what does it care about the happiness or unhappiness of individuals? 347 ‘The real is rational and the rational is the real.’ When something ceases to be rational, when the spirit has already moved on, it will wither away and die. The individual may not understand his fate because he is liable to overestimate himself and believes that history revolves around his person at the centre. The philosopher who perceives the kernel in the multi-coloured rind of what occurs will provide the insight too.

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

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It is a paradox that the historicism of Hegel and his followers led them to deny the historicity of the Old Testament. For, as Paul Johnson writes, the so-called “critical” school of Biblical interpretation, “the work mainly of German scholars, dismissed the Old Testament as a historical record and classified large parts of it as religious myth. The first five books of the Bible, or Pentateuch, were now presented as orally transmitted legend from various Hebrew tribes which reached written form only after the Exile, in the second half of the first millennium BC. These legends, the argument ran, were carefully edited, conflated and adapted to provide historical justification and divine sanction for the religious beliefs, practices and rituals of the post-Exile Israelite establishment. The individuals described in the early books were not real people but mythical heroes or composite figures denoting entire tribes.

“Thus not only Abraham and the other patriarchs, but Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Sampson, dissolved into myth and became no more substantial than Hercules and Perseus, Priam and Agamemnon, Ulysses and Aeneas. Under the influence of Hegel and his followers, Jewish and Christian revelation, as presented in the Bible, was reinterpreted as a determinist sociological development from primitive tribal superstition to sophisticated urban ecclesiology. The unique and divinely ordained role of the Jews was pushed into the background, the achievement of Mosaic monotheism was progressively eroded, and the rewriting of Old Testament history was pervaded by a subtle quality of anti-Judaism, tinged even with anti-Semitism. The collective work of German Biblical scholars became the academic orthodoxy, reaching a high level of persuasiveness and complexity in the teachings of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), whose remarkable book, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, was first published in 1878. For half a century Wellhausen and his school dominated the approach to Biblical study, and many of his ideas influence the historian’s reading of the Bible even today. Some outstanding twentieth-century scholars, such as M. Noth and A. Alt, retained this essentially skeptical approach,

dismissing the pre-conquest traditions as mythical and arguing that the Israelites became a people only on the soil of Canaan and not before the twelfth century BC; the conquest itself was largely myth, too, being mainly a process of peaceful infiltration. Others suggested that the origins of Israel lay in the withdrawal of a community of religious zealots from a Canaanite society they regarded as corrupt. These and other theories necessarily discarded all Biblical history before the Book of Judges as wholly or chiefly fiction, and Judges itself as a medley of fiction and fact. Israelite history, it was argued, does not acquire a substantial basis of truth until the age of Saul and David, when the Biblical text begins to reflect the reality of court histories and records.”

Fortunately, modern archaeology has provided confirmation of the existence of the supposedly mythical persons and stories of the Old Testament. So the “critical” approach to Bible Study has begun to lose its icy grip on Biblical scholarship. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering this, not the least harmful consequence of Hegelian historicism.

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

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

Lionel Trilling writes: “The historical process that Hegel undertakes to expound is the self-realization of Spirit through the changing relation of the individual to the external power of society in two of its aspects, the political power of the state and the power of wealth. In an initial stage of the process that is being described the individual consciousness renders what Hegel calls ‘obedient service’ to the external power and feels for it an ‘inner reverence’. Its service is not only obedient but also silent and unreasoned, taken for granted; Hegel calls this ‘the heroism of dumb service’. This entire and inarticulate accord of the individual consciousness with the external power of society is said to have the attribute of ‘nobility’.

“But the harmonious relation of the individual consciousness to the state power and to wealth is not destined to endure. It is the nature of Spirit, Hegel tells us, to seek ‘existence on its own account’ – that is, to free itself from limiting conditions, to press towards autonomy. In rendering ‘obedient service’ to and in feeling ‘inner reverence’ for anything except itself it consents to the denial of its own nature. If it is to fulfill its natural destiny of self-realization, it must bring an end to its accord with the external power of society. And in terminating this ‘noble’ relation the individual consciousness moves towards a relation with external power which Hegel calls ‘base’.

“The change is not immediate. Between the noble relation of the individual consciousness to state power and to wealth and the developing base relation there stands what Hegel speaks of as a ‘mediating term’. In this transitional stage the ‘heroism of dumb service’ modifies itself to become a heroism which is not dumb but articulate, what Hegel calls the ‘heroism of flattery’. The individual, that is to say, becomes conscious of his relation to the external power of society; he becomes conscious of having made the choice the maintain the relationship and of the prudential reasons which induced him to make it – the ‘flattery’ is, in effect, the rationale of his choice which the individual formulates in terms of the virtues of the external power, presumably a personal monarch. We might suppose that Hegel had in mind the relation of the court aristocracy to Louis XIV. Consciousness and choice, it is clear, imply a commitment to, rather than identification with, the external power of society.

“From this modification of the ‘noble’ relation to the external power the individual proceeds to the ‘baseness’ of being actually antagonistic to the external power. What was once served and reverenced now comes to be regarded with resentment and bitterness. Hegel’s description of the new attitude is explicit: ‘It [that is, the individual consciousness] looks upon the authoritative power of the state as a chain, as something suppressing its separate autonomous existence, and hence hates the ruler, obeys only with secret malice and stands ever ready to burst out in rebellion.’ And the relation of the individual self to wealth is even baser, if only because of the ambivalence which marks it – the self loves wealth but at the same time despises it; through wealth the self ‘attains to the enjoyment of its own independent existence’, but it find wealth discordant with the nature of Spirit, for it is of the nature of Spirit to be permanent, whereas enjoyment is evanescent.
“The process thus described makes an unhappy state of affairs but not, as Hegel judges it, by any means a deplorable one. He intends us to understand that the movement from ‘nobility’ to ‘baseness’ is not a devolution but a development. So far from deploring ‘baseness’, Hegel celebrates it. And he further confounds our understanding by saying that ‘baseness’ leads to and therefore is ‘nobility’. What is the purpose of this high-handed inversion of common meanings?

“An answer might begin with the observation that the words ‘noble’ and ‘base’, although they have been assimilated to moral judgement, did not originally express concepts of moral law, of a prescriptive and prohibitory code which is taken to be of general, commanding, and even supernal authority and in which a chief criterion of a person’s rightdoing and wrongdoing is the effect of his conduct upon other persons. The words were applied, rather, to the ideal of personal existence of a ruling class at a certain time – its ethos, in that sense of the word which conveys the idea not of abstractly right conduct but of a characteristic manner of style of approved conduct. What is in accord with this ethos is noble; what falls short of it or derogates from it is base. The noble self is not shaped by its beneficent intentions towards others; its intention is wholly towards itself, and such moral virtue as may be attributed to it follows incidentally from its expressing the privilege and function of its social status in mien and deportment. We might observe that the traits once thought appropriate to the military life are definitive in the formation of the noble self. It stands before the world boldly defined, its purposes clearly conceived and openly avowed. In its consciousness there is no division, it is at one with itself. The base self similarly expresses a social condition, in the first instance by its characteristic mien and deportment, as these are presumed or required to be, and ultimately by the way in which it carries out those of its purposes that are self-serving beyond the limits deemed appropriate to its social status. These purposes can be realized only by covert means and are therefore shameful. Between the intentions of the base self and its avowals there is no congruence. But the base self, exactly because it is not under the control of the noble ethos, has won at least a degree of autonomy and has thereby fulfilled the nature of Spirit. In refusing its obedient service to the state power and to wealth it has lost its wholeness; its selfhood is ‘disintegrated’; the self is ‘alienated’ from itself. But because it has detached itself from imposed conditions, Hegel says that it has made a step in progress. He puts it that the existence of the self ‘on its own account’ is, strictly speaking, the loss of itself’. The statement can also be made the other way round: ‘Alienation of self is really self-preservation’.”

* Bertrand Russell, expounded Hegel thus: “In the historical development of Spirit there have been three main phases: The Orientals, the Greeks and Romans, and the Germans. ‘The history of the world is the discipline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a universal principle and conferring subjective freedom. The East knew, and to the present day knows, only that One

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351 Trilling, Sincerity and Authenticity, Oxford University Press, 1974, pp. 35-38.
is free; the Greek and Roman world, that some are free; the German world
knows that All are free.’ One might have supposed that democracy would be the
appropriate form of government where all are free, but not so. Democracy and
aristocracy alike belong to the stage where some are free, despotism to that
where one is free, and monarchy to that in which all are free. This is connected
with the very odd sense in which Hegel uses the word ‘freedom’. For him (and
so far we may agree) there is no freedom without law; but he tends to convert
this, and to argue that wherever there is law there is freedom. Thus ‘freedom’,
for him, means little more than the right to obey the law.

“As might be expected, he assigns the highest role to the Germans in the
terrestrial development of Spirit. ‘The German spirit is the spirit of the new
world. Its aim is the realization of absolute Truth as the unlimited self-
determination of freedom – that freedom which has its own absolute form itself
as its purport.’

“This is a very superfine brand of freedom. It does not mean that you will be
able to keep out of a concentration camp. It does not imply democracy, or a free
press, or any of the usual Liberal watchwords, which Hegel rejects with
contempt. When Spirit gives laws to itself, it does so freely. To our mundane
vision, it may seem that the Spirit that gives laws is embodied in the monarch,
and the Spirit to which laws are given is embodied in his subjects. But from the
point of view of the Absolute the distinction between monarch and subjects, like
all other distinctions, is illusory, and when the monarch imprisons a liberal-
minded subject, that is still Spirit freely determining itself. Hegel praises
Rousseau for distinguishing between the general will and the will of all…

“So much is Germany glorified that one might expect to find it the final
embodiment of the Absolute Idea, beyond which no further development would
be possible. But this is not Hegel’s view. On the contrary, he says that America is
the land of the future, ‘where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the
world’s history shall reveal itself – perhaps in a contest between North and
South America.’ He seems to think that everything important takes the form of

[352 “And after a eulogy of Prussia, the government of which, Hegel assures us, ‘rests with the
official world, whose apex is the personal decision of the Monarch; for a final decision is, as
shown above, an absolute necessity’, Hegel reaches the crowning conclusion of his work: ‘This is
the point,’ he says, ‘which consciousness has attained, and these are the principal phases of that
form in which Freedom has realized itself; for the History of the World is nothing but the
development of the Idea of Freedom… That the History of the World… is the realization of
Spirit, this is the true Theodicy, the justification of God in History… What has happened and is
happening… is essentially His Work…”

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

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

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war. If it were suggested to him that the contribution of America to world history might be the development of a society without extreme poverty, he would not be interested. On the contrary, he says that, as yet, there is no real State in America, because a real State requires a division of classes into rich and poor.

“Nations, in Hegel, play the part that classes play in Marx. The principle of historical development, he says, is national genius. In every age, there is some one nation which is charged with the mission of carrying the world through the stage of the dialectic that it has reached. In our age, of course, this nation is Germany. But in addition to nations, we must also take account of world-historical individuals; these are men in whose aims are embodied the dialectical transitions that are due to take place in their time. These men are heroes, and may justifiably contravene ordinary moral rules…

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

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

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

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353 “‘The Nation State is Spirit in its substantive rationality and immediate actuality,’ he writes; ‘it is therefore the absolute power on earth…The State is the Spirit of the People itself. The actual State is animated by this spirit, in all its particular affairs, its Wars, and its Institutions… The self-consciousness of one particular Nation is the vehicle for the... development of the collective spirit;... in it, the Spirit of the Time invests its Will. Against this Will, the other national minds have no rights: that Nation dominates the World.’” (Popper, op. cit., p. 58).

354 Hegel goes on: “We must therefore worship the State as the manifestation of the Divine on earth, and consider that, if it is difficult to comprehend Nature, it is infinitely harder to grasp the Essence of the State… The State is the march of God through the world…. The State must be comprehended as an organism… To the complete State belongs, essentially, consciousness and thought. The State knows what it wills… The State is real; and... true reality is necessary. What is real is eternally necessary… The State… exists for its own sake… The State is the actually existing, realized moral life.” (Popper, op. cit., p. 31).
“It will be seen that Hegel claims for the State much the same position as St. Augustine and his Catholic successors claimed for the Church. There are, however, two respects in which the Catholic claim is more reasonable than Hegel’s. In the first place, the Church is not a chance geographical association, but a body united by a common creed, believed by its members to be of supreme importance; it is thus by its very essence the embodiment of what Hegel calls the ‘Idea’. In the second place, there is only one Catholic Church, whereas there are many States. When each State, in relation to its subjects, is made an absolute as Hegel makes it, there is difficulty in finding any philosophical principle by which to regulate the relations between different States. In fact, at this point Hegel abandons his philosophical talk, falling back on the state of nature and Hobbes’s war of all against all.

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

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

For, as Hegel put it, “the march of world history stands outside virtue, vice and justice…”

As Copleston points out, “it is essential to remember that Hegel is speaking throughout of the concept of the State, its ideal essence. He has no intention of suggesting that historical States are immune from criticism.” Nevertheless, the similarities between Hegel and the modern totalitarians, especially the Fascists, are clear: “(a) Nationalism, in the form of the historicist idea that the state is the incarnation of the Spirit (or now, of the Blood) of the state-creating nation (or race); one chosen nation (now, the chosen race) is destined for world domination. (b) The state as the natural enemy of all other states must assert its existence in war. (c) The state is exempt from any kind of moral obligation; history, that is, historical success, is the sole judge; collective utility is the sole principle of personal conduct; propagandist lying and distortion of the truth is permissible. (d) The ‘ethical’ idea of war (total and collectivist), particularly of young nations against older ones; war, fate and fame as most desirable goods. (e) The creative rôle of the Great Man, the world-historical personality, the man of deep knowledge and great passion (now, the principle of leadership). (f) The ideal of the heroic life (‘live dangerously’) and of the ‘heroic man’ as opposed to the petty bourgeois and his life of shallow mediocrity.”

Barzun has sought to lessen Hegel’s guilt somewhat: “Hegel did express himself in favor of a strong state. What intelligent German who remembered 200 years of helplessness would want a weak one? In Hegel’s day, the state created by the Prussian awakening was less than 20 years old and must not be allowed to droop again” True; and yet the desire for a strong state, which is compatible with many creeds and philosophies, need not be translated into the worship of the State as the Divine Idea on earth, which is in effect Hegel’s idea. As he put it: “the State is the basis and centre of all the concrete elements in the life of a people: of Art, Law, Morals, Religion, and Science…” This is idolatry, State-worship, and the purest atheism…

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

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359 Barzun, From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 508.
360 Popper, op. cit., p. 63.
Hegel’s philosophy, if it was followed to its logical conclusion. They took it upon themselves to explain Christianity, like all religious belief, historically, as a reflection of social reality, as a self-misunderstanding. Hegel had spoken much of the reconciliation of idea and reality, but he had achieved this reconciliation only in the mind, through his philosophy; it was for philosophy to recognize retrospectively that what happened in reality was reasonable. Hegel’s successors, however, claimed that reality was not reasonable but must be made reasonable, not by dreams but by political action. Politics, rightly understood, was thus in the end the true philosophy. Hegel had spoken of the ‘truth of power’, and had meant the power of the state, of kings, of victorious armies. His followers spoke of the truth of revolutions, of majorities, of mass action. There was no need to fear the masses as Hegel had feared them. The rights of the private individual were not as important as liberals believed. The state could not be too powerful, provided it was a scientifically directed state, free from all superstition. Such a state would do away with the remains of the Middle Ages and make men free...”

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

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

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361 Mann, op. cit., p. 78.
24. THE ROTHSCILD CENTURY

The nineteenth century stood, among many other things, for the destruction of feudalism in the economic and social relations between men, and its replacement by capitalism. Now capitalism, as Adam Smith taught, is based on egoism in theory and practice. It is a paradoxical theory, to say the least: that the public interest is best served by everyone pursuing his self-interest as freely as possible! But it found confirmation in the work of the London banker David Ricardo in the 1820s.

“It was Ricardian economic theory,” writes Norman Cantor, “that became and remains the theoretical foundation of that market capitalism in which so many nineteenth-century Jews [most famously, the Rothschilds] made their fortune and general fame, or at least found the means for a satisfying private family life. Ricardo was the Moses of Jewish capitalism, who brought down the tables of truth to show to the chosen people and the admiring Gentiles as well.

“The main point of Ricardian economics is identical with that of Reform Judaism’s Haskalah-Kantian theology. Just as God in the latter is a creator whose majesty is humanly unapproachable, so the market is a universal, rationalizing structure that cannot be modified by human will or sentiment, such as by paying wages beyond the minimum with which the market can operate, or by state interference with the business cycle or capital accumulation. Leave God and the market alone and attend to your personal, family, and communal lives and business interests…”

There is indeed nothing mystical about the Jews’ acquisition of enormous wealth. In the present as in the past – for example, in the Hungarian Jew George Soros’ vastly successful gamble on Britain leaving the European Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1990, or in the Jewish bank Goldman Sachs’ ability to profit even from the drastic culling of the American banks in 2007 – we see the same prosaic formula for success, consisting of the following in order of importance: (i) The exceptionally close solidarity of the members of the tribe to each other on the basis of their common Jewish faith or – which comes to the same thing – Jewish nationality; (ii) their vast capital base, which enables them to ride out storms and disasters that would sink less well capitalized organizations; and (iii) their vast intelligence network combined with great speed and security of communication, which enables them always to be “ahead of the game” in what may be called “institutionalized insider dealing.” All three elements were important in the rise of the most famous Jewish family of the nineteenth century, the Rothschilds…

As Niall Ferguson writes: “Master of unbounded wealth, he [Rothschild] boasts that he is the arbiter of peace and war, and that the credit of nations depends upon his nod; his correspondents are innumerable; his couriers outrun those of sovereign princes, and absolute sovereigns; ministers of state are in his pay. Paramount in the cabinets of continental Europe, he aspires to the

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domination of our own.’

“Those words were spoken in 1828 by the Radical MP Thomas Dunscombe. The man he was referring to was Nathan Myer Rothschild, founder of the London branch of what was, for most of the nineteenth century, the biggest bank in the world. It was the bond market that made the Rothschild family rich – rich enough to build forty-one stately homes all over Europe...

“... His brothers called Nathan ‘the general in chief’. ‘All you ever write,’ complained Salomon wearily in 1815, ‘is pay this, pay that, send this, send that.’ It was this phenomenal drive, allied to innate financial genius, that propelled Nathan from the obscurity of the Frankfurt Judengasse to mastery of the London bond market. Once again, however, the opportunity for financial innovations was provided by war.

“On the morning of 18 June 1815, 67,000 British, Dutch and German troops under the Duke of Wellington’s command looked out across the fields of Waterloo, nor far from Brussels, towards an almost equal number of French troops commanded by the French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. The Battle of Waterloo was the culmination of more than two decades of intermittent conflict between Britain and France. But it was more than a battle between two armies. It was also a contest between rival financial systems: one, the French, which under Napoleon had come to be based on plunder (the taxation of the conquered); the other, the British, based on debt.

“Never had so many bonds been issued to finance a military conflict. Between 1793 and 1815 the British national debt increased by a factor of three, to £745 million, more than double the annual output of the UK economy. But this increase in the supply of bonds had weighed heavily on the London market. Since February 1792, the price of a typical £100 3 per cent consol had fallen from £96 to below £60 on the eve of Waterloo, at one time (in 1797) sinking below £50...

“According to a long-standing legend, the Rothschild family owed the first millions of their fortune to Nathan’s successful speculation about the effect of the outcome of the battle on the price of British bonds. In some versions of the story, Nathan witnessed the battle himself, risked a Channel storm to reach London ahead of the official news of Wellington’s victory and, by buying bonds ahead of a huge surge in prices, pocketed between £20 and £135 million. It was a legend the Nazis later did their best to embroider. In 1940 Joseph Goebbels approved the release of Die Rothschilds, which depicts an oleaginous Nathan bribing a French general to ensure the Duke of Wellington’s victory, and then deliberately misreporting the outcome in London in order to precipitate panic selling of British bonds, which he then snaps up at bargain-basement prices. Yet the reality was altogether different. Far from making money from Wellington’s victory, the Rothschilds were very nearly ruined by it. Their fortune was made not because of Waterloo, but despite it.

“After a series of miscued interventions, British troops had been fighting
against Napoleon on the Continent since August 1808, when the future Duke of Wellington, then Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley, led an expeditionary force to Portugal, invaded by the French the previous year. For the better part of the next six years, there would be a recurrent need to get men and materiel to the Iberian Peninsula. Selling bonds to the public had certainly raised plenty of cash for the British government, but banknotes were of little use on distant battlefields. To provision the troops and pay Britain’s allies against France, Wellington needed a currency that was universally acceptable. The challenge was to transform the money raised on the bond market into gold coins, and to get them to where they were needed. Sending gold guineas from London to Lisbon was expensive and hazardous in time of war. But when the Portuguese merchants declined to accept the bills of exchange that Wellington proffered, there seemed little alternative but to ship cash.

“The son of a moderately successful Frankfurt antique dealer and bill broker, Nathan Rothschild had arrived in England only in 1799 and had spent most of the next ten years in the newly industrializing North of England, purchasing textiles and shipping them back to Germany. He did not go into the banking business in London until 1811. Why, then, did the British government turn to him in its hour of financial need? The answer is that Nathan had acquired valuable experience as a smuggler of gold to the Continent, in breach of the blockade that Napoleon had imposed on trade between England and Europe. (Admittedly, it was a breach the French authorities tended to wink at, in the simplistic mercantilist belief that outflows of gold from England must tend to weaken the British war effort.) In January 1814, the Chancellor of the Exchequer authorized the Commissary-in-Chief, John Charles Merries, to ‘employ that gentleman [Nathan] in most secret and confidential manner to collect in Germany, coins, not exceeding in value £600,000, which he may be able to procure within two months from the present time.’ These were then to be delivered to British vessels at the Dutch port of Helvoetsluys and sent on to Wellington, who had by now crossed the Pyrenees into France. It was an immense operation, which depended on the brothers’ ability to manage large-scale bullion transfers. They executed their commission so well that Wellington was soon writing to express his gratitude for the ‘ample… supplies of money’. As Harries put it: ‘Rothschild of this place has executed the various services entrusted to him in this line admirably well, and though a Jew [sic], we place a good deal of confidence in him.’ By May 1814 Nathan had advanced nearly £1.2 to the government, double the amount envisaged in his original instructions.

“Mobilizing such vast amounts of gold even at the tail end of a war was risky, no doubt. Yet from the Rothschilds’ point of view, the hefty commissions they were able to charge more than justified the risks. What made them so well suited to the task was that the brothers had a ready-made banking network within the family – Nathan in London, Amschel in Frankfurt, James (the youngest) in Paris, Carl in Amsterdam and Salomon roving wherever Nathan saw fit. Spread throughout Europe, the five Rothschilds were uniquely positioned to exploit price and exchange rate differences between markets, the process known as arbitrage. If the price of gold was higher in, say, Paris than in London, James in Paris would sell gold for bills of exchange, then send these to London, where
Nathan would use them to buy a larger quantity of gold. The fact that their own transactions on Herries’s behalf were big enough to affect such price differentials only added to the profitability of the business. In addition, the Rothschilds also handled some of the large subsidies paid to Britain’s continental allies. By June 1814, Herries calculated that they had effected payments of this sort to a value of 12.6 million francs. ‘Mr. Rothschild’, remarked the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, had become ‘a very useful friend’. As he told the Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, ‘I do not know what we should have done without him...’ By now his brothers had taken to calling Nathan the master of the Stock Exchange.

“After his abdication in April 1814, Napoleon had been exiled to the small Italian island of Elba, which he proceeded to rule as an empire in miniature. It was too small to hold him. On 1 March 1815, to the consternation of the monarchs and ministers gathered to restore the old European order at the Congress of Vienna, he returned to France, determined to revive his Empire. Veterans of the grande armée rallied to his standard. Nathan Rothschild responded to this ‘unpleasant news’ by immediately resuming gold purchases, buying up all the bullion and coins he and his brothers could lay their hands on, and making it available to Herries for shipment to Wellington. In all, the Rothschilds provided gold coins worth more than £2 million – enough to fill 884 boxes and fifty-five casks. At the same time, Nathan offered to take care of a fresh round of subsidies to Britain’s continental allies, bringing the total of his transactions with Herries in 1815 to just under £9.8 million. With commissions on all this business ranging from 2 to 6 per cent, Napoleon’s return promised to make the Rothschilds rich men. Yet there was a risk that Nathan had underestimated. In furiously buying up such a huge quantity of gold, he had assumed that, as with all Napoleon’s wars, this would be a long one. It was a near fatal miscalculation.

“Wellington famously called the Battle of Waterloo ‘the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life’. After a day of brutal charges, countercharges and heroic defense, the belated arrival of the Prussian army finally proved decisive. For Wellington, it was a glorious victory. Not so for the Rothschilds. No doubt it was gratifying for Nathan Rothschild to receive the news of Napoleon’s defeat first, thanks to the speed of his couriers, nearly forty-eight hours before Major Henry Percy delivered Wellington’s official dispatch to the Cabinet. No matter how early it reached him, however, the news was anything but good from Nathan’s point of view. He had expected nothing as decisive so soon. Now he and his brothers were sitting on top of a pile of cash that nobody needed – to pay for a war that was over. With the coming of peace, the great armies that had fought Napoleon could be disbanded, the coalition of allies dissolved. That meant no more soldiers’ wages and no more subsidies to Britain’s wartime allies. The price of gold, which had soared during the war, would be bound to fall. Nathan was faced not with the immense profits of legend but with heavy and growing losses.

“But there was one possible way out: the Rothschilds could use their gold to make a massive and hugely risky bet on the bond market. On 20 July 1815 the evening edition of the London Courier reported that Nathan had made ‘great purchases of stock’, meaning British government bonds. Nathan’s gamble was
that the British victory at Waterloo, and the prospect of a reduction in government borrowing, would send the price of British bonds soaring upwards. Nathan bought more and, as the price of consols duly began to rise, he kept on buying. Despite his brothers’ desperate entreaties to realize profits, Nathan held his nerve for another year. Eventually, in late 1817, with bond prices up more than 40 per cent, he sold. Allowing for the effects on the purchasing power of sterling of inflation and economic growth, his profits were worth around £600 million today. It was one of the most audacious trades in financial history, one which snatched financial victory from the jaws of Napoleon’s military defeat. The resemblance between victor and vanquished was not lost on contemporaries. In the words of one of the partners at Barings, the Rothschilds’ great rivals, ‘I must candidly confess that I have not the nerve for his operations. They are generally well planned, with great cleverness and adroitness in execution – but he is in money and funds what Bonaparte was in war.’ To the Austrian Chancellor Prince Metternich’s secretary, the Rothschilds were simply die Finanzbonaparten. Others went still further, though not without a hint of irony. ‘Money is the god of our time,’ declared the German [Jewish] poet Heinrich Heine in March 1841, ‘and Rothschild is his prophet.’

“To an extent that even today remains astonishing, the Rothschilds went on to dominate international finance in the half century after Waterloo. So extraordinary did this achievement seem to contemporaries that they often sought to explain it in mystical terms...

“The more prosaic reality was that the Rothschilds were able to build on their successes during the final phase of the Napoleonic Wars to establish themselves as the dominant players in an increasingly international London bond market. They did this by establishing a capital base and an information network that were soon far superior to those of their nearest rivals, the Barings. Between 1815 and 1859, it has been estimated that the London house issued fourteen different sovereign bonds with a face value of nearly £43 million, more than half the total issued by all banks in London. Although British government bonds were the principal security they marketed to investors, they also sold French, Prussian, Russian, Austrian, Neapolitan and Brazilian bonds. In addition, they all but monopolized bond issuance by the Belgian government after 1830. Typically, the Rothschilds would buy a tranche of new bonds outright from a government, charging a commission for distributing these to their network of brokers and investors throughout Europe, and remitting funds to the government only when all the instalments had been received from buyers. There would usually be a generous spread between the price the Rothschilds paid the sovereign borrower and the price they asked of investors (with room for an additional price ‘run up’ after the initial public offering). Of course, as we have seen, there had been large-scale international lending before, notably in Genoa, Antwerp and Amsterdam. But a distinguishing feature of the London bond market after 1815 was the Rothschilds’ insistence that most new borrowers issue bonds denominated in sterling, rather than their own currency, and make interest payments in London or one of the other markets where the Rothschilds had branches. A new standard was set by their 1818 initial public offering of Prussian 5 per cent bonds, which – after protracted and often fraught negotiations – were issued not only in
London, but also in Frankfurt, Berlin, Hamburg and Amsterdam. In his book *On the Traffic in State Bonds* (1825), the German legal expert Johann Heinrich Bender singled out this as one of the Rothschilds’ most important financial innovations: ‘Any owner of government bonds… can collect the interest at his convenience in several different places without any effort.’ Bond issuance was by no means the only business the Rothschilds did, to be sure: they were also bond traders, currency arbitrageurs, bullion dealers and private bankers, as well as investors in insurance, mines and railways. Yet the bond market remained their core competence. Unlike their lesser competitors, the Rothschilds took pride in dealing only in what would now be called investment grade securities. No bond they issued in the 1820s was to default by 1829, despite a Latin American debt crisis in the middle of the decade (the first of many).

“With success came ever greater wealth. When Nathan died in 1836, his personal fortune was equivalent to 0.62 per cent of British national income. Between 1818 and 1852, the combined capital of the five Rothschild ‘houses’ (Frankfurt, London, Naples, Paris and Vienna) rose from £1.8 million to £9.8 million. As early as 1825 their combined capital was nine times greater than that of Baring Brothers and the Banque de France. By 1899, at £41 million, it exceeded the capital of the five biggest German joint-stock banks put together. Increasingly, the firm became a multinational asset manager for the wealth of the managers’ extended family. As their numbers grew from generation to generation, familial unity was maintained by a combination of periodically revised contracts between the five houses and a high level of intermarriage between cousins or between uncles and nieces. Of twenty-one marriages involving descendants of Nathan’s father Mayer Amschel Rothschild that were solemnized between 1824 and 1877, no fewer than fifteen were between his direct descendants. In addition, the family’s collective fidelity to the Jewish faith, at a time when some other Jewish families were slipping into apostasy or mixed marriage, strengthened their sense of common identity and purpose as ‘the Caucasian [Jewish] royal family’.”

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The world as we know it today is largely the product of a dual revolution - the liberal revolution and the industrial revolution. Its main workshop and demonstration hall was Britain, where both liberalism and industrialism had been born in the century that stretched from the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to the eve of the French Revolution in 1789. It was on the back of this dual revolution that a third would break out – the communist revolution...

“During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars,” writes Evans, “Britain had forged ahead economically, leaving the Europe Continent far behind. Per capita industrial production in Britain in 1830 was almost twice that of Switzerland or Belgium, more than twice that of France, and three times that of the Habsburg Empire, Spain, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Denmark or the Netherlands.

“Linen and wool had long formed the basis of the textile industry. What was new in the late eighteenth century was the arrival of cotton, previously used mainly for printed fabric or calico, for mass consumption. By this time, England was mass-producing cloth from raw cotton grown with cheap labour in India and then exporting finished cotton products back to the subcontinent. In the American south, cotton was farmed by slaves, making it cheaper still. Soon cotton in Europe was replacing the more expensive linen and wool, which did not undergo mechanization until the 1820s or later, as the basic fabric used in clothing. Exports of raw cotton into Britain rose from 11 million pounds in weight in 1785 to 188 million in 1850, all used to manufacture cloth. India, meanwhile, was sent headlong into industrial decline, to be followed by Egypt, where the attempts of the local pasha, Muhammed Ali, to develop a cotton industry were undermined by the Anglo-Ottoman Convention of 1838. The British intervened the following year, after the pasha defeated an Ottoman army in battle and threatened to march on Constantinople. His monopoly on trade was forcibly abolished, and as Egypt was flooded with cheap British cotton products, the domestic industry collapsed. Britain’s industrial advantage over the rest of the world was not the product of British ingenuity or inventiveness or other domestic factors. More than anything else, the explosion of cotton production in Britain was driven by world trade. In 1814, Britain was already exporting more cotton cloth than it sold at home; by 1850 the disparity had increased, with thirteen yards sold abroad for every eight in the UK. In 1820, 118 million yards of cotton cloth were sold to the European Continent, with 80 million going to the Americas (apart from the USA), Africa and Asia: by 1840 the comparable figures were 200 million and 529 million. British domination of the seas guaranteed a virtual monopoly for cotton sales to Latin America, which took a quarter as much cotton cloth as the European Continent in 1820 and half as much again twenty years later. Exports to India rose from 11 million yards in 1820 to 145 million in 1840. Cotton products made up nearly half the value of all British exports between 1816 and 1850. The growth of a new industrial economy in Britain after 1815 was not just the product of scientific or technological superiority, it was also the product of global empire…
“The industrial revolution was not confined to textile manufacture, but was in the longer run of even greater significance in the production of coal and iron. Here what marked out Britain from the rest of Europe in the industrial sphere was above all its early use of coal as a source of energy and its continued domination of coal production well into the second half of the century. Between 1815 and 1830 coal output in Britain virtually doubled, from 16 million tons a year to 30 million. As later as 1860, Britain was still producing more than twice as much coal as the whole of the rest of Europe put together. As demand grew, so mines had to be sunk deeper to access coal seams hundreds of feet below the surface. Water had to be pumped out of the mine, air circulated along the pits and galleries, gallery roofs held up with timber prop, coal hauled to the surface and taken away by specially built canals or, in the 1840s increasingly, by rail. The need to pump water out of coalmines was a key factor in the development and refinement of the steam engine, but the actual cutting of coal from the seam was done by hand. Production could only increased by bringing ever more miners to the coalfields, and areas where there were rich seams of coal, for example in south Wales, saw increasing numbers of immigrants drawn by the prospect of steady work.

“The work was dirty, difficult and dangerous…”364

Certain factors assisted the British in achieving this domination. One, as we have seen, was political: domination of the seas and of the Indian subcontinent. A second was geographical: the presence of rich seams of coal in several areas around the country.

A third was education. England “had an unusually high level of literacy and education – probably higher, for example, than Pakistan today. Some schooling for working class children was not uncommon. Only in England and Holland could a majority of workers sign their names – something unprecedented in world history. Two-thirds of English boys took long apprenticeships in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – impressive in the light of today’s unfulfilled ambition to have half of young people in post-school education. Schooling and apprenticeship cost money, and required the prospect of high wages to make them affordable and attractive as investments, even to the poor: one Ealing gardener paid 6d a week to educate his two children – as much as he spent on beer. If there is a literacy threshold for economic development, England had probably passed it by 1700: there was practically universal literacy in high-level commercial occupations and close to universal in occupations where it was functionally valuable. England’s economy was centered on what was not the biggest city in the western world. Its government kept order while permitting an unusual degree of liberty. It also gave protection against foreign competition. Its legal system protected property, but not so much as to prevent change: for example, by land enclosure. Its agriculture, already efficient and adaptable, could feed a growing and increasingly urban population.365

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364 Evans, op. cit., pp. 132-133, 139-140.
365 Tombs, op. cit., p. 374.
This brings us to another important factor: the English agrarian revolution of the eighteenth century. Its essential features were the "privatization" of the common land (in England, the pioneer in both the agrarian and industrial revolutions, it was accomplished through the Enclosure Acts of 1760 to 1830), its more efficient capitalist exploitation by a new breed of capitalist landowners, creating a new surplus in food and market in agricultural produce, and the destruction of the feudal bonds that bound the peasant to the land that he worked and the landowner for whom he worked. This led to the creation of a large number of landless agricultural labourers who, in the absence of work in the countryside, sought it in the new industrial enterprises that were being created in the towns to exploit a series of important technological innovations.

These innovations did not all originate in England: the Jacquard loom, which revolutionized silk weaving, originated in France before 1788. But it was the British who exploited it to drive down prices and increase profits. Moreover, they had plenty of their own. "During the eighteenth century," writes Tombs, "there came an amazing succession of technological advances. Abraham Darby’s iron smelting with coke (1709) bypassed the need for charcoal; Thomas Newcomen’s steam engine (1712) permitted out the pumping out of deep coalmines; John Kay’s flying shuttle (1733) speeded up weaving; James Hargreaves’s spinning jenny (c. 1765) multiplied the effectiveness of hand-spinning; Richard Arkwright’s water frame (1769) used power for spinning with rollers; James Watt’s condenser (1769) meant economical steam power; Samuel Crompton’s mule (1779) began mass production of high-quality yarn; Henry Cort’s rolling mill (1783) speeded up production of iron; Edmund Cartwright’s loom (1787) enabled water and steam power to be used to make cloth. These transformed the productivity of workers and were continually improved. The focused ingenuity that produced them was found among the often self-taught artisans and businessmen who were already involved in the ‘industrious revolution’. Ten ‘macro-inventers’ have been identified: those mentioned above, plus John Smeaton (engineering) and Josiah Wedgwood (pottery). Three had been to grammar schools and one, Cartwright (the son of a landed gentleman), to Oxford. The others had little schooling, but had learned technical skills through apprenticeship, adult education and experiment. Several had Dissenting connections. Ordinary people thus changed history.

“What made these ingenious labour-saving technologies worthwhile were the already high wages of English workers. Also, buoyant consumer demand ensured that new technology made profits. Cheaper products then further fed the growing demand for goods. Heavy investment in continuous technological development was thus viable in England. By contrast, spinning jennies were not taken up in France or India because labour was so cheap. The French government was eager to obtain technology from England by industrial espionage and by offering inducements to British entrepreneurs and workers. Significantly, this did not always succeed. In 1785, with the help of the
ironmaster William Wilkinson, a huge plant producing the Continent’s first coke-blast iron was built at Le Creuset, in eastern France. It soon became a white elephant. Where wages and demand were low and skills rare, expensive prestige projects rusted.

“The epoch-making technological innovation was to harness energy generated from coal, marking the beginning of a transition from what has been turned an ‘organic economy’ (wood-, wind-, water- and muscle-powered) to a ‘mineral economy’. This permitted England to overtake Holland in wealth and India in manufacturing. It also did much to shape the country’s economic, social and political geography, concentrating much of the new industrial activity near the coalfields of the Midlands and the north. England had very large coal deposits, which were indispensable to the Industrial Revolution. But so did many other parts of the world, including India. It was only in England that the mineral economy could take off, because it already had a sizeable coal industry (80% of Europe’s production in 1700), principally to heat London, swollen by centuries of mercantile development. Early steam power – Newcomen’s simple ‘atmospheric engine’ (c. 1712), which created a vacuum by heating and cooling steam – used so much coal that it was only viable at the pit head, where fuel costs were negligible. Continual improvements in fuel economy (such as Watt’s condenser) gradually extended the use of steam, through it took until well into the nineteenth century to producing a transforming effect on the English and then the world economy through powered machinery, railways, steamships and later electricity generation. It would be more than two centuries before the global spread of the carbon economy began to pose an environmental threat to the very well-being it had created…”

The steam engine was perhaps the most important technological innovation of this “take off” stage of the Industrial Revolution. It was exploited particularly by Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806–1859), an English engineer, who changed the face of the English landscape with his groundbreaking designs and ingenious constructions. Brunel built dockyards, the Great Western Railway, a series of steamships including the first propeller-driven transatlantic steamship, and numerous important bridges and tunnels. His designs revolutionized public transport and modern engineering. During his career, Brunel achieved many engineering firsts, including assisting in the building of the first tunnel under a navigable river, and development of SS Great Britain, the first propeller-driven, ocean-going, iron ship, which, when built in 1843, was the largest ship ever built. Brunel must rank prominently in the ranks of those men who most changed the world – at any rate in the physical, technological sense.

Hardly less important were George Stephenson (1781-1848), the “Father of the Railways” and his son George. They built the Locomotion No. 1, the first steam locomotive to carry passengers on a public rail line, the Stockton and Darlington Railway, in 1825.

But the most important innovations from a political as also from an economic point of view were those in communications. As we have seen it was through superior communications on a yacht Nathan Rothschild made a record killing on the London stock market on 19 June 1815. However, yachts were as nothing compared to the new, machine-produced means of communication, such as trains and steamships. And hardly less important than these were the electric telegraph (1835), the postage stamp (1840), photography (we possess a very early photo of the Duke of Wellington) and, especially, the modern, mass-produced newspaper.

The impact of the explosion in newspaper reading was so great that the Austrian Chancellor Metternich wondered "whether society can exist along with the liberty of the press."368 Indeed, his secretary Friedrich Gentz wrote in 1819 to Adam Mueller: "I continue to defend the proposition: 'In order that the press may not be abused, nothing whatever shall be printed in the next... years. Period.' If this principle were to be applied as a binding rule, a very few rare exceptions being authorized by a very clearly superior Tribunal, we should within a brief time find our way back to God and Truth."369

But the press could not be muzzled. And so in the 1848 revolution, "even the most arch-reactionary Prussian junkers discovered... that they required a newspaper capable of influencing 'public opinion' - in itself a concept linked with liberalism and incompatible with traditional hierarchy."370 As the poet Robert Southey wrote: "The steam engine and the spinning engines, the mail coach and the free publication of the debates in parliament... Hence follow in natural and necessary consequences increased activity, enterprise, wealth and power; but on the other hand, greediness of gain, looseness of principle, wretchedness, disaffection and political insecurity."371

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While Ricardian theory and Rothschildian practice enabled a few to get rich quick – mainly those with initial capital and entrepreneurial skills, - for the great majority of Englishmen the nineteenth century meant the horror and squalor of William Blake’s “satanic mills”. If “freedom” in liberal theory means “freedom from”, it certainly did not mean freedom from poverty, disease or death for the workers - many of them children - crowded together in filthy slums in Manchester. The pollution of land, water and air was horrific - a quarter of Victorian Britons died from bad air.372 In view of this, it is hardly surprising that not only the poor, but also many of the better-off who pitied them, came to see look upon these liberal “freedoms” with jaundiced eyes... Later, of course,

372 Marr, op. cit., p. 387.
largely under the pressure of humanitarian ideas and the labour movement, capitalism did begin to restrain itself, thereby disproving Marx’s prophecy of its imminent collapse. But the rise of collectivism was not checked by these concessions, but was rather strengthened, as we see throughout Europe as the nineteenth century progressed.

This is the generally accepted picture. But to what degree is it accurate? Let us examine a “revisionist” point of view, that of Robert Tombs: “Though long-term the global consequences, good and bad, of the Industrial Revolution are obvious the immediate effects on England and its people are less so. This has long been a vexed question. From the beginning there were enemies of the new economy, who attacked it on moral, social, aesthetic and eventually ideological grounds. It was corrupting, encouraging luxury and vice; it was disruptive and ugly. Others had praised ‘commercial society’, most famously the Scottish philosophers David Hume and Adam Smith, who asserted that the new economy remedied poverty and unemployment, and its ‘obvious and simple system of natural liberty’ provided the basis for a peaceful, civilized, cooperative and stable society. Individual self-betterment would serve the general good as if by ‘an invisible hand’: ‘It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.’ So economic freedom was not only right, it was also productive. Oppression and slavery were not only wrong, but also inefficient. Pessimistic and optimistic interpretations have continued ever since, and have shaped English social and political ideas.

“The fundamental question is whether the Industrial Revolution improved or damaged the lives of the English people as a whole. ‘Optimists’ could point to the undeniable increase in living standards that took place – eventually. They inferred that technology and increased economic activity must have increased wealth. ‘Pessimists’ argued that industrialization for many decades brought workers little but cost them much – loss of independence and self-respect, devaluation of skills, deteriorating health, high mortality, bad food, crushing labour (for men, women and children) and destruction of cherished rights and community traditions. In short, the Industrial Revolution created an impoverished, downtrodden and embittered proletariat, ground down by the power of money and the oppression of the ruling classes, and forced by long and bitter struggle to assert their meager rights to a share in national wealth.

“What is the evidence? Much painstaking investigation has focused on workers’ wages and living standards. Perhaps surprisingly, real wages barely rose over the crucial period of the Industrial Revolution – by only 4 percent between 1760 and 1820. Over this period working hours greatly increased. Women and children worked more intensively, contributing about 25 percent of family incomes. Food prices rose and diet deteriorated. Health and hygiene in industrial cities worsened. Infant mortality was high and life expectancy low by present-day standards, and both actually deteriorated. People’s physical condition as measured by their height fell to one of its lowest ever levels and showed marked difference between classes – over five inches’ difference between rich and poor boys in 1790. It would seem that the pessimistic case is
amply proved, and that industrialization amounted to stunted and damaged lives for generations of ordinary people.

“Looked at closely, the picture is less stark. More optimistic views see economic changes, for good and bad, as linked to the aspirations and choices, however limited, or ordinary working people, who were not hostile to the market economy or indifferent to the goods it brought. English wages did not rise partly because they were already very high by world standards, and they remained among the highest in the world over the period of industrialization. A sharp and continuous rise took place from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, when new industries and technologies had grown sufficiently to transform the whole economy. The average fall in height may have been due not to new factory conditions, but to increasing work in agriculture at a young age (the same fall can be seen in the nineteenth-century United States), and is therefore probably a consequence of the ‘industrious revolution’ rather than of ‘proletarianized’ labour in factories. Moreover, French, Italian and Austrian men were smaller still than Englishmen. English workers’ attainment of a relative degree of prosperity brought what we now know to be unhealthy choices (more alcohol, tobacco, sugar and meat), health risks and family stress. Similar things can be seen in the slums of Mumbai or Rio today: appalling and life-threatening conditions, but which also mean a chance to escape from age-old poverty and cultural and social immobility. Indeed, England’s political stability must in part be due to many people being able to aspire to improvement, and even to attain it.

“There is, finally, a factor which most specialists now agree resolves the ‘optimist’/‘pessimist’ debate: England was experiencing a sudden demographic boom unique in its history. The population more than tripled in 150 years, from 5.2 million in 1701 to 17.9 million in 1851. The reason is simple: increasing wages and job opportunities after the Restoration – the ‘industrious revolution’ again – which enabled people to marry several years’ younger on average than before, and which meant more children. The inevitable result of this process in other times and places was a sharp fall in living standards as numbers outran resources, reducing life expectancy, restricting births, or bringing even more severe consequences such as famines, epidemics or wars. These are the famous ‘Malthus checks’ first theorized by the Rev. Thomas Malthus in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798). The consequences were visible in southern and central Europe, where living standards deteriorated sharply between 1500 and 1800, and real wages had dropped to a half or a third of those in England. Given its exceptional population explosion, eighteenth-century England was logically heading for a similar collapse in living standards and widespread misery.

“But it did not happen... There was certainly hardship, especially during and immediately after the Napoleonic Wars, in 1811-12 and 1816-21, when the whole country and its economic system were under strain. On top of that came a Continent-wide run of bad harvests, the worst of them due to a catastrophic volcanic eruption in the East Indies in April 1815, which disrupted global climate and caused widespread famine. In England, there was hunger and economic instability. But there was no economic disaster – as there might well
have been had Napoleon won and wrecked British trade. And there was no
political catastrophe. What was once seen as the ‘stagnation’ or ‘decline’ of English workers’ living standards should properly be seen as their maintenance of a relatively high level. This stands out in comparison with disastrous increases in poverty in many parts of Europe since the seventeenth century.

“How, in adverse circumstances, were English living standards maintained? By growing the towns, especially manufacturing and commercial centres, such as London, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. By creating new jobs in textiles, metalworking and commerce. By supporting incomes through the Poor Law. And by defending access to export markets by defeating Napoleon.

“During several decades, things might still have gone badly wrong. But by the 1850s a ‘second stage’ of industrialization was beginning. By 1850 Britain’s GDP had overtaken that of the world’s most populous country, China – a lead it maintained for more than 150 years. Productivity was transformed by the cheap energy of the ‘mineral economy’, permitting what economists have called a breakout to permanent economic growth. This finally brought it the second of the nineteenth century an unambiguous increase in workers’ living standards. Thus was established, in difficult and dangerous circumstances, the prototype of a new society…”

The Industrial Revolution had this important spiritual effect, not only in England but throughout the world and to the present day: by increasing the number of urban dwellers and reducing the number of country dwellers, it increases the power of the state over the citizen. For the country dweller generally has this degree of independence: he grows his own food and lives in his own house. But when he moves to the town he loses this independence, and with it his independence of mind, making him more amenable to the influence of demagogues and mass movements such as socialism…

26. THE AMERICAN DREAM

We have seen that Hegel, for all his admiration of the Prussian State as the embodiment of the World Spirit, saw the land of the future as America. This was one of the few genuine insights of his philosophy. For indeed, in the early nineteenth century America was beginning to spread her wings...

Of all the major countries that can be called European in the cultural sense, America was the most advanced from the liberal point of view (just as Russia was the most “backward”). Her economic system was more purely capitalist than any other’s, and her system of government was more democratic than any other’s; for the scourges of despotism and feudalism had been more effectively removed from America than from any other country. In spite of this, American democracy had its critics, even among democrats.

Thus the New Yorker Thomas Whitney declared: "I take direct issue with democracy. If democracy implies universal suffrage, or the right of all men to take part in the control of the State without regard to the intelligence, the morals, or the principles of the man, I am no democrat... As soon would I place my person and property at the mercy of an infuriated mob... as place the liberties of my country in the hands of an ignorant, superstitious, and vacillating populace."374

One of the best of America’s critics was the French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville, who came to America in 1831 and whose Democracy in America was published in 1835. He saw an important fault of American democracy was what he called “the tyranny of the majority”, whose power, he considered, threatened to become not only predominant, but irresistible: “The moral authority of the majority is partly based on the notion that there is more enlightenment and wisdom in a numerous assembly than in a single man, and the number of the legislators is more important than how they are chosen. It is the theory of equality applied to brains. This doctrine attacks the last asylum of human pride; for that reason the minority is reluctant in admitting it and takes a long time to get used to it...

“The idea that the majority has a right based on enlightenment to govern society was brought to the United States by its first inhabitants; and this idea, which would of itself be enough to create a free nation, has by now passed into mores and affects even the smallest habits of life..."375

One effect, paradoxically, of this freedom was extreme intolerance of any minority opinion. “I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. The majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion; within these barriers an author may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them.”376

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376 De Tocqueville, Democracy in America, in Barzun, op. cit., p. 538.
This contributed to a general “dumbing down” of culture, although this cultivated Frenchman admitted it also prevented complete brutalization. “Few pleasures are either very refined or very coarse, and highly polished manners are as uncommon as great brutality of tastes. Neither men of great learning nor extremely ignorant communities are to be met with; genius becomes more rare, information more diffused. There is less perfection, but more abundance in all the productions of the arts.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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377 De Tocqueville, On the Effects of Future Democratization, 1840.
379 De Tocqueville, Democracy in America, pp. 307-308.
“A nation is like a jury entrusted to represent universal society and to apply the justice which is its law. Should the jury representing society have greater power than that very society whose laws it applies?

“Consequently, when I refuse to obey an unjust law, I by no means deny the majority’s right to give orders; I only appeal from the sovereignty of the people to the sovereignty of the human race.” 380

In a believing age, instead of “the sovereignty of the human race”, the phrase would have been: “the sovereignty of God” or “the authority of the Church as the representative of God”. But after this obeisance to the atheist and democratic temper of his age, de Tocqueville does in fact invoke the sovereignty of God. For the essential fact is that the majority – even the majority of the human race – can be wrong, and that only God is infallible. “Omnipotence in itself seems a bad and dangerous thing. I think that its exercise is beyond man’s strength, whoever he be, and that only God can be omnipotent without danger because His wisdom and justice are always equal to His power. So there is no power on earth in itself so worthy of respect or vested with such a sacred right that I would wish to let it act without control and dominate without obstacles. So when I see the right and capacity to do all given to any authority whatsoever, whether it be called people or king, democracy or aristocracy, and whether the scene of action is a monarchy or a republic, I say: the germ of tyranny is there, and I will go look for other laws under which to live.

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

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

“But suppose you were to have a legislative body so composed that it represented the majority without being necessarily the slave of its passions, an executive power having a strength of its own, and a judicial power independent of the other two authorities; then you would still have a democratic government, but there would be hardly any remaining risk of tyranny.” 381

381 De Tocqueville, op. cit., pp. 311-313. “I am guided by Alexis de Tocqueville,” writes Charles C. Camosy, “in my assessment of the course of liberal democracy, who observed that as democracy becomes ‘more itself,’ it becomes ‘less itself.’ Thus, the end station of democracy, according to Tocqueville, was despotism” (“Why Individualist Liberalism Wins, and the Catholic Side Loses”, Crux, December 19, 2017).
Towards the end of his great work, de Tocqueville describes in a remarkably prescient manner how he sees democracy changing into a benevolent yet sinister despotism: “I ask myself in what form will despotism reappear in the world. I see an immense agglomeration of people, all equal and alike, each of them restlessly active in getting for himself petty and vulgar pleasures which fill his whole being. Each of them, left to himself, is stranger to the fate of all the others. A vast, protecting power overshadows them. This power alone is responsible for securing their satisfaction and for watching over their fates. The power is absolute, concerned with every detail, smooth in operation, takes account of the future, and is not harsh… The power wants all citizens to be happy, provided that happiness is their sole aim. It works willingly for their well-being, but insists upon being the source of this well-being and the sole judge of what it should consist. It gives them security, foresees and supplies their needs, facilitates their pleasures, conducts the principal business of their lives, manages their industries, divides their properties and regulates their inheritances and, in short, saves them from the trouble of thinking and the difficulties of living.

“This tutelary power is continuously at work to render less useful and more infrequent the use of free-will; the sphere of liberty of decision is thus restricted more and more until every citizen loses, as it were, the control of himself. Equality has conditioned men for all these transformations and prepared to accept such things and even to welcome them as beneficial.

“After having brought the individual, stage by stage, into its mighty bonds and moulded him to its wishes, the sovereign extends its tentacles over the community as a whole, and covers the surface of society with a network of little rules, complicated, detailed and uniform, but from beneath which the more original minds and the more vigorous personalities can find no way of extricating themselves and rising above the crowd. The sovereign does not break the wills of the subjects; it enervates them, bends them to its purpose, directs them, rarely forcing them to act, but continually preventing them from action; it does not destroy, but merely prevents things from coming to life; it never tyrannizes, but it hampers, dumps down, constricts, suffocates, and at the last reduces every nation to the level of timid and industrious animals of whom the Government is the shepherd…

“This kind of regulated servitude, well regulated placid and gentle, could be combined – more easily than one would think possible – with the forms of liberty and could even establish itself under the shadow of the sovereignty of the people.” 382

The democratic government de Tocqueville had in mind here as preventing the tyranny of the majority was probably that of England, with its rule by “the king in parliament”, its respect for custom and strong aristocratic element.

382 De Tocqueville, op. cit.
England’s aristocratic element did indeed protect the English from some of the excesses of democracy for a time, eliciting the comment of Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev that parliamentary government was possible only in England. Nevertheless, the process of further democratization was inexorable.

In this context, and in the light of our modern experience of democracy, it will be useful to examine the estimate of de Tocqueville given by his fellow Frenchman and fierce anti-communist, Jean-François Revel: “Tocqueville the visionary depicted with stunning precision the coming ascension of the omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient state that twentieth-century man knows so well; the state as protector, entrepreneur, educator; the physician-state, helpful and predatory, tyrant and guardian, economist, journalist, moralist, shipper, trader, advertiser, banker, father and jailer all at once. The state ransoms and the state subsidizes. It settles without violence into a wheedling, meticulous despotism that no monarchy, no tyranny, no political authority of the past had the means to achieve. Its power borders on the absolute partly because it is scarcely felt, having increased by imperceptible stages at the wish of its subjects, who turn to it instead of to each other. In these pages by Tocqueville we find the germ both of George Orwell’s 1984 and David Riesman’s The Lonely Crowd.

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

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

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

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

More cherished even than the Christianity that they so prided themselves on, which exhorted men to be “free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice” (I Peter 2.16)...

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This brings us to the question of American religion and the secular religion of Americanness. “In America,” wrote Sir Roger Scruton in 2002, “religion has been a vital force in building the nation. The initial unity of faith among the Pilgrim Fathers rapidly disintegrated, however, and while religious worship remains an important feature of the American experience, freedom of conscience has been guaranteed from the beginning by the Bill of Rights. This does not mean that America is a secular nation, or that religion has no part to play in establishing the legitimacy of American institutions. It means, rather, that all the many religions of America are bound to acknowledge the authority of the territorial law, and that each renounces the right to intrude on the claims of the state. Furthermore, these religions come under pressure to divert their emotional currents into the common flow of patriotic sentiment: the God of the American sects speaks with an American accent.

“The patriotism that upholds the nation-state may embellish itself with far-reaching and even metaphysical ideas like the theories of race and culture that derive from Herder, Fichte and the German romantics. But it might just as easily rest content with a kind of mute sense of belonging – an inarticulate experience of neighbourliness – founded in the recognition that this place where we live is ours. This is the patriotism of the village, of the rural community, and also of the city street, and it has been a vital force in the building of modern America. Indeed, in the last analysis, national identity, like territorial jurisdiction, is an outgrowth of the experience of a common home.

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“Of course, if people turn their backs on one another, live behind closed doors in suburban isolation, then this sense of neighbourliness dwindles. But it can also be restored through the ‘little platoons’ described by Burke and recognized by Tocqueville as the true lifeblood of America. By joining clubs and societies, by forming teams, troupes, and competitions, by acquiring sociable hobbies and outgoing modes of entertainment, people come to feel that they and their neighbours belong together, and this ‘belonging’ has more importance, in times of emergency, than any private difference in matters of religion or family life. Indeed, freedom of association has an inherent tendency to generate territorial loyalties and so to displace religion from the public to the private realm…”

This may have been true in the nineteenth century, or even in some parts in the 1950s, but feels outdated today, in the twenty-first century, when social cohesiveness has declined drastically, political divides have become much deeper and fiercer, and religion has been not only banished to the private realm, but been invaded and trampled on. True cohesiveness does not exist without the true faith, which the Americans did not possess (although they gave refuge to many immigrants having the true faith). Hence the sage words of President John Adams: “We have no government capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion... Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people.”

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Let us turn to America’s attitude to other nations.

While the Old World was tearing itself apart, the newly independent power of the United States was sheltered from the turmoil not only by the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean, but also by its own very distinctive understanding of itself and its role in the world.

In his Farewell Address of 1796 President George Washington admonished his countrymen to avoid allowing the newly independent United States to be dragged into the ongoing wars and strife that characterized Europe. “The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations,” he said, “is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.”

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385 The English revolutionary Tom Paine managed to cross it, but was very tepidly received.
“In other words,” writes Protopresbyter James Thornton, “while friendship and trade with all countries is a good thing, the United States should maintain strict neutrality when it comes to Europe’s seemingly everlasting quarrels since they involve nothing that concerns this country.

“President Thomas Jefferson spoke similarly when, in his 1801 inaugural address, he advocated ‘peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.’ That policy of friendship and trade with all, but alliances with none, remained the cornerstone of our country’s foreign policy throughout the 19th century. Indeed, during that time there were occasional conflicts with other nations. But these involved the immediate interests, or the defense of the sovereignty, of the United States. Let us review major events in America’s foreign policy during that period.

“An example of a policy that involved America’s interests was the First Barbary War, which began in 1801. Pirates along the North African coast regularly attacked commercial vessels, including those of the United States, seizing them and either holding their captives for ransom or selling them into slavery. In exchange for tribute payments, the Pasha of Tripoli offered protection against these attacks. For some time, the United States paid the protection money, but when Tripoli demanded increased payments, the United States refused. A squadron of ships was sent to the Mediterranean and, when threatened by Tripolitanian pirates, engaged them in battle. A blockade was enforced against Tripoli, and both sea and land battles ensued. The climax came when a U.S.-led army crossed the desert from Alexandria to the city of Derna, which was captured. The Pasha, fearful of further encroachment by the U.S. forces, agreed to terms and signed a peace treaty that satisfied American concerns. A Second Barbary War was fought in 1815 when the Barbary States returned to their old practices. Two powerful American squadrons under Commodores William Bainbridge and Stephen Decatur entered the Mediterranean, attacking and capturing enemy ships. U.S. envoys demanded an end to piracy and threatened the North African rulers. The war ended with a new treaty that guaranteed American rights in the Mediterranean, granted compensation for American losses, and freed American and European captives.

“Another example of war to uphold American interests was the War of 1812, declared by the United States against Britain on June 18, 1812. Hostilities were brought about when Britain stopped American ships on the high seas to seize American seamen and impress, or force, them to serve in the Royal Navy. That was a direct assault on American sovereignty and an attack on the ability of the United States to sail the oceans of the world for purposes of peaceful commerce and communication unmolested. To make matters worse, Britain tried to foment an uprising by Indians on the American frontier. After more than two years of war, during which part of Maine was occupied and the U.S. capital burned, negotiations brought peace. The Treaty of Ghent was signed in December 1814, in which American grievances were satisfactorily addressed.”

As the nineteenth century progressed, however, another aspect of American foreign policy emerged... Having been a colony that had won its independence from an imperialist power, the United States has always been officially an anti-imperialist State. So it is something of a surprise to discover that in the very year of the Declaration of Independence, leading American politicians were foreseeing the growth of an empire. Thus Ferguson writes: "When, in the draft Articles of Confederation of July, 1776, John Dickinson proposed setting western boundaries of the states, the idea was thrown out at the committee stage. To George Washington the United States was a 'nascent empire', later an 'infant empire'. Thomas Jefferson told James Madison he was 'persuaded no constitution was ever before as well calculated as ours for extending extensive empire and self-government.' The initial 'confederacy' of thirteen would be 'the nest from which all America, North and South [would] be peopled.' Indeed, Jefferson used his inaugural address in 1801 to observe that the short history of the United States had already furnished 'a new proof for the falsehood of Montesquieu's doctrine, that a republic can be preserved only in a small territory. The reverse is the truth.' Madison agreed; in the tenth of the Federalist Papers he forcefully argued for 'extend[ing] the sphere' to create a larger republic. Alexander Hamilton too referred to the United States – in the opening paragraph of the first of the Federalist Papers as 'in many respects the most interesting... empire... in the world.' He looked forward eagerly to the emergence of a 'great American system, superior to the control of all trans-Atlantic force of influence, and able to dictate the terms of connection between the Old and the New World.'"387

Henry Kissinger explains how this quasi-imperialist element of American foreign policy arose: "The openness of American culture and its democratic principles made the United States a model and a refuge for millions. At the same time, the conviction that American principles were universal has introduced a challenging element into the international system because it implies that governments not practicing them are less than fully legitimate. This tenet – so engrained in American thinking that is only occasionally put forward as official policy – suggests that a significant portion of the world lives under a kind of unsatisfactory, probationary arrangement, and will one day be redeemed; in the meantime, their relations with the world’s strongest power must have some latent adversarial element to them.

"These tensions have been inherent since the beginning of the American experience. For Thomas Jefferson, America was not only a great power in the making but an 'empire for liberty' – an ever-expanding force acting on behalf of all humanity to vindicate principles of good governance. As Jefferson wrote during his presidency: 'We feel that we are acting under obligations not confined to the limits of our society. It is impossible not to be sensible that we are acting for all mankind; that circumstances denied to others, but indulged to us, have imposed on us the duty of proving what is the degree of freedom and self-government in which a society may venture to leave its individual members.'

“So defined, the spread of the United States and the success of its endeavors was coterminous with the interests of humanity. Having doubled the size of the new country through his shrewd engineering of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, in retirement Jefferson ‘candidly confess[ed]’ to President Monroe, ‘I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States.’ And to James Madison, Jefferson wrote, ‘We should then have only to include the North [Canada] in our confederacy… and we should such an empire for liberty as she has never surveyed since the creation: & I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire & self government.’ The empire envisaged by Jefferson and his colleagues differed, in their minds, from the European empires, which they considered based on the subjugation and oppression of foreign peoples. The empire imagined by Jefferson was in essence North American and conceived as the extension of liberty. (And in fact, whatever may be said about the contradictions in this prospect or of the personal lives of its Founders, as the United States expanded and thrived, so too did democracy, and the aspiration toward it spread and took root across the hemisphere and the world.)”

Soon this “empire for liberty” was conceived as embracing not only North but also Central and South America. In 1823, as we have seen, President James Monroe asserted his famous “Monroe doctrine”, which Ferguson calls “the fons et origo of American grand strategy”. It asserted “as a principle… that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers”. The point of the Monroe doctrine, according to Thornton, “was to keep any European conflicts from spilling over into the Americas and, thereby, to avoid ensnaring the United States in Europe’s disputes”. Almost inevitably, however, it came to be seen by some as giving America exclusive right to interfere anywhere in the western hemisphere where she considered her own interests to be at stake...

Kissinger writes: “In the United State, the Monroe Doctrine was interpreted as the extension of the War of Independence, sheltering the Western Hemisphere from the operation of the European balance of power. No Latin American countries were consulted (not least because few existed at the time). As the frontiers of the nation crept across the continent, the expansion of America was seen as the operation of a kind of law of nature. When the United States practiced what elsewhere was defined as imperialism, Americans gave it another name: ‘the fulfilment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.’ The acquisition of vast tracts of territory was treated as a commercial transaction in the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France and as the inevitable consequence of this Manifest Destiny in the case of Mexico. It was not until the close of the nineteenth century in the Spanish-American War of 1898, that the United States engaged in full-scale hostilities with another major power...

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389 Thornton, *op. cit.*
“The success of the United States, [wrote the United States Magazine and Democratic Review,] would serve as a standing rebuke to all other forms of government, ushering in a future democratic age. A great, free union, divinely sanctioned and towering above all other states, would spread its principles throughout the Western Hemisphere – a power destined to become greater in scope and in moral purpose than any previous human endeavour: ‘We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march? Providence is with us, and no earthly power can. The United States was thus not simply a country but an engine of God’s plan and the epitome of world order.

“In 1845, when American westward expansion embroiled the country in a dispute with Britain over the Oregon Territory and with Mexico over the Republic of Texas (which had seceded from Mexico and declared its intent to join the United States), the magazine concluded that the annexation of Texas was a defensive measure against the foes of liberty. The author reasoned that ‘California will probably, next fall away’ from Mexico, and an American sweep north into Canada would likely follow. The continental force of America, he reasoned, would eventually render Europe’s balance of power inconsequential by its sheer countervailing weight. Indeed the author of the Democratic Review article foresaw a day, one hundred years hence – that is, 1945 – when the United States would outweigh even a unified, hostile Europe: ‘Though they should cast into the opposite scale all the bayonets and cannons, not only of France and England, but of Europe entire, how would it kick the beam against the simple, solid weight of the two hundred and fifty, or three hundred million – and American millions – destined to gather beneath the flutter of the stripes and stars, in the fast hastening year of the Lord 1945!’

390 “In 1836, the Republic of Texas came into being, having achieved independence from Mexico. It was subsequently recognized as a sovereign country by the United States and several European countries. In October 1845, a substantial majority of the citizens of Texas voted in favor of union with the United States. That union became official in February 1846. Unfortunately, there arose a dispute between the United States and Mexico as to the precise location of the western borders of Texas.

“Texas had always claimed all of the territory as far south as the Rio Grande, while Mexico insisted that the borders of Texas extended no further south than the Nueces River, a difference involving a huge swath of territory. Both the United States and Mexico sent in troops. In April 1846, a large Mexican force ambushed and overwhelmed a small American force of about 80 men, killing 11, wounding six, and capturing the remainder. President Polk stated that Mexico had invaded American territory and shed American blood, and asked Congress to declare war, which it did. As a result of the American victory in that war, the United States gained not only Texas, but also the territory that is now California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, most of Colorado, and a small portion of Wyoming. For that, the United States paid Mexico $15 million (the equivalent today of nearly $500 million), and the United States agreed to assume the debts owed by Mexico to American citizens, amounting to $3.25 million (the equivalent today of about $88.6 million). Later, in 1854, Mexico agreed to sell what today is southern Arizona and a small slice of land in southwest New Mexico to the United States for $10 million (the equivalent today of about $260 million). The land was needed so that a transcontinental railroad could be constructed along a southern route that avoided mountainous terrain.” (Thornton, op. cit.) (V.M.)
“This is, in fact, what transpired (except that the Canadian border was peacefully demarcated, and England was not part of a hostile Europe in 1945, but rather an ally). Bombastic and prophetic, the vision of America transcending and counterbalancing the harsh doctrines of the Old World would inspire a nation – often while being largely ignored elsewhere or prompting consternation – and reshape the course of history..."391

But while America was fulfilling her “Manifest Destiny”, millions were dying to make way for the coming Universal Empire of Liberty. These were, of course, the American Indians, whose treatment at the hands of the Americans was much worse than, for example, the treatment of the Siberian natives by the Russians. (And the relatives of the Siberian natives in Alaska wept when the Russian flag was taken down for the last time when the United States bought Alaska in 1867.)

“The indigenous population [of North America],” writes William Landes, “was uprooted repeatedly to make way for land-hungry newcomers. The Indians fought back, the more so as settler expansion entailed repeated violations of ostensibly sacred and eternal agreements – as long as the sun would shine and the waters run. The white man broke faith at will, while the natives were slaughtered... Here... technology made the difference. Repeating weapons, batch- or mass-produced with roughly interchangeable parts, multiplied the firepower of even small numbers and made Indian resistance hopeless.”392

Noam Chomsky has called the white man’s slaughter of the American Indians “pure genocide... Current estimates are that north of the Rio Grande, there were about twelve to fifteen million Native Americans at the time Columbus landed, something like that. By the time Europeans reached the continental borders of the United States, there were about 200,000. Okay: mass genocide. Across the whole Western Hemisphere, the population decline was probably on the order of from a hundred million people to about five million. That’s pretty serious stuff – it was horrifying right from the beginning in the early seventeenth century, then it got worse after the United States was established, and it just continued until finally the native populations were basically stuck away in little enclaves. The history of treaty violations by the United States is just grotesque: treaties with the Indian nations by law have a status the same as that of treaties among sovereign states, but throughout our history nobody ever paid the slightest attention to them – as soon as they wanted more land, you just forgot the treaty and robbed it; it’s a very ugly and vicious history. Hitler in fact used the treatment of the Native Americans as a model, explicitly – he said, that’s what we’re going to do with the Jews...”393

The Russian poet Alexander Pushkin had, like Hegel, been attracted at first to the United States. However, after reading a review of a book on the North American Indians, he changed his mind: “My respect for this new people and its constitution, the fruit of the newest enlightenment,” he wrote, “has been

391 Kissinger, op. cit., pp. 240, 243-244.
severely shaken. With amazement we have seen democracy in its disgusting cynicism, its cruel prejudices, its intolerable tyranny…”

America remained a land of opportunity, even a dream, for many millions of future immigrants; but in spite of the fresh beginning it provided, the passions of “Old Europe” – more exactly, of fallen humanity in general – remained endemic in the land of the free, while for the native Indians the dream of freedom very early on turned into a nightmare…

II. THE EAST: THE MAN-GOD DEFEATED (1789-1830)

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27. TSAR PAUL I

Tsar Paul I has in general had a bad press from historians who usually, without any good reason, call him “mad”. Certainly, he was eccentric, impulsive and domineering in relation to the nobility, who hated him and eventually killed him. Nevertheless, the thoroughly dissolute nobility needed some reining in after being indulged so much by Catherine the Great and her predecessors; and it was Tsar Paul who began the slow process of restoring the links of the monarchy with the people’s faith, Orthodoxy, and thereby restoring its autocratic but non-absolutist character. For, contrary to the generally held view, the Orthodox Autocracy is not a form of absolutism. Indeed, as D.A. Khomiakov writes, “the tsar is ‘the denial of absolutism’ precisely because it is bound by the confines of the people’s understanding and world-view, which serve as that framework within which the power can and must consider itself to be free.”

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

“On ascending the throne of All-Russia,” he wrote, “and entering in accordance with duty into various parts of the state administration, at the very beginning of the inspection We saw that the state economy, in spite of the changes in income made at various times, had been subjected to extreme discomforts from the continuation over many years of unceasing warfare and other circumstances. Expenses exceeded income. The deficit was increasing from year to year, multiplying the internal and external debts; in order to make up a part of this deficit, large sums were borrowed, which brought great harm and disorder with them.”

The tsar had been educated by Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, and shared his teacher’s devotion to pre-Petrine Russia. And so at his coronation, before putting on the purple, he was vested in the dalmatic, one of the royal vestments of the Byzantine emperors. Thus the rite moved a significant step away from the symbolism of the First Rome, which had been the model of Peter, and back to the symbolism of the New Rome of Constantinople, the Mother-State of Holy Rus’.

Then, writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, “he himself read out a new Statute [Uchrezhdenie] on the Imperial Family which he had composed together with [the

395 The evidence is all too vividly described in Sebastian Sebag Montefiore’s The Romanovs (London: Vintage, 2011).
396 Khomiakov, Pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost’ (Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality), Minsk, 1997, p. 103.
397 St. John Maximovich, Proiskhozhdenie Zakona o Prestolonasledovanii v Rossii (The Origin of the Law on the Succession to the Throne in Russia), Shanghai, 1936, Podolsk, 1994.
398 Tsar Paul, in V.F. Ivanov, Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do nashikh dnej (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry from Peter I to our days), Harbin, 1994, Moscow, 1997, p. 211.
Tsaritsa] Maria Fyodorovna. By this law he abolished Peter I’s decree of 1722 on the right of the Russian Autocrat to appoint the Heir to the Throne according to his will and revived the Basic Act of 1613. From now on and forever (!) a strict order of succession was established according to which the eldest son became his father’s heir, and in the case of childlessness – his elder brother. The law also foresaw various other cases, determining the principles of the succession to the Throne in accordance with the ancient, pre-Petrine (!) Russian customs and certain important new rules (for example, a Member of the Imperial Family wanting to preserve his rights to the succession must enter only into an equal by blood marriage with a member of a royal or ruling house, that is, who is not lower than himself by blood). Paul I’s new law once and for all cut off the danger in Russia of those ‘revolution’-coup which had taken place in the eighteenth century. And it meant that the power of the nobility over the Russian Tsars was ending; now they could be independent of the nobility’s desires and sympathies. The autocracy was restored in Russia! Deeply wounded and ‘offended’, the nobility immediately, from the moment of the proclamation of the law ‘On the Imperial Family’, entered into opposition to Paul I. The Tsar had to suffer the first and most powerful blow of the opposition. This battle between the Autocrat and the nobility was decisive, it determined the future destiny of the whole state. It also revealed who was who in Great Russia. All the historians who hate Paul I are not able to diminish the significance of the Law of 1797, they recognise that it was exceptionally important and correct, but they remark that it was the only outstanding act of this Emperor (there were no others supposedly). But such an act would have been more than sufficient for the whole reign! For this act signified a radical counter-coup – or, following the expression of the time, counter-revolution - to that which Catherine II had accomplished.

“However, the haters lie here, as in everything else! The law was not the only important act of his Majesty. On the same day of 1797 Paul I proclaimed a manifesto in which for the first time the serf-peasants were obliged to make an oath of allegiance to the Tsars and were called, not ‘slaves’, but ‘beloved subjects’, that is, they were recognized as citizens of the State! There is more! Paul I issued a decree forbidding landowners to force serfs to work corvée for more than three days in the week: the other three days the peasants were to work for themselves, and on Sundays – rest and celebrate ‘the day of the Lord’, like all Christians. Under the threat of severe penalties it was confirmed that masters were forbidden to sell families of peasants one by one. It was forbidden to subject serfs older than seventy to physical punishments. (And at the same time it was permitted to apply physical punishments to noblemen who had been condemned for criminal acts.) All this was nothing other than the beginning of the liberation of the Russian peasants from serfdom! In noble circles of the time it was called a ‘revolution from above’, and for the first time they said of about their Emperor:

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399 The decree said: “The Law of God given to us in the ten commandments teaches us to devote the seventh day to God; which is why on this day, which is glorified by the triumph of the Faith, and on which we have been counted worthy to receive the sacred anointing and royal crowning on our Forefathers’ Throne, we consider it our duty before the Creator and Giver of all good things to confirm the exact and constant fulfillment of this law throughout our Empire, commanding each and every one to observe it, so that no one should have any excuse to dare to force his peasants to work on Sundays....”
‘He is mad!’ Let us recall that this word was used in relation to the ‘peasant’ politics of Paul I. He even received a special ‘Note’ from one assembly of nobles, in which it was said that ‘the Russian people has not matured sufficiently for the removal of physical punishments’.”

“We know of a case when the Tsar came to the defence of some peasants whose landowner was about to sell them severally, without their families and land, so as to make use of the peasants’ property. The peasants refused to obey, and the landowner informed the governor of the rebellion. But the governor did not fail to carry out his duty and quickly worked out what was happening. On receiving news about what was happening, Tsar Paul declared the deal invalid, ordered that the peasants be left in their places, and that the landowner be severely censured in his name. The landowner’s conscience began to speak to him: he gathered the village commune and asked the peasants for forgiveness. Later he set off for St. Petersburg and asked for an audience with his Majesty. ‘Well, what did you sort out with your peasants, my lord? What did they say?’ inquired the Emperor of the guilty man. ‘They said to me, your Majesty: God will forgive…’ ‘Well, since God and they have forgiven you, I also forgive you. But remember from now on that they are not your slaves, but my subjects just as you are. You have just been entrusted with looking after them, and you are responsible for them before me, as I am for Russia before God…’ concluded the Sovereign.”

The Tsar also acted to humble the pride of the Guards regiments which, together with the nobility, had acted in the role of king-makers in the eighteenth century. “He forbade the assigning of noblemen’s children, babies, into the guards (which had been done before him to increase ‘the number of years served’). The officers of the guards were forbidden to drive in four- or six-horse carriages, to hide their hands in winter in fur muffs, or to wear civilian clothing in public. No exception was made for them by comparison with other army officers. At lectures and inspections the Guards were asked about rules and codes with all strictness. How much, then and later, did they speak (and they still write now!) about the ‘cane discipline’ and the amazing cruelties in the army under Paul I, the nightmarish punishments which were simply means of mocking the military…. Even among the historians who hate Paul I we find the admission that the strictnesses of the Emperor related only to the officers (from the nobility), while with regard to the soldiers he was most concerned about their food and upkeep, manifesting a truly paternal attentiveness. By that time the ordinary members of the Guards had long been not nobles, but peasants. And the soldierly mass of the Guards of Paul I very much loved him and were devoted to him. Officers were severely punished for excessive cruelty to soldiers… On the fateful night of the murder of Paul I the Guards soldiers rushed to support him. The Preobrazhensky regiment refused to shout ‘hurrah!’ to Alexander Pavlovich as to the new Emperor, since they were not sure whether his Majesty Paul I was truly dead. Two soldiers of the regiment demanded that their commanders give them exact proof of the death of the former Emperor."

400 Lebedev, Velikorossia (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 239-240.
These soldiers were not only not punished, but were sent as an ‘embassy’ of the Preobrazhensky to the grave of Paul I. On their return the regiment gave the oath of allegiance to Alexander I. That was the real situation of the Russian soldier of Paul’s times, and not their fictitious ‘rightlessness’!

“The Emperor Paul’s love for justice and care for the simple people was expressed also in the accessibility with which he made his subjects happy, establishing the famous box in the Winter palace whose key was possessed by him personally and into which the first courtier and the last member of the simple people could cast their letters with petitions for the Tsar’s immediate defence or mercy. The Tsar himself emptied the box every day and read the petitions, leaving not a single one of them unanswered.

“There was probably no sphere in the State which did not feel the influence of the industrious Monarch. Thus he ordered the minting of silver rubles to struggle against the deflation in the value of money. The Sovereign himself sacrificed a part of the court’s silver on this important work. He said that he himself would eat on tin ‘until the ruble recovers its rate’. And the regulation on medical institutions worked out by the Emperor Paul could be used in Russia even in our day.”

“Paul I gave hierarchs in the Synod the right themselves to choose a candidate for the post of over-procurator, took great care for the material situation of the clergy, and the widows and orphans of priests, and forbade physical punishments for priests before they had been defrocked.”

He also increased the lands of hierarchical houses and the pay of the parish clergy, and freed the clergy from being pressed into army service. The power of bishops was extended to all Church institutions and to all diocesan servers. He opened many seminaries, increased the income of the theological academies by five times, and greatly broadened the curriculum.

In general, as K.A. Papmehl writes, “Paul proved to be much more generous and responsive to the Church’s financial needs than his mother. Although this may to some – perhaps a considerable – extent be attributed to his general tendency to reverse her policies, it was probably due, in at least equal measure, to his different attitude toward the Church based, as it undoubtedly was, on

403 “Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel”, op. cit.
404 Lebedev, Velikorossia, p. 242. A.P. Dobroklonsky writes: “At the beginning of the [19th] century the over-procurator Yakovlev planned to place [the consistories] in a position more independent of the bishops and presented to the sovereign a report about establishing in them a special post of procurator subject only to the over-procurator; but the realization of this report was hindered by Metropolitan Ambrose Podobedov of St. Petersburg, who presented a report on his part that in such a case the canonical authority of the bishops would be shaken and they would become dependent on secular officials” (Rukovodstvo po istorii russkoj tserkvi (Handbook on the History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 2001, p. 534).
405 Fr. Alexis Nikolin, Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo (The Church and the State), Moscow, 1997, p. 106.
sincere Christian belief…. One symptom of this different attitude was that, unlike his predecessor – or, indeed, successor, Paul dealt with the Synod not through the Ober-Prokurator, but through the senior ecclesiastical member: first Gavriil and later Amvrosii.”407

“One of the Tsar’s contemporaries, N.A. Sablukov, who had the good fortune, thanks to his service at the Royal Court, to know the Emperor personally, remembered the Emperor Paul in his memoirs as ‘a deeply religious man, filled with a true piety and the fear of God…. He was a magnanimous man, ready to forgive offences and recognize his mistakes. He highly prized righteousness, hated lies and deceit, cared for justice and was merciless in his persecution of all kinds of abuses, in particular usury and bribery.’

“The well-known researcher of Paul, Shabelsky-Bork, writes: ‘While he was Tsarevich and Heir, Paul would often spend the whole night in prayer. A little carpet is preserved in Gatchina; on it he used to pray, and it is worn through by his knees.’ The above-mentioned N.A. Sablukov recounts, in agreement with this: ‘Right to the present day they show the places on which Paul was accustomed to kneel, immersed in prayer and often drenched in tears. The parquet is worn through in these places. The room of the officer sentry in which I used to sit during my service in Gatchina was next to Paul’s private study, and I often heard the Emperor’s sighs when he was standing at prayer.’

“The historical records of those years have preserved a description of the following event: ‘A watchman had a strange and wonderful vision when he was standing outside the summer palace... The Archangel Michael stood before the watchman suddenly, in the light of heavenly glory, and the watchman was stupefied and in trembling from this vision... And the Archangel ordered that a cathedral should be raised in his honour there and that this command should be passed on to the Emperor Paul immediately. The special event went up the chain of command, of course, and Paul Petrovich was told about everything. But Paul Petrovich replied: “I already know”: he had seen everything beforehand, and the appearance to the watchman was a kind of repetition...’ From this story we can draw the conclusion that Tsar Paul was counted worthy also of revelations from the heavenly world...”408

Although Tsar Paul was traditional and conservative in his views, this did not prevent from acknowledging, sound views and good practice from less traditional sources. Thus he accepted Voltaire’s arguments against torture. As Simon Sebag Montefiore writes: “During the latter half of the 18th century Prussia, Sweden, France, Austria and Tuscany all abolished judicial torture. In 1801, under Tsar Paul, Russia decreed that ‘the very name of torture, bringing shame and reproach on mankind, should be forever erased from the public memory.’”409

408 “Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel”, op. cit. And after his death he himself appeared to people from the other world. See http://lib.rus.ec/b/30838/read.
We should also not forget here the salutary influence of Tsar Paul’s wife, Empress Maria Fyodorovna, who was very popular among the people. A.V. Buganov writes: “While it was the inveterate desire of the enserfed peasants throughout Russia to be liberated, in the villages of Maria Fyodorovna the complete opposite was observed: tradesmen and free men generally were assigned to the number of her peasants. The empress took care that they had enough, and founded village charitable-educational institutions. She often put on feasts for her peasants in her park, where in her presence the young people sang songs and had round dances. The summit of Maria Fyodorovna’s activity and the crown of her charitable work was her educational system, which was known as ‘the institutions of Empress Maria’. These included shelters and children’s homes and educational institutions, especially for women.”

410 Buganov, “Lichnosti i sobytia istorii v pamiati russkih krestian XIX – nachala XX veka” (Personalities and historical events in the memory of the Russian peasants of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries), Voprosy istorii (Questions of History), December, 2005, p. 120.
**28. THE ANNEXATION OF GEORGIA**

Tsar Paul’s love for the Church found expression in two important events in the year 1800: the annexation of Georgia and the reunion of some of the Old Ritualists with the Orthodox Church on a “One Faith” (*Yedinoverie*) basis. The former strengthened the security of the Orthodox world against the external foe, and the latter - its internal unity.

The Georgians had first appealed for Russian protection in 1587. Since then, they had suffered almost continual invasions from the Persians and the Turks, leading to many martyrdoms, of which the most famous was that of Queen Ketevan in 1624. One king, Rostom, even adopted Islam and persecuted Orthodoxy. In fact, from 1634 until the crowning of King Wakhtang in 1701, all the sovereigns of Georgia were Muslim. The eighteenth century saw only a small improvement, and in 1762 King Teimuraz II travelled to Russia for help. In 1783, in the treaty of Georgievsk, protection was formally offered to King Heraclius II of Kartli-Kakhetia by Catherine II.

“The last, most heavy trial for the Church of Iberia,” writes P. Ioseliani, “was the irruption of Mahomed-Khan into the weakened state of Georgia, in the year 1795. In the month of September of that year the Persian army took the city of Tiflis, seized almost all the valuable property of the royal house, and reduced the palace and the whole of the city into a heap of ashes and of ruins. The whole of Georgia, thus left at the mercy of the ruthless enemies of the name of Christ, witnessed the profanation of everything holy, and the most abominable deeds and practices carried on in the temples of God. Neither youth nor old age could bring those cruel persecutors to pity; the churches were filled with troops of murderers and children were killed at their mothers’ breasts. They took the Archbishop of Tiflis, Dositheus, who had not come out of the Synod of Sion, made him kneel down before an image of [the most holy Mother of God], and, without mercy on his old age, threw him from a balcony into the river Kur; then they plundered his house, and set fire to it. The pastors of the Church, unable to hide the treasures and other valuable property of the Church, fell a sacrifice to the ferocity of their foes. Many images of saints renowned in those days perished for ever; as, for instance, among others, the image of [the most holy Mother of God] of the Church of Metekh, and that of the Synod of Sion. The enemy, having rifled churches, destroyed images, and profaned the tombs of saints, revelled in the blood of Christians; and the inhuman Mahomed-Khan put an end to these horrors only when there remained not a living soul in Tiflis.

“King George XIII, who ascended the throne of Georgia (A.D. 1797-1800) only to see his subjects overwhelmed and rendered powerless by their incessant and hopeless struggles with unavoidable dangers from enemies of the faith and of the people, found the resources of the kingdom exhausted by the constant armaments necessary for its own protection; before his eyes lay the ruins of the city, villages plundered and laid waste, churches, monasteries, and hermitages demolished, troubles within the family, and without it the sword, fire, and inevitable ruin, not only of the Church, but also of the people, yea, even of the
very name of the people. In the fear of God, and trusting to His providence, he made over Orthodox Georgia in a decided manner to the Tzar of Russia, his co-religionist; and thus obtained for her peace and quiet. It pleased God, through this king, to heal the deep wounds of an Orthodox kingdom.

“Feeling that his end was drawing near, he, with the consent of all ranks and of the people, requested the Emperor Paul I to take Georgia into his subjection for ever (A.D. 1800). The Emperor Alexander I, when he mounted the throne, promised to protect the Georgian people of the same faith with himself, which had thus given itself over the people of Georgia (A.D. 1801) he proclaimed the following:- ‘One and the same honour, and humanity laid upon us the sacred duty, after hearing the prayers of sufferers, to grant them justice and equity in exchange for their affliction, security for their persons and for their property, and to give to all alike the protection of the law.’”

What we have called “Georgia” was in fact the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti in Eastern Georgia. There was another kingdom on the Black Sea Coast, Mingrelia, which was taken under Russian protection in 1803. And then there was another independent Georgian kingdom in the West, Imeretia. There, “in 1809, King Solomon II of Imeretia, now allied to the Ottomans, fought Russian troops until in 1810, with Solomon surrounded, [Tsar] Alexander deposed him and annexed the kingdom.”

More details on how this annexation took place are recounted in the Life of Hieroschemamonk Hilarion the Georgian of Mount Athos. After the annexation of the eastern kingdom, the Russians “initiated correspondence with the Imeretian king concerning the uniting of his nation with Russia. King Solomon II sought the counsel of his country’s foremost nobles, and in 1804, due to pressure from Russia, he was left with little choice but to set forth the following: since the king did not have an heir to the throne, Imeretia would retain her independence until his death, remaining in brotherly relations with Russia as between two realms of the same faith. The Russian army had free passage across Imeretian territory to the Turkish border, and the Imeretian army was required to render them aid. The relations of the two countries were to be upheld in those sacred terms which are proper to God’s anointed rulers and Christian peoples united in an indivisible union of soul – eternally and unwaveringly. But after the king’s death the legislation of the Russian Empire would be introduced. The resolution was then sent to the Governor-General of the Caucasus in Tbilisi for forwarding to Tsar Alexander I.

“Despite the general approval of the resolution by the king’s subjects, one nobleman, Prince Zurab Tsereteli, began plotting how he could seize the Imeretian throne for himself. He first attempted to erode the friendly relations between the two monarchs by slandering each to the other. Unable to sow discord, he began a communication with the Russian governor-general of the Caucasus, Alexander Tormasov. Depicting the royal suite in the darkest colors to

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the governor-general, after repeated intrigues he finally succeeded in his designs. Eventually, the report reached the tsar. He, believing the slander, ordered Tormasov to lure Solomon II to Tbilisi and escort him to Russia, where he would remain a virtual prisoner.

“Not able to believe that others could be so base, treacherous and ignoble, the king fell into the trap set by Tormasov and Prince Zurab. Fr. Ise [the future Hieroschemamonk Hilarion] had initially warned the king of Prince Zurab’s disloyalty. However, upon learning of his wife’s repose he returned to Kutaisi and was unable to further counsel the king.

“King Solomon II and his entire retinue were eventually coaxed all the way to Tbilisi. There they were put under house arrest; the plan being to send the king to live out his days in a palace in St. Petersburg. Preferring exile to imprisonment, the king and his noblemen conceived a plan of escape and fled across the border to Turkey. There, with Fr. Ise and his retinue, he lived out the remainder of his life. After great deprivations and aborted attempts to reclaim the Imeretian Kingdom from Russia, King Solomon II reposed at Trebizond on February 19, 1815, in his forty-first year…

“After the king’s death, Fr. Ise intended to set out for Imeretia (then annexed to Russia) no matter what the consequences. He informed all the courtiers, who numbered about six hundred men, and suggested that they follow his example. Many of them accepted his decision joyfully, but fear of the tsar’s wrath hampered this plan. Fr. Ise reassured everyone, promising to take upon himself the task of mediating before the tsar. He immediately wrote out a petition in the name of all the princes and other members of the retinue, and sent it to the tsar. The sovereign graciously received their petition, restored them to their former ranks, and returned their estates…”

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Although union with Russia protected Georgia from the incursions of the Muslims, it had the unfortunate effect of destroying the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and weakening its culture. Archpriest Zakaria Machitadze writes: “The foreign officials sent to rule in Georgia began to interfere considerably in the affairs of the Church, and it soon became clear that the Russian government [contrary to the eighth paragraph of the treaty of 1783] intended to abolish the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and subordinate it to the Russian Synod.

“On June 10, 1811, Tsar Alexander summoned Anton II, Patriarch of All Georgia, to his court and from there sent him into exile. For ten years Georgia had neither a king nor a spiritual leader, and the people began to lose their sense of political and spiritual independence.

There ensued a period of great difficulty in the life of the Georgian Church. The Church was subordinated to the Russian Synod through an exarch, or representative, of the synod. From 1811 to 1817 the Georgian nobleman Varlaam served as exarch, but after his term all the subsequent exarchs were Russian by descent. The foreign exarchs’ ignorance of the Georgian language, traditions, local saints, and feast gave rise to many conflicts between the foreign clergy and the Georgian Orthodox believers. The most contemptible exarchs stole valuable pieces of jewelry and masterpieces of the Georgian enamel arts and sent them to Russia. Many cathedrals were left to fall into ruin, and the number of diocese in Georgia dropped dramatically from twenty-four to five. Divine services in the Georgian language and ancient polyphonic chants were replaced by services in Slavonic and the music of the post-Petrine Russian Church.

“Russian domination of the Church aroused considerable vexation and indignation in the Georgian people, and evidence of the exarchs’ anti-Georgian activities exacerbated their discontent. Despite the wise admonitions of many Russian elders to respect the portion assigned by lot to the Theotokos and converted by the holy Apostles themselves, appalling crimes continued to be committed against the Georgian Church and nation. Frescoes in churches were whitewashed, and the Khakuli Icon of the Theotokos along with other icons and objects adorned with precious gold and silver were stolen…”

In spite of these deviations, the annexation of Georgia marked an important step forward in Russia’s progress to becoming the Third Rome. In the eighteenth century “the gathering of the Russian lands” was on its way to completion, and the more or less continuous wars with Turkey demonstrated Russia’s determination to liberate the Orthodox of the Balkans and the Middle East. Georgia was the first non-Russian Orthodox nation to enter the empire of the Third Rome on a voluntary basis...

In 1901 Fr. John Vostorgov meditated on this almost unprecedented union of two peoples and Churches as follows: “In voluntarily uniting herself with Russia, Georgia gained much. But we must not forget that she also lost: she lost her independent existence as a separate state, that which served and serves as the object of ardent desires and bloody struggles up to now in many peoples, and which Georgia herself defended for a long series of centuries as an inestimable treasure with as lofty heroism as can be attributed to any people in history.

“Whether we recognize or not the providential significance of peoples in history, we must in any case agree that historical and geographical conditions at least place before this or that people this or that world task. Only from this point of view do the ardent enthusiasms of patriotism, and the fervent desire and care to bring greatness and power to one’s homeland, acquire a meaning and higher justification: her greatness and power are not an end, but the means to serve the universal, pan-human good. But what was the destiny of Russia on the

universal-historical plane? It would not be an exaggeration, nor an artificial invention to point to the fact that she, as standing on the borders of the East and the West, is destined to mediate between them, and to work out in her own history a higher synthesis of the principles of life of the East and the West, which are often contradictory and hostile to one another, pushing them onto the path of bitter struggle, reconciling them in the unity of a higher, unifying cultural type. This task – a great, colossal, unique task – was bequeathed to Russia by deceased Byzantium, which in her turn inherited it from ancient Greece with her eastern-Persian armies, her powerful Hellenism, which was victoriously borne even in the time of Alexander the Great into the very heart of the East.

“But much earlier than Russia this great task was recognized and accepted by Georgia…

“In the days of the ancient struggle between Greece and Persia, the West was characterized, spiritually speaking, by the religions of anthropomorphism, and the East – by Parsism. Georgia, like Armenia, stood at that time completely on the side of the latter. The Persians placed a seal on the clothing, morals and customs of the Georgians, and on their royal dynasties, language and religion, that is perceptible to this day, because in deep antiquity the native paganism of the Georgians was supplanted by the worship of Armazd, in whose name we can undoubtedly hear the name of the Persian Ormuzd. A new, powerful influence entered into the world when the West accepted Christianity and placed it on the banner of her historical existence. And before the appearance of Christianity, under Caesar and Pompey, we see in Georgia the beginnings of an attraction towards the West. But she finally understood her own mission in the world only in the light of Christianity: under the emperor Hadrian, this was still expressed in an indecisive manner and bore the character of a certain compulsion, but under Constantine the Great this was finally and irreversibly recognized.

“It is not in vain that the year of the victory of Constantine the Great near Adrianopyle (323), and the declaration that Christianity was not only permitted (as it had been in 312 and 313) but the dominant religion of the Roman empire, coincides with the year of the baptism of the Georgians in Mskhet… A remarkable coincidence! King Mirian, who was by birth from a Persian dynasty, wavered quite a bit until, propelled by the historical calling of his people, in spite of his family links with Persia, he decided to make this step, which irreversibly defined the destiny of Georgia. Soon the East, in its turn, exchanged Parsism for Islam, and there began the great duel of two worlds. Western Europe responded, and responded powerfully, to this duel with its crusades. But we can say that the life and history of Georgia was one long crusade, one long heroic and martyrlic feat! The arena of the great struggle was continually being widened in the direction of the north: from ancient Greece to Byzantium, to Georgia, to the south-western Slavic peoples. But when Byzantium began to decline, from the tenth century, still further to the north, the young Russian people was called into the arena, bearing upon herself the seal of great powers and a great destiny. But until she grew up and thrust aside a multitude of paths that bound her childhood and youth, until she had passed through the
educational suffering of her struggle with the wild hordes, with the infidels, in the crucible of the Tatar yoke, and in domestic upheavals, Georgia remained alone. It is difficult to represent and describe her boundless sufferings, her faithfulness to the Cross, her heroism worthy of eternal memory, her merits before the Christian world.

“Soon the Tatar yoke became synonymous with Islam; Russia, casting aside that yoke, moved further and further into the Muslim world, became stronger and stronger, and finally the hour of the will of God sounded: she gave the hand of help and complete union to exhausted Iberia, which had reached the final limits of exhaustion in her unequal struggle. Peoples having a single world task naturally merged into one on the level of the state also…

“But this is not all: the situation of the struggle between Islam and Christianity, between the East and the West, immediately changed. Russia, having established herself in Transcaucasia, immediately became a threat to Persia and Turkey; with unprecedented rapidity and might she cast the banner of Islam far from the bounds of tormented Georgia. Only one century has passed since the time of the union of Russia and Georgia, and in the meantime what a huge, hitherto unseen growth has taken place in Christian Russia, and, by contrast, fall in Muslim Turkey and Persia! This demonstrates to all how much good the executed decision of the two peoples to merge into one on the basis of the communality of their world tasks brought to the history of the world one hundred years ago.

“But did both peoples understand these tasks, and do they understand them now?

“Even if they had not understood them clearly, they would have striven towards them semi-consciously: if a people is an organism, then in it there must be instincts which subconsciously direct its life purposefully and infallibly, having before it, not death, but life. But there is a force which gave to both the one and the other people an understanding of their world tasks, and the means of their fulfillment. This force is Orthodoxy. It alone includes in itself the principles of true Catholicity, and does not suppress nationalities, but presents to each one spiritual freedom without tying its spiritual life to a person, a place or an external discipline, while at the same time it stands higher than all nationalities. By means of undying tradition it preserves a man from confusing freedom with license, from destructive spiritual anarchy, and makes possible in him constant vitality and growth, as of a spiritual organism. Not being tied to a place or time, and including in itself the principles of true democracy and good, healthy cosmopolitanism (in the Orthodox understanding of the Church), Orthodoxy – and only Orthodoxy – serves as a religion having an eternal and global significance, uniting mankind inwardly, and not outwardly. Without suppressing nationalities, it can at the same time become a pan-popular religion in the full sense of the word. And truly it has become the fundamental strength and popular religion both for the Russians and for the Georgians. Outside Orthodoxy both Russians and Georgians cease to be themselves. But in it they find the true guarantee of the preservation of their spiritual personalities under
any hostile attacks. For that reason it has become infinitely dear to the hearts of both peoples; for that reason it has so quickly and firmly united both peoples in an unbroken union hitherto unknown in history of state and Church, in spite of the absence of tribal kinship, for kinship according to faith is higher than kinship according to blood, union in the spirit is higher than union in race, and stronger than unions created for the avaricious aims of states. This is a union in life and death, for the present and the future, since it rests on spiritual, age-old foundations. And the eternal and the spiritual give sense to the temporal and make it truly fertile…”

29. THE OLD RITUALISTS AND THE YEDINOVERIE

Although the Old Ritualists were not allowed to have open churches in the eighteenth century, the numbers of those executed or tortured were not large – and certainly smaller than the numbers of those who immolated themselves in the burnings. As long as they did not seek to make converts, they were in general left alone. Some emigrated to the Urals, Siberia, Lithuania and Courland; but the Empress Elizabeth invited those who had gone abroad to return to Russia.

“In 1761,” writes S.A. Zenkovsky, “when Peter III came to power, he almost immediately issued a decree forbidding any kind of persecution of the Old Ritualists, which was confirmed in 1762, 1764 and 1784 by Catherine II. She asked the Old Ritualists living abroad to return to the homeland, and tens of thousands of them responded to her appeal, returned to Russia and settled in the Middle and Lower Volga regions and in New Russia, where they were immediately offered large plots of land. The ‘schismatics’ office that controlled Old Ritualist affairs was closed, the Old Ritualists received civil rights, and the monasteries of Irgiz on the Lower Volga were opened and became important centres of the Old Ritualist popovtsi.

“At the end of the century large Old Ritualist centres were formed in Moscow – the Rogozhsky (popovtsi) and Preobrazhensky (bespopovtsi), and the Korolevsky in Petersburg. In many cities and village districts there were Old Ritualist (popovtsi) churches or chapels in which priests who had come over from the ‘dominant’ church to Old Ritualism served. To speak of executions or tortures of the Old Ritualists… since 1761 would simply be a distortion of the truth…”

The great hermit, St. Seraphim of Sarov (1754-1833), frequently had cause to lead Old Ritualists to the True Church. “Four Old Ritualists,” write Archimandrite Lazarus Moore, “once came to him in order to ask him about the Sign of the Cross made with two fingers, and wanting a miracle as evidence of the truth. They had hardly crossed the threshold of his cell, when Father Seraphim read their thoughts, took the first man by the hand, folded his fingers in the Orthodox way and, crossing him, said: ‘This is the Christian Sign of the Cross! Pray in this way and tell others to do so. This way of making the Sign of the Cross had been handed down to us by the holy Apostles, but the two-finger way is against holy tradition.’

“And he added with power: ‘I beg and implore you to go to the Greek-Russian Church. It is all the power and glory of God. Like a ship with many masts, sails and a great helm, it is steered by the Holy Spirit. Its good helmsmen are the Doctors of the Church. The Archpastors are the successors of the Apostles. But your chapel is like a small rowing-boat without rudder and oars; it

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416 Zenkovsky, “Staroobriadchestvo, Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo” (Old Ritualism, the Church and the State), Russkoe Vozrozhdenie (Russian Regeneration), 1987-1, pp. 92-93.
is secured to the ship of our Church and floats behind it. The waves wash over it, and it would have certainly gone down if it had not been secured to the ship.

“Another time an Old Ritualist asked him: ‘Tell me, old man of God, which faith is the best – the present faith of the Church or the old one?’

“Stop your nonsense,’ replied Father Seraphim sharply, contrary to his wont. ‘Our life is a sea, the Holy Orthodox Church is our chip, and the Helmsman if the Saviour Himself. If with such a Helmsman, on account of their sinful weakness people cross the sea with difficulty and are not all saved from drowning, where do you expect to get with your little dinghy? And how can you hope to be save without the Helmsman?’

“Once they brought him a woman whose limbs were so distorted that her knees were bent up to her breast. She had previously been Orthodox, but having married an Old Ritualists, she stopped going to Church. St. Seraphim cured her in front of all the people by anointing her breast and hands with oil from his Icon-lamp, and then ordered her and relations to pray in the Orthodox way.

“’Did some of your now deceased relatives pray with the two-finger Sign of the Cross?’

“’To my great grief, everyone prayed like that in our family.’

“Father Seraphim reflected a little, and then remarked: ‘Even thought they were virtuous people, they will be bound; the Holy Orthodox Church does not accept this Sign of the Cross.’

“Then he asked: ‘Do you know these graves? God, mother, to their graves, make three prostrations and pray to the Lord that He may release them in eternity.’

“Her living relatives afterwards obeyed Father Seraphim’s instructions.

“Another edifying case was that of a woman who had been adopted as a three-year-old orphan by Old Ritualists.

“After their death she first joined their community, but then she started a life of pilgrimage and went from one Elder to another.

“My whole object was to find someone who could teach me, a sinner, how to save my soul. I also had a misgiving. I was in doubt whether I could have my benefactors prayed for in the Orthodox Church.’

“At last she reached Sarov. Reports about Father Seraphim had already spread throughout Russia.

“’I saw a crowd of people preparing to go somewhere. I inquired and was told that they were going to Father Seraphim’s hermitage. Though I was very
tired from the journey, yet I forgot about res and went with them. I wanted to see the Elder as soon as possible. Having passed the Monastery, we went along a forest path. We had walked about twenty versts, those who were stronger were ahead, but I was lagging behind and following slowly in the rear. Suddenly I looked to one side and saw an old wizened man, with whitish-looking hair and a bent back, in a white cassock, gathering sticks. I went up to him, and asked him whether it was far to Father Seraphim’s hermitage.

“‘The Elder put down his faggot, gave me a serene look and asked softly:

“‘What do you want with poor Seraphim, my joy?’

“Only then did I realize that I was talking to the Elder himself, and threw myself at his feet, and began to ask him to pray for me, unworthy as I was.

“‘Rise, daughter Irene!’ said the ascetic, and he bent down to help me up himself. “I was just waiting for you. I did not want you to have come here for nothing, when you are so tired.”

“I was astonished to be called by my name, when he had never seen me before, and I trembled all over with fear; neither could I say a word, but just gazed at his angelic face.’

“Father Seraphim folded her fingers in the Orthodox way and crossed himself with her hand.

“‘Cross yourself like that,’ he repeated twice, ‘that is how God commands us.’

“And after a short silence he went on: ‘As for your benefactors, if you happen to have a copeck, give it without misgiving for them to be commemorated at the proskomedia. It is not a sin!’

“‘Having blessed me, he held the copper cross which was hanging on his chest for me to kiss, and gave me some biscuits from his bag.

“‘Now,’ he said, “go in God’s name!”

“Then he hurried away into the forest. I dragged my feet slowly back to the Monastery. As for my fellow-travelers, they walked for a long time, but did not see the Elder. They did not even believe me, when I told them that I had seen him.’”

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It is against this background that we should view the movement that began among some Old Ritualist communities towards union with the Orthodox on the

basis of *yedinoverie*, or “One Faith” – that is, agreement on dogmas and the acceptance of the authority of the Orthodox hierarchy, together with retention of the pre-Nikonian rites. “The essence of the *yedinoverie*,” writes Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), consisted in the fact that the ‘one-faithers’, while having amongst themselves the priesthood and the fullness of the sacraments, did not at the same time lose their beloved rites, with which they were accustomed to pray to God and to please Him. The first person who had the idea of the *yedinoverie* was none other than Patriarch Nikon himself. After his Church reforms he allowed the first and most important leader of the Church disturbance that then arose, Gregory Neronov, to carry out Divine services according to the old printed service books and books of needs, and blessed for him ‘to increase the alleluias’ during his presence in the Dormition cathedral. In this way Patriarch Nikon returned the first schismatic to the Church. Moreover, already after the correction of the Divine service books, Patriarch Nikon published books of the Hours in which the controversial passages were printed in the old way. It is evident that Patriarch Nikon treated this necessary Church reform very rationally and clearly understood that after the danger of the Russian Orthodox Church being torn away from Ecumenical Orthodoxy had been averted by the accomplished Church reform, the old books and rites could be freely allowed for those who attached particular significance to them without at the same time violating the dogmas of the faith.

“It is also known that in the best Russian monasteries of the second half of the 17th century they looked upon the old and new books in the same way and carried out Church services with the ones and the others. There are also indications that in the 18th century, too, the Church took a condescending attitude towards the Church rite practice of the Old Ritualists, and her attention was mainly directed at the dogmas of the faith, and not at rites and books. The strict measures taken by the government, and the formal, bureaucratic attitude of the Synod administration, together with the striving to achieve unity in rites by means of force put an end to this *rapprochement* and deepened the schism… There is no doubt that the main reasons [for the gradual mutual alienation of the ruling clergy and the Old Ritualists] were not so much religious and ecclesiastical, as political, including the influence of foreign States striving to weaken and disrupt the inner unity of the Russian people…”

“Before 1800,” writes K.V. Glazkov, “almost all the Old Ritualist communities had united with the Orthodox Church on their own conditions. Besides, there were quite a few so-called crypto-Old Ritualists, who formally belonged to the ruling Church, but who in their everyday life prayed and lived according to the Old Ritualist ways (there were particularly many of these amidst the minor provincial nobility and merchant class). This state of affairs was evidently not normal: it was necessary to work out definite rules, common for all, for the union of the Old Ritualists with the Orthodox Church. As a result of negotiations with the Muscovite Old Ritualists the latter in 1799 put forward the conditions under which they would agree to accept a priesthood from the Orthodox Church...”

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Church. These conditions, laid out in 16 points, partly represented old rules figuring in the 1793 petition of the Starodub ‘agreers’, and partly new ones relating to the mutual relations of the ‘one-faithers’ with the Orthodox Church. These relations required the union of the ‘one-faithers’ with the Orthodox Church, but allowed for their being to a certain degree isolated. On their basis the Muscovite Old Ritualists submitted a petition to his Majesty for their reunion with the Orthodox Church, and Emperor Paul I wrote at the bottom of this document: ‘Let this be. October 27, 1800.’ This petition with the royal signature was returned to the Muscovite Old Ritualists and was accepted as complete confirmation of their suggested conditions for union, as an eternal act of the recognition of the equal validity and honour of Old Ritualism and Orthodoxy.

“But on the same day, with the remarks (or so-called ‘opinions’) of Metropolitan Plato of Moscow, conditions were confirmed that greatly limited the petition of the Old Ritualists. These additions recognised reunited Old Ritualism as being only a transitional stage on the road to Orthodoxy, and separated the ‘old-faith’ parishes as it were into a special semi-independent ecclesiastical community. Wishing to aid a change in the views of those entering into communion with the Church on the rites and books that they had acquired in Old Ritualism, and to show that the Old Ritualists were falsely accusing the Church of heresies, Metropolitan Plato called the ‘agreers’ ‘one-faithers’…

“The one-faithers petitioned the Holy Synod to remove the curses [of the Moscow Council of 1666-1667] on holy antiquity, but Metropolitan Plato replied in his additional remarks that they were imposed with justice. The Old Ritualists petitioned for union with the Church while keeping the old rites, but Metropolitan Plato left them their rites only for a time, only ‘in the hope’ that with time the reunited would abandon the old rites and accept the new…

“Amidst the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church the view became more and more established that the ‘One Faith’ was a transitional step towards Orthodoxy. But in fact the One Faith implies unity in dogmatic teaching and the grace of the Holy Spirit with the use in the Divine services of various Orthodox rites. But the old rite continued to be perceived as incorrect, damaged and in no way blessed by the Church, but only ‘by condescension not forbidden’ for a time.”

“The Synodal administration, which was built on formalist foundations, looked on the yedinoverie not from a paternal-caring point of view, but only as on a certain group that was constantly making petitions for something, and the Church authorities, in reply to these petitions, constantly restricted them, and regarded them with suspicion and did not satisfy their age-old desire to have a common spiritual father, a [one-faither] bishop.

“Thanks to this situation, the yedinoverie gradually fell into decline and disorder, to the great joy of the hardened schismatics and neighbouring States,

419 Glazkov, “K voprosu o edinoverii v sviazi s ego dvukhsotletiem” (“Towards the Question of the ‘One Faith’ in connection with its 200th anniversary”), Pravoslavnij Put’ (The Orthodox Way), 2000, pp. 74-75, 76-77.
which used this misfortune and helped in creating for the Old Ritualists the so-called Austrian hierarchy…”"}^{420}

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^{420} Rklitsky, op. cit., p. 167.
30. THE MURDER OF TSAR PAUL

When the Empress Catherine saw the effect that the ideas of the Enlightenment had in generating the French revolution, she backed away from her former support of them. “Yesterday I remembered,” she wrote to Grimm in 1794, “that you told me more than once: this century is the century of preparations. I will add that these preparations consisted in preparing dirt and dirty people of various kinds, who produce, have produced and will produce endless misfortunes and an infinite number of unfortunate people.”

“The next year,” writes Ivanov, “she categorically declared that the Encyclopédie had only two aims: the one – to annihilate the Christian religion, and the other – royal power. ‘I will calmly wait for the right moment when you will see how right is my opinion concerning the philosophers and their hangers-on that they participated in the revolution…, for Helvétius and D’Alambert both admitted to the deceased Prussian king that this book had only two aims: the first – to annihilate the Christian religion, and the second – to annihilate royal power. They spoke about this already in 1777.”

In his estimate of Masonry and French influence, if in little else, Tsar Paul was in agreement with his mother. Well-known Masons were required to sign that they would not open lodges (the rumour that Paul himself became a Mason is false), and the great General Suvorov was sent to Vienna to join Austria and Britain in fighting the French. But the French continued to advance through Europe, and when, in 1797, Napoleon threatened the island of Malta, the knights of the Order of the Maltese Cross, who had ruled the island since the 16th century, appealed to the protection of Tsar Paul. Paul accepted the responsibility, and in gratitude the Maltese offered that he become their Grand Master. Paul accepted because it was anti-French and anti-revolutionary.

421 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 211.
422 Sorokin, op. cit. The Maltese Order that he headed was a Roman Catholic, not a Masonic institution.
423 Suvorov’s extraordinarily successful career was based, according to Lebedev, “on Orthodox spirituality. He taught the soldiers prayer and life according to the commandments of God better than any preacher, so that at times it was difficult to say what Suvorov taught his soldiers more – to be a warrior or to be a real Orthodox Christian!” (Velikorossia, p. 234).
424 Sorokin, op. cit., pp. 33-34. Not too much should be of the fact that the Tsar was sympathetic, or at least not antipathetic, towards Catholicism, which, as Nikolin points out, “was to a large extent linked with fear of the French revolution, which had been cruel to believing Catholics, monks and clergy. This relationship is attested by such facts as his offering the Pope of Rome to settle in Russia, his cooperation with the establishment of the Jesuit order in Russia, and his support for the establishment of a Roman Catholic chapel in St. Petersburg. At the same time attention should be drawn to Paul I’s ukaz of March 18, 1797, which protected the consciences of peasants whom landowners were trying to detach forcibly from Orthodoxy into the unia or convert to Catholicism.” (Nikolin, op. cit., p. 106). “On October 12, 1799 the holy things of the Order were triumphantly brought to Gatchina: the right hand of St. John the Baptist, a particle of the Cross of the Lord and the icon of the Filerma Odigitria icon of the Mother of God. Only a spiritually blind man, on learning this fact, would not see the Providence of God in the fact that the Tsar became Master of the Maltese Order. October 12 was introduced into the number of festal days by the Church, and a special service to this feast was composed…” (“Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel”, op. cit.).
In 1798 Napoleon seized Malta. Paul then entered into an alliance union with Prussia, Austria and England against France. A Russian fleet entered the Mediterranean, and in 1799 a Russian army under Suvorov entered Northern Italy, liberating the territory from the French. However, in 1800, writes Lebedev, “England seized the island of Malta, taking it away from the French and not returning it to the Maltese Order. Paul I sent Suvorov with his armies back to Russia and demanded that Prussia take decisive measures against England (the seizure of Hanover), threatening to break relations and take Hanover, the homeland of the English monarchs, with Russian forces. But at the same time there began direct relations between Paul and Napoleon. They began in an unusual manner. Paul challenged Napoleon to a duel so as to decide State quarrels by means of a personal contest, without shedding the innocent blood of soldiers. Bonaparte declined from the duel, but had a high opinion of Paul I’s suggestion, and as a sign of respect released his Russian prisoners without any conditions, providing them with all that they needed at France’s expense. Paul I saw that with the establishment of Napoleon in power, an end had been put to the revolution in France. Therefore he concluded a union with Napoleon against England (with the aim of taking Malta away from her and punishing her for her cunning), and united Russia to the ‘continental blockade’ that Napoleon had constructed against England, undermining her mercantile-financial might. Moreover, in counsel with Napoleon, Paul I decided [on January 12, 1801] to send a big Cossack corps to India – the most valuable colony of the English. To this day his Majesty’s order has been deemed ‘mad’ and ‘irrational’. But those who say this conceal the fact that the plan for this Russian expedition against India did not at all belong to Paul I: it arose under Catherine II and was seriously considered by her (Paul I only put it into action).

“Russia’s break with England and the allies signified for them a catastrophe and in any case an irreparable blow to the British pocket, and also to the pocket of the major Russian land-owners and traders (English trade in Russia had been very strong for a long time!). From the secret masonic centres of England and Germany an order was delivered to the Russian Masons to remove the Emperor and as quickly as possible!

“Long disturbed by Paul I’s attitude, the Russian nobles were quick to respond to the Masonic summons. Even before this,... in 1798 the Russian Masons had succeeded in sowing dissension in the Royal Family. They slanderously accused the Tsaritsa Maria Fyodorovna of supposedly trying to rule her husband and instead of him. At the same time he was ‘set up with’ the beauty Lopukhina, the daughter of a very powerful Mason, and a faithful plotter. But the affair was foiled through the nobility of the Emperor. Learning

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425 This was, of course, a great mistake. Napoleon was a child of the revolution and the instrument of the spread of its ideas throughout Europe. (V.M.)
426 Another mistake, for it did precisely the opposite, weakening the continental economies and allowing England, with her superior navy, to seize the colonies of her rivals around the world. (V.M.)
427 They had crossed the Volga on March 18 when they heard of the death of the Tsar...
that Lopukhina loved Prince Gagarin, Paul I arranged their marriage, since he was just good friends with Lopukhina. The Masons had to save the situation in such a way that Prince Gagarin himself began to help his own wife come closer to Paul I. She settled in the Mikhailov palace and became a very valuable agent of the plotters. From the autumn of 1800 the plot rapidly acquired a systematic character. Count N.P. Panin (the college of foreign affairs) was drawn into it, as was General Count Peter Alexeyevich von der Pahlen, the governor of Petersburg and a very close advisor of the Tsar, General Bennigsen (also a German), Admiral Ribas (a native of the island of Malta), the brothers Plato, Nicholas and Valerian Zubov and their sister, in marriage Princes Zherbtsova, the senators Orlov, Chicherin, Tatarinov, Tolstoy, Torschinsky, Generals Golitsyn, Depreradovich, Obolyaninov, Talysin, Mansurov, Uvarov, Argamakov, the officers Colonel Tolbanov, Skaryatin, a certain Prince Yashvil, Lieutenant Marin and very many others (amongst them even General M.I. Kutuzov, one of the prominent Masons of those years). At the head of the conspiracy stood the English consul in Petersburg, Sir Charles Whitford. According to certain data, England paid the plotters two million rubles in gold through him.

“The most important plotters were the Mason-Illuminati, who acted according to the principle of their founder Weishaupt: ‘slander, slander - something will stick!’ Floods of slanderous inventions poured onto the head of the Emperor Paul I. Their aim was to ‘prove’ that he was mad, mentally ill and therefore in the interests of the people (!) and dynasty (!) he could not remain in power. The slander was strengthened by the fact that the Emperor’s orders either were not carried out, or were distorted to an absurd degree, or in his name instructions of a crazy character were given out. Von Pahlen was especially successful in this. He began to insinuate to Paul I that his son Alexander Pavlovich (and also Constantine), with the support of the Empress, wanted to cast him from the throne. And when Paul I was upset by these communications, it was insinuated to his sons and Alexander and Constantine that the Emperor by virtue of a paranoid illness was intending to imprison them together with their mother for good, while he was supposedly intending to place the young Prince Eugene of Wurtemburg, who had then arrived in Russia, on the throne. Noble society was frightened by the fact that Paul I in a fit of madness [supposedly] wanted to execute some, imprison others and still others send to Siberia. Pahlen was the person closest to the Tsar and they could not fail to believe him! While he, as he later confessed, was trying to deceive everyone, including Great Prince Alexander. At first the latter was told that they were talking about removing his father the Emperor from power (because of his ‘illness’), in order that Alexander should become regent-ruler. Count N.P. Panin sincerely believed precisely in this outcome of the affair, as did many other opponents of Paul I who had not lost the last trace of humanity. At first Alexander did not at all agree with the plot, and prepared to suffer everything from his father to the end. But Panin, and then Pahlen convinced him that the coup was necessary for the salvation of the Fatherland! Alexander several times demanded an oath from the plotters that they would not allow any violence to his father and would preserve his life. These oaths were given, but they lied intentionally, as Pahlen later
boasted, only in order to ‘calm the conscience’ of Alexander. They convinced Constantine Pavlovich in approximately the same way. The coup was marked for the end of March, 1801. Before this Ribas died, and Panin landed up in exile, from which he did not manage to return. The whole leadership of the plot passed to Pahlen, who from the beginning wanted to kill the Emperor. Many people faithful to his Majesty knew about this, and tried to warn him. Napoleon also heard about all this through his own channels, and hastened to inform Paul I in time.… On March 7, 1801 Paul I asked Pahlen directly about the plot. He confirmed its existence and said that he himself was standing at the head of the plotters, since only in this way could he know what was going on and prevent it all at the necessary moment… This time, too, Pahlen succeeded in deceiving the Tsar, but he felt that it would not do that for long, and that he himself ‘was hanging by a thread’. He had to hurry, the more so in that many officials, generals and especially all the soldiers were devoted to Paul I. Besides, the Jesuits, who were at war with the Illuminati, knew everything about the plot in advance. In the afternoon of March 11, in the Tsar’s reception-room, Pater Gruber appeared with a full and accurate list of the plotters and data on the details. But they managed not to admit the Jesuit to an audience with Paul I. Palen told Alexander that his father had already prepared a decree about his and the whole Royal Family’s incarceration in the Schlisselburg fortress, and that for that reason it was necessary to act without delay. Detachments of units loyal to Paul I were removed from the Mikhailov castle, where he lived. On March 11, 1801 the father invited his sons Alexander and Constantine and personally asked them whether they had any part in the conspiracy, and, having received a negative reply, considered it necessary that they should swear as it were for a second time to their faithfulness to him as to their Tsar. The sons swore, deceptively… On the night of the 11th to 12th of March, 1801, an English ship entered the Neva with the aim of taking the conspirators on board in case they failed. Before that Charles Whitford had been exiled from Russia. Zherebtsova-Zubova was sent to him in England so as to prepare a place for the conspirators there if it proved necessary to flee. On the night of the 12th March up to 60 young officers who had been punished for misdemeanours were assembled at Palen’s house and literally pumped with spirits. One of them drunkenly remarked that it would be good for Russia if all the members of the Royal Family were slaughtered at once! The rest rejected such an idea with horror, but it spoke volumes! After much drinking they all moved by night across Mars field to the Mikhailov castle. There the brave officers were scared to death by some crows which suddenly took wing at night in an enormous flock and raised a mighty cry. As became clear later, some of the young officers did not even know where they were being led and why! But the majority knew. One by one (and frightening each other), they managed to enter in two groups into Paul I’s bedroom, having killed one faithful guard, a chamber-hussar at the doors (the second ran for the sentry). Paul I, hearing the noise of a fight, tried to run through a secret door, but a tapestry, ‘The School in Athens’, a gift from the murdered king and queen of

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428 Alan Palmer writes: “One of the older conspirators, more sober than the others, pertinently asked the question which Alexander had always ignored: what would happen if the Tsar offered resistance? ‘Gentlemen,’ Pahlen replied calmly, ‘you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs’. It was an ominous remark, difficult to reconcile with his assurance to Alexander” (Alexander I, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, p. 44). Lenin later quoted it... (V.M.)
France, fell on top of him. The plotters caught the Tsar. Bennigsen declared to him that they were arresting him and that he had to abdicate from the throne, otherwise they could not vouch for the consequences. The greatly disturbed Paul I did not reply. He rushed to a room where a gun was kept, trying to break out of the ring of his murderers, but they formed a solid wall around him, breathing in the face of the Emperor, reeking of wine and spitefulness. Where had the courtier nobles disappeared! ‘What have I done to you?’ asked Paul I. ‘You have tormented us for four years!’ was the reply. The drunken Nicholas Zubov took hold of the Emperor by the hand, but the latter struck the scoundrel on the hand and repulsed him. Zubov took a swing and hit the Tsar on the left temple with a golden snuff-box given by Catherine II, wounding his temple-bone and eyes. Covered with blood, Paul I fell to the ground. The brutalized plotters hurled themselves at him, trampled on him, beat him, suffocated him. Special zeal was displayed by the Zubovs, Skoriatin, Yashvil, Argamakov and, as people think, Pahlen (although there are reasons for thinking that he took no personal part in the fight). At this point the sentries made up of Semenovtsy soldiers faithful to Alexander appeared (the soldiers had not been initiated into the plot). Bennigsen and Pahlen came out to them and said that the Tsar had died from an attack of apoplexy and now his son Alexander was on the throne. Pahlen rushed into Alexander’s rooms. On hearing of the death of his father, Alexander sobbed. ‘Where is your oath? You promised not to touch my father!’ he cried. ‘Enough of crying! They’re going to lift all of us on their bayonets! Please go out to the people!’ shouted Pahlen. Alexander, still weeping, went out and began to say something to the effect that he would rule the state well... The sentries in perplexity were silent. The soldiers could not act against the Heir-Tsarevich, but they could also not understand what had happened. But the simple Russian people, then and later and even now (!) understood well. To this day (since 1801) believing people who are being oppressed by the powerful of this world in Petersburg (and recently also in Leningrad) order pannikhidas for ‘the murdered Paul’, asking for his intercession. And they receive what they ask for!...

“And so the plot of the Russian nobles against the Emperor they did not like succeeded. Paul I was killed with the clear connivance of his sons. The eldest of them, Alexander, became the Tsar of Russia. In the first hours and days nobody yet suspected how all this would influence the destiny of the country in the future and the personal destiny and consciousness of Alexander I himself. All the plotters had an evil end. Some were removed by Alexander I, others were punished by the Lord Himself. The main regicide Pahlen was quickly removed from all affairs and sent into exile on his estate. There he for a long time went mad, becoming completely irresponsible. Nicholas Zubov and Bennigsen also went mad (Zubov began to eat his own excreta). Having falsely accused Paul I of being mentally ill, they themselves became truly mentally ill! God is not mocked. ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay’, He said. The joy of the Russian nobility was not especially long-lived. Alexander I and then Nicholas I were nevertheless sons of their father! Both they and the Emperors who followed them no longer allowed the nobility to rule them. Immediately the Russian nobility understood this, that is, that they no longer had any power over the Autocracy, they began to strive for the annihilation of the Autocracy in Russia altogether, which they succeeded in doing,
finally, in February, 1917 – true, to their own destruction!.. Such was the zig-zag of Russian history, beginning with Catherine I and ending with Nicholas II.

“The reign of Emperor Paul Petrovich predetermined the following reigns in the most important thing. As we have seen, this Tsar ‘turned his face’ towards the Russian Orthodox Church, strengthened the foundations of the Autocracy and tried to make it truly of the people. Personally this cost him his life. But thereby the later foundations were laid for the State life of Russia in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries: ‘Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality!’ Or, in its military expression – ‘For the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland!’”\(^{429}\)

Tsar Paul knew the circumstances and even the exact date of his death beforehand. It was told him by a monk named Abel, who had foretold the date of the Tsar’s mother, Catherine the Great. “The prophecy of the clairvoyant monk Abel was completely fulfilled. He personally foretold to the Emperor Paul: ‘Your reign will be short, and I, the sinner, see your savage end. On the feast of St. Sophronius of Jerusalem you will receive a martyrlic death from unfaithful servants. You will be suffocated in your bedchamber by evil-doers whom you warm on your royal breast... They will bury you on Holy Saturday... But they, these evil-doers, in trying to justify their great sin of regicide, will proclaim that you are mad, and will blacken your good memory.... But the Russian people with their sensitive soul will understand and esteem you, and they will bring their sorrows to your grave, asking for your intercession and the softening of the hearts of the unrighteous and cruel.’ This part of the prophecy of Abel was also fulfilled. When Paul was killed, for many years the people came to his grave to pray, and he is considered by many to be an uncanonised saint.”\(^{430}\)

\(^{429}\) Lebedev, Velikorossia, pp. 245-249.

Monk Abel prophesied the following about Paul’s son and successor, Tsar Alexander I: “Under him the French will burn down Moscow, but he will take Paris from them and will be called the Blessed. But his tsar’s crown will be heavy for him, and he will change the exploit of service as tsar for the exploit of fasting and prayer, and he will be righteous in God’s eyes.”

The reign of Tsar Alexander can be divided into three phases: a first phase until 1812, when he was strongly influenced by the ideas of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment; a second phase from 1812 to about 1822, when the main influence on him was a kind of romantic mysticism; and a third phase until his death, when he returned to True Orthodoxy. Tsar Alexander faced, in a particularly acute form, the problems faced by all the “enlightened despots” of the eighteenth century – that is, how to relieve the burdens of his people without destroying the autocratic system that held the whole country together. Like his fellow despots, Alexander was strongly influenced by the ideals of the French revolution and by the Masonic ferment that had penetrated the nobility of Russia no less than the élites of Western Europe. So it is not surprising that he should have wavered between the strictly autocratic views of his mother the Dowager Empress Maria Fyodorovna, the Holy Synod and the court historian Nicholas Karamzin, on the one hand, and the liberalism of the Masons that surrounded him, on the other.

Nikolai Karamzin was one of the first intelligentsia, together with the poet Pushkin and the hierarch Philaret of Moscow, who called for a return to Russian traditions in public life, and in particular to the Russian language, after the century of forced westernization since Peter the Great. Karamzin believed that Russia had nothing to be ashamed of by comparison with the West. Nor did he accept the western vogue for republicanism. “Russia was founded through victories and one-man-rule; she perished [at the end of the Kievan period] because of a variety of rulers; and she was saved by the wise autocracy [of the Muscovite tsars].”

And yet the autocrat of all the Russias had his doubts about autocracy. Only ten days after the death of his father, Alexander returned to the Winter Palace one night to find an anonymous letter on his desk, full of liberal, anti-autocratic sentiments of the kind that Alexander had espoused in his youth. “Is it

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431 Shabelsky-Bork, in Fomin S., Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1993, p. 121.
432 Karamzin, “Zapiska o novoj i drevnej Rossi i ee politicheskom i grazhdanskom otnosheniakh” (Note on the new and ancient Russia and her political and civil relations), 1811; in N.G. Fyodorovsky, V poiskakh svoego puti: Rossia mezhdu Evropoj i Azej (In Search of her own path: Russia between Europe and Asia), Moscow, 1997, p. 27.
433 Alexander had once said to his tutor La Harpe, a Swiss republican: “Once… my turn comes, then it will be necessary to work, gradually of course, to create a representative assembly of the nation which, thus directed, will establish a free constitution, after which my authority will cease absolutely” (in Geoffrey Hosking, Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917, London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 123).
possible,” it asked, “to set aside the hope of nations in favour of the sheer delight of self-rule?… No! He will at last open the book of fate which Catherine merely perceived. He will give us immutable laws. He will establish them for ever by an oath binding him to all his subjects. To Russia he will say, ‘Here lie the bounds to my autocratic power and to the power of those who will follow me, unalterable and everlasting.’”

The author turned out to be a member of the chancery staff, Karazin. “There followed,” writes Alan Palmer, “an episode which anywhere except Russia would have seemed fantastic. When summoned to the Tsar’s presence, Karazin feared a severe rebuke for his presumption. But Alexander was effusively magnanimous. He embraced Karazin warmly and commended his sense of patriotic duty. Karazin, for his part, knelt in tears at Alexander’s feet, pledging his personal loyalty. Then the two men talked at length about the problems facing the Empire, of the need to safeguard the people from acts of arbitrary tyranny and to educate them so that they could assume in time the responsibilities of government…”

In 1797 Alexander wrote a letter to his former tutor La Harpe which, as well as being indiscreet and disloyal to his father the Tsar, showed his republican sympathies alarmingly clearly: “When my father came to the throne, he wished to reform everything. The beginning of his reign was indeed bright enough, but its continuation has not fulfilled expectations. Everything has been turned upside down… You have always known my thoughts about leaving my country… Now the wretched condition of my fatherland makes me look differently at my ideas. I think that if ever the time comes for me to reign, rather than go into voluntary exile myself, I had far better devote myself to the task of giving freedom to my country and thereby preventing her from becoming in the future a toy in a madman’s hands. I have been in touch with enlightened people who, on their side, have long thought in the same way. In all we are only four in number, that is to say, M. Novosiltsov, Count Stroganov, the young Prince Czartoryski, my aide-de-camp (a young man in a million) and me. Our idea is that during the present reign we should translate into the Russian language as many useful books as is possible, of which we would print as many as would be permitted, and we will reserve others for a future occasion… Once my turn comes, then it will be essential to work, little by little, for a method of representing the nation… let it be by a free constitution, after which my authority will end absolutely and, if Providence seconds our endeavours, I will retire into some place and I will live contentedly and happily observing the good fortune of my country and rejoicing in it.”

After ascending the throne, “in April, 1801,” writes Montefiore, “Alexander created a new Council and replaced Peter the Great’s collegia with eight Western-style ministries, reforms that completed Peter’s vision of a simplified central government. But his ministers were still the same grandees who had run Russia since Tsar Michael, and he wanted to find his own way so he appointed

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434 Palmer, op. cit., p. 50.
435 Palmer, op. cit., p. 35.
[the Polish] Adam Czartoryski and his friends as their deputies. And then secretly he created an Intimate Committee [neglasny komitet] made up of his friends. ‘We had the privilege of coming to dine with the emperor without a prior appointment,’ recalled Czartoryski. ‘Our confabs took place two or three times a week,’ then after official dinner and coffee, Alexander would disappear and the four liberals would be led through corridors to reappear in the emperor’s salon to discuss a constitution, a semi-elected senate and the abolition of serfdom.”

Alexander was further hindered in breaking with his liberal past by the guilt he felt at not stopping his father’s murder, and by the fact that he was still surrounded by many of those Masons who had murdered his father. The result was a continual increase in the power of Masonry, which was not without its effect on the conduct of government.

“On June 24, 1801,” writes V.F. Ivanov, “the Intimate Committee opened its proceedings. Alexander called it, on the model of the revolution of 1789, ‘the Committee of public safety’ [Komitet Gosudarstvennoj Bezopasnosti – KGB for short], and its opponents from the conservative camp – ‘the Jacobin gang’.

“There began criticism of the existing order and of the whole government system, which was recognized to be ‘ugly’. The firm and definite conclusion was reached that ‘only a constitution can muzzle the despotic government’.”

However, Alexander’s coronation in September, 1801, in Moscow, the heart of Old Russia with its autocratic traditions, pulled him in the opposite direction to the liberal ideas of St. Petersburg. “After being anointed with Holy Oil by the Metropolitan, Alexander swore a solemn oath to preserve the integrity of the Russian lands and the sacred concept of autocracy; and he was then permitted, as one blessed by God, to pass through the Royal Doors into the Sanctuary where the Tsars had, on this one occasion in their lives, the privilege of administering to themselves the Holy Sacrament. But Alexander felt unworthy to exercise the priestly office in this way; and, as [Metropolitan] Platon offered him the chalice, he knelt to receive communion as a member of the laity. Although only the higher clergy and their acolytes witnessed this gesture of humility, it was soon known in the city at large and created a deep impression of the new Tsar’s sense of spiritual discipline.”

“The movement was encouraged,” writes Janet Hartley, “by the rumours, which cannot be substantiated, that Alexander I became a mason (he certainly visited lodges in Russia and Germany); his younger brother Constantine

437 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 246.
439 Richard Rhoda writes: “The tradition exists that Alexander became a Mason in 1803 and there is evidence that he was the member of a lodge in Warsaw” (“Russian Freemasonry: A New Dawn”, paper read at Orient Lodge N 15 on June 29, 1996, http://members.aol.com/houltonme/ru.htm). (V.M.) But, as we shall see, he later repented and banned Masonry. (V.M.)
certainly was a mason. Regional lodges continued to flourish and young army officers who accompanied Russian forces through Europe in 1813 and 1814 also attended, and were influenced by, lodges in the territory through which they passed. The constitutions of secret societies which were formed by army officers in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, like the Order of the Russian Knights and the Union of Salvation and Welfare, copied some of their rules and hierarchical organization from masonic lodges. In 1815, the higher orders of masonry in Russia were subordinated to the Astrea grand lodge.\footnote{Hartley, \textit{A Social History of the Russian Empire, 1650-1825}, London and New York: Longman, 1999, pp. 233-235. “Astrea” is the goddess of justice (O.F. Soloviev, \textit{Masonstvo v Mirovoy Politike XX Veke} (Masonry in World Politics in the 20th Century), Moscow, 1998, p. 23).}

In January, 1800 A.F. Labzin opened the “Dying Sphinx” lodge in Petersburg. The members of the order were sworn to sacrifice themselves and all they had to the aims of the lodge, whose existence remained a closely guarded secret. In 1806 Labzin founded \textit{The Messenger of Zion} as the vehicle of his ideas. Suppressed at first by the Church hierarchy, it was allowed to appear by Prince Golitsyn in 1817.

“\textit{The Messenger of Zion},” writes Walicki, “preached the notion of ‘inner Christianity’ and the need for a moral awakening. It promised its readers that once they were morally reborn and vitalized by faith, they would gain suprarational powers of cognition and be able to penetrate the mysteries of nature, finding in them a key to a superior revelation beyond the reach of the Church.

“Labzin’s religion was thus a nondenominational and anti-ecclesiastical Christianity. Men’s hearts, he maintained, had been imbued with belief in Christ on the first day of creation; primitive pagan peoples were therefore closer to true Christianity than nations that had been baptized but were blinded by the false values of civilization. The official Church was only an assembly of lower-category Christians, and the Bible a ‘silent mentor who gives symbolic indications to the living teacher residing in the heart’. All dogmas, according to Labzin, were merely human inventions: Jesus had not desired men to think alike, but only to act justly. His words ‘Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden’ showed that he did not mean to set up any intermediate hierarchy between the believers and God.”\footnote{Andrzej Walicki, \textit{A History of Russian Thought}, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, p. 73.}

In 1802 A.A. Zherebtsov opened the “United Friends” lodge in Petersburg. Its aim was “to remove between men the distinctions of races, classes, beliefs and views, and to destroy fanaticism and superstition, and annihilate hatred and war, uniting the whole of humanity through the bonds of love and knowledge.”\footnote{Ivanov, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 247.}

Then there was the society of Count Grabianka, “The People of God”. “The aim of the society was ‘to announce at the command of God the imminent Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious reign upon earth’ and to prepare the humble and faithful souls for the approaching Kingdom of God. ‘As
in the Rosecrucian lodges,’ writes Sokolskaia, ‘in the lodge of Count Grabianka people indulged, besides theosophy, in alchemy and magic. But while asserting that the brothers of the “Golden Rose Cross” had as their object of study ‘white, Divine magic’, the leaders of the Rosecrucians accused the followers of Count Grabianka of indulging in reading books of black magic and consorting with evil spirits. In sorrow at the lack of firmness of these brothers, who had become enmeshed in a new teaching, the leaders wrote: ‘Those who are known to us are wavering on their path and do not know what to join. And – God have mercy on them! – they are falling into the hands of evil magicians or Illuminati…”’

443 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 249.
St. Petersburg and Moscow, liberalism and autocracy, the false “inner church” of Masonry and the True Church of Orthodoxy, divided Tsar Alexander’s heart between them, making his reign a crossroads in Russian history. Finally he was forced to make his choice for Orthodoxy by the appearance in Russia of that supreme representative of the despotic essence of the revolution – Napoleon.

Tsar Paul had been murdered with the connivance of the British. Knowing this, Alexander “did not trust the British…, and much that Consul Bonaparte was achieving in France appealed to his own political instincts. Provided Napoleon had no territorial ambitions in the Balkans or the eastern Mediterranean, Alexander could see no reason for a clash of interests between France and Russia. The Emperor’s ‘young friends’ on the Secret Committee agreed in general with him rather than with [the Anglophile] Panin, and when Alexander discussed foreign affairs with them during the late summer of 1801, they received the impression that he favoured settling differences with France as a preliminary to a policy of passive isolation. As St. Helens wrote to Hawksbury shortly before Alexander’s departure for Moscow, ‘The members of the Emperor’s Council, with whom he is particularly connected… have been… zealous in promoting the intended peace with France, it being their professed System to endeavour to disengage the Emperor from all foreign Concerns… and induce him to direct his principal attention to the affairs of the Interior.”

However, the influence of Napoleon on Alexander began to wane after the Russian Emperor’s meeting with the Prussian king Frederick William and his consort Queen Louise in June, 1802. The closeness of the two monarchs threatened to undermine the Tsar’s policy of splendid isolation from the affairs of Europe, and alarmed his foreign minister Kochubey, as well as annoying the French. But isolation was no longer a practical policy as Napoleon continued to encroach on the rights of the German principalities, and so Alexander replaced his foreign minister and, in May, 1803, summoned General Arakcheev (known as “the Uniformed Ape”) to strengthen the Russian army…

In 1804 the Duc d’Enghien was kidnapped by French agents, tried and executed as a traitor. “Alexander was enraged by the crime. The Duc d’Enghien was a member of the French royal house. By conniving at his kidnapping and execution the First Consul became, in Alexander’s eyes, a regicide. Nor was this the only cause of the Tsar’s indignation. He regarded the abduction of the Duke from Baden as a particular insult to Russia, for Napoleon had been repeatedly reminded that Alexander expected the French authorities to respect the lands of his wife’s family. His response was swift and dramatic. A meeting of the Council of State was convened in mid-April at which it was resolved, with only one dissentient voice, to break off all diplomatic contact with France. The Russian Court went into official mourning and a solemn note of protest was dispatched to Paris.

444 Palmer, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
“But the French paid little regard to Russian susceptibilities. Napoleon interpreted Alexander’s complaint as unjustified interference with the domestic affairs and internal security of France. He entrusted the reply to Talleyrand, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a bland statement appeared in the official Moniteur: ‘If, when England prepared the assassination of Paul I, the Russian Government had discovered that the organizers of the plot were no more than a league away from the frontier, would it not have seized them at once?’ No allusion could have been better calculated to wound the Tsar than this deliberate reference to the circumstances of his own accession. It was a rhetorical question which he found hard to forgive or forget. A month later news came from Paris that the First Consul had accepted from the French Senate the title of Emperor. Now, to all his other transgressions, Napoleon had added contempt for the dynastic principle. Resolutely the successor of Peter the Great refused to acknowledge the newest of empires.”

Alexander now formed a defensive alliance with Austria and Prussia against France (there were extensive negotiations with Britain, too, but no final agreement was reached). The Tsar and his new foreign minister, the Polish Mason Adam Czartoryski, added an interesting ideological element to the alliance. “No attempt would be made to impose discredited regimes from the past on lands liberated from French military rule. The French themselves were to be told that the Coalition was fighting, not against their natural rights, but against a government which was ‘no less a tyranny for France than the rest of Europe’. The new map of the continent must rest on principles of justice: frontiers would be so drawn that they coincided with natural geographical boundaries, provided outlets for industries, and associated in one political unit ‘homogeneous peoples able to agree among themselves’.”

Appealing to peoples over the heads of their rulers, and declaring that states should be made up of homogeneous ethnic units were, of course, innovative steps, derived from the French revolution, which presented considerable dangers for multi-ethnic empires such as the Russian and the Austrian. Similarly new and dangerous was the idea that the nation was defined by blood alone. None of these ideological innovations appealed to the other nations, and the Coalition (including Britain) that was eventually patched up in the summer of 1805 was motivated more by Napoleon’s further advances in Italy than by a common ideology.

In 1805 the British defeated Napoleon on sea at Trafalgar. However, it was a different story on land. At Austerlitz the Russians lost between 25,000 and 30,000 men killed, wounded or captured – a serious blow to Alexander, whose retinue had assured him of victory. And this was only the beginning. In 1806 Napoleon routed the Prussians at Jena and Auerstadt, and in 1807, after an indecisive but bloody conflict at Eylau, he defeated the Russians at Friedstadt. Alexander had suffered huge losses, and almost the whole of Europe up to the borders of Russia was in the hands of the French…

445 Palmer, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
446 Palmer, op. cit., p. 84.
Two religious events of the year 1806 gave a deeper and darker hue to the political and military conflict. In France Napoleon re-established the Jewish Sanhedrin, which then proclaimed him the Messiah. Partly in response to this, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church called Napoleon the antichrist, declaring that he was threatening “to shake the Orthodox Greco-Russian Church, and is trying by a diabolic invasion to draw the Orthodox into temptation and destruction”. It said that during the revolution Napoleon had bowed down to idols and to human creatures. Finally, “to the greater disgrace of the Church of Christ he has thought up the idea of restoring the Sanhedrin, declaring himself the Messiah, gathering together the Jews and leading them to the final uprooting of all Christian faith”. He was “the Beast of the Apocalypse”, said Alexander, the diabolic enemy of Orthodoxy and the champion of the Jews.

In view of this unprecedented anathema, and the solemn pledges he had made to the King of Prussia, it would seem to have been unthinkable for Alexander to enter into alliance with Napoleon at this time. And yet this is precisely what he did. “Alliance between France and Russia,” he said, “has always been a particular wish of mine and I am convinced that this alone can guarantee the welfare and peace of the world.”

“‘I desire that a close union between our two nations may repair past evils,’ Alexander instructed Prince Dmitri Lobanov-Rostovsky, his envoy to Napoleon. ‘An entirely new system... and I flatter myself Emperor Napoleon and I will understand each other easily provided we deal without intermediaries.’ They agreed to meet at Tilsit, where their engineers erected a white pavilion on a specially constructed raft in the middle of the Niemen river, the border between their empires. ‘Few sights will be more interesting,’ wrote Napoleon. He was right. The division of Europe between two emperors, based on an expedient friendship, made this one of the most famous summits in history.

“As Alexander prepared to meet his vanquisher, accompanied by [his brother, Grand Duke] Constantine, he was under no illusions. ‘Bonaparte claims I’m only an idiot,’ he soon afterwards wrote to his sister Catiche. ‘He who laughs last laughs best! And I put all my hope in God.’ After his disastrous rush for glory, Alexander was entering a long game. He could hardly believe what was about to happen, as he told Catiche: ‘Me, spending my days with Bonaparte! Whole hours in tête-à-tête with him!’ Alexander’s practice in duplicity qualified him well for the seduction of Napoleon. ‘He possessed to a high degree,’ wrote his courtier Baron Korff, ‘the facility to subordinate men to himself and penetrate their souls while hiding all his own feelings and thoughts.’

“On 13 June, Napoleon was rowed across to the raft so that he was there to meet Alexander when he disembarked from his side. The two men embraced, then Alexander said, ‘I will be your second against the English.’ Napoleon was

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448 Montefiore, op. cit., p. 289.
delighted. ‘Those words changed everything.’ They turned together and disappeared through the pavilion door surmounted with Russian and French eagles and elaborate ‘A’s and ‘N’s’, to talk for two hours in French without interpreters. Alexander pleaded for Prussia, which he wished to save not only out of chivalry for its queen [Louise, to whom he was close] but as an essential ally.

“The younger emperor, still only twenty-nine, was ‘not dazzled by false confidence’ but was happy to learn from ‘this extraordinary man’ who ‘liked to show me his superiority in imaginative sallies’. For his part, Napoleon, the elder at thirty-eight, could not help but be a little patronizing, yet he was utterly charmed. ‘My dear, I’ve just seen Emperor Alexander and I’m very pleased with him, a very handsome, good and young emperor,’ he told Empress Josephine. ‘More intelligent than is commonly thought,’ he later decided, ‘it would be hard to have more wit than Alexander, but there’s a piece missing and I can’t discover which.’ Alexander was somewhat seduced by the genius of his era. Napoleon’s ‘light-grey eyes’, he later recalled, ‘gaze at you so piercingly that you cannot withstand them.’

“On the second day, Frederick William was allowed to sit in silently on their discussions, when he no doubt learned that Prussia was to be harshly diminished. After the meeting, a hundred guns saluted and Alexander joined Napoleon in Tilsit. Each night, the three monarchs dined together, with Napoleon and Alexander bored to tears by the lumpish Prussian; they would say good night – and then, like a secret assignation, Alexander would steal back to join Napoleon for long talks into the night.

“Alexander sought peace without losing honour or territory. Napoleon sought mastery over Europe with a junior partner. These sons of the Enlightenment were dreamers as well as pragmatists. War, Napoleon explained, was not ‘a difficult art’ but ‘a matter of hiding fear as long as possible. Only by this means is one’s enemy intimidated and success not in doubt.’ Alexander praised effective republics and criticized hereditary monarchy which he regarded as irrational – except in Russia, where local conditions made it essential. Napoleon, the parvenu emperor who had been elected by plebiscite to the throne of a guillotined king, defended heredity to the dynastic autocrat who had acquiesced in paternal regicide. ‘Who is fit to be elected?’ asked Napoleon. ‘A Caesar, an Alexander only comes along once a century, so that election must be a matter of chance.’

“’At Tilsit, I chattered away,’ admitted Napoleon. As the two of them bargained over new kingdoms and spheres, Alexander asked for Constantinople. ‘Constantinople is the empire of the world,’ replied Napoleon gnomically. ‘I called the Turks barbarians and said they ought to be turned out of Europe,’ he recalled. He played on Alexander’s fantasies, suggesting a joint march eastwards to take Constantinople and then attack British India. ‘But I never intended to do so,’ Napoleon admitted later. Alexander, who understood the game, later called this ‘the language of Tilsit’. 
“In 25 June, Lobanov, Paul’s minister Kurakin and Talleyrand signed the Treaty of Tilsit. Alexander lost no territory but relinquished the Ionian Islands and Wallachia and Moldavia, recognized Napoleon’s brothers as kings of Westphalia and Naples, and promised to blockade England. Prussia suffered grievously, but Alexander refused to annex Prussian Poland. Instead, Napoleon created a grand duchy of Warsaw, a possible Polish base against Russia.

‘God has saved us,’ Alexander boasted to Catiche.

‘As long as I live, I shan’t get used to knowing you pass your days with Bonaparte,’ Catiche replied. ‘It seems like a bad joke.’ A worse joke was mooted. Napoleon’s marriage with Josephine was childless so, keen to found his own dynasty, he contemplated divorce. Talleyrand sounded out Alexander about a marriage to Catiche, who was already considering matrimony with another suitor, Emperor Francis of Austria, but the tsar thought him dull – and dirty. ‘Then I can wash him,’ replied Catiche, who added that he certainly would not be dull after marrying her. When Napoleon was mentioned, ‘I wept hot tears like a calf,’ she admitted. ‘Princes are of two kinds – worthy people with scant brains and clever ones but of hateful character.’ The former were preferable but ‘if the divorce came about’ and Napoleon asked for her, she ‘owed that sacrifice to the State’. Napoleon was not yet single – but Catiche, to avoid him, had to marry fast.

“As they parted, Alexander invited Napoleon to St. Petersburg: ‘I’ll order his quarters warmed to Egyptian heat.’ The summit resembled one of those short love affairs in which both lovers promise eternal love even though both know they will ultimately return to their real lives. Looking back at the end of his life, Napoleon reflected that ‘Perhaps I was happiest at Tilsit.’ As for Alexander, his days with Napoleon seemed ‘like a dream’, he told Catiche. ‘It’s past midnight and he’s just left. Oh I wish you could have witnessed all that happened.’ But given his appalling hand, ‘Instead of sacrifices, we got out of the struggle with a little short of lustre.””

To speak of not having to make sacrifice when so many men had been killed in recent battles was extraordinary, and Catiche was having none of it: “We shall have made huge sacrifices and for what?... I wish to see [Russia] respected not in words but in reality, since she certainly has the means and right to do so. While I live I shall not get used to the idea of knowing that you pass your days with Bonaparte. When people say so, it seems like a bad joke and impossible. All the coaxing he has tried on this nation is only so much deceit, for the man is a blend of cunning, ambition and pretence...”

The Prussians, too, were dismayed at Alexander’s betrayal of their recently signed treaty with him. Queen Louise of Prussia, who was very close to Alexander, wrote to him: “You have cruelly deceived me”. And it is hard not to agree with her since, with Alexander’s acquiescence, Napoleon took most of the

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450 Palmer, op. cit., p. 139.
Prussian lands and imposed a heavy indemnity on the Prussians, while Alexander took a part of what had been Prussian territory in Poland, the province of Bialystok. The only concession Alexander was able to wring from the Corsican was that King Frederick should be restored to the heart of his greatly reduced kingdom “from consideration of the wishes of His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russians”.

“As the days went by with no clear news from Tilsit,” writes Palmer, “the cities of the Empire were again filled with alarming rumours, as they had been after Austerlitz: was Holy Russia to be sold to the Antichrist? For, whatever the fashion on the Niemen, in St. Petersburg and Moscow the Church still thundered on Sundays against Bonaparte.” Metropolitan Platon of Moscow wrote to the Tsar warning him not to trust Napoleon, whose ultimate aim was to subjugate the whole of Europe. In other letters, Platon compared Napoleon to Goliath and to “the Pharaoh, who will founder with all his hosts, just as the other did in the Red Sea”.

Of course, in view of his crushing military defeats, Alexander was in a weak position at Tilsit. Nevertheless, if he could not have defeated his enemy, he did not have to enter into alliance with him or legitimize his conquests, especially since Napoleon did not (at that time) plan to invade Russia. Nor did he have to damage Russian commerce by joining Napoleon’s “Continental System” against England, “a major miscalculation... For the merchants of Petersburg and Riga his secret pledge at Tils is was an error of judgement they found hard to forgive.” To explain Alexander’s behaviour, which went against the Church, his Allies and most of public opinion at home (led by his own mother, the Dowager-Empress), it is not sufficient to point to the liberal ideas of his youth, although those undoubtedly played a part. It is necessary to point also to a personal (or demonic) factor, the romantically seductive powers of that truly antichristian figure, Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon had seduced a whole generation of young people in Europe and America; so it is hardly surprising that the Tsar should also have come under his spell. But rarely could such a seduction have had such profound geopolitical consequences – if the seducer had not over-reached himself in 1812...

452 Papmehl, op. cit., p. 84.
453 Papmehl, op. cit., p. 125.
454 Palmer, op. cit., p. 140.
“As Petersburg seethed against the French,” continues Montefiore, “Alexander promoted [Count Alexei] Arakcheev to war minister to reform the army. Arakcheev served as his ‘guard-dog with his obtuse ferocity and unconditional loyalty’. Utterly trusted and universally loathed as ‘the Vampire’, he ran Alexander’s chancellery, able to sign on the emperor’s behalf. Simultaneously, Alexander promoted the Ape’s opposite, Mikhail Speransky, son of a village priest, who had himself studied for the priesthood. This liberal humanist was made deputy justice minister, but he quickly became Alexander’s state secretary. He proposed an almost American system with a presidential tsar, semi-elected legislature and independent judiciary, linked together by a council of state. He openly criticized serfdom and his measures implied that nobles needed some qualifications to take part in government. Speransky’s humble origins, dynamic reforms and Francophile culture created enemies. There had been many favourites before – and all had been co-opted by marriage and interest into the clans of nobility, but Speransky’s ideas were a threat to their privilege of being born to govern, command and own serfs…

“While society plotted against his French policy, Alexander welcomed Napoleon’s ambassadors, first Savary, duc de Rovigo, and then Armand de Caulincourt, duc de Vicenza, as if these Bonapartist henchmen were his friends. Then, as chinks started to show in French invincibility, Napoleon invited Alexander as his star guest at a new summit.

“’My Alexander,’ wrote his mother, begging him not to go, ‘you’re guilty of criminal self-deception.’

“’We will do everything to prove the sincerity’ of Russia’s ‘tight alliance with France, this fearful colossus,’ replied Alexander to his mother – until ‘the moment when we will calmly observe his fall. The wisest policy is to await the right moment to take measures.’ He could only follow ‘the indications of my conscience, my essential conviction, the desire that has never left me to be useful to my country.’

“On 17 September 1808, Alexander (accompanied by Speransky) was greeted by Napoleon five miles outside Erfurt. As well as the two emperors, there were four kings and a constellation of other German princes attending this three-week demonstration of the panoply of Napoleonic power – but it was all about Russia and France. During their eighteen days together, the two emperors banqueted, hunted, danced and attended illuminations and the theatre: when one of the actors onstage in the play Oedipus declaimed ‘A great man’s friendship is the gift of the gods’, Alexander turned and presented his hand to Napoleon to the applause of the entire audience. Napoleon, a born actor himself, half admired Alexander’s Thespian talents, calling him the ‘Talma of the North’ after the top French actor.
“But Napoleon grumbled because Alexander had become ‘stubborn as a mule’. Alexander was treated to his first Napoleonic tantrum, with the imperial foot stamping on the imperial hat. ‘You’re violent and I am stubborn,’ said Alexander. ‘Let us talk and be reasonable – or I leave.’ Napoleon noticed that ‘he plays deaf when things are said he is reluctant to hear.’ Alexander was slightly deaf, but there was plenty he did not wish to hear. The Russians disliked the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and Napoleon’s Continental System, a blockade of British trade which was damaging the Russian economy. Alexander took the opportunity to demand rewards. Napoleon offered Russia the very same titbits offered by Hitler to Stalin in similar circumstances in 1939: Moldavia and Wallachia ‘as part of the Russian empire’ and Finland, then a Swedish duchy. ‘It’s not right that the beauties of Petersburg should be interrupted by Swedish cannon’, Napoleon generously reflected. In return, Alexander promised to uphold the Continental System against Britain and support Napoleon if attacked by Austria.

“Yet Alexander’s vision of himself as a European crusader was encouraged by a traitor at the heart of Napoleon’s court. Napoleon had recently sacked his foreign minister, the lame and reptilian Talleyrand. He still admired ‘the man with the most ideas, the most flair’, though he had recently called him ‘shit in a silk stocking’ to his face. Now appointed to the sinecure office of vice-grand-elector, Talleyrand secretly betrayed him to the tsar – for cash. ‘Sire, it is up to you to save Europe,’ he told Alexander, ‘and you won’t manage unless you resist Napoleon. The French people are civilized, their sovereign is not; the sovereign of Russia is civilized, but his people are not. Thus it is up to the sovereign of Russia to be the ally of the French people.’

“Napoleon had one more demand. ‘I tell you of one of the most grievous plights in which I ever found myself,’ Alexander told Catiche. ‘Napoleon is obtaining a divorce and casting an eye on Anne.’ Their youngest sister Annette was just fourteen. ‘Mother,’ wrote Alexander, ‘showed more calm over it than I should have believed.’ Maria concluded, ‘How wretched would the child’s existence be united to a man of villainous character to whom nothing is sacred and without restraint since he does not believe in God? And would this sacrifice profit Russia? All of that makes me shudder.’ Alexander thought ‘the right course is hard to choose.’ Napoleon did not realize the Russians regarded him as a fiend. ‘I’m happy with Alexander: I think he is with me,’ he told Josephine. ‘Were he a woman, I think I’d make him my lover.’

“That love was soon to be tested. After his return, Alexander was more interested in promoting reform at home and seizing his own prizes abroad to rescue his damaged prestige. He launched his Swedish war to gobble up the Swedes’ province of Finland which would safeguard the approaches to Petersburg. By February 1808, the Russian troops were floundering so Alexander sent in Arakcheev. The Vampire reorganized the armies, enabling Alexander’s best generals, the dependable Mikhail Barclay de Tolly and the ferocious Prince Bagration, to cross the ice and assault Stockholm. The Swedes agreed to cede Finland, which became a Russian grand duchy until 1917. ‘The peace is perfect’
Alexander boasted to Catiche, ‘and absolutely the one I wanted. I cannot thank the Supreme Being enough.’

“Napoleon now discovered the limits of his Russian alliance. In April 1809, Emperor Francis again went to war against Napoleon. Alexander fulfilled his promises by despatching 70,000 troops but with instructions not to help the French in the slightest. ‘It’s not an alliance I have here,’ fulminated Napoleon. ‘I’ve been duped.’ At Wagram, Napoleon defeated the Austrians.

“In November, Napoleon offered Alexander a settlement of the Polish question – in return for his own betrothal to Annette. ‘My sister could not do better,’ said the tsar to Caulaincourt. Alexander started negotiating a ‘reciprocal agreement never to permit the re-establishment of Poland’. The French agreed, but when Alexander insisted that Annette could not marry for two years, Napoleon reneged on the Polish deal, and instead married Emperor Francis’s daughter Archduchess Marie-Louise. Annette was saved from the Corsican ogre, but the Romanovs had been insulted.

“As for Napoleon, he started to despise Alexander with that special hatred reserved for the beloved mistress who ends a cherished affair. Napoleon insulted him as ‘a shifty Byzantine’ and ‘a Greek of the lower empire, fake as a coin’... Yet every ruler in Europe had to dissemble their real views and compromise with Napoleon: it was Napoleon’s Icaran vanity that deluded him into believing that any of them meant their diplomatic expressions of loyalty. Alexander was a pragmatist living (and trying to stay alive and on his throne) in dangerous times who survived because of that same versatility which others might call dissembling. ‘His personality is by nature well meaning, sincere and loyal, and his sentiments and principles are elevated,’ observed Caulaincourt, ‘but beneath all this there exists an acquired royal dissimulation and a dogged persistence that nothing will overcome.’

“Alexander and Napoleon were now preparing for war...”

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If Alexander had a spy in Paris in the shape of Talleyrand, Napoleon had, if not a spy in Petersburg, at any rate an ideological sympathizer, in the shape of Speransky. Speransky was a great admirer of Napoleon’s Civil Code. Karamzin noted, however: “Russia really does not need solemnly to acknowledge her ignorance before all of Europe and to bend greying heads over a volume devised by a few perfidious lawyers and Jacobins. Our political principles do not find inspiration in Napoleon’s Code of Laws, nor in an encyclopaedia published in Paris, but in another encyclopaedia infinitely older, the Bible.”

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Napoleon and Speransky had met at Erfurt, where Napoleon “did not miss the opportunity to discuss with him in detailed conversations various questions of administration. The result of these conversations was a whole series of outstanding projects of reform, of which the most important was the project of a constitution for Russia.”

L. A. Tikhomirov writes: “From the beginning of the 19th century, the Petrine institutions finally collapsed. Already the practice of our 19th century has reduced ‘the collegiate principle’ to nothing. Under Alexander I the elegant French system of bureaucratic centralization created by Napoleon on the basis of the revolutionary ideas captivated the Russian imitative spirit. For Russians this was ‘the last word’ in perfection, and Speransky, an admirer of Napoleon, and, together with the Emperor, an admirer of the republic, created a new system of administration which continued essentially until Emperor Alexander II.

“Alexander I’s institutions completed the absolutist construction of the government machine. Until that time, the very imperfection of the administrative institutions had not allowed them to escape control. The supreme power retained its directing and controlling character. Under Alexander I the bureaucracy was perfectly organized. A strict separation of powers was created. An independent court was created, and a special organ of legislation – the State Council. Ministries were created as the executive power, with an elegant mechanism of driving mechanisms operating throughout the country. The bureaucratic mechanism’s ability to act was brought to a peak by the strictest system of centralization. But where in all these institutions was the nation and the supreme power?

“The nation was subjected to the ruling mechanism. The supreme power was placed, from an external point of view, at the intersection of all the administrative powers. In fact, it was surrounded by the highest administrative powers and was cut off by them not only from the nation, but also from the rest of the administrative mechanism. With the transformation of the Senate into the highest judicial organ, the supreme power lost in it an organ of control.

“The idea of the administrative institutions is that they should attain such perfection that the supreme power will have no need to conduct any immediate administrative activity. As an ideal this is correct. But in fact there is hidden here the source of a constant usurpation of administrative powers in relation to the supreme power. The point is that the most perfect administrative institutions act in an orderly fashion only under the watchful control of the supreme power and his constant direction. But where control and direction by the supreme power is undermined, the bureaucracy becomes the more harmful the more perfectly it is constructed. With this it acquires the tendency to become de facto free of the supreme power and even submits it to itself…”

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Ivanov writes: “The plan for a transformation of the State was created by Speransky with amazing speed, and in October, 1809 the whole plan was on Alexander’s desk. This plan reflected the dominant ideas of the time, which were close to what is usually called ‘the principles of 1789’.

“1) The source of power is the State, the country.

“2) Only that phenomenon which expresses the will of the people can be considered lawful.

“3) If the government ceases to carry out the conditions on which it was summoned to power, its acts lose legality. The centralized administration of Napoleon’s empire influenced Alexander’s ideas about how he should reform his own administration.

“4) So as to protect the country from arbitrariness, and put a bound to absolute power, it is necessary that it and its organs – the government institutions – should be led in their acts by basic laws, unalterable decrees, which exactly define the desires and needs of the people.

“5) As a conclusion from what has been said: the basic laws must be the work and creation of the nation itself.

“Proceeding from Montesquieu’s proposition that ‘three powers move and rule the state: the legislative power, the executive power and the judicial power’, Speransky constructed the whole of his plan on the principle of the division of powers – the legislative, the executive and the judicial. Another masonic truth was introduced, that the executive power in the hands of the ministers must be subject to the legislative branch, which was concentrated in the State Duma.

“The plot proceeded, led by Speransky, who was supported by Napoleon.

“After 1809 stubborn rumours circulated in society that Speransky and Count N.P. Rumyantsev were more attached to the interests of France than of Russia.

“Karamzin in his notes and conversations tried to convince Alexander to stop the carrying out of Speransky’s reforms, which were useless and would bring only harm to the motherland.

“Joseph de Maistre saw in the person of Speransky a most harmful revolutionary, who was undermining the foundations of all state principles and was striving by all means to discredit the power of the Tsar.

“For two years his Majesty refused to believe these rumours and warnings. Towards the beginning of 1812 the enemies of Speransky in the persons of Arakcheev, Shishkov, Armfeldt and Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna [the sister of the Tsar] convinced his Majesty of the correctness of the general conviction of Speransky’s treachery.
“The following accusations were brought against Speransky: the incitement of the masses of the people through taxes, the destruction of the finances and unfavourable comments about the government.

“A whole plot to keep Napoleon informed was also uncovered. Speransky had been entrusted with conducting a correspondence with Nesselrode, in which the main French actors were indicated under pseudonyms. But Speransky did not limit himself to giving this information: on his own, without authorization from above, he demanded that all secret papers and reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be handed over to him. Several officials were found who without objections carried out his desire….

“Then from many honourable people there came warnings about the traitorous activities of Speransky.

“At the beginning of 1812 the Swedish hereditary prince Bernadotte, who was in opposition to Napoleon, informed Petersburg that ‘the sacred person of the Emperor is in danger’ and that Napoleon was ready with the help of a big bribe to establish his influence in Russia again.”

In 1810 an Illuminati lodge, “Polar Star”, was opened by the German Lutheran and pantheist mystic Professor I.A. Fessler, whom Speransky had summoned from Germany. Speransky joined this lodge, and Professor Shiman writes that Speransky “was a Freemason who accepted the strange thought of using the organization of the lodge for the reform of the Russian clergy, which was dear to his heart. His plan consisted in founding a masonic lodge that would have branch-lodges throughout the Russian State and would accept the most capable clergy as brothers.

“Speransky openly hated Orthodoxy. With the help of Fessler he wanted to begin a war against the Orthodox Church. The Austrian chargé d’affaires Saint-Julien, wrote in a report to his government on the fall of Speransky that the higher clergy, shocked by the protection he gave to Fessler, whom he had sent for from Germany, and who had the rashness to express Deist, antichristian views, were strongly instrumental in his fall (letter of April 1, 1812). However, our ‘liberators’ were in raptures with Speransky’s activities.…” 459

“Speransky’s relations with the Martinists and Illuminati were reported by Count Rostopchin, who in his ‘Note on the Martinists’, presented in 1811 to Great Princess Catherine Pavlovna, said that ‘they (the Martinists) were all more or less devoted to Speransky, who, without belonging in his heart to any sect, or perhaps any religion, was using their services to direct affairs and keep them dependent on himself.’

“Finally, in the note of Colonel Polev, found in Alexander I’s study after his death, the names of Speransky, Fessler, Magnitsky, Zlobin and others were mentioned as being members of the Illuminati lodge…

459 Shiman, in Ivanov, op. cit., p. 255.
“On March 11, 1812 Sangley was summoned to his Majesty, who informed him that Speransky ‘had the boldness to describe all Napoleon’s military talents and advised him to convene the State Duma and ask it to conduct the war while he absented himself’. ‘Who am I then? Nothing?’, continued his Majesty. ‘From this I see that he is undermining the autocracy, which I am obliged to transfer whole to my heirs.’

“On March 16 Professor Parrot of Derpt university was summoned to the Winter Palace. ‘The Emperor,’ he wrote in a later letter to Emperor Nicholas I, ‘angrily described to me the ingratitude of Speransky, whom I had never seen, expressing himself with feeling that drew tears from him. Having expounded the proof of his treachery that had been presented to him, he said to me: ‘I have decided to shoot him tomorrow, and have invited you here because I wish to know your opinion on this.’”

On March 17, after a two-hour confrontation with Speransky, Alexander sacked him. However, he did not carry out his decision to shoot him.

“Speransky had too many friends and protectors. They saved him, but for his betrayal he was exiled to Nizhni Novgorod, and then – in view of the fact that the Nizhni Novgorod nobility were stirred up against him – to Perm.... At a patriotic banquet in the house of the Provincial Governor Prince Gruzinsky in Nizhni Novgorod, the nobles’ patriotism almost cost Speransky his life. ‘Hang him, execute him, burn Speransky on the pyre’ suggested the Nizhni Novgorod nobles.

“Through the efforts of his friends, Speransky was returned from exile and continued his treachery against his kind Tsar. He took part in the organization of the uprising of the Decembrists, who after the coup appointed him first candidate for the provisional government.”

After the attempted coup, Tsar Nicholas used him, but told one of his officials to keep an eye on him...

460 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 255-258.
Napoleon's Invasion of Russia

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. As Palmer writes, "Every possible solution for easing tension between the Russians and French broke down on two basic questions: the refusal of the French to permit Russia total control of trade by land and by sea, and the French insistence on retaining armies of occupation on Prussian territory, even as far east as the line of the Niemen."\footnote{Palmer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 213.}

By May, 1811, as a comet blazed in the heavens above Europe, 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..."\footnote{Palmer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 203.}

"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 [his sister] 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..."\footnote{Montefiore, \textit{The Romanovs}, pp. 298, 299. Kutuzov defeated a Turkish army four times the size of his own, showing himself a worthy successor of his mentor Suvorov.}
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 interdependence of Church and State, for this essential bond of Tsardom was customarily emphasized in Moscow rather than in the newer capital. To some it seemed, both at the time and later, that the act of consecration served Alexander as a moment of re-dedication and renewal, linking the pledges he had given at his crowning in Moscow with the mounting challenge from across the frontier. For the rest of the century, the Kazan Cathedral remained associated in people’s minds with the high drama of its early years, so that it became in time a shrine for the heroes of the Napoleonic wars.”

464 Papmehl, op. cit., p. 85.
466 Palmer, op. cit., p. 206.
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 gubernia, to be reinforced from the neighbouring gubernia 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 gubernia 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

468 That same icon which was to reappear, miraculously renewed, on March 2, 1917.
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 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…”

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

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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…”

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 plan 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 burning 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 the dwellings in the city, and Alexander’s refusal to surrender even after that, which proved the decisive turning-point, convincing Napoleon that he could not win…

The 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. “For three days, one observer had noted, ‘the whole city was on fire, thick sheaves of flame of various colours rose up on all sides to the heavens, blotting out the horizon, sending in all directions a blinding light and a burning heat’. In the chaos, French soldiers had looted everything they could lay their hands on, joined in the pillaging by peasants who descended upon the city from the neighbouring countryside. After the fires had died down, the charred ruins of the burnt-out city had offered little in the way of food and shelter to sustain Napoleon’s army though the winter. Nearly 7,000 out of just over 9,000 houses, more than 8,000 shops and warehouses, and over a third of the city’s 329 churches had been totally destroyed. Some 270 million roubles’ worth of private property had been lost without any possibility of compensation. Many civilians had already fled, and most of the rest had subsequently left the city, facing a life of vagabondage and

472 Montefiore, The Romanovs, pp. 304-305.
473 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 264-265.
destitution. Only 2 per cent of the population had remained, and a large proportion of those, including many soldiers, did not survive...“474

“Many soldiers” is an understatement. 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.475 This was total war, unprecedented in its scope and breadth.

“The fire of Moscow,” writes Ivanov, “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.”476

God was clearly on the side of the Orthodox. Thus early in the campaign terrible rain storms killed thousands of horses that were desperately needed by Napoleon. Then terrible summer 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...477

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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The role of the commander-in-chief Kutuzov was controversial. On the one hand, “by their fruits ye shall know them”, and it was he who commanded the armies that drove Napoleon out of Russia. The protégé of Suvorov, who also brought the war against Turkey to an end just before Napoleon’s invasion, surely deserves credit for that.

On the other hand, there were many who blamed him for not engaging Napoleon in battle. The Tsar blamed Kutuzov, probably unjustly, for the defeat at Austerlitz, and was against his appointment in 1812, declaring: “The public wanted his appointment. I appointed him: as regards myself personally, I wash my hands of him.”

476 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 269.
In favour of the Tsar’s judgment was the poor preparation of the Russian position at Borodino. In that battle it was Barclay, rather than Kutuzov, who took the lead, acting heroically.

According to Ivanov, the Russian victory was almost foiled by the intrigues of the Masons, and first of all 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.478

Ivanov describes the course of events after Borodino and the burning of Moscow: “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.

478 « In 1779 he was initiated into the German Masonic lodge ‘Three Keys’ (Ratisbon). He was a member of the Moscow lodges ‘Sphinx’ and ‘Three Banners.’ He also participated in the meetings of the Masonic lodges of St. Petersburg, Frankfurt, Berlin. He had a higher degree of initiation in the Swedish system. Within the Freemasons he was known as ‘evergreen laurel” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Kutuzov)
“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.”

Montefiore agrees with Ivanov’s negative assessment of Kutuzov’s performance. “After the closely-fought battle of Maloyaroslavets on October 11-12, 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’.

479 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 269-270, 272.
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 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’…”

However, Alan Palmer is more generous to Kutuzov, while giving due credit to Alexander’s determination and drive: “Alexander returned to Vilna determined to resume the role of Europe’s liberator which he had sought to play prematurely seven years previously [at Austerlitz]. He was now a Tsar with a sense of mission. Even Rumiantsev, appeaser though he was by nature, caught the new spirit: ‘Heaven has chosen you to accomplish its designs’, he wrote to his master from St. Petersburg, ‘revealing already your destiny, that you shall save Europe.’ But Kutuzov was cautious. He did not for one moment doubt continuation of the war would lead to the final downfall of Napoleon, but only if the Russians were strong in men and material. According to General Wilson, who was attached to Kutuzov’s headquarters throughout the pursuit of Napoleon, the army suffered 45,000 casualties in the final four weeks before entering Vilna, and modern Soviet historians reckoned that only a third of Kutuzov’s men were fit for active military service at the close of the year. Kutuzov therefore wished to wait until the thousands of recruits marshaling in Russia had reached headquarters. He was not opposed to Alexander’s mission, although he was naturally less interested in the general affairs of Europe than the non-Russians who had entered the Tsar’s service; but he was convinced the army should not cross the frontier into Prussia in the depth of winter.

“Alexander, however, had no intention of listening to Kutuzov. He was encouraged by the Prussian exile Stein who had already written urging him ‘to deliver the human race from the most absurd and degrading of tyrannies’, and he genuinely believed the Russians should strike while the enemy was still in confusion. There was good sense in this argument, for the Cossacks and the militia units were better able to give battle under winter conditions than in the spring, when climate and terrain would favour troops from western and

southern Europe. The Germans at Alexander’s headquarters, both soldiers and civilians, argued that their compatriots were eager to change sides against the French provided they could count on adequate Russian protection from countermeasures. However, although Kutuzov was exhausted and anxious to rest both himself and his troops. Wittgenstein was still pursuing the enemy columns along the banks of the lower Niemen and had every intention of crossing into Prussia as soon as possible. Alexander warmly approved of Wittgenstein’s initiative, as indeed he had done throughout the campaign: here at last was a General after his own heart. ‘Thanks Heavens everything here is going well,’ Alexander wrote to Saltykov once he had assessed the situation at Vilna. ‘It is proving a little difficult to dispose of the Prince Marshal [Kutuzov], but it is absolutely essential to do so.’

“Events played admirably into Alexander’s hands. On 30 December General Hans von Yorck, commanding the Prussian contingent in what remained of the Grand Army, concluded a military convention at Tauroggen (Taurage) with the Russian General Diebitsch, a corps commander serving under Wittgenstein. The actual terms of the convention were limited and precise: the Prussians would police the salient of territory around the mouth of the Niemen, southwards from Memel, and would offer no opposition to the Russian army; but the significance of this pledge of neutrality influenced events over a far larger area; for it made it virtually impossible for the French to retain any hold on East Prussia and they rapidly evacuated the city of Königsberg, though preparing to withstand a siege in Danzig rather than surrender so vital a port.

“Alexander heard of the Tauroggen convention when one of Wittgenstein’s aides arrived in Vilna on 4 January. Immediately the Tsar decided to exploit the signs of weakness in the French hold on Germany. He sent the ardent Prussian patriot General von Boyen on a secret mission to King Frederick William with the offer of an offensive and defensive alliance, and he also encouraged Stein to issue and appeal to the King which urged him to break with Napoleon and call on his subjects to liberate themselves in partnership with the advancing Russians. Finally on 9 January Alexander left Vilna and prepared to carry the war into Europe. He established temporary headquarters down the Niemen at Meritz and it was from there that, three days later, he ordered his army westwards across the Niemen and into Prussia. By the Russian calendar it was the first day of the New Year; and a proclamation from Kutuzov called on Alexander’s troops ‘to liberate from oppression and misery even those nations who have taken up arms against Russia’.”481

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As the Tsar pursued the remnants of Napoleon’s Great Army into Poland in the winter of 1812-13, he was, writes Palmer, “in a state bordering on religious ecstasy. More and more he turned to the eleventh chapter of the Book of Daniel with the apocalyptic vision of how the all-conquering King of the South is cast down by the King of the North. It seemed to him as if the prophecies, which had

sustained him during the dark days of autumn and early winter, were now to be fulfilled: Easter this year would come with a new spiritual significance of hope for all Europe. 'Placing myself firmly in the hands of God I submit blindly to His will,' he informed his friend Golitsyn from Radzonow, on the Wrkra. 'My faith is sincere and warm with passion. Every day it grows firmer and I experience joys I had never known before... It is difficult to express in words the benefits I gain from reading the Scriptures, which previously I knew only superficially... All my glory I dedicate to the advancement of the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.'... At Kalisch (Kalisz) on the border of the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw and Prussia the Tsar concluded a convention with Frederick William: the agreement provided for a close military alliance between Russia and Prussia, stipulating the size of their respective contingents and promising Prussia territory as extensive as in 1806; but the final clauses went beyond the normal language of diplomacy to echo Alexander's religious inspiration. 'Let all Germany join us in our mission of liberation,' the Kalisch Treaty said. 'The hour has come for obligations to be observed with that religious faith, that sacred inviolability which holds together the power and permanence of nations.'

But should Russia go further west into Germany and liberate the whole of Western Europe? Kutuzov and most of the senior officers were against it. “Even the most ardent Russian patriots, such as his Minister of the Interior Admiral Shishkov and the Archimandrite Filaret, were against Alexander’s proposed liberation of Europe. The consensus was that Russia should help herself to East Prussia and much of Poland, providing herself with some territorial gain and a defensible western border, and leave it at that. But Alexander ignored them.”

However just was some of the criticism targeted at the tsar in his period, on the critical question whether he should have stopped at the Vistula or continued all the way to Paris, in hindsight we must conclude that Alexander was right and his critics wrong. For Napoleon’s power was by no means broken in 1813; and if Alexander’s troops had not taken part in the great battle that did finally break it, at Leipzig in October, 1813, it is likely that the ogre would have retaken the whole of Germany and Poland up to the Vistula.

As Alexander and his armies approached the borders of France, the British and Austrian foreign ministers Castlereagh and Metternich tried to persuade him to wait – they feared the increased power of Russia on the continent. But Alexander pushed on, showing both the necessary firmness and generosity when he arrived in the capital. On the one hand, he refused to make any compromises, or meet with Napoleon until he abdicated, allowing the Bourbons to return to power. On the other hand, he did his best to reconcile the French people with the loss of their evil empire.

“His prime task was to undermine the political influence of Austria, by wearing thin the friendship of Castlereagh and Metternich and by establishing a

new Franco-Russian understanding, ensuring close collaboration between his own ministers and the representatives of Bourbon France. If he could also retain his undoubted popularity with the people of Paris and win the support of what Metternich termed ‘the Polish French and Frenchified Poles’ in the city, so much the better for Russia. The hour called for elaborate exercises in charm and in tact. No other contemporary public figure could display these qualities to such advantage.”

True, the ever-chivalrous Alexander was unwise in giving Napoleon the island of Elba, very close to the mainland, from which he escaped in 1815, only to be finally defeated with great difficulty at Waterloo in June. Castlereagh and Metternich were right in trying to dissuade him from that. However, the Tsar must take the main credit for finally seeing the restoration of legitimate monarchism in France and throughout Continental Europe.

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484 Palmer, _op cit.,_ p. 287.
35. THE CHILDREN OF 1812

1812 was not only a great military victory. It also rekindled the religious and national consciousness of Russia. Orlando Figes writes: “As readers of War and Peace will know, the war of 1812 was a vital watershed in the culture of the Russian aristocracy. It was a war of national liberation from the intellectual empire of the French – a moment when noblemen like the Rostovs and the Bolkonskys struggled to break free from the foreign conventions of their society and began new lives on Russian principles. This was no straightforward metamorphosis (and it happened much more slowly than in Tolstoy’s novel, where the nobles rediscover their forgotten national ways almost overnight). Though anti-French voices had grown to quite a chorus in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the aristocracy was still immersed in the culture of the country against which they were at war. The salons of St. Petersburg were filled with young admirers of Bonaparte, such as Pierre Bezukhov in War and Peace. The most fashionable set was that of Counts Rumiantsev and Caulaincourt, the French ambassador in Petersburg, the circle in which Tolstoy’s Hélène moved. ‘How can we fight the French?’ asks Count Rostopchin, the Governor of Moscow, in War and Peace. ‘Can we arm ourselves against our teachers and divinities? Look at our youths! Look at our ladies! The French are our Gods. Paris is our Kingdom of Heaven.’ Yet even in these circles there was horror at Napoleon’s invasion, and their reaction against all things French formed the basis of a Russian renaissance in life and art.”485

This Russian renaissance took many forms. At its simplest it meant that the noble army officers evinced a greater appreciation of the Russian peasants with whom they had marched all the way from Moscow to Paris. In the eighteenth century the main contact the nobility had had with the Russian peasants, their speech and their values, had been through their peasant nannies. As Figes shows, this was a vital influence on many nobles, preserving a kind of stream of Russian subconsciousness under their European consciousness. As a result of 1812, this subconscious stream came more to the fore.

One of the consequences of this was the birth of a specifically Russian-language literature in the works of such “children of 1812” as the great poet Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin. It was Pushkin who started the trend of looking back to childhood, when the influence of his peasant nanny had been dominant. Thus “compared with their parents, the Russian nobles who grew up after 1812 put a higher valuation on childhood. It took a long time for such attitudes to change, but already by the middle decades of the nineteenth century one can discern a new veneration of childhood on the part of those memoirists and writers who recalled their upbringing after 1812. This nostalgia for the age of childhood merged with a new reverence for the Russian customs which they had known as children through their father’s household serfs.”486

486 Figes, op. cit., p. 119.
Again, the new focus on the Russian language, Russian customs and childhood influences merged with a new focus on history – beginning, of course, with the events of 1812 itself, but going much further back into the childhood of the nation. ‘Oh please, Nurse, tell me again how the French came to Moscow.’ Thus Herzen starts his sublime memoir *My Past and Thoughts*, one of the greatest works of Russian literature. Born in 1812, Herzen had a special fondness for his nanny’s stories of that year. His family had been forced to flee the flames that engulfed Moscow, the young Herzen carried out in his mother’s arms, and it was only through a safe conduct from Napoleon himself that they managed to escape to their Yaroslav estate. Herzen felt great ‘pride and pleasure at [having] taken part in the Great War’. The story of his childhood merged with the national drama he so loved to hear: ‘Tales of the fire of Moscow, of the battle of Borodino, of the Berezina, of the taking of Paris were my cradle songs, my nursery stories, my Iliad and my Odyssey.’ For Herzen’s generation, the myths of 1812 were intimately linked with their childhood memories. Even in the 1850s children were still brought up on the legends of that year. History, myth and memory were intertwined.

“For the historian Nikolai Karamzin, 1812 was a tragic year. While his Moscow neighbours moved to their estates, he refused to ‘believe that the ancient holy city could be lost’ and, as he wrote on 20 August, he chose to ‘die on Moscow’s walls’. Karamzin’s house burned down in the fires and, since he had not thought to evacuate his library, he lost his precious books to the flames as well. But Karamzin saved one book – a bulging notebook that contained the draft of his celebrated *History of the Russian State* (1818-1826). Karamzin’s masterpiece was the first truly national history – not just in the sense that it was the first by a Russian, but also in the sense that it rendered Russia’s past as a national narrative. Previous histories of Russia had been arcane chronicles of monasteries and saints, patriotic propaganda, or heavy tomes of documents compiled by German scholars, unread and unreadable. But Karamzin’s *History* had a literary quality that made its twelve large volumes a nationwide success. It combined careful scholarship with the narrative techniques of a novelist. Karamzin stressed the psychological motivations of his historical protagonists – even to the point of inventing them – so that his account became more compelling to a readership brought up on the literary conventions of Romantic texts. Medieval tsars like Ivan the Terrible or Boris Godunov became tragic figures in Karamzin’s *History* – subjects for a modern psychological drama; and from its pages they walked on to the stage in operas by Mussorgsky and Rimsky Korsakov.

“The first eight volumes of Karamzin’s *History* were published in 1818. ‘Three thousand copies were sold within a month – something unprecedented in our country. Everyone, even high-born ladies, began to read the history of their country,’ wrote Pushkin. ‘It was a revelation. You could say that Karamzin discovered ancient Russia as Columbus discovered America.’ The victory of 1812 had encouraged a new interest and pride in Russia’s past. People who had been raised on the old conviction that there was no history before the reign of Peter the Great began to look back to the distant past for the sources of their country’s unexpected strengths. After 1812 history books appeared at a furious pace.
Chairs were established in the universities (Gogol held one for a term at St. Petersburg). Historical associations were set up, many in the provinces, and huge efforts were suddenly devoted to the rescuing of Russia’s past. History became the arena for all those troubling questions about Russia’s nature and its destiny. As Belinsky wrote in 1846, ‘we interrogate our past for an explanation of our present and a hint of our future’.

Both of the major intellectual movements of the mid-century – the Slavophiles and the Westerners – may be said to have originated in this passion for Russian history, which began after 1812. The Slavophiles believed that the real Russia was to be found in the Orthodox medieval state that existed many centuries before Peter the Great, while the Westerners believed that Russian history only really began with Peter and his westernizing reforms. However, both movements represented a turning away from the “pure” westernism of the eighteenth century. For both were speaking in Russian about Russia – and not merely about the upper classes, but about the whole people.

1812 elicited more than patriotic feelings. The victory over Napoleon also elicited an explosion of specifically religious feeling, not least in the Tsar himself, who said: “The burning of Moscow enlightened my soul, and the judgement of God on the icy fields filled my heart with a warmth of faith such as I had not felt before. Then I came to know God as He is depicted in the Holy Scriptures. I am obliged to the redemption of Europe from destruction for my own redemption”. All the crosses and medallions minted in memory of 1812, he said, were to bear the inscription: “Not to us, not to us, but to Thy name give the glory”.

God was teaching the Russians a most important lesson: that those western influences which had so inundated Russia in the century up to 1812, were evil and threatened to destroy Russia. As St. Theophan the Recluse wrote some generations later: “We are attracted by enlightened Europe... Yes, there for the first time the pagan abominations that had been driven out of the world were restored; then they passed and are passing to us, too. Inhaling into ourselves these poisonous fumes, we whirl around like madmen, not remembering who we are. But let us recall 1812: Why did the French come to us? God sent them to exterminate that evil which we had taken over from them. Russia repented at that time, and God had mercy on her.”

Tragically, however, the repentance was short-lived. Although the Masonic plans to overthrow both Church and State had been foiled, both Masonry and other unhealthy religious influences continued to flourish. And discontent with the existing order was evident in both the upper and the lower classes. Thus the question arose of the emancipation of the peasants, who had played such a great part in the victory, voluntarily destroying their own homes and crops in order to deny them to the French.

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488 Dobroklonsky, op. cit., p. 666. For more on Alexander’s religious feelings in this period, see Troubetskoy, op. cit., pp. 105-106.
489 Bishop Theophan, Mysli na kazhdij den’ (Thoughts for every day), p. 461.
In return, they hoped for some kind of reward, but received none. “There was great bitterness,” writes Hosking, “among peasants who returned from their militia service to find that there was no emancipation. Alexander, in his manifesto of 30 August 1814, thanking and rewarding all his subjects for their heroic deeds, said of the peasants simply that they would ‘receive their reward from God’…. Some nobles tried to persuade the authorities not to allow them back, but to leave them in the regular army as ordinary soldiers. The poet Gavriil Derzhavin was informed by his returnees that they had been ‘temporarily released’ and were now state peasants and not obliged to serve him. Rumours circulated that Alexander had intended to free them all, but had been invited to a special meeting of indignant nobles at night in the Senate, from which he had allegedly been rescued, pleading for his life, by his brother Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich…”

Here we have the familiar theme of the people laying the blame for their woes, not on the tsar, but on the nobles. Some peasants may have wanted emancipation and a share in the nobles’ wealth. But they wanted it with the Tsar and through the Tsar, not as the expression of some egalitarian and anti-monarchist ideology. The French revolution in this, its imperialist, expansionist phase, overthrew many kingdoms and laid the seeds for the overthrow of still more. But it broke against the rock of the Russian people’s faith in their God and their Tsar…

However, if the masses of the people were still Orthodox and loyal to the Tsar, this could not be said of the nobility. We have seen the extent to which Masonry penetrated the bureaucracy in the early part of Alexander’s reign. Unfortunately, the triumphant progress of the Russian army into the heart of Masonry, Paris, did not destroy this influence, but only served to strengthen it. For, as Zamoyski writes, “if nobles at home wanted to keep their serfs, the nobles who served as officers in the armies that occupied Paris were exposed to other, liberal influences. They had been brought up speaking French and reading the same literature as educated people in other countries. They could converse effortlessly with German and English allies as well as with French prisoners and civilians. Ostensibly, they were just like any of the Frenchmen, Britons and Germans they met, yet at every step they were made aware of profound differences. The experience left them with a sense of being somehow outside, almost unfit for participation in European civilisation. And that feeling would have dire consequences…”

All kinds of pseudo-religious mysticism flooded into Russia from the West. There was, writes N. Elagin, “a veritable inundation of ‘mystical’ and pseudo-Christian ideas… together with the ‘enlightened’ philosophy that had produced the French Revolution. Masonic lodges and other secret societies abound; books containing the Gnostic and millenarian fantasies of Jacob Boehme, Jung-

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490 Hosking, op. cit., p. 137.
Stilling, Eckhartshausen and other Western ‘mystics’ were freely translated into Russian and printed for distribution in all the major cities of the realm; ‘ecumenical’ salons spread a vague teaching of an ‘inner Christianity’ to the highest levels of Russian society; the press censorship was under the direction of the powerful Minister of Spiritual Affairs, Count Golitsyn, who patronized every ‘mystical’ current and stifled the voice of traditional Orthodoxy by his dominance of the Holy Synod as Procurator; the Tsar Alexander himself, fresh from his victory over Napoleon and the formation of a vaguely religious ‘Holy Alliance’ of Western powers, favored the new religious currents and consulted with ‘prophetesses’ and other religious enthusiasts; and the bishops and other clergy who saw what was going on were reduced to helpless silence in the face of the prevailing current of the times and the Government’s support of it, which promised exile and disgrace for anyone who opposed it. Many even of those who regarded themselves as sincere Orthodox Christians were swept up in the spiritual ‘enthusiasm’ of the times, and, trusting their religious feelings more than the Church’s authority and tradition, were developing a new spirituality, foreign to Orthodoxy, in the midst of the Church itself. Thus, one lady of high birth, Ekaterina P. Tatarinova, claimed to have received the gift of ‘prophecy’ on the very day she was received into the Orthodox Church (from Protestantism), and subsequently she occupied the position of a ‘charismatic’ leader of religious meetings which included the singing of Masonic and sectarian hymns (while holding hands in a circle), a peculiar kind of dancing and spinning when the ‘Holy Spirit’ would come upon them, and actual ‘prophecy’ – sometimes for hours at a time. The members of such groups fancied that they drew closer to the traditions of Orthodoxy by such meetings, which they regarded as a kind of restoration of the New Testament Church for ‘inward’ believers, the ‘Brotherhood in Christ’, as opposed to the ‘outward’ Christians who were satisfied with the Divine services of the Orthodox Church… The revival of the perennial ‘charismatic’ temptation in the Church, together with a vague ‘revolutionary’ spirit imported from the West, presented a danger not merely to the preservation of true Christianity in Russia, but to the very survival of the whole order of Church and State…”

V.N. Zhmakin writes: “From 1812 there began with us in Russia a time of the domination of extreme mysticism and pietism... The Emperor Alexander became a devotee of many people simultaneously, from whatever quarter they declared their religious enthusiasm... He protected the preachers of western mysticism, the Catholic paters... Among the first of his friends and counsellors was Prince A.N. Golitsyn, who was over-procurator of the Synod from 1803... Prince Golitsyn was the complete master of the Russian Orthodox Church in the reign of Alexander I... Having received no serious religious education, like the majority of aristocrats of that time, he was a complete babe in religious matters and almost an ignoramus in Orthodoxy... Golitsyn, who understood Orthodoxy poorly, took his understanding of it only from its external manifestations... His mystical imagination inclined in favour of secrecy, fancifulness, originality... He became simultaneously the devotee of all the representatives of contemporary...”

mysticism, such as Mrs. Krunder, the society of Quakers, Jung Schtilling, the pastors... etc. Moreover, he became the pitiful plaything of all the contemporary sectarians, all the religious utopians, the representatives of all the religious theories, beginning with the Masons and ending with the... eunuch Selivanov and the half-mad Tatarinova. In truth, Prince Golitsyn at the same time protected the mystics and the pietists, and gave access into Russia to the English missionaries, and presented a broad field of activity to the Jesuits, who, thanks to the protection of the Minister of Religious Affairs, sowed a large part of Russia with their missions... He himself personally took part in the prayer-meetings of the Quakers and waited, together with them, for the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, he himself took part in the religious gatherings of Tatarinova, which were orgies reminiscent of the Shamans and khlysts.... Thanks to Prince Golitsyn, mystical literature received all rights of citizenship in Russia - works shot through with mystical ravings were distributed en masse... By the direct order of Prince Golitsyn all the more significant mystical works and translations were distributed to all the dioceses to the diocesan bishops. In some dioceses two thousand copies of one and the same work were sent to some dioceses... Prince Golitsyn... acted... in the name of the Holy Synod... and in this way contradicted himself;... the Synod as it were in its own name distributed works which actually went right against Orthodoxy.... He strictly persecuted the appearance of such works as were negatively oriented towards mysticism... Many of the simple people, on reading the mystical works that came into their hands, ... were confused and perplexed.”

Something of the atmosphere of St. Petersburg at that time can be gathered from the recollections of the future Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov), when he went there for service in the newly reformed ecclesiastical schools in 1809. “The Synod greeted him with the advice to read ‘Swedenborg’s Miracles’ and learn French. He was taken to court to view the fireworks and attend a masquerade party in order to meet Prince Golitsyn..., quite literally ‘amidst the noise of a ball’... This was Philaret’s first masquerade ball, and he had never before seen a domino. ‘At the time I was an object of amusement in the Synod,’ Philaret recalled, ‘and I have remained a fool”... but a holy fool who would play a great part in formulating the Orthodox doctrine of the State in the next reign...
“In December 1812,” writes Sergiy Plokhy, “Emperor Alexander issued a manifesto in which he addressed the Poles as close relatives, almost brothers, offering amnesty to those who had fought against Russia in Napoleon’s army. ‘We hope,’ declared Alexander, ‘that this philoprogenitive and altruistic forgiveness of Ours will bring the guilty to wholehearted repentance and prove to all residents of these regions in general that they, as a people of one language and kin with the Russians from ancient times, can nowhere and never be so happy and secure as in complete merging in one body with mighty and magnanimous Russia.’ The pan-Slavic idea of Russo-Polish brotherhood, first presented by the court poet Vasilii Petrov on the occasion of the second partition of Poland in 1793, was now reiterated and strengthened by the notion of linguistic affinity.

“Alexander believed that he knew how to redeem the Poles. His solution was to establish the Kingdom (in Russian, Tsardom) of Poland, and it was approved by the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) – the international conference that defined the borders of post-Napoleonic Europe. The kingdom was created out of the Polish lands taken over by Prussia, with its capital in Warsaw. Without renouncing his title of emperor of Russia, Alexander thus assumed the new title of tsar of Poland, thereby creating the semblance of a dynastic union to justify Russia’s continued domination of that country. This was also a step toward the realization of his old dream of becoming a constitutional monarch: if he could not become one in Russia, perhaps he could so in Poland. He granted the kingdom quite a liberal constitution that provided for a Diet, a separate government and administrative structure, and even an army. Catherine’s notion of making all parts of the empire homogeneous was discarded in favor of particularism, now under the banner of the Polish constitution. Alexander hoped that one day the rest of the empire would get its constitution as well. As things turned out, it would have to wait another ninety years.

“Alexander was hailed in Warsaw as a restorer of the Polish statehood. The Poles retained most of the territories given to them under Napoleon. But their enthusiasm for Alexander was short-lived, as the Polish government had no control over the kingdom’s budget, military forces, or international trade. Besides, the tsar’s officials exceeded their mandate, while the tsar’s brother, Grand Duke Constantine, who was commander in chief of the Polish army, acquired a bad reputation among the Polish elites for his abusive behavior. On top of that, Warsaw had no authority over the former Polish lands acquired by Russia in the course of the partitions. The younger generation of Polish activists began to create clandestine organizations whose goals included the restoration of Poland in its pre-partition boundaries. The Russian authorities cracked down on the conspirators, adding to the general sense of dissatisfaction in the kingdom.

“Alexander’s constitution experiment was not going well, either in Poland or in the rest of the empire. Conservative sections of Russian society opposed the
idea of constitutionalism as such. Progressives who wanted a constitution complained that the Poles had gotten one while the Russians had not. Persistent rumors about Alexander’s plans to transfer to the kingdom the territories annexed by Russia in the second and third partitions aroused protests from both camps.

“In 1819, these concerns were voiced by Russia’s most prominent historian of the day, Nikolai Karamzin. In a letter titled The Opinion of a Russian Citizen, Karamzin warned the tsar against what he saw as tantamount of a partition of Russia: ‘Will they say that she [Catherine] divided Poland illegally? But you would act even more illegally if your should think of smoothing over her illegality by partitioning Russia itself.’ He then pointed out how tricky the use of historical argument could be. ‘There are no old fortresses in politics,’ wrote Karamzin. ‘Otherwise we would be obliged to restored the kingdoms of Kazan and Astrakhan, the public of Novgorod, the grand principality of Riazan, and so on. Moreover, even by virtue of old fortresses, Belarus, Volhynia, and Podolia, along with Galicia, were once original possessions of Russia. If you give them back, they will also demand Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Smolensk of you: after all, they, too, belonged to hostile Lithuania for a long time.’

“Karamzin, the author of the multivolume History of the Russian State, published in St. Petersburg between 1816 and 1826, did no confine himself to historical arguments in his letter. He maintained that the tsar who ruled both Russia and Poland had to choose and take the side of ‘your true Fatherland – good, strong Russia’. With reference to the Polish elites of the annexed territories, he wrote: ‘Lithuania and Volhynia want the Kingdom of Poland, but we want one Russian Empire’. Ceding those territories to the Kingdom of Poland would create a threat to Russia: ‘Poles legally recognized as a separate and sovereign people are more dangerous to us than Pole-Russians.’ Finally, Karamzin wanted no part of the pan-Slavic discourse that was popular at the time: ‘No, Sire, the Poles will never be true brothers to us, nor faithful allies. Now they are weak and insignificant: if you strengthen them, they will want independence, and their first step will be to draw away from Russia – not in your reign, of course, but look beyond your own lifetime, Sire!’

“Karamzin turned out to be a prophet of sorts. There was no revolt in the Kingdom of Poland as long as Alexander was alive. But five years after his death, which came in 1825, the Poles were up in arms …”

No ruler tried harder to please the Poles than Alexander in spite of strong opposition from both western rulers and his own Russian subjects. But he knew that “many of his Russian subjects regarded the Poles as hereditary enemies, hardly less of a menace than the Turks, and it was intolerable that a nation which had collaborated so flagrantly with Napoleon in 1812 should be the chief beneficiary of Russia’s final victory… The Tsar’s inconsistencies alienated the sympathies of his new subjects in the Congress Kingdom while failing to allay the suspicions of his old subjects that the Poles had in some way stolen a march

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on them. The contradictoriness of his half-solution of the Polish Question was to confound politics for the remainder of his reign and beyond..."496

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If the Polish problem was difficult to solve, the Jewish problem was even more intractable. The two nations had much in common: both were nations without states, distrustful of each other but united in their craving for national autonomy, both fiercely anti-Orthodox and both subjects of the same people, the Russians, whom they had both exploited in the not-so-distant past. The future of Europe, and Christian civilization in general, would to a large extent depend on how well Orthodox Russia would succeed in assimilating and neutralising this breeding-ground of the Revolution...

Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, the Jews had been forbidden to settle in Russia. From the beginning of the Muscovite kingdom, however, they had begun to infiltrate into Russia from Poland-Lithuania, where, as we have seen, the Polish landowners had given them considerable privileges, employing them to collect very heavy taxes, fees, tolls and produce from the Russian serfs. In some cases the Poles even handed over churches and monasteries to the Jews, who would extort fees for the celebration of sacraments.497

“"In the 16th century,” writes Solzhenitsyn, quoting Yury Hessen, “‘the spiritual leadership of the Jewish world came to be concentrated in German-Polish Jewry... So as to prevent the possibility of the Jewish people being dissolved amidst the surrounding population, the spiritual leaders had from ages past introduced stipulations whose purpose was to isolate the people from close contact with their neighbours. Using the authority of the Talmud,... the Rabbis wrapped round the public and private life of the Jew with a complex web of prescriptions of a religio-social nature, which... prevented them getting close to people of other faiths.’ Real and spiritual needs ‘were brought in sacrifice to outdated forms of popular life’, ‘blind fulfilment of ritual was transformed for the people into the goal, as it were, of the existence of Jewry... Rabbinism, ossified in lifeless forms, continued to keep both the mind and the will of the people in fetters.”498

In 1648, the Ukrainian Cossacks and peasants rose up against their Polish and Jewish oppressors and appealed to the Tsar for help. The Tsarist armies triumphed, and by the treaty of Andrusovo in 1667 Eastern Ukraine was ceded – together with its Jewish population – to Russia.499

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498 A.I. Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti Let Vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, vol. 1, p. 34.
499 1667 was the very year in which Patriarch Nikon was unjustly deposed; so the first major influx of Jews into Russia coincided with the first serious undermining of Russian Church-State
For the next hundred years, writes Janet Hartley, these Jews of the Russian empire “lived mostly in the Ukraine although a small Jewish community became established in Moscow. The government legislated to contain and control the Jewish population within the empire’s borders. Both Catherine I (1725-27) and Elizabeth (1741-62) attempted to ban Jews from Russia; one estimate is that 35,000 Jews were banished in 1741.”

From the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the universalism and cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, together with the principles of human and national rights of the French revolution, led to the emancipation of the Jews, first in France, and then in most of the countries of Europe. This process was slow and accompanied by many reverses and difficulties, but inexorable. The only great power which firmly resisted it was Russia.

Contrary to popular myth, the myth of its being “the prison of the peoples”, the record of the Russian empire in its treatment of various subject populations was in general good. We only have to look at the large number of Baltic German names among the senior officials of the empire, the very large measure of autonomy given to the Finns (and to the Poles before they rebelled), and the way in which Tatar khans and Georgian princes were fully assimilated (or rather: assimilated to the degree that they wanted). In fact, Russia was probably more liberal, and certainly less racist, in its treatment of its subject peoples than its contemporary rival, the supposedly “liberal” empire of Great Britain.

But the Jews presented certain intractable problems not found in the other peoples of the empire. The first problem was the sheer number of Jews who suddenly found themselves within its boundaries. Thus Hartley writes: “The empire acquired a further c. 250,000 Jews after the establishment of the Congress Kingdom of Poland in 1815. There was a substantial Jewish population in Bessarabia (11.3 per cent in 1863). In 1854, the Jewish population of the whole empire was estimated as 1,062,132.” These numbers grew rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century. And by the beginning of the twentieth century, according to Lebedev, about half the number of the Jews in the whole world were to be found in the Russian empire.

More fundamental, however, than the administrative problem presented by these large numbers was the fact that, as David Vital writes, “there were differences… between Russia and the other European states… in respect of the place of religion generally and what were taken to be the teachings of religion on what were unquestionably the state’s affairs. It was not merely that in principle Russia continued to be held by its Autocrat and its minions to be a Christian state with a particular duty to uphold its own Orthodox Church. It was that, far from the matter of the state’s specifically Christian duty slowly wasting away, as
in the west, it continued actively to exercise the minds of Russia’s rulers as one of the central criteria by which questions of public policy were to be judged and decided. The continuous search for an effective definition of the role, quality, and ultimate purposes of the Autocracy itself was an enterprise which, considering the energy and seriousness with which it was pursued, sufficed in itself to distinguish Russia from its contemporaries. The programmes to which the state was committed and all its structures were under obligation to promote varied somewhat over time. But in no instance was there serious deviation from the rule that Russian Orthodoxy was and needed to remain a central and indispensable component of the ruling ethos. Nineteenth-century imperial Russia was therefore an ideological state in a manner and to a degree that had become so rare as to be virtually unknown in Europe and would not be familiar again for at least a century…”502

Moreover, if Russia was the last ideological state in Europe, the large numbers of Ashkenazi Jews that came within the Russian empire between 1772 and 1815 constituted an ideological “state within the state” whose anti-Christian books, rabbinic leaders and kahal institutions caused them to be bitterly hostile to everything that Russia stood for. To put it bluntly: if the Russians worshipped Christ, the Jews hated Him. And no amount of state intervention, whether in a liberal or illiberal, emancipatory or anti-emancipatory direction, could resolve this basic contradiction or defuse the hostile sentiments it aroused on both sides. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that, unlike the Orthodox Christians, who are taught to recognise and obey secular authorities even if they are not Orthodox, and not only out of fear but for conscience’s sake (Romans 13.1-4), the Jews ultimately recognised no authorities beside their own, rabbinical ones. And if they did obey the Gentile powers, it was only because they had been taught that resistance was counter-productive, not because these powers had any moral authority over them.

This led the Jew, writes Vital, “to be deeply sceptical of civil authority of all kinds... The lasting effect of such scepticism was to leave him peculiarly independent in mind and social outlook. “Having no earthly masters to whom he thought he owed unquestioning political obedience (the special case of the Hasidic rebbe or zaddik and his devotees aside), ‘[the European Jew’s] was... a spirit that, for his times, was remarkably free. Permitted no land, he had no territorial lord. Admitted to no guild, he was free of the authority of established master-craftsmen. Not being a Christian, he had neither bishop nor priest to direct him. And while he could be charged or punished for insubordination to state or sovereign, he could not properly be charged with disloyalty. Betrayal only entered into the life of the Jews in regard to their own community or, more broadly, to Jewry as a whole. It was to their own nation alone that they accepted that they owed undeviating loyalty.”503

We have seen how important and harmful the internal Jewish authority of the kahal was considered to be by the enlightened Polish Jew Hourwitz. The Tsar’s servants were soon to make this discovery for themselves. Tsar Paul I appointed the poet and state official Gavriil Romanovich Derzhavin to investigate why Belorussia had been afflicted by such a severe famine. After visiting Belorussia twice in 1799 and 1800, Derzhavin came to the conclusion that the main cause of the famine was the desperate poverty into which the Jewish tavern-keepers and money-lenders, in connivance with the Polish landowners, had reduced the Belorussian peasants.

But more importantly, writes Platonov, Derzhavin “noted the ominous role of the kahals – the organs of Jewish self-rule on the basis of the bigoted laws of the Talmud, which ‘a well-constructed political body must not tolerate’, as being a state within the state. Derzhavin discovered that the Jews, who considered themselves oppressed, established in the Pale of Settlement a secret Israelite kingdom divided into kahal districts with kahal administrations endowed with despotic power over the Jews which inhumanly exploited the Christians and their property on the basis of the Talmud. …

“Derzhavin also uncovered the concept of ‘herem’ – a curse which the kahal issued against all those who did not submit to the laws of the Talmud. This, according to the just evaluation of the Russian poet, was ‘an impenetrable sacrilegious cover for the most terrible crimes’.

“In his note Derzhavin ‘was the first to delineate a harmonious, integral programme for the resolution of the Jewish question in the spirit of Russian statehood, having in mind the unification of all Russian subjects on common ground’.

“Paul I, after reading the note, agreed with many of its positions and decorated the author. However, the tragic death of the Tsar as the result of an international Masonic conspiracy destroyed the possibility of resolving the Jewish question in a spirit favourable for the Russian people. The new Emperor, Alexander I, being under the influence of a Masonic environment, adopted a liberal position. In 1802 he created a special Committee for the improvement of the Jews, whose soul was the Mason Speransky, who was closely linked with the

504 Solzhenitsyn writes, quoting Derzhavin, that “some ‘landowners, giving the sale of wine on franchise to the Jews in their villages, are making agreements with them that their peasants should buy nothing that they needed from anyone else, and should take loans from nobody except these tax-farmers [three times more expensive], and should sell none of their products to anyone except these same Jewish tax-farmers… cheaper than the true price” (op. cit., p. 47).
505 In 1800, I.G. Friesel, governor of Vilna, reported: “Having established their own administrative institution, called Synagogues, Kahals, or associations, the Jews completely separated themselves from the people and government of the land. As a result, they were exempt from the operation of the statutes which governed the peoples of the several estates, and even if special laws were enacted, these remained unenforced and valueless, because the ecclesiastical and temporal leaders of the Jews invariably resisted them and were clever enough to find means to evade them.” (Isaac Levitats, The Jewish Community in Russia, 1772-1844, New York, 1970, p. 29; quoted in Hartley, op. cit., pp. 98-99). (V.M.)
Jewish world through the well-known tax-farmer Perets, whom he considered his friend and with whom he lived.

“Another member of the committee was G.R. Derzhavin. As general-governor, he prepared a note ‘On the removal of the deficit of bread in Belorussia, the collaring of the avaricious plans of the Jews, on their transformation, and other things’. Derzhavin’s new note, in the opinion of specialists, was ‘in the highest degree a remarkable document, not only as the work of an honourable, penetrating statesman, but also as a faithful exposition of all the essential sides of Jewish life, which hinder the merging of this race with the rest of the population.’

“In the report of the official commission on the Jewish question which worked in the 1870s in the Ministry of the Interior, it was noted that at the beginning of the reign of Alexander I the government ‘stood already on the ground of the detailed study of Jewry and the preparation that had begun had already at that time exposed such sides of the public institutions of this nationality which would hardly be tolerable in any state structure. But however often reforms were undertaken in the higher administrative spheres, every time some magical brake held up the completion of the matter.’ This magical brake stopped Derzhavin’s proposed reform of Jewry, which suggested the annihilation of the kahals in all the provinces populated by Jews, the removal of all kahal collections and the limitation of the influx of Jews to a certain percentage in relation to the Christian population, while the remaining masses were to be given lands in Astrakhan and New Russia provinces, assigning the poorest to re-settlement. Finally, he proposed allowing the Jews who did not want to submit to these restrictions freedom to go abroad. However, these measures were not confirmed by the government.

“Derzhavin’s note and the formation of the committee elicited great fear in the Jewish world. From the published kahal documents of the Minsk Jewish society it becomes clear that the kahals and the ‘leaders of the cities’ gathered in an extraordinary meeting three days later and decided to send a deputation to St. Petersburg with the aim of petitioning Alexander I to make no innovations in Jewish everyday life. But since this matter ‘required great resources’, a very significant sum was laid upon the whole Jewish population as a tax, refusal from which brought with it ‘excommunication from the people’ (herem). From a private note given to Derzhavin by one Belorussian landowner, it became known that the Jews imposed their herem also on the general procurator, uniting with it a curse through all the kahals ‘as on a persecutor’. Besides, they collected ‘as gifts’ for this matter, the huge sum for that time of a million rubles and sent it to Petersburg, asking that ‘efforts be made to remove him, Derzhavin, from his post, and if that was not possible, at any rate to make an attempt on his life’.”

Not surprisingly, Tsar Alexander’s Statute for the Jews of December 9, 1804 turned out to be fairly liberal – much more liberal than the laws of Frederick Augustus in Napoleon’s Duchy of Warsaw. Its strictest provisions related to a

ban on Jews’ participation in the distilling and retailing of spirits. Also, “there was to be no relaxation of the ancient rule that Jews (negligible exceptions apart\(^{507}\)) were to be prevented from penetrating into ‘inner Russia’. Provision was made for an eventual, but determined, attack on the rabbinate’s ancient – but in the government’s view presumptuous and unacceptable – practice of adjudicating cases that went beyond the strict limits of the religious (as opposed to the civil and criminal domain), but also on rabbinical independence and authority generally…\(^{508}\)

“But the Jews themselves could take some comfort in it being expressly stated that there was to be no question of forcible conversion to Christianity; that they were not to be oppressed or harassed in the observance of their faith and in their general social activities; that the private property of the Jews remained inviolable; and that Jews were not to be exploited or enserfed. They were, on the contrary, to enjoy the same, presumably full protection of the law that was accorded other subjects of the realm. They were not to be subject to the legal jurisdiction of the landowners on whose estates they might happen to be resident. And they were encouraged in every way the Committee could imagine – by fiscal and other economic incentives, for example, by the grant of land and loans to develop it, by permission to move to the New Russian Territories in the south – to undergo decisive and (so it was presumed) irreversible change in the two central respects which both Friezel and Derzhavin had indeed, and perfectly reasonably, regarded as vital: education and employment. In this they were to be encouraged very strongly; but they were not to be forced…”\(^{509}\)

However, the liberal Statute of 1804 was never fully implemented, and was succeeded by stricter measures towards the end of Alexander’s reign and in the reign of his successor, Nicholas I. There were many reasons for this. Among them, of course, was Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812, which, if it had been successful, would have united the Western Sephardic Jews with the Eastern Ashkenazi Jews in a single State, free, emancipated, and under their own legally convened Sanhedrin. But not only did Napoleon not succeed: the invasion of Russia was the graveyard of his empire. In 1813, and again in 1815, the Russian armies entered Paris. From now on, the chief target of the Jews’ hatred in both East and West would be the Russian Empire…

But the main reason for the tightening of Russian policy was “the Jews’ abhorrence of Christianity, the intensely negative light in which non-Jewish society had always been regarded, and the deeply ingrained suspicion and fear in which all forms of non-Jewish authority were commonly held.”\(^{510}\) As a result, in the whole of the 19th century only 69,400 Jews converted to Orthodoxy.\(^{511}\)

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\(^{507}\) In fact they were not negligible at all. The Pale of Settlement was exceedingly porous!

\(^{508}\) The kahal was abolished in 1821 in Poland and in 1844 in the rest of the Russian empire.

\(^{509}\) Vital, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

\(^{510}\) Vital, op. cit., p. 105.

\(^{511}\) Vladimir Gubanov (ed.), Nikolai II-i i novie mucheniki (Nicholas II and the New Martyrs), St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 698. Gubanov took this figure from the Jewish Encyclopaedia.
the French delegates who emancipated French Jewry could ignore this fact, the Russian Tsars could not.\textsuperscript{512}

The Tsars’ gradual tightening of policy had little or no effect on the basic problem of religious and social antagonism. As Platonov writes: “The statute of the Jews worked out in 1804, which took practically no account of Derzhavin’s suggestion, continued to develop the isolation of the Jewish communities on Russian soil, that is, it strengthened the \textit{kahals} together with their fiscal, judicial, police and educational independence. However, the thought of re-settling the Jews out of the western region continued to occupy the government after the issuing of the statute in 1804. A consequence of this was the building in the New Russian area (from 1808) of Jewish colonies in which the government vainly hoped to ‘re-educate’ the Jews, and, having taught them to carry out productive agricultural labour, to change in this way the whole structure of their life. Nevertheless, even in these model colonies the \textit{kahal}-rabbinic administration retained its former significance and new settlements isolated themselves from the Christian communities; they did not intend to merge with them either in a national or in a cultural sense. The government not only did not resist the isolation of the Jews, but even founded for them the so-called Israelite Christians (that is, Talmudists who had converted to Orthodoxy). A special committee existed from 1817 to 1833.”\textsuperscript{513}

\textsuperscript{512} Nor did the Jews receive emancipation from the great powers at the Congress of Vienna, although their situation had made it onto the agenda (Zamoyski, \textit{Rites of Peace}, p. 568).

\textsuperscript{513} Platonov, op. cit., p. 245.
37. THE REACTION AGAINST MASONRY

Church-State relations were greatly strained in Alexander’s reign by the Bible Society. “Founded in 1804 in England by Methodists and Masons, the Bible Society extended its wide activity also in Russia. The Society had large financial resources. In 1810 the monetary contributions of the Bible Society attained 150,000 rubles, and at the end of 1823 there were already 300 such societies in Russia. Under the mask of love for one’s neighbour and the spreading of the word of God, the bible societies began to conduct oral propaganda and publish books directed against [the Orthodox Christian] religion and the State order. These books were published under the management of the censor, which was attached to the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and Popular Enlightenment, which was headed by the Emperor Alexander’s close friend, Prince A.N. Golitsyn. The main leaders of the Bible societies were members of the Masonic lodges, who preached the rejection of Orthodoxy, the Church and the rites of the Church. In 1819 there was published Stankevich’s book, ‘A conversation in the coffin of a child’, which was hostile to the institution of the Orthodox Church. Then Yastrebov published a work entitled ‘An appeal to men to follow the inner promptings of the Spirit of Christ’. This work was recognised to be a sermon ‘of seditious elements against the Christian religion’ and the good order of the State. In 1824 there appeared ‘a blasphemous interpretation of the Gospel’ published by the director of the Russian Bible Society. This work openly pursued the aim of stirring up people against the Church and the Throne. Besides the publication of books directed against Orthodoxy, foreign religious propaganda was conducted. Two Catholic priests from Southern Germany, Gosner and Lindl, preached Protestantism, a sect beloved by the Masons. The Methodists and other sectarians sowed their tares and introduced heresies amidst the Orthodox. At the invitation of the Mason Speransky, the very pope of Masonry, Fessler, came and took charge of the work of destroying the Orthodox Church.

“The Orthodox clergy were silent. They could not speak against the evil that was being poured out everywhere. All the powerful men of the world were obedient instruments of Masonry. The Tsar, who was falsely informed about the aims and tasks of the Bible Society by Prince Golitsyn, gave the latter his protection from on high.”

“Golitsyn,” writes Oleg Platonov, “invited to the leadership of the Bible Society only certain hierarchs of the Russian Church that were close to him. He de facto removed the Holy Synod from participation in this matter. At the same time he introduced into it secular and clerical persons of other confessions, as if underlining that ‘the aim of the Society is higher than the interests of one, that is the Russian Church, and that it develops its activities in the interests of the whole of Christianity and the whole of the Christian world’.

“As the investigator of the Bible Society I.A. Chistovich wrote in 1873 [Istoria pererova Biblii na russkij iazyk (A History of the Translation of the Bible into Russian), St. Petersburg, pp. 50-55], ‘this indifferent cosmopolitanism in relation to the

514 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 278.
Church, however pure its preachers might be in their ideal simplicity of heart, was, however, an absurdity at that, as at any other time. Orthodoxy is, factually speaking, the existing form of the Christian faith of the Greco-Russian Church, and is completely in accord with the teaching and statutes of the Ancient Universal Church. Therefore Christianity in its correct ecclesiastical form only exists in the Orthodox Church and cannot have over or above it any other idea... But the Bible Society was directed precisely against such an ideal, and they sought it out or presupposed it.

“In an official document of the Bible Society the ideas of Masonic ecumenism were openly declared. ‘The heavenly union of faith and love,’ it says in a report of the Russian Bible Society in 1818, ‘founded by means of Bible Societies in the great Christian family, reveal the beautiful dawn of the wedding day of Christians and that time when there will be one pastor and one flock, that is, when there will be one Divine Christian religion in all the various formations of Christian confessions.’

“The well-known Russian public figure, the academic A.S. Shishkov wrote on this score: ‘Let us look at the acts of the Bible Societies, let us see what they consist of. It consists in the intention to construct out of the whole human race one general republic or other and one religion – a dreamy and undiscriminating opinion, born in the minds either of deceivers or of the vainly wise... If the Bible Societies are trying only to spread piety, as they say, then why do they not unite with our Church, but deliberately act separate from her and not in agreement with her? If their intention consists in teaching Christian doctrines, does not our Church teach them to us? Can it be that we were not Christians before the appearance of the Bible Societies? And just how do they teach us this? They recruit heterodox teachers and publish books contrary to Christianity!... Is it not strange – even, dare I say it, funny – to see our metropolitans and hierarchs in the Bible Societies sitting, contrary to the apostolic rules, together with Lutherans, Catholics, Calvinists and Quakers – in a word, with all the heterodox? They with their grey hairs, and in their cassocks and klobuks, sit with laymen of all nations, and a man in a frock suit preaches to them the Word of God (of God as they call it, but not in fact)! Where is the decency, where the dignity of the church server? Where is the Church? They gather in homes where there often hang on the walls pictures of pagan gods or lascivious depictions of lovers, and these gatherings of theirs – which are without any Divine services, with the reading of prayers or the Gospel, sitting as it were in the theatre, without the least reverence – are equated with Church services, and a house without an altar, unconsecrated, where on other days they feast and dance, they call the temple of God! Is this not similar to Sodom and Gomorrah?’”515

At this critical moment for Russian Orthodoxy, God raised up righteous defenders of the faith, such as Metropolitan Michael (Desnitsky) and Archimandrite Innocent (Smirnov). Metropolitan Michael protested at Golitsyn’s removal of the censorship of spiritual books from the Holy Synod, which meant

515 Platonov, op. cit., pp. 262-263.
giving free expression to the pseudo-mystical sects. There were stormy scenes between the prince and the metropolitan even in the Synod.

“As a Member of the Synod, the hierarch Philaret was witness to the heated speeches of Metropolitan Michael in defence of the Church and undoubtedly approved of his actions. In his eyes the first-ranking hierarch was rightly considered to be a pillar of the Orthodox Church, restraining the onslaught of false mysticism. And when this pillar collapsed, and the storms did not die down, Philaret, like many others, was seized by fear for the destiny of the Church. Under the influence of a vision seen by someone concerning Metropolitan Michael, a sorrowful picture of Church life, full of misery and darkness, was revealed. He believed that in such a situation only a person possessing the spirit and power of the Prophet Elijah could work with benefit for the Church. However, the holy hierarch was profoundly convinced that the Church was supported, not by people, but by the Lord. And since he saw that it was impossible to save the Church only by human efforts, without the help of God, he decided that it was better for him to withdraw himself from everything as far as he could. Evidently, Philaret preferred a different method of warfare with various kinds of heterodox preachers and sectarian societies from that employed by Metropolitan Michael. And these methods were: a correct organization of the spiritual schools throughout Russia and the spiritual enlightenment of the Russian people through the distribution of Orthodox spiritual literature…”

However, while Philaret withdrew to concentrate on spiritual education, a man with the spirit and strength of the Prophet Elijah was found. Fr. Photius (Spassky), later archimandrite of the Yuriev monastery near Novgorod, began his open defence of Orthodoxy in 1817.

“Bureaucratic and military Petersburg were angry with the bold reprover. His first speech was unsuccessful. Photius’ struggle... against the apostates from Orthodoxy, the followers of the so-called inner Church, ended with his expulsion from Petersburg.

“After the expulsion of Photius the Masons celebrated their victory. But the joy of the conquerors turned out to be short-lived. The exile was found to have followers. Photius received special support at a difficult time of his life from the great righteous woman, Countess Anna Alexeevna Orlova-Chesmenskaia, who presented a model of piety. She not only protected him, but chose him as her leader and confessor. The firmness and courage with which Photius fought against the enemies of Orthodoxy attracted the mind and heart of Countess Orlova, a woman of Christian humility and virtue. After the death of her instructor, Countess Orlova explained why it was Photius whom she chose as her spiritual director. ‘He attracted my attention,’ wrote Countess Orlova, ‘by

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516 Two weeks before he died, in March, 1821, he wrote to the Emperor: “Your Majesty, when this epistle reaches you, I will no longer be in this world. I have communicated nothing except the truth to people, especially now, when in my actions I am preparing to give an account to the Supreme Judge” (Snychev, op. cit., p. 147). (V.M.)
517 Snychev, op. cit., pp. 148-149.
the boldness and fearlessness with which he, being a teacher of the law of God at
the cadet corps and a young monk, began to attack the dominant errors in faith.
Everybody was against him, beginning with the Court. He did not fear this. I
wanted to get to know him and entered into correspondence with him. His
letters seemed to me to be some kind of apostolic epistles. After getting to know
him better, I became convinced that he personally sought nothing for
himself.”

However, the struggle against Masonry was helped by other events. As we
have seen, Kushelev reported to the Tsar on the revolutionary activity in the
Polish and Russian lodges. And then there was the Congress of the Sacred
Alliance in Verona in 1822. Lebedev writes that at this Congress “Metternich
unexpectedly, on the basis of Masonic documents that had unexpectedly fallen
into his possession, demonstrated that the secret societies of all countries, being in
constant communication with each other, constituted one common plot, which was
subject only to the secret leaders, and only for form’s sake accepted different
programmes in different countries, depending on circumstances and conditions.
He was supported by the Prussian minister, Count Haugwitz, who himself had
formerly been a Mason. He made a detailed report in which he showed that the
‘enmity’ of various unions of Masonry was only for show, to divert attention. In
actual fact Masonry in its depths was one and its aim was the subjection of the
world, and in the first place the subjection of the monarchs, so that they become
weapons in the hands of the Masons. Haugwitz added that since 1777 he had
personally ruled not only a part of the Prussian lodges, but also Masonry in
Poland and Russia! We can imagine how shocked his Majesty Alexander I was
as he sat in the hall. He had been born in the same year of 1777 and had entered
Masonry in 1803. Everybody was stunned. The Austrian Emperor Frantz and the
Russian Emperor Alexander I decided to attack this great evil. In 1822 Masonry
was forbidden in Russia by a decree of the Tsar. The lodges were disbanded, the
‘brothers’ correspondence with abroad was strictly forbidden. At the same time
this was the third powerful blow that shook the soul of Alexander I with the
collapse of his faith in the nobility of the Masonic ideas and strivings. Strict
censorship was introduced, especially in the publication of books of a spiritual
nature. Now his Majesty began to pay attention to the rebukes of Masonry and
mysticism issuing from Archimandrite Innocent, who had suffered earlier for
this, of the metropolitan of the capital Michael, Metropolitan Seraphim who
succeeded him, and also of the zealous defender of Orthodox Archimandrite
Photius (Spassky)… Seraphim and Photius, joining forces, were able to show
Alexander the danger for Orthodoxy of ‘fashionable’ tendencies in thought, the
harmfulness of the activity of Prince Golitsyn, and return the heart of the Tsar to
Holy Orthodoxy. A visit to Valaam monastery, conversations with Vladyka
Seraphim, with Elder Alexis of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra made a great
impression on Alexander and showed him that what his exalted soul had sought
throughout his life was contained in the experience, rules and methods of
Orthodox asceticism, which was just then experiencing an unusual ascent, being
armed with such books as The Philokalia and others, especially on the doing of
the Jesus prayer (‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!’).

518 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 280.
This was Alexander’s fourth powerful spiritual shock. It had two kinds of consequences. When, in April, 1824, after many fruitless exhortations, Archimandrite Photius publicly (in a private house) pronounced ‘anathema’ on Prince Golitsyn and the latter retired, his Majesty accepted his retirement. Archimandrite Photius wrote: “the Masonic faith is of Antichrist, and its whole teaching and writings are of the devil”, and “in the spring of 1824 [he] wrote two epistles to his Majesty. In one of them he said that ‘in our time many books, and many societies and private people are talking about some kind of new religion, which is supposedly pre-established for the last times. This new religion, which is preached in various forms, sometimes under the form of a new world..., sometimes of a new teaching, sometimes of the coming of Christ in the...
Spirit, sometimes of the union of the churches, sometimes under the form of some renewal and of Christ’s supposed thousand-year reign, sometimes insinuated under the form of a so-called new religion – is apostasy from the faith of God, the faith of the apostles and the fathers. It is faith in the coming Antichrist, it is propelling the revolution, it is thirsting for blood, it is filled with the spirit of Satan. Its false-prophets and apostles are Jung-Stilling, Eckartshausen, Thion, Bohme, Labzin, Fessler and the Methodists…’

“His Majesty was favourably disposed to the epistle of Archimandrite Photius in spite of the fact that it contained criticism of all his recent friends and of the people who had enjoyed his protection. Almost at the same time there appeared the book of Gosner, about whose harmful line Archimandrite Photius had reported to his Majesty on April 17, 1824.

“On April 20, 1824, Emperor Alexander received Photius, who was ordered: ‘Come by the secret entrance and staircase into his Majesty’s study so that nobody should know about this’. Their conversation lasted for three hours, and on May 7 Photius sent his second epistle with the title: ‘Thoroughly correct the work of God. The plan for the revolution published secretly, or the secret iniquities practised by secret society in Russia and everywhere.’

“On April 29 Photius gave his Majesty another note: ‘To your question how to stop the revolution, we are praying to the Lord God, and look what has been revealed. Only act immediately. The way of destroying the whole plan quietly and successfully is as follows: 1) to abolish the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and remove two others from a well-known person; 2) to abolish the Bible Society under the pretext that there are already many printed Bibles, and they are now not needed; 3) the Synod is, as before, to supervise education, to see if there is anything against the authorities and the faith anywhere; 4) to remove Koshelev, exile Gosner, exile Fessler and exile the Methodists, albeit the leading ones. The Providence of God is now to do nothing more openly.’

“This flaming defence of Orthodoxy [by Photius] together with Metropolitan Seraphim was crowned with success: on May 15, 1824 the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs was abolished.”

The Synod was now freer; it had a new over-procurator in the place of Golitsyn, and was purged of those members that had been linked with him. The Tsar had paid heed to Photius’ appeal, and so had become a spiritual as well as a physical conqueror. “God conquered the visible Napoleon who invaded Russia,” he said to him. “May He conquer the spiritual Napoleon through you!”

However, not everyone saw only good in the struggle against the Bible Society and the false mystics. Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, who had been Archimandrite Photius’ early sponsor, had declined to enter into open warfare

with them, partly because of his personal friendship with Golitsyn\textsuperscript{523}, and partly because he had another approach to the mystical ferment in Russia. “Under the cover of the mystical temptations,” writes Florovsky, “Philaret was able to recognize a living religious need, a thirst for religious instruction and enlightenment. He recognized the need in Russian society for the living enchurchment of the whole of life, whatever distorted and corrupt forms it sometimes assumed. And he considered that what was necessary was not rebuke, but pastoral admonishment, penetrated by the spirit of love and completed by positive teaching.”\textsuperscript{524}

As for Golitsyn, writes Snychev, “the Muscovite archpastor saw in him much that was positive and recognized him to be one of the zealots of the spiritual side of the ecclesiastical organism. One way or the other, with the support of Prince Golitsyn it had been possible to publish many useful ecclesiastical books of a mystical character, but in an Orthodox spirit. Of course, Philaret was Orthodox in his views on mysticism. He clearly understood that in mysticism the most important question is its relation to the Church and the institutions of the Church. Every form of isolation could bring only harm, not good. Philaret recognized the usefulness of mystical teaching in the spirit of Orthodoxy and was far from sympathizing with a superficial approach to the latter. In the actions of the opponents of mysticism he found excesses, while the very method of the struggle against the latter he considered to be open to criticism and of little use. What, for example, did the party of Arakcheev and Photius gain by their victory? Absolutely nothing.... First of all, mystical literature was subjected to terrible attacks, and that which was formerly considered useful was now recognized to be harmful, demonic and heretical. All books of a mystical character were ordered to be removed from the libraries of educational institutions and a veto placed on them. Terrible difficulties were placed in the way of the publication of patristic literature. Publishers were frightened, as it were, to publish, for example, the writings of St. Macarius, they were frightened to appear thereby to be supporters of mysticism. The opponents of the Bible Society did great harm also to the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Russian…”\textsuperscript{525}

Philaret had been taking an active part in this translation because he saw in it the best means of diverting the often misdirected religious aspirations of Russian society in the direction of Orthodoxy. “‘Let the bread not be taken away from the child’... - Metropolitan Philaret firmly believed in the renovatory power of the Word of God. He uninterruptedly bound his destiny with the work on the Bible, with the translation of the Holy Scriptures. And it is difficult properly to value his Biblical exploit. For him personally it was bound up with great trials and sorrow.”\textsuperscript{526}

\textsuperscript{523}This, however, did not stop him from firmly refusing Golitsyn’s request to distribute a work published by the Tatarinova group. See Snychev, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 144.
\textsuperscript{524}Florovsky, “Filaret, mitropolit moskovskij”, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 271.
\textsuperscript{525}Snychev, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 160-161.
\textsuperscript{526}Florovsky, “Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij”, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 272.
For the work of translation was vigorously opposed by Metropolitan Seraphim, Archimandrite Photius and Admiral Shishkov, the new minister of education. Thus Shishkov “denied the very existence of the Russian language – ‘as if he saw in it only baseness and meanness’, ‘the simple people’s’ dialect of the single Slavic-Russian language. He saw in [Philaret’s] determination to translate the Word of God an ill-intentioned undertaking, ‘a weapon of revolutionary plots’, ‘how can one dare to change the words which are venerated as having come from the mouth of God?’… And translate it into what? Who would read these translations, would they not pile up everywhere in torn-up copies?… From the translation of the Bible Shishkov turned to the Catechism of Philaret and to his Notes on the Book of Genesis, where the Biblical and New Testament texts were translated in a Russian ‘reworking’. He was particularly disturbed by the fact that the Catechism was printed in a large print-run (18,000!) – he saw in this the clear manifestation of some criminal intention. Archimandrite Photius, on his part,… reproached the ‘unhealthy and harmful’ work of the Biblical translation – ‘the power of the translation was such that it clearly overthrew the dogmas of Church teaching or cast doubt on the truth of the Church’s teaching and traditions’. And Photius directly attacked Philaret, who, in his words, ‘was struggling on behalf of a God-fighting assembly’ and was supposedly ‘influencing the translation of the Bible in order rather to give a new appearance to the Word of God, thereby assisting faithlessness, innovation and all kinds of ecclesiastical temptations’. He directly called Philaret’s Catechism ‘gutter water’. As Philaret was told by his disciple Gregory, who was then rector of the Petersburg Academy and many years later Metropolitan of Novgorod and Petersburg, they were saying about the Bible Society that ‘it was founded in order to introduce a reformation’. They feared the translation of the Old Testament, and in particular the five books of Moses, lest it somehow seduced people to return to the Old Testament ritual law, or fall into Molokanism and Judaism (this thought was Magnitsky’s). They began ‘to say unpleasant things’ about Philaret in Petersburg, and it was suggested that he be removed to the Caucasus as exarch of Georgia… In these years Philaret was in Moscow and took no notice of the Petersburg rumours and ‘Alexandrine politics’. As before, he directly and openly defended the work on the Bible and attempted to show that ‘the very desire to read the Holy Scriptures is already an earnest of moral improvement’. To the question, what was the purpose of this new undertaking in a subject so ancient and not subject to change as Christianity and the Bible, Philaret replied: ‘What is the purpose of this new undertaking? But what is new here? Dogmas? Rules of life? But the Bible Society preaches none of these things, and gives into the hands of those who desire it the book from which the Orthodox dogmas and pure rules of life were always drawn by the true Church in the past and to the present day. A new society? But it introduces no novelty into Christianity, and produces not the slightest change in the Church’… They asked: ‘Why is this undertaking of foreign origin?’ But, replied Philaret, so much with us ‘is not only of foreign origin, but also completely foreign’…

“The supposed zealots succeeded in obtaining the banning of Philaret’s Catechism on the excuse that there were ‘prayers’ in it – the Symbol of faith and the Commandments – in Russian. The Russian translation of the New Testament was not banned, but the translation of the Bible was stopped. And as
Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev remembered later ‘with great sorrow and horror’, from fear of conversions to Judaism, ‘they found it necessary to commit to the flames of brick factories several thousand copies of the five books of the Prophet Moses translated into Russian in the St. Petersburg Theological Academy and printed by the Bible Society’.

M. Philaret reacted sharply and sorrowfully to these actions, which were carried out bypassing the Holy Synod. [He wrote to Metropolitan Seraphim]: ‘I cannot understand by whom and how and why doubt can be cast on a work as pure and approved by all, as sacred as anything on earth. It would be no small matter if the doubt threatened only the one man who was the instrument of this work; but does it not threaten the Church? Does it not threaten the Church? If the Orthodoxy of a Catechism that was triumphantly approved by the Most Holy Synod is in doubt, then will not the Orthodoxy of the Most Holy Synod itself not be in doubt? Will not allowing this shake the Hierarchy to its foundations, will it not disturb the peace of the Church? Will it not produce a serious temptation for the Church?’ Metropolitan Seraphim calmed Philaret, saying that Orthodoxy was not in question here, that everything came down to the language, but he refused ‘to reply in a satisfactory manner’ ‘why the Russian language must have no place in the Catechism, which was, moreover, short, and intended for small children who had no knowledge whatsoever of the Slavonic language, and for that reason were not able to understand the truths of the faith which were expounded to them in that language’…

The ban on the Catechism (1828) was removed only when all the texts had been put into Slavonic and the Russian translation of the Symbol, the Lord’s Prayer and the Commandments had been left out. M. Philaret was deeply shaken by these events. ‘Smoke is eating into their eyes’, he wrote to his vicar, ‘and they are saying: how corrosive is the light of the sun! They can hardly breathe from the smoke and with difficulty decree: how harmful is the water from the source of life! Blessed is he who can not only raise his eyes to the mountains, but run there for the clean air, the living water!… Blessed is he who can sit in his corner and weep for his sins and pray for the Sovereign and the Church, and has no need to take part in public affairs, becoming tainted with the sins of others and multiplying his own sins!’ Above all Philaret was alarmed by the un-thought-through hastiness and interference of secular people, ‘people who have been called neither by God, nor by their superiors’, and who rise up in bold self-opinionated fashion against the appointed teachers.”

The destruction of the Holy Scriptures simply because they were in a Russian translation, and of the official Catechism because it quoted them in Russian rather than Slavonic, would, in another age, have led to a schism. But Philaret refrained from open protest precisely because he did not want to create a schism.528

527 Florovsky, “Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij”, pp. 273-275. And yet his main enemies, sadly, were the zealots of Church piety. Thus Fr. Photius, on reading Philaret’s letter to Seraphim, wrote: “From the letters of Philaret it is not evident that he valued the faith, the Church and Orthodoxy, but only his own personality and honour” (in A.I. Yakovlev, “Sviatitel’ Filaret (Drozdov) in gosudarstvennaia zhizn’ Rossii v 1821-1831 godakh” (The Hierarch Philaret (Drozdov) and State life in Russia from 1821 to 1831), in Vladimir Tsurikov (ed.), Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow 1782-1867, Jordanville: Variable Press, 2003, p. 138.

528 Metropolitan Seraphim of St. Petersburg had threatened to retire if Philaret insisted on continuing his translation. (Snychev, op. cit., p. 181)
However, with heresy overwhelming so many from the left, and blind prejudice parading as traditionalism from the right, the Russian Church was in a precarious position...

The Russian Bible Society was forced to close down in 1826 by Tsar Nicholas I; its property, worth some two million roubles, was transferred to the Holy Synod. The Society re-established itself in Russia in 1990. The project for the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Russian was resumed in the reign of Alexander II...
38. THE DECEMBRIST REBELLION

The wave of revolutionary violence rolling through Southern Europe reached Russia after the supposed death of Tsar Alexander I on November 19, 1825. According to a rather strong tradition, his death in Taganrog was actually staged, and he in fact became a hermit in Omsk under the name Theodore Kuzmich until his death in 1864, being blessed to undertake this path by Seraphim of Sarov.529 This tradition has received confirmation recently from graphological experts.530 Moreover, in November, 2015, during a press conference, Bishop Tikhon (Shevkhnunov) announced that the tomb of Tsar Alexander I had been found to be empty in 1921...

The Decembrist conspiracy began when thirty officers founded a Union of Salvation in 1816. They then divided into a constitutionalist Northern Society based in St. Petersburg and a more radical Southern society based in Tulchin, headquarters of the Second Army in the Ukraine.

“In the ideology of the Northern Society especially,” writes Walicki, “there were certain elements reminiscent of the views of the aristocratic opposition of the reign of Catherine II. Many of the members in this branch of the Decembrist movement were descendants of once powerful and now impoverished boyar families... Nikita Muraviev claimed that the movement was rooted in the traditions of Novgorod and Pskov, of the twelfth-century Boyar Duma, of the constitutional demands presented to Anne by the Moscow nobility in 1730, and of the eighteenth-century aristocratic opposition. The poet Kondraty Ryleev painted an idealized portrait of Prince Andrei Kurbsky (the leader of the boyar revolt against Ivan the Terrible) and even devoted one of his ‘elegies’ to him...In his evidence before the Investigating Commission after the suppression of the revolt, Petr Kakhovsky stated that the movement was primarily a response to the high-handedness of the bureaucracy, the lack of respect for ancient gentry freedom, and the favoritism shown to foreigners. Another Northern Decembrist, the writer and literary critic Aleksandr Bestuzhev... wrote that his aim was ‘monarchy tempered by aristocracy’. These and similar facts explain Pushkin’s view, expressed in the 1830’s, that the Decembrist revolt had been the last episode in the age-old struggle between autocracy and boyars...

“The Decembrists used the term ‘republic’ loosely, without appearing to be fully aware that there were essential differences between, for instance, the Roman republic, the Polish gentry republic, the old Russian city states, and

modern bourgeois republics... Muraviev modelled his plan for a political system on the United States... The theorists of the Northern Society made no distinction between criticism of absolutism from the standpoint of the gentry and similar criticism from a bourgeois point of view. Hence they saw no difficulty in reconciling liberal notions taken largely from the works of Bentham, Benjamin Constant and Adam Smith with an idealization of former feudal liberties and a belief in the role of the aristocracy as a ‘curb on despotism’. The theoretical premise here was the ‘juridical world view’ of the Enlightenment, according to which legal and political forms determined the revolution of society.”

The Northern Decembrists were in favour of the emancipation of the serfs. However, they insisted that the land should remain with the gentry, thereby ensuring the continued dependence of the serfs on the gentry. “The conviction that the peasants ought to be overjoyed merely at the abolition of serfdom was shared by many Decembrists. Yakushkin, for instance, could not conceal his exasperation at his peasants’ demand for land when he offered to free them. When they were told that the land would remain the property of the landlord, their answer was: ‘Then things had better stay as they were. We belong to the master, but the land belongs to us.’”

The Northern Decembrists worked out a new interpretation of Russian history conceived “as an antithesis to Karamzin’s theory of the beneficial role of autocracy”. “An innate Russian characteristic, the Decembrists maintained – one that later developments had blunted but not destroyed – was a deep-rooted love of liberty. Autocracy had been unknown in Kievan Russia: the powers of the princes had been strictly circumscribed there and decisions on important affairs of state were taken by the popular assemblies. The Decembrists were especially ardent admirers of the republican city-states of Novgorod and Pskov. This enthusiasm was of practical significance, since they were convinced that the ‘spirit of liberty’ that had once imbued their forebears was still alive; let us but strike the bell, and the people of Novgorod, who have remained unchanged throughout the centuries, will assemble by the bell tower, Ryleev declared. Kakhovsky described the peasant communes with their self-governing mir as ‘tiny republics’, a living survival of Russian liberty. In keeping with this conception, the Decembrists thought of themselves as restoring liberty and bringing back a form of government that had sound historical precedents.”

This reinterpretation of Russian history was false. Russia was imbued with the spirit of Orthodox autocracy and patriarchy: the “republics” of Pskov and Novgorod were exceptions to the historical rule. And if Kievan autocracy was less powerful than the Muscovite or Petersburg autocracies, this was not necessarily to its advantage. Russia succumbed to the Mongols because the dividedness of her princes precluded a united defence. And there can be little doubt that she would not have survived into the nineteenth century as an independent Orthodox nation if she had not been an autocracy.

531 Walicki, op. cit, pp. 58, 59, 60.
532 Walicki, op. cit, p. 61.
533 Walicki, op. cit, p. 67.
The leader of the Southern Society, Colonel Pavel Pestel, had more radical ideas in his draft for a constitution, *Russian Justice*, which was based on two assumptions: “that every man has a natural right to exist and thus to a piece of land large enough to allow him to make a basic living; and that only those who create surplus wealth have a right to enjoy it. After the overthrow of tsarism, therefore, Pestel proposed to divide land into two equal sectors: the first would be public property (or, more accurately, the property of the communes); the second would be in private hands. The first would be used to ensure everyone a minimum living, whereas the second would be used to create surplus wealth. Every citizen was entitled to ask his commune for an allotment large enough to support a family; if the commune had more land available, he would even be able to demand several such allotments. The other sector would remain in private hands. Pestel felt that his program ensured every individual a form of social welfare in the shape of a communal land allotment but also left scope for unlimited initiative and the opportunity of making a fortune in the private sector.

“Pestel believed that his program had every chance of success since land ownership in Russia had traditionally been both communal and private. Here he obviously had in mind the Russian village commune; it should be emphasized, however, that Pestel’s commune differed essentially from the feudal *obshchina* in that it did not restrict its members’ movement or personal freedom and did not impose collective responsibility for individual members’ tax liabilities.”

In 1823 Alexander I was given a list of the future “Decembrists”. But he refused to act against them. Archpriest Lev Lebedev explains why: “‘It is not for me to punish them,’ said his Majesty, and cast the paper into the fire. ‘I myself shared their views in my youth,’ he added. That means that now, in 1823, Alexander I evaluated these diversions of his youth as sin, which also had to receive their retribution. Neither he nor [Grand Duke] Constantine [his brother] had the spiritual, moral right to punish the plotters, insofar as both of them had been guilty of the plot against their own father! That was the essence of the matter! Only he had the right to punish who had in no way been involved in the parricide and the revolutionary delusions – that is, the younger brother Nicholas. It was to him that the reins of the government of Russia were handed.”

The rebellion took place on December 14, 1825, when a group of army officers attempted to seize power in St. Petersburg. It was crushed by Tsar Nicholas I.

On the investigation committee into the crimes of the conspirators he placed Count Alexander Khristoforovich Benckendorff, future head of the Gendarmes and secret police. At the first interrogation Benckendorff gathered all the accused and said to them: “You affirm that you rebelled for the sake of freedom for the serfs? Very praiseworthy. I ask those of you who gave this same freedom to the serfs – who did not cast them out on the street to die as homeless dogs, their

heads under a fence, but released them from the land while helping them to relocate – to raise your hands. If there are such people among you, then their case will be shelved, since they have truly acted in accordance with their own conscience. I’m waiting. Nobody? How strange...

“I released my serfs in Lithuania in 1816, and those in Tambov in 1818. They all left the land with funds to make a new start. I paid the taxes of each one of them for five years in advance to the state purse. And I do not consider myself to be a liberal or liberator! It’s more advantageous to me this way. These people work better for themselves. I earn on grinding and timber-felling – and from my former serfs. I have already covered all his expenses and made a profit on all that And I don’t come out onto the square with made declarations and protests against his Majesty or, even less, the Empire? And so there is no way you can prove that this affair is political. We will judge you as rebels and traitors of the Fatherland like Emelyan Pugachev. And now, all of your, to your cells! You will go on the same convoy with the criminals, you swine!”

579 people were arrested and brought to trial. 40 were given the death sentence and the rest – hard labour. In the end only five were executed;536 the soldiers were flogged. The five, writes Sir Richard Evans, “were hanged before a large crowd; as the ropes split, saving the lives of the condemned men, the crowd clamored for mercy, in a tradition that regarded such occurrences as the expression of God’s will; but the implacable Tsar Nicholas I ordered new ropes to be attached to the gallows and the hanging went ahead…”537

In August, 1826 Tsar Nicholas confirmed the ban on Masonry.

“And so for the first time in Russian history,” writes Lebedev, “a rebellion of the nobility had as its aim not the removal of one sovereign by another, but the annihilation of tsarist power altogether… It became clear that [the Decembrists’] links in ‘society’ were so significant and deep, and the sympathy for them so broad, that one could speak of a betrayal of the Throne and Church – or, at any rate, of the unreliability – of the noble class as a whole.”538

V.F. Ivanov writes: “As an eyewitness put it, the rebellion in Petersburg shocked the general mass of the population of Russia profoundly. In his words, ‘the attempt to limit the Tsar’s power and change the form of government seemed to us not only sacrilege, but an historical anomaly; while the people, seeing that the plotters belonged exclusively to the upper class, considered the nobility to be traitors, and this added one more sharp feature to that secret hatred which it nourished towards the landowners. Only the progressives and

536 One of those executed was Sergius Ivanovich Muraviev-Apostol, a leader of the southern society. In his Catechesis we find a strong Christian element, but a tirade against the tsars for having “seized the people’s freedom” and a confession that he wanted to kill the tsar (http://decemb.hobby.ru/index.shtml?archive/pokaz5).
537 Evans, The Pursuit of Power, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 433. “In the 1820s there was only one execution per 100,000 population in Russia, a ration that continued roughly for the rest of the century.” (op. cit., p. 433)
538 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 318.
the intelligentsia of the capital sympathized with the unfortunate madmen’ (Schilder).

“The best people turned away from the affair in disgust and branded the work of the Mason-Decembrists that of Cain. In the words of Karamzin: ‘Look at the stupid story of our mad liberals! Pray God that not so many real rogues are found among them. The soldiers were only victims of a deception. Sometimes a fine day begins with a storm: may it be thus in the new reign... God saved us from a great disaster on December 14…’”

In 1826 Karamzin wrote: “Liberals! What do you want? The happiness of men? But is there happiness where there is death, illness, vices, passions?... For a moral being there is no good without freedom: but this freedom is given not by his Majesty, not by Parliament, but by each of us to ourselves, with the help of God. We must conquer freedom in our hearts by peace of conscience and trust in Providence!”

In the same year Metropolitan Philaret said: “It is becoming clearer and clearer from what horrors and iniquities God delivered us, when he strengthened His Majesty on December 14. Pray that this evil will be completely annihilated by righteousness and wisdom. But there are people who, after talking previously about the visitation of God, are now talking about the wrath of God on us.”

The Decembrist rebellion was important not only for what it represented in itself but also for the halo of martyrdom which its exiles acquired. They were romantic dreamers rather than hardened revolutionaries. Thus one of their leaders, the poet Ryleev, mounted the scaffold with a volume of Byron in his hands, and another, Count Sergius Volkonsky, remained a monarchist to the end of his life, breaking down in tears on hearing of the death of Nicholas I.

But of course they were not monarchists: as Alexis Khomyakov said, they “preferred the tyranny of an armed minority to one-man rule”. And their naivety did not diminish the evil effect of their words and deeds on succeeding generations. From now on, Russian liberals could appeal to the example of the “heroic” Decembrists in their struggle against the Orthodox autocracy...

539 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 307-308.
540 Yakovlev, op. cit., p. 143.
541 Yakovlev, op. cit., p. 130.
543 Figes, op. cit., p. 143. He also petitioned to serve as a private in the Crimean war, which he saw as a return to the spirit of 1812. Figes sees Volkonsky as the link between the Decembrists and the Populists of a later generation. He wrote to his son in 1857: “I gave my blessing when you went into the service of the Fatherland and the Tsar. But I always taught you to conduct yourself without lordly airs when dealing with your comrades from a different class (op. cit., pp. 143-143). For more on the Decembrists and their wives (from a pro-Decembrist perspective), see Christine Sutherland, The Princess of Siberia, London: Quartet Books, 2001.
As I.P. Yakobi pointed out, “the corruption of the upper classes could not fail to influence the other strata of society. From the nobility the revolutionary turmoil spread to the new class of the intelligentsia, and there appeared organized terror. The assassins followed on the heels of the Russian Tsars. Emperor Alexander II was killed by the members of the ‘People’s Freedom’ movement. His successor was saved by a miracle. His grandson, Nicholas II, together with the whole of his family, found a martyrlic death at the hands of the heirs of the Decembrists – the Bolsheviks.”\footnote{Yakobi, \textit{Imperator Nikolai II i Revoliutsia} (Emperor Nicholas II and the Revolution), Moscow, w010, p. 62.}

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Just before the rebellion, a young officer-Decembrist came up to a hermit in the great woods of Sarov, St. Seraphim, the most famous Russian saint of modern times. “Taking off his cap,” the soldier “asked for his blessing. The always meek and quiet elder Seraphim was suddenly filled with such anger as nobody had ever seen in him. He began to shout loudly at the officer and cursed him. The unfortunate one, struck as if by thunder, went away, swaying from the shock and forgetting to put on his cap... An involuntary witness of the event had been a young monk who had brought Elder Seraphim some food. ‘Did you see?’ the elder asked him. ‘I saw,’ replied the monk. The elder pointed at the source, which he had so carefully tended: ‘Look!’ The monk glanced and saw that the source of grace-filled water, which had healed many sick people, and which was always clean and transparent, this time had become completely disturbed. ‘That’s how these gentlemen want to disturb Russia,’ said St. Seraphim. Soon Russia learned of the plot and the attempt at rebellion of the ‘Decembrists’ (the officer was one of them)...”\footnote{Lebedev, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 295. Platonov (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 265) believes that the Decembrist was Pestel.}

In 1844 Nicholas Alexandrovich Motovilov, a nobleman of Simbirsk province and a close friend of the saint, made notes of his conversations with him. At the beginning of the twentieth century Sergius Alexandrovich Nilus found these notes and published them as follows:-

“... As a demonstration of true zeal for God Batyushka Seraphim cited the holy Prophet Elijah and Gideon, and for hours at a time he talked in an inspired manner about them. Every judgement that he made about them was concluded by its application to life, precisely our own life, and with an indication of how we... can draw soul-saving instructions from their lives. He often spoke to me about the holy King, Prophet and Ancestor of God David, at which point he went into an extraordinary spiritual rapture. How one had to see him during those unearthly minutes! His face, inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit, shone like the sun, and I – I speak the truth – on looking at him felt in my eyes as if I was looking at the sun. I involuntarily recalled the face of Moses when he had just come down from Sinai. My soul, pacified, entered such a quiet, and was filled with such great joy, that my heart was ready to embrace within itself not
only the whole human race, but also the whole creation of God, pouring out in love towards everything that is of God...

“‘So, your Godbelovedness, so,’ Batyushka used to say, leaping from joy (those who still remember this holy elder will relate how he would sometimes be seen leaping from joy), “I have chosen David my servant, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will”…

“In explaining how good it was to serve the Tsar and how much his life should be held dear, he gave as an example Abishai, David’s war-commander.

“‘Once,’ said Batyushka Seraphim, ‘to satisfy the thirst of David, he stole in to a spring in view of the enemy camp and got water, and, in spite of a cloud of arrows released at him from the enemy camp, returned to him completely unharmed, bringing the water in his helmet. He had been saved from the cloud of arrows only because of his zeal towards the King. But when David gave an order, Abishai replied: “Only command, O King, and everything will be done in accordance with your will.” But when the King expressed the desire to take part himself in some bloody deed to encourage his warriors, Abishai besought him to preserve his health and, stopping him from participating in the battle, said: “There are many of us, your Majesty, but you are one among us. Even if all of us were killed, as long as you were alive, Israel would be whole and unconquered. But if you are gone, then what will become of Israel?”…’

“Batyushka Fr. Seraphim loved to explain himself at length, praising the zeal and ardour of faithful subjects to the Tsar, and desiring to explain more clearly how these two Christian virtues are pleasing to God, he said:

“‘After Orthodoxy, these are our first Russian duty and the chief foundation of true Christian piety.’

“Often from David he changed the subject to our great Emperor [Nicholas I] and for hours at a time talked to me about him and about the Russian kingdom, bewailing those who plotted evil against his August Person. Clearly revealing to me what they wanted to do, he led me into a state of horror; while speaking about the punishment prepared for them from the Lord, and in confirmation of his words, he added:

“‘This will happen without fail: the Lord, seeing the impenitent spite of their hearts, will permit their undertakings to come to pass for a short period, but their illness will turn upon their heads, and the unrighteousness of their destructive plots will descend upon them. The Russian land will be reddened with streams of blood, and many noblemen will be killed for his great Majesty and the integrity of his Autocracy: but the Lord will not be wrath to the end, and will not allow the Russian land to be destroyed to the end, because in it alone will Orthodoxy and the remnants of Christian piety be especially preserved.

“Once,” as Motovilov continued in his notes, “I was in great sorrow, thinking what would happen in the future with our Orthodox Church if the evil
contemporary to us would be multiplied more and more. And being convinced that our Church was in an extremely pitiful state both from the great amount of carnal debauchery and... from the spiritual impiety of godless opinions sown everywhere by the most recent false teachers, I very much wanted to know what Batyushka Seraphim would tell me about this.

“Discussing the holy Prophet Elijah in detail, he said in reply to my question, among other things, the following:

“’Elijah the Thesbite complained to the Lord about Israel as if it had wholly bowed the knee to Baal, and said in prayer that only he, Elijah, had remained faithful to Lord, but now they were seeking his soul, too, to take it... So what, batyushka, did the Lord reply to this? “I have left seven thousand men in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So if in the kingdom of Israel, which had fallen away from the kingdom of Judah that was faithful to God, and had come to a state of complete corruption, there still remained seven thousand men faithful to the Lord, then what shall we say about Russia? I think that at that time there were no more than three million in the kingdom of Israel at that time. And how many do we have in Russia now, batyushka?’

“I replied: ‘About sixty million.’

“And he continued: ‘Twenty times more. Judge for yourself how many more of those faithful to God that brings!... So, batyushka, those whom He foreknew, He also predestined; and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He guards, and those He also glorifies... So what is there for us to be despondent about!... God is with us! He who hopes in the Lord is as Mount Sion, and the Lord is round about His people... The Lord will keep you, the Lord will protect you on your right hand, the Lord will preserve your coming in and your going out now and to the ages; the sun will not burn you by day, nor the moon by night.’

“And when I asked him what this meant, and to what end he was talking to me about it:

“’To the end,’ replied Batyushka Fr. Seraphim, ‘that you should know that in this way the Lord guards His people as the apple of His eye, that is, the Orthodox Christians, who love Him and with all their heart, and all their mind, in word and deed, day and night serve Him. And such are those who completely observe all the commandments, dogmas and traditions of our Eastern Universal Church, and confess the piety handed down by it with their lips, and really, in all the circumstances of life, act according to the holy commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ.’

“In confirmation of the fact that there were still many in the Russian land who remained faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived in Orthodoxy and piety, batyushka Fr. Seraphim once said to one acquaintance of mine... that once, when he was in the Spirit, he saw the whole land of Russia, and it was filled and
as it were covered with the smoke of the prayers of believers praying to the Lord..."\(^{546}\)

St. Seraphim prophesied: "More than half a century will pass. Then evildoers will raise their heads high. This will happen without fail: the Lord, seeing the impenitent evil of their hearts, will allow their enterprises for a short time. But their sickness will rebound upon their own heads, and the unrighteousness of their destructive plots will fall upon them. The Russian land will become red with rivers of blood... Before the birth of the Antichrist there will be a great, protracted war and a terrible revolution in Russia passing all bounds of human imagination, for the bloodletting will be most terrible: the rebellions of Ryazan, Pugachev and the French revolution will be nothing in comparison with what will take place in Russia. Many people who are faithful to the fatherland will perish, church property and the monasteries will be robbed; the Lord's churches will be desecrated; good rich people will be robbed and killed, rivers of Russian blood will flow..."\(^{547}\)


\(^{547}\) St. Seraphim, quoted by Protopriest Victor Potapov, "God is betrayed by silence". See also *Literaturnaya Ucheba*, January-February, 1991, pp. 131-134.
39. THE GREEK REVOLUTION

Greek nationalism under the Turkish yoke was nourished and sustained from three sources. One, the purest, was the Orthodox faith: since the Gospel and most of the patristic writings were written in Greek, a good knowledge of Orthodoxy required a good knowledge of Greek and Byzantine history in which Hellenism, the patriotic belief in the greatness of the Greek nation, was linked inseparably with its confession of the Orthodox faith. This kind of Orthodox Greek nationalism was to be found especially among the monks of Mount Athos.

Another source was a natural desire to be liberated from the Ottoman yoke. The situation of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire was very difficult. As time passed and Ottoman power weakened, persecution of the faith increased. The names of 162 martyrs for the faith at the hands of the Turks between 1453 and 1838 are known.  

"The rights of the patriarch," writes Fr. Alexander Schmemann, "were gradually reduced to nothing; all that was left to him was the ‘right’ of being responsible for the Christians. In the course of seventy-three years in the eighteenth century, the patriarch was replaced forty-eight times! Some were deposed and reinstalled as many as five times; many were put to torture. The rebellions of the Janissaries were accompanied by terrible bloodshed. Churches were defiled, relics cut to pieces, and the Holy Gifts profaned. Christian pogroms became more and more frequent. In the nineteenth century Turkey was simply rotting away, but the ‘sick man of Europe’ was supported at all points by other nations in opposition to Russia."  

The Patriarch was bound by his oath of allegiance to the Sultan not to encourage protest against the Turks. However, as Sir Steven Runciman writes, "the Greek in the provinces could not understand the subtle politics of the Patriarchate. He could not appreciate the delicacy that the Patriarch and his advisers had to show in their dealings with the Sublime Porte. He looked to his village priest or to the local abbot or the bishop to protect him against the Turkish governmental authorities, and he gave his support to anyone who would champion him against the government. In the great days of the Ottoman Empire, when the administration had been efficient and on the whole just, Greek nationalism could be kept underground. But by the eighteenth century the administrative machinery was beginning to run down. Provincial Turkish governors began to revolt against the Sultan and could usually count on the support of the local Greeks. A growing number of outlaws took to the mountains. In Slav districts they were known by the Turkish name of haidouks; in Greece they were called the Klephts. They lived by banditry, directed mainly against the Turkish landowners; but they were quite ready to rob Christian merchants or travellers of any nationality. They could count on the support of national allies."

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550 New Martyr Demetrios of Samarina (+1808) also urged the Greeks to obey the Ottoman laws.
the local Christian villagers, to whom they were latter-day Robin Hoods; they could almost always find refuge from the Turkish police in some local monastery…”

The first and second sources of Greek nationalism combined: it was because the faith was being trampled on that the Greek revolution of 1821 had widespread support in the Church and was understood as a struggle “for faith and fatherland” in response to the insults cast at both by the Turks.

A third, less pure source of Greek nationalism was the western teaching on freedom promulgated by the French revolution, and brought back to Greece by the sons of the wealthy Phanariot families of Constantinople. As Mark Mazower writes, “it was the French Revolution which first suggested that emancipation might come through the action of the masses themselves [as opposed to a foreign king]. The toppling of the French monarchy, the rise of Bonaparte and above all, his invasion of Ottoman Egypt in 1798, radicalised the political thought of Balkan Christian intellectuals.”

“According to my judgement,” wrote the Greek freedom fighter Theodore Kolokotronis in his memoirs, “the French Revolution and the doings of Napoleon opened the eyes of the world. The nations knew nothing before, and the people thought that kings were gods upon the earth and that they were bound to say that whatever they did was well done. Through this present change it is more difficult to rule the people.”

By the end of the eighteenth century most educated Greeks were deeply tainted by westernism. And there were other, political and economic factors exciting the dreams of the Phanariots: the conquest of the Ionian islands by Napoleon and then by the British; the rebellion of the Mohammedan warlord Ali Pasha against the Sultan in 1820; the inexorable gradual southward expansion of the Russian Empire, which drew Greek minds to the prophecies about the liberation of Constantinople by “the yellow-haired race”, the Russians; and the restrictions on the accumulation of capital in the Ottoman empire, which contrasted unfavourably with the more business-friendly regimes they had encountered in the West. However, the most important influences were undoubtedly ideological – the influence of western ideas made available by the explosion in the provision of educational opportunities for young Greeks that the Phanariots created in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth.

Such an emphasis on education had been made by New Hieromartyr Cosmas of Aitolia (+1779), who built over two hundred schools. But he emphasized education in Orthodoxy in order to escape the snares of western culture. The

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553 Kolokotronis, in Mazower, op. cit., p. 87.
554 “It is better,” he said, “my brother, for you to have a Greek school in your village rather than fountains and rivers, for when your child becomes educated, then he becomes a human being. The school opens churches; the school opens monasteries.” And to the people of Parga he said:
merchants, however, sent young Greeks to the heterodox universities of Western Europe, especially Germany. “Here,” writes Richard Clogg, “they came into contact not only with the heady ideas of the Enlightenment, of the French Revolution and of romantic nationalism but they were made aware of the extraordinary hold which the language and civilisation of ancient Greece had over the minds of their educated European contemporaries.555

“During the centuries of the Tourkokratia knowledge of the ancient Greek world had all but died out, but, under the stimulus of western classical scholarship, the budding intelligentsia developed an awareness that they were the heirs to an heritage that was universally revered throughout the civilised world. By the eve of the war in independence this progonoplexia (ancestor obsession) and arkhaiolatreia (worship of antiquity), to use the expressive Greek terms, had reached almost obsessive proportions. It was precisely during the first decade of the nineteenth century that nationalists, much to the consternation of the Church authorities, began to baptise their children with the names of (and to call their ships after) the worthies of ancient Greece rather than the Christian saints....”556

Such veneration of Greek antiquity could, unfortunately, be combined with contempt for the real strength and glory of Greece - the Orthodox Church. A case in point was Adamantios Korais.

Sir Steven Runciman writes: “He was born at Smyrna in 1748 and went as a young man to Paris, which he made his headquarters for the rest of his life. There he made contact with the French Encyclopédistes and their successors. From them he learnt a dislike for clericalism and for tradition. From reading Gibbon he came to believe that Christianity had ushered in a dark age for European civilization. His friend Karl Schlegel taught him to identify nationality with language. ‘Language is the nation.’ He wrote; ‘for where one says la langue de France one means the French nation.’ The Greeks of his time were therefore of

“Take care to establish without fail a Greek school in which your children will learn all that you are ignorant of [because] our faith wasn’t established by ignorant saints, but by wise and educated saints who interpreted the Holy Scriptures accurately and who enlightened us sufficiently by inspired teachings” (Nomikos Michael Vaporis, Witnesses for Christ: Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period 1437-1860, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000, p. 202).

555 The Europeans were originally interested in the ancient monuments. Hence the removal of the Elgin marbles and the Venus of Milo to London and Paris respectively. However, attitudes were changed, as Zamoyksi points out, “by Lord Byron’s visit to Greece in 1809, whose fruits were the second canto of Childe Harold, published in 1809, The Giaour and The Bride of Abydos (1813), and The Siege of Corinth (1816). More interested in people than in stones, Byron concentrated on depicting the craggy nobility of the natives. He was also much affected by the notion of a once great people under alien oppression. The negative picture of the Turks and their culture – rococo Ottomania had given way to priggish neoclassical contempt – made the oppression all the crueler to the European imagination, in which the Turk combined lustfulness with barbarity. The educated European of 1800 was as disgusted by the idea of the ‘terrible’ Turk defiling Greece as his twelfth-century forebear had been at the idea of Saracens profaning the Holy Land. And just as the Holy Land called out to Christendom for vengeance and crusade, so the oppressed Greek land called out for liberation” (Holy Madness, p. 233).

the same race as the ancient Greeks. But to make the identification closer he sought to reform the language so that it would be nearer to the Classical form... For the Byzantine past of Greece and for the Orthodox Church he had no use at all. His writings were eagerly read by the young intellectuals at the Phanar and by men of education all over Greece.”557

And so, mixed with the righteous Greek nationalism “for faith and fatherland”, was an unrighteous, fallen nationalism influenced by the ideas of the French revolution and ready at times to put the narrow interests of the Greek nation – or rather, of the nation’s ruling elite - above those of the other oppressed Orthodox under the Turkish yoke.

Such was the nationalist bombast of, for example, Benjamin of Lesbos, who wrote: “Nature has set limits to the aspirations of other men, but not to those of the Greeks. The Greeks were not in the past and are not now subject to the laws of nature.”558 This mixed character of the Greek revolution, symbolized by the use of three different flags559, determined its mixed outcome, and the fact that, in the course of the nineteenth century, Orthodox Eastern Europe was liberated, not through a single, united Orthodox movement of liberation, but by separate nationalist movements – Greek, Bulgarian, Serb, Romanian – which ended up, in 1912-1913, fighting each other rather than the common enemy…

“One of the first to develop plans for a co-ordinated revolt,” writes Clogg, “was Rigas Velestinlis, a Hellenised Vlach from Thessaly. After acquiring his early political experience in the service of the Phanariot hospodars of the Danubian principalities, he had been powerfully influenced by the French Revolution during a sojourn in Vienna in the 1790s. The political tracts, and in particular his Declaration of the Rights of Man, which he had printed in Vienna and with which he aspired to revolutionise the Balkans, are redolent of the French example. Potentially the most significant was the New Political Constitution of the Inhabitants of Rumeli, Asia Minor, the Islands of the Aegean and the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. This envisaged the establishment of a revived Byzantine Empire but with the substitution of republican institutions on the French model for the autocracy of Byzantium. Although it was intended to embrace all the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, Greeks, whether by birth or by culture, were to predominate. Rigas’ carefully articulated schemes were without result for he was betrayed (by a fellow Greek) in Trieste as he was about to leave the Hapsburg territory to preach the gospel of revolution in the Balkans.

558 Benjamin, Stoikheia tis Metaphysikis (The Elements of Metaphysics), 1820 (in Greek); quoted in Clogg, op. cit., p. 33.
559 Alexander Pushkin, who was in nearby Kishinev at the time, wrote that the Greeks “published proclamations which quickly spread everywhere – in them it is said that the Phoenix of Greece will arise from its own ashes, that the hour of Turkey’s downfall has come, and that a great power [Russia?] approves of the great-souled feat! The Greeks have begun to throng together in crowds under three banners; of these one is tricoloured [the revolutionary flag], on another streams a cross wreathed with laurels, with the text ‘By this sign conquer’ [the religious flag, derived from God’s promise to St. Constantine], on a third is depicted the Phoenix arising from its ashes [the patriotic flag]” (in Mazower, op. cit., p. 91).
With a handful of fellow conspirators he was put to death by the Ottomans in Belgrade in May 1798.”

However, the revolutionaries were opposed not only by the Turks, but also by the Patriarchate. Runciman writes: “A test came early in the nineteenth century when Sultan Selim made a serious effort to suppress brigandage. The Klephs in Greece, thanks to the spirit of revolt and to the hymns of Rhigas, had become popular heroes. It was a patriotic duty for a Greek to give them shelter against the police; and the village priest and the monks of the country monasteries were eager to help them. But they were a menace to orderly rule; and when the Sultan demanded of the Patriarch that he should issue a stern decree threatening with excommunication any priest or monk who would not aid the authorities in their suppression, the Patriarch could not well refuse. The decree was published in the Peloponnese; and though most of the higher clergy sullenly obeyed it, the villages and the poorer monasteries were outraged; and even at the Phanar there was open disapproval. It became clear that when the moment for revolt arrived the Patriarch would not be at its head.

“In spite of the Patriarch the plots continued. At the end of the eighteenth century there were even several secret societies in existence, with names such as the Athena, which hoped to liberate Greece with French help and which counted Korais among its members, or the Phoenix, which pinned its hopes on Russia. In 1814 three Greek merchants at Odessa in Russia, Nicholas Skouphas, Emmanuel Xanthos and Athanasius Tsakalof, the first a member of the Phoenix and the latter two freemasons, founded a society which they called the Hetaireia ton Philikon, the Society of Friends. Thanks chiefly to the energy of Skouphas, who unfortunately died in 1817, it soon superseded all the previous societies and became the rallying point of the rebellion. Skouphas was determined to include in the society patriots of every description; and soon it had amongst its members Phanariots such as Prince Constantine Ypsilanti and his hot-headed sons, Alexander and Nicholas, all now living in exile in Russia, and members of the Mavrocorato and Caradja families, or high ecclesiastics such as Ignatius, Metropolitan of Arta and later of Wallachia, and Germanus, Metropolitan of Patras, intellectuals such as Anthimus Ghazis, and brigand leaders such as the armatolos George Olympios and Kolokotronis. It was organized partly on Masonic lines and partly on what the founders believed to have been the early Christian organization. It had four grades. The lowest was that of Blood-brothers, which was confined to illiterates. Next were the Recommended, who swore an oath to obey their superiors but were not permitted to know more than

561 He came from the same village of Dhimitsana in the Peloponnese as Patriarch Gregory V. The attitudes of these two hierarchs came to symbolise a fundamental division in Greek society that was to continue for decades... (V.M.)
562 Although the Philiki Hetairia recalled Masonry in its four grades, in its oaths of secrecy and obedience to unknown leaders, and in the fact that two of its three founders were in fact Freemasons, it was nevertheless Orthodox in its ideology, according to Archimandrite Ambrose, (Tekionismos kai Philiki Hetairia (Masonry and the Society of Friends), Athens, 1972 (in Greek)). But if two of the three founders of the Hetairia were Masons, then Masonic influence cannot be ruled out. (V.M.)
the general patriotic aims of the society\textsuperscript{563} and were kept in ignorance of the names of their superiors and were supposed not even to know of the existence of the Blood-brothers. Above them were the Priests, who could initiate Blood-brothers and Recommended and who, after solemn oaths, were allowed to know the detailed aims of the society. Above them again were the Pastors, who supervised the Priests, who supervised the Priests and saw that they only initiated suitable candidates; a suitable Recommended could become a Pastor without passing through the grade of Priest. From the Pastors were chosen the supreme authorities of the society, the \textit{Arche}. The names of the \textit{Arche} were unknown except to each other, and their meetings were held in absolute secrecy. This was thought necessary not only security against external powers but also for the prestige of the society. Had the names of its directors been known, there might have been opposition to several of them, particularly among such a faction-loving people as the Greeks; whereas the mystery surrounding the \textit{Arche} enabled hints to be dropped that it included such weighty figures as the Tsar himself. All grades had to swear unconditional obedience to the \textit{Arche}, which itself operated through twelve Apostles, whose business it was to win recruits and to organize branches in different provinces and countries. They were appointed just before the death of Skouphas; and their names are known. It was first decided to fix the headquarters of the society on Mount Pelion, but later, after the initiation of the Maniot chieftain, Peter Mavromichalis, it was moved to the Mani, in the south-east of the Peloponnese, a district into which the Turks had never ventured to penetrate.

“There were however two distinguished Greeks who refused to join the Society. One was the ex-Patriarch Gregory V. He had been deposed for the second time in 1808, and was living on Mount Athos, where the Apostle John Pharmakis visited him. Gregory pointed out that it was impossible for him to swear an oath of unconditional obedience to the unknown leaders of a secret society\textsuperscript{564} and that anyhow he was bound by oath to respect the authority of the Sultan. The reigning Patriarch, Cyril VI, was not approached.

Still more disappointing for the revolutionaries was the refusal of the Tsar’s foreign minister, John Capodistrias, to countenance the \textit{Hetairia}\textsuperscript{565}.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{563} Adam Zamoyski writes that “its ultimate aim was the liberation of Greece and the restoration of a Greek Empire. More immediately it was concerned with the ‘purification’ of the Greek nation…. By 1821 the \textit{Hetairia} had a total of 911 members.” (\textit{Holy Madness}, p. 234) (V.M.)

\textsuperscript{564} Gregory Frazee, \textit{The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821-1852}, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 24. Moreover, these “highest authorities” (\textit{anotati arkhi}) were called “Great Priests of the Eleusinian Mysteries” (Clogg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 35). It is understandable that the first priest in Orthodoxy could not be involved in such things! (V.M.)

\textsuperscript{565} The \textit{Hetairia} sent an envoy to Capodistrias in St. Petersburg. He was appalled, and advised them that if the conspirators “do not want to perish themselves and destroy together with themselves their innocent and unfortunate Race, they should abandon their revolutionary plots and live as before under the Governments they find themselves, until Providence decides otherwise.” Again, when the revolution broke out, he said: “So, a premature revolution for Greece that is going to destroy all my efforts for a happy future” (Frazee, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 17). However, he did not betray the plan of the plotters, and when the revolution began he resigned his post as minister and went to Geneva, where he worked quietly to help the insurgents. (V.M.)}
“John Antony, Count Capodistrias, had been born in Corfu in 1770, and as a young man had worked for the Ionian government there, before going to Russia at the time of the second French occupation of the Ionian islands in 1807. He was given a post in the Russian diplomatic service and was attached to the Russian Embassy at Vienna in 1811, and next year was one of the Russian delegates at the treaty negotiations at Bucharest. His remarkable abilities impressed Tsar Alexander, who in 1815 nominated him Secretary of State and Assistant Foreign Minister. In his youth Capodistrias had made contacts with many of the Greek revolutionary thinkers, and he was well known to be a Greek patriot. In the past many Greeks had looked to France to deliver them from the Turks; but after Napoleon’s collapse the whole Greek world turned to Russia, and Capodistrias’s accession to power gave them confidence. The Russian sovereign was the great patron of Orthodoxy. The Greeks forgot how little they had gained from Catherine the Great, the imperialistic German free-thinker, who had incited them to revolt in 1770 and then had abandoned them. But at the Treaty of Kucuk Kainarci in 1774 Russia had acquired the right to intervene in Turkish internal affairs in the interests of the Orthodox. Catherine’s son, ... Paul, was clearly unwilling to help the Greek cause; but when Alexander I succeeded his murdered father in 1801 hopes rose. Alexander was known to have liberal views and mystical Orthodox sympathies. Belief in his aid had encouraged the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia to plot against the Sultan in 1806; and, when they were deposed by the Sultan, the Tsar cited his rights under the Treaty of Kucuk Kainarci and declared war on Turkey. The only outcome of the war had been the annexation by Russia of the Moldavian province of Bessarabia. But the Greeks were not discouraged. Now, with a Greek as the Tsar’s Secretary of State, the time had surely come for the War of Liberation. The plotters refused to realize that Capodistrias was the Tsar’s servant and a practical man of the world; and they did not know that the Tsar himself was becoming more reactionary and less willing to countenance rebellion against established authority.

“The planners of Greek independence could not count on the open support of the Patriarchate. They should have realized that they also could not count on the support of Russia. And the nationalist ecclesiastical policy of the Church during the last century deprived them of the friendship of the other peoples of the Balkans. The leaders of the Hetairia were aware of this. They made earnest attempts to enrol Serbian, Bulgarian and Roumanian members. When Karageorge revolted against the Turks in Serbia Greek armatoles and klephts came to join him. Even the Phanariat princes had offered support; but they were rebuffed. ‘The Greek Princes of the Phanar,’ Karageorge wrote, ‘can never make common cause with people who do not wish to be treated like animals.’ Karageorge’s revolt was put down by the Turks in 1813. Two years later the Serbs revolted again, under Miloš Obrenovic, a far subtler diplomat, who secured Austrian support and eventually induced the Sultan to accept him as a reliable vassal-prince. Miloš had no contact with the Greeks. The Hetairia

566 “The ill-fated Orlov expedition to the Peloponnesos, launched by Catherine the Great, and the combined Russian-Greek attempt to free the Peloponnesos from the tyranny of the Ottoman Mohammedans, ended in disaster. In addition to destroying the Greek military forces and many of the Russians, the Albanian Mohammedan mercenaries, who were called in by the Ottoman Mohammedans, wreaked havoc on the local population…” (Vaporis, op. cit., p. 337) (V.M.)
therefore pinned its faith on Karageorge, who was persuaded to become a member in 1817. As Karageorge was greatly admired by the Bulgarians it was hoped that numbers of them would now join the movement. Karageorge was then sent back to Serbia. But the Serbs, who were satisfied with Miloš’s achievements, offered him no support; and Miloš regarded him as a rival to be eliminated. He was assassinated in June 1817. With his death any hope of interesting the Serbs in the coming Greek rebellion faded out; and there was no one capable of rallying the Bulgars to the cause. Karageorge alone could have given the Hetairia the air of not being exclusively Greek.

“The Hetairia had higher hopes of the Roumanians. There a peasant leader, Tudor Vladimirescu, who had led a band to help the Serbs, was defying the Turkish police in the Carpathian mountains and had gathered together a considerable company. He was in close touch with two leading hetaerists, George Olympius and Phokianos Savvas, and he himself joined the society, promising to co-ordinate his movements with the Greeks’. But he was an unreliable ally; for he was bitterly opposed to the Phanariot princes, who, he considered, had brought ruin to his country…”

* * *

“By the end of 1820,” continues Runciman, “everything seemed to be ready. Ali Pasha of Janina was in open revolt against the Sultan; and had promised help to the Greeks; and though Osman Pasvanoglu was dead, his pashalik of Vidin was in disorder, tying up Turkish troops south of the Danube. The Arche of the Hetairia had a few months previously elected a Captain-General, choosing a young Phanariot Alexander Ypsilanti, son of the ex-Prince Constantine of Moldavia. It is interesting to note that the plotters considered that only a Phanariot had sufficient experience and prestige for the post. Alexander Ypsilanti was born in 1792 and spent his youth in Russia. He had won a reputation for gallantry and military skill when serving in the Russian army and had lost an arm at the battle of Kulm, fighting against the French. He was known to be an intimate friend of the Tsar and the Tsaritsa and of Capodistrias. He made it his first task to improve the efficiency of the Society and summoned the one and only plenary meeting of the Arche, which was held at Ismail in southern Russia in October 1820. The original plan had been to start the revolt in the Peloponnese, where there would be a secure base in the Mani and where the sympathy of the inhabitants was assured. Alexander now changed his mind. It would be better to start the main campaign in Moldavia. By the Treaty of

567 Runciman, op. cit., pp. 398-402. That the Romanians should have placed their hopes of freedom from the Turks on the tsar rather than on a phanariot was hardly surprising. Moldavia had been closely linked to Russia for many centuries, and in November, 1806, when the Russo-Turkish war began, Metropolitan Benjamin (Kostake) in his pastoral epistle wrote: “The true happiness of these lands lies in their union with Russia”. And when Bessarabia, that is, the part of Moldavia east of the Prut, was united to Russia in 1812 (an annexation recognized by the Congress of Vienna in 1815), there was great rejoicing among the people, and in five years the population of Bessarabia almost doubled through an influx from the lands west of the Prut. (Vladimir Bukarsky, “Moskovskij Patriarkhat pod udarnom: na ocheredi – Moldavia”, Pravoslavnaia Rus’, N 23 (1836), December 1/14, 2007, p. 4).
Bucharest the Turks had undertaken not to send troops into the Principalities without Russian consent. Vladimirescu would distract what Turkish militia was there already; and a successful army sweeping through Wallachia and across the Danube was the only thing that might induce the Bulgarians and the Serbians to join in. Meanwhile a subsidiary rising in the Peloponnese, which Alexander’s brother Demetrius was sent to organize, would further embarrass the Turks.

“The invasion of Moldavia was timed to begin on 24 November (O.S.) 1820. Alexander had already gathered together a small army of Greeks and Christian Albanians on the Russian side of the frontier. Almost at the last moment Capodistrias counselled delay. The Austrian secret police had discovered the plans and had sent to warn the Sultan; and the Tsar was nervous of international reactions. But, in January 1821, Vladimirescu, encouraged by George Olympus, against the advice of Phokianos Savvas, began to attack Turkish police posts and was scornful of Ypsilanti’s hesitation. About the same time the Prince of Wallachia, Alexander Soutzo, died, poisoned it was rumoured by the Hetairia, of which he was known to disapprove. Demetrius Ypsilanti reported from the Peloponnese that everyone there was impatient of further delays. Alexander Ypsilanti decided that the time had come to act. He sought an audience of the Tsar before leaving St. Petersburg, but it was refused. The Tsaritsa, however, sent him her blessing; and he was assured that the Tsar would personally protect his wife. On 22 February (O.S.) Alexander and his little band crossed over the Pruth into Moldavia.

“In his desire to prevent a leakage of news Alexander had not warned his fellow-plotters. When news of his advance reached the Peloponnese, his brother Demetrius hesitated, fearing that it might be a false rumour. But the people would not wait. They found a leader in Germanus, Metropolitan of Patras, who, in defiance of the Patriarchate and of Orthodox tradition, raised the standard of revolt at the monastery of Agia Lavra, near Kalavryta, on 25 March. The Mani had already risen. The islands of Spetsai and Psara and a little later Hydra rose

568 Michael Binyon writes: “A letter from Alexander I, signed by Capo d’Istria, ... denounced Ypsilanti’s actions as ‘shameful and criminal’, upbraided him for misusing the tsar’s name, struck him from the Russian army list, and called him to lay down his arms immediately” (Pushkin, London: HarperCollins, 2002, p. 133). Ironically, the officer sent by the Russian government to report on the insurrection was Pestel, the future leader of the Decembrist rebellion (op. cit., p. 134). (V.M.)

Troubetskoy writes: “Under normal circumstances there would have been no doubt about the tsar’s reaction: as champion of the Orthodox world, he could hardly have rejected such a plea. The circumstances at the time, however, were anything but normal. Central Europe was captive to the views of Austrian chancellor Metternich, to whom any hint of insidious liberalism – revolutionary movements in particular – was anathema. The Holy Alliance, of which Russia was an enthusiastic signatory and driving force, was to assure this. Despite his personal sympathy for the Greeks and antipathy to the Turks, there was no way the tsar could let down the established new order. It was a conundrum that he painfully resolved by disavowing and censuring Ypsilantis.” (Imperial Legend, Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003, pp. 112-113) (V.M.)

569 Germanus wrote to the ambassadors of the foreign powers: “We, the Greek race of Christians, seeing that the Ottoman people despises us and is intending destruction against us, sometimes in one way and at other times in another, have decided firmly: either we shall all die or we shall be liberated.” (Boomerjes, 24, March-April, 2006, p. 32 (in Greek)). Germanus was supported by eight other bishops, five of whom died in prison. (V.M.)
in early April. By the end of April all central and southern Greece was up in arms.

“But it was now too late for Alexander Ypsilanti. He had marched unopposed on Bucharest. But there was no news of any rising among the Bulgarians or the Serbs; and when he reached Bucharest he found that Tudor Vladimirescu and his troops were there before him; and they refused to let him into the city. ‘I am not prepared to shed Roumanian blood for Greeks,’ said Vladimirescu. There were skirmishes between the two forces. Then came news that the Tsar had repudiated the whole rebellion at the Congress of Laibach, and with his permission a huge Turkish army was approaching the Danube, ready to invade the Principalities. Ypsilanti retired north-east, towards the Russian frontier. Vladimirescu, after lingering for a few days in Bucharest trying to make terms with the Turkish commander, moved back on 15 May into the Carpathians. But he had lost control over his own followers. They allowed George Olympus to take him prisoner and to put him to death, on the evening of 26 May, for his treason to the cause. Phokianos Savvas and a garrison of Albanians held Bucharest for a week, then also retired into the mountains. The Turks entered Bucharest before the end of May, then moved in pursuit of Ypsilanti. On 7 June (O.S.) they routed his army at a battle at Dragasani. His best troops perished. He himself fled over the Austrian border into Bukovina, where by Metternich’s orders he was arrested. He spent the remainder of his life in an Austrian prison. The remnant of his army was rallied by George Cantacuzenus, who led them back towards the Russian frontier. But the frontier was closed to them. The Turks caught up with them at Sculeni on the Pruth and massacred them there, on 17 June, in sight of Russian territory. Savvas surrendered to the Turks in August and was put to death by them. George Olympus held out till September in the monastery of Secu. When all hope was lost he fired his powder stores and blew up the monastery with himself and all his garrison within it.”

However, while the Phanariot rebellion in the north failed, the rebellion of the bishops and the people in the south succeeded. But the cost was high. A characteristic of the war was the extreme cruelty on both sides. It began with the Greeks. By April, 1821, 15,000 out of the 40,000 Turkish inhabitants of the Peloponnese had been killed. Within a few months, shouting “Kill all the Turks in the Morea”, the Greeks had killed 20,000 men, women and children. At Tripolitsa, the Scottish Philhellene Thomas Gordon watched as the Greeks, “mad with vindictive rage, spared neither age nor sex – the streets and houses were inundated with blood, and obstructed with heaps of dead bodies. Some Mohammedans fought bravely and sold their lives dearly, but the majority were slaughtered without resistance...” The British observer George Finlay wrote: “Women and children were frequently tortured before they were murdered. After the Greeks had been in possession of the city for forty-eight hours, they deliberately collected together about two thousand persons of every age and sex, but principally women and children, and led them to a ravine in the nearest mountain [Mount Maenalion] where they murdered every soul.”

570 Runciman, op. cit., pp. 403-405.
“On 27 January 1822,” writes Sir Richard Evans, “meeting at Epidauros in the Peloponnese, a self-styled Greek National Assembly issued a ringing declaration of independence from ‘the cruel yoke of Ottoman power’. The Greeks, it proclaimed, were fighting ‘a holy war, a war the object of which is to reconquer the rights of individual liberty, of property and honour – rights which the civilized peoples of Europe, our neighbours, enjoy today.’ Yet despite the ideological proclamations of the Assembly, which provided the formal leadership of the rebel movement, the uprising remained uncoordinated, internally divided and chaotic, a huge gulf separating the educated professional elements from the rough-and-ready and often barely politically aware fighters on the ground…”571

The Turks responded in kind. The massacres began in Constantinople, where the war had placed Patriarch Gregory V in an impossible position. The Sultan was convinced that he was at least in part to blame for the insurrection. So Gregory, writes Frazee, “called a meeting of the Greek leaders and people to discuss their common peril that same day after he had met with the sultan. Mahmud had demanded that the patriarch and Synod excommunicate those responsible for the uprising and those who had killed innocent Turks. At the patriarchate, therefore, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Polykarpos, four synodal archbishops, Karolos Kallimachi, Hospodar of Wallachia, the Dragoman of the Porte, Konstantinos Mourouisi, and the Grand Logothete, Stephanos Mavroyeni, gathered to decided on their next step. A number of other Greeks were also in attendance ‘of every class and condition’. Gregorios and Mourouisi presided. The assembled Greeks were all exhorted ‘to carefully guard against any move or action contrary to their allegiance and fidelity to their Sovereign’. A letter was drafted which incorporated the sultan’s suggestion and was sent off to be printed at the patriarchal press. The patriarch then urged that the Greeks prepare to leave the city quickly, promising that he would stay: ‘As for me, I believe that my end is approaching, but I must stay at my post to die, and if I remain, then the Turks will not be given a plausible pretext to massacre the Christians of the capital.’

“The letter of excommunication against the revolutionaries appeared on Palm Sunday, 4 April, in all the Greek churches of the capital signed by the patriarch, Polykarpos of Jerusalem, and twenty-one other prelates. In part, the document stated: ‘Gratitude to our benefactors is the first of virtues and ingratitude is severely condemned by the Holy Scriptures and declared unpardonable by Jesus Christ; Judas the ungrateful traitor offers a terrible example of it; but it is most strongly evidenced by those who rise against their common protector and lawful sovereign, and against Christ, who has said that there is no rule or power but comes from God. It was against this principle that Michael Soutzos and Alexandros Ypsilantis, son of a fugitive, sinned with an audacity beyond example, and have sent emissaries to seduce others, and to conduct them to the abyss of perdition; many have been so tempted to join an unlawful hetairia and thought themselves bound by their oath to continue [as] members, but an oath to commit a sin was itself a sin, and not binding – like that of Herod, who, that he

571 Evans, op. cit., pp. 54-55.
might not break a wicked obligation committed a great wickedness by the death of John the Baptist.’ The text ended by solemnly condemning and excommunicating Soutzos and Ypsilantis, having been signed on the altar itself. The patriarchal letter was the final blow to strike Ypsilantis’ fading expedition in the Principalities.”

Some have argued that the patriarch secretly repudiated this anathema; which is why the Turks, suspecting him of treachery, hanged him at Pascha. Gregory’s biographer, Kandiloros writes: “As the representative of Christ it cannot be believed that the patriarch signed such a letter. But as the head of a threatened people, he had to take measures, as well as he could, to save his powerless and hard-pressed population from being massacred.” In any case,” writes Fr. Anthony Gavalas, “the anathema was ignored, as were all the other letters unfavourable to the plans of the revolutionaries, as having been issued under duress. There is an opinion that the patriarch knew that the anathema would be so considered and issued it, hoping to placate the Turks on the one hand, and on the other, to gain time for the revolution to gain strength.”

In the opinion of the present writer, while the patriarch was undoubtedly a patriot who longed for the freedom of his country, his righteousness of character precludes the possibility that he could have been plotting against a government to which he had sworn allegiance and for which he prayed in the Divine Liturgy, or that he could have been hypocritical in such an important church act. After all, as we have seen, he had always refused to join the Philiki Hetairia. In this connection it is significant that the patriarch’s body was picked up by a Russian ship and taken to Odessa, mutely pointing to the place where the organisation that had indirectly caused his death was centred.

The Tsar, writes John Julius Norwich, “did not mince his words” when condemning the Turks. “In an ultimatum drafted by Capodistrias, he declared that: ‘the Ottoman government has placed itself in a state of open hostility against the Christian world. It has legitimised the defence of the Greeks, who will henceforth be fighting solely to save themselves from inevitable destruction. In view of the nature of that struggle, Russia will find herself strictly obliged to offer them help, because they are persecuted; protection, because they need it; and assistance, jointly with the whole of Christendom, because she cannot surrender her brothers in religion to the mercy of blind fanaticism.’ This was presented to the Turkish government on 18 July. On the 25th, having received no reply, the Russian ambassador, Count Stroganoff, broke off diplomatic relations with the Porte and closed the embassy…”

Nevertheless, there was to be no military help from Tsar Alexander. Thus Capodistrias wrote to a friend: “The emperor has highly disapproved of these [means] which Prince Ipsilanti appears to wish to employ to deliver Greece. At a

572 Frazee, op. cit., pp. 28-29.
573 Kandiloros, in Frazee, op. cit. p. 29.
time when Europe is menaced everywhere by revolutionary explosions, how can one not recognize in that which has broken out in the two principalities [Wallachia and Moldavia] the identical effect of the same subversive principles, the same intrigues which attract the calamities of war... the most dreadful plague of demagogic despotism.”  

The Greeks after the revolution were desperately poor and even more desperately divided. The new patriarch, Eugenius, again anathematized the insurgents. In response, twenty-eight bishops and almost a thousand priests in free Greece anathematized the patriarch, calling him a Judas and a wolf in sheep’s clothing. The Free Greeks now commemorated “all Orthodox bishops” at the Liturgy instead of the patriarch. Not surprisingly, in 1824 the patriarchate refused a request from the Greek Church for Holy Chrism.

At the same time, in 1822 the Free Greeks entered into negotiations with the Pope for help against the Turks. Very soon the Faith was being betrayed for the sake of the political struggle, as it had been at the council of Florence. President Mavrokordatos wrote to the Papal Secretary of State: “The cries of a Christian nation threatened by complete extermination have the right to receive the compassion of the head of Christendom.” Greek delegates to the meeting of the Great Powers in Verona wrote to Pope Pius VII that the Greek revolution was not like the revolutions of other nations raised against altar and throne. Instead, it was being fought in the name of religion and “… asks to be placed under the protection of a Christian dynasty with wise and permanent laws”. In another letter the delegates addressed the pope as “the common father of the faithful and head of the Christian religion”, and said that the Greeks were worthy of the pope’s “protection and apostolic blessing”. Metropolitan Germanus was even empowered to speak concerning the possibility of a reunion of the Churches. However, it was the Pope who drew back at this point, pressured by the other western States that considered the sultan to be a legitimate monarch.

How soon had a struggle fought “for faith and fatherland” betrayed the faith while only partially winning the fatherland! For real political independence had not been achieved. If the Turks had been driven out, then the British and the French and later the Germans came to take their place.

The Greeks had to pay a heavy price for their rebellion. After the martyrdom of Patriarch Gregory, the Turks ran amok in Constantinople; and there were further pogroms in Thessaloniki, Smyrna, Adrianople, Crete and

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575 Capodistrias, in Mazower, op. cit., pp. 91-92.  
576 Gregory Frazee, The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821-1852, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 44.  
577 Frazee, op. cit., p. 62.  
578 Frazee, op. cit., p. 54.  
579 Frazee, op. cit., pp. 54-57.  
580 Frazee, op. cit., pp. 54-57.  
581 Not for the first time. Thus in 1601 Metropolitan Dionysius rebelled twice against the Turks, which led, not only to his own death, but to the deaths of many innocent Christians, including Hieromartyr Metropolitan Seraphim of Phanarion, who had taken no part in the rebellion.
especially in Chios, where, in May, 1922, in response to the arrival of a small party of Greek revolutionaries from Samos, 30,000 Muslims invaded from Asia Minor, killed 25,000 Greeks and took 45,000 into slavery. Many others fled. The population of the island fell from 120,000 before 1822 to 30,000 a year later.  

Aroused by these events, many young westerners, among whom was the famous poet Lord Byron, decided to join the Greek freedom-fighters. They sympathized with the sufferings of the Greeks, which were popularized by works of art such as Byron’s poems and Eugene Delacroix’s painting *The Massacre at Chios* (1824); but they were fighting, not so much for Orthodox Greece as for their romantic vision of ancient, pagan Greece, which they saw as having been the first to espouse the ideal of freedom. Similarly, although many Greeks undoubtedly fought for the sake of Orthodoxy against Islam, several of their leaders espoused an essentially western ideology of freedom.  

London financiers were also involved. Their reasons, of course, had nothing to do with sympathy for the suffering or with an enthusiasm for Classical Greece. Nevertheless, their contribution was vital.  

As Yuval Noah Harari writes, “They proposed to the rebel leaders the issue of tradable Greek Rebellion Bonds on the London stock exchange. The Greeks would promise to repay the bonds, plus interest, if and when they won their independence. Private investors bought bonds to make a profit, or out of sympathy for the Greek cause, or both. The value of Greek Rebellion Bonds rose and fell on the London stock exchange in tempo with military successes and failures on the battlefields of Hellas. The Turks gradually gained the upper hand. With a rebel defeat imminent, the bondholders faced the prospect of losing their trousers. The bondholders’ interest was the national interest, so the British organized an international fleet that, in 1827, sank the main Ottoman flotilla at the Battle of Navarino. After centuries of subjugation, Greece was finally free. But freedom came with a huge debt that the new country had no way of repaying. The Greek economy was mortgaged to British creditors for decades to come…”  

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Before Navarino, however, the Greek cause had very nearly been lost. “The Ottomans,” writes Evans, “dispatched a strong force of Egyptian troops supplied by the sultan’s nominal vassal Muhammad Ali (1769-1849), who had

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582 Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 56.  
583 However, there is a strong tradition in Greece that Byron was baptized into the Orthodox Church before he died.  
584 Ypsilantis’ ideology had little to do with Orthodoxy. “‘Let us recollect, brave and generous Greeks, the liberty of the classic land of Greece; the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae, let us combat upon the tombs of our ancestors who, to leave us free, fought and died,’ Ypsilantis wrote in his declaration of 24 February 1821. ‘The blood of our tyrants is dear to the shades of the Theban Epaminondas, and of the Athenian Thrasybulus who conquered and destroyed the thirty tyrants’ – and so on.” (Zamoyski, *Holy Madness*, p. 255).  
agreed to put down the rebellion in return for the addition of Syria to his fiefdom. His troops soon began advancing up the Peloponnese, leaving a bloody trail behind them. Public pressure in western Europe mounted, but serious differences opened up between the Russians, who sought to exploit the weakness of the Ottomans for their own purposes, and the British, who distrusted Russian ambitions. Alexander I had initially shrunk from unilateral action since he knew this would undermine the Holy Alliance, which after all had largely been his own creation. But the continued deterioration of the situation made this policy difficult for his successor Nicholas I to continue without serious damage to Russian influence and prestige. Soon the tsar felt forced to act. A chance for him to intervene was supplied by serious internal disturbances within the Ottoman capital of Constantinople, resulting from military reforms introduced by Mahmud II, who was understandably concerned by the multiple threat now emerging towards his rule over south-eastern Europe.

"The disturbances started with the Janissaries, created in the fourteenth century as an elite military corps of slaves recruited from young Christian boys but which had evolved into a largely hereditary body by the early modern period, becoming corrupt and undisciplined. In 1826 the sultan, recognizing that they had become largely useless for military purposes, ordered that the Janissaries be disbanded. In the past they had on more than one occasion deposed sultans who attempted reform, and in 1826 too, most of the 135,000 members of the corps refused to obey the command. But as well as the Janissaries, Mahmud II had been recruiting a modern army on European lines, consisting of free Turks, so that when the Janissaries began fighting their way to the sultan’s palace, they were quickly forced back into their barracks. The sultan’s new troops bombarded the barracks, killing at least 4,000 of the mutineers; the rest fled or were imprisoned. At least 1,000 of them were taken to Thessaloniki and beheaded in what became known as the ‘blood fort’. These disturbances provided the opportunity for the Russians in 1826 to impose on the sultan the Convention of Akkerman, which forced the Turks to evacuate the Romanian Principalities. In July 1827 the British, French and Russians managed to patch up their disagreements in the Treaty of London to work together for an armistice between the Greeks and the Ottomans without committing themselves to either side, and dispatched their fleets to the area. The commander of the joint fleet, the British Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Codrington (1770-1851), was less than impressed by the town of Nafplio (‘the filthiest town, with the worst streets and most wretched houses, I ever saw’), the capital of the provisional Greek government in the Peloponnese, and still less by the gunfire that echoed round the streets as the different Greek factions tried to pick each other off with small-arms fire. But when the sultan refused to accept the Treaty of London, Codrington, encouraged by the British consul in Istanbul, the philhellene Stratford Canning (1786-1880), ordered his ships in October 1827 to open fire on the Turkish fleet lying at anchor in the sheltered bay of Navarino in the south-

586 Besides, the Russians, for all their annoyance with the “demagogic despotism” of the Greeks, still took their role as the Third Rome and therefore defenders of the Orthodox Christians everywhere, seriously. (V.M.)
western corner of the Peloponnese. There was nowhere for the Turkish ships to escape apart from a narrow channel leading to the waiting British fleet. In three and a half hours of relentless bombardment, the Turkish fleet was sunk and Ottoman naval power destroyed.

“Both Canning and Codrington had exceeded their brief. The Duke of Wellington, commander-in-chief of the British Army at the time, was furious and publicly disowned the action. It was not in the British national interest to weaken the Ottoman Empire, because this would simply open the door to an extension of Russian power in the area. His perception was correct, but he was unwise to give it public expression. The Ottoman Sultan saw Wellington’s statement as an encouragement to repudiate the Akkerman Convention and continue with his efforts to suppress the Greeks; the tsar responded by declaring war on the Ottoman Empire. Initially the campaign did not go well... but by August 1829 a Russian army was threatening Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire seemed on the verge of collapse. Paradoxically, this provided the stimulus needed to patch up the Concert of Europe that had become so badly unstuck over the Greek rebellion. It was in nobody’s interests at this stage to replace the Ottoman Empire in Europe with a disorderly collection of weak and unstable states run by bandits and revolutionaries. A conference held in London between November 1829 and February 1830 decided to establish by European agreement a small independent Greek state under a constitutional monarchy, assigned the Romanian Principalities to Russia’s sphere of influence, and committed the participants, including Russia, to abandoning any further claims on Ottoman territory in the Balkans. The Greek revolt had posed the most serious threat to the Concert of Europe so far. In the end, the Concert had held together...”

The question now was: who was to lead the newly independent state of Greece? The best candidate was the former Foreign Minister of Russia Kapodistrias, who was elected as ‘Governor’ of Greece by a National Assembly in 1827. In an encyclical to the clergy he wrote: “Speak to the hearts of the people the law of God, rightly dividing the word of truth. Announce peace. Evangelize unanimity. Teach philanthropy, love for each other, that all may be one in Christ.”

“Returning to the capital at Nafplio in 1828, Kapodistrias introduced a new currency and implemented educational reforms, as he had done on Corfu more than two decades earlier, setting up schools, establishing a university, and using his medical knowledge to establish a quarantine system against infectious diseases such as the plague. Among other things, he also introduced the potato into Greece in an effort to improve people’s diet. At first, this met with deep skepticism among the peasantry, who refused to take up his offer of free distribution of seed potatoes to anyone who would plant them. Trying a new tactic, Kapodistrias ad the potatoes piled up on the waterfront at Nafplio and surrounded by armed guards. This convinced local people and visitors from the

587 Evans, op. cit., pp. 57-59.
588 Boanerges (Esphigmenou monastery, Mount Athos) 24, March-April, 2006, p. 32.
countryside that these new vegetables were precious objects, and thus worth stealing. Before long, as the guards turned a blind eye, virtually all the potatoes had been taken – and their future in Greece was assured. But Kapodistrias did not take such a subtle approach in his dealings with the warring factions whose internecine rivalries were proving such an obstacle to the creation of a stable Greek state. His attempts to centralize military administration and recruitment, taxation and customs revenues, met with determined opposition from the fiercely independent leading families of the Mani peninsula, where an uprising was quelled with the aid of Russian troops. Further trouble was caused by the piratical merchant ship-owners of the islands of Hydra, Spetses and Psara, who captured the ineffectual Greek national fleet, but were themselves defeated by the French navy and scuttled their own ships rather than be incorporated into a new Greek navy under central government control.

“The most dangerous opposition to Kapodistrias came from the Mavromichalis family, one of the turbulent and powerful clans based on the Mani peninsula. In an attempt to bring the clan to heel, Kapodistrias imprisoned its leading figure, Petrobey Mavromichalis (1785-1848), formerly governor of the peninsula under the Ottomans. Outraged at this insult to their honour, Petrobey’s two brothers decided to follow local tradition and assassinate Kapodistrias. They were waiting for him as he went to church on 9 October 1831. As Kapodistrias made to enter the building, one of the brothers shot him in the head, while the other stabbed him through the lungs…”

589 “He dismissed the primates as ‘Christian Turks’, the military chieftains as ‘robbers’, the intelligentsia as ‘fools’ and the Phanariots as ‘children of Satan’” (Clogg, op. cit., p. 46). (V.M.)

590 Evans, op. cit., pp. 60-61. Misha Glenny summarizes the rule of Kapodistrias thus: “Although [he] attempted to integrate the various factions into his system of authoritarian government, he underestimated the strength of particularism. All sides distinguished themselves by their appalling behavior. The Hydriots, who had excelled themselves during the war, mounted an insurrection in August 1831 so bitter that they preferred to scuttle their entire fleet, the only real source of independent Greek power, rather than see it come under central government control. By imprisoning Petrobey, the Maniot leader of the Mavromichalis family, Kapodistrias sealed his own fate.”
III. THE WEST: LIBERALISM, CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM (1830-1861)
“The latter half of the eighteenth century,” writes Bernard Cornwell, “had been a long struggle for supremacy between France and Britain. The Seven Years War drove the French from North America, but France had its revenge in the American Revolution when its army, allied with George Washington’s forces, decisively defeated the British and so secured independence for the United States. Ten years later the Revolutionary Wars began, and except for one brief respite in 1802, those wars would last till 1815. Waterloo ended the struggle and ensured that Britain would dominate the nineteenth century…”

Britain’s power was expressed not only in its control of the sea and world trade, but also, and more importantly, in its export of the idea of liberalism, which it did not invent but which it successfully protected and promoted throughout the world. The years 1792-1815 had discredited both absolutism and its opposite, the communistic ideas of Danton, Robespierre and Babeuf. Liberalism and constitutionalism was “the third option”, in Burke’s opinion, between the “despotism of the monarch” and the “despotism of the multitude”.

The Bourbon restoration in 1815 did not restore full absolutism. For if Jacobin tyranny, and Napoleonic imperialism were now discredited, there were few who wanted a return to the pre-revolutionary, old regime, even if that had been possible. And so, while Louis XVIII’s powers were declared to rest on a divine mandate, a bicameral legislature on the English model was established, and in 1821 the rights of citizens to freedom of religion and thought were reaffirmed.

“Liberalism,” writes Norman Davies, “developed along two parallel tracks, the political and the economic. Political liberalism focused on the essential concept of government by consent. It took its name from the liberales of Spain, who drew up their Constitution of 1812 in opposition to the arbitrary powers of the Spanish monarchy; but it had its roots much further back, in the political theories of the Enlightenment and beyond. Indeed, for much of its early history it was indistinguishable from the growth of limited government. Its first lasting success may be seen in the American Revolution, though it drew heavily on the experiences of British parliamentarianism and on the first, constitutional phase of the Revolution in France. In its most thoroughgoing form it embraced republicanism, though most liberals welcomed a popular, limited, and fair-minded monarch as a factor encouraging stability. Its advocates stressed above all the rule of law, individual liberty, constitutional procedures, religious toleration and the universal rights of man. They opposed the inbuilt prerogatives, wherever they survived, of Crown, Church, or aristocracy. Nineteenth-century liberals also gave great weight to property, which they saw as the principal source of responsible judgement and solid citizenship. As a

result, whilst taking the lead in clipping the wings of absolutism and in laying the foundations of modern democracy, they were not prepared to envisage radical schemes for universal suffrage or for egalitarianism.

“Economic liberalism focused on the concept of free trade, and on the associated doctrine of *laissez-faire*, which opposed the habit of governments to regulate economic life through protectionist tariffs. It stressed the right of men of property to engage in commercial and industrial activities without undue restraint. Its energies were directed on the one hand to dismantling the economic barriers which had proliferated both within and between countries and on the other to battling against all forms of collectivist organization, from the ancient guild to the new trade unions.”

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

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

“It was brilliantly sketched by the Swiss-born Frenchman Benjamin Constant, whose political writings were a fierce rejection of revolutionary violence and Napoleonic tyranny. Constant argued that ordinary people were bound to resist interference in their private and social lives and that arbitrary acts by the state destroyed the mutual trust between individuals on which all social and commercial relations depended. He distinguished between the proper (and narrow) sphere of authority and the wider realm (what would now be called ‘civil society’) in which the self-regulation of private interests should prevail. Modern societies, he suggested, were too complex to be ruled politically after the fashion of an ancient city state – the model to which many earlier writers (including Rousseau) had appealed. Diversity, pluralism and localism were the secret of stability and freedom. Secondly, the legislators, to whom the executive should answer, should be drawn from those least likely to favour the extension

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of arbitrary power or to be seduced by a demagogue. Politics should be the preserve of the propertied, who would exert a wholesome (and educated) influence on the 'labouring poor'. The propertied were the true guardians of the public interest. Thirdly, it was necessary for property rights and other civil freedoms to be protected by well-established rules – an idea that implied the codification of the law and its machinery.

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

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

All of these contradictory tendencies were in the original French revolution, which became successively liberal, socialist and nationalist in character. As yet the potential conflicts between these different tendencies were only dimly perceived, as was the fact that the revolution could not be used to make limited reforms, and then stopped in its tracks before it became dangerous. The path that the first French revolution took after 1792 should have made that obvious. But many conservative liberals thought that they could sow the wind without reaping the whirlwind...

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So how did the second revolution take place?

Louis XVIII, as we have seen, was forced to allow a certain degree of constitutionalism. However, his successor, Charles X, tried to turn the clock back, and his coronation ceremony in Rheims in 1825 had all the ceremonial of the ancien régime, including the medieval practice of touching for scrofula. But Charles was not popular, and in July, 1830 he was overthrown. The July Days introduced a constitutional monarchy headed by another Bourbon, Louis-Philippe, the Duke of Orléans. As Alistair Horne writes, “his acceptability to both sides in 1830 stemmed largely from the fact that his father had been the duplicitous regicide Philippe Egalité – though apostasy had not sufficed to save his neck during the Terror. Louis-Philippe had been nominated for the post of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom by both Charles X and the Commune of Paris, and for the remainder of his eighteen-year rule between revolutions he would do his utmost to be all things to all sides. It was symbolic that the last King of France, the very antithesis of Louis XIV, accepted the crown not at Rheims but in the Palais Bourbon, as the politically elected ruler of ‘the people’. Shorn of all mystical or inherited droits, the People’s King had little more power than a British constitutional monarch…”

The difference between the revolutions of 1789 and 1830, apart from the fact that much less blood was shed in 1830, consisted in the latter’s concentration on broadening electoral suffrage and in its more openly commercial flavour, in keeping with the new spirit of commercial enterprise.

595 Even allies of De Maistre, such as the ultra-royalist and ultramontane priest Felicité de Lamennais became disillusioned with Charles X. "To Lamennais, the July 1830 revolution was providential; the world was to be given a new lease of life through freedom and freedom was to be given a new lease of life through God. With his friends Lacordaire, Montalembert, de Coux and Gerbet, on 15 October 1830 Lamennais founded a journal with the title L'Avenir (The Future), which carried at its masthead 'God and Freedom'. The journal was of interest to those who were fighting for independence: the Poles, the Irish. It proposed a renewal of the church and society based on freedom: freedom of conscience and worship without distinction, the separation of church and state, the freedom of the press and of association, decentralization, and so on. De Coux aroused his readers to the social question. The tone of the journal was sometimes over the top. The bishops, who thought that the idea of separation of church and state was unthinkable, showed their disapproval by applying indirect sanctions against the subscribers. L'Avenir ceased publication on 15 November 1831. Frowned on by the French bishops, Lamennais, Lacordaire and Montalembert decided to take their case to the pope, whom they had always supported. 'Pilgrims for God and Freedom', they arrived in Rome at the end of December 1831 at a rather inopportune time. The pilgrims waited three months before having a disappointing meeting with Gregory XVI, at which neither the question of L'Avenir nor future preoccupations were raised. The publication of the letter from the Pope to the Polish bishops in June 1832 infuriated Lamennais, who left Rome, which he called 'this gigantic tomb where there are only bones to be found'. A few weeks later, on 15 August 1832, the encyclical Mirari vos appeared which, without naming Lamennais, condemned all his ideas and those of L'Avenir." (Jean Comby, How to Read Church History, London: SCM Press, 1989, vol. 1, pp. 129-130).
“The July revolution,” wrote Alexis de Tocqueville, “was carried out by the people, but the middle class which had touched it off and led it, was the chief beneficiary”. 597  

“Master of everything, as no aristocracy had ever been or perhaps will never be, the middle class, which one has to call the governing class, having entrenched itself in power and soon afterwards in its self-interest, seemed like a private industry. Each of its members scarcely gave a thought to public affairs except to make them function to profit his own private business, and had no difficulty in forgetting the lower orders in his little cocoon of affluence. Posterity will possibly never realize how far the government of the day had in the end taken on the appearance of an industrial company, where all operations are carried out with a view to the benefit the shareholders can draw from them.” 598

The July Days in Paris were followed by a revolution in Brussels in the same year that overthrew the rule of the Dutch King Willem. As Sir Richard Evans writes, “the formation of a provisional national government on 26 September was followed on October 4 by a Belgian declaration of independence and then the calling of a national Congress. Demonstrating the enduring influence of the American Revolution in European political thought, the Congress issued a ringing condemnation of the Dutch government for reducing Belgium to the status of a colony, accompanied by ‘the despotic imposition of a privileged language’ and ‘taxes, overwhelming in their amount, and still more in the manner in which they were apportioned’.” 599 The events in Paris led to similar disturbances and similar political changes in several West European countries. The issues were comparable everywhere: “middle-class reformers and artisans and small farmers all wanted a liberalization of the laws of assembly and association, freedom of the press, and above all a widening of political participation.” 600

There were similar changes also in Britain, where the Peterloo riots of 1819 had wakened the rulers to the necessity of reform. The Reform Act of 1832 “did enough to defuse popular outrage and, with further reforms in local government and other areas of administration, stabilized the British political system on a new, moderately liberal basis. The outcome of the great struggle over reform was in the end a constitution and political system not so very different from those of other European states that had experienced a successful transition in 1830. Unlike them, however, it was, in the short-to-medium term at least, to be more durable and to prove more resistant to further attempts at changing the status quo.” 601

As a result of the revolution of 1830 François Guizot became Prime Minister of France. He was “a Protestant historian whose father had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror, [who] managed to establish a stable ministry in 1840, which lasted until 1848. He became more conservative over time. ‘Not to be a

598 De Tocqueville, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 553.  
600 Evans, op. cit., p. 79.  
601 Evans, op. cit., p. 80.
Republican at the age of 20 is proof of a want of heart,’ he remarked: ‘to be one at 30 is proof of a want of head’. An Anglophile who translated Shakespeare and published a collection of English historical documents in thirty-one volumes, Guizot was the arch-apostle of English-style constitutional monarchy. His commitment to the established order was unquestionable. His ambition, one critic said, was ‘to be incorporated into the Metternich clique of every country’. His response to those who complained of not having a vote because they did not have the 1,000 francs a year needed as a qualification, laid bare the materialism at the heart of the July Monarchy: ‘Enrich yourselves!’”

In 1820, when Louis XVIII’s Charter conceded legal equality, religious toleration and parliamentary scrutiny over new laws, Guizot declared: "I consider the revolution of 1789 to be over. All its interests and legitimate wishes are guaranteed by the Charter. What France needs now is to do away with the revolutionary spirit which still torments her." Guizot wanted to believe that the "freedom" aimed at by the revolutionaries of 1789 and 1830 was quite different from the "freedom" aimed at by the revolutionaries of 1793. As he said in December, 1830: "the spirit of revolution, the spirit of insurrection, is a spirit radically opposed to liberty". Therefore according to Guizot the revolution could conveniently stop in 1830, when the middle classes were put back in the saddle. But is there really such a radical opposition between the "freedom from" of the liberals and the "freedom to" of the sans-culottes? How can one and not the other be called "the spirit of insurrection" when both attained their ends by means of bloody insurrection against the established order?

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

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

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602 Evans, op. cit., pp. 185-186.
604 Guizot, in Almond, op. cit., p. 95.
605 Guizot, in Almond, op. cit., p. 93.
606 Guizot, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 552.
The four decades after the “July Days” (approximately 1830-1870) constitute the highwater mark of liberalism in its most naïve, attractive form (as opposed to the far more alarming and extreme varieties that have appeared in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries). The more extreme offshoots of humanism – what Yuval Noah Harari calls “socialist humanism” (Communism) and “evolutionary humanism” (Fascism) – were still in the stage of theoretical development and had not yet displayed their full, bloody potential. All that would change with the Paris Commune of 1870 and the rise of the New Germany in 1871. But for the time being, Europeans could deceive themselves into thinking that they could be both liberal and Christian, both progressive and civilized.

Although Louis Philippe was more liberal than Charles X, he was not liberal enough for the Zeitgeist. He sought to establish a "golden mean" between absolutism and Jacobinism. As he said in a speech from the throne in January, 1831: "We seek to hold to the juste milieu [golden mean] equally distant from the excesses of popular power and the abuses of royal authority".607

But such a "golden mean" was not attained by any except the English in the nineteenth century for any long period of time. Louis Philippe's reign was cut off by a more radical revolution, that of 1848, which was succeeded by the still more radical revolution of the Paris Commune in 1870. Guizot and Louis Philippe are clear examples of the inconsistency and ultimate ineffectiveness of those who oppose revolution, not root and branch, but only in its more obviously unpleasant and radical manifestations.

What all the liberals failed to see was that that the revolution was not a rational human desire for limited, reasonable reform that could be satisfied once those limited reforms had been granted, but an irrational, elemental, satanic force whose ultimate aim was simply total destruction. The liberals thought that this demon could be tamed by constitutional reform and limited monarchy - as Adolphe Thiers put it, a king who would reign but not rule.

But the vanity of this liberal hope of “constitutional monarchy” and “limited revolution” was demonstrated by Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose): “In the Christian order, politics... was founded upon absolute truth... The principal providential form government took in union with Christian Truth was the Orthodox Christian Empire, wherein sovereignty was vested in a Monarch, and authority proceeded from him downwards through a hierarchical social structure... On the other hand... a politics that rejects Christian Truth must acknowledge 'the people' as sovereign and understand authority as proceeding from below upwards, in a formally 'egalitarian' society. It is clear that one is the perfect inversion of the other; for they are opposed in their conceptions both of the source and of the end of government. Orthodox Christian Monarchy is government divinely established, and directed, ultimately, to the other world,

607 Guizot, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 552
government with the teaching of Christian Truth and the salvation of souls as its profoundest purpose; Nihilist rule - whose most fitting name... is Anarchy - is government established by men, and directed solely to this world, government which has no higher aim than earthly happiness.

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

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

"Now a government is secure insofar as it has God for its foundation and His Will for its guide; but this, surely, is not a description of Liberal government. It is, in the Liberal view, the people who rule, and not God; God Himself is a 'constitutional monarch' Whose authority has been totally delegated to the people, and Whose function is entirely ceremonial. The Liberal believes in God with the same rhetorical fervor with which he believes in Heaven. The government erected upon such a faith is very little different, in principle, from a government erected upon total disbelief; and whatever its present residue of stability, it is clearly pointed in the direction of Anarchy.

"A government must rule by the Grace of God or by the will of the people, it must believe in authority or in the Revolution; on these issues compromise is possible only in semblance, and only for a time. The Revolution, like the disbelief which has always accompanied it, cannot be stopped halfway; it is a force that, once awakened, will not rest until it ends in a totalitarian Kingdom of this world. The history of the last two centuries has proved nothing if not this. To appease the Revolution and offer it concessions, as Liberals have always done, thereby showing that they have no truth with which to oppose it, is perhaps to postpone, but not to prevent, the attainment of its end. And to oppose the radical Revolution with a Revolution of one's own, whether it be 'conservative', 'non-violent', or 'spiritual', is not merely to reveal ignorance of the full scope and nature of the Revolution of our time, but to concede as well the first principle of the Revolution: that the old truth is no longer true, and a new truth must take its place."608

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Liberalism as a political theory is a compromise, a compromise between the barbarism of the revolutionaries, the crude and violent men known as the sans-culottes (literally, those “without trousers”), and the decency of the liberals themselves, the gentlemen who wore both trousers and top hats, who paid their taxes and bowed to the ideals of Christian civilization as they understood it. It took the slogan of the revolution, “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” and sought to give it a Christian gloss. In essence, however, this slogan encapsulates, not merely a political doctrine, but a new religion, the religion of liberty.

As the German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine wrote: “Freedom is the new religion, the religion of our time. If Christ is not the god of this new religion, he is nevertheless a high priest of it, and his name gleams beatifically into the hearts of the apostles. But the French are the chosen people of the new religion, their language records the first gospels and dogmas. Paris is the New Jerusalem, the Rhine is the Jordan that separates the consecrated land of freedom from the land of the Philistines.”

Again, James Stephens said that the phrase “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity”... was “indeed something more than a motto. It is the creed of a religion, less definite than any one of the forms of Christianity, which are in part its rivals, in part its antagonists, and in part its associates, but not on that account the less powerful. It is, on the contrary, one of the most penetrating influences of the day. It shows itself now and then in definite forms, of which Positivism is the one best known to our generation, but its special manifestations give no adequate measure of its depth or width. It penetrates other creeds. It has often transformed Christianity into a system of optimism, which has in some cases retained and in others rejected Christian phraseology. It deeply influences politics and legislation. It has its solemn festivals, its sober adherents, its enthusiasts, its Anabaptists and Antinomians. The Religion of Humanity is perhaps as good a name as could be found for it, if the expression is used in a wider sense than the narrow and technical one associated with it by Comte. It is one of the commonest beliefs of the day that the human race collectively has before it splendid destinies of various kinds, and that the road to them is to be found in the removal of all restraints on human conduct, in the recognition of a substantial equality between all human creatures, and in fraternity or general love. These doctrines are in very many cases held as a religious faith. They are regarded not merely as truths, but as truths for which those who believe in them are ready to do battle, and for the establishment of which they are prepared to sacrifice all merely personal ends. Such, stated of course in the most general terms, is the religion of which I take ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity’ to be the creed.”

But is Stephens right to suppose that the liberals were as passionate about their religion of liberalism as the revolutionaries about their religion of revolution? Yes, because in essence they are the same religion. The French Revolution gave birth both to liberalism with its slogan of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and its Declaration of Human Rights and to Jacobinism with its bloody guillotine and regicide. If the earlier phase seems more reasonable and civilized to contemporary westerners than the later, it nevertheless gave birth to the later
and cannot be separated from it logically or historically. If “true” liberals stop short in horror at cutting off the heads of kings and aristocrats, this is not because their teaching forbids it. Christianity forbids it – but Christianity is something quite different. If the path to liberty and equality lies through a pool of blood, then so be it. In vain did Guizot and his ilk look to the English revolution as a model of moderation. It, too, culminated in regicide, and even its less violent and supposedly “glorious” reprise in 1689 involved an armed invasion and a pitched battle.

Where is the axiom in liberal theory that will prevent it taking the road to war and barbarism? In truth, it does not exist. Immediately it is accepted that the first step towards liberty and equality involves rebellion against the powers that be, at that moment the potential for violence and barbarism is present. For while the English might deceive themselves that their own revolution was “glorious” and “bloodless”, in truth there is no such thing as a glorious and bloodless revolution whose aims are those of liberalism. The degree of violence will vary depending on the situation, the degree of resistance and the temperament of the liberators; but violence there will undoubtedly be...

The same applies to the concept of the “liberal empire” which the British boasted in having. In India, for example, the British Raj, while more liberal in some respects than its Mughal predecessor, and having some justifications for its rule that were not trivial, was nevertheless not liberal. How could it be if it ruled over a vastly more numerous population who did not want to be ruled by foreigners? Only if one nation asks to be ruled by another – as, for example, the Russians asked to be ruled by Rurik in 862, or the Georgians asked to be ruled by the Tsar in 1801 – can we entertain the possibility, albeit highly unlikely, of a liberal imperium. In India, the fiction of liberal empire was exposed during the Indian Mutiny in 1859 and again during the Amritsar massacre of 1919.

The truth which all liberals refuse to face is the fallenness of human nature, which cannot be coaxed or bribed into disappearing, but can only be extirpated by true faith, prayer and fasting. Freedom beyond a certain limit is not good for fallen man; it spoils him and leads him further away from God and the truth. The Lord did not say “Ye shall be free, and that will lead you into truth”, but the opposite: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8.32). The liberals do not know the truth, which is why they are incapable of truly freeing a single human being.
LIBERALISM AND NATIONALISM

Before the rise of Marxist socialism, the only political tendency to rival that of liberalism was nationalism. The relationship between these two tendencies was close and complex. It was also potentially contradictory. For whereas liberalism stood for the freedom of the individual, nationalism stood for the liberation of the collective, of the nation. But they agreed in locating their authority and legitimacy in “the people”.

The root of both tendencies lay in the disintegrative effects of the whole Early Modern period in Europe from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. In particular, faith in God as having a real influence on human affairs had been radically undermined during the eighteenth century – the preferred theology of Enlightenment-influenced intellectuals, if they were not atheists, was a kind of Deism.

But several other important cultural factors that made up what Sir Roger Scruton calls the “pre-political membership” of a society were also being broken down. Sir Llewellyn Woodward identifies them as “family, church, craft, city”. He sees nationalism as a reaction to the loss of these unifying elements: “An inquiry into the nationalist movements in Europe after 1815 brings out an element in them which is not found to the same extent in earlier times; an element of protest, or even fear, fear of the disintegration of the group to which one belonged, fear almost of a loss of identity and of being left an atom in a world of atoms. Such a fear was greater when other groups – family, church, craft, city were losing much of their old significance and the individual, especially in urban areas, though more free to choose, was also feeling himself more alone. The association of like with like had been one of the reasons for the formation of nation-states. Medieval loyalty was not to countries, but to persons or small groups... As late as the early eighteenth century the transfer of territory from one sovereign was not regarded as an affront to political morality. The retention of Gibraltar and Minorca by Great Britain in the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 was not considered by the losers as a moral offence. Gain of territory was the result of victory; loss of it, the result of defeat. A hundred years later the proceedings of the Congress of Vienna caused scandal to enlightened minority opinion in Europe. Transfer of territory had now become barter of souls, something against which this enlightened minority opinion protested as it protested against slavery. After another hundred years recognition of the right of national groups to determine their own political allegiance was thought essential to the removal of the causes of war. The Vienna treaty of 1815 put certain different national groups under a single sovereignty; the treaty of Versailles in 1919 divided multinational state as a means to lasting peace.”

Apart from religious-philosophical and political factors undermining the unity of European societies, there were also (1) industrial-economic and (2) educational-linguistic-sociological factors. However, in addition to undermining the old unities, these helped create new unities.

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(1) Industrial-Economic. The Industrial revolution undermined old economic communities, such as the village, the farm and the guild. However, by uniting different parts of the population into one economic nexus, created the conditions for a stronger national-democratic, as opposed to local or regional or class consciousness. For, as Shlomo Sand writes, “only the post-agrarian world, with its altered division of labor – its distinctive social mobility and thriving new communications technologies – has produced conditions conducive to linguistic and cultural homogeneity, leading to an identity and self-awareness not confined to narrow elites or groups, as was always the case in the [pre-industrial] past, but now broadly manifest among the productive masses. Whereas earlier, in the era of the great empires, through the nature of the feudal and religious fabric, human societies had always been marked by definite cultural-linguistic divisions and strata, henceforth all the people – high and low, rich and poor, educated or not – would feel they belonged to a particular nation and, what is no less meaningful, would be convinced they belonged to it in equal degree.

“The consciousness of legal, civil and political equality – produced mainly by social mobility in the era of commercial, and later of industrialized, capitalism – created an umbrella under which everyone could share an identity. Whoever was not converted or included by it could not be a member of the national body, an immanent aspect of equality. It is this equality that underlies the political demand that construes ‘the people’ as a nation that warrants full self-government. The democratic aspect – ‘the rule of the people’ – is utterly modern and clearly distinguishes nations from the older social formations, such as tribes, peasant societies under dynastic monarchies, religious communities with internal hierarchies, even pre-modern ‘peoples’.

“No pre-modern human community manifested an inclusive sense of civil equality or a persistent desire for self-rule that was felt by the entire populace. But when people began to see themselves as sovereign creatures, there arises the consciousness, or illusion, that enables them to believe that they can rule themselves through political representation. This is the attitudinal core of all national expressions in the modern age...”

Again, as Maria Hsia Chang writes, “the protean forces of industrialization began to link disparate peoples and communities together, ultimately transforming them into a single nation. In effect, nations were produced as a result of the peculiar functional requirements of the industrial economy. It is said that the logic of modern industry necessitated a common culture and language. Unlike the preindustrial agrarian society – where the economic units were small, isolated, self-sufficient villages of face-to-face relations – the industrial economy required a communication and transportation infrastructure that could connect geographically separated communities. The effective operation of this infrastructure, in turn, required a common language and cultural code so that parochial communities of local dialects and cultures could

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communicate in an abstract manner over space with strangers. Where a common language was absent, the state would have to impart that common tongue – and common culture – through a public school system. At the same time, the new industries attracted increasing numbers of migrants from the countryside to the cities. As people left their villages and farms for cities, they also left behind many of their previous attachments and became receptive to new identities.

“The transformative effects of industrialization were magnified by the rise of civil society, given impetus and justification by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. As ideas of self-government through political representation spread, previously unconnected masses began to identify with each other. More and more, new horizontal linkages replaced the feudal vertical relations between monarch and subject, eventually culminating in a collective consciousness and identity that congealed into nationalism.”

“The crucial feature of a republican constitution,” writes Scruton, “is not democracy, but representation, and this in turn requires a territorial jurisdiction, along with the loyalties that feed it. These loyalties become durable through the three paramount virtues of the citizen: law-abidingness, sacrifice in war, and public spirit in peacetime.”

(2) Educational-Linguistic-Sociological. As the century progressed, the universalist nationalism preached by figures such as Mazzini metamorphosed into the harder, more exclusive and aggressive kind of nationalism preached by, for example, Garibaldi. As Sir Richard Evans writes, “This development depended in the first place on the establishment of national identities based on written language. At the time of the Restoration, levels of literacy, measured by the ability to sign a marriage register or an army recruitment form with one’s name rather than with a cross, were patchy at best....

“Lacking a basis in a written national language, identity was firmly rooted not in nationality but in locality. ‘Every valley,’ commented an economist writing about the Pyrenees in 1837, ‘is still a little world that differs from the neighbouring world as Mercury does from Uranus. Every village is a clan, a sort of state with its own patriotism.’ ...

“Entirely different languages existed side by side as the principal medium of communication in many parts of Europe. Minority languages were present in particular regions everywhere – Welsh, for example, or Scottish Gaelic, or Basque in north-west Spain, or Sami among the nomadic Lapps of northern Scandinavia. In Brittany it was reported in 1873 that the people ‘do not speak French, and do not want to speak French’. Some dialects were extremely localized. ‘Change village, change language,’ went one proverb in the French

612 Scruton, op. cit., p. 55.
613 This illustrates the truth of Andrew Marr’s remark: “Most Europeans either did not speak the language of whatever nation claimed to rule them, or spoke dialects that would have been incomprehensible in their capital cities’ (A History of the World, London: Pan, 2012, p. 309). (V.M.)
province of the Limousin. The smallest of the Slavic linguistic communities, the Lusatian Sorbs, continued to defy the influence of the surrounding majority of Germans well into the twentieth century. In Calabria, in southern Italy, people still spoke a version of Ancient Greek, probably deriving from the years of Byzantine occupation…

“What changed this fragmented situation was not only the spread of communications but also the expansion of elementary education, especially in the second half of the century. Many states attempted during this period to make primary schooling compulsory…

“Nationalists tried to develop a standard written and spoken language in order to justify their claim to a national identity and national statehood. Usually they chose some particular dialect. West Bulgarian dialect was used as the basis for the literary language in Bulgaria; in Italy it was the Tuscan dialect…

“Not just language, but also history, real and imagined, provided a basis for national identity. In Ireland the nationalist movement began by attempting to recover the autonomous institutions, including the Irish Parliament, abolished in the Act of Union of 1800. The cultural memory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a powerful state in early modern Europe until its dismemberment by Prussia, Austria and Russia in the eighteenth century, played a key role in Poland. A historical grounding for a national culture could not always be easy to create. For the supporters of Greek independence it seemed natural to call the civilization of Ancient Greece in evidence for the claim to statehood in the nineteenth century. The humanist scholar Adamantios Corais (1748-1833), who was educated at the University of Montpellier in south-eastern France, corresponded with Thomas Jefferson, and lived in Paris throughout the Revolution of 1789-94, attempted to revive this connection not only by publishing new editions of the Ancient Greek classics but also by propagating a new version of Demotic Greek, called Katharevousa. He aimed to purge the common spoken language of its foreign and particularly its Byzantine accretions and bring it as close as was practicable to the ancient form of the language. But the great mass of ordinary Greeks could not fully understand it and it never became common currency…

“The spread of education, the increasing intensity of cross-border communications, the greater ease with which people could migrate from one country to another, the rise of tourism, and the growing trend for books to be translated from one language into others, did not, as some hoped, lead to greater international understanding…”

Indeed; for speaking the same language does not mean thinking the same thoughts or having the same feelings. In fact, for the knowledge that comes from reading books (the wrong, revolutionary kind of books) may increase the desire to change one’s status by violent action…

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Both liberals and nationalists adhere to the religion of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, but with different emphases. The liberal seeks to free the individual (from kings and feudal servitude): the nationalist – the nation (from more powerful nations or empires). The liberal seeks to make all citizens equal under the law (but not necessarily in wealth or inherited privilege): the nationalist seeks to make his nation equal in sovereignty (but not necessarily in power or prestige) to other nations.

It is with regard to fraternity that the two tendencies differ most. The liberal is not seeking the fraternity of brothers in the real sense but the much vaguer “fraternity” of co-citizenship and will instinctively seek to restrict citizenship to those of his own bourgeois, property-owning class. The nationalist, on the other hand, is likely to feel the loss of the old fraternities of “family, church, craft, city” more keenly, and therefore seeks the creation of new unities defined by blood or land or even a new language.

However, whatever its emphasis – towards the individual or the collective – this is a religion that is bound to fail. Especially with regard to real fraternity, which is the deepest desire of human beings. Where there is fraternity, a lack of liberty or equality can be tolerated, if not enjoyed; many servants or slaves are perfectly happy with their masters, or at any rate do not wish to remove them. But where there is no fraternity, nothing satisfies – hence the restlessness of nineteenth-century politics, even where it is not outrightly revolutionary or counter-revolutionary.

The fact is that, however political, economic and cultural conditions may bring people together, it is only religion that truly brings them together, as is reflected from the etymology of the word “religion” itself, which denotes “binding together”. Moreover, even if a common religion unites men, this union is superficial and temporary if the religion in question is not the true religion. Thus a common religion united those who built the Tower of Babel, but this religion, being a false one, ultimately served only to hasten their division and dispersion throughout the world as separate communities speaking different languages.

One way of looking at world history, therefore consists in the following: throughout history men seek a common language and citizenship or brotherhood based on a common religion, but this dream is shattered by one or other of two tragedies. Either they choose a false religion, whose hidden contradictions sooner or later lead to the collapse of the universalist dream. Or they find the true religion, but their disobedience to that truth in all its purity allows particularist passions – including nationalism – to destroy the dream again...
42. THE GEOPOLITICS OF SLAVERY AND ABOLITION

Perhaps the greatest paradox of nineteenth-century history is the fact that the main power spreading liberalism throughout the world was Great Britain, the power that had, with Russia, defeated the French revolution in its Napoleonic phase, and whose empire, the greatest in history, had come to rule over, if not technically enslave, hundreds of millions of people around the globe. Let us see how the British tried to reconcile liberalism with imperialism...

The greatest affront to the new liberal creed of “progressive” humanity was slavery; and as the nineteenth century progressed, this was the issue that more than any other threatened to divide the Great Powers between and within themselves. So they were forced to discuss it in the intervals when they were not combatting some revolutionary outbreak (of which there were many in this period). Thus at the Vienna Congress in 1815, they had agreed a common statement, as Bernard Simms writes, “that the slave trade was repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality. For the moment this was mere aspiration, but the potentially huge international ramifications of the issue were already clear…” These revolved around the fact that while the victors of 1815 had declared themselves against slavery, in the eyes of many liberals and revolutionaries the monarchical regimes of Russia, Prussia and Austria kept the peasants and subject nations of their empires in virtual slavery, or at any rate serfdom. This gave a propaganda advantage to the only victor nation that had – officially, if not yet de facto in all her dominions - abolished slavery and serfdom, Britain, and it allowed the British, while formally belonging to the monarchical, anti-revolutionary Holy Alliance, to interfere on the side of liberals and revolutionaries in such places as Spain and Italy. Of course, it may plausibly be argued that the condition of industrial workers in Britain, as of many millions of subjects in the British empire, was little short of slavery; but the propaganda advantage remained, and was used vigorously by the British.

Before we examine how the British played the slavery card, let us look at how and why slavery was introduced into the West...

Slavery, the slave trade and forced labour had been commonly practiced among the Arab Muslims and pagans of Africa since the time of the Egyptian pharaohs. A particularly egregious contemporary example of native African slavery was seen in Queen Ranavalona I of Madagascar (1829-1842). “Putting an end to most foreign trade relationships, Ranavalona I pursued a policy of self-reliance, made possible through frequent use of the long-standing tradition of fanompoana—forced labor in lieu of tax payments in money or goods. Ranavalona continued the wars of expansion conducted by her

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predecessor, Radama I, in an effort to extend her realm over the entire island, and imposed strict punishments on those who were judged as having acted in opposition to her will. Due in large part to loss of life throughout the years of military campaigns, high death rates among fanompoana workers, and harsh traditions of justice under her rule, the population of Madagascar is estimated to have declined from around 5 million to 2.5 million between 1833 and 1839, and from 750,000 to 130,000 between 1829 and 1842 in Imerina.”

But the emphasis now was on slavery in the Christian nations.

According to Yuval Noah Harari, “At the end of the Middle Ages, slavery was almost unknown in Christian Europe. During the early modern period, the rise of European capitalism went hand in hand with the rise of the Atlantic slave trade. Unrestrained market forces, rather than tyrannical kings or racist ideologues, were responsible for this calamity.

“When the Europeans conquered America, they opened gold and silver mines and established sugar, tobacco and cotton plantations. These mines and plantations became the mainstay of American production and export. The sugar plantations were particularly important. In the Middle Ages, sugar was a rare luxury in Europe. It was imported from the Middle East at prohibitive prices and used sparingly as a secret ingredient in delicacies and snake-oil medicines. After large sugar plantations were established in America, ever-increasing amounts of sugar began to reach Europe. The price of sugar dropped and Europe developed an insatiable sweet tooth. Entrepreneurs met this need by producing large quantities of sweets: cakes, cookies, chocolate, candy, and sweetened beverages such as cocoa, coffee and tea. The annual sugar intake of the average Englishman rose from near zero in the early seventeenth century to around eight kilograms in the early nineteenth century.

“However, growing cane and extracting the sugar was a labour-intensive business. Few people wanted to work long hours in malaria-infested sugar fields under a tropical sun. Contract labourers would have produced a commodity too expensive for mass consumption. Sensitive to market forces, and greedy for profits and economic growth, European plantation owners switched to slaves.

“But the slave trade was not controlled by any state or government. It was a purely economic enterprise, organized and financed by the free market.
According to the laws of supply and demand. Private slave-trading companies sold shares on the Amsterdam, London and Paris stock exchanges. Middle-class Europeans looking for a good investment bought these shares. Relying on this money, the companies bought ships, hired sailors and soldiers, purchased slaves in Africa and transported them to America. There they sold the slaves to the plantation owners, using the proceeds to purchase plantation products such as sugar, cocoa, coffee, tobacco, cotton and rum. They returned to Europe, sold the sugar and cotton for a good price, and then sailed to Africa to begin another round. The shareholders were very pleased with this arrangement. Throughout the eighteenth century the yield on slave-trade investments was about 6 per cent a year – they were extremely profitable, as any modern consultant would be quick to admit.

“… The African slave trade did not stem from racist hatred towards Africans. The individuals who bought the slaves, the brokers who sold them, and the managers of the slave-trade companies rarely thought about the Africans. Nor did the owners of the sugar plantations. Many owners lived far from their plantations, and the only information they demanded were neat ledgers of profits and losses…”

“The British,” writes Robert Tombs, “were by far the largest shippers, carrying over 3 million people between 1660 and 1807, when Parliament banned the trade; the French, and the Portuguese in Brazil were the biggest customers. African rulers were eager suppliers. The trade expanded, reaching an all-time peak in the 1780s, when British ships were transporting about 120 Africans per day. Sugar flowed out and imports flooded back: linen from Ireland and Scotland, fish from Newfoundland, timber and rum from New England, and manufactured goods from England. This was the notorious ‘triangular trade’: carrying manufactured goods to Africa in exchange for slaves, sold in the Caribbean to purchase sugar for Europe. By 1780 Liverpool was shipping one-third of Manchester’s total cloth exports to Africa. Britain and France were prepared to make unlimited efforts to seize and hold sugar islands, principally Jamaica for the British and Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) for the French. Tens of thousands of troops were repeatedly sacrificed to tropical diseases: officers resigned and men deserted when ordered there. But as George III put it to one of his ministers in 1779, ‘Our islands must be defended even at a risk of the invasion of this island’ – Britain itself.”

However, consciences began to stir, and slavery was eventually abolished in one of the earliest and most remarkable – but also most peaceful - manifestations of “people power”...

In the early modern period, writes Henry Kissinger, “the West expanded with the familiar hallmarks of colonialism – avariciousness, cultural chauvinism, lust for glory. But it is also true that its better elements tried to lead a kind of global tutorial in an intellectual method that encouraged skepticism and a body of

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political and diplomatic practices including democracy. It all but ensured that, after long periods of subjugation, the colonized peoples would eventually demand – and achieve - self-determination. Even during their most brutal depredations, the expansionist powers put forth, especially in Britain, a vision that at some point conquered peoples would begin to participate in the fruits of a common global system.”620

Since the anti-slavery movement was all about freedom and equality, one would have expected the revolutionary French to take the lead in it. But the French under Napoleon chose rather to enforce slavery in the Caribbean and attempt to conquer the whole of Europe from Spain to Russia. It was the counter-revolutionary British rather than the revolutionary French who initiated this most liberal of causes.

“Gradually in the 18th century an anti-slavery lobby built up in Europe, notably in Britain, the superpower of the seas. In 1772 Lord Mansfield, a judge, ruled that a runaway slave there could not be forced back by his master to the West Indies. The ruling was interpreted (questionably, but this was the effect) as confirming that there could be no slavery in Britain.” 621

Then, “in late May 1787, a group of parliamentarians, doctors, clergymen and others met in London to form the ‘Committee of the Society for the purpose of effecting the abolition of the Slave Trade’. Its supporters were driven by an often religiously inspired sense of humanitarian outrage at the whole concept of slavery, and especially the horrors of the ‘middle passage’, the transportation across the Atlantic. In mid-April 1791, William Wilberforce’s parliamentary bill demanding the abolition of the slave trade failed, but put the issue firmly on the political agenda. The slaves, of course, were not passive recipients of western benevolence. In August 1791 a major counter-revolutionary revolt broke out in the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue led by plantation slaves outraged not only by the Revolution’s continued toleration of slavery and its failure to extend the rights of man to gens de couleur but also by its treatment of the king and revealed religion. Their leaders regarded themselves as African tribal chiefs rather than representatives of the people. Left to their own devices the revolting slaves would probably have set up a political system similar to the traditional slave-owning African kingdoms from they had originally come; they regularly sold black captives to the Spanish and British. The revolt was a major headache for the European powers, especially Britain and Spain, who drew much of their revenue, and thus their European leverage, from slave plantations in the Caribbean, and the Americans, who feared that the example of Haiti would inflame the black population of the Southern states. The relationship between slavery and the international balance was thus very close…”622

Thus James Walvin writes: “The emergence of the independent black republic of Haiti from the wreckage of plantation slavery in St. Domingue sent shock

waves throughout the Americas. It also sent refugees (white and black) fleeing to other islands, especially to neighbouring Jamaica, and to North America, with terrifying tales of what had happened. Defenders of the slave trade (and slavery) felt vindicated. Here was living proof of all their warnings: if you tamper with the slave system, catastrophe would inevitably follow. It was a powerful blow against British abolition [the movement for which had been building up for over fifty years] and it was reinforced by subsequent military disasters.

“St. Domingue was a temptation to the British. It was a fruitful colony whose sugar and coffee threatened to displace British Caribbean produce on world markets. For William Pitt, the opportunity to seize St. Domingue, and to add it to Britain’s necklace of Caribbean possessions, proved too good to resist. But Pitt’s plans took little notice of Haitian leader and former slave Toussaint L’Ouverture’s rebellious slaves on the island or of tropical disease, and the British invading force was soon overwhelmed. The loss of life was horrendous and the whole endeavour proved a military debacle whose significance was camouflaged by being so distant from the metropolis. Pitt’s aims of augmenting Britain’s slave possessions ended in the deaths of more than 40,000 men…”623

In 1799, the French tried to take back the colony. In 1802 Napoleon was proclaiming: “Never will the French Nation give chains to men whom it has once recognized as free.”624 But in the same year his forces tried to reintroduce slavery, only to be defeated by black soldiers singing the Marseillaise...625

Then, in the next year, as Joanna Bourke writes, “Haitians waged the first successful anti-colonial revolution, to found the first black republic. Their armed struggle won them a nation to call their own at colossal cost.626 The fury of the entire Western world turned against the new nation, ostracizing them and even insisting that former slaves pay compensation to their owners. Well into the twentieth century, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere was paying this financial debt to one of the world’s strongest economies, France.”627

The British, meanwhile, while continuing to justify their empire (although there were plenty of critics), had really bitten the anti-slavery bullet. In 1807 parliament banned the slave trade. However, slavery itself was not banned in the British Empire until 1833, and did not end in the British Caribbean until 1838.628

“When in 1814,” writes Tombs, “Castlereagh successfully pressed the French to agree to abolish their slave trade in five years’ time, this delay was denounced as

626 More than 100,000 slaves died in many barbarous ways in Haiti (Claude Ribbe, in Ian Sparks, “How Napoleon’s massacre of 100,000 blacks inspired Hitler”, Daily Mail, November 30, 2005, p. 35), (V.M.)
627 Bourke, What it Means to be Human, London: Virago, 2011, p. 128. By a profound irony, “according to one estimate, Haiti has more slaves [today] than any other country outside Asia.” (op. cit., p. 152)
the ‘death warrant of a multitude of innocent victims’ and a huge national campaign was organized, claiming 750,000 supporters. Wellington tried to renegotiate the treaty, and the government put pressure on its allies Spain and Portugal, the main slave-buying nations, to stop the trade. Castlereagh wrote: ‘You must really press the Spanish... there is hardly a village that has not met and petitioned.’ London even asked the Pope for support. Castlereagh persuaded the reluctant Great Powers to attach to the Treaty of Vienna (1815) a condemnation of the slave trade – the first such ‘human rights’ declaration in a major international treaty. This began a long effort to end slaving, against the resistance of the slave-trading and slave-holding nations and their African suppliers.

“Campaigning peaked in 1833 with more than 5,000 petitions containing nearly 1.5 million signatures. One, more than a mile long, was signed and sewn together by women, who played an unprecedented part in the campaign, among them Elizabeth Heyrick, author of Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition (1824). Parliament responded in 1834 by emancipating 800,000 slaves in the empire, paying a huge £20m in compensation to the owners – equal to a third of the state budget – and requiring a four-year ‘apprenticeship’ by slaves. This was thus a compromise measure, but still its anniversary was publicly celebrated by American abolitionists as a great achievement. In 1843 British subjects were forbidden to own slaves anywhere else in the world. The abolition of slavery in the empire in practice applied to slave ownership by whites.”

In South Africa, the British came up against the Boers on this issue; for the Boers were particularly oppressive slave-owners, who were “outraged that black people were ‘placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God’.” The problem began after a war with the Xhosa to the east of Cape Colony, when the British, as Evans writes, “withdrew and left the Xhosa with their land. This did not go down well, especially with the Dutch-descended Boer farmers, who bitterly resented the abolition of slavery by the British government in 1834 and were outraged by the minimal scale of the compensation paid to them. Some 5,000 Boer farmers expressed their lack of confidence in the British Empire by migrating northwards between 1835 and 1837 in the ‘Great Trek.’”

The British saw themselves as the champions of liberty everywhere, and did not care much if their increasingly muscular interventions on behalf of liberty, wherever it might be, offended their monarchical and serf-owning allies, Russia, Prussia and Austria.

“The Russians, for their part,” writes Simms, “saw Austria and Prussia as a counter-revolutionary dam or breakwater which would halt, or at least slow down, subversive currents before they reached Poland, and ultimately Russia itself. It was with this in mind that the tsar exerted pressure on Berlin to disavow ministers who wanted to cooperate with liberal nationalism. He got his way

631 Evans, op. cit., p. 660.
after the death of Motz and the replacement of Bernstorff by the conservative Friedrich Ancillon as foreign minister in the early 1830s. In 1833, the three eastern powers came together at Münchgrätz, to agree a joint policy of stability on conservative principles in central Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Two years later, Berlin and St. Petersburg advertised their solidarity by holding joint manoeuvres in Poland. The counter-revolution was closing ranks across Europe.

“In the west, liberal and constitutionalist powers were quick to pick up the gauntlet. British foreign policy, in particular, manifested an emancipatory and at times almost messianic streak. This reflected a strong sense that European peace and Britain’s own security depended, as the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, put it, on the ‘maint[enance] of the liberties and independence of all other nations’. On his reading, the survival of freedom in Britain required its defence throughout Europe: constitutional states were thus her ‘natural allies’. There was also a broader feeling that Britain should, as Palmerston argued in August 1832, ‘interfer[e] by friendly counsel and advice’, in order to ‘maintain the liberties and independence of all other nations’ and thus to ‘throw her moral weight into the scale of any people who are spontaneously striving for... rational gov[ernmen]t, and to extend as far and as fast as possible civilization all over the world’. In other words, Britain would not ‘interfere’ in the internal affairs of other countries, or impose her values on unwilling populations, but she pledged her support to those who were willing to take the initiative – who were ‘spontaneously striving’ – to claim their liberal birthright.

“Globally, the main battlefront was the international slave trade, and, increasingly, the institution of slavery itself. In 1833, slavery was finally abolished throughout the British Empire, which led a year later to the establishment of a French abolitionist society. A cross-Channel Franco-British agitation against the slave trade now began, and a joint governmental programme for its eradication became a real possibility. This cleared the way for a more robust policy against the international slave trade, which the Royal Navy had been battling with varying success since 1807. The newly independent Central and South American states had just abolished slavery, while Britain forced Madrid to give up the legal importation of slaves in 1820, and was increasing the pressure on Spain to abolish slavery altogether in her only remaining large colony of Cuba. In 1835, London and Madrid concluded a treaty to limit the slave trade; for the moment this agreement was honoured on the Spanish side, but it was a further step in the international de-legitimation of the trade. The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was founded in 1838, and two years later the World Anti-Slavery Convention took place in London. Tensions with Portugal, whose ships still carried the lucrative human cargo to Brazil, rose...”

“Even when other states agreed to outlaw slave trafficking,” continues Tombs, “- sometimes (as with Spain and Portugal) with compensation paid by Britain – they commonly winked at evasion. So the Royal Navy placed a

permanent squadron from 1808 to 1870, at times equal to a sixth of its ships, to try to intercept slavers off West Africa. It was based at Freetown, the capital of the colony for freed slaves at Sierra Leone, which had the first African Anglican bishop, Samuel Crowther, rescued as a boy from a slave ship by the Royal Navy. Patrolling was a thankless and grueling effort, exposing crews to yellow fever, hardship and even personal legal liability for damages; it also cost a large amount of taxpayers’ money. France and the United States refused to allow the Royal Navy to search ships flying their flags. There was continual diplomatic friction with slave-trading states. British officials there were often threatened with violence. During the 1830s and 1840s several American ships forced by bad weather into British colonial territory had the slaves they were carrying released. In 1839 in the famous case of the slave ship *Amistad*, when captives rebelled and killed the captain, British testimony proving illegal action by American officials helped to secure their freedom. A serious dispute with the United States occurred in 1841 when American slaves on the ship *Creole*, being taken from Virginia to be sold in New Orleans, seized the ship and killed a slave-trader. They were given asylum in the British-ruled Bahamas, where they were acquitted of any crime and declared free.

“Britain signed forty-five treaties with African rulers to stop the traffic at source. They were very reluctant to give it up, even threatening to kill all their slaves if they were prevented from selling them. In several cases, Britain paid them to abandon the traffic. Abolitionists urged that Britain should maintain a territorial preserve in West Africa, to combat illegal trafficking and promote legitimate commerce, such as palm oil, to wean African rulers and Liverpool merchants from slaving and towards soap manufacture – a good example of cleanliness being next to godliness. By 1830 palm oil exports were worth more than the slave trade. But the trade continued, and the Royal Navy adopted more aggressive tactics, including blocking rivers and destroying slave pens on shore, even when these were foreign property. In 1861 it occupied Lagos, deposing the ruler who refused to stop the trade, and thus blocked one of the main slave routes. Over sixty years the navy captured hundreds of slave ships off the African coast and freed some 160,000 captives. As one recalled it: ‘They took off all the fetters from our feet and threw them into the water, and they gave us clothes that we might cover our nakedness, they opened the water casks, that we might drink water to the full, and we also ate food, till we had enough.’ Several hundred thousand more were prevented from being shipped from Africa by naval and diplomatic pressure.

“Palmerston, as Foreign Secretary, was prepared to put pressure on slave-owners too. In 1839 he simply ordered the seizure of Portuguese slave ships, and in 1845 his successor, Lord Aberdeen, declared Brazilian slave ships to be pirates, and 400 were seized in five years. In 1850 the Royal Navy even forcibly entered Brazilian ports to seize or destroy hundreds of slave ships – decisive in forcing Brazil, the biggest slave-buyer of all, to end of the largest forced emigrations in history. Palmerston said this had given him his ‘greatest and purest pleasure’. Cuba, supplied by fast United States ships, came under similar pressure. But American ships were treated more cautiously, as searches of suspected slave ships carrying the Stars and Stripes caused threats of war from
Washington. As Palmerston expostulated, ‘every slave trading Pirate’ could escape by simply hoisting ‘a piece of Bunting with the United States emblems’. The American Civil War caused a reversal in American policy in 1862, when Abraham Lincoln’s government signed a secret treaty allowing the Royal Navy to intercept American slavers. The Spanish and Cuban authorities bowed to circumstances, and the Atlantic slave trade was effectively ended. Slavery itself remained legal in the United States until the 1860s, and in much of Latin America until the 1880s. As late as 1881 the Royal Navy arrested an American slave ship off the Gold Coast.

“The British campaign against the slave trade has often been debunked. French and American slave-traders accused Britain of using it as a pretext to try to gain control of West Africa, Cuba, even Texas. Some later historians claimed that slavery ended only because it was no longer profitable. But recent research is practically unanimous that slavery was booming, and it would have been in Britain’s economic interests to expand it, as the United States did. But Britain was rich enough to let its powerful humanitarian and religious lobby get its way.

“Did Britain – another accusation at the time and since – use the slave trade as a pretext for colonial expansion in Africa? In fact, successive governments were reluctant to rule inhospitable and relatively profitless territory, and movement inland was negligible until the late-nineteenth-century ‘scramble for Africa’. The exception, which involved campaigns against the aggressive slaving kingdom of Asante (Ashanti) – a magnificent and exceptionally cruel warrior society – was done at the request of Africans on the coast, who were subject to repeated attack from the 1820s onwards and requested British protection. Central Africa meanwhile was being devastated by Muslim slavers supplying the Middle East. The Foreign Office estimated that they were taking 25,000 – 30,000 people per year during the 1860s, and the nineteenth century total has been estimated at between 4 million and 6 million people, huge numbers dying as they were dragged across the Sahara or to the coast, and many others being killed in the violence of capture. British anti-slavery groups – inspired by the adventures and writings in the 1850s and 1860s of one of the most revered Victorian heroes, David Livingstone – demanded government intervention in what Livingstone had rightly called the open sore of the world. He hoped optimistically that a ‘Christian colony’ of ‘twenty or thirty good Christian Scotch families’ would lead to moral and commercial improvement and would put an end to slavery. Instead, a long diplomatic effort was required to throttle the trade, by persuading African rulers to stop supplying and Muslim states to close the great slave-markets of Egypt, Persia, Turkey and the Gulf. Britain had far less power to act directly in the Muslim world, where slavery had ancient social and religious sanction, so action had to be discreet. The consul-general at Cairo in the1860s, Thomas F. Reade, spied out the Egyptian slave markets disguised as an Arab. He estimated that 15,000 Africans were sold at Cairo annually, and reported on ‘the cruelties and abominations’ involved. Other diplomats were active in helping escaped slaves, including by purchasing their freedom with official funds, and the consul in Benghazi maintained a safe house for escapees at his own expense. British interference in the slave trade – however cautious Whitehall tried to be – could cause serious tensions and even led to mass
uprisings in Egypt and the Sudan. However, careful but persistent pressure on the Egyptian, Turkish and Persian governments to forbid the trade, backed up by naval patrols, treaties and even bribes to officials to apply law eventually had considerable effect. Pressure and financial inducements to the sultan of Zanzibar (a vast slaving entrepôt) shut its slave market in 1873...”

“The main focus of the new geopolitics, however,” writes Simms, “was Europe. With liberal – but not radical – governments in Paris after 1830, and in London from 1832, France and Britain were now ideologically aligned. In 1834, both powers responded to Münchengrätz by coming together with liberal-constitutionalist Spain and Portugal to form the Quadruple Alliance. ‘The Triple League of despotic governments,’ Palmerston exulted, ‘will now be counter-balanced by a Quadruple Alliance in the west.’ The continent was now split into two ideologically divided camps. Once hopeful of Alexander’s intentions, liberal opinion saw the Tsarist Empire of Nicholas I as the bulwark of reaction across Europe. The British writer Robert Bremner noted at the end of the decade that the European press was teeming with books painting Russia as the ‘most boundless, irresistible... most formidable, and best consolidated [power] that ever threatened the liberties and rights of man’.”

And yet the institution of serfdom, for which Russia was particularly reproached (together with her autocracy), was by no means unique to her. Serfs were not slaves, since they had rights as well as obligations; but they were tied to the land and the landowners in an essentially feudal relationship, being the basis of the agrarian economy of the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. After 1815, they were gradually emancipated throughout the region, with the greatest single act of emancipation in history taking place in Russia in 1861.

“The scale of these measures,” as Evans writes, “was vast. In East-Elbian Prussia, 480,000 peasants became free proprietors in the wake of the emancipation edicts of the early nineteenth century. Even in a small country such as Romania, more than 400,000 peasant received ownership of their land, and another 51,000 households were given land enough for a house and garden. Nearly 700,000 peasants in Poland [which was, of course, in the Russian Empire] became landowners. In the German and Slav provinces of the Habsburg Empire, the emancipation involved more than two and a half million peasant households indemnifying nearly 35,000 landowners for the loss of 39 million days of labour services without animals and 30,000 days with them, plus over 10 million bushels of dues in kind. In Russia the emancipation was even more gargantuan in its effects, with some 10 million peasants on private estates receiving title to nearly 100 million acres of land, quite apart from the similar measures already enacted for the even larger number of serfs on state demesnes. Nevertheless, everywhere the measures were put into effect relatively quickly, with a minimum of fuss. In principle this was the greatest single act of emancipation and reform in Europe during the whole of the nineteenth century. A huge class of people who had hitherto been bound to the land in a form of neo-feudal...

634 Simms, op. cit., p. 201.
servitude had been emancipated from its chains and given equal rights as full citizens. Legally prescribed social distinctions now came to an effective end. Encrusted status and privilege had been swept away and every adult male was now in almost every respect equal before the law and free to dispose over his person and his property. The last significant legal vestiges of the society of social orders assailed by the French Revolution of 1789 left the state of history..."635

635 Evans, op. cit., p. 98.
43. UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

We have seen that the liberal movement was largely confined to bourgeois property-owners with the purpose of benefiting other property owners. In fact, as liberal ideas spread, class snobbery also spread. Liberalism had its limits...

Socialist humanism, the third kind of humanism after liberal humanism and evolutionary humanism in Yuval’s terminology, aimed to correct this fault in liberalism by extending liberal freedoms to the peasants and/or the workers. But this was only the first, and by no means the most important step for socialists: since the formerly dispossessed were the largest class and had suffered so long and so bitterly from the oppression of the higher classes, it was envisaged that the lower classes should take over the government of states, creating a completely new kind of society, a community of “comrades” rather than “citizens” or “nations”, that would have no place at all for the beneficiaries of the earlier revolutions.

This was the dream of the most extreme socialists, Marx and Engels, whose *Communist Manifesto* was published in the year of the liberal revolutions of 1848. However, there were other kinds of socialists...

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

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

These “Utopian” Socialists were particularly influenced by the economic
ideas of the so-called Philosophical Radicals: Jeremy Bentham, Malthus, Ricardo
and James Mill, the father of J.S. Mill. Utopian socialism, writes Bertrand Russell,
“began in the heyday of Benthamism, and as a direct outcome of orthodox
economics. Ricardo, who was intimately associated with Bentham, Malthus, and
James Mill, taught that the exchange value of a commodity is entirely due to the
labour expended in producing it. He published this theory in 1817, and eight
years later Thomas Hodgskin, an ex-naval officer, published the first Socialist
rejoinder, Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital. He argued that if, as
Ricardo taught, all value is conferred by labour, then all the reward ought to go
to labour; the share at present obtained by the landowner and the capitalist must
be mere extortion. Meanwhile Robert Owen, after much practical experience as a
manufacturer, had become convinced of the doctrine which soon came to be
called Socialism. (The first use of the word ‘Socialist’ occurs in 1827, when it is
applied to the followers of Owen.) Machinery, he said, was displacing labour,
and laisser-faire gave the working classes no adequate means of combating
mechanical power. The method which he proposed for dealing with the evil was
the earliest form of modern Socialism.

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

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

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

Owen’s creed, writes Sir Isaiah Berlin, “was summarised in the sentence
inscribed at the head of his journal, The New Moral World: ‘Any general character,
from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may
be given to any community, even the world at large, by the application of proper
means, which means are to a great extent at the command and under the control

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of those who have influence in the affairs of men.’ He had triumphantly demonstrated the truth of his theory by establishing model conditions in his own cotton mills in New Lanark, limiting working hours, and creating provision for health and a savings fund. By this means he increased the productivity of his factory and raised immediately the standard of living of his workers, and, what was even more impressive to the outside world, trebled his own fortune. New Lanark became a centre of pilgrimage for kings and statesmen, and, as the first successful experiment in peaceful co-operation between labour and capital, had a considerable influence on the history both of socialism and of the working class. His later attempts at practical reform were less successful. Owen, who died in deep old age in the middle of the nineteenth century, was the last survivor of the classical period of rationalism, and, his faith unshaken by repeated failures, believed until the end of his life in the omnipotence of education and the perfectibility of man.”

In his Declaration of Mental Independence, Owen declared that from then mankind should consider itself liberated from "the trinity of evils responsible for all the world's misery: traditional religion, conventional marriage and private property". And since traditional religion was the main buttress of conventional marriage and private property, it was the worst evil. Perhaps that is why he founded his own religion, becoming “the self-styled ‘Social Father of the Society of Rational Religionists’, before converting to Spiritualism and enjoying conversations with the shades of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson…”

Kind-hearted entrepreneurs who would support Owen remained few and far between. His last scheme, in New Harmony, Indiana, failed because when he tried to put into effect his belief in the abolition of private property, his workers did not respond. Their nature, alas, was not as perfectible as Owen believed...

John Stuart Mill drew from Owen’s failure the conclusion that only state action could solve the problem of poverty and inequity. In his Principles of Political Economy, he made another proposal that was to be seen as the essence of socialism: redistribution. With this proposal, writes Barzun, he "broke with the liberal school by asserting that the distribution of the national product could be redirected at will and that it should be so ordered for the general welfare. That final phrase, perpetually redefined, was a forecast.... It was [its] underlying idea - essential socialism - that ultimately triumphed, taking the twin form of Communism and the Welfare State, either under the dictatorship of a party and its leader or under the rule of a democratic parliament and democracy.”

However, the English liberal solutions of self-help and education (Owen) and redistribution of wealth (Mill) were rejected by radical thinkers on the continent, especially in France. The most radical was the anarchist Proudhon, who anticipated the nihilists of the following generation by calling for the destruction

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638 Berlin, Karl Marx, London: Fontana, 195, pp. 32-33. Owen also wanted to abolish the family....
639 Evans, op. cit., p. 173.
641 Barzun, From Dawn to Decadence, New York, 2000, pp. 527-528.
of all authorities, even God. “‘The Revolution is not atheistic, in the strict sense of the word... it does not deny the absolute, it eliminates it...’ ‘The first duty of man, on becoming intelligent and free, is to continually hunt the idea of God out of his mind and conscience. For God, if he exists, is essentially hostile to our nature... Every step we take in advance is a victory in which we crush Divinity.’ ‘Humanity must be made to see that God, if there is a God, is its enemy.’” 642 It was Proudhon who uttered the famous words: “What is property? Property is theft.” 643 “By this phrase,” writes Evans, “he did not intend to dismiss all private property; rather, he wanted society to own all property but to lease it all out to prevent profiteering and unfair distribution. Nevertheless, his declarations resonated across the century as a slogan for socialists, communists and anarchists alike. Proudhon was vehemently opposed to female equality. If women obtained equal political rights, he declared men would find them ‘odious and ugly’, and it would bring about ‘the end of the institution of marriage, the death of love and the ruin of the human race’. ‘Between harlot and housewife,’ he concluded, ‘there is no halfway point’.” 644

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Other French thinkers tried to be more constructive. Among them was the Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), “who had had a career more adventurous than most: he had served under Washington at Yorktown in 1781, narrowly escaped the guillotine during the Revolution of 1789, and been incarcerated as a lunatic with the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) at the asylum in Charenton. He continued to live a troubled life thereafter, even attempting suicide in 1823 by shooting himself. His central concern was with developing a rational form of religion in which people would obtain eternal life ‘by working with all their might to ameliorate the condition of their fellows’.” 645

Saint-Simon’s “earliest pamphlet,” writes Talmon, “A Letter from a Citizen of Geneva, contains the bizarre scheme of a Council of Newton. The finest savants of Europe were to assemble in a mausoleum erected in honour of the great scientist, and deliberate on the problems of society. The author thereby gave picturesque expression to his view that in the French Revolution popular sovereignty had proved itself as fumbling, erratic and wrong as the divine right of kings, and that the tenets of rationalism about the rights of man, liberty and equality, had shown themselves just as irrelevant to man’s problems as theological doctrine. Not being rooted in any certainty comparable to that of

642 Proudhon, in Rose, op. cit., p. 61.
643 Marx disagreed with the latter statement insofar as it presupposed real rights in property. Nevertheless, he admitted the importance of Proudhon’s analysis of private property relations. “The two forces,” writes Berlin, “which Proudhon conceived as fatal to social justice and the brotherhood of man were the tendency towards the accumulation of capital, which led to the continual increase of inequalities of wealth, and the tendency directly connected with it, which openly united political authority with economic control, and so was designed to secure a growth of a despotic plutocracy under the guise of free liberal institutions. The state became, according to him, an instrument designed to dispossession the majority for the benefit of a small minority, a legalised form of robbery...” (Berlin, op. cit., pp. 82-83)
644 Evans, op. cit., p. 175.
645 Evans, op. cit., pp. 172-173.
science, old and new political ideas alike became only a pretext for the will of one set of men to dominate all others – which was all, in fact, that politics had ever been.

“What had made men yield to such palpable error for so long and then caused Saint-Simon to see through them at precisely that moment? Unlike eighteenth-century philosophers – such as his masters Turgot and Condorcet – Saint-Simon does not invoke the march of progress, the victory of enlightenment, or the sudden resolve of men. He points to the importance assumed by scientific advance, technological development and problems of industrial production, all based upon scientific precision, verifiable facts and quantitative measurements which left no room for human arbitrariness.

“In the past, mythological and theological modes of thought, medieval notions of chivalry, metaphysical preoccupations and so on were the accompaniment – or, as Saint-Simon more often seems to suggest, the matrix – of the economic conditions and the social-political order of the day. In brief, frames of mind, modes of production and social political systems hang together, and develop together, and the stages of such overall development cannot be skipped. The industrial system which the nineteenth century was ushering in had its beginnings in the Middle Ages. Within the womb of a civilization dominated by priests and warriors, shaped by values and expectations not of this world, geared for war and inspired by theatrical sentiments of chivalry, there began a mighty collective effort to fashion things, instruments and values designed to enhance men’s lives here and now: industrial production, economic exchange and scientific endeavour. The communes had at first no thought of subverting the feudal-theological order, within which they made their earliest steps – firstly because they were as yet too weak for such a revolt, and secondly because they did not value the external accoutrements of power. They believed only in positive tangible goods and solid achievements in the social-economic and scientific domain.

“This was the cause of a divorce between content and form. While in external appearance warriors and priests still held the reins of authority, real power was increasingly concentrated in the hands of the productive classes. These classes, whose position, indeed whose very existence, lacked acknowledged legitimacy in the official scheme of things, developed a special ethos. Knowing the ruling classes to be incompetent to deal with matters of decisive importance to them, the bourgeoisie restored to a theory of laissez-faire which condemned all government interference and glorified individual initiative and the interplay of economic interests. In order to clothe this class interest in theoretical garb, bourgeois spokesmen evolved the doctrine of the natural rights of man and the theory of checks and balances and division of power. These designed to curb the power-drives of the feudal forces, and indeed succeeded in undermining the self-assurance of the aristocratic order.

“In Saint-Simon’s view, the French Revolution signified not so much the triumph of rationalist-democratic ideas as the total victory of the productive classes and the final swamping of feudal-theological values by positive forces.
But this fundamental fact was distorted and obscured by those metaphysicians and lawyers who, having played an important part in helping the industrial classes to win, mistook their secondary role for a mission to impose their ideas and their rule upon society. Instead of stepping aside and letting the imperatives of industrial endeavour shape new institutions, they set out to impose their conjectural ideas upon society, side-tracking the real issues and befogging them with rhetoric and sophistry. In effect their intention was not to abolish the old system which divided society into rulers and ruled, but to continue it, only substituting themselves for the feudal lords; in other words, to rule by force. For where the relationship between rulers and ruled is not grounded in the nature of things as is that, for example, between doctor and patient, teacher and pupil – that is, on division of functions – the only reality is the rule of man over man based on force. This form of relationship dated from the days when man was considered to need protection by superiors because he was weak, lowly and ignorant, or had to be kept from mischief because he was riotous and savage. It was no longer justified since the Revolution had proved that man had come of age. It was time for government, in other words the state, to make room for an administration of things, and conscious, sustained planning of the national economy. The need to keep law and order, allegedly always so pressing and relentless, would be reduced to a minimum when social relations were derived from objective necessities. The whole problem was thus reduced to the discovery of the ‘force of things’, the requirements of the mechanism of production. Once these had become the measure of all things, there would be no room for the distinction between rulers in the traditional political sense. The nexus of all human relationships would be the bond between expert knowledge and experience on the one hand, and discipleship, fulfillment of necessary tasks, on the other. The whole question of liberty and equality would then assume a quite different significance.

“In fact men would no longer experience the old acute craving for liberty and equality. A scientific apportioning of functions would ensure perfect cohesion of the totality, and the high degree of integration would draw the maximum potential from every participant in the collective effort. Smooth, well-adjusted participation heightens energy and stills any sense of discomfort or malaise. There is no yearning for freedom and no wish to break away in an orchestra, a choir, a rowing boat. Where parts do not fit and abilities go to waste, there is a sense of frustration and consequently oppression, and man longs to get away. The question of equality would not arise once inequality was the outcome of a necessary and therefore just division of tasks. There is no inequality where there is no domination for the sake of domination.

“Such a perfect integration remained to be discovered. Pursuing his quest, Saint-Simon stumbled upon socialism, and then found himself driven to religion. Waste, frustration, deprivation, oppression were the denial of both cohesion of the whole and the self-expression of the individual. Those scourges were epitomized in the existence of the poorest and most numerous class – the workers. And so what started with Saint-Simon as a quest for positive certainty and efficiency gradually assumed the character of a crusade on behalf of the disinherited, the underprivileged and frustrated. The integrated industrial
productive effort began to appear as conditioned upon the abolition of poverty, and dialectically the abolition of poverty now seemed the real goal of a fully integrated collective endeavour.

“But was the removal of friction and waste enough to ensure the smooth working of the whole? And would rational understanding suffice to ensure wholehearted participation in the collective effort? Saint-Simon was led to face at a very early stage of socialism the question of incentives. He felt that mechanical, clever contrivances, intellectual comprehension and enlightened self-interest were in themselves insufficient as incentives and motives. And so the positivist, despising mythical, theological and metaphysical modes of thought, by degrees evolved into a mystical Romantic. He became acutely aware of the need for incentives stronger, more impelling and compelling than reason and utility. In a sense he had already come to grips with the problem in the famous distinction between organic and critical epochs in history, a distinction which was destined to become to important in the theory of his disciple, Auguste Comte.

“These two types of epoch alternate in history. There is a time of harmony and concord, like the pre-Socratic age in Greece and the Christian Middle Ages, and there are times of disharmony and discord, like post-Socratic Greece and the modern age, which began with the Reformation, evolved into rationalism, and came to a climax in the French Revolution. The organic ages are period of a strong and general faith, when the basic assumptions comprise a harmonious pattern and are unquestioningly taken for granted. There are no dichotomies of any kind, and classes live in harmony. In the critical ages there is no longer any consensus about basic assumptions; beliefs clash, traditions are undermined, there is no accepted image of the world. Society is torn by class war and selfishness is rampant.

“The crying need of the new industrial age was for a new religion. There must be a central principle to ensure integration of all the particular truths and a single impulse for all the diverse spiritual endeavours. The sense of unity of life must be restored, and every person must be filled with such an intense propelling and life-giving sense of belonging to that unity, that he would be drawn to the centre by the chains of love, and stimulated by a joyous irresistible urge to exert himself on behalf of all.

“Saint-Simon called this new religion of his ‘Nouveau Christianisme’. It was to be a real fulfillment of the original promise of Christianity, and was to restore that unity of life which traditional Christianity – decayed and distorted – had done its best to deny and destroy. The concept of original sin had led to a pernicious separation of mankind into a hierarchy of the perfect and the mass of simple believers. This carried with it the distinction between theory and practice, the perfect bliss above and the vale of tears below; the result was compromise and reconciliation with – in effect, approval of – evil here and now.”

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Saint-Simon reduced Christianity to “Love thy neighbour”. “Applied to modern society,” writes Edmund Wilson, this principle “compels us to recognize that the majority of our neighbours are destitute and wretched. The emphasis has now been shifted from the master mind at the top of the hierarchy to the ‘unpropertied man’ at the bottom; but the hierarchy still stands as it was, since Saint-Simon’s whole message is still his own peculiar version of the principle of noblesse oblige. The propertied classes must be made to understand that an improvement in the condition of the poor will mean an improvement in their condition, too; the savants must be shown that their interests are identical with those of the masses. Why not go straight to the people? he makes the interlocutor ask in his dialogue. Because we must try to prevent them from resorting to violence against their governments; we must try to persuade the other classes first.

“And he ends – the last words he ever wrote – with an apostrophe to the Holy Alliance, the combination of Russia, Prussia and Austria which had been established upon the suppression of Napoleon. It was right, says Saint-Simon, to get rid of Napoleon, but what have they themselves but the sword? They have increased taxes, protected the rich; their church and their courts, and their very attempts at progress, depend on nothing but force; they keep two million men under arms.

“‘Princess!’ he concludes, ‘hear the voice of God, which speaks to you through my mouth: Become good Christians again, throw off the belief that the hired armies, the nobility, the heretical clergy, the corrupt judges, constitute your principal supporters; unite in the name of Christianity and learn to accomplish the duties which Christianity imposes on the powerful; remember that Christianity command them to devote their energies to bettering as rapidly as possible the lot of the very poor!’”

Saint-Simon is an important link between the Masonic visionaries of the French revolution and the “scientific” vision of the Marxists. The importance he attached to economic factors and means of production formed one of the main themes of Marxism – although Marx himself dismissed him as a “Utopian socialist”. That he could still think in terms of a “New Christianity” shows his attachment to the religious modes of thought of earlier ages, although, of course, his Christianity is a very distorted form of the faith.

Marx would purge the religious element in Saint-Simon and make the economic element the foundation of his theory, while restoring the idea of Original Sin in a very secularized form. As for the incentives which Saint-Simon thought so necessary and which he thought to supply with his “New Christianity”, Marx found those through his adoption of the idea of a scientifically established progress to a secular Paradise, whose joyous inevitability he borrowed from the dialectical historicism of one of the most corrupting thinkers in the history of thought – Hegel.

647 Wilson, To the Finland Station, London: Phoenix, 2004, pp. 84-85.
One of Saint-Simon’s disciples was Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who founded the extremely influential doctrine of positivism. “Comte,” writes Norman Davies, “held that all knowledge passed through three successive stages of development, where it is systematized according to (respectively) theological, metaphysical, and ‘positive’ or scientific principles. The theological and metaphysical states had to be discarded in order to arrive at the state of true knowledge, which is science. Comte placed the sciences in a kind of hierarchy with a new “science of society”, or sociology, at the summit. The social scientists’ task was “to know in order to foresee, and to foresee in order to know”.

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

Another Utopian Socialist figure was Charles Fourier (1772-1837). He believed in the old chiliastic dream of Paradise on earth, in which men would live to be 144 years old. He had other dreams, too: “He believed that the world would last precisely 80,000 years and that by the end of that time every soul would have traveled 810 times between the earth and certain other planets which he regarded as certainly inhabited, and would have experienced a succession of existences to the precise number of 1626!”

“He’s starting point,” according to Talmon, “was very much that of Rousseau. Man, he believed, had come out of the hands of nature a good and noble being. The institutions of civilization had brought about his undoing. Greed and avarice were the root of all evil. They had created the existing dichotomies between private morality and commercial and political codes of behaviour, between things preached and ways practiced. Morose, ascetical teachings about the evil character of the natural urges were motivated by the avarice and ambition of the greed and strong, who wished to instill into their victims a sense of sin, and with it humility and readiness to bear privations, perform the dirtiest jobs, and receive the whip. The attempt to stifle natural impulses had the effect of turning the energy contained in them into channels of perversion and aggressiveness.

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648 Davies, op. cit., p. 790.
649 Hieromonk Damascene (Christensen), Father Seraphim Rose: His Life and Writings, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 2003, p. 623.
650 Wilson, op. cit., p. 89. These early socialists, in spite of their materialist bent of mind, were peculiarly susceptible to quasi-religious visions. Thus Saint-Simon had visions of Charlemagne, and it was revealed to him “in a vision that it was Newton and not the Pope whom God had elected to sit beside Him and to transmit to humanity His purposes” (Wilson, op. cit., p. 83). As for Owen, “he came in his last days to believe that all the magnanimous souls he had known, Shelley, Thomas Jefferson, Channing, the Duke of Kent... - all those who when living had listened to him with sympathy, of whom he had felt that they had really shared his vision, and who were lost to him now through death – he came to believe that they were returning from the other world, to make appointments with him and keep them, to talk to him and reassure him” (Wilson, op. cit., p. 97).
“Such impulses were inflamed by the spectacle of avarice rampant and all-pervasive, in spite of the official ascetic teachings. Fourier may have moralized, may have dreamed of the waters of the oceans turning into lemonade and of lions changed into modern aeroplanes and carrying men over vast distance; but his homilies and dreams are buttressed by a very acute analysis and critique of commercial, if not quite capitalist, civilization. He also analysed history into a succession of social economic stages, and sketched a historical dialectic from which Marx and Engels could – and it seems did – learn something.

“Here, however, we are concerned with Fourier’s contribution to the problem of organization and freedom. In his view, the state and its laws were instruments of exploitation, and any large centralized state was bound to develop into an engine of tyranny. Fourier therefore held that the state ought to be replaced by a network of small direct democracies. Each should enjoy full autonomy and be at once a wholly integrated economic unit and a closely-knit political community. In these ‘phalanstères’ all would be co-partners, everybody would know all the other members (Fourier laid down a maximum of 1800), and decisions would be reached by common consent. By these means men would never be subjected to some anonymous, abstract power above and outside them.

“Fourier also tackled the problem of reconciling integration with self-expression. He argued that it was absurd to expect to eliminate the love of property, desire to excel, penchant for intrigue or craving for change, let alone sex and gluttony. Such an attempt was sure to engender frustration and anti-social phenomena. And there was no escape from the fact that people had different characteristics and urges of different intensity. Happily, benevolent nature had taken care of that by creating different sorts of characteristics and passions, like symphonic compositions in which the most discordant elements are united into a meaningful totality. The task was therefore reduced to the art of composing the right groups of characteristics – perfectly integrated partnerships based on the adjustment of human diversities. It followed that the other task was to manipulate the human passions so cleverly that they would become levers of co-operative effort and increased production instead of impediments to collaboration. (This implies an ardent faith in education and environmental influence comparable to Robert Owen’s.651) To take first the love of property: it would not be abolished or made equal. There would be a secured minimum of private property, but beyond that it would depend on investment, contribution, type of work, degree of fatigue and boredom, and so on, with progressively decreasing dividends. Persons of diverse characteristics joined into one group would stimulate each other, and competition between groups would be strongly encouraged. The paramount aim was to turn labour into a pleasure instead of a curse. In order to obviate the danger of boredom, spells of work would be short and changes in the type of labour frequent. Gangs of children would be set the

651 Cf. Owen’s words: “Every day will make it more and more evident that the character of man is, without a single exception, always formed for him; that it may be, and is, chiefly created by his predecessors: that they give him, or may give him, his ideas and habits, which are the powers that govern and direct his conduct. Man, therefore, never did, nor is it possible he ever can, form his own character” (in Anderson, op.cit., p. 341). (V.M.)
task of doing the dirty jobs in a spirit of joyous emulation. Finally, industry would be combined with an Arcadian type of agriculture.

“This is Fourier’s solution to the dilemmas which have plagued our common sense for so long: who will do the disagreeable jobs in a perfectly harmonious society, and what will be the relationship between superiors and inferiors in it?”

“It was above all Fourier,” writes Evans, “who propounded the identity of women’s emancipation and general human emancipation, a belief shared by Flora Tristan: ‘The extension of privileges to women,’ he wrote, ‘is the general principle of all social progress.’ He too compared women to slaves: marriage for them was ‘conjugal slavery’. In the phalanstery, women would have fully equal rights and would be free to marry and divorce as they wished. Just as Cabet invented the word ‘communism’, so Fourier invented the word ‘feminism’. The Saint-Simonians were equally preoccupied with women’s place in society. Enfantin proclaimed ‘the emancipation of women’ as a central goal of a new Church that he would lead. He included in this concept, however, the ‘rehabilitation of the flesh’, and his advocacy of the sexual emancipation of women brought a conviction for offending public morality in 1832. Far more conventional was Cabet, who, perhaps surprisingly, thought that the main constituent unit of communist society would not be the individual but the heterosexual married couple and their children, so that shared childrearing did not come into his vision. Every women should be educated, but the aim of her education should be to make her ‘a good girl, a good sister, a good wife, a good mother, a good housekeeper, a good citizen’.”

Before leaving the French thinkers, we should briefly take note of the great historian Jules Michelet. In the first half of his book, The People, written shortly before the 1848 revolution, he analyzed industrial society in a way that anticipated Marx, but which was broader in scope and more balanced in its vision. “Taking the classes one by one, the author shows how all are tied into the social-economic web – each, exploiting or being exploited, and usually both extortionist and victim, generating by the very activities which are necessary to win its survival irreconcilable antagonisms with its neighbours, yet unable by climbing higher in the scale to escape the general degradation. The peasant, eternally in debt to the professional moneylender or the lawyer and in continual fear of being dispossessed, envies the industrial worker. The factory worker, virtually imprisoned and broken in will by submission to his machines, demoralizing himself still further by dissipation during the few moments of freedom he is allowed, envies the worker at a trade. But the apprentice to a trade belongs to his master, is servant as well as workman, and he is troubled by bourgeois aspirations. Among the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, the manufacturer, borrowing from the capitalist and always in danger of being wrecked on the shoal of overproduction, drives his employees as if the devil were driving him. He gets to hate them as the only uncertain element that impairs the perfect functioning of the mechanism; the workers take it out in

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hating the foreman. The merchant, under pressure of his customers, who are eager to get something for nothing, brings pressure on the manufacturer to supply him with shoddy goods; he leads perhaps the most miserable existence of all, compelled to be servile to his customers, hated by and hating his competitors, making nothing, organizing nothing. The civil servant, underpaid and struggling to keep up his respectability, always being shifted from place to place, has not merely to be polite like the tradesman, but to make sure that his political and religious views do not displease the administration. And, finally, the bourgeoisie of the leisure class have tied up their interests with the capitalists, the least public-spirited members of the nation, and they live in continual terror of communism. They have now wholly lost touch with the people. They have shut themselves up in their class; and inside their doors, locked so tightly, there is nothing but emptiness and chill….

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

Industrialization, writes Andrew Marr, “changed the politics of the British in many unexpected ways. During 1811-16 in Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire, the old artisan, cottage-based handloom weaver revolted violently against the new mechanized factory looms that were destroying their livelihoods. Taking their battle name from a fictitious woodland freedom fighter called King Lud, these ‘Luddites’ smashed machines, attacked employers and magistrates and, having practiced night manoeuvres outside industrial cities, ended up clashing with the army. Many were hanged or sent to Australia. In 1830, agricultural workers in Kent began the ‘Swing Riots’ – another attack on the new job-destroying technology: in this case mechanized threshing machines.”

The Luddite rebellion exposed a profound dilemma at the heart of the industrial revolution, not only in the early nineteenth century but in every stage of its development up to the present day: that as science and technology produce inventions that save labour and increase productivity, creating wealth and leisure for some, or even for very many, workers in the older industries lose their jobs and become poorer. This is the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in its modern form: increases in material scientific knowledge yield “good” in the shape of material progress and wealth, but also “evil” in the shape of the blighting of formerly productive lives. No generation has succeeded in solving this dilemma because no generation has been able to desist from tasting of the forbidden fruit. Thus in our own time computerization and digitalization have brought huge increases in productivity and wealth to the modern world, but also unemployment and insecurity on a massive scale. The next stage, we are told, will be robotization: most ordinary jobs done by humans will be replaced by the operations of robots. The consequences of this are difficult to foresee; with confidence we can say only that they will be huge, and by no means unambiguously good. Some put their faith in the promise of the serpent that men are gods and that the good of their inventions will always outweigh the evil. Others believe in God, Who says that the fruits of this tree, whatever they may be in material terms, will lead to the spiritual death of man unless he repents of his folly and clings to the Tree of Life…

Another, related change brought about by industrialization was the change in the formerly paternal attitude taken by governments and landlords to agriculture and agricultural workers. By far the biggest employer in England, writes Tombs, “was agriculture, taking about a third of the male labour force. The booming wartime population and restricted imports had caused an extension of cultivation to common land and ‘waste’. Despite occasional serious shortages, the country had been fed. Landlords and tenant farmers had made

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655 Modern films that have explored this theme are The Man in the White Suit (1951), 2001 Space Odyssey (2001 and Artificial Intelligence (2001).
profits; but the poor had lost customary common rights as land was ‘enclosed’, making them wholly dependent on wages, and creating a sense of injustice. Wartime conditions were clearly unsustainable, but again the solution was neither easy nor uncontentious. Should agriculture be encouraged to maximize production and try to feed the booming population? Or should cheaper overseas food supplies be sought, and some English land taken out of cultivation? In 1813 a notorious ‘Corn Law’ was adopted, which gave some protection to domestic producers by excluding imports of grain until the price reached a certain level – for wheat, eighty shillings a quarter (sixty-four gallons).

“Many, at home and abroad, thought that an overpopulated England was heading for famine. The most notorious and influential alarmist was an Anglican parson with radical connections, Thomas Malthus. His Essay on Population (1798) mixed heterodox Christianity with what would now be called finite ecology, arguing that population growth inevitably tended to outrun food supply, and would inevitably be ‘checked’ either by restraining births or by famine, hunger and war. In his own time and since he has been the subject of controversy and denunciation – he himself apologized for his ‘disheartening’ conclusions. Defended by political economists and attacked by a string of moralists, including Dickens, Carlyle, Coleridge, Byron, Cobbett and Disraeli, he had an immediate influence, for his argument seemed incontrovertibly logical, and it became, wrote one Utilitarian, ‘the fixed, axiomatic belief of the educated world’. Malthus’s theories caused moral and intellectual turmoil, and the perception of the poor as a danger. Attempts to relieve poverty would encourage population increase, and so merely make the danger worse. His ideas retained a hold until the 1850s. As late as 1852, the leading French radical Auguste Ledru-Rollin published a book prophesying gloatingly that England was doomed to mass starvation. The main target of such fears during the 1820s-1830s was the Poor Law, believed to encourage a feckless dependency culture and the breeding of too many children.

“One way of escaping future hunger was to import food. This required secure control of the seas by maintaining naval supremacy built up over the previous century (potential enemies looked forward to the day when England might be starved by a coalition of naval powers). It also meant exporting ever more goods and services to pay for imported food. These exports required increasing employment in manufacturing and commerce, and endlessly growing cities – an uncharted prospect. Was this just another road to disaster? Many thought so: only agriculture was ‘real’, the rest was a house of cards. ‘Perish commerce!’ exclaimed the Radical William Cobbett. Many feared a future of ugly, polluted towns, crowded with degraded and lawless labourers. Could this be prevented, or must it be adapted to? Was more government intervention required, or should things be left to work themselves out under the rules of political economy and Divine Providence?

“These questions reflected deep ideological and moral divisions. The philosopher and politician John Stuart Mill characterized it as ‘every Englishman of the present day [being] either a Benthamite or a Coleridgian’. This convenient
labeling was derived from Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), whose Utilitarianism gave a fresh ideological thrust to Radicalism, and the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), an enthusiastic revolutionary turned mystical conservative. The division covered politics, economics, science, social relations and not least theology – we must always remember that most of the political class, and most of the country, had religious beliefs now rare outside the deepest recesses of the American Bible Belt. Other voices called for a plague on both Benthamites and Coleridgians, including Dickens and Thomas Carlyle, denouncing all and sundry like a modern Jeremiah.

“Benthamite Utilitarianism saw the universe as a self-regulating machine, with discoverable ‘axioms’, such as the ‘Principle of Utility’: ‘The greatest happiness of the greatest number… is the measure of right and wrong.’ Society should be reformed to work according to these axioms. This appealed both to political economists, who saw the rules as scientific, and to Evangelicals, who saw them as God’s will. Individual choice was central – there was no such thing as society. Coleridge once said to Martineau, ‘You seem to regard society as an aggregate of individuals.’ She replied: ‘Of course I do.’ Government, professionally managed, must regulate individuals through a system of rewards and punishments, like intelligent laboratory rats. The virtuous man, taught Bentham, is an exact calculator. Utilitarianism was authoritarian, epitomized by the ‘Panopticon’, a prison (it could also be a school, hospital or factory) built so that inmates could be constantly observed by an all-seeing ‘inspection’. Millbank (1816) and Pentonville (1842) prisons in London adopted some of these features. Bentham, who considered the idea of natural rights ‘nonsense on stilts’, had thought of having a million poor and potentially antisocial people confined in factory-prisons. Not all his schemes were adopted, of course, but his fundamental maxims, his scorn for traditional thinking, and his bureaucratic utopianism were widely influential among modernizers. His embalmed body still sits inspecting University College London.

“The Coleridgian view – paternalist, interventionist, anti-liberal – saw the universe and human society not as machines but as complex organisms developing over time, under a Divine artist, not a celestial engineer. Society needed leadership and high-minded government to function. Coleridge advocated moral leadership by a ‘clerisy’, a public-spirited cultural and intellectual elite. Such views of society appealed to those who saw the traditional landowning class as having that duty – as Edmund Burke had put it, like great oaks shading a meadow. However, idealized this view, there was a wide acceptance of gentry leadership, and recognition of obligations to the ‘deserving’ poor, through charity and the Poor Law. Coleridge and Wordsworth, their youthful hopes of the French Revolution dashed, found consolation in the English countryside, and social relations based on what Wordsworth called ‘personal feeling’ and ‘moral cement’. Arguably, such a society could not survive population growth, urbanization and commercial expansion. Such was Wordsworth’s fear: ‘Everything has been put up to market and sold for the highest price’, he wrote to a friend in 1818. The only hope was for society’s moral
basis to be restored, but for that ‘they who govern the country must be something superior to mere financiers and political economists’..."656

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One of the main “axioms” of the Benthamite Radicals was free trade, the main principle of economic liberalism; it was a very important concept, first in England, and then in other countries that followed the English way.

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

“These were the sources of the long-enduring association between industrialism and liberalism; they were deplored by conservatives who regretted a hierarchical, agricultural order of mutual obligations and duties, settled ideas, and religious values. Yet liberals who welcomed the new age were by no means taking their stand on a simply negative and selfish base. The creed of ‘Manchester’, as it was called because of the symbolic importance of that city in English industrial and commercial development, was for its leaders much more than a matter of mere self-enrichment. A great political battle which for years preoccupied Englishmen in the early nineteenth century made this clear. Its focus was a campaign for the repeal of what were called the ‘Corn Laws’, a tariff system originally imposed to provide protection for the British farmer from imports of cheaper foreign grain. The ‘repealers’, whose ideological and political leader was a none-too-successful businessman, Richard Cobden, argued that much was at stake. To begin with, retention of the duties on grain demonstrated the grip upon the legislative machinery of the agricultural interest, the traditional ruling class, who ought not to be allowed a monopoly of power. Opposed to it were the dynamic forces of the future which sought to liberate the national economy from such distortions in the interest of particular groups. Back came the reply of the anti-repealers: the manufacturers were themselves a particular interest who only wanted cheap food imports in order to be able to pay lower wages; if they wanted to help the poor, what about some regulation of the conditions under which they employed women and children in factories? There, the inhumanity of the production process showed a callous disregard for

the obligations of privilege which would never have been tolerated in rural England. To this, the repealers responded that cheap food would mean cheaper goods for export. And in this, for someone like Cobden, much more than profit was involved. A worldwide expansion of Free Trade untrammelled by the interference of mercantilist governments would lead to international progress both material and spiritual, he thought; trade brought peoples together, exchanged and multiplied the blessings of civilization and increased the power in each country of its progressive forces. On one occasion he committed himself to the view that Free Trade was the expression of the Divine Will (though even this did not go as far as the British consul at Canton who had proclaimed that ‘Jesus Christ is Free Trade, and Free Trade is Jesus Christ’)…

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

The difference between the old patriarchal attitude towards social and economic relations and the new liberal attitude is seen particularly in the contrast between Lord Ashley and Richard Cobden.

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

respect, the disdain of being patronised or petted, the desire to accumulate and the ambition to rise.”

“Richard Cobden and John Bright,” writes Tombs, “were promoters of what Disraeli called the ‘Manchester School’ of economics. Cobden, elected to Parliament for Stockport in 1841, was a self-made Manchester cotton magnate, the son of a small yeoman farmer who detested the landlord class: ‘We will grapple with the religious feeling of the people – their veneration for God shall be our leverage to upset their reverence for the aristocracy.’ Bright was a Quaker landowner from Rochdale, and MP for Durham from 1843. The league was to have a great impact on politics and economics than any single-issue group before or since. In Britain and elsewhere, exporters were quick to see the advantages of free trade and lower food costs, but there was far more to the league than merely business calculation. It condemned trade barriers as pillars of war, poverty and aristocratic oppression, whereas free trade promised freedom, peace and prosperity for all. The league combined the organizational dynamism of a new business class with the campaigning fervour of Evangelicals and Dissenters: in one week it mailed some 9 million leaflets, and it organized saturation press campaigns. The campaign tapped into the anti-slavery movement, which had just succeeded in abolishing slavery in the empire. Cobden adopted the slogan ‘immediate abolition’ because it was the old anti-slavery shibboleth. The league’s optimistic message was the first effective answer to the Malthusian belief, so hated and so persuasive, that rising population would inevitably lead to poverty, starvation and conflict. What began as the campaign of a pressure group became the settled orthodoxy of the country until the 1930s and still influences English attitudes today.

“Farmers led a counter-campaign in favour of continuing protection for agriculture, and a flood of rural support went to the Tories. This gave them a sweeping victory in 1841. The results show that a durable regional pattern was setting in. The Tories now dominated the English counties and smaller towns. The Whigs dominated the larger towns, especially south of the Trent, and were well ahead in Scotland and Ireland. These years set the scene for nearly half a century of Whig-Liberal hegemony once the Corn Law issue exploded, for the Whigs established an alliance with northern manufacturers and retailers, many of them Nonconformists, who dominated urban politics.”

In fact, Cobden had still wider, international aims in campaigning for the repeal of the Corn Laws. “It was expected not merely to destroy the domestic bases of British militarism by crushing landlord power, but also to link states commercially through what we would today call ‘interdependence’, thus making war all but impossible. Free trade, Cobden predicted, would inaugurate ‘the greatest revolution that ever happened in the world’s history’, destroy ‘the

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659 Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 448-449.
antagonism of race, and creed and language’, and make ‘large and mighty empires… gigantic armies and great navies’ redundant.”

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

The idea of free trade began to penetrate into Europe... Thus Prussia took the lead in abolishing tariff barriers between the members of the German Confederation, “first through a reform passed in 1818 and then through the German Customs Union founded in 1834, soon to be joined by South German states such as Baden, though not by Austria. The Customs Union [Zollverein] brought together a range of earlier, smaller tariff agreements on the basis of a uniform import duty based on the Prussian one. A major and often neglected effect of the Customs Union was to protect German industry from British competition; in 1844, for example, it was charging an import duty on pig iron of a pound a ton... The breaking down of internal tariff barriers was... vital for economic progress...”

Yanis Varoufakis sees in the Zollverein a precursor to the European Union. “Prior to 1833, what is Germany today encompassed a multitude of different states, city-states and jurisdictions, each with its own standards, time zone and currency. Trading across these multiple borders was nightmarish and the reason that Germany was so far behind Britain in terms of industrialization, innovation and governance. German unification began with a customs union known as the Zollverein, an 1833 agreement between the various territories promoted as a first step towards free trade and much needed economic integration.

“One shrewd observer at the time was deeply concerned with the Zollverein. Chancellor Klemens von Metternich of the Austro-Hungarian empire... could not fail to notice that the Zollverein treaty had been driven by Prussia, the

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661 Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
dominant German kingdom, and excluded the Austro-Hungarian empire. Just as Beijing today sees as a major threat the American drive to forge a Pacific Basin free trade zone that excludes China in the form of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Metternich too felt that Prussia was up to mischief. In a letter to his emperor he wrote: ‘Within the great Confederation, a smaller union is being formed, a status in statu in the full sense of the term, which will only too soon accustom itself to achieving its ends by its own machinery and will pay attention to the objectives and machinery of the Confederation only when convenient… [O]n every question that comes before the Diet [the Confederation’s parliament] (and not only commercial affairs) [it] will act and vote as one according to prior arrangements. Then there will no longer be any useful discussion in the Diet; debates will be replaced by votes agreed in advance and inspired not by the interests of the Confederation but by the exclusive interest of Prussia… Even now it is unfortunately easy to determine in advance how these votes will be cast on all the questions where the interest of Prussia conflicts with that of the federal body.’ This description could have been written, with very few emendations, to describe my experience of the Eurogroup deliberations as finance minister of a small European nation in 2015. Metternich could have been writing about the manner in which matters of crucial importance for various Eurozone member states, especially those with large deficits and unbearable debts, were settled on the basis of modern Prussia’s ‘exclusive interest’.

“In modern times we imagine that nineteenth-century politicians primarily used the sword to expand their empires, rather than appealing to the self-interest of prospective subjects. That was not true of the German Confederation. The idea of voluntary accession on the basis of the self-interest of the smaller states was indeed central to the Zollverein. Prussia persuaded the small German states to enter into the new arrangements by insisting that they would be better off inside the union, where they would be well positioned to influence matters, than outside, where they could only react to decisions the confederation reached.

“Even the notion of subsidiarity, or something close to it, was employed. The promise of decentralized power worked miracles in convincing the German states that feared a Prussian-dominated union to enter it. However, some argue that this was a well-laid trap. The German constitutionalist Heinrich Tiepel observed that ‘a looser association of states encourages hegemony more than a tight one…”

Another attempt to combine free trade with a European economic union was made when the French Emperor Napoleon III “suddenly agreed, partly to strengthen relations with Britain, to a commercial treaty, negotiated secretly between Richard Cobden and the French free-trade economist Michel Chevalier and signed in January 1860. The treaty opened the French market to a range of British goods. It became the core of a short-lived European economic community, extended by other treaties to the whole of western and central Europe, with free movement of population, certain rights of citizenship and an

embryonic single currency, which became the Latin Currency Union. This was the apogee of the free traders’ vision, and Europe became for a time Britain’s main trading outlet.”663

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The late 1830s in England were characterized by a huge movement of protests, strikes and threats of violence. The Luddite movement was only one manifestation of this. The largest was Chartism, combining a variety of causes. The Chartists were so-called because they handed in a charter with 1.2 signatures to parliament, but it was rejected. Tempers flared, and there was one armed uprising, in Newport.

The result of increasing poverty for the great majority in the 1840s, according to the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, “was social revolution in the form of spontaneous risings of the urban and industrial poor”, which “made the revolution of 1848 on the continent, the vast Chartist movement in Britain. Nor was discontent confined to the labouring poor. Small and inadaptable businessmen, petty-bourgeois, special sections of the economy, were also the victims of the Industrial Revolution and of its ramifications. Simple-minded labourers reacted to the new system by smashing the machines which they thought responsible for their troubles; but a surprisingly large body of local businessmen and farmers sympathized profoundly with these Luddite activities of their labourers, because they too saw themselves as victims of a diabolical minority of selfish innovators. The exploitation of labour which kept its incomes at subsistence level, thus enabling the rich to accumulate the profits which financed industrialization (and their own ample comforts), antagonized the proletarian. However, another aspect of this diversion of national income from the poor to the rich, from consumption to investment, also antagonized the small entrepreneur. The great financiers, the tight community of home and foreign ‘fund-holders’ who received what all paid in taxes... - something like 8 per cent of the entire national income – were perhaps even more unpopular among small businessmen, farmers and the like than among labourers, for these knew enough about money and credit to feel a personal rage at their disadvantage. It was all very well for the rich, who could raise all the credit they needed, to clamp rigid deflation and monetary orthodoxy on the economy after the Napoleonic Wars; it was the little man who suffered, and who, in all countries and at all times in the nineteenth century demanded easy credit and financial unorthodoxy. Labour and the disgruntled petty-bourgeois on the verge of toppling over into the unproportioned abyss, therefore shared common discontents. These in turn united them in the mass movements of ‘radicalism’, ‘democracy’ or ‘republicanism’ of which the British Radicals, the French Republicans and the American Jacksonian Democrats were the most formidable between 1815 and 1848.”664

663 Tombs, op. cit., p. 571.
Violent collectivist reaction to the excesses of liberal individualism seemed inevitable. This was certainly the belief of a German factory-owner in Manchester, Friedrich Engels, who wrote in his *Condition of the English Working Classes*, written in 1844, but published in English only 1892: “The revolution must come; it is already too late to bring about a peaceful solution... The classes are divided more and more sharply, the spirit of resistance penetrates the workers, the guerrilla skirmishes become concentrated in more important battles, and soon a slight impulse will suffice to set the avalanche in motion.” Engels’ work made “Manchesterism” a term of abuse throughout Europe. Marx built on it to argue that the workers would not better their lot through helping themselves, and still less through receiving help from governments, churches or employers, but through revolution.

And yet the revolution did not take place in England. The Chartist movement was both large-scale and occasionally violent. But it did not develop into the proletarian revolution Engels and Marx anticipated.

In investigating why the revolution did not take place in England Tombs notes, first, “the fundamental economic and social fact [of] England’s population growth, faster than anywhere in Europe. It rose from 8.6 million in 1801 to 17 million in 1852 - an increase of 98 percent, with the highest ever recorded growth in 1811-21 (16 percent in a decade). Around 40 percent of this population was under fifteen, comparable with much of Africa today. The total urban population, already the highest in Europe, tripled during the first half of the century. London’s more than doubled, making it by far Europe’s biggest conurbation. In the 1820s alone, Manchester grew by 47 percent, West Bromwich by 60 percent, and Bradford by 78 percent. Average life expectancy at birth was 41.7 years in 1841 – also comparable with much of Africa in the 2000s. In the multiplying towns and among the poorest groups it was some ten years less than the national average... This corresponds to the darkest ‘Dickensian’ images – of ‘Coketown’ (1854), or the lawless and savage ‘Wodgate’ in Benjamin Disraeli’s novel *Sybil* (1845), where ‘swarming thousands lodged in the most miserable tenements in the most hideous burg in the ugliest country in the world.’ A French visitor thought that ‘if the people [of Birmingham] go to hell, they won’t find anything new.’

“Yet this revulsion missed as much as it saw. Critics seized on the worst conditions, not the typical: there were horrible slums, but the vast majority of the people did not live in slums, the most notorious of which, investigated and later photographed, were often very small - a few streets or houses. Working conditions in the new industries were horrifying by modern Western standards, but the deadliest trades were thoroughly traditional - file-making, chimney-sweeping and, worst of all, keeping a pub. Moreover, England was in a considerably better state than elsewhere. In 1820 GDP per head was some 50 percent higher than in western Europe as a whole. Infant mortality in 1839 was 151 per 1,000 in England (comparable with that of Afghanistan in 2010); but in France it was 160, in Belgium 185 and in southern Germany 285. An unprecedented Europe-wide cholera pandemic in 1831, spread by infected
drinking water, killed up to 7,000 in London – often taken as a symptom of the capital’s archaic and decentralized governance (it had thirty-eight local authorities); but the same disease killed over 18,000 in centrally administered Paris. Cholera came to seem the nemesis of the growing city. The worst pandemic of the century, in the mid-1850s, killed another 11,000 in London and 23,000 across Britain – but 130,000 died in France. London led the way during the 1850s in gradually improving public health, sewerage and drinking water in a joint effort by philanthropic campaigners, local government bodies such as the Metropolitan Board of Works (1855), and parliamentary legislation…

“Paternalistic Toryism campaigned in the 1830s for legislation to limit hours, improve factory conditions, and protect child and women workers. It was led by a strange but determined group including Richard Oastler (a Leeds linen merchant turned squire), his friend Michael Sadler (another Leeds linen merchant) and the philanthropic aristocrat Lord Ashley later 7th Earl of Shaftesbury. They had in common fervent Evangelical Anglicanism (opposing both slavery and Catholic emancipation) and were horrified by the moral and social effects of uncontrolled factory labour: ‘I heard their groans,’ wrote Oastler, ‘I watched their tears; I knew they relied on me.’ Parliament enacted down a watered-down Factory Act in 1833 and the principle of compulsory labour regulation was established. Utilitarians and liberals deplored what they considered ignorant and damaging attempts to shackle the labour market and pile costs on employers.

“Industrialists accused Tory paternalists – sometimes no doubt correctly – of being less solicitous about the farm labourers on great estates. It was also the case that Evangelical Tories were ultimately more concerned with souls than bodies, particularly those of women and children tempted by the drink, godlessness and sex supposedly inseparable from factories and mines…

“… Poor people themselves did not necessarily share the pessimism either of contemporary upper-class commentators or of later historians. The rural poor, especially young people underemployed in over-populated villages, found in towns and factories an escape from dependency, chronic poverty, and exclusion from adult life and marriage. However risky and accident prone, a move to town meant more regular work, money in their pockets, freedom, the chance of family life and/or amorous adventure, and exciting new social and cultural opportunities. Judging from their own writings, many working people felt not only that they were living in a rapidly changing world, but that it was changing for the better…”665

In any case, Engels’ analysis was not accurate. “He seized on slums in Manchester as ‘the classic type of a modern manufacturing town’ – although they were neither modern nor linked to manufacturing. He denounced as the ‘degradation’ of the new industrial ‘proletariat’ what was in fact the plight of a non-industrial, unskilled underclass, many of them newly arrived Irish

immigrants, who had no connection with factory work. Such slums in London, Liverpool and Manchester illustrated not industrialization but the problems of rapid urbanization without manufacturing industry – what England’s booming population might have suffered had it not been for the Industrial Revolution, and which was being suffered in the ancient teeming cities of eastern and southern Europe, from Palermo to Moscow. In contrast to Engels’s pessimism, an 1860s survey found 95 percent of houses in Hull and 72 percent in Manchester to be ‘comfortable’.”

Even if we accept that the working class was less miserable than previously thought, and that the problems were due more to very rapid population growth than industrialization as such, the fact remains that legislation was needed in order to protect the vast numbers of new workers pouring into the new industrial towns. And here it has to be admitted that the legislation in this period of “unrestrained capitalism” (Sir Karl Popper’s phrase) often only exacerbated the plight of the poor. This was especially true of the Poor Law Act of 1834, which prescribed the building of workhouses designed to be as unattractive as possible. Thus the Reverend H.H. Milman wrote to Edwin Chadwick: “The workhouses should be a place of hardship, of coarse fare, of degradation and humility; it should be administered with strictness – with severity; it should be as repulsive as is consistent with humanity.”

As Tombs writes, “The New Poor Act (1834) – which fired Dickens’s indignation in Oliver Twist (1837) – is the most notorious of the Utilitarian reforms, and that which most colours popular perceptions of the period. The Old Poor Law, dating from Elizabeth I, had developed into a unique welfare system... It had – or was believed to have – become increasingly unsustainable during the wary years: total spending had increased from about £2m in 1784 to £6m in 1815, when around 15 percent of the population were receiving aid. In fact, the cost was pretty stable as a share of growing GDP (which contemporaries could not know) – around 2 percent. However, the rise in population, wartime inflation and postwar economic fluctuations made the old system of local financing unviable, imposing an open-ended commitment on ratepayers: in one small Yorkshire town, Newburgh, the annual bill to thirteen ratepayers rose from £34 in 1817-18 to £130 in 1836-37. Foreign observers thought it dangerous to give the poor a legal entitlement to assistance and commonly made the elementary error of assuming that because there were more ‘paupers’ (i.e. benefit claimants) in England than in other countries, this meant that there were more poor people, and that the gulf between rich and poor was growing. Rather, it was because the Poor Law recognized relative deprivation: the richer society grew, the more the poor needed. So ‘the English poor almost rich to the French poor,’ observed the French liberal Alexis de Tocqueville. Paupers were quick to stand up for their rights by applying to Overseers of the Poor and, if dissatisfied, appealing to the magistrates: Tocqueville was scandalized to see old men, pregnant girls and unemployed labourers doing so unblushingly before the

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Justices of the Peace. This, he and many others thought, created a dependency culture that meant that ‘the number of illegitimate children and criminals grows rapidly and continuously, the indigent population is limitless, the spirit of foresight and saving becomes more and more alien to the poor,’ as truculent young men squandered their poor relief in the pub…

“Grey’s government appointed a Royal Commission, which proposed a uniform, transparent and impersonal system, aiming to eliminate fraudulent claims and what it considered excessive generosity without removing the legal right to assistance. The New Poor Law (1834) had many Benthamite features. It prescribed ratepayer-elected Boards of Guardians, professional administrators, a central supervisory commission and national dietary regulations. The key idea was a self-acting ‘test’ of genuine need: the traditional payments in cash or kind were forbidden (except in emergencies and for the sick); assistance was to be given only within workhouses offering a ‘less eligible’ existence than the lowest wages could provide. So these ‘Whig Bastilles’ were a deliberate deterrent, by monotonous (if usually ample) diet, unpleasant work and regimentation. The ‘respectable’ poor were humiliated by wearing uniforms, being mixed with the unrespectable, and having their families split up between different day-rooms and dormitories. The press quoted one old man as vowing that ‘as long as I can arne a sixpence anyhow, they shan’t part me from my wife.’ Entry into ‘the House’ was made a last desperate resort: thus, reported the Royal Commission on the Poor Law with evident satisfaction, ‘the line between those who do, and those who do not need relief is drawn, an drawn perfectly.’ Spending on poor relief dropped from £6.3m to £4m, and the percentage of the population aided from 10.2 to 5.4 percent. Only some Tories and Radicals objected. Disraeli said that the Act ‘disgraced the country’…

“Poor relief – previously a source of social cohesion – had been envenomed and many lives blighted by Utilitarian reforms that were harsh, unworkable and counter-productive, for in trying to prevent the pauperization and demoralization of the poor, the reformers had in truth pauperized and demoralized them far more. A shoemaker, Samuel Kydd, recalled that ‘reforms ‘did more to sour the hearts of the laboring population’ than material hardship, and to ‘sap the loyalty of the working men, to make them dislike the country of their birth.’ It did much to ignite arguably the greatest – if not the only – class war England has ever seen, the Chartist campaign…”

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

“Eric Hobsbawm captures the background, character and effects of the welfare reforms of the 1830s when he writes: ‘The traditional view, which still survived in a distorted way in all classes of rural society and in the internal relations of working-class groups, was that a man had a right to earn a living, and, if unable to do so, a right to be kept alive by the community. The view of middle-class liberal economists was that men should take such jobs as the market offered, wherever and at whatever rate it offered, and the rational man would, by individual or voluntary collective saving and insurance make provision for accident, illness and old age. The residuum of paupers could not, admittedly, be left actually to starve, but they ought not to be given more than the absolute minimum – provided it was less than the lowest wages offered in the market, and in the most discouraging conditions. The Poor Law was not so much intended to help the unfortunate as to stigmatize the self-confessed failures of society… There have been few more inhuman statutes than the Poor Law Act of 1834, which made all relief ‘less eligible’ than the lowest wage outside, confined it to the jail-like work-house, forcibly separating husbands, wives and children in order to punish the poor for their destitution.’

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

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

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

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

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

The most famous champion of the poor in this period was the novelist Charles Dickens, whose early novel *Oliver Twist* did much to publicize the horrors of child labour and the inhumanity of the factory-owners.

His *A Christmas Carol* (1843) was a moving exhortation to charity, a nineteenth-century version of the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. As John Broich writes, it “was an instant bestseller, followed by countless print, stage and screen productions. Victorians called it ‘a new gospel,’ and reading or watching it became a sacred ritual for many, without which the Christmas season cannot materialize.

“But *A Christmas Carol*’s seemingly timeless transcendence hides the fact that it was very much the product of a particular moment in history, its author meaning to weigh in on specific issues of the day. Dickens first conceived of his project as a pamphlet, which he planned on calling, ‘An Appeal to the People of England on behalf of the Poor Man’s Child.’ But in less than a week of thinking about it, he decided instead to embody his arguments in a story, with a main character of pitiable depth. So what might have been a polemic to harangue, instead became a story for which audiences hungered.”

Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* epitomized the industrial and retail bourgeoisie who formed the core of the new “middle class”. They were, as Eric Hobsbawm writes, “self-made men, or at least men of modest origins who owed little to birth, family or formal higher education. (Like Mr. Bounderly in Dickens’ *Hard Times*, they were not reluctant to advertise the fact.) They were rich and getting richer by the year. They were above all imbued with the ferocious and dynamic self-confidence of those whose own careers prove to them that divine providence, science and history have combined to present the earth to them on a platter.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even the Anglican Church, which hardly penetrated into the new industrial slums, seemed to be on the side of the exploiters. “A typical representative of this kind of Christianity was the High Church priest J. Townsend, author of A Dissertation on the Poor Laws, by a Wellwisher of Mankind, an extremely crude apologist for exploitation whom Marx exposed. ‘Hunger,’ Townsend begins his eulogy, ‘is not only a peaceable, silent, unremitted pressure but, as the most natural motive of industry and labour, it calls forth the most powerful exertions.’ In Townsend’s ‘Christian’ world order, everything depends (as Marx observes) upon making hunger permanent among the working class; and Townsend believes that this is indeed the divine purpose of the principle of the growth of population; for he goes on: ‘It seems to be a law of nature that the poor should be to a certain degree improvident, so that there may always be some to fulfil the most servile, the most sordid, the most ignoble offices in the community. The stock of human happiness is thereby much increased, whilst the more delicate… are left at liberty without interruption to pursue those callings which are suited to their various dispositions.’ And the ‘delicate priestly sycophant’, as Marx called him for this remark, adds that the Poor Law, by helping the hungry, ‘tends to destroy the harmony and beauty, the symmetry and order, of that system which God and nature have established in the world.”

With the official Church effectively on the side of the exploiters, it was left to “Christian socialists”, individual preachers and philanthropists, and, above all, novelists to elicit the milk of human kindness from the hard breasts of the rich. The realistic novel in the hands of great writers such as Dickens and Balzac acquired an importance it had not had in earlier ages, teaching morality without moralizing. Thus Mrs. Elisabeth Gaskell’s North and South not only brought home to readers in the rural south the sufferings of the industrial north: it also

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showed how the philosophy of Free Trade tended to drive out even the Christian practice of almsgiving. For the novel describes how the industrialist Thornton, though not a cruel man at heart, is against helping the starving families of his striking workers on the grounds that helping them would help prolong the strike, which, if successful, would force him out of business, which would mean unemployment and starvation for those same workers. But in the end he is led by the woman he loves to see how a thriving business and kindness to the workers can be combined…

Poverty, especially in the countryside, where most of the population continued to live, was an increasing problem throughout Europe in the nineteenth century. Gradual improvements in medicine meant that child mortality went down and the numbers of mouths to feed went up. Improved agricultural techniques, developed mainly in England, were slow in reaching those areas where they were most needed. Emancipation of the peasants went ahead throughout the continent; but it was a painful, disputatious and complex affair that did not translate immediately, if at all, into increased prosperity, and not infrequently led to peasant uprisings. Periodic famines, such as those of 1816-17 and the late 1840s, killed hundreds of thousands.

Evans writes: “In view of the Church’s inability to deal with the mounting problems of pauperism, secular voluntary associations across Europe were playing a growing role in poor relief. In Russia, where the institutions of civil society were weak in the extreme, it was not surprising that the most important of the voluntary poor-relief organizations, the Imperial Philanthropic Society, was founded in 1816 on the initiative of Tsar Alexander I, who supplied it with an annual grant to increase the income it received from membership fees and private donations. Branches opened in many cities, and the number of people it assisted increased from just over 4,000 in the 1820s to more than 25,000 in the early 1840s and nearly 38,000 in 1857. Some twenty new charitable societies were given licenses in Russia between 1826 and 1855. Typical was the house of industry opened in 1833 by Anatoly Nikolayevich Demidov (1813-70), the son of a rich industrialist, providing soup and work to the needy. On a visit to the main prison in St. Petersburg in 1837, Tsar Nicholas I was shocked to find beggars mingling with common criminals, and he set up a Supreme Committee for Differentiation and Care of Beggars in St. Petersburg, as well as a similar institution in Moscow. The Committee took beggars arrested by the police, sent those thought to be the deserving poor unable to work through no fault of their own to the Imperial Philanthropic Society, and referred the able-bodied to employers. Allegedly idle professional beggars were returned by the Committee to the police and then went on to labour colonies in Siberia, while those in temporary difficulty were helped out with funds or documents.

“The relative centralization of poor relief in Russia was unusual. In most parts of Europe it was localized.”

673 Evans, op. cit., p. 118.
In 1841 Lord Peel became Tory Prime Minister. It looked as if Tory Paternalism had triumphed over Whig Utilitarianism. But it was not to be – thanks to the Irish famine...
45. THE HUNGRY FORTIES AND THE IRISH FAMINE

“The Hungry Forties’ – a term invented retrospectively during the anti-protectionist campaign of the 1900s – saw a Europe-wide economic slump of extreme severity. Beginning in 1846, this was a combination of the last of the age-old dearths caused by harvest failures and the first great global financial panic. Rising prices, a rush to import food, government borrowing and interest rate increases burst a speculative bubble based on railway-building. This gave rise to an acute sense of change and crisis, inspiring both utopian hopes and a sense of dread, as mass hunger and unemployment precipitates in 1848 a bloody cycle of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary conflict across much of Europe. The 1840s were also the climax of agonized English self-examination, the decade of several of Dickens’s most popular works – including The Old Curiosity Shop (1840-41), Barnaby Rudge (1841), A Christmas Carol (1843), Dombey and Son (1848) and David Copperfield (1849-50); of Carlyle’s Chartism (1840), famously denouncing the ‘cash nexus’, and Past and Present (1843); of Disraeli’s Coningsby (1844) and Sybil (1845); Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre (1847); Charles Kingsley’s Yeast (1848); Thackeray’s Vanity Fair (1848) and Elizabeth Gaskell’s Mary Barton (1848); and impassioned poetry, including Thomas Hood’s ‘Song of the Shirt’, Elizabeth Barrett’s ‘The Cry of the Children’ and Tennyson’s ‘Locksley Hall’. Literature made metropolitan readers more aware of regional differences and problems, particularly those of the industrial north – though one reader declared that after reading the Brontës she would ‘rather visit the Red Indians than trust herself in Leeds’. The aim was to haunt readers’ imaginations and prick their consciences.

“Bad weather and the arrival of an unknown plant disease from America in 1845 began ‘an ecological catastrophe almost unparalleled in modern history’ by destroying potato crops. In 1846 wheat and rye harvests also failed from Spain to Prussia. Potatoes provided good and cheap nourishment across northern Europe, and the crop failures caused some 40,000-50,000 deaths in Belgium and similar numbers in Prussia. Far worse ensued in Ireland, whose population had risen to at least 8 million (compared with England’s 13 million) and which was more dependent on potatoes than anywhere else, consuming some 7 million tons per year. The Irish famine, during which nearly a million people died [according to other estimates, 1.1 million between 1845 and 1850] and as many emigrated [mainly to the United States], has left a dark stain on English history, because of the overall responsibility of predominantly English governments. The tragedy has been described as ‘genocide’, developing an accusation first put forward by Irish nationalists in the 1860s. It bred generations of hatred, not least among Irish Americans. The genocide accusation, which can be found today on websites and in pop songs and was approved in the 1990s for teaching in schools in parts of the United States, alleges not merely that English aid was inadequate, but that the government deliberately blocked aid and created an artificial famine by extorting vast quantities of food from Ireland to feed England.”

674 Tombs, op. cit., pp. 451-452.
Let us first listen to the case for the prosecution. Niall Ferguson writes: “It may have been *phytophthora infestans* that ruined the potatoes; but it was the dogmatic *laissez-faire* policies of Ireland’s British rulers that turned harvest failure into outright famine.”675

John Mitchel put the same point as follows in his *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps) 1860*: “The Almighty indeed sent the potato blight, but the English created the Famine.” “These words,” writes A.N. Wilson, “very understandably became the unshakeable conviction of the Irish, particularly those forced into exile by hunger. The tendency of modern historians is not so much to single out individuals for blame, such as Charles Edward Trevelyan, permanent head of the Treasury, as to point to the whole attitude of mind of the governing class and the, by modern standards, gross inequalities which were taken for granted. Almost any member of the governing class would have shared *some* of Trevelyan’s attitudes.

“But there is more to John Mitchel’s famous statement (one could almost call it a declaration of war) than mere rhetoric. Deeply ingrained with the immediate horrors of the famine was the overall structure of Irish agrarian society, which placed Irish land and wealth in the hands of English (or in effect English) aristocrats. It was the belief of a Liberal laissez-faire economist such as Lord John Russell that the hunger of Irish peasants was not the responsibility of government but of landowners. No more callous example of a political doctrine being pursued to the death – quite literally – exists in the annals of British history. But Lord John Russell’s government, when considering the Irish problem, were not envisaging some faraway island in which they had no personal concern. A quarter of the peers in the House of Lords had Irish interests...”676

Another factor contributing to English callousness was “No Popery”. English Protestantism had made a significant concession to Irish Catholicism in 1829, when, under the guidance of the Duke of Wellington (an Anglo-Irish landowner who also commanded many Irish soldiers in the Napoleonic wars), and under the pressure especially of the Catholic Member of Parliament for Co. Clare, Daniel O’Connell, the British government repealed the anti-Catholic legislation that had been in place since the Gunpowder Plot. And yet anti-Catholic feeling remained.

Thus, as Wilson writes, “there were plenty who saw [the famine] as ‘a special “mercy”, calling sinners both to evangelical truth and the Dismantling of all artificial obstacles to divinely-inspired spiritual and economic order’, as one pamphlet put it.”677

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676 Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
677 Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
In spite of such attitudes, there were English men and women who felt their consciences and contributed to the relief of the famine – Queen Victoria and Baron Rothschild among them. “Yet these overtures from the English side,” continues Wilson, “were undoubtedly made against a tide of prejudice and bitterness. The hordes of Irish poor crowding into English slums did not evoke pity – rather, fear and contempt. The Whiggish Liberal Manchester Guardian blamed the famine quite largely on the feckless Irish attitudes to agriculture, family, life in general. Small English farmers, said this self-righteous newspaper, don’t divide farms into four which are only sufficient to feed one family. (The economic necessities which forced the Irish to do this were conveniently overlooked by the Manchester Guardian: indeed economic weakness, in the Darwinian jungle, is the equivalent of sin.) Why weren’t the English starving? Because ‘they bring up their children in habits of frugality, which qualify them for earning their own living, and then send them forth into the world to look for employment’.

“We are decades away from any organized Irish Republican Movement. Nevertheless, in the midst of the famine unrest, we find innumerable ripe examples of British double standards where violence is in question. An Englishman protecting his grossly selfish way of life with a huge apparatus of police and military, prepared to gun down the starving, is maintaining law and order. An Irishman retaliating is a terrorist. John Bright, the Liberal Free Trader, hero of the campaign against the Corn Laws, blamed Irish idleness for their hunger – ‘I believe it would be found on inquiry, that the population of Ireland, as compared with that of England, do not work more than two days a week.’ The marked increase in homicides during the years 1846 and 1847 filled these English liberals with terror. There were 68 reported homicides in Ireland in 1846, 96 in 1847, 126 shootings in the latter year compared with 55 the year before. Rather than putting these in the contexts of hundreds of thousands of deaths annually by starvation, the textile manufacturer from Rochdale blames all the violence of these starving Celts on their innate idleness. ‘Wherever a people are not industrious and not employed, there is the greatest danger of crime and outrage. Ireland is idle, and therefore she starves; Ireland starves, and therefore she rebels.’

“Both halves of this sentence are factually wrong. Ireland most astonishingly did not rebel in, or immediately after, the famine years; and we have said enough to show that though there was poverty, extreme poverty, before 1845, many Irish families survived heroically on potatoes alone. The economic structure of a society in which they could afford a quarter or a half an acre of land on which to grow a spud while the Duke of Devonshire owned Lismore, Bolton (and half Yorkshire), Chatsworth (and ditto Derbyshire), the whole of Eastbourne and a huge palace in London was not of the Irish peasant’s making.

“By 1848/9 the attitude of Lord John Russell’s government had become Malthusian, not to say Darwinian, in the extreme. As always happens when famine takes hold, it was followed by disease. Cholera swept through Belfast
and Co. Mayo in 1848, spreading to other districts. In the workhouses, crowded to capacity, dysentery, fevers and ophthalmia were endemic – 13,812 cases of ophthalmia in 1849 rose to 27,200 in 1850. Clarendon and Trevelyan now used the euphemism of ‘natural causes’ to describe death by starvation. The gentle Platonist-Hegelian philosopher Benjamin Jowett once said, ‘I have always felt a certain horror of political economists, since I heard one of them say that he feared the famine of 1848 in Ireland would not kill more than a million people, and that would scarcely be enough to do much good.’ As so often Sydney Smith was right: ‘The moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned, the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, common prudence and common sense, and to act with the barbarity of tyrants and the fatuity of idiots.’

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And now the case for the defence, made by Robert Tombs: “When the blight was first reported to [Tory Prime Minister Lord] Peel in September 1845 – a potato merchant wrote warning him personally – he bought American maize for Ireland to feed 500,000 people for three months. In January 1846 he suspended the Corn Laws to allow untaxed imports. A Public Works (Ireland) bill was introduced to provide employment. But the early potato crop was good, and disguised the peril. Irish nationalists minimized the problem and rejected aid: ‘No begging appeals to Ireland… For who could make men and freemen of a nation so basely degraded?’ Peel’s fall in June 1846, after repealing the Corn Laws, brought in a Whig government under Lord John Russell, which has long been condemned for dogmatic adherence to free trade. The traditional villain of the piece is Charles Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, accused of dogmatism, racism and an Evangelical belief that the famine was the work of Providence. There is some truth in this, though Providentialist views were widespread, including in the Irish Catholic Church. The Whigs certainly believed in the beneficence of free trade, including exports from Ireland. They set up a public-works programme as a means of famine relief, though rejecting a large-scale plan of railway-building, aid to farmers and taxes on absentee landlords proposed by the Tory Lord George Bentinck. At the peak, over 700,000 people were being employed on public works – more than the total employment provided by Irish agriculture. But this was still insufficient. The potato crop failed disastrously again in 1846. Trevelyan wrote to a Catholic priest: ‘The famine is increasing; deaths become more frequent; and the prospect may well appal the heart’. In January 1847 the government began direct food distribution through soup kitchens, which by July fed 3 million people daily, but this was considered only possible for a few months, and was cut back when the next harvest came. Trevelyan declared that ‘Absolute famine still stares whole districts in the face,’ and appealed for ‘a great effort [of] human exertion’ – voluntary contributions from the English people. A leading nationalist paper replied: ‘We scorn, we repulse, we curse all English alms.’ The main collection in England, despite its own economic depression, raised £435,000 – the equivalent of over £100 million today – smaller contributions came from the empire and

678 Wilson, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
America. The British Relief Association, a charity, was helping to feed up to 200,000 children. Another £0.5m came from public funds, equal to a sixth of total state spending and ‘probably unprecedented in famine history’. Yet it was nowhere near enough. People continued to die in their thousands, mostly from untreatable epidemic diseases worsened by hunger, movement and overcrowding at soup kitchens and workhouses, where many doctors and clergy also died. Trevelyan and Russell doubtless believed that everything possible had been done, and that the only long-term remedies were migration and agricultural reform. Palmerston, Foreign Secretary and an Irish landlord, himself chartered ships to take his impoverished tenants to Canada and he supplied them with clothes and money.

“In the conditions of the time – when the United Kingdom was economically at about the level of Cameroon today – famine could not have been wholly prevented. It was immense in scale and duration: there was a total overall shortfall of some 50 million tons of potatoes. The food exported to England (a staple of the genocide accusation) accounted for only a fraction of what was needed to replace the potato and was ‘dwarfed’ by government purchases of maize. A measured judgement is that the Whig government ‘may have lacked foresight and generosity’ and ‘may have been guilty of underestimating the human problems,’ but it was ‘not guilty of either criminal negligence or of deliberate heartlessness’. At the time, there was no clear demand within Ireland for a different policy, and the disaster made Irish independence seem unfeasible. Yet British shortcomings, however they are judged, provided one of the pillars of Irish nationalism in future generations.

“Aid from England, however substantial, had limits. Public opinion blamed rapacious Irish landlords for the problem, especially when they evicted impoverished tenants (there the English agreed with Irish nationalists): hence a general determination that they should pay their share. In Russell’s words, ‘The owners of property in Ireland ought to feel the obligation of supporting the poor who have been born on their estates and have hitherto contributed to their yearly incomes. It is not just to expect the working classes of Great Britain should permanently support the burden.’ Prosperous Irish tenant farmers also inspired little sympathy, in the light of reports that they were ignoring the crisis and even profiting from it. It was also reported that aid was being siphoned off to buy arms, while nationalists continued to collect political funds from the population. There developed a certain ‘compassion fatigue’, aggravated by the hostile responses of Irish nationalists – ‘thank you for nothing is the Irish thanks for £10 million’. But racial prejudice does not seem to have been a significant barrier to aid, and policies in Ireland were the same as in Scotland, which was also suffering. Views for which English politicians were subsequently excoriated were shared by prominent Irish nationalists, one of whom, Justin McCarthy, a witness of the suffering, wrote later that ‘terrible as the immediate effects of the famine are, it is impossible for any friend of Ireland to say that, on the whole, it did not bring much good with it.’ There was a bitter irony in the polemic, at the time and since. English politicians insisted on the permanence of the Union, yet thought of Ireland as a semi-foreign country; Irish nationalists rejected the Union
and ‘appeals to England’, yet later accused the English of lack of solidarity. The real English responsibility lies in the dysfunctional aspects of Irish society, in large part due to its long and troubled hegemony.”

Whatever the final verdict on the role of the British in Ireland, the impact of the crisis was colossal. “Between 1848 and 1855,” writes Sir Richard Evans, “the island’s population fell from 8.5 to 6 million, and while much of the decline at the beginning of the period can be ascribed to the famine, the continuing fall, to under 4.5 million by the census of 1921, was almost entirely due to emigration. More than 700,000 had arrived on the British mainland by 1861, over 200,000 went to Canada and 289,000 left for Australia (many of them to join the gold rushes of the 1860s). But the bulk of the migrants found their way to the United States – more than three million in all between 1848 and 1921. By 1900 there were more Irish-born men and women living in the USA than in Ireland itself…”

Ireland was England’s first colony, the beginning of what John Dee in about 1580 had called “the British Empire”. If it had remained her only colony, then as a consequence of the Irish famine, not to mention earlier troubles, the British Empire would have to be deemed an unequivocal failure…

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“The Irish crisis,” continues Tombs, “had caused Peel to suspend grain tariffs as an emergency measure, and he then abolished the Corn Laws formally in January 1846 against the will of his own party. Passage through the Commons took thirty-two nights of angry debate, among the most dramatic in parliamentary history. The leading protectionist spokesmen were Lord George Bentinck, who obliquely accused Peel of ‘double-dealing with the farmers of England... deceiving our friends, betraying our constituents,’ and Benjamin Disraeli, who claimed to speak for ‘the cause of labour – the cause of the people – the cause of England!’ The Conservative party was split: two thirds voted against Peel, typically those representing the counties and smaller boroughs, and holding local office as JPs, lords lieutenant and sheriffs; they agreed with Disraeli that agriculture provided ‘the revenues of the Church, the administration of justice, and the estate of the poor’. Liberals and Radicals voted overwhelmingly – 95 percent – for repeal. Soon after, Peel was defeated on a secondary issue, and his career was over. In his resignation speech he said that the working class would have ‘abundant and untaxed food… no longer leavened by a sense of injustice’. His followers, including young disciples such as William Ewan Gladstone, gravitated to the Liberals. He died in 1850, after falling from a horse. Factories closed as crowds of working class people gathered to mourn. He was surely the most popular Conservative leader of all time with urban workers: 400,000 contributed a penny each for a memorial fund to buy books for working men’s clubs and libraries. He did much to convince them that the established order was not their enemy.

680 Evans, op. cit., p. 347.
The repeal of the Corn Laws had little economic effect for a generation. But it had immense political and moral effect. It shattered the Conservative party and brought political divisions into private life to an unusual degree: for example, the Duke of Newcastle used all his influence to bring about his Peelite son’s election defeat, and was only reconciled with him on his deathbed. More than material interests were at stake: there is no obvious correlation between Tory MPs’ vote on repeal and their personal sources of income. Bentinck declared that repeal would save him £1,500 a year: ‘I don’t care that: what I cannot bear is being sold.’ Disraeli’s stance if usually dismissed as opportunistic – the accusation of his political opponents, aggravated by snobbery and anti-Semitism, and repeated by historians afraid of being branded naïve. In reality, he was a romantic English nationalist, a consistent supporter of protection against the cost-cutting commercialism of the ‘Manchester School’. He also believed that Peel’s betrayal of electoral commitments undermined the party system on which politics depended.

Symbolically, and in the long term really, the end of the Corn Laws marked the end of a governing order and a set of political ideas. These ideas were of England as primarily an agricultural country, feeding itself, and governed by a paternalistic landed elite – the vision of Burke, Wordsworth and Coleridge. But by 1846 more than half the population lived in towns, and more people had worked in manufacturing than in farming since the 1820s. The new urban mechanistic ideologies of Utilitarianism, political economy and free trade became the norm. All their opponents – from Tories to socialist Owenites – had lost the argument…”

**47. THE 1848 REVOLUTION: (1) ITALY**

In his early work, *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx declared: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world. Our business is to change it." His chance to change the world came in 1848, with the simultaneous publication of his most famous work, *The Communist Manifesto*, and the first European-wide revolution. This revolution began in Italy and spread with remarkable speed through all the major states of Continental Europe to the borders of the Russian Empire.

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

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

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L.A. Tikhomirov writes: “Revolutionary agitation between the years 1830 and 1848 was carried out mainly by the Carbonari and various ‘Young Germanies’, ‘Young Italies’, etc. In the Masonic world before 1848 something powerful, similar to 1789, was being planned, and preparations for the revolution went ahead strongly in all countries. In 1847 a big Masonic convention was convened in Strasbourg from deputies elected at several small conventions convened earlier… At the convention it was decided to ‘masonize’ the Swiss cantons and then produce a revolutionary explosion at the same time throughout Europe. As we know, movement did in fact follow, with a difference of several months, in a whole series of countries: Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Milan, Parma, Venice, etc. Reformist ‘banquets’ laying the beginning of the revolution in Paris were organized by the directors of the Masonic lodges…” 683

“In January 1848,” writes Simon Jenkins, “Milan rebelled against its Austrian government and set up a provisional regime. The king of Piedmont and Sardinia, Charles Albert, came out in support and declared war on Austria. In Rome a new pope, Pius IX (1846-78) greeted anti-Austrian crowds with the cry: ‘God bless Italy’. He liberated Rome’s Jews from their ghetto. On cue, Sicily declared its independence of Bourbon Naples, and a rare Venetian revolutionary, Daniele Manin, declared that city’s independence of the Austrians. Gradually, as in 1830, uprisings spread across the continent…” 684

However, the counter-revolution proved stronger than the revolution – across the continent. Italy before 1848 was still little more than "a geographical expression", in Metternich's phrase; and, as the Tuscan radical, Giuseppe Montanelli, said, "there was no unity of direction; therefore there was no national government. We fought as Piedmontese, as Tuscanans, as Neapolitans, as Romans, not as Italians." Thus when the Austrians counter-attacked against revolutionary Milan and Venice, many of their soldiers were poor Italians who distrusted the urban revolutionaries. Again, the Bourbon King of the Two Sicilies Ferdinand II found allies amongst the Neapolitan poor. 685

In March, 1849 the Austrians defeated the Piedmontese King Charles Albert. In April, they invaded Tuscany and restored Grand Duke Leopold to the throne.

Only Rome now remained. Now Rome was the most reactionary of all the monarchies of Europe. Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh write: "Writing in the 1850s, an historian and Catholic apologist described the Papal States of the immediate post-Napoleonic period as 'a benevolent autocracy'. Between 1823 and 1846, some 200,000 people in this 'benevolent autocracy' were consigned to the galleys, banished into exile, sentenced to life imprisonment or to death. Torture by the Inquisitors of the Holy Office was routinely practised. Every community, whether small rural village or major city, maintained a permanent

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685 Almond, op. cit., pp. 103, 104.
gallows in its central square. Repression was rampant and surveillance constant, with Papal spies lurking everywhere. Meetings of more than three people were officially banned. Railways were banned because Pope Gregory XVI believed they might 'work harm to religion'. Newspapers were also banned. According to a decree of Pope Pius VIII, anyone possessing a book written by a heretic was to be considered a heretic himself. Anyone overhearing criticism of the Holy Office and not reporting it to the authorities was deemed as guilty as the critic. For reading a book on the Index, or for eating meat on Friday, one could be imprisoned."\(^{686}\)

The new pope who came to power in 1846, Pius IX, began his reign, as we have seen, with the reputation of a reformer. He was sympathetic to at least some form of Italian unification and nationalism. He envisioned himself, in his capacity of pontiff, serving as a divinely ordained conduit and instrument for Italy's rebirth. He dreamed of presiding over a confederation of Italian states. He even elicited hopeful appeals for support from Mazzini and Garibaldi, who in their naivety fancied they might find a new ally in the Church.

But, as Baigent and Leigh write: "Whatever illusions Pius may initially have fostered, they quickly evaporated, along with his popularity. It soon became apparent that the Italy the Pope had in mind bore little relation to any constitutional state. In 1848, he doggedly refused to lend his support to a rebellious military campaign against Austrian domination of the north. His studied neutrality was perceived as a craven betrayal, and the resulting violent backlash obliged him to flee Rome in ignominious disguise, as a priest in the carriage of the Bavarian ambassador."\(^{687}\)

"The Pope’s flight," writes Evans, "led to the proclamation of the Roman Republic, in which Mazzini, elected an honorary citizen by a unanimous vote of the democratic Assembly, played the leading role. Mazzini proved to be an unexpectedly competent administrator, winning general approval for his modest way of life, his probity and his effectiveness. He closed down the Inquisition and made over its premises for the accommodation of the poor, scrapped the censorship and abolished the death penalty, introduced public courts run by lay judges, set up a progressive taxation system and introduced religious toleration. His commissioner in Ancona, a town on the Adriatic coast of the Papal States, Felice Orsini (1819-58), a former carbonaro, restored order in the midst of a crime wave. The American writer Margaret Fuller (1810-50), visiting Rome at the time, called Mazzini ‘a man of genius, an elevated thinker’ and compared him to Julius Caesar.

"However, the Pope’s appeal to the international community, now led again by the resurgent monarchies of Europe, did not fall on deaf ears. Surprisingly, perhaps, it was the French who responded..."\(^{688}\)


\(^{687}\) Baigent and Leigh, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

The explanation was as follows... In December, 1848 Louis Napoleon had been elected “Prince-President” of the French Second Republic. He “was aware of the need to win over conservatives and monarchists in France to his support, as well as to turn popular hostility to Austria to his own advantage. A French expedition to Rome to restore the Pope to his throne would win Catholic support in France and satisfy liberals and leftists by pre-empting the Austrian threat to do the same. In March 1849 the Assembly approved the sending of an expedition, and on 24 April, 6,000 French troops led by Charles Oudinot (1791-1863), who had fought with the first Napoleon from 1809 to 1814, landed on the Italian coast and moved towards Rome. Mazzini had been joined in Rome by Garibaldi, who had come back from exile in South America the previous August and taken part with his band of 500 volunteers in the fighting in northern Italy. Mazzini put him in charge of military affairs in Rome. Eight thousand troops of the Roman Republic surprised the French on 30 April and drove them back with heavy losses in a fierce bayonet charge, led by Garibaldi himself brandishing a sabre. Further republican victories followed against a Neapolitan army approaching from the south. Louis-Napoleon knew that the humiliation of Oudinot’s defeat had to be avenged if he was to continue to associate himself plausibly with the military legend of his uncle. Oudinot moved heavy artillery up to the heights around the Eternal City and began a systematic bombardment.

“On 3-4 June an assault on Italian positions allowed the French to move further forward, and by 22 June they had captured the outer walls of the city. With their ceaseless cannonades causing huge destruction and loss of life, the French entered the city on the night of 29-30 June, beating back Garibaldi’s volunteers, who had now begun to wear the red shirts that later made them famous. Recognizing defeat, Garibaldi told Mazzini the game was up. The veteran revolutionary left for renewed exile in Switzerland, while Garibaldi led his volunteers out of Rome on an epic march across the mountains towards Venice, during which his wife Anita died and most of his followers were captured by the Austrians... Garibaldi himself managed to make his way to the coast and sail to the Americas, where he eeked out a living in a variety of countries over the next few years.”

In 1850, Pius was restored to his throne. “His political position, however, now made no concessions of any kind to liberalism or reform; and the regime he established in his own domains was to become increasingly hated.” He “disregarded Louis-Napoleon’s advice to respect the liberties of his subjects, re-established the Inquisition, forced the Jews back into the old ghetto, and refused to amnesty the majority of the Republic’s officials.”

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689 Evans, op. cit., pp. 216-217.
690 Baigent and Leigh, op. cit., p. 197.
691 Evans, op. cit., p. 217.
In August the Venetians surrendered to the Austrian Count Radetsky, and the Italian revolution was over. Mazzini's slogan, *Italia farà da sé* (Italy will do it alone), had failed – for the time being.
“Citizen-King” Louis Philippe’s attempt to create a compromise between the principles of monarchy and revolution collapsed in February, 1848, when he abdicated and fled with his queen to England (disguised as Mr. and Mrs. Smith). At this, “the Masonic lodge loudly expressed its joy. On March 10, 1848 the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite welcomed the Provisional government. On March 24 a delegation of the Grand Orient also welcomed the Provisional government and was received by two ministers, Crémieux and Garnier-Pagès… who came out in their Masonic regalia.”692

However, the Provisional Government of the Second Republic, which included a worker in its ranks, Albert Martin, did not last long: the elections to the Constituent Assembly, now on the basis of universal male suffrage, returned a massive monarchist majority. Many of the liberal bourgeoisie, fearing social revolution, voted for the right693, as did the property-owning peasantry. What seems to have happened is that the Masons underwent a change of heart in the middle of the revolution, and decided, out of fear or for some other reason, not to allow it to proceed to its logical conclusion. For during the bloody “June days”, they switched sides, supporting the government of General Cavaignac against the workers in the streets. Thus on June 27, writes Jasper Ridley, the historian of Masonry, “the day after the revolutionaries had been defeated, the Grand Orient issued a statement supporting Cavaignac.”694 Perhaps it was the spectre of communism as set out in The Communist Manifesto that had set the Masons thinking. In any case, the consequences were profound. As the new government arrested revolutionary leaders, clawed back some of the concessions of February and abolished national workshops, the urban poor rose in rebellion against the republic they had helped to create.

This rebellion was put down with much bloodshed; some 13,000 rioters and police were killed. “The ‘June Days’,” writes Jenkins, “became a metaphor for bourgeois treachery against revolution. The composer Hector Berlioz noted that the statue of Liberty on the Bastille column had a stray bullet hole in her breast.

“The spectacle of the French republic killing its own devastated the revolutionary cause. In December 1848 elections were held for a new president of France. One candidate was the exiled pretender to Napoleon’s crown, his nephew Louis Bonaparte. Dismissed as a charlatan and even a cretin, he had been living incognito in London, where he served as a constable during the Chartists’ rally. All Bonapartes were supposedly banned from France. However,

692 Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 464.
693 As predicted by Count Cavour, the future architect of a united Italy, in 1846: “If the social order were to be genuinely menaced, if the great principles on which it rests were to be at serious risk, then many of the most determined oppositionists, the most enthusiastic republicans would be, we are convinced, the first to join the ranks of the conservative party” (in Hobsbawm, The Age of Capital, p. 28).
Louis’s appearance in Paris caused a sensation. The sheer celebrity of his name won him over five million votes and the presidency.”

Again, Masonry played a part. Ridley writes: "On 10 December 1848 the election was held for the new President of the Republic. The Freemasons' journal, Le Franc-Maçon, called on its readers to vote for [the poet] Lamartine [though he was not a Mason], because he believed in 'the sacred words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'; but Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (who would later become the Emperor Napoleon III) was elected by a very large majority; he defeated Cavaignac, Ledru-Rollin, the Socialist François Raspail, and Lamartine, receiving 75 per cent of the votes cast, and coming top of the poll in all except four of the eighty-five departments of France. He was the son of Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, and in his youth had been involved in the revolutionary movement in Italy in 1831. It has been suggested that he joined the Carbonari and the Freemasons in Italy, but this cannot be proved. He afterwards tried twice to make a revolution against Louis Philippe, and on the second occasion was sentenced to life imprisonment in the fortress at Ham near St Quentin in northeastern France; but he made a sensational escape, took refuge in England, and returned to Paris to his electoral triumph in 1848.

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

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

695 Jenkins, op. cit., p. 213. “The emperor's only son - 'Napoleon II', 'The Eaglet' - had died young in Austria. Louis-Napoleon was his political heir. Until 1848 his career had been a bad joke. He made absurd attempts in 1836 and 1840 to seize power, was imprisoned, escaped, and lived as a man-about-town in London. After the revolution, he returned to France and found himself a political celebrity. When he announced his candidature to be the first elected president of the republic, it soon became clear that he would win by a landslide; and in December 1848 he duly did.”(Robert and Isabelle Tombs, My Sweet Enemy, London: Pimlico, 2007, p. 349)

Napoleon III took full advantage of his famous name. “My name is a programme in itself”, he said. “He had created an image of concern for social problems. The political alternatives - republican, royalist, socialist - had all made themselves unpopular. He attracted support for different, even contradictory, reasons: he would both prevent further revolution and stop royalist counter-revolution; he would both help the poor and restore business confidence; he would both make France great and keep the peace. However, the new constitution allowed presidents to serve for only one four-year term, which was not enough for a Bonaparte. To stay in power he carried out a coup d'état on 2 December 1851, which involved brief fighting in Paris and a major insurrection in the provinces. A plebiscite gave him overwhelming popular support; but it was never forgotten that he had shed French blood and transported thousands to penal colonies.”

When, in addition to this, Napoleon, in order to win the Catholic vote, sent his troops to crush the Roman republic under Mazzini, it must have seemed that the Masons would now, at last, turn against him. And indeed, when he established his dictatorship on December 2, 1851, "there was an attempt at resistance in Paris next day, led by the deputy Baudin, a Freemason." But Baudin was shot on the barricade; and when Napoleon held a plebiscite on whether he should continue as President for ten years, the Grand Orient called on all Masons to vote for him. And on October 15, 1852, the Masons addressed Napoleon and said: "Guarantee the happiness of us all and put the emperor's crown on your noble head".

Why did the Masons support the man who crushed Mazzini’s Roman republic? Some light is cast on this mystery by Tikhomirov: "Soon after the coup of 1851 (more precisely: on February 7, 1852), Michelet wrote to Deschampes: 'By this time a great convention of the heads of the European societies had taken place in Paris, where they discussed France. Only three members (whose leader was Mazzini) demanded a democratic republic. A huge majority thought that a dictatorship would better serve the work of the revolution - and the empire was decreed 'sur les promesses formelles' (on the basis of the formal promises) of Louis Napoleon to give all the forces of France to the services of Masonry. All the people of the revolution applied themselves to the success of the state coup. Narvaets, who was in obedience to Palmerston [British Prime Minister in 1855-1858 and from 1859], even loaned Louis Napoleon 500,000 francs not long before December 2.'

"If Napoleon III really gave 'formal promises', then this could refer only to the unification of Italy, and consequently, to the fate of the Pope's secular dominion… In general Masonry protected Napoleon III. At any rate Palmerston, who had,

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697 Tombs and Tombs, op. cit., p. 350.
698 Alexander Selyanin, Tajnaia sila masonstva (The Secret Power of Masonry), St. Petersburg, 1911, p. 82.
699 However, in spite of the Masons' support for Napoleon III, the Freemason Benito Juarez, president of Mexico from 1861 to 1872, succeeded in driving out the French occupation under the
as they affirm, been the highest leader of European Masonry (the Orient of Orients), supported Napoleon with all his strength, and, perhaps, would not have allowed his fall, if he had not died five years before the Franco-Prussian War."\textsuperscript{700}

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

The pattern of events in France between 1848 and 1851 was remarkably similar to that of the First French Revolution and Empire under Napoleon the First: constitutional monarchy, followed by revolution, followed by one-man dictatorship. As Alfonse Karr wrote in \textit{Le Figaro}, "\textit{plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose}."\textsuperscript{701}

However, one thing radically distinguished 1848 from 1789: the fact that the monarchical principle was now much weaker. Thus in January, 1848 De Tocqueville declared: "The old monarchy [of Louis XVI] was stronger than you, because of its [hereditary] origin; it had better support than you from ancient practices, old customs, ancient beliefs; it was stronger than you, and yet it fell into the dust. Can you not feel - how shall I put it? - the wind of revolution in the air?\textsuperscript{702} These new, democratic winds could hardly fail to be felt when, as a result of it, many thousands of "Poles, Danes, Germans, Italians, Magyars, Czechs and Slovaks, Croats, and Romanians rose up in arms, claiming the right of self government."

But it was above all the use by Napoleon III of the plebiscite that demonstrated that Europe had entered a new age, the age of the nation-state, in which the \textit{demos} was truly king. For, as Philip Bobbitt writes, "when Louis Napoleon resorted to the plebiscite, he first used it to legitimate a new constitution, and later in 1852 in order to confer the title of emperor and to make this title hereditary. [But] the use of the national referendum to determine the constitutional status of a state is more than anything else the watermark of the nation-state. For on what basis other than popular sovereignty and nationalism can the mere vote of a people legitimate its relations with others? It is one thing to suppose that a vote of the people legitimates a particular policy or ruler; this implies that, within a state, the people of that state have a say in the political

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\textsuperscript{700} Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 465.
\textsuperscript{702} De-Tocqueville, in Almond, op. cit., p. 98.
direction of the state. It is something else altogether to say that vote of the people legitimates a state within the society of states. That conclusion depends on not simply a role for self-government, but a right of self-government. It is the right of which Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg.\(^{703}\)

There was another important factor that distinguished 1848 from 1789: the publication, early in the year, of *The Communist Manifesto*, which provided a more radical and quasi-intellectual support for the revolution in the form of the theory that took its name from its founder, Marx. In the end, the theory played little direct role in the events of 1848-49; it was still too little-known and too extreme for the majority even of leftists. However, the threat of Communism, the spectre of a truly radical social upheaval hanging over the whole of Europe, probably played an important part in stiffening the right-wing reaction that eventually crushed the revolution…

In March, 1848, the Chancellor of the Habsburg Empire, Metternich, resigned following revolutionary protests against government corruption, and went into exile in England. This was a hugely symbolic event since Metternich had been the main force behind European anti-liberalism since 1815. This was followed by disturbances in many states of the German Federation, where constitutions were granted with full parliamentary rights.

In Berlin 300 rioters were killed by police. Jenkins write: “This so dismayed the king, Frederick Wilhelm IV (1840-61), that he publicly begged forgiveness of his citizenry [and withdrew his troops from the capital]. To the horror of his generals, he pledged constitutional reform and freedom of speech, assembly and the press. More significantly, he pledged his support for radical calls for German unification. He announced a parliament, or Reichstag, for all German people, to meet at the old confederacy headquarters in Frankfurt.”

In May an all-German preparatory parliament (Vorparlament) convened in Frankfurt. But there were arguments over what kind of constitution a united Germany should have, whether a single unitary German republic should be created or not, and whether it should be a "great Germany" with Austria or a "little Germany" without it. And then there was the problem of what to do with non-German national minorities. The parliament ignored the demands of the Prussian Poles for national self-determination; and the Czechs, among other national minorities, "saw the [Austro-Hungarian] Empire as a less unattractive solution than absorption by some expansionist nationalism such as the Germans' or the Magyars'. 'If Austria did not already exist,' Professor Palacky, the Czech spokesman, is supposed to have said, 'it would be necessary to invent it.'\

"At its first session," writes Jenkins, "the parliament invited Prussia’s Frederick William to become its constitutional monarch. He declined, worried both over the intrusion on the autonomy of the German state and over the likely reaction of Vienna and St. Petersburg. By early 1849 scepticism towards the parliament was growing across Germany and members were failing to attend. But summer it was inquorate and collapsed. Engels dismissed it as ‘a mere debating club, an accumulation of gullible wretches’.

“Frederick William was right on one score. Russia’s reactionary tsar, Nicholas, had no interest in the growth of a liberal-minded, let alone democratic, German state, any more than did Austria. In November 1850 the tsar forced on Frederick William he bizarrely entitled ‘humiliation of Olmütz’. His German initiative was declared dead.”

704 Jenkins, op. cit., p. 211.
In truth, the tide had began to turn against the revolution long before the tsar’s intervention. As Evans writes, “The recovery of nerve by the Habsburg Monarchy and the reconquest of Vienna and Prague in the summer and autumn of 1848 had profoundly negative effects on the prospects of German unification. On 10 December the Frankfurt Parliament, after many months of discussion, finally promulgated the Basic Rights of the German People, guaranteeing all the liberal freedoms, secularizing marriage, abolishing aristocratic titles and privileges, introducing trial by jury in open court, and abolishing the death penalty. Yet these would prove impossible to enforce. Since Austria and Bohemia had definitely rejected inclusion in a unitary German nation state, the Parliament was left with no choice but to go for a smaller Germany, with the King of Prussia as hereditary sovereign, able to delay legislation but not reject it. Sufficient numbers of democrats were persuaded to support the idea with the inclusion of the vote for all men over the age of twenty-five in the Constitution, which narrowly passed on 27 March 1849. Twenty-eight German states adopted the Constitution, including Prussia, where the newly elected, largely liberal Parliament endorsed it on 21 April. Immediately, however, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who referred to the imperial crown as a ‘dog-collar with which people want to chain me to the 1848 Revolution’, dissolved the Parliament, shortly afterwards declaring that he would never accept an office given him by election rather than Divine Right. This severely undermined the political position of the moderate constitutionalists and played into the hands of the radical democrats and republicans, who now seized the initiative. However, it was striking that they were able to do so only in relatively peripheral regions of Germany, in Saxony and the Rhineland.”

The last stand of the radicals took place in May, 1849 in Dresden, the capital of Saxony, where the rebels were crushed by the King’s troops. 2000 survivors – who included the composer Richard Wagner and the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin – fled to Switzerland. The revolution was over…

As we have seen, Napoleon’s victories over the German armies before 1813, and the continued dividedness of the German lands after 1815, had fostered in the German people a powerful feeling of wounded pride, "some form of collective humiliation" in Sir Isaiah's Berlin's phrase.708 This feeling, which was felt especially in relation to France, but also in relation to other great powers, was to be one of the great driving forces of European history until the destruction of the Third Reich in 1945. German philosophers such as Fichte and Hegel, and German historians such as Leopold von Ranke, built on the writings of Herder in the eighteenth century to proclaim a mysterious essence of Germanness. Thus von Ranke wrote in 1836 "that the fatherland 'is with us, in us'. And as 'a mysterious something that informs the lowest among us' the idea of the nation 'precedes any form of government and animates and permeates all its forms'.709

Again, E.M. Arndt (1769-1860) redefined “freedom” as, in the words of George L. Mosse, "the right to integrate one's self with the tradition and customs of one's own people. The innocent and just against whom no force must be used are those who desire to live in that way. In Arndt's mind these were the Prussians opposed to Napoleon. What is rejected from the 'religion' of liberty is its cosmopolitanism based on the view of a natural law which makes the goal of freedom the same all over the world. This emphasis upon freedom as circumscribed by national customs and traditions contrasts with the liberal ideas of men like Cobden and Bright in England. For them liberty was the same in all nations, a moral imperative which transcended nationalism and was indeed hostile to it."

Arndt foreshadowed the future, the rise of what in Germany would be called “national liberalism”, the increasing stress upon the historic nation rather than upon the universality of freedom...

As George L. Mosse writes: "The revolution of 1848 seemed to give liberalism another chance. But at the high tide of the revolution, the Frankfurt Parliament, the revolution's nationalist impetus became as evident as its liberal framework. From Frankfurt's Church of Saint Paul, where the Parliament sat, came a declaration of the rights of the German people which enumerated all the principles of the religion of liberty: individual freedom under the law, freedom of belief, the abolition of all entrenched privileges, the inviolability of private property and, finally, the call for a constitution. But what was missing from this declaration is equally significant. The principle that 'he who governs best governs least' was never apparent. Instead, the declaration insisted that military service was the paramount duty of the citizen; no citizen could be allowed exemption from duty to the state on the grounds of conscience.

"The fact that true revolutionaries of 1848 had to resolve the question of nationalism as well as that of freedom produced a change in liberal thought, a change which was foreshadowed by Arndt. The men of 1848 desired liberty - a liberty, however, that rested upon a national base. The revolution failed and a second chance was lost. Its manner of failure further influenced the construction of a national liberalism. The common explanation of this failure has been that the Parliament at Frankfurt talked too much and acted too little. By drawing out their proceedings, the explanation runs, the Parliament gave the territorial rulers ample time to gain back their lost power. But the story involved more than a simple delight in speechifying. There was in this Parliament a minority whose ideas on reform far exceeded those of the majority. They were Republicans, revolutionaries of the left. Encouraged by some local successes, especially in the state of Baden, these men were allied with the Socialists; Karl Marx looked to their successes with hope. In Parliament they filibustered. The Liberals were thus caught between the left and the reaction.

710 “Over its chamber towered a painting of a mythical Germania, holding an ominously large sword and a very small olive branch” (Jenkins, op. cit., p. 214). (V.M.)
"It was the left they feared more than the right even from the beginning of the revolution. Like Liberals all over Europe, they believed that wealth was an open road to be trod by talent and morality in tandem - but they were equally keen to close that road to the challenge of popular democracy. The famous Frankfurt Parliament was not elected by a universal franchise but by restrictive electoral practices which excluded the lower classes from the vote, just as in England parliamentary reform had erected the barrier of a high property qualification for voting. In Germany as in England the lower classes protested. The Chartists and the radical Republicans, as they were called in Germany, tried to establish universal suffrage. Both failed. But where in England the Chartist agitation, though peaceful, accomplished nothing, in Germany the radicals did capture momentary control of some regions. In Baden, for example, their attempted reforms were later called by their adversaries the 'red terror'.

"Though this radicalism was only a small factor in the revolution itself, it was to have a great effect on the future of German liberalism. The middle classes were driven still further into the arms of the state. They now feared a 'red terror' and sought, above all, stability, those national roots, which contemporaries had already held up as desirable goals. Within a few years after the event one leading Liberal could characterize 1848 as the 'idiotic revolution'. German liberalism took on aspects which would have been unthinkable in England or France. A man like the writer Gustav Freytag, regarded as a leading Liberal by both contemporary and future generations of German Liberals, could combine ideas of constitutionalism with racial stereotypes. For him rootedness in the nation was an essential prerequisite for any kind of liberty. Those who preserved any custom or religion alien to the deep roots of the German past were enemies of the German people. National liberalism was unable to fight authoritarian encroachments on individual freedom, as did English and French liberalism. Nationalism swamped the religion of liberty in Germany…"711

As we have seen, the revolution in Vienna caused Metternich to resign and flee. However, the conservatives in control of the army soon regained control, and set about restoring order in other parts of the multi-national empire. But half of the empire was controlled by Hungary, and it was the Hungarian revolution that came the nearest to success.

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

Misha Glenny explains what happened: "The initiative to appoint Jelačić [as Imperial Ban or Viceroy of Croatia] had originated in a petition to the [Austrian] Kaiser, signed jointly by representatives of Croatia’s gentry and its aristocracy. They had been prompted to do so by the vigorous rebellion that swept through Croatia and Slavonia in March 1848. They saw Jelačić as a guarantor both of greater autonomy and of law and order against a restless peasantry, potentially the most powerful revolutionary force in Croatia in 1848. His appointment was also the first move in a complicated game played by the court in Vienna to set Hungarian and Croatian nationalism against each other. The resulting collision played a key role in the defeat of revolution in the Empire.”

The Hungarian liberal revolutionaries led by Lajos Kossuth were prepared to make compromises with the Austrian monarchy (which it promised to recognize as their own), and with the Magyar peasantry (who were pacified by a land reform). But they were determined not to negotiate with the Slavic national minorities, Croat, Slovak, Slovene and Serb. And after they had proclaimed the

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union of Hungary with Transylvania, they also came into conflict with the Romanians of Transylvania.

An important role here was played by the Serbs of Novi Sad, who were much wealthier and savvier than their Free Serb brothers across the Danube. In March they "presented a petition to the Hungarian government, demanding the restoration of autonomy for the Orthodox Church and the recognition of Serbian as a state language. In exchange, the Serbs said they would back the Hungarian struggle against Vienna. Kossuth dismissed their demands with a brusque warning that 'only the sword would decide the matter'. In doing so he sealed the unspoken alliance between Serbs and Croats - the 'one-blooded nation with two faiths' - and, as a result, the fate of the Hungarian revolution. "On 2 April, a Serb delegation in Vienna appealed for the unification of the Banat and Bačka (two provinces within Vojvodina) with Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia. With the approval of Serbia's Prince Alexander Karadjordjević, who had come to power in 1842, and Ilija Garašanin in Belgrade, Serb leaders at Novi Sad decided to convene a Serb National Assembly. At the beginning of May, Serbs from all over the Banat streamed into Sremski Karlovci, the former seat of the Orthodox Church in the Habsburg Empire. Joined by Croats, Czechs, Poles and Slavs, they gathered in the streets and began chanting 'Rise up, rise up, Serbs!' Through popular acclamation, the government of the Serbian Vojvodina was proclaimed, headed by Colonel Josip Šupljikac, the supreme Vojvoda (Military Leader or Duke). Rajačić was named Patriarch of the restored seat in Karlovci. Conspicuously, the new assembly did not rescind allegiance either to Vienna or to the Kingdom of Hungary. But the concluding words of the proclamation breathed life into the Yugoslav idea for the first time: 'Before all else, we demand resolutely a true and genuine union with our brothers of the same blood and tribe, the Croats. Long Live Unity! Long Live the Triune Kingdom!'714

Immediately, war broke out between the Hungarians and the Serbs...

"This was a modern conflict," writes Bernard Simms, "triggered by imperial collapse and the nationalist rivalry of two liberal bourgeoisies. It was not an explosion of ancient tribal hatreds, as is so often claimed. And the Serbs and Croats, after all, were fighting side by side as brothers...

"The Hungarian forces drove the imperial forces out of the country. At this point in the summer of 1849, Tsar Nicholas I offered his services to Franz Joseph in the name of the Holy Alliance. Two Russian armies, one stationed east of the Pruth in Bessarabia, the other east of the Vistula in Russian-controlled Poland [300,000 troops in all], swept across and down into Hungary and finally smashed the revolution in August.

"Reaction had triumphed throughout the Habsburg Empire. In Hungary, the newly restored Austrian authorities exacted a terrible retribution against the

714 Glenny, _op. cit_, p. 50.
rebels. Elsewhere in the Empire, the demands of other national communities, especially the Croats and Serbs, who had contributed significantly to the exhaustion of the Hungarian forces, were simply ignored by the Kaiser. Liberal nationalism had apparently suffered a catastrophic defeat.\textsuperscript{715}

It is important to understand why Tsar Nicholas intervened so decisively in the 1848 revolution. It was not simply because of his membership of the Holy Alliance of monarchical powers and hatred of revolution in general. There was also the question of \textit{Poland}. Already in 1846 a rebellion in the Austrian-controlled region of Galicia had been crushed by the Austrian army, and in November an Austrian-Russian Treaty had abolished the free status of the city of Crakow, the centre of the revolt, and merged it into Galicia. Now “Liberal and socialist plans for the reconstitution of Poland threatened the very core of the Tsarist Empire. ‘Poland as understood by the Poles,’ the Russian diplomat Baron Peter von Meyendorff warned in March 1848, ‘extends to the mouth of the Vistula and Danube, as well as to the Dnieper at Kiev and Smolensk.’ ‘Such a Poland,’ he continued, ‘enters Russia like a wedge, destroys her political and geographical unity, throws her back into Asia, [and] puts her back two hundred years.’ Stopping this, Meyendorff concluded, was the cause of ‘every Russian’.\textsuperscript{716} Thus when the Russians made their decisive intervention against the Hungarian revolution through Transylvania in 1849, they were driven, according to Stephen Winder, “by disgust at insurrection, but also because they could not help noticing how many Poles were joining the Hungarian army: a liberal, republican, independent Hungary providing a shelter for Poles would have featured very high in the long list of the Tsar’s nightmares...”\textsuperscript{717}


51. THE TRIUMPH OF REACTION

The impact of the events of 1848, according to Evans, was cataclysmic. "Europe’s thrones had been shaken to their foundations. Figures like Metternich and Louis-Philippe, who had long dominated the political world had been ousted. Monarchs had been pressured into abdicating, abjuring a large part of their powers, or surrendering their claim to rule by Divine Right and undergoing the humiliating experience of bowing before enraged crowds of their citizens. Representative assemblies had come into being across Europe, and where they had existed already, gained significant new powers. The principle of national self-determination had been successfully asserted in one country after another. Vast and far-reaching social and economic reforms had been put in train in a dramatic expression of the principle of equality before the law. The 1848 Revolutions have often been dismissed in retrospect as half-hearted failures, but that is not how they seemed at the time. Nothing in Europe would ever be the same again after the events of January to July 1848. True, there had been setbacks. But in the summer of ‘the crazy year’, as it was later called in Germany, or, more optimistically, ‘the springtime of the people’, there still seemed everything to play for."718

Several factors contributed to the collapse of the revolution. One was the continued support of the armies for the dynastic principle. Another was the distrust of the peasants, still the majority of the population in most countries, for the urban intellectuals. A third was the fear of the propertied classes for their property. This had been predicted by Count Cavour, the future architect of a united Italy, in 1846: "If the social order were to be genuinely menaced, if the great principles on which it rests were to be a serious risk, then many of the most determined oppositionists, the most enthusiastic republicans, would be, we are convinced, the first to join the ranks of the conservative party".719

The question raised by this defeat was: could liberalism and nationalism coexist in the long term? And the answer provided by history since the French revolution appears to be: no. Liberalism demands freedom and equality for each individual citizen, regardless of his race or creed. Nationalism, on the other hand, calls for the freedom and equality of every nation, no matter how small. Both demands are impossible to fulfill. No state is able to fulfill the endless list of human rights demanded by every citizen and every minority without descending into anarchy. And no state is able to fulfill the supposed national rights of every nation without descending into war, as the demand that one nation have its own sovereign, inclusive and homogeneous territory inevitably involves the "ethnic cleansing" of other groups on the same territory. The only solution, it seemed, was the multi-national empire, which suppressed both liberalism and nationalism and in which the emperor stood above all his empire's constituent national groups, being, at least in theory, the guarantor of the rights of every individual citizen.

718 Evans, op. cit., pp. 197-199.
719 Cavour, in Hobsbawm, The Age of Capital, p. 28.
Such were the empires of Russia, Austro-Hungary and Turkey. The “liberal empires” of France and Britain (which did not suffer from revolutionary disturbances) were in a slightly different category, having made significant concessions to liberalism. Germany was in yet another category, still in the process of unification and showing signs of succumbing to nationalism...

Of course, many nations within these empires saw themselves as being tyrannized by the dominant nation from which the empires took their names. But at any rate all the subordinate nations had a kind of brotherhood in misery, being equally prisoners in a “prison of the peoples”. This suppressed age-old rivalries among themselves. Moreover, many members of national minorities acquired a kind of sincerely imperial patriotism. Only when central authority began to falter did this supra-national patriotism weaken and national conflicts return with a vengeance, as we see in the 1848 revolution in Austro-Hungary.

“Henceforth,” writes Hobsbawm, “there was to be no general social revolution of the kind envisaged before 1848 in the ‘advanced’ countries of the world. The centre of gravity of such social revolutionary movements, and therefore of twentieth-century socialist and communist regimes, was to be in the marginal and backward regions... The sudden, vast and apparently boundless expansion of the world capitalist economy provided political alternatives in the ‘advanced’ countries. The (British) industrial revolution had swallowed the (French) political revolution.”

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

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

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722 Montalembert, in Comby, *op. cit.,* p. 133.
However, the leaders of the Church – with the important exception of the Pope - were moving to come to terms with the prevailing Zeitgeist. Thus Cardinal de Bonald told his priests: “Show the faithful the example of obedience and submission to the Republic. Frequently make a vow to yourselves to enjoy this freedom which makes our brothers in the United States so happy; you will have this freedom. If the authorities wish to deck religious buildings with the national flag, attentively heed the desires of the magistrates. The flag of the Republic will always be a flag which protects religion... Agree to all measures which may improve the lot of the workers... Citizens, Jesus Christ was the first, from up on his cross, to make the magnificent words ‘Freedom, equality, brotherhood’ resound throughout the world. The Christ who died for you on the tree of liberty is the holy, the sublime Republican of all times and all countries.”

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

Of course, this positivist stamp on post-1848 governments guaranteed a further decay in Christianity and therefore a bringing closer of the revolution. But that was not how things were seen by the disillusioned revolutionaries themselves – that is, those who had not changed sides, who had not been...

bought, who refused to work from within the system. They all believed that a proletarian revolution was not on the cards for at least another generation.

Marx and Engels now thought that society had to go through all the stages of bourgeois development before the proletariat could rise up and take power. That meant that the revolution would not come first in peasant societies such as Russia (the European peasantry had proved frustratingly conservative in 1848), but in highly industrialized ones, such as Britain or Germany, as the proletariat there became poorer. Again, writing in *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in January, 1849, Marx said that several nations in Europe – including the Basques, the Scottish Highlanders and the Serbs – would have to perish in the coming revolution, because they were too primitive in their development, they were still two stages behind the capitalists... But these predictions turned out to be wrong. In the West no revolution took place as the workers’ lot was improved by trade-union agitation from below and prudent concessions from above. The revolution finally took place in the predominantly peasant country of Russia...

Another consequence of the failure of 1848 was that Marx and Engels saw no role in the revolution for the smaller nations, of which there were so many in Central and Eastern Europe. For the Croats, for example, had fought on the side of counter-revolution. And so they damned the Croats, writes Mark Almond, “as the arch-collaborators with tottering reaction: ‘An Austria shaken to its very foundations was kept in being and secured by the enthusiasm of the Slavs for the black and yellow;... it was precisely the Croats, Slovenes, Dalmatians...’ But the two prophets of Marxism tinged their savage political condemnation of the Croats with a genocidal, albeit ‘progressive’, racism.

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

“Engels remained decidedly unsympathetic to the aspirations of the South Slavs for independence or unity until the end of his days. Even in the 1880s, after all the public outrage in Britain about the Bosnian and Bulgarian atrocities, he could still write to Bernstein that the Hercegovinians’ ‘right to cattle-rustling
must be sacrificed \textit{without mercy} to the interests of the European proletariat’, which lay in peace at that time. Both Marx and Engels bequeathed to the left in the twentieth century a powerful tendency to sympathise with large-scale ‘progressive’ states at the expense of the poor and small."\footnote{Almond, \textit{Europe’s Backyard War}, London: Mandarin, 1994, pp. 70-71. Already in 1849 Engels was declaring that small nations such as the Basques, the Scottish highlanders and the Serbs should be exterminated because they were not one, but two stages behind in the dialectical progress of History.}

Thus did 1848’s “springtime of the nations” turn into a bitter “winter of discontent”. Although the monarchists had triumphed, there were few monarchists who believed that the tide of history was returning their way. As for the revolutionaries like Marx and Herzen, and even moderate liberals, they felt that the “miasma of the fifties”, as Nietzsche put it, compared badly with the idealism of the forties. Thus the historian Johann Gustav Droysen wrote: “Our spiritual life is deteriorating rapidly; its dignity, its idealism, its intellectual integrity are vanishing... Meanwhile the exact sciences grow in popularity; establishments flourish where pupils will one day form the independent upper middle class as farmers, industrialists, merchants, technicians and so one; their education and outlook will concentrate wholly on material issues. At the same time the universities are declining... At present all is instability, chaos, ferment and disorder. The old values are finished, debased, rotten, beyond salvation and the new ones are as yet unfomed, aimless, confused, merely destructive... we live in one of the great crises that lead from one epoch of history to the next...”\footnote{Droysen, in Mann, \textit{A History of Germany since 1789}, London: Pimlico, p. 124.}

The Russian poet and diplomat Fyodor Tiutchev wrote: "The revolution is an illness devouring the West... The revolution is the purest product, the last word and the highest expression of that which we have been accustomed to call, already for three centuries now, the civilization of the West. It is contemporary thought, in all its integrity, from the time of its break with the Church. The thought is as follows: man, in the final analysis, depends only on himself both in the government of his reason and in the government of his will. Every authority comes from man; everything that proclaims itself to be higher than man is either an illusion or deception. In a word, it is the apotheosis of the human I in the most literal meaning of the word... We are quite possibly present at the bankruptcy of the whole civilization... The revolution is not simply an opponent clothed in flesh and blood. It is more than a Principle. It is Spirit, reason, in order to gain victory over it, we must know how to drive it out...

"The revolution is the logical consequence and final end of contemporary civilization, which antichristian rationalism has won from the Roman church. The revolution has in fact become convinced of its complete inability to act as a unifying principle, and has to the same degree become convinced, on the contrary, that it possesses a disintegrating power. On the other hand, the elements of the old society which have been preserved in Europe are still sufficiently alive that, in case of necessity, they can throw everything that has
been done by the Revolution back to its point of origin. But they have also been so penetrated by the revolutionary principle, so distorted by it, that they are almost incapable of creating anything that could be accepted by European society as a lawful authority. That is the dilemma which rears its head with all its exceptional importance at the present time... The European West is only half of a great organic whole, but the difficulties undergone by it, difficulties that are from an external point of view insoluble, will acquire their resolution only in its other half, "727 that is, in the Russian Empire.

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727 Tiutchev, in Fomin and Fomina, Rossia pered Vторым Пришествием (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. 2, pp. 83-84.
52. POLITICAL REACTION AND AESTHETIC REALISM

The defeat of the 1848 revolution, and the great industrial boom of the 1850s, placed a temporary damper on the romantic, mystical and irrationalist tendencies of the previous age. The post-1848 era was the age of reaction in politics, of the realistic novel in art and of positivism in philosophy, when “the real” was defined as exclusively “the rational”.

Romanticism, as we have seen, is characterized by the love of the exotic, the erotic and the extreme in human nature. Realism, on the other hand, describes the commonplace... This may be connected with the advent of the age of the common man, of democracy.

Perhaps the earliest realist in the field of the novel was Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), whose masterpiece, La Comédie Humaine, “is made up of nearly 100 works, which contain more than 2000 characters and together create an alternative reality that extends from Paris to the provincial backwaters of France. Balzac’s works transformed the novel into a great art form capable of representing life in all its detail and colour, so paving the way for the ambitious works of writers such as Proust and Zola...

“His imaginative gift and powers of description set the tone for the development of the 19th-century realist novel. As Oscar Wilde said, Balzac ‘created life, he did not copy it.’...”

Evans suggests that that the rise of realism in art has something to do with the advent of photography – the Duke of Wellington and the battlefields of the Crimean War were among the first subjects to be photographed. And he continues: “By mid-century the age of Romanticism was drawing to a close with the growing turn to Realism in the work of painters such as Gustave Courbet (1819-77), who eschewed mythical and religious themes of the past for the concerns of contemporary life. His landscapes abandoned the dramatic exaggeration and compositional artifice employed by the Romantics in favour of a naturalistic approach that suggested he had just come upon a scene and decided on the spot to paint it. In The Stone-Breakers (1849) Courbet depicted two peasants breaking rocks by the side of a road, while in A Burial at Ornans (1849) he showed the funeral of his great-uncle, depicting not richly clad models but the actual people who attended the event, participating in orderly manner rather than indulging in the emotional gestures that would have been expected in a Romantic representation of the same subject. ‘The burial at Ornans, Courbet remarked, ‘was in reality the burial of Romanticism.’ Later he complained that ‘the title of Realist was thrust upon me just as the title of Romantic was imposed upon the men of 1830.’ But his paintings undoubtedly inaugurated a new cultural style. Courbet was a political radical and a committed participant in the Paris Commune of 1871, and he painted scenes of poverty that were intended as social criticism rather than presentations of the picturesque. In The Gleaners...”

728 Montefiore, op. cit., pp. 343, 345.
Jean-François Millet (1814-75) showed poor peasant women bending over to pick up small ears of corn left on the fields after the harvest, while The Potato Eaters (1885) by Vincent van Gogh depicted a group of rough peasants sitting round a table eating the potatoes by the light of a little lamp. Van Gogh wanted, he said, to indicate by their appearance the fact that they had ‘tilled the earth themselves with these hands they are putting in the dish’.

“Realist in a very different way were the English painters of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded in 1848. From one point of view they paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), John Everett Millais (1829-96) and their colleagues reflected the concern of Romanticism, with their focus on the Middle Ages and religious subjects and their break with Classical models and techniques in the search for authenticity of expression. But they also follow the new Realism in using ordinary people, including working-class girls and prostitutes, as models. Millais’ painting Christ in the House of His Parents, exhibited in 1850, was widely condemned: instead of employing transcendental religious imagery, it was set amid the dirt and mess of a carpenter’s workshop and showed the Holy Family as ordinary, poor people. Even more controversial was the sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), whose sculptures were a far cry from the smooth Classicism of the Academies…

“Realism spread rapidly to other countries, reaching Russia for example in the shape of ‘The Wanderers’, fourteen young artists who abandoned the Imperial Academy of Arts in 1863 to form their own co-operative, painting scenes such as the celebrated Barge Haulers on the Volga (1873) by Ilya Yefimovich Repin (1844-1930). Similarly, the Realist novel was often, though not invariably, set in the present rather than in the Romantic past. It allowed readers to inhabit a world parallel to their own, where moral and social dramas were played out in ways that were recognizably similar to their own lives, but more eventful and exciting, and which sometimes prompted the desire to subscribe to the reforming ideas of the author. The chronology of literary Realism did not match that of its counterpart in the visual arts precisely: already in the 1830s, Balzac was turning away from writing historical fiction in the manner of Walter Scott, as in early novels such as Les Chouans (1829) and fantasy-fables like La Peau de Chagrin (1831), to writing in a Realist manner his series La Condition humaine. Of course some artists continued to paint Biblical, Classical and historical scenes regardless of the Realist trend. But there is no doubt that artworks and novels addressing contemporary life and attempting to portray it in a manner that was true to life predominated after the middle years of the century.

“It was above all industrialization that called forth the Realist novel as a means of portraying the collectivity of society, with its teeming mass of characters and its description of the shifting relations between them. The master here was Charles Dickens, many of whose works sought to lay bare in literary form the evils of the age and to advocate by showing their dramatic consequences the urgent need to tackle them: Oliver Twist (1837-9) addressed the state of crime and disorder in London, Bleak House (1853) the expense and injustice of the antiquated English system of civil law, Hard Times (1854) the
cruelties inflicted by the utilitarian philosophy of the new industrialists. The ‘social novel’ carried a strong charge of social criticism: *Alton Locke* (1849) by Charles Kingsley (1819-75) reflected its author’s Chartist sympathies in its depiction of the exploitation of agricultural labourers and workers in the garment industry, while *Mary Barton* (1848) by Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-65) showed what its author called the ‘misery and hateful passions caused by the love of pursuing wealth as well as the egoism, thoughtlessness and insensitivity of manufacturers’. *Les Misérables* (1862) addressed the three great problems of the age, identified by Victor Hugo as ‘the degradation of man by poverty, the ruin of women by starvation, and the dwarfing of childhood by physical and spiritual night’. In *L’Assommoir* (1877), Émile Zola painted a drastic portrait of poor housing conditions in a Parisian slum, while his *Germinal* (1885) brought together the political and social features of life in a coal mining community over several decades in a dramatic narrative of a strike followed by an uprising. More drastic still was the account of impoverished Russians living in a shelter for the homeless in *The Lower Depths* (1902) by Maxim Gorky.

“Realist novels could flourish in many European countries not least because of the emergence of a new market for books, as the middle classes grew in numbers and wealth, and merchants, industrialists, lawyers, bankers, employers and landowners were joined in the ranks of the affluent by doctors, teachers, civil servants, scientists, and white-collar workers of various kinds, numbering more than 300,000 in the 1851 census in the United Kingdom for example, the first time they were counted, and more than double that number thirty years later. Books became cheaper and more plentiful as steam-driven presses replaced hand-operated ones in the printing industry, and as mechanical production reduced the cost of paper while hugely increasing the supply. Novels, including those of Dickens and Dostoyevsky, were commonly printed in instalments and read in serial form. Alongside the ‘penny dreadful’ and the *colportage* serial a new type of bourgeois novel emerged, catering for an educated readership. Altogether, if 580 books were published in the United Kingdom every year between 1800 and 1825, more than 2,500 appeared annually in mid-century, and ore than 6,000 by the end of the century. In 1855 some 1,020 book titles were published in Russia, and by 1894 this figure had increased tenfold, to 10,691, a figure equal to the output of new titles in Britain and the United States combined.

“In all of this, despite the growing taste for non-fiction, ranging from encyclopedias and handbooks to triple-decker biographies, the proportion of works of fiction published in Britain increased from 16 per cent in the 1830s to nearly 25 per cent half a century later. Novel-reading, once the province of upper-class women, became a general habit among the middle classes of both sexes. Perhaps by necessity, in order to gain a following, Realist artists and writers focused on the comfortably off as well as on the poor and the exploited. Portraits continued to be a significant source of income for painters, while in literature the bourgeoisie featured centrally in the family sagas of the age. *Fathers and Sons* (1862) by Ivan Turgenev dissected the fraught relationship between a conservative elder generation and young nihilistic intellectuals; Zola’s *Les
Rougon-Macquart (1871-1893), a cycle of twenty novels, attempted, as the author said, ‘to portray, at the outset of a century of liberty and truth, a family that cannot restrain itself in its rush to possess all the good things that progress is making available and is derailed by its own momentum, the fatal convulsions that accompany the birth of a new world’.

“In Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life (1871-2), George Eliot tackled the impact of change brought by the railways, medicine and other harbingers of modernity on a deeply conservative small-town society; Madame Bovary (1856), written by Gustave Flaubert after his friends had persuaded him to abandon early efforts at historical fantasy, described in realistic detail the daily life and love affairs of the bored wife of a weak provincial doctor; both Theodor Fontane in Effi Briest (1894) and Tolstoy in Anna Karenina (1877) dealt with adultery, real or imagined, and the constrained lives of married women in the upper reaches of society; and in the six-novel sequence The Barsetshire Chronicles (1855-67), Anthony Trollope traced the fortunes of the leading inhabitants of an imaginary provincial town, while The Pallisers (1865-80) focused on the engagement of a much grander family with parliamentary politics. As the American writer Henry James (1843-1916) remarked, in a somewhat backhanded compliment, Trollope’s ‘inestimable merit was a complete appreciation of the usual’. However quotidian their concerns, Realist novels and paintings shared one thing in common with the cultural products of Romanticism: their appeal to the emotions, achieved not least by plumbing the depths of character and arousing sympathy and identification in the reader or the viewer…”

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So powerful was the romance of revolution and the revolution of romanticism, that neither the political nor the artistic kind of madness was brought to an end by the age of political reaction and artistic realism. The revolutionary/romantic personality even became a subject of realistic art, as in Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment and The Devils.

As for music, the most romantic of the arts, it became an important vehicle of nationalist feeling. The demand for the official recognition of a nation’s language and culture was a great stimulus to art and, especially, music. And this in turn added an extra energy to nationalism. We think of Sibelius for the Finns, Grieg for the Norwegians, Smetana and Dvorak for the Czechs, Liszt for the Hungarians – even, somewhat later, Albeniz for the Spanish and Elgar and Vaughan Williams for the English. But perhaps the most characteristic fusion of nationalism and music was to be found in the Italian Giuseppe Verdi. Verdi’s operas, from Nabucco in 1842 (whose chorus of the Hebrew slaves became a kind

729 Evans, op. cit., pp. 520-524.
730 However, as Evans writes, Grieg “came to dislike what was perhaps his most famous composition, ‘In the Hall of the Mountain King’, part of his incidental music for Ibsen’s 1867 play Peer Gynt, ‘because it absolutely reeks of cow-pats [and] exaggerated Norwegian nationalism’” (op. cit., p. 528).
of national anthem of Italian nationalism) to Don Carlos in 1870, completed three years before Italian troops entered Rome and completed the task of national unification, “provided the soundtrack to the desire for independence. Through his many works, Verdi reflected, and even shaped, the struggle for Italian unification.” As an Italian writer wrote in 1855: “With what marvelous avidity the populace of our Italian cities was seized by these broad and clear melodies, singing as they went..., confronting the grave reality of the present with aspirations for the future.”

And so music never went through a realist reaction, but went on to still wilder emotional extremes, as in Wagner’s Tristan or Strauss’s Salome.

The legacy of romanticism is also evident in the philosophy of the era, where, while the hard-boiled realists might insist that man was just a complicated animal or machine, the romantics still dreamed dreams and saw visions and believed in the world spirit and their own inner divinity. If the men-gods had been brought down to earth, their dreams and fantasies were now part of the mental furniture of every European (and American). The bacillus was now in the bloodstream of western man, and it would require a still greater blood-letting, at the hand of a still crueler tyrant, to tame it…

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52. THE BRITISH IN INDIA

“Many in England,” writes Tombs, “felt uncomfortable about India, less the jewel in the crown than the cuckoo in the nest... The British presence there had originally been commercial, through the chartered Honourable East India Company (HEIC). Over the second half of the eighteenth century it had increasingly become a territorial ruler, originally under nominal Mughal sovereignty and then as an agent of the British government - the greatest ever quango. But expansion had taken place haphazardly, often driven by the ambitions of men on the spot, months away from the restraining and parochial hands of Whitehall and Westminster. British actions had always aroused controversy as well as pride. ‘How can the same nation pursue two lines of policy so radically different... despotic in Asia and democratic in Australia?... Why do we... involve ourselves in the anxiety and responsibility of governing two hundred millions of people in Asia?’ asked Sir John Seeley, the pioneer Cambridge historian of empire, in 1883. Yet this view of the empire as a confederation of settler colonies ignored the immense economic and strategic importance of India, both directly as a market for British goods and as the source of the Indian Army that made Britain an Asian power from the Persian Gulf to Shanghai, and also indirectly, as Indians were the producers, merchants and labourers who constructed a vast economic network. As one historian sums it up, ‘Across a large part of the world East of Suez, it would have been more accurate to talk not of a British, but of an Anglo-Indian empire.’”

Further expansion of British rule in India “occurred particularly,” as Evans writes, “at the initiative of the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie (1812-60), appointed in 1848. Dalhousie considered Indian-controlled states were inefficient and that income for the East India Company... would be increased if he annexed them.”

The Company was probably the largest corporation in history, even to this day. Indeed, the Company was British India. It had its own civil service and army - up to 350,000 men, larger than the British army, - in order to protect the vast territories it had annexed in pursuit of its business interests.

Gradually, however, the British state took a deeper, more intrusive interest in the Company, bringing the first, purely commercial phase in its history to an end. This intrusiveness took the form initially of making the company act as an aid to the missionary work advocated in parliament by the famous champion of the emancipation of slavery, William Wilberforce. As a Wikipedia article on him writes, “Wilberforce fostered and supported missionary activity in Britain and abroad. He was a founding member of the Church Missionary Society Church (since renamed the Church Mission Society) and was involved, with other members of the Clapham Sect, in numerous other evangelical and charitable organisations. Horrified by the lack of Christian evangelism in India, Wilberforce

732 Tombs, op. cit., p. 548.
733 Evans, op. cit., pp. 637-638.
used the 1793 renewal of the British East India Company’s charter to propose the addition of clauses requiring the company to provide teachers and chaplains and to commit to the ‘religious improvement’ of Indians. The plan was unsuccessful due to lobbying by the directors of the company, who feared that their commercial interests would be damaged. Wilberforce tried again in 1813, when the charter next came up for renewal. Using petitions, meetings, lobbying and letter writing, he successfully campaigned for changes to the charter. Speaking in favour of the Charter Act 1813, he criticized the British in India for their hypocrisy and racial prejudice, while also condemning aspects of Hinduism, including the caste system, infanticide, polygamy and suttee. ‘Our religion is sublime, pure beneficent’, he said, ‘theirs is mean, licentious and cruel.’”

“In one sense,” writes Dominic Lieven, “religion was a relatively unimportant factor in Britain’s empire. From the seventh and eighth centuries, for instance, Muslim conquerors converted the Near East and southern Mediterranean to Islam, in the process forever changing identities and geopolitics in a vast region. Religion was also very important in the Spanish conquest of the Americas, great effort being put into subsequent conversion of the indigenous population. Though Elizabethan imperialists sometimes talked the language of religious mission, in reality little effort went into converting indigenous peoples to Christianity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Until 1813 the East India Company strictly limited missionary activity in India. Only with the onset of the Evangelical Movement in the late eighteenth century did missionaries begin to play a role of any significance in the British Empire. Even subsequently, however, missionaries never converted large communities and when compared to the activities of the Islamic or Spanish empires, their impact was very small.”

Indeed, it could be argued that the Indians were making more converts to Hinduism among the British Christians in India than the British were making converts to Anglicanism among the Indians... This threat of “going native” produced an exaggerated determination among the British to preserve their culture to the smallest detail, while separating themselves completely from the life of the Indians, whom they despised. This was to bode ill for the future of the British in India...

This is not to say that their aim in trying to bring Christianity to India was wrong: the preaching of the true religion, and protection from false religions, remains the only really defensible justification of one people’s dominion over another – so long as it is done in a truly Christian, apostolic spirit. It was at the root of the idea of Christian Rome, which brought Orthodoxy to the peoples of the Mediterranean basin and to the Slav nations to the north. The Russian Empire extended it still further into Asia and even America – and with much less damage to indigenous cultures than was inflicted by many of the Western missionaries.

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

Tombs continues: “Those driving the extension of power in India between the middle of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth had a potent mixture of motives: the ambition to make a name and a fortune; a growing belief in Britain’s destiny to rule as a ‘new Rome’; and a confident belief that they would ‘improve’ India, encouraged in some cases by a Christian zeal, and in all cases by the belief that Britain was in the vanguard of human Progress. Intervention and often annexation took place in what the British considered failing states, where there was internal conflict, disputed succession, serious human rights abuse or the danger of inter-state conflict. While there was, or seemed to be, a military threat – from the Marathas (whose cavalry were ferocious raiders), the Afghans or the sikhs in the Punjab – they were fought and eventually defeated or at least checked. By 1850 the HEIC directly governed most of northern, central and south-eastern India, and states under Indian rulers were subordinated. This security-led expansion of what has been called the ‘imperial garrison state’ was more important than trade or settlement in pushing forward the boundaries of empire.

“Perhaps the most notorious cultural imperialists were the Utilitarians James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay, who in 1835 drafted a Minute on education in India, arguing that money should be spent on teaching English and European science, philosophy and history, rather than ‘medical doctrines which would disgrace an English Farrier – Astronomy, which would move laughter in

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735 Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 139, 141. There is a story from this time of a British commander, who was told that some locals were practicing sati. The commander saddled his horse and took some soldiers and went out to where this was going on, and told them to stop. The locals replied, “This is our tradition.” His answer was, ‘And it is our tradition to hang men who murder women. So if you will practice your tradition, we will practice ours.’ The woman was let go.

736 However, it goes without saying that neither the “New Rome” of Byzantium, still less the “Third Rome” of Russia, was a model for the British. They preferred – as their architecture in Delhi showed – the first, pagan Rome of the Caesars and Augusti. (V.M.)
girls at an English boarding school – History, abounding with kings thirty foot high... and Geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter.' This is often quoted as an egregious example of racial arrogance; in fact, it was Utilitarian arrogance towards all traditional culture, English as well as Indian – Mill considered all poetry a relic of barbarism. Not all shared Mill’s sweeping modernism: Benares College, founded in 1791, preserved, ever-created a supposedly traditional Indian culture. The British were often torn between admiration and impatience, pride and guilt. One of the most influential voices of the age, Richard Cobden, regarded Britain’s record in India one of ‘spoliation and wrong’ and hoped for the ‘happy day when England has not an acre of territory in Continental Asia.’”

The generation after the Crimean War saw Britain reach the peak of her power. Far outstripping her competitors in industrial production (it was still some time before America and Germany caught up), mistress of the seas and of an ever-expanding empire (four times larger than the Roman empire) on which, as the saying went, the sun never set, British self-confidence grew with it. The British considered that theirs was the greatest civilization in the world, and that it would last forever... And yet Britain’s boast, as we have seen, was in something quite different: in being the world champion of freedom and liberalism in both political and economic life. But how – we return to the question - was it possible to be both liberal and imperialist at the same time?

The clue lay in the so-called doctrine of benign intervention: the teaching that Britain, alone among the empires of history, had acquired her empire for the benefit, not of her own, but of her subject peoples, to whom she communicated the fruits of her liberal civilization by her benign interventions in their lives – in other words, by her annexation of their territories and completely reconstructing their economies. This teaching was expounded by Britain’s foremost liberal thinker, John Stuart Mill, in his essay, “A Few Words on Non-Intervention”, in which he asserted that England was “incomparably the most conscientious of all nations... the only one whom mere scruples of conscience... would deter” and “the power which of all in existence best understands liberty”. As Noam Chomsky writes, Mill “urged Britain to undertake the enterprise [of humanitarian intervention] vigorously – specifically, to conquer more of India. Britain must pursue this high-minded mission, Mill explained, even though it will be ‘held up to obloquy’ on the continent. Unmentioned was that by doing so, Britain was striking still further devastating blows at India and extending the near-monopoly of opium production that it needed both to force open Chinese markets by violence and to sustain the imperial system more broadly by means of its immense narco-trafficking enterprises, all well known in England at the time. But such matters could not be the source of the ‘obloquy’. Rather, Europeans are ‘exciting odium against us’, Mill wrote, because they are unable to comprehend that England is truly ‘a novelty in the world.’ A remarkable nation that acts only ‘in the service of others’. It is dedicated to peace, though if

737 Tombs, op. cit., pp. 548-549.
‘the aggressions of barbarians force it to a successful war’, it selflessly bears the cost while ‘the fruits it shares in fraternal equality with the whole human race’, including the barbarians it conquers and destroys for their own benefit. England is not only peerless but near perfect, in Mill’s view, with no ‘aggressive designs’, desiring ‘no benefit to itself at the expense of others’. Its policies are ‘blameless and laudable’. England was the nineteenth-century counterpart of the ‘idealistic new world bent on ending inhumanity’, motivated by pure altruism and uniquely dedicated to the highest ‘principles and values’, though also sadly misunderstood by the cynical or perhaps paranoid Europeans…”

Mills’ views undoubtedly express a dangerous degree of hubris and self-delusion. Even taking into account the occasional genuine idealism and evangelical zeal among the British in India, the fact remains that the main motive of Britain’s imperial expansion was commercial profit. Moreover, this profit was unquestionably immoral when gained at the expense of jobless Indian textile workers or Chinese opium addicts.

“From another angle,” continues Lieven, “Protestantism was vital to the whole English sense of imperial mission. From the sixteenth to the twentieth century, most Englishmen believed that the Protestant conscience was at the core of all progress. They were convinced that the Protestant had a sense of individual responsibility and a strong motivation to better himself and succeed in life. He was self-disciplined, purposeful and based his life on firm moral principles, which he derived for himself by reading the Bible and struggling to define his own path to salvation. Eighteenth-century Enlightenment and nineteenth-century liberalism had no doubt of their descent from the Protestant tradition even if they had sometimes lost faith in a personal god. By contrast, Catholics were seen to be the slaves of sentiment, tradition, ritual and ignorance. Muslims were worse, and Hindus and Buddhists worst of all. Racial stereotypes of Africans in the late nineteenth century were very familiar from sixteenth-century Ireland: the natives were shifty, immoral and idle, and needed for their own good to be forced to work. Nor had English attitudes to Catholics in general or the Irish in particular necessarily changed much over the previous 300 years. In 1882 the Regius Professor of History at Oxford University commented that ‘the Celts of Ireland are as yet unfit for parliamentary government… Left to themselves, without what they call English misrule, they would almost certainly

740 Chomsky again: “India was a real competitor with England: as late as the 1820s; while the British were learning advanced techniques of steel-making there. India was building ships for the British navy at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, they had a developed textiles industry, they were producing more iron than all of Europe combined – so the British just proceeded to de-industrialize the country by force and turn it into an impoverished rural society” (Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky, London: Vintage, 2003, p. 257).
741 “It is a remarkable fact,” writes Ferguson, “that throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the amount the East India Company earned from its monopoly on the export of opium was roughly equal to the amount it had to remit to London to pay the interest on its huge debt. The opium trade was crucial to the Indian balance of payments.” (op. cit., p. 166, note).
be... the willing slaves of some hereditary despot, the representative of their old cosherning chiefs, with a priesthood as absolute and as obscurantist as the Druids.'

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

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

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

“But the British Empire could never give up its basic, albeit stuttering commitment to progress and enlightenment, since these were essential to its British elite’s understanding of history, their perception of themselves and of the
legitimacy of Britain’s empire. Clearly, British liberal values and ideology did convert growing sections of the indigenous elite, firstly in India and then elsewhere: it was precisely in the name of these values that self-government and independence from Britain were demanded. But in this as in so much else formal empire was only one element in a much broader process of change and Westernization...”\textsuperscript{742}

\textsuperscript{742} Lieven, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 97-99.
53. THE INDIAN MUTINY

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 – known in India as the First War of Independence - deeply impressed upon the British the limitations of their power in the reformation of Hindu “usages or superstitions”. It began, as Tombs writes, “when mutinies in the East India Company’s Bengal army in February, April and May 1857 turned into a revolt across north-central India, involving both peasants and princes. The causes were many and have been debated ever since. The withdrawal of British troops from India for the Crimea, the exposed failings of the British army [in the Crimean war] – dangerous for a regime so reliant on prestige – and expectation of Russian or Persian intervention created a sense of opportunity among discontented Indians, and perhaps fed prophecies that the British would be defeated one hundred years after Clive’s 1757 victory at Plassey. There were political, military, economic and religious grievances among the Company’s subject peoples and its troops. The Bengal army, largely high-caste Hindu gentry, resented deteriorating conditions of service for what had been the most attractive employer in India, but which now seemed to bring social degradation. Peasants resented taxation and changes in land tenure. Princes, dispossessed princes, would-be princes and their military retainers bitterly resented British takeover of ‘lapsed’ states, when there was no direct heir, or when the British considered them badly governed, as in the Muslim-ruled Awadh (Oudh), just annexed. Nana Sahib, who became the most notorious rebel leader, had been refused recognition as adopted heir of a Maratha prince. The Rhani of Jhansi, later a heroine to both Indian nationalists and feminists, was alienated by British rejection of her similar claim. The British later liked to think that it was their modernizing reforms, such as railway-building, that were resented by reactionaries. Some reforms certainly had caused resentment – for, example, banning the burning of widows, ‘suttee’ (also ‘sati’), legalizing their remarriage, and permitting (against sharia law) inheritance by Muslim converts to Christianity. The abolition of suttee caused one of the first major campaigns against British rule and stimulated the creation of Hindu newspapers. Christian missionary activity (which the Company traditionally disliked as a nuisance) was a further aggravation. These resentments were expressed in an anonymous manifesto sent to all the princes of India: ‘The English are people who overthrow all religions... the common enemy of both [Hindu and Muslims, who] should unite in their slaughter... for by this alone will the lives and faiths of both be saved.’ The final spark for the mutiny was the introduction of new rifle cartridges, supposedly greased with pork and cow fat, polluting for both Muslims and Hindus and seen as a plot to force mass conversion to Christianity.743

“This inextricable confusion about causes illustrates a fundamental problem of foreign rule: the difficulties of understanding and communicating with the ruled. The British were horrified and enraged by the savage violence suddenly inflicted not only on supposedly popular army officers, but on any British person (other than converts to Islam), on women and children, and on Indian

743 “At root the Vellore mutiny was about religion” (Ferguson, op. cit., p. 145). (V.M.)
Christians – an unmistakable sign of the religious hatreds British rule had aroused, and of the absence of basic human solidarity between them and many of their subjects. Though there were several vicious episodes, the most notorious took place at Cawnpore (Kanpur) in June and July 1857 – a traumatic event constantly retold in British accounts. A few hundred British and loyal Indian soldiers, civilians, women and children witnessed a three-week siege in harrowing conditions. They were persuaded to surrender by promises of safe conduct by river, but as they tried to embark, they were ambushed and several boats set alight. Few men escaped. Nearly 200 captured women and children were subsequently butchered and thrown down a well, some still alive. British troops arriving soon after found their prison ‘ankle deep in blood, ladies’ hair torn from their heads… poor little children’s shoes lying here and there, gowns and frocks and bonnets… scattered everywhere.’

‘The British and their Indian supporters [particularly Gurkhas and Sikhs] fought with savage desperation first for survival and then for revenge. Men whose families had been killed often took the lead. Villages suspected of harbouring rebels or mistreating British fugitives were burned. Suspected mutineers were indiscriminately massacred. At Cawnpore, condemned men were forced to clean the blood-stained floor – polluting to Hindus, who, wrote General James Neill, ‘think that… they doom their souls to perdition. Let them think so.’ Some were forced to eat pork and beef before being killed. [At Peshawar] another notorious punishment – copied from the Mughals and Marathas – was to be tied to a cannon and ‘blown away’: ‘His head flew up into the air some thirty or forty feet – an arm yonder, another yonder, while the gory, reeking trunk fell in a heap beneath the gun.’

“The governor-general, Lord Canning, a former Peelite and son of the 1820s Foreign Secretary George Canning, tried to rein in the reprisals and was attacked as ‘Clemency Canning’: ‘As long as I have breath in my body… I will not govern in anger.’ He was supported by some of the government in London. Palmerston called a National Day of Fast, Humiliation and Prayer on 7 October 1857. The day inspired calls for clemency and criticism of misgovernment. Radical newspapers expressed sympathy with the Indians. There was a wider conviction that rule in India had to be reformed: the mutiny, thought the Earl of Elgin, proved ‘the scandalous treatment the natives receive at our hands.’ The queen wrote that ‘for the perpetrators of these awful horrors no punishment can be severe enough… But… the native at large… should know there is no hatred of brown skin.’ But for many British in India there certainly was. Wrote one young officer, Edward Vibart: ‘These black wretches shall atone with their blood for our murdered countrymen,’ and he and others made sure they did.”744

“The year 1857,” writes Ferguson, “was the Evangelical movement’s annus horribilis. They had offered India Christian civilization, and the offer had been not merely declined but violently spurned. Now the Victorians revealed the other, harsher face of their missionary zeal. In churches all over the country, the

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Theme of the Sunday sermon switched from redemption to revenge. Queen Victoria – whose previous indifference to the Empire was transformed by the Mutiny into a passionate interest – called the nation to a day of repentance and prayer: ‘A Day of Humiliation’, no less. In the Crystal Palace, that monument to Victorian self-confidence, a vast congregation of 25,000 heard the incandescent Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon issue what amount to a call for holy war:

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

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

This resulted in a significant change in British imperial policy with regard to the conversion of the natives. From now on, the emphasis would be less on the saving of souls and more on the political and economic benefits of British rule.

Thus “on 1 November 1858 Queen Victoria issued a proclamation that explicitly renounced ‘the right and the desire to impose Our convictions on any of Our subjects’. India was henceforth to be ruled not by the East India Company – it was to be wound up – but by the crown, represented by a Viceroy. And the government of India would never again lend its support to the Evangelical project of Christianization. On the contrary, the aim of British policy in India would henceforth be to govern with, rather than against, the grain of indigenous tradition.”

745 Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 150-151.
746 Dickens, in Wheatcroft, op. cit., p. 259.
747 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 154.
54. AFTER THE MUTINY

“After the 1857 rebellion,” writes Sir Richard Evans, “the subcontinent was ruled autocratically by an appointed governor-general whose power was limited only by a small council of civil servants. Over time this was expanded, and in 1909 it was enlarged to include elected members, but the council had no power to introduce laws or stop whatever the governor-general was doing. Until the First World War, therefore, India was a kind of ancien régime autocracy.

By then India had a capital to match its imperial ambitions. As Tombs writes, Delhi was “a capital worthy not merely of a global but of a galactic empire [that] had been in preparation since 1911, aiming ‘to rival Paris and Washington’. It was to be a garden city in a hybrid neoclassical cum Mughal style, with as its centrepiece Sir Edwin Lutyens’s stunning viceregal palace.”

“British rule in India rested on two key institutions. First of these was the civil service, a central, elite organization operating across the entire country, and staffed by British men, with only 5 per cent of the posts occupied by Indians as late as 1915. The Indian Civil Service was well paid and after the corruption scandals of the late eighteenth century it had become reasonably honest and conscientious. It collected the taxes already levied by the Mughals, above all the land tax, which under the Mughals had been administered by officials known as zamindars, often indistinguishable from high aristocrats. It administered justice under a codified system begun in 1861 that mixed British and Hindu principles and customs, and it provided political advisers to the 600 or so mostly small princely states that survived the uprising of 1857 (not least because the move to assimilate them into British rule was thought to have been one of its causes). The princely states collected their own taxes and ran their own affairs, but under the advice of British officials who encouraged reform. Over time the growing habit of educating the younger generation at British schools and universities, as well as the intensification of communications through better transport, telegraph and so on, and the increasing employment of British or British-trained civil servants to administer them, the princely states developed an amalgam of Indian traditions and European modernity that struck many as an ideal example of what could be achieved by indirect rule. Not just in the princely states, however, but also in the areas under direct rule, British control depended effectively on the passive co-operation of Indians, both elites and masses. This was achieved above all by the retention of Indian customs, institutions and basic structures of administration, along with an attempt to provide good and honest government. Thus the full panoply of Victorian administration was applied to India, with the founding of educational institutions such as the University of Madras (1857), and the adoption of the principle put forward in Thomas Babington Macaulay’s 1835 report on Indian education that schools and colleges teaching in English should be used to create a new Indian administrative elite to act as an intermediary between British and Indian society. Police forces were created from the 1860s and unified in 1905. Free trade was used to destroy autonomous

748 Tombs, op. cit., p. 661.
industries such as textiles in the early part of the century, but India’s incorporation into a rapidly globalizing world economy stimulated new industries and an increasing rate of urbanization, helped by the construction of roads, railways and canals. The shock of the 1857 rebellion had stimulated the British to be both cautious and conservative in their handling of Indian society and traditions, and to engage in a sustained policy of improvement and development to convince Indians of the benefits of British rule.749

“Yet underpinning all this was the application, or threat, of force, in the form of the second great institution of British rule in India, namely the Indian Army. The British regular army numbered around 250,000 men and had to defend and garrison colonies all over the world. The Indian Army was almost as large, and it could quickly be expanded by calling up reserves. It was paid for by taxes levied in India and indeed consumed around a third of all Indian tax revenues. In the key area of the 1857 rebellion, Bengal, the proportion of European to Indian troops was fixed at one to one; in Madras and Bombay one to two. Altogether there were 73,000 British and 154,000 Indian troops in the charge of British senior officers in 1885. British regiments served in India in rotation, with ‘sepoy’ regiments remaining separate. Recruits were taken from the so-called ‘martial’ areas like the North-West frontier, Nepal, or the Punjab, which had largely stayed loyal in 1857, as well as from the poorest and most illiterate social groups, who were seen as less likely to ideas of rebellion and revolt. The Indian Army was an asset not only in ruling the subcontinent but also in establishing British supremacy more generally, among other things in providing backing for the acquisition of colonies in east Africa.

“In major respects, however, British rule in India brought disaster for the population. The intensive land taxes levied by the Raj, and collected with considerably greater efficiency than their equivalents had been under the Mughals, caused changes in land use and turned bad harvests into famines, with two million dying of starvation in northern India in 1860-1, six million across India in the 1870s, and another five million with a monsoon failure in 1896-7, when the situation was made worse by the outbreak of plague. Communications were still not good enough for effective relief operations to be mounted, and as late as 1921 only 3 per cent of Indians had any formal education, making disease prevention difficult; reading and writing were the prerogative of only a small elite. These catastrophes were not new – the Bengal famine of 1770 is estimated

749 Civil servants were dubbed “heaven-born” for their incorruptibility; their recruitment (from the 1850s on) was “by open, competitive examination, which attracted some of Britain’s best brains and made the envy of Europe, well ahead of Britain’s own domestic civil service… They were required to speak two Indian languages and spent most of their time out in the midday sun, touring remote areas, dispensing quick justice to villages that still miss them today, studying local flora, fauna and social customs and writing valuable books about them… No regime based on violence alone could have enabled a maximum of 100,000 Europeans to rule for two centuries a land of 400 million people… By the 1940s most ICS officers were Indian, as were most Indian Army officers… The judiciary, universities, professions and business had long before been ‘Indianised’ and… the new Indian middle classes were active in local and provincial governments…” (Zareer Masani, Review of “India Conquered: Britain’s Raj & the Chaos of Empire” by Jon Wilson, in History Today, April, 2017, p. 62) (V.M.)
to have killed nearly 10 million people, and famines were also recorded in pre-colonial times - but there is little doubt that they increased in frequency and intensity under British rule, nor did the authorities of the Raj undertake adequate measures to deal with them and mitigate their effects. India also became the major global reservoir of indentured labour, a kind of quasi-slavery where workers were paid but had neither freedom nor any significant rights. Some 60,000 South Asians were sent to Fiji to work between 1879 and 1920, 25,000 to Mauritius, and 30,000 to build Kenya’s railways in the 1890s, more than a third of them suffering death or serious injury during the construction. The total number of South Asians, almost all of them Indian, working across the British Empire indicated its global nature, but it also caused disruption to Indian communities on the subcontinent, and led to racial tensions in some colonies, notably Fiji.

“Despite these problems and the failure of the British administration to deal with them adequately, in India and increasingly after 1918 in other parts of the British Empire reform was seen as the best means of bringing stability and order to colonial societies. Conquest was followed in the end by Victorian ‘improvement’. A case in point was the Kingdom of Upper Burma. Fear of growing French power in Indochina prompted British concern when the death of the Burmese king, Mindon Min (1808-78), sparked a struggle for the succession in the course of which the majority of his 110 children were strangled then trampled by elephants (it was taboo to spill royal blood). The victor, King Thibaw in (1859-1916), was not disposed to yield to the British. Indeed it was not so much disapproval of this violence as concern that the new king had begun to open negotiations with the French, who agreed to build a railway and set up a bank, which led the British Conservative government of Lord Salisbury to send in 10,000 troops in 1885. The Burmese forces were defeated and the territory was annexed in 1886 at the end of what became known as the Third Anglo-Burmese War. This was denounced by Liberal MPs as ‘an act of high-handed violence…and act of flagrant folly’, through which the Burmese political system had been destroyed, leaving chaos behind. Guerilla resistance proliferated, led by some of the remaining royal princes, and soon the British had 40,000 troops in the country, engaging in a ‘pacification’ campaign that involved the execution of alleged ‘dacoits’, or rebels, and the burning of their villages.

“By 1890 peace had descended on Burma… What this meant in practice was the wholesale conversion of the countryside to commercial rice production, with vast tracts of forest being felled and British firms bringing in thousands of indentured labourers from India to do the work. This in turn meant roads, railways, seaports, urban and commercial development. Burma became a vitally important source of rice for large parts of the British Empire, notably eastern Africa and above all India, where it supplied 15 per cent of the rice consumed. Meanwhile the habit of British soldiers and administrators of taking Burmese women as their wives or more usually concubines, much complained of in the 1890s, led to the emergence of a new Anglo-Burmese elite that came to dominate the administration of the country in the interwar years, in a comparable
development to the creation of the social stratum of ‘Anglo-Indians’ who fulfilled a similar role on the subcontinent in the same period.”

Tombs presents another side of the picture, defending the British record in India: “Given the size of India (20 percent of the world population in 1820) and its centrality to the empire, it is a devastating accusation to say that it was deliberately or even accidentally impoverished by British policy. What is the verdict? Asian living standards had begun to fall relative to Europe long before imperialism, partly due to political instability; and British rule did not see a further fall, but a slow rise. Asia’s export successes had depended on cheap skilled labour: and the low cost of Indian labour made early technology unviable... Rapid early-nineteenth-century improvements in technology meant that English cotton goods suddenly became both cheaper and better than those of India, which consequently lost its global markets. In space of a generation (roughly from the 1830s to the 1850s) India thus became ‘de-industrialized’, as did China. However, modern mechanized cotton mills began to be built in the 1850s, and by 1876 India reached the ‘one million spindle mark’ – twenty years before Japan and thirty before Brazil. Famous names appeared at this time: J.N. Tata visited Lancashire in 1872 and six years later opened modern cotton mills at Nagapur; his son, Sir Dorabji Tata, established a huge steelworks in 1911. By 1900 India had the fourth largest cotton industry in the world, after England, the USA and Russia. It also had the fourth-largest railway system in the world (paid for by Indians but with British technical direction and aided by cheap British capital), with three-quarters of Asia’s total track – thirty-five times more than China. Agricultural export growth in India was comparable to Brazil’s. Indian industry began competing successfully with British imports – especially as the imperial government gave preference to Indian-produced goods. Indian taxes were 20-40 percent lower than in the non-European world in general, and lower in British India than in the semi-autonomous princely states.

“But even if all this is accepted, the worst accusation is that colonial rulers, by encouraging export-oriented commercial agriculture and building railways, destroyed traditional subsistence farming, using free-market economics as a ‘mask’ for ‘holocaust’ and ‘colonial genocide’. The worst famines in 1876-79, 1888-91 and 1896-1902, caused by severe droughts connected with variations in the ‘El Niño’ current, were worldwide, but particularly deadly in India, China, Brazil, Russia and east Africa. To what extent was Britain responsible? A popular view – propagated today in a range of American universities and racial websites – blames it for every disaster from Brazil to China because it fostered a globalization that brought political, social, economic and ecological catastrophe. Imperial government failed disastrously to prevent a terrible death toll. Yet the Famine Codes drawn up in India in the 1880s were the world’s first anti-famine policy, still consulted today. They proclaimed that ‘the object of State intervention is to save life... all other considerations should be subordinated to this.’ Nor did colonial authorities refuse funds – the spending on famine relief in India in the 1873-74 and 1896-97 was equivalent to over £700m in today’s values, and tens of

Evans, op. cit., pp. 665-668.
millions of people were assisted. But the authorities did fear that mass relief would encourage dependency and prove financially unsustainable, and so they cut relief too quickly. They also over-estimated the ability and willingness of the market to mobilize resources in these unprecedented crises, and were too hierarchical, complacent, dogmatic and finally parsimonious. Was this ‘genocide’? Imperial government did not do enough in the face of mass hunger, and this is widely accepted as an intrinsic failure of unrepresentative governments, colonial or other. Did British policy of encouraging commercial agriculture aggravate natural disaster? The answer is not simple. It depends on whether one assumes that traditional agriculture could have averted similar famines at a time of exceptional climatic disturbance.”751

751 Tombs, op. cit., pp. 569-570.
55. THE BRITISH IN CHINA

There was a huge contradiction at the heart of the British Empire. On the one hand, as we have seen, the British regarded themselves as innately superior to the native peoples they ruled; they were true racists. On the other hand, the ideology on the basis of which they justified their expansionist policies, Free Trade and Human Rights, was universalist.

For, as Tombs writes, “free traders were universalistic: all mankind was morally and intellectually the same, human values were transnational, racial or ethnic differences were irrelevant, and civilization and progress were the right and destiny of all. However, some nations were more advanced than others – with England economically and politically in the lead. This could mean, as one Englishman put it tartly in 1863, that his countrymen thought that ‘all men were morally and intellectually alike’ and all ‘equally inferior to himself’.

“Unquestioned belief in the morality and civilizing influence of commercial freedom explains how a country that was striving to stop the African slave trade was also striving to export opium to China. Some of the same people were involved, notably Palmerston. Although he believed that ‘Her Majesty’s Government cannot interfere for the purpose of enabling British merchants to violate the laws of the country to which they trade,’ he equally believed that ‘Commerce is the best pioneer of civilization,’ making mankind ‘happier, wiser, better’.” 752

In China the British came up against a nation that was much older than theirs, and similar, arguably, in their common sense of racial superiority… Maria Hsia Chang writes: “It is difficult to imagine two civilizations more dissimilar than those of China and the West. Continental in proportion, agrarian China was insular and self-sufficient; industrial Western Europe was driven to export and championed free trade. Chinese culture deified authority and the group; Western civilization was rooted in individualism. Europeans were Judeo-Christians who regarded the Chinese, with their ancestor worship, as benighted pagans. Westerners believed in the rule of law, due process, and innocence until proven guilty; Chinese long opted for rule by Confucian ethics, in which the courts were a last recourse where the accused was presumed to be guilty until proven innocent. Although East and West were each other’s complete opposites, both were great and proud civilizations. The Chinese, an ancient people with a 5,000-year history, still thought they were the centre of the world; Westerners, with a civilization that reached back to Greco-Roman antiquity, found only confirmation of their superiority in their excursions across the globe. It does not take the gifts of a prophet to predict that contact between two such disparate civilizations could only lead to deadly conflict. Indeed, a British trader, writing in 1833 on the miserable trade conditions in China, ominously concluded that ‘war with the Chinese cannot be doubted’.” 753

752 Tombs, op. cit., p. 559.
The problem was that the British wanted to trade with China, but the Chinese did not want to trade with the British. Nevertheless, in what he saw as a magnanimous gesture, Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) had allowed western merchants to trade within a kind of ghetto in Canton with a monopolistic group of Chinese merchants, the Thirteen Hongs. But the British, the “proudest” and “stiffest” of the westerners, found these restrictions “tiresome, insulting, and stultifying”. Just as Rousseau had said that the people had to be “forced to be free” in the political sphere, so the British insisted that Free Trade had to be forced down the throats of every people they came into contact with…

“The China trade,” continues Chang, “had become important for both British consumers and their government. Until 1830, when India began the commercial cultivation of tea, tea could be bought only from China. In 1785, some 15 million pounds of Chinese tea a year were purchased by the British East India Company; tax on that tea accounted for a tenth of the British government’s total revenue. In 1795, and again in 1816, envoys were sent from London to prevail upon the Chinese emperor to improve trade conditions by lifting the restrictions in favor of a modern commercial treaty. Both missions, like the earlier Dutch effort, returned empty handed. To add fuel to fuel, the emperor treated the representatives of the British monarch with customary imperiousness, sublimely oblivious that he was dealing with a new breed of ‘barbarians’. That arrogance was only too evident in the letter to King George III from Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795), in response to the Macartney mission of 1795:

“’My capital is the hub and centre about which all quarters of the globe revolve… Our Celestial Empire possesses all thing in prolific abundance… [and has] no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians… But as the tea, silk and porcelain which the Celestial Empire produces, are absolute necessities to… yourselves, we have permitted, as a signal mark of favor, that foreign hongs should be established at Canton, so that… your country thus participate in our beneficence.’

“What the Chinese did not realize was that Britain had the power to force them into making trade concessions. But before force could be resorted to, a casus belli had to be found. That pretext was opium…”

“William Jardine and James Matheson,” writes Niall Ferguson, “were buccaneering Scotsmen who had set up a trading company in the southern Chinese port of Guangzhou (then known as Canton) in 1832. One of their best lines of business was importing government-produced opium from India. Jardine was a former East India Company surgeon, but the opium he was bringing into China was for distinctly non-medicinal purposes. This was a practice that the Emperor Yongzheng had prohibited over a century before, in 1729, because of the high social costs of opium addiction. On 10 March 1839 an imperial official named Lin Zexu arrived in Canton under orders from the

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Daoguang Emperor to stamp out the trade once and for all. Lin blockaded the Guangzhou opium godowns (warehouses) until the British merchants acceded to his demands. In all, around 20,000 chests of opium valued at £2 million were surrendered. The contents were adulterated to render it unusable and literally thrown into the sea. The Chinese also insisted that henceforth British subjects in Chinese territory should submit to Chinese law. This was not to Jardine’s taste at all. Known to the Chinese as ‘Iron-Headed Old Rat’, he was in Europe during the crisis and hastened to London to lobby the British government. After three meetings with the Foreign Secretary, Viscount Palmerston, Jardine seems to have persuaded him that a show of strength was required, and that ‘the want of power of their war junks’ would ensure an easy victory for a ‘sufficient’ British force. On 20 February 1840 Palmerston gave the order. By June 1840 all the naval preparations were complete. The Qing Empire was about the feel the full force of history’s most successful narco-state: the British Empire.

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

“Thereafter,” writes Chang, “the political integrity of China began to unravel. In 1844, without fighting a war, treaties were concluded with the United States and France that had effects more far-reaching than the Treaty of Nanjing. The Treaty of Wangxia with the United States introduced the most-favored-nation clause and the right of extraterritoriality, both of which had devastating impact on China’s well-being and sovereignty. The most-favored-nation clause extended all bilateral treaties between China and a foreign country to all other interested powers, thereby enabling the United States to obtain all the benefits that Britain had derived from the Treaty of Nanjing (excepting Hong Kong and the indemnity). The right of extraterritoriality, for its part, gave foreigners to China immunity from its laws and criminal justice system. Foreigners suspected of having committed crimes in China would be handed over to their consuls for trial in accordance with their own country’s laws – which was rarely followed through in practice. More than that, the right of extraterritoriality was not mutual. Chinese immigrants in Western countries enjoyed no reciprocal legal immunity.”

756 “Foreigners were placed under the legal jurisdiction of their consuls – a flagrant breach of Chinese sovereignty necessitated, in Western eyes, by the barbarity of Chinese law” (Tombs, op. cit., pp. 560-561). (V.M.)
“France followed the United States by concluding the Treaty of Huangpu, which promptly invoked the most-favored-nation principle, thereby gaining for France every erstwhile concession obtained by Britain and the United States. Additionally, the Chinese agreed to lift their ban on Christianity, opening China to proselytization by French and other Western missionaries.”

The Second Anglo-Chinese War began in 1856 when “the Chinese authorities arrested the crew of a British-registered ship, the Arrow... [The war was] deliberately escalated by the governor of Hong Kong, Sir John Bowring, a free-trade fundamentalist, founder member of the Anti-Corn Law League and former Radical MP for Bolton. Believing that ‘Jesus Christ is Free Trade’ he acted in November 1856 to try to compel the Chinese by force to concede greater commercial access, and ordered the navy to shell the Canton defences – an enterprise denounced both by Tories and more pacifically minded free traders. In retaliation, the Chinese governor of Canton offered $100 for every English head, and attacks on foreigners multiplied. The Earl of Elgin – who deplored imperial expansion as merely ‘increasing the area over which Englishmen... exhibit how hollow and superficial are both their civilization and their Christianity’ – was, ironically, sent to negotiate with the Chinese by force, though his arrival was delayed by the Indian Mutiny. Elgin confided in his diary that the ‘wretched’ Arrow case was ‘a scandal’. He loathed the Hong Kong merchants who ‘for blood and massacre on a great scale’, and who ‘for the most selfish objects are trampling under foot this ancient civilisation’. But he nevertheless permitted a fairly minor bombardment and occupation of Canton in Decembe 1857. The French, determined not to be left out, contributed troops. After sporadic skirmishing, multi-national diplomatic wrangling and broken agreements, it was decided t mount an expedition to Peking. An Anglo-French force land in August 1860, simultaneously negotiating and looting with gusto as they marched...”

When some British prisoners were tortured and killed, Elgin aimed his reprisal “at the imperial court, a furious Elgin in October ordered the destruction of the vast Summer Palace, some 200 buildings in a park outside Peking – a unique cultural monument, though of varying taste. Thus Elgin, sneered Lytton Strachey, ‘in the name of European civilization, took vengeance upon the barbarism of the East.”

“The Convention of Peking (1860) confirmed and extended concessions to foreigners, ceded Kowloon to Britain, accepted foreign diplomats at Peking, and opened ports to foreign trade. The British were determined to prevent the Chinese Empire from collapsing and either becoming ‘another India’ or being partitioned by rivals, particularly Russia and France. So they treated China as as an informal protectorate, preventing other states from obtaining more than minor commercial footholds. The Royal Navy tried to suppress piracy.

757 Chang, op. cit., pp. 70-71. Tombs (op. cit., p. 561) says “perhaps 50 million deaths”.
758 Tombs op. cit., pp. 570, 572-573,
sometimes at Chinese request. British and French troops defended Shanghai against the indomitable Taipings… Shanghai was developed by British business and remained largely under British control until 1937. The British consular service in China was the largest in the world, and the key Chinese Maritime Customs Service, a major source of state income, was run for forty-five years by the incorruptible Sir Robert Hart, who saw himself as a disinterested servant of China: ‘I want to make China strong, and I want to make England her best friend.’”  

The attitudes of Elgin and Hart show an interesting ambiguity. On the one hand, they were servants of the British crown, and therefore had to carry out the commandments of the British Gospel of Free Trade. And so British cotton exports to China multiplied – as did the export of opium. But they were also manifestly impressed by this ancient civilization and inwardly deplored the destruction that the British were clearly inflicting upon it. The question was: could the European imperialists be “friends” of China and strengthen its defences, while at the same time exploit it, imposing unequal treaties upon it at the point of a gun?

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“For China,” writes Ferguson, “the first Opium War ushered in an era of humiliation. Drug addiction exploded. Christian missionaries destabilized traditional Chinese beliefs. And in the chaos of the Taiping Rebellion – a peasant revolt against a discredited dynasty led by the self-proclaimed younger brother of Christ [called Hong Xiuquan] – between 20 and 40 million people lost their lives [although only a small proportion of these deaths was in battle].”  

“At first,” writes Tombs, “the rebels’ quasi-Christianity won some sympathy from the West. British naval officers were officially sent fifty theological questions: ‘Does any one among you know 1. How tall God is, or how broad, 2. What his appearance or colour is, 3. How large his abdomen is, 4. What kind of beard he grows?’ etc., to which they gave ‘courteous and thorough’ answers, but also said that they ‘think it right to state to you distinctly that we… can subscribe to none of your [dogmas].’

There were other western influences, notably communistic ideas. Thus J.M. Roberts writes: “The basis of Taiping society was communism: there was no private property but communal provision for general needs. The land was in theory distributed for working in plots graded by quality to provide just shares.

759 Tombs op. cit., pp. 573-574. Hobsbawm writes: “Hart, who was Inspector General of Chinese Customs from 1863 until 1909, was the master of the Chinese economy and, though he came to be trusted by the Chinese governments and to identify himself with the country, in effect the arrangement implied the entire subordination of the imperial government to the interests of the westerners (The Age of Capital, p. 159).

760 “In the late nineteenth century, about 40 million Chinese, a tenth of the country’s population, were opium addicts” (Harari, Homo Sapiens, p. 364).

761 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 292.
Even more revolutionary was the extension of social and educational equality to women. The traditional binding of their feet was forbidden and a measure of sexual austerity marked the movement’s aspirations (though not the conduct of the ‘Heavenly King’ himself). These things reflected the mixture of religious and social elements which lay at the root of the Taiping cult and the danger it presented to the traditional order.”762

Such elements might lead one to think that this rebellion was undertaken under the direct influence of the West, being an eastern offshoot of the European Age of Revolution. But this would be a mistake, according to Jacques Gernet, insofar as Hung “was only following in the footsteps of other rebel leaders and usurpers who had been regarded as reincarnations of Maitreya, the saviour Buddha... This view fails to recognize the role played by heterodox religions in the big rebellions of Chinese history and the opposition – a basic factor in China – between the official cults, patronized by the legitimate authority, and the religious practices frowned on by the state (yin-ssu). Taoism, Buddhism, and Manicheism all provided popular risings with the messianic hope of a world at peace, harmony, and general prosperity; the Christianity of the T’ai P’ing comes into the same category.”763

Be that is may, it is intriguing that this enormous rebellion, together with the later rebellions it gave rise to, should have taken place at just the time when western ideas were beginning to enter into China. Some causal link seems highly probable. Thus we may agree with the judgement of Eric Hobsbawm that “these convulsions were in important respects the direct product of the western impact on China.

“Perhaps alone among the great traditional empires of the world, China possessed a popular revolutionary tradition, both ideological and practical. Ideologically its scholars and its people took the permanence and centrality of their Empire for granted: it would always exist, under an emperor (except for occasional interludes of division), administered by the scholar-bureaucrats who had passed the great national civil service examinations introduced almost two thousand years before – and only abandoned when the Empire itself was about to die in 1916. Yet its history was that of a succession of dynasties each passing, it was believed, through a cycle of rise, crisis and supersession: gaining and eventually losing that ‘mandate of Heaven’ which legitimised their absolute authority. In the process of changing from one dynasty to the next, popular insurrection, growing from social banditry, peasant risings and the activities of popular secret societies to major rebellion, was known and expected to play a significant part. Indeed its success was itself an indication that the ‘mandate of Heaven’ was running out. The permanence of China, the centre of world civilisation, was achieved through the ever-repeated cycle of dynastic change, which included this revolutionary element.

“The Manchu dynasty, imposed by northern conquerors in the mid-seventeenth century, had thus replaced the Ming dynasty, which had in turn (through popular revolution) overthrown the Mongol dynasty in the fourteenth century. Though in the first half of the nineteenth century the Manchu regime still seemed to function intelligently and effectively – thought it was said with an unusual amount of corruption – there had been signs of crisis and rebellion since the 1790s. Whatever else they may have been due to, it seems clear that the extraordinary increase of the country’s population during the past century (whose reasons are still not fully elucidated) had begun to create acute economic pressures. The number of Chinese is claimed to have risen from around 140 million in 1741 to about 400 million in 1834. The dramatic new element in the situation of China was the western conquest, which had utterly defeated the Empire in the first Opium War (1839-42). The shock of this capitulation to a modest naval force of the British was enormous, for it revealed the fragility of the imperial system, and even parts of popular opinion outside the few areas immediately affected may have become conscious of it. At all events there was a marked and immediate increase in the activities of various forces of opposition, notably the powerful and deeply rooted secret societies such as the Triad of south China, dedicated to the overthrow of the foreign Manchurian dynasty and the restoration of the Ming. The imperial administration had set up militia forces against the British, and thus helped to distribute arms among the civilian population. It only required a spark to produce an explosion.

“That spark was provided in the shape of an obsessed, perhaps psychopathic prophet and messianic leader, Hung Hsiu Chuan (1813-64), one of those failed candidates for the imperial Civil Service examination who were so readily given to political discontent. After his failure at the examination he evidently had a nervous breakdown, which turned into a religious conversion. Around 1847-8 he founded a ‘Society of those who venerate God’, in Kwangsi province, and was rapidly joined by peasants and miners, by men from the large Chinese population of pauperised vagrants, by members of various national minorities and by supporters of the older secret societies. Yet there was one significant novelty in his preaching. Hung had been influenced by Christian writings, had even spent some time with an American missionary in Canton, and thus embodied significant western elements in an otherwise familiar mixture of anti-Manchu, herético-religious and social-revolutionary ideas. The rebellion broke out in 1850 in Kwangsi and spread so rapidly that a ‘Celestial Realm of Universal Peace’ could be proclaimed within a year with Hung as the supreme ‘Celestial King’. It was unquestionably a regime of social revolution, whose major support lay among the popular masses, and dominated by Taoist, Buddhist and Christian ideas of equality. Theocratically organised on the basis of a pyramid of family units, it abolished private property (land being distributed only for use, not ownership), established the equality of the sexes, prohibited tobacco, opium and alcohol, introduced a new calendar (including a seven-day week) and various other cultural reforms, and did not forget to lower taxes. By the end of 1853, the Taipings with at least a million active militants controlled most of south and east China and had capture Nanking, though failing - largely for want of cavalry - to push effectively into the north. China
was divided, and even those parts not under Taiping rule were convulsed by major insurrections such as those of the Nien peasant rebels in the north, not suppressed until 1868, the Miao national minority in Kweichow, and other minorities in the south-west and north-west.

“The Taiping revolution did not maintain itself, and was in fact unlikely to. Its radical innovations alienated moderates, traditionalists and those with property to lose – by no means only the rich – the failure of its leaders to abide by their own puritanical standards weakened its popular appeal, and deep divisions within the leadership soon developed. After 1856 it was on the defensive, and in 1864 the Taiping capital of Nanking was recaptured. The imperial government recovered, but the price it paid for recovery was heavy and eventually proved fatal. It also illustrated the complexities of the western impact.

“Paradoxically the rulers of China had been rather less ready to adopt western innovations than the plebeian rebels, long used to living in an ideological world in which unofficial ideas drawn from foreign sources (such as Buddhism) were acceptable. To the Confucian scholar-bureaucrats who governed the empire what was not Chinese was barbarian. There was even resistance to the technology which so obviously made the barbarians invincible. As late as 1867 Grand Secretary Wo Jen memorialised the throne’s warning that the establishment of a college for teaching astronomy and mathematics would ‘make the people proselytes of foreignism’ and result ‘in the collapse of uprightness and the spread of wickedness’, and resistance to the construction of railways and the like remained considerable. For obvious reasons a ‘modernising’ party developed, but one may guess that they would have preferred to keep the old China unchanged, merely adding to it the capacity to produce western armaments. (Their attempts to develop such production in the 1860s were not very successful for that reason.) The powerless imperial administration in any case saw itself with little but the choice between different degrees of concession to the west. Faced with a major social revolution, it was even reluctant to mobilise the enormous force of Chinese popular xenophobia against the invaders. Indeed, the overthrow of the Taiping seemed politically by far its most urgent problem, and for this purpose the help of the foreigners was, if not essential, then at any rate desirable; their good-will was indispensable. Thus imperial China found itself tumbling rapidly into complete dependence on the foreigners.”

Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848-1875*, pp. 155-159. Stephen Platt writes: “China was not a closed system, and globalism is hardly the recent phenomenon we sometimes imagine it to be. By consequence, the war in China was tangled up in threads leading around the globe to Europe and America, and it was watched from outside with a sense of immediacy and horror.” (*Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China, the West and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War*, pp. xxiii, xxvi, review by Samuel Burt in *Open Democracy*, August 18, 2012)
56. VICTORIAN RELIGION AND MORALITY

“It would be easy,” writes Tombs, “to present Victorian England as a mass of contradictions. It rang with moral exhortation: listening to sermons was a popular pastime, even on honeymoon. Yet vices were not only secretly indulged but publicly flaunted. Politicians could show off their mistresses: for example, the Marquess of Hartington, Liberal MP and later holder of many ministerial offices, who openly took the well-known courtesan Catherine (‘Skittles’) Walters to the Derby in 1862. Aggressive prostitution made parts of London’s West End no-go areas for respectable women, and the staff of the well-known Trocadero restaurant were so nervous about prostitutes that any unknown unaccompanied woman was shunted off into a corner so that ‘in case of misbehavior we can screen the table off’. Property and convention ruled, but emotion was constantly bursting out as men sobbed and women swooned, sometimes over things that even we would find embarrassingly sentimental: one elderly peer sobbed all night after reading one of Dickens’s death scenes. Modernity was lauded; but some of the most creative cultural impulses came from a reinvention of tradition in architecture, art and music. Religion exerted enormous power over people’s lives. Yet never before had its power been so publicly questioned. Matthew Arnold’s poem ‘Dover Beach’ (1851), with its sonorous description of Faith ebbing with a ‘melancholy, long, withdrawing roar’, is said to be the most widely reprinted poem in the language…”

With regard to religion, there was a marked change from the early nineteenth century to the mid-century Victorian era. At the beginning of the century, religion was not something that gentlemen practiced or talked about much. Thus, as David Starkey and Katie Greening write, “the Church of England had fallen to a new low earlier in the century. Its buildings were crumbling, and Anglican church services had become not only devoid of ceremony and ritual, but were often badly organized, understaffed and sparsely attended. On Easter Sunday, 1800, only six communicants attended the morning celebration in St. Paul’s Cathedral.”

The Oxford Movement was a movement of reaction against the decline in religion. It began in 1833 when it was proposed that ten out of twenty-two Irish bishoprics be suppressed. John Keble promptly delivered a sermon on “National Apostasy”, accusing parliament of “direct disavowal of the sovereignty of God”. Another of the leaders of the movement, William Palmer, looking back in 1883 to England in 1833, wrote: “Allusions to God’s being and providence became distasteful to the English parliament. They were voted ill-bred and superstitious; they were the subjects of ridicule as overmuch righteousness. Men were ashamed any longer to say family prayers, or to invoke the blessing of God upon

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765 Tombs, op. cit., p. 463.
their partaking of His gifts; the food which He alone had provided. The mention of His name was tabooed in polite circles.”

And yet only a few decades later, the English could be counted among the more religious nations of Europe. Continental atheism found little response in English hearts. True, Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein* (1816) expressed a fear not only that science might go off the right path and produce monsters, but that it might reveal that man, like Frankenstein, did not have a soul, but was purely material, so that God did not exist. The rapid growth of science, and the emergence of such atheist theories as Darwinism, accentuated these fears. But in the second half of the century, at any rate, the English remained stubbornly “pious”. And if some surprising blasphemies did escape the lips of senior public servants – such as the British consul in Canton’s remark: “Jesus Christ is Free Trade, and Free Trade is Jesus Christ” – this was not common. True, Free Trade was probably the real faith of many in the English governing classes. But officially England was a “most Christian” nation.

This was owing in no small part to the religio-moral movement that we know as Victorianism...

Francis Fukuyama writes: “The Victorian period in Britain and America may seem to many to be the embodiment of traditional values, but when this era began in the mid-nineteenth century, they were anything but traditional. Victorianism was in fact a radical movement that emerged in reaction to the kinds of social disorder that seemed to be spreading everywhere at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a movement that deliberately sought to create new social rules and instill virtues in populations that were seen as wallowing in degeneracy. The shift toward Victorian values began in Britain but was quickly imported into the United States beginning in the 1830s and 1840s. Many of the institutions that were responsible for its spread were overtly religious in nature, and the changes they brought about occurred with remarkable speed. In the words of Paul E. Johnson: “In 1825 a northern businessman dominated his wife and children, worked irregular hours, consumed enormous amounts of alcohol, and seldom voted or went to church. Ten years later the same man went to church twice a week, treated his family with gentleness and love, drank nothing but water, worked steady hours and forced his employees to do the same, campaigned for the Whig Party, and spent his spare time convincing others that if they organized their lives in similar ways, the world would be perfect.’ The nonconformist churches in England and the Protestant sects in the United States, particularly the Wesleyan movement, led the Second Great Awakening in the first decades of the century that followed hard on the rise in disorder and created new norms to keep that order under

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769 As in the patriotic and religious revival of the mid-eighteenth century, music played an important part in this movement. The German Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn, with the help of Victoria and Albert, raised the level of church music, and recalled Handel in his composing the oratorios *St. Paul* (1836) and *Elijah* (1846) (Starkey and Greening, *op. cit.*, p. 302).
control. The Sunday school movement grew exponentially in both England and America between 1821 and 1851, as did the YMCA movement, which was transplanted from England to America in the 1850s. According to Richard Hofstadter, U.S. church membership doubled between 1800 and 1850, and there was a gradual increase in the respectability of church membership itself as ecstatic, evangelical denominations became more restrained in their religious observances. At the same time, the temperance movement succeeded in lowering per capita alcohol consumption on the part of Americans back down to a little over two gallons by the middle of the century...

“These attempts to reform British and American society from the 1830s on in what we now label the Victorian era were a monumental success…”

We can measure the success of Victorianism by the sharp reversal in the trends for crime and illegitimacy, which increased through the first half of the nineteenth century (and especially during the Napoleonic wars), but from about 1845 declined steadily until the end of the century. We find a similar pattern in America, with the peak in crime coming about thirty years later. However, in spite of its undoubted success in raising the external morality and efficiency of the Anglo-Saxon nations, Victorianism has had a bad press. It has been seen as the product of pride and engendering hypocrisy. As we shall see, there is some truth in this (although exaggerated in the sphere of sexuality). Moreover, the rise of Victorianism coincided, paradoxically, with a decline in faith in many spheres.

“Victorian England,” writes Tombs, “was a highly religious society: this was one of the best and worst things about it. But so had the country been in previous centuries, and so were all contemporary societies. How religious was it? Its favourite books included the Bible and Pilgrim’s Progress. But when for the first and only time a census recorded religious practice on Sunday, 30 March, 1851, the statistics shocked many. They showed a relatively high number ‘neglecting’ religious services – estimated at 5.3 million people, 29 percent of the population. However, 7.3 million did attend church – 41 percent of the population, about 70 percent of those able to do so. These levels are similar to those in the United States in the 2000s, though five times higher than the 8 percent attending Sunday worship in Britain in 2000.”

The Russian theologian Alexis Khomiakov was amazed at how silent the streets of London were on a Sunday. And he wrote: “Germany has in reality no religion at all but the idolatry of science; France has no serious longings for truth, and little sincerity; England with its modest science and its serious love of religious truth might [seem] to give some hopes…”

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771 Fukuyama, _op. cit._, pp. 268-269.
772 Tombs, _op. cit._, p. 465.
773 Khomiakov, First Letter to William Palmer, in W.J. Birkbeck, _Russia and the English Church_, London: Rivington, Percival & Co., 1895, p. 6. Cf. the Fourth Letter: “An almost boundless Individualism is the characteristic feature of Germany, and particularly of Prussia. Here in Berlin it would be difficult to find one single point of faith, or even one feeling, which could be
Tombs continues: “More than half of 1851 attendances were at Nonconformist chapels, not the Church of England. England had since the seventeenth century been unusually diverse and divided in its beliefs – ‘sixty sects and only one sauce,’ joked a French observer. Yet over the eighteenth century Old Dissent (Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers) legally tolerated in 1689, stagnated, and Anglican dominance seemed unchallengeable. The explosion of ‘New Dissent’ (especially Methodism) from the 1770s to the 1840s marked one of the most dramatic social and cultural changes in the country’s history. English religion no longer consisted of a national Church with a few licensed dissenters, but of some ninety churches and sects. The omnipresent Church of England remained by far the larges – 85 percent of marriage in 1851 were in church, and only 6 percent in chapel. But the 1832 Reform Act had increased the voting power of Nonconformists – about 20 percent of the new electorate. Many of them demanded outright disestablishment, some vehemently denouncing ‘the white-chokered, immoral, wine-spilling, degraded clergy, backed by debauched aristocrats and degraded wives and daughters.’ To understand the continuing importance of the Church, and the vehemence of both its defenders and attackers, we would have to imagine an institution today combining the BBC, the major universities, parts of the Home Office, and much of the welfare, judicial and local-government systems.

“Anglicanism was both strengthened and weakened by its ancient institutional structures. It was strongest in the Midlands and the south of England, and weak around the edges – the north, the south-west, the Scottish and Welsh borders, and Wales. This was originally for basic material reasons – scattered populations, low incomes and inability to support a resident clergy. But from the 1750s these areas boomed in population and industry. By the time the Church responded – building over 4,000 churches between 1820 and 1870, an effort unique in history – many people had been integrated into Nonconformist sects, especially Methodism: on ’census Sunday’ its chapels attracted about 2.25 million, over 20 percent of the total, and up to half of those in towns. John Wesley’s flexible and even opportunistic methods (moving on when there was no response and consolidating where converts were made) proved highly successful: Methodism was the only denomination that positively thrived on socio-economic change – including population growth, industrialization, migration and social mobility. So, in its various forms, it became the most powerful catalyst of cultural dissidence in England. Chapels and their Sunday schools, often staffed by self-taught artisans and miners, became a channel of revolt against the squire and the parson, providing an autonomous religious environment affording moral legitimacy, solidarity and self-confidence. In rural society, this might attract farmers who resented paying church rates and tithes, considered as a link of true spiritual communion in the Christian meaning of the word. Even the desire for harmony seems to be extinguished, and that predominance of individualism, that spiritual solitude among the ever-busy crowd, sends to the heart a feeling of dreariness and desolation…. Still the earnestness of the German mind in all intellectual researches is not quite so disheartening as the frivolous and self-conceited gaiety of homeless and thoughtless France.” (Birkbeck, op. cit., pp. 77-78).
labourers in dispute with their bosses – even poachers. In short, all who detested parsons, who were also often Poor Law guardians or JPs: Radicals never forgot that it was a clerical magistrate who had read the Riot Act at Peterloo [in 1819]. The Primitive Methodists (the ‘Prims’), who doubled their numbers during the conflictual 1830s, remained a sect of the poor, preaching a lively message of ‘the 3 Rs’: ‘ruin, repentance and redemption’; and their preachers provided a constant stream of trade union leaders. Mainstream Methodism attracted the hard-working, respectable and newly prosperous businessmen who now had the vote and became one of the most dynamic forces in English politics.

“Smaller older sects, such as the Quakers and Unitarians, became the religion of urban and business elites, at least as much as the Church of England was that of the squirearchy... Some were also influential philanthropists and campaigners: pious Dissenting families regarded their wealth and privilege as imposing a God-given duty to society. Similarly, Evangelicalism, which influenced both Church and Dissent, was a call to public and political action in almost every sphere. It created vast numbers of charities and philanthropic lobby groups – many still in existence – largely depending on the voluntary labours of middle-class women. Women as well as men were politically organized and powerful as lobby groups, despite lacking the vote. To their pressure is due much of what is ‘Victorian’ in social and cultural life: anti-slavery, animal protection, Sunday Observance, prison reform, temperance, protection of women, and prosecution of obscenity and illicit sexuality. The so-called Nonconformist conscience was willing to use political action and law enforcement as a means of extending moral behaviour.”

“A challenge to Anglicanism from the other end of the spectrum was the Oxford Movement, an 1820s High Church dons’ revolt led by the poet John Keble, the Regius Professor of Hebrew Edward Pusey, and the vicar of St. Mary’s, John Henry Newman. The rebels were determined, in Newman’s words, to resist ‘Rationalism’ and ‘Liberalism’ in the Church which led to the subversive conclusion that ‘no theological doctrine is anything more than an opinion.’ During the 1840s Pusey was banned from preaching and Newman censured.”

The Movement began, as we have seen, with John Keble’s sermon to the Oxford Assize Judges in July, 1833, in which he warned against “the growing indifference, in which men indulge themselves, to other men’s religious sentiments”. Later, in his famous Tract 90, John Newman sought to interpret the Anglican 39 Articles in such a way as to make them consistent with Catholic teaching. This led to a backlash, which eventually forced Newman to leave Anglicanism and join the Roman Church, where he became a cardinal. The Oxford Movement then devolved into the Cambridge Camden Society, which explored medieval liturgy, music and architecture, and which was led by Pusey.

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775 Tombs, op. cit., p. 467.
Pusey developed the branch theory of the Church, according to which Anglicanism, Catholicism and Orthodoxy were three branches of the One Church. This aroused the interest of Khomiakov with hopes of a genuine rapprochement between Anglicans and Orthodox. Not that he agreed with the branch theory: his *The Church is One* is an effective refutation of the heresy.

The main contribution of the Oxford Movement was to return attention to the *dogma of the Church*, which Anglican theology had seriously neglected. “The whole point of the Movement,” writes Geoffrey Faber, “lay in the assertion – no less passionately made than the Evangelical’s assertion of his private intimacy with God – that men deceive themselves if they seek God otherwise than through the Church. It should be needless to add that in the teachings of Keble, Pusey, Newman, and the Tractarians generally, the relationship of the individual soul to God was just as important as in the teaching of John Wesley. But the importance of that relationship was not to be thought of as transcending the importance of the Church. The Church was the divinely established means of grace. But she was something else and something greater. She was the continuing dwelling place of God’s spirit upon earth, and as such she had owed to her all the honour and glory within the power of men to pay.”

The semblance of Catholicity that the Oxford Movement gave to Anglicanism deceived Khomyakov – as it deceived many later Orthodox theologians. In the midst of her “Babylonian” materialism, as exemplified above all by the 1851 Great Exhibition, England seemed to him to have “higher thoughts”: “England, in my opinion, has never been more worthy of admiration than this year. The Babylonian enterprise of the Exhibition and its Crystal Palace, which shows London to be the true and recognized capital of Universal Industry, would have been sufficient to engross the attention and intellectual powers of any other country; but England stands evidently above its own commercial wonders. Deeper interests agitate her, higher thoughts direct her mental energy…”

In the end, as the Oxford movement petered out - Khomiakov’s friend, William Palmer, joined Catholicism, not Orthodoxy, as did Newman, - and England joined with “insincere” France and infidel Turkey in the Crimean War against Holy Russia, Khomiakov’s admiration turned to disillusion and anger. In his last years he may well have felt closer in his estimate of England to Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who was appalled by his visit to London in 1862.

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776 Dr. Joseph Overbeck, one of the first Western converts to Orthodoxy, wrote about Pusey: “Dr. Pusey is the father of the so-called Anglo-Catholics, sometimes styled Puseyites, though by this by-name are generally understood those High-Churchmen who revel in decorative tom-fooleries and stylish ceremonies. He was, though not the originator, still a mighty support of the Tractarian movement. He quieted the passions of the young hot-brained Tractarians, smoothed down the Romanizing tendencies, and was always an upright friend of the Eastern Church, which he considered to be in unison with his own. Still he remained a Western Churchman, guided by the true idea that both Churches are fully entitled to have their own way and subsistence, only linked by the bond of common Catholic truth and Catholic Constitution. He would be quite right, provided his Church were a true branch of the Western Catholic Church.”


“On the streets,” writes Geir Kjetsaa, he “saw people wearing beautiful clothes in expensive carriages, side by side with others in filth and rags. The Thames was poisoned, the air polluted; the city seemed marked by joyless drinking and wife abuse. The writer was particularly horrified by child prostitution:

“'Here in the Haymarket, I saw mothers who brought along their young daughters and taught them their occupation. And these twelve-year-old girls took you by the hand and asked to be accompanied. One evening, in the swarm of people I saw a little girl dressed in rags, dirty, barefoot, emaciated and battered. Through her rags I could see that her body was covered with bloody stripes. She wandered senseless in the crowd... perhaps she was hungry. No one paid her any attention. But what struck me most was her sad expression and the hopelessness of her misery. It was rather unreal and terribly painful to look at the despair and cursed existence of this small creature.'

“When he visited the London World’s Fair with ‘civilization’s shining triumphs’, Dostoyevsky again found himself possessed by feelings of fear and dejection. Appalled, he recoiled from the hubris that had created the Crystal Palace’s ‘colossal decorations’. Here was something taken to its absolute limit, he maintained, here man’s prideful spirit had erected a temple to an idol of technology: “‘This is a Biblical illustration, this speaks of Babylon, in this a prophet of the Apocalypse is come to life. You feel that it would take unbelievable spiritual strength not to succumb to this impression, not to bow before this consummate fact, not to acknowledge this reality as our ideal and mistake Baal for God.’”

Lev Tolstoy, who visited the city in 1861, noted the sexual hypocrisy of the city with its thousands of prostitutes, but thought they had an important role to play in preserving the institution of the family. “Imagine London without its 80,000 magdalenes – what would happen to families?” he wrote. However, Tombs argues that the “widely repeated estimate of 80,000 or more prostitutes in London should probably be closer to 5,000. A proof of the power of respectable Nonconformity to shape actual behaviour was the rarity of prostitution in the northern towns. We should be skeptical of the idea that hypocrisy was a Victorian hallmark: ‘As a matter of plain fact, sexual hypocrisy in the recorded lives of notable Victorians is rare.’

Dostoyevsky saw through the Englishman’s religiosity, calling it “atheism”, because ultimately it was the worship of man wrapped in the trappings of the worship of God. He noted that English thinkers such as Mill were impressed by Auguste Comte’s idea of a “Religion of Humanity”, and in 1876 he wrote: “In

782 Tombs, op. cit., p. 482.
their overwhelming majority, the English are extremely religious people; they are thirsting for faith and are continually seeking it. However, instead of religion – notwithstanding the state ‘Anglican’ religion – they are divided into hundreds of sects. Here, for instance, is what an observer who keeps a keen eye on these things in Europe, told me about the character of certain altogether atheistic doctrines and sects in England: ‘You enter into a church: the service is magnificent, the vestments are expensive; censers; solemnity; silence; reverence among those praying. The Bible is read; everybody comes forth and kisses the Holy Book with tears in his eyes, and with affection. And what do you think this is? This is the church of atheists. Why, then, do they kiss the Bible, reverently listening to the reading from it and shedding tears over it? – This is because, having rejected God, they began to worship ‘Humanity’. Now they believe in Humanity; they deify and adore it. And what, over long centuries, has been more sacred to mankind than this Holy Book? – Now they worship it because of its love of mankind and for the love of it on the part of mankind; it has benefited mankind during so many centuries – just like the sun, it has illuminated it; it has poured out on mankind its force, its life. And “even though its sense is now lost”, yet loving and adoring mankind, they deem it impossible to be ungrateful and to forget the favours bestowed by it upon humanity…’

“In this there is much that is touching and also much enthusiasm. Here there is actual deification of humankind and a passionate urge to reveal their love. Still, what a thirst for prayer, for worship; what a craving for God and faith among these atheists, and how much despair and sorrow; what a funeral procession in lieu of a live, serene life, with its gushing spring of youth, force and hope! But whether it is a funeral or a new and coming force – to many people this is a question.”

Dostoyevsky then quotes from his novel, A Raw Youth, from the “dream of a Russian of our times – the Forties – a former landowner, a progressive, a passionate and noble dreamer, side by side with our Great Russian breadth of life in practice. This landowner also has no faith and he, too, adores humanity ‘as it befits a Russian progressive individual.’ He reveals his dream about future mankind when there will vanish from it every conception of God, which, in his judgement, will inevitably happen on earth.

“‘I picture to myself, my dear,’ he began, with a pensive smile, ‘that the battle is over and that the strife has calmed down. After maledictions, lumps of mud and whistles, lull has descended and men have found themselves alone, as they wished it; the former great idea has abandoned them; the great wellspring of energy, that has thus far nourished them, has begun to recede as a lofty, receding Sun, but this, as it were, was mankind’s last day. And suddenly men grasped that they had been left all alone, and forthwith they were seized with a feeling of great orphanhood. My dear boy, never was I able to picture people as having grown ungrateful and stupid. Orphaned men would at once begin to draw themselves together closer and with more affection; they would grasp each

other’s hands, realizing that now they alone constituted everything to one another. The grand idea of immortality would also vanish, and it would become necessary to replace it, and all the immense over-abundance of love for Him who, indeed, had been Immortality, would in every man be focused on nature, on the universe, on men, on every particle of matter. They would start loving the earth and life irresistibly, in the measure of the gradual realization of their transiency and fluency, and theirs would now be a different love – not like the one in days gone by. They would discern and discover in nature such phenomena and mysteries as had never heretofore been suspected, since they would behold nature with new eyes, with the look of a lover gazing upon his inamorata. They would be waking up and hastening to embrace one another, hastening to love, comprehending that days are short and that this is all that is left to them…’

“Isn’t there here, in this fantasy, something akin to that actually existent ‘Atheists’ Church’?”

The American writer Emerson came to the same conclusion in his English Traits (1856). As Lionel Trilling writes: “These people, he says, have no religious belief and therefore nothing is ‘so odious as the polite bows to God’ which they constantly make in their books and newspapers… [However, continues Trilling,] no student of Victorian life will now confirm Emerson in the simplicity with which he describes the state of religious belief in England. It is true that the present indifference of the English to religion – apart from the rites of birth, marriage, and death – was already in train. By the second half of the nineteenth century the working classes of England were almost wholly alienated from the established Church and increasingly disaffected from the Nonconformist sects. It was the rare intellectual who was in any simple sense a believer. The commitment of the upper classes was largely a social propriety, and Emerson was doubtless right when he described it as cant. It is possible to say that the great Dissenting sects of the middle classes were animated as much by social and political feelings as by personal faith and doctrinal predilections. Still, when all the adverse portents have been taken into account, the fact remains that religion as a force in the life of the nation was by no means yet extinct and not even torpid, what with Low Church and High Church, Oxford Movement and the unremitting dissidence of Dissent, public trials over doctrine and private suffering over crises of belief. Christian faith was taken for granted as an element of virtue; as late as 1888, Mrs. Humphry Ward, a niece of Matthew Arnold, could scandalize the nation with her novel, Robert Elsmere, the history of a gifted and saintly young clergyman who finds Christian doctrine unacceptable; Gladstone himself felt called upon to review the book at enormous length.

“The history of England was bound up with religion, which still exercised a decisive influence upon the nation’s politics, its social and ethical style, and its intellectual culture. If there was indeed an attenuation of personal faith which gave rise to the insincerity that Emerson discerned, among the intellectual

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784 Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, op. cit., p. 266.
classes it had an opposite effect, making occasion for the exercise of a conscious and strenuous sincerity. The salient character-type of the Victorian educated classes was formed, we might say, in response to the loss of religious faith – the non-believer felt under the necessity of maintaining in his personal life the same degree of seriousness and earnestness that had been appropriate to the state of belief; he must guard against falling into the light-minded libertinism of the French – ‘You know the French…,’ Matthew Arnold said. Perhaps the greatest distress associated with the evanescence of faith, more painful and disintegrating than can now be fully imagined, was the loss of the assumption that the universe is purposive. This assumption, which, as Freud says, ‘stands and falls with the religious system’, was, for those who held it, not merely a comfortable idea but nothing less than a category of thought; its extirpation was a psychic catastrophe. The Victorian character was under the necessity of withstanding this extreme deprivation, which is to say, of not yielding to the nihilism it implied.

“How this end might be achieved is suggested by the anecdote about George Eliot – it has become canonical – which F.W.H. Myers relates. On a rainy May evening Myers walked with his famous guest in the Fellows’ Garden of Trinity College, Cambridge, and she spoke of God, Immortality, and Duty. God, she said, was inconceivable. Immortality was unbelievable. But it was beyond question that Duty was ‘peremptory and absolute’. ‘Never, perhaps,’ Myers says, ‘have sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensing Law. I listened and night fell; her majestic countenance turned towards me like a sybil in the gloom; it was as though she withdrew from my grasp the two scrolls of promise, and left me with the third scroll only, awful with inscrutable fate.’ Much as George Eliot had withdrawn from her host, she had not, we may perceive, left him with nothing. A categorical Duty – might it not seem, exactly in its peremptoriness and absoluteness, to have been laid down by the universe itself and thus to validate the personal life that obeyed it? Was a categorical Duty wholly without purpose, without some end in view, since it so nearly matched one’s own inner imperative, which, in the degree that one responded to it, assured one’s coherence and selfhood? And did it not license the thought that man and the universe are less alien to each other than they may seem when the belief in God and Immortality are first surrendered?”

One of the questions that troubled the Victorians was the relationship between religion and science, doubts that would become more acute after the publication of Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in 1859 (to which we shall devote a separate chapter). Another was the impact of industrialization on the spiritual life in a more general sense. Thus Thomas Carlyle wrote in *Sartor Resartus*: “Now the Genius of Mechanism smotheres [man] worse than any Nightmare did. In Earth and Heaven he can see nothing but Mechanism; he has fear for nothing else, hope in nothing else… To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb.”

But whatever their doubts, and however great the inconsistencies between their beliefs and actions, the Victorians were prepared to go to great pains to export their religion to other lands, as the efforts of Livingstone in Africa and Lord Redstock in Russia demonstrate. As late as 1904, writes Niall Ferguson, the German satirical magazine Simplicissimus pointed to this religiosity and missionary enthusiasm of the British Empire by comparison with the other empires “with a cartoon contrasting the different colonial powers. In the German colony even the giraffes and crocodiles are taught to goose-step. In the French, relations between the races are intimate to the point of indecency. In the Congo the natives are simply roasted over an open fire and eaten by King Leopold. But British colonies are conspicuously more complex than the rest. There, the native is force-fed whisky by a businessman, squeezed in a press for every last penny by a soldier and compelled to listen to a sermon by a missionary…”

This Victorian attachment to Duty in the place of God and Immortality explains the puzzling fact that while English liberalism made a fetish of liberty, and the Anglican Church tolerated a wide range of beliefs in the most liberal fashion, in the realm of morals, as George Mosse writes, “very little freedom was allowed. For Liberals accepted and furthered that change in morality which came about at the turn of the century. It is important, therefore, to discuss this morality in connection with liberalism, even though it became the dominant morality in England generally and in much of Europe as well. Liberal freedom… was severely circumscribed and restricted by this development.

“It is difficult to analyze the moral pattern which accompanied liberal thought. There is no doubt that the turn of the century saw a change in the moral tone of society, which is easily illustrated. Sir Walter Scott’s aged aunt asked him to procure for her some of the books she had enjoyed in her youth during the previous century. Sir Walter did as he was bid and later when he ventured to hope that she had enjoyed this recapturing of her youth her answer greatly surprised him. His aunt blushed at the mention of the books and allowed that she had destroyed them because they were not fit reading. Similarly, in Germany, a lady sitting next to the writer Brentano told him how much she had enjoyed a play he had written in his youth. How startled she must have been when the author, instead of being pleased, replied that as a woman and mother she should have been ashamed to read such a work. This change is what Sir Harold Nicolson has characterised as the ‘onslaught of respectability’. It was, as these examples show, quite rapid, almost within one generation.

“What lay behind this tightening up of morality? Only tentative answers can be given, for as yet little is known about this phenomenon. It seems certain that the evangelical movement in England, the strongest element in nonconformity, and the pietistic movements in Europe had a direct influence on the morality of the age. Both these movements had remained outside the mainstream of the Enlightenment; both were opposed to its main tenets. It is often forgotten that

the eighteenth century witnessed a religious revival even while the philosophes were writing their enlightened tracts. This revival stressed piety, not the piety of Church attendance but the piety of the heart. Dogma had no great interest for either the Wesley brothers in England or Count Zinzendorf in Germany; true conversion of the spirit was the center of their religious thought. Such piety required a casting off of the worldly frivolities. Especially in England it revived the Puritan idea of life as a struggle between the world and the spirit, between the lusts of the flesh and dedication to one's calling.

"Two other factors strengthened this reawakened moral passion. There was a moral reaction against the French Revolution and its antireligious bent. Madame de Staël had seen in the Reign of Terror a moral failing on the part of the people; many Englishmen linked the events of the French Revolution to the prevalence of immorality in that nation. Men and women of the nobility and middle classes called for moral reform at home in order that Revolutionary immorality might be better withstood in the struggle between the two nations. Pamphlets and diaries give ample evidence of an attempted reform of manners. Frivolity, worldly and sexual excesses were regarded as unworthy of a nation engaged in a life and death struggle with forces which symbolized all that was immoral. The Evangelicals in England benefited from this feeling of distaste. Sunday observances were revived; frivolity was taken as a sign of levity in a time of serious crisis. William Wilberforce persuaded King George III to issue a royal proclamation in 1787 which condemned vice. Considering the immoral tone of his sons, this could not have lacked irony.

"The second factor, associated with the expanding economy, was the rapid rise within the social hierarchy of the newly rich. This self-assertive and ambitious bourgeoisie brought with them a dedication to hard work and a sense of the superiority of the values of the self-made man to those of the old aristocracy. These values blended in with the revived Puritan impetus exemplified by the evangelical movement. Never a part of the idle and sophisticated aristocracy, these men, through the increasing fluidity of English class lines, now infiltrated that class. No wonder that Edmund Burke lamented the vanished 'unbought grace of life' of a previous age. Now the grace of membership in the upper classes was bought and that, in itself, created a different attitude toward life. Piety, moral revulsion against the French Revolution, and the attitudes of the bourgeoisie all contributed to the new moral tone. This was not confined to England; such conditions were present in all of western Europe, but it was England which best exemplified these moral attitudes, for they fitted in with liberal thought which now took up and furthered this morality as suited to its ideology in the age of the Industrial Revolution. Individualism stood in the forefront combined with the kind of toughness which made for victory in the struggle for existence. What was needed was sobriety, hard work, and an emphasis on action. Such a life exemplified the true Christian spirit and on the basis of the individuality of one's own character led to self-fulfilment.
“Two passages from Charles Kingsley’s famous novel Westward Ho! (1855) demonstrate the conception of this new attitude by a leading Evangelical. The duty of man was to be bold against himself, as one of the book’s heroes explained to his young companion: ‘To conquer our fancies and our own lusts and our ambitions in the sacred name of duty; this is to be truly brave, and truly strong; for he who cannot rule himself, how can he rule his crew or his fortunes?’ What the Puritans had designated their ‘calling’ was here named duty. The individualism involved was brought out further in another passage from Kingsley’s book. There were two sorts of people: one trying to do good according to certain approved rules he had learned by ear, and the other not knowing whether he was good or not, just doing the right thing because the Spirit of God was within him. It was this sort of piety which became fashionable at the turn of the century. The contemplative side of pietism gave way to a piety of action. This transformation was in tune with the experiences of the commercial and industrial classes, though seventeenth-century Puritans had already stated repeatedly that ‘action is all’.

“This action was exemplified by what the Victorians called the ‘gospel of work’. As Carlyle put it: ‘…. Not what I have but what I do is my kingdom.’ It was in work that duty was exemplified. John Henry Newman shared this emphasis on work: ‘We are not here that we might go to bed at night, and get up in the morning, toil for our bread, eat and drink, laugh and joke, sin when we have a mind and reform when we are tired of sinning, rear a family and die.’ Work had to be done in the right spirit: the service of God in one’s secular calling.

“Samuel Smiles’s Self Help (1859), which propagandised this morality and its application to work, was the most successful book of the century – over a quarter of a million copies were sold by 1905. Its popularity was as great outside England as within the country. Garibaldi was a great admirer of the book, as was the Queen of Italy. In Japan it was the rage under the title European Decision and Character Book. The mayor of Buenos Aires compared Smiles, surprisingly, to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Quite rightly these underdeveloped countries saw in Smiles’s book a reflection of attitudes which were making an important contribution to the successful industrialization of England.

“The aim of Self Help was to aid the working classes in improving themselves so as to reach the top. This path was marked by the improvement of the individual character of those who desired to be a success in life. ‘The crown and glory of life is character.’ What this character should be Smiles illustrated through examples of men who raised themselves to fame and fortune. Character had to be formed by morals, for to Smiles, social and economic problems were really problems for morality. When he talked about thrift and saving it was the moral aspect of self-reliance and restraint which appealed to him and not the economic consequences of such practices. Character was also shaped by the competitive struggle – stop competition and you stop the struggle for individualism. This struggle had to be conducted in a ‘manly way’ if success was to follow. He exhorted the workers to become gentlemen, for this meant the
acquisition of a keen sense of honor, scrupulously avoiding mean actions. ‘His law is rectitude – action in right lines.’ Here was a rooted belief in a moral code as the sole road to worldly success...”787

The Victorians’ keen sense of character, honour and manliness appears to go back to an attitude of the Italian Renaissance. Thus in about 1860 Jacob Burckhardt wrote about “that moral force which was then the strongest bulwark against evil. The highly gifted man of that day thought to find it in the sentiment of honour. This is that enigmatic mixture of conscience and egotism which often survives in the modern man after he has lost, whether by his own fault or not, faith, love and hope. This sense of honour is compatible with much selfishness and great vices, and may be the victim of astonishing illusions; yet, nevertheless, all the noble elements that are left in the wreck of a character may gather around it, and from this foundation may draw new strength. It has become, in a far wider sense than is commonly believed, a decisive test of conduct in the minds of the cultivated Europeans of our own day, and many of those who yet hold faithfully by religion and morality are unconsciously guided by this feeling in the gravest decisions of their lives.”788

Yes, Victorians’ code of morality based on a sense of honour was indeed the road to worldly success, both at home and abroad. It protected them from certain sins such as laziness and petty thievery, but not from more serious ones such as pride and avarice – although it must be acknowledged that the Victorian era was a time of charities and alms-giving on a large scale. As such it could not help being supremely worldly and hypocritical from a Christian point of view: as the Lord said of the Victorians’ first-century predecessors: “Verily I say unto you: they have had their reward” (Matthew 6.5)...

Foreigners were impressed by England’s political system because it seemed to combine freedom with stability, individualism with solidarity, power with prosperity (for the few), gradual extension of rights with traditional deference to title and rank, science and progress with morality and religion. The German encyclopaedist Carl Welcker called it “the most glorious creation of God and nature and simultaneously humanity’s most admirable work of art”. “What impressed European liberals,” writes Evans, “was the ability of the British political system to avoid revolution through timely concessions to liberal demands.”

Why was England able to avoid the continual upheavals that we see in contemporary France and on the continent? Probably the most important single factor was the morality of duty and respectability noted above, which acted as a strong deterrent on bad behaviour in all classes. “Respectability,” writes Tombs, “was a much broader process than merely compelling the working classes to accept middle-class standards of decorum. It meant working people themselves wishing to create security, cleanliness and safety for their families, asserting a social status, ‘keeping up appearances’, and raising children according to various ideals of Progress, Christianity, manliness and femininity...The attainment of respectability was a source of pride and the basis of political assertion. For example, mid-century Chartists and later Radicals demanded democratic rights on the grounds that they were respectable heads of households.”

The Victorians did not like the idea of the “grandmotherly state” – what we call the “nanny state” – because it offended their pride in themselves as being able to help themselves. And if that meant that the state intruded less, this was balanced by the fact that the neighbours intruded more. As the Russian exile Alexander Herzen, who lived in London in the 1850s, put it: “The freer a country is from government interference... the more intolerant grows the mob: your neighbour, your butcher, your tailor, family, club, parish keep you under supervision and perform the duties of a policeman.”

This was reflected in a much less tolerant attitude to criminals than in, for example, Russia. Thus Tolstoy wrote: “I was struck when I saw in the streets of London a criminal escorted by the police, and the police had to protect him energetically from the crowd, which threatened to tear him in pieces. With us it is just the opposite, police have to drive away in force the people who try to give the criminal money and bread. With us, criminals and prisoners are ‘little unhappy ones’.”

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789 Evans, op. cit., p. 183.
790 Tombs, op. cit., pp. 477, 479.
791 Herzen, My Past and Thoughts; in Tombs, op. cit., p. 477.
Another factor enabling the English to combine relative freedom in governance with stability was undoubtedly the authorities’ ability to use the improved methods of communication, especially the railways, to concentrate the power of a greatly increased police force against troublemakers more quickly than on the continent. For example, 80,000 new constables were quickly created and deployed at the peak of the Chartist riots. Again, the unprecedentedly large emigration to America and the White Dominions (in the case of Australia, of course, this “emigration” was compulsory) served as a safety-valve to expel the desperately poor (especially the Irish). A third factor was that the rapidly increasing lower middle classes, though poor, already had more than their chains to lose, and so tended to support the existing system. They needed the patronage of the rich, and looked down on the proletarians below them, whose desperation they feared. The rulers took this into account, and so were able to introduce just enough reforms to maintain stability without creating a totalitarian state.

As Jacques Barzun writes: “This knack of judging when and how things must change without upsetting the apple cart was painfully acquired by the English over the centuries. They were long reputed the ungovernable people. But fatigue caught up at last and a well-rooted anti-intellectualism helped to keep changes unsystematic and under wraps. Forms, titles, décor remain while different actions occur beneath them; visual stability maintains confidence. It was the knack of rising above principle, the reward of shrewd inconsistency.”

The “knack” paid dividends (literally and metaphorically). The 1850s saw England at her peak from an external, material point of view. Her navies ruled the seas; her trade and industry was far greater than any other country’s (though America and Germany were catching up fast); and while liberalism was checked on the continent after 1848 as monarchy revived and the proletariat raged, in England it remained remarkably stable.

As John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge write, “British liberals took a decrepit old system and reformed it, establishing a professional civil service, attacking cronyism, opening up markets, and restricting the state’s right to subvert liberty. The British state shrank in size even as it dealt with the problems of a fast-industrializing society and a rapidly expanding global empire. Gross income from all forms of taxation fell from just under 80 million pounds in 1816 to well under 60 million pounds in 1846, despite a nearly 50 percent increase in the size of the population. The vast network of patronage appointees who made up the unreformed state was rolled up and replaced by a much smaller cadre of carefully selected civil servants. The British Empire built a ‘night-watchman state’, as it was termed by the German socialist Ferdinand Lasalle, which was both smaller and more competent than its rivals across the English Channel.

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“The thinker who best articulated these changes was John Stuart Mill, who strove to place freedom, rather than security, at the heart of governance... Mill’s central political concern was not how to create order out of chaos but how to ensure that the beneficiaries of order could achieve self-fulfilment. For Mill, the test of a state’s virtue was the degree to which it allowed each person to develop fully his or her abilities. And the surest mechanism for doing this was for government to get out of the way…”  

It was to give a theoretical underpinning to this English variety of liberalism, that John Stuart Mill wrote his famous essay *On Liberty*, which remains to this day the most elegant and influential defence of English liberalism.

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

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

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This qualification provided a neat justification for the spread of the British Empire among the pagan nations; and in general, in spite of the fact that Mill was concerned above all to protect the liberty of the individual against the tyranny of the majority and popular morality, his theory fitted in remarkably well with the prejudices of the majority in the England of his time. Thus the English prided themselves on their freedom of speech, and their giving refuge to political exiles of every kind, from Louis XVIII and Louis Napoleon to Herzen and Bakunin, Kossuth and Marx.\(^798\) No tyranny of the majority here!

Mill provided a passionate defence of the widest possible freedom of thought and speech. “First,” he argued, ‘the opinion which it is attempted to suppress by authority may possibly be true. Those who desire to suppress it, of course, deny its truth; but they are not infallible. They have no authority to decide the question for all mankind and exclude every other person from the means of judging. To refuse a hearing to an opinion because they are sure that it is false is to assume that their certainty is the same thing as absolute certainty. All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility.’\(^799\)

No: there is a difference between certainty and the assumption of infallibility. A man may consider himself to be a wretched sinner and prone to all kinds of errors, and yet be completely certain of some things. All true religious belief is of this kind – and much false religious belief also. Faith, according to the definition of the Apostle, is certainty in the existence of invisible realities (Hebrews 11.1); it is incompatible with the least doubt. But even if one is not completely certain about something, one may be sufficiently sure to act to censor what one considers a false opinion. Thus a government may not be completely certain that a certain drug has no serious side effects. But it may still act to ban it, and ban any propaganda in its favour, in the belief that the risks are sufficiently great to warrant such action. Mill may be able to accommodate this example with his “Harm Principle”, but not on the grounds that to exclude a certain opinion on the grounds that it is likely to be false amounts to a belief in one’s infallibility. Mill anticipates this objection, writing: “Men and governments must act to the best of their ability. There is no such thing as absolute certainty, but there is assurance sufficient for the purposes of human life. We may, and must assume our opinions to be true for the guidance of our own conduct; and it is assuming no more when we forbid bad men to pervert society by the propagation of opinions which we regard as false and pernicious.”\(^800\)

\(^798\) Dostoyevsky described how a Member of Parliament, Sir Edward Watkins, welcomed Don Carlos to England: “Of course, he himself knew that the newly arrived guest was the leading actor in a bloody and fratricidal war; but by meeting him he thereby satisfied his patriotic pride and served England to the utmost of his ability. Extending his hand to a blood-stained tyrant, in the name of England, and as a member of Parliament, he told him, as it were: ‘You are a despot, a tyrant, and yet you came to the land of freedom to seek refuge in it. This could have been expected: England receives everybody and is not afraid to give refuge to anyone: \textit{entréé et sortie libres}. Be welcome’” \textit{(The Diary of a Writer, 1876, London: Cassell, part I, trans. Boris Brasol, pp. 262-263)}.\(^799\) Mill, \textit{On Liberty}, p. 77.\(^800\) Mill, \textit{On Liberty}, p. 79.
But Mill will have none of this; it is only by allowing our opinion to be contested by those who think otherwise, he argues, that we come to know whether it is really deserving of confidence, and hence whether the opposite opinion should be censored. “The most intolerant of churches, the Roman Catholic Church, even at the canonization of a saint admits, and listens patiently to, a ‘devil’s advocate’. The holiest of men, it appears, cannot be admitted to posthumous honours until all that the devil could say against him is known and weighed.”

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

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

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

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802 Mill, On Liberty, p. 84.
Mill cites the Reformation, the late eighteenth-century in France and the early nineteenth-century in Germany as admirable periods of intellectual freedom. “In each, an old mental despotism had been thrown off, and no new one had yet taken its place. The impulse given at these three periods has made Europe what it now is. Every single improvement which has taken place either in the human mind or in institutions may be traced distinctly to one or other of them.”

However, the citing of these three periods exposes the false assumptions of Mill’s argument. The Reformation was indeed an intellectually exciting period, when many of the abuses and falsehoods of the medieval period were exposed. But did it lead to a greater understanding of positive truth? By no means. Similarly, the late eighteenth century was the period in which the foundations of Church and State were so effectively undermined as to lead to the bloodiest revolution in history to that date, a revolution which most English liberals quite rightly abhorred. As to the early nineteenth century in Germany, its most dominant thinker was Hegel, who constructed probably the most pompous and contradictory – indeed, strictly nonsensical – of all philosophical systems, which is considered, with some justice, to be an ancestor of both communism and fascism.

As for the Anglo-Saxon world, in the one-and-a-half centuries since Mill’s time, although it has attained a still greater degree of freedom of thought and speech than prevailed in those three epochs, yet it has been at the expense of the almost complete decay of traditional Christian belief and morality... Evidently, freedom does not necessarily lead to truth. Nor did the Truth incarnate ever claim that it would, declaring rather the reverse relationship, namely, that “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8.32). And part of the truth consists in the sober recognition that men’s minds are fallen, and for much of the time do not even want the truth, so that if given complete freedom to say what they like, the result will be the falling away of society from truth into the abyss of destruction.

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

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

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James Fitzjames Stephen, in his *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873) pointed to further important flaws in Mill’s argument. Liberty was like fire, he said; it could be used for good and ill; to assume otherwise was naïve and dangerous. It was by no means certain that full freedom from interference by others would lead to greater searching for truth; it could just as easily lead to idleness and lack of interest in social affairs. Moreover, writes Gertrude Himmelfarth, “what disturbed him about Mill’s doctrine was the possibility that its adoption would leave society impotent in those situations where there was a genuine need for social action. Implicit too was the possibility that the withdrawal of social sanctions against any particular belief or act would be interpreted as a sanctioning of that belief or act, a licence to do that which society could not prohibit.”

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

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

Mill justifies the prohibition of certain acts, such as public indecency, on the grounds that they “are a violation of good manners, ... coming thus within the category of offences against others”. And yet, as Jonathan Wolff points out, it is difficult to see how such a prohibition can be justified on the basis of the Harm Principle alone. For “what harm does ‘public indecency’ do? After all, Mill insists that mere offence is no harm. Here Mill, without being explicit, seems to

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allow customary morality to override his adherence to the Liberty Principle. Few, perhaps, would criticize his choice of policy. But it is hard to see how he can render this consistent with his other views: indeed, he appears to make no serious attempt to do so. “Once we begin to consider examples of this kind we begin to understand that following Mill’s ‘once simple principle’ would lead to a society of a kind never seen before, and, perhaps, one which we would never wish to see.”

And so, while Millsean liberalism carefully sought to protect society both from the continental-style tyranny of one man, and from the American-style tyranny of the majority, it ended up delivering society into a series of tyrannies of minorities, which is best exemplified by the European Human Rights Act that is devastating Christian faith and morality in contemporary Britain. This should not surprise us; for liberalism is in essence a pagan doctrine, owing its origin more to fifth-century Athens than to any period of Christian history. Mills extolled the Liberty or Harm Principle not simply because it supposedly guaranteed freedom from tyranny and the triumph of truth, but because it fostered that ideal of the human being, vigorous, independent, unafraid of being different, even eccentric, which he found in Classical Greece. Indeed, he openly rejected the ascetic, Christian ideal in favour of the pagan Greek: “There is a different type of human excellence from the Calvinistic: a conception of humanity as having its nature bestowed on it for other purposes than merely to be abnegated. ‘Pagan self-assertion’ is one of the elements of human worth, as well as ‘Christian self-denial’. There is a Greek ideal of self-development, which the Platonic and Christian ideal of self-government blends with, but does not supersede. It may be better to be a John Knox than an Alcibiades, but it is better to be a Pericles than either; nor would a Pericles, if we had one in these days, be without anything good which belonged to John Knox…”

\[809\] Wolff, op. cit., pp. 140-141. For the difficulties created for Mills’ theory by public indecency, see several articles in Philosophy Now, issue 76, November-December, 2009.

While England continued on the path of ever-increasing liberalism, in Germany after the failure of the 1848 revolution there was a reaction from liberalism to conservatism, which can be seen most clearly in the writings of the famous composer Richard Wagner.

Wagner’s youthful faith was in the socialist revolution. Thus during the revolutionary year of 1848 he wrote: “I will destroy every evil that has power over mankind. I will destroy the domination of one over another, of the dead over the living; I will shatter the power of the mighty, of the law and of property. Man’s sole master shall be his own will, his only law his own desire, his only property his own strength, for only the free man is holy and there is nothing higher than he. Let there be an end to the evil that gives one man power over millions... since all are equal I shall destroy every dominion of one over another.” Here we see not only the influence of the revolution, but also of the concept of Will, even before his meeting with Schopenhauer, together with the embryo of a Will to Power such as we find later in Nietzsche, who greatly admired Wagner (until he thought that he had sold out to the bourgeoisie in his later years).

The collapse of the 1848 revolution forced Wagner into exile from his native Germany for many years. Nevertheless, he never completely shook off his early faith, but combined it in an original way with other ideas: anti-capitalism with anti-communism, and republicanism with monarchism. Thus his early anti-capitalism found expression also in his later music dramas. One of leitmotifs of these dramas was the corrupting power of money. For example, his most famous work, the four-opera Ring cycle, describes how money, symbolized by a golden ring possessed by Alberich and sought by the hero, Siegfried, is incompatible with true love and happiness.

The contemporary symbol of the love of money gone wild was London, and in 1877, during a trip down the Thames in a steamer, as A.N. Wilson writes, “Wagner said, 'This is Alberich's dream come true - Nibelheim, world dominion, activity, work, everywhere the oppressive feeling of steam and fog.'..."

"One of the most disturbing novels of the 1870s was Trollope's The Way We Live Now - disturbing because genial, comic Anthony Trollope, who had so consistently amused his public with tales of country-house gossip and cathedral-feuds, chose to depict an England extremely vulgarised, sold to Mammon, dominated by money-worship.... Professor Polhemus, an American scholar quoted by Trollope's biographer James Pope-Hennessy, makes the point that Trollope saw the same truth as Marx and Engels - 'a world where there is no other bond between man and man but crude self-interest and callous cash-payment', a world that 'has degraded personal dignity to the level of exchange-

value', creating 'exploitation that is open, unashamed, direct and brutal'. Professor Polhemus points out that, while Karl Marx was an optimist, Trollope's later years were suffused with pessimism and gloom.

"The Way we Live Now was published the year before the opening of the Bayreuth Festival Playhouse and the first complete performance of Wagner's Ring. As Bernard Shaw reminded 'The Perfect Wagnerite' in 1898, 'the Ring, with all its gods and giants and dwarfs, its water-maidens and Valkyries, its wishing-cap, magic ring, enchanted sword, and miraculous treasure is a drama of today, and not of a remote and fabulous antiquity. It could not have been written before the second half of the nineteenth century, because it deals with events which were only then consummating themselves.'

"Shaw rightly saw Alberich the dwarf, amassing power through his possession of the ring, and forcing the Niebelungs to mine his gold, as the type of capitalism. 'You can see the process for yourself in every civilized country today, where millions of people toil in want and disease to heap up more wealth for our Alberichs, laying up nothing for themselves, except sometimes agonizing disease and the certainty of premature death.'

"No allegory of any work is exhausted by drawing too punctilious a match between symbol and signified. The audience to Wagner's musical drama is caught up in an experience which is profound in itself, and to say Alberich = the Big Capitalist or that the befriending of Alberich by Loki and Wotan = the Church and the Law embracing the power of capital is too narrow and too specific an account of what stands as a universal work of art. Shaw was right, however, to say that Wagner's masterpiece was rooted in its time. What is suggested in the final opera of the cycle is a universal collapse - the Gods themselves hurtling towards self-destruction. As the 'storm-clouds of the nineteenth century' - John Ruskin's phrase - gather, we sense impending disaster in many of the great art-works of the period."812

Wagner managed to combine anti-capitalism with anti-communism, and republicanism with monarchism. In his celebrated "Fatherland Club Speech", delivered on June 14, 1848 in Dresden, Wagner declared that his aim is that the "demonic idea of Money vanish from us, with all its loathsome retinue of open and secret usury, paper-juggling, percentage and bankers' speculations. That will be the full emancipation of the human race; that will be the fulfilment of Christ's pure teaching, which enviously they hide from us behind parading dogmas, invented to bind the simple world of raw barbarians, to prepare them for a development towards whose higher consummation we now must march in lucid consciousness. Or does this smack to you of Communism? Are ye foolish or ill-disposed enough to declare the necessary redemption of the human race from the flattest, most demoralising servitude to vulgarest matter, synonymous with carrying out the most preposterous and senseless doctrine, that of Communism? Can ye not see that this doctrine of a mathematically equal division of property

812 Wilson, op. cit., pp. 413-414, 415.
and earnings is simply an unreasoning attempt to solve that problem, at any rate dimly apprehended, and an attempt whose sheer impossibility itself proclaims it stillborn? But would ye denounce therewith the task itself [i.e. the removal of the power of money] for reprehensible and insane, as that doctrine of a surety [i.e. Communism] is? Have a care! The outcome of three-and-thirty years of unruffled peace shews you Human Society in such a state of dislocation and impoverishment, that, at end of all those years, ye have on every hand the awful spectacle of pallid Hunger! Look to it, or e'er it be too late! Give no alms, but acknowledge a right, a God-given right of Man, lest ye live to see the day when outraged Nature will gird herself for a battle of brute force, whose savage shout of victory were of a truth that Communism; and though the radical impossibility of its continuance should yield it but the briefest spell of reign, that short-lived reign would yet have sufficed to root up every trace, perchance for many an age to come, of the achievements of two thousand years of civilisation. Think ye, I threaten? Nay, I warn!813

It was a prophetic warning, published in the same year as The Communist Manifesto and directed precisely against it. And in his zeal that his warning about the coming of Communism should be fulfilled, Wagner called for the preservation of the Monarchy in Saxony. Only he argued that his idea of monarchy was not in opposition to the Republic, but in union with it.

He called for "the King to be the first and sterlingest Republican of all. And who is more called to be the truest, faithfulest Republican, than just the Prince? RESPUBLICA means: the affairs of the nation. What individual can be more destined that the Prince, to belong with all his feelings, all his thoughts and actions, entirely to the Folk's affairs? Once persuaded of his glorious calling, what could move him to belittle himself, to cast in his lot with one exclusive smaller section of his Folk? However warmly each of us may respond to feelings for the good of all, so pure a Republican as the Prince can he never be, for his cares are undivided: their eye is single to the One, the Whole; whilst each of us must needs divide and parcel out his cares, to meet the wants of everyday."814

Here Wagner is expressing one of the key ideas of Orthodox Christian monarchism: that only the king is able to transcend individual and party political factionalism and self-interest, and labour for the nation as a whole. In this sense the king is the guarantee of the freedom of his people rather than its destroyer; for only he can preserve the freedom of individuals and parties from encroachment from other individuals and parties. And so "if he is the genuine free Father of his Folk, then with a single high-hearted resolve he can plant peace where war was unavoidable."815

814 Wagner, op. cit., p. 141.
815 Wagner, op. cit., p. 142.
At the same time, Wagner claims, he is a Republican. But the Republic will be proclaimed by - the King! "Not we, will proclaim the republic, no! this prince, the noblest, worthiest King, let him speak out:

"I declare Saxony a Free State."

"And let the earliest law of this Free State, the edict giving it the fairest surety of endurance, be:- 'The highest executive power rests in the Royal House of Wettin, and descends therein from generation to generation, by right of primogeniture.'

"The oath which we swear to this State and this edict, will never be broken: not because we have sworn it (how many an oath is sworn in the unthinking joy of taking office!) but because we have sworn it in full assurance that through this proclamation, through that law, a new era of undying happiness has dawned, of utmost benefit, of most determinant presage, not alone for Saxony, no! for Germany, for Europe. He who thus boldly has expressed his enthusiasm, believes with all his heart that never was he more loyal to the oath he, too, has sworn his King, than when he penned these lines today."816

All this may seem like the height of romantic fantasy - and Wagner was nothing if not a romantic. However, his idea of a "People's Monarchy" as essential to the spiritual well-being of Germany did not leave him; and if he did not find it in Saxony, he appeared to have found it for a time in Ludwig II of Bavaria some 16 years later. Moreover, already in 1848 he was quite clear that he did not mean by a "People's Monarchy" a kind of compromise between Monarchy and Republicanism in the form of an English-style "constitutional monarchy": "Now would this have brought about the downfall of the Monarchy? Ay! But it would have published the emancipation of the Kinghood. Dupe not yourselves, ye who want a 'Constitutional Monarchy upon the broadest democratic basis.' As regards the latter (the basis), ye either are dishonest, or, if in earnest, ye are slowly torturing your artificial Monarchy to death. Each step forward, upon that democratic basis, is a fresh encroachment on the power of the Mon-arch, i.e. the sole ruler; the principle itself is the completest mockery of Monarchy, which is conceivable only as actual alone-ruling; each advance of Constitutionalism is a humiliation to the ruler, for it is a vote of want-of-confidence in the monarch. How shall love and confidence prevail, amid this constant, this often so unworthily manoeuvred contest twixt two opposing principles? The very existence of the monarch, as such, is embittered by shame and mortification. Let us therefore redeem him from this miserable half-life; let us have done altogether with Monarchism, since Sole-rule is made impossible by just the principle of Folk's rule (Democracy): but let us, on the contrary, emancipate the Kinghood in its fullest, its own peculiar meaning! At head of the Free State (the republic) the hereditary King will be exactly what he should be, in the noblest meaning of his title [Fürst]: the First of the Folk, the Freest of the Free! Would not this be alike the fairest commentary upon Christ's saying: 'And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall he be servant of all?' Inasmuch as he

816 Wagner, op. cit., pp. 142-143.
serves the freedom of all, in his person he raises the concept of Freedom itself to the loftiest, to a God-implanted consciousness.

"The farther back we search among Germanic nations for the Kinghood’s meaning, the more intimately will it fit this new-won meaning."\textsuperscript{817}

Wagner returned to this subject in 1864, in an article entitled "On State and Religion" written at the request of his patron, King Ludwig II. If in 1848, the year of revolution, he had been concerned to show that kingship was compatible with freedom, here he links freedom with stability, which is the main aim of the State.

"For it constitutes withal the unconscious aim in every higher human effort to get beyond the primal need: namely to reach a freer evolution of spiritual attributes, which is always cramped so long as hindrances forestall the satisfaction of that first root-need. Everyone thus strives by nature for stability, for maintenance of quiet: ensured can it only be, however, when the maintenance of existing conditions is not the preponderant interest of one party only. Hence it is in the truest interest of all parties, and thus of the State itself, that the interest in its abidingness should not be left to a single party. There must consequently be given a possibility of constantly relieving the suffering interests of less favoured parties.

"The embodied voucher for this fundamental law is the Monarch. In no State is there a weightier law than that which centres on stability in the supreme hereditary power of one particular family, unconnected and un-commingling with any other lineage in that State. Never yet has there been a Constitution in which, after the downfall of such families and abrogation of the Kingly power, some substitution or periphrasis has not necessarily, and for the most part necessitously, reconstructed a power of similar kind. It therefore is established as the most essential principle of the State; and as in it resides the warrant of stability, so in the person of the King the State attains its true ideal.

"For, as the King on the one hand gives assurance of the State’s solidity, on the other his loftiest interest soars high beyond the State. Personally he has naught in common with the interests of parties, but his sole concern is that the conflict of these interests should be adjusted, precisely for the safety of the whole. His sphere is therefore equity, and where this is unattainable, the exercise of grace (Gnade). Thus, as against the party interests, he is the representative of purely-human interests, and in the eyes of the party-seeking citizen he therefore occupies in truth a position well-nigh superhuman. To him is consequently accorded a reverence such as the highest citizen would never dream of distantly demanding for himself."\textsuperscript{818}

\textsuperscript{817} Wagner, op. cit., p. 143.
The subject relates to the King through the self-sacrificing emotion of patriotism. In a democracy, on the other hand, the position of the King is taken by public opinion, the veneration of which is far more problematic, leading as it does to "the most deplorable imbroglios, into acts the most injurious to Quiet".  

"The reason lies in the scarcely exaggerable weakness of the average human intellect, as also in the infinitely diverse shades and grades of perceptive-faculty in the units who, taken all together, create the so-called public opinion. Genuine respect for this 'public opinion' is founded on the sure and certain observation that no one is more accurately aware of the community's true immediate life-needs, nor can better devise the means for their satisfaction, than the community itself: it would be strange indeed, were man more faultily organised in this respect than the dumb animal. Nevertheless we often are driven to the opposite view, if we remark how even for this, for the correct perception of its nearest, commonest needs, the ordinary human understanding does not suffice - not, at least, to the extent of jointly satisfying them in the spirit of true fellowship: the presence of beggars in our midst, and even at times of starving fellow-creatures, shews how weak the commonest human sense must be at bottom. So here already we have evidence of the great difficulty it must cost to bring true reason into the joint determinings of Man: though the cause may well reside in the boundless egoism of each single unit."

Another problem with public opinion is that it has an extremely unreliable "pretended vice-regent" in the press. The press is made out to be "the sublimation of public spirit, of practical human intellect, the indubitable guarantee of manhood's constant progress." But in fact "it is at all times havable for gold or profit." In fact, "there exists no form of injustice, of onesidedness and narrowness of heart, that does not find expression in the pronouncements of 'public opinion', and - what adds to the hatefulness of the thing - forever with a passionateness that masquerades as the warmth of genuine patriotism, but has its true and constant origin in the most self-seeking of all human motives. Whoso would learn this accurately, has but to run counter to 'public opinion', or indeed to defy it: he will find himself brought face to face with the most implacable tyrant; and no one is more driven to suffer from its despotism, than the Monarch, for very reason that he is the representative of that selfsame Patriotism whose noxious counterfeit steps up to him, as 'public opinion', with the boast of being identical in kind.

"Matters strictly pertaining to the interest of the King, which in truth can only be that of purest patriotism, are cut and dried by his unworthy substitute, this Public Opinion, in the interest of the vulgar egoism of the mass; and the necessitation to yield to its requirements, notwithstanding, becomes the earliest source of that higher form of suffering which the King alone can personally experience as his own."  

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Ordinary men pursue definite, practical aims associated with their particular, lowly station in life. But "the King desires the Ideal, he wishes justice and humanity; nay, wished he them not, wished he naught but what the simple burgher or party-leader wants, - the very claims made on him by his office, claims that allow him nothing but an ideal interest, by making a traitor to the idea he represents, would plunge him into those sufferings which have inspired tragic poets from all time to paint their pictures of the vanity of human life and strife. True justice and humanity are ideals irrealisable: to be bound to strive for them, nay, to recognise an unsilenceable summons to their carrying out, is to be condemned to misery. What the thoroughly noble, truly kingly individual directly feels of this, in time is given also to the individual unqualified for knowledge of his tragic task, and solely placed by Nature's dispensation on the throne, to learn in some uncommon fashion reserved for kings alone. The highly fit, however, is summoned to drink the full, deep cup of life's true tragedy in his exalted station. Should his construction of the Patriotic ideal be passionate and ambitious, he becomes a warrior-chief and conqueror, and thereby courts the portion of the violent, the faithlessness of Fortune; but should his nature be noble-minded, full of human pity, more deeply and more bitterly than every other is he called to see the futility of all endeavours for true, for perfect justice."\(^{822}\)

"To him more deeply and more inwardly than is possible to the State-citizen, as such, is it therefore given to feel that in Man there dwells an infinitely deeper, more capacious need than the State and its ideal can ever satisfy. Wherefore as it was Patriotism that raised the burgher to the highest height by him attainable, it is Religion alone that can bear the King to the stricter dignity of manhood."\(^{823}\)

Therefore just as Monarchy is more purely disinterested, more truly solicitous of the needs - the deepest as well as the more temporary needs - of all its citizens, than "Franco-Judaico-German Democracy"\(^{824}\), so through this very necessity of having to rise above individual, partial, lower interests and needs, it ascends into the realm of religion. And, we should add, receives its strength and confirmation and sanctification from true religion. In this Wagner, paradoxically, while still far from the true faith, is not far from the Orthodox conception of true kingship...

\(^{822}\) Wagner, "On State and Religion", op. cit., pp. 22-23. We remember the great speech of the king in Shakespeare's Henry V (IV.1): Upon the king! Let us our lives, our souls,/ Our debts, our careful wives,/ Our children, and our sins lay on the king!/ We must bear all. O hard condition!/ Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath/ Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel/ But his own wringing. What infinite heart's ease/ Must kings neglect that private men enjoy!


\(^{824}\) Wagner, "What is German?", op. cit., p. 166.
Among the nationalisms that became such an important feature of European life in the nineteenth century, none is more important that that of the Jews. Jewish nationalism is a particularly complex variety that does not fit easily into the category of the nationalisms either of the great, “historic” nations (Nationen) or of the lesser, newer nationalities (Nationalitäten) that grew up in reaction to the former.\footnote{David Vital, \textit{A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939}, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 253.}

Of course, Jewish nationalism of one kind had existed for thousands of years, being closely linked with the religion, first, of the Old Testament and, later, after their rejection of Christ, of the Talmud. But nineteenth-century Jewish nationalism was of a different kind, being strongly influenced by the western varieties that arose out of the French revolution. Its development was slow because it had to contend with other currents of thought that also arose out of the revolution and were particularly strong among the Jews: anti-nationalism or assimilationism, union with the prevailing liberal-secular culture of the West, and violent rejection of that same culture on the basis of the creed of the internationalist proletarian revolution. (In a speech in the House of Commons in 1852 Disraeli spoke of the secret societies aiming to destroy tradition, religion and property. And he said that at the head of all of them stood people of the Jewish race…) Other factors making for the great complexity of Jewish nationalism were: the lack of a territorial base or homeland, the different conditions of Jews in different parts of Europe, and the different relationships between the religion and the nation of the Jews in the different regions.

Jewish nationalism arose at least in part as a reaction to assimilationism. Since 1789 and the declaration of the rights of men, Jewish assimilation into European life, which was achieved either through Christian baptism (the favoured route), or through the sanitized, almost Protestant religion known as Reform Judaism, had progressed rapidly, if unevenly, through Europe. It was furthest advanced in Britain, where we see it triumphant in the careers of such men as the banker Lionel Rothschild, the philanthropist Sir Moses Montefiore and the Tory party leader and Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. And yet the striking fact especially about these men is their continued attraction to Israel: Montefiore financed Jewish colonies in Palestine, and Disraeli travelled to Palestine and wrote a novel, \textit{Tancred}, about the return to Zion.

Disraeli is usually contrasted with his great parliamentary rival from the 1850s to the 1880s – William Ewart Gladstone, leader of the Liberal Party. Both, writes Tombs, were “highly unusual men by any standards. In some ways both were characteristically but differently ‘Victorian’ – Gladstone in his agonized and introspective religiosity, Disraeli in his romantic devotion to aristocratic leadership and grandiose patriotism.”\footnote{Tombs, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 504.}
“With his goatee beard, his dandified clothing, his profession as a writer of novels (which he continued to publish during his tenure of office), and his often frivolous wit, [Disraeli] hardly seemed cut out to lead a party of stolid gentry and landowners. Part of his secret was that he had a firm belief in the virtues of the aristocracy, strong-minded, independent, and not to be overawed by the mob; indeed, he believed that Jews themselves were natural aristocrats. The architect of the 1867 extension of the franchise, he was the founder of ‘Tory Democracy’, turning the Conservatives into a modern political party in terms not only of organization but also of ideology. On the death of Lord Palmerston in 1865, Disraeli was quick to appropriate his mantle of patriotism for the Conservatives.”

“One of Disraeli’s most influential achievements,” writes Montefiore, “was in creating an imperial ethos for the British empire. He sang the virtues of imperium et libertas (empire and liberty), and he saw Britain’s mission as not just to trade and establish colonial settlements, but also to bring British civilization and values to the diverse peoples of its ever expanding dominion...”

In his early novels, such as Coningsby and Sybil, Disraeli showed himself to be a passionate monarchist, a defender of the old aristocratic order based on the land and an enemy of the contemporary worship of Mammon that produced such a lamentable contrast between the “two nations” of England, the rich and the poor. “Toryism,” he predicted, “will yet rise... to bring back strength to the Crown, liberty to the subject, and to announce that power has only one duty: to secure the social welfare of the PEOPLE.”

Such a creed, combined with his Anglicanism (he was a baptized Jew from an upper-middle-class family) might lead us to believe that Disraeli was trying, like so many assimilated Jews, to distance himself as far as possible from his Jewish roots and make himself out to be a High Tory Englishman. But this was only half true. He once answered a taunt in parliament: “Yes, I am a Jew, and when the ancestors of the Right Honourable Gentleman were living as savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon...” And, as Constance de Rothschild wrote, “he believed more in the compelling power of a common ancestry than in that of a common faith. He said to me, as he has said over and over again in his novels, ‘All is race, not religion – remember that.’”

It was extraordinary how a Jew to the leadership of the greatest and proudest Gentile empire while not disguising his belief that he belonged to a superior race. It was in 1847 that he first made this belief public, first in the third novel of his trilogy, Tancred, published in March, and then in his famous speech pleading Jewish emancipation in the Commons in December.

827 Evans, op. cit., p. 575.
828 Montefiore, Titans of History, pp. 357-358.
830 Rothschild, in Bradford, op. cit., p. 186.
“Tancred,” writes Sarah Bradford, “which Disraeli began in 1845, the year in which Peel’s Jewish Disabilities Bill had opened every municipal office to the Jews (membership of Parliament still remaining closed to them), was Disraeli’s favourite among his novels. It had originally been conceived as part of the Young England plan, an examination of the state of the English Church as an instrument of moral regeneration, but evolved into an exposition of the debt of gratitude which European civilization, and the English Church in particular, owed to the Jews as the founders of their religious faith. It was the expression of all his most deeply-felt convictions, combining his feeling for Palestine and the East and his theory of the superiority of the Jewish race with the revolt of the romantic against progress and scientific materialism…

“… Disraeli’s hero, Tancred de Montacute, is young, rich and noble, heir to the Duke of Bellamont. Serious and deeply religious, Tancred, disappointed by the failure of the ‘mitred nullities’ of the Anglican Church to satisfy his spiritual needs, conceives the idea of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in search of redemption. He is encouraged in this project by Sidonia, a thinly disguised London Rothschild, whose City office, Sequin Court, and select dinner parties are minutely described. Sidonia talks to Rothschild of ‘the spiritual hold which Asia has always had upon the North’, recommending him to contact Lara, prior of the Convent of Terra Santa in Jerusalem, who is a descendant of an aristocratic Spanish Sephardic family and a Nuevo Cristiano, or converted Jew. He compares Lara’s knowledge of the Old (Jewish) faith with the New (Christian) learning of the English Church in a manner extremely derogatory to the Anglican bishops, while introducing the main theme of the book: ‘You see, he is master of the old as well as the new learning; this is very important; they often explain each other. Your bishops here know nothing about these things. How can they? A few centuries back they were tattooed savages.’

“This was hardly a tactful way of putting his argument to his English readers; but when Disraeli gets Tancred to the East, his statements become even odder and, to his Victorian Gentile audience, more offensive. Tancred visits Jerusalem and establishes himself in Syria… He meets and falls in love with a beautiful Jewess named Eva, whom Disraeli uses as a mouthpiece for his main message. ‘Half Christendom worships a Jewess,’ Eva tells Tancred, ‘and the other half a Jew. Now let me ask you. Which do you think should be the superior race, the worshipped or the worshippers?’ Disraeli goes even further, for not only do Christians owe a debt of gratitude to the Jews as the forerunners of their religion, but if the Jews had not crucified Christ there would be no Christianity. He aims his argument at a specifically British audience: ‘Vast as is the obligation of the whole human family to the Hebrew race, there is no portion of the modern population indebted to them as the British people.’

“As the book progresses Disraeli’s arguments become even more mystical and confusing. He introduces an odd supernatural figure, the Angel of Arabia, who accords Tancred a visionary interview on Mount Sinai. The Angel, in Disraelian fashion, blames the sickness of human society on the atheistic influence of the French Revolution…
“...The Angel, Tancred and the author are anti-Progress. In a famous passage that was to rouse *The Times* to fury, Disraeli declares: ‘And yet some flat-nosed Frank, full of bustle and puffed up with self-conceit (a race spawned perhaps in the morasses of some Northern forest hardly yet cleared) talks of Progress! Progress to what, and from where? Arid empires shrivelled into deserts, amid the wrecks of great cities, a single column or obelisk of which nations import for the prime adornment of their mud-built capitals, amid arts forgotten, commerce annihilated, fragmentary literatures, and by populations destroyed, the European talks of progress, because by an ingenious application of some scientific acquirements, he has established a society which has mistaken comfort for civilisation.’ Tancred’s cure for the ‘fever of progress’ is to ‘work out a great religious truth on the Persian and Mesopotamian plains’, and by revivifying Asia to regenerate Europe.

“Disraeli, carried away by the onrush of his feelings and wild ideas, simply backs away when faced with the necessity of producing some solution to Tancred’s vague plans for revivifying Europe... [He] had conceived the love between Eva and Tancred as a symbol of his most important message, the synthesis between Judaism and Christianity; but in the end he finds even this impossible to carry through...

“... *The Times*... reproved Disraeli for writing a novel with a message: ‘It is a bastard kind of writing – that of fiction “with a purpose”, ... the “unsubstantial” aim of “converting the whole world back to Judaism”.’ The reviewer ridiculed this notion by pointing out the anxiety of contemporary Jewry to approximate itself ever more nearly to Gentile society, with particular reference to the Rothschilds: ‘Whilst Mr. Disraeli eloquently discourses of a speedy return to Jerusalem, Sidonia buys a noble estate in Bucks, and Sidonia’s first cousin is high-sheriff of the county. So anxious, indeed, are the Hebrews generally to return to the Holy Land as a distinct race, that they petition Parliament for all the privileges of British citizens... During the last ten years the Western Jew has travelled faster and farther from Jerusalem than he journeyed during ten centuries before.’...

“Disraeli was not deterred by the public reaction to *Tancred*; he was to repeat his arguments in the debate on Jewish Disabilities on 16 December. The background to the bill was the election, in August of that year, of Disraeli’s friend, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, as Liberal candidate for the City of London. As a Jew, Baron Lionel had felt unable to take the oath requiring a member of Parliament to swear ‘on the true faith of a Christian’ and was therefore debarred from taking his seat...

“[Disraeli’s] argument... aimed at removing Christian scruples by pointing out that Judaism and Christianity were practically synonymous, that Judaism was the foundation of Christianity.

“’The Jews,’ Disraeli began, ‘are persons who acknowledge the same God as the Christian people of this realm. They acknowledge the same divine revelation as yourselves.’ No doubt many of the listening squires did not greatly like the
idea of their Anglican faith being equated with that of ‘the Ikys and Abys’, but worse was to come. They should be grateful, Disraeli told them, because ‘They [the Jews] are, humanly speaking, the authors of your religion. They unquestionably those to whom you are indebted for no inconsiderable portion of your known religion, and for the whole of your divine knowledge.’ At this point the first outraged cries of ‘Oh!’ broke out, but Disraeli only warmed to his theme. ‘Every Gentleman here,’ he told the astonished House, ‘does profess the Jewish religion, and believes in Moses and the Prophets’, a statement that provoked a chorus of angry cries.

‘Where is your Christianity, if you do not believe in their Judaism?’ Disraeli asked them. He went on: ‘On every sacred day, you read to the people the exploits of Jewish heroes, the proofs of Jewish devotion, the brilliant annals of past Jewish magnificence. The Christian Church has covered every kingdom with sacred buildings, and over every altar… we find the tables of the Jewish law. Every Sunday – every Lord’s day – if you wish to express feelings of praise and thanksgiving to the Most High, or if you wish to find expressions of solace in grief, you find both in the words of the Jewish poets.’

“No doubt most of Disraeli’s hearers thought he was going too far, and stirred uncomfortably in their seats. When, however, he prepared to launch into yet another paragraph on the same theme, ‘… every man in the early ages of the Church, by whose power, or zeal, or genius, the Christian faith was propagated, was a Jew,’ the dissidents in the House lost patience and shouted him down. ‘Interruption’ Hansard notes flatly.

“At this, Disraeli too lost patience. He rounded on his tormentors, telling them in so many words that much of their concern for the safeguarding of Christianity was humbug, and that the real reason for their opposition to admitting the Jews was pure anti-Semitic prejudice: ‘If one could suppose that the arguments we have heard… are the only arguments that influence the decision of this question, it would be impossible to conceive what is the reason of the Jews not being admitted to full participation in the rights and duties of a Christian legislature. In exact proportion to your faith ought to be your wish to do this great act of national justice… But you are influenced by the darkest superstitions of the darkest ages that ever existed in this country. It is this feeling that has been kept out of this debate; indeed that has been kept secret in yourselves… and that is unknowingly influencing you.’

“He ended defiantly: ‘I, whatever may be the consequences – must speak what I feel. I cannot sit in this House with any misconception of my opinion on the subject. Whatever may be the consequences on the seat I hold… I cannot, for one, give a vote which is not in deference to what I believe to be the true principles of religion. Yes, it is as a Christian that I will not take upon me the awful responsibility of excluding from the Legislature those who are of the religion in the bosom of which my Lord and Saviour was born.’”

It is difficult to know at whom to be more amazed – at the audacity of Disraeli in telling the highest assembly of perhaps the most powerful Christian nation on earth that all the greatest Christians were in fact Jews, and that Christianity was merely a variety of Judaism, or the ignorance of the English, who in essence bought the argument, eventually passed the Bill (Lionel Rothschild became MP for the City in 1858) and from then on acted as the main protectors of the Jews and Judaism on the stage of world history! This confirms Keble’s charge in his Assize Sermon of 1833 that “under the guise of charity and toleration we are come almost to this pass: that no difference, in matters of faith, is to disqualify for our approbation and confidence, whether in public or domestic life.”

Ignored, it would seem, by everyone in this debate was the fundamental fact that Judaism since Annas and Caiaphas was not the religion of the great saints of the Old Testament, that Christ was killed by the Jews, and that the Talmud, the contemporary Jews’ real “Bible”, expressed the most vituperative hatred of both Christ and Christians.

Disraeli’s speech was a sign of the times, a sign that the Jews had now truly broken through the barrier of “anti-Semitism” to reach the highest positions in the western world, the top of the “greasy pole” (Disraeli’s phrase), where, as Tombs writes, he believed himself “himself destined to wield British power, ‘to sway the race that sways the world in an epic global chess game for world civilization against the forces of revolution, nationalism, militarism and pan-Slav imperialism.”

But the speech also showed that the Jews would unfailingly use their position to advance the interests of their race, whether baptised or unbaptised. In other words, if we were to judge from the behaviour of the Rothschilds and Montefiores and Disraelis, at any rate, the Jews would never be fully assimilated. For, as Disraeli himself said: “All is race, not religion – remember that…”

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832 Tombs, op. cit., p. 505.
833 Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich wrote: “[Jews] first need to become legally equal with Christians in order to repress Christianity next, turn Christians faithless, and step on their necks. All modern European slogans have been made up by Jews, the crucifiers of Christ: democracy, strikes, socialism, atheism, tolerance of all religions, pacifism, universal revolution, capitalism, and communism. These are all inventions made by Jews, namely, by their father, the devil. All this has been done with the intention to humiliate Christ, to obliterate Him, and to place their Jewish Messiah on the Christ’s throne, without being aware even today that he is Satan himself, their father, who has reined them in with his reins, and who whips them with his whip.”

9Addresses to the Serbian People–Through the Prison Window, chapter 77)
And yet there were many assimilated Jews who went to the other extreme: far from emphasizing their Jewishness, they did everything in their power not only to deny it in their own personal lives, but also to extirpate the very principle of nationality from political life in general. The French revolution had been the watershed. Before it, Jewish revolutionary activity had been religious in character - and therefore nationalist as well, insofar as Talmudism was in essence the faith of the Jewish nation. During the revolution, the activity of the Jewish revolutionaries had been neither religious nor specifically anti-religious in character, but nationalism under the guise of internationalism, Jewish emancipation under the guise of obtaining equal rights for all men and all nations.

According to Norah Webster, “religious feeling appears to have played an entirely subordinate part” among the Jews in the French Revolution. “The Jews... were free before the Revolution to carry on the rites of their faith. And when the great anti-religious campaign began, many of them entered wholeheartedly into the attack on all religious faiths, their own included... The encouragement accorded by the Jews to the French Revolution appears thus to have been prompted not by religious fanaticism but by a desire for national advantage...”

However, after the revolution the situation changed again. There were as many Jews as ever in the secret societies; but nationalism no longer seems to have been their motive. For the Jews were now, as we have seen, thoroughly emancipated in some western countries, such as Britain and France, and on the way there in many more. Their financial power, symbolized by the Rothschilds, was enormous. And except to some extent in Germany, there were no real barriers to their political advancement, either. Even in Germany, according to William Marr, “we Germans completed in the year 1848 our abdication in favour of the Jews... Life and the future belong to Judaism, death and the past to Germandom.”

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835 This fact was well-known to Disraeli, from “the exceptional intelligence service linking the London house of Rothschild with the branches in Paris, Frankfurt, Vienna and Naples” (Bradford, op. cit., p. 187). However, he chose not to mention it when, on July 14, 1856, he said in the House of Commons: “There is in Italy a power which we seldom mention in this House... I mean the secret societies... It is useless to deny, because it is impossible to conceal, that a great part of Europe – the whole of Italy and France and a great portion of Germany, to say nothing of other countries – is covered with a network of these secret societies, just as the superficies of the earth is now being covered with railroads. And what are their objects? They do not attempt to conceal them. They do not want constitutional government; they do not want ameliorated institutions... they want to change the tenure of land, to drive out the present owners of the soil and to put an end to ecclesiastical establishments... Some of them may go further...”
836 Wilhelm Marr, Der Sieg des Judentums über das Germanentum (The Victory of Jewry over the German Spirit), 1879, pp. 27, 44; in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 630.
But the Jews who poured into the socialist revolutionary movements in the second quarter of the nineteenth century were neither Judaists nor interested in the fate of their fellow Jews. Rather, they tended to identify Jewry and Jewishness with the most hated aspects of the capitalist system. A forerunner of this phenomenon was the German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine.

Heine, as Paul Johnson writes, “hated being a Jew. He wrote of ‘the three evil maladies, poverty, pain and Jewishness’. In 1822 he was briefly associated with the Society for Jewish Science, but he had nothing to contribute. He did not believe in Judaism as such and saw it as an anti-human force. He wrote the next year: ‘That I will be enthusiastic for the rights of the Jews and their civil equality, that I admit, and in bad times, which are inevitable, the Germanic mob will hear my voice so that it resounds in German beerhalls and palaces. But the born enemy of all positive religion will never champion the religion which first developed the fault-finding with human beings which now causes us so much pain.’ But if he rejected Talmudic Judaism, he despised the new Reform version. The Reformers were ‘chiropodists’ who had ‘tried to cure the body of Judaism from its nasty skin growth by bleeding, and by their clumsiness and spidery bandages of rationalism, Israel must bleed to death... we no longer have the strength to wear a beard, to fast, to hate and to endure out of hate; that is the motive of our Reform.’ The whole exercise, he said scornfully, was to turn ‘a little Protestant Christianity into a Jewish company. They make a tallis out of the wool of the Lamb of God, and a vest out of the feathers of the Holy Ghost, and underpants out of Christian love, and they will go bankrupt and their successors will be called: God, Christ & Co.’…

“Heine suffered from a destructive emotion which was soon to be commonplace among emancipated and apostate Jews: a peculiar form of self-hatred. He attacked himself in [his attacks on the baptised Jew] Gans. Later in life he used to say he regretted his baptism. It had, he said, done him no good materially. But he refused to allow himself to be presented publicly as a Jew. In 1835, lying, he said he had never set foot in a synagogue. It was his desire to repudiate his Jewishness, as well as his Jewish self-hatred, which prompted his many anti-Semitic remarks. A particular target was the Rothschild family. He blamed them for raising loans for the reactionary great powers. That, at any rate, was his respectable reason for attacking them. But his most venomous remarks were reserved for Baron James de Rothschild and his wife, who showed him great kindness in Paris. He said he had seen a stockbroker bowing to the Baron’s chamber-pot. He called him ‘Herr von Shylock in Paris’. He said, ‘There is only one God – Mammon. And Rothschild is his prophet.’… Heine was both the prototype and the archetype of a new figure in European literature: the Jewish radical man of letters, using his skill, reputation and popularity to undermine the intellectual self-confidence of established order.”

But there are strong indications that while trying to repudiate his Jewishness, Heine remained loyal to his race. Thus “I would fall into despair,” he wrote to a friend in 1823, “if you approved of my baptism”. Again, in one work he

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described three symbolic beauties: Diana – ancient classical art, Abondona – romantic art, and Herodias – a Jewess, and declared himself to prefer “the dead Jewess”. Indeed, according to the Jewish historian Graetz, Heine only superficially renounced Jewry, “and was like those warriors who remove the arms and banner from the enemy, so as to use them to beat and annihilate him more thoroughly!”

To prove the point, some four of five years before his death (from syphilis), Heine returned to the Judaist faith...

Again, if Heine was a radical, he saw more clearly than almost any conservative – and this clarity of sight was another characteristic of his Jewishness, given to him by his outsider status - the horrors to which radicalism would lead. As Golo Mann writes, “he foresaw the inevitable annihilation of the rich and their state by the poor, the ‘dangerous classes’ as they were called in France at the time. His prescience did not make him happy, yet he despised the existing social order; his attitude was that of one who was above or outside it. It was as though Heine was bewitched by Communism. In his articles he constantly talked about it at a time when only a very few people concerned themselves with it. He spoke of it more with dread than hope, as of an elemental movement of the age, immune to politics.

“Communism is the secret name of the terrible antagonist who confronts the present-day bourgeois regime with proletarian domination and all its consequences. There will be a terrible duel... Though Communism is at present little talked about, vegetating in forgotten attics on wretched straw pallets, it is nevertheless the dismal hero destined to play a great, if transitory part in the modern tragedy...” (20 June 1842).

“Three weeks later he prophesied that a European war would develop into a social world revolution from which would emerge an iron Communist dictatorship, ‘the old absolutist tradition... but in different clothes and with new catchphrases and slogans... Maybe there will then only be one shepherd and one flock, a free shepherd with an iron crook and an identically shorn, identically bleating human herd. Confused, sombre times loom ahead, and the prophet who might want to write a new apocalypse would need to invent entirely new beasts, and such frightening ones that St. John’s animal symbols would appear like gentle doves and amoretts by comparison... I advise our grandchildren to be born with very thick skins.’

“Then again he saw Communism not as a system under which men would enjoy the material benefits of life but as one under which they would slave at their jobs with dreary monotony; once he even predicted [with Dostoyevsky] the marriage of the Catholic Church with the Communists and foresaw an empire of asceticism, joylessness and strict control of ideas as the child of this union. Heine made himself few friends by such prophecies. The conservatives, the good German citizens, regarded him as a rebel and a frivolous wit. The Left saw in him a faithless ally, a socialist who was afraid of the revolution, who took back

today what he had said yesterday and who behaved like an aristocrat. It is true that Heine, the artist, was both an aristocrat and a rebel. He hated the rule of the old military and noble caste, particularly in Prussia, despised the role of the financiers, particularly in France, and yet feared a leveling reign of terror by the people.…

“Heine could not identify himself with any of the great causes that excited his compatriots at home or in exile [in Paris]; the servant of beauty and the intellect cannot do this. He could only see things with gay, sarcastic or melancholy eyes, without committing himself. Yet just because he was detached, sometimes to the point of treachery, his work has remained more alive than that of his more resolute contemporaries.

“Those who had no doubts, who were reliable, were equally irritated by Heine’s attitude towards Germany. At times he loved it and could not do otherwise. He had been born there and spoke its language; he was only a young man when he wrote the poems which have become part of Germany’s national heritage. Sick and lonely in exile, he longed for home. Yet at other times he mocked his compatriots in a manner which they could not forgive for their philistinism, their provincialism, their weakness for titles, their bureaucrats, soldiers and thirty-six monarchs. In an extremely witty poem he says that if there were ever to be a German revolution the Germans would not treat their kings as roughly as the British and French had treated theirs…

“No sooner had Heine written verses of this kind and mocked at the Germans for their lamb-like patience than he warned the French that the German revolution of the future would far exceed theirs in terror.

“‘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 old restraining talisman, the cross, has rotted away, the old frenzied madness will break out again.’

“The French must not believe that it would be a pro-French revolution, though it might pretend to be republican and extreme. German nationalism, unlike that of the French, was not receptive to outside influences filled with missionary zeal; it was negative and aggressive, particularly towards France. ‘I wish you well and therefore I tell you the bitter truth. You have more to fear from liberated Germany than from the entire Holy Alliance with all its Croats and Cossacks put together…’ Heine toyed with things cleverly and irresponsibly. At the time it was thought in France, in Italy and in Germany too that nationalism was international, closely related to the republican and the democratic cause; that nations, once they were free and united at home, would join forces in one great league of nations. Heine did not share this view. He regarded nationalism, particularly German nationalism, as a stupid, disruptive force motivated by hatred…”

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839 Mann, op. cit., pp. 80-82.
Talmon writes that Heine “was vouchsafed an uncanny prophetic insight into the terrifying potentialities of German Romantic pantheism, with its vision of man as a being swallowed up or impelled by cosmic forces, the all-embracing Will of History, and the destiny of the Race. These were the favourite images of the various architects of catastrophe, who never tired of pouring scorn on the bloodless, cogitating, analysing and vacillating creature cut off from the vital forces of being.”

840 Talmon, op. cit., p. 162.
61. THREE WESTERN JEWS: (3) MARX

Karl Marx was born in Trier on the Rhine. As Evans writes, he “gravitated towards the Young Hegelians at the University of Berlin, one of whom, Feuerbach (1804-72), was the source of Marx’s famous statement ‘Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world: the point is to change it’. Marx became a freelance writer, penning articles for a recently founded radical paper based in Cologne, the Rheinische Zeitung. The paper was soon closed by the authorities in April 1843, and three months later Marx moved to Paris. His reading of the French socialists led him to see in the abolition of private property and the establishment of communal and collective forms of labour the way to overcome the alienation of the workers’ labout through the appropriation of its products by the employers. Socializing with radicals in Paris also brought Marx for the first time into contact with Friedrich Engels (1820-95), who became his lifelong collaborator.”\textsuperscript{841}

Marx was a friend of Heine’s, being a still more developed and important example of the same phenomenon: the God-hating, Jew-hating Jew. According to Johnson, “Heine’s jibe about religion as a ‘spiritual opium’ was the source of Marx’s phrase ‘the opium of the people’. But the notion that Heine was the John the Baptist to Marx’s Christ, fashionable in German scholarship of the 1960s, is absurd. A huge temperamental gulf yawned between them. According to Arnold Ruge, Marx would say to Heine: ‘Give up those everlasting laments about love and show the lyric poets how it should be done – with the lash.’ But it was precisely the lash Heine feared: ‘The [socialist] future,’ he wrote, ‘smells of knouts, of blood, of godlessness and very many beatings’; ‘it is only with dread and horror that I think of the time when those dark iconoclasts will come to power’. He repudiated ‘my obdurate friend Marx’, one of the ‘godless self-gods’.

“What the two men had most in common was their extraordinary capacity for hatred, expressed in venomous attacks not just on enemies but (perhaps especially) on friends and benefactors. This was part of the self-hatred they shared as apostate Jews. Marx had it to an even greater extent than Heine. He tried to shut Judaism out of his life... Despite Marx’s ignorance of Judaism as such, there can be no doubt about his Jewishness. Like Heine and everyone else, his notion of progress was profoundly influenced by Hegel, but his sense of history as a positive and dynamic force in human society, governed by iron laws, an atheist’s Torah, is profoundly Jewish. His Communist millennium is deeply rooted in Jewish apocalyptic and messianism. His notion of rule was that of the cathedocrat. Control of the revolution would be in the hands of the elite intelligentsia, who had studied the texts, understood the laws of history. They would form what he called the ‘management’, the directorate. The proletariat, ‘the men without substance’, were merely the means, whose duty was to obey – like Ezra the Scribe, he saw them as ignorant of the law, the mere ‘people of the land’.”\textsuperscript{842}

\textsuperscript{841} Evans, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 177.
\textsuperscript{842} Johnson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 347.
Johnson ignores the anti-Christian essence of Talmudic Judaism. Nevertheless he is perceptive in his analysis of Marx's Communism “as the end-product of his theoretical anti-Semitism... In 1843 Bruno Bauer, the anti-Semitic leader of the Hegelian left, published an essay demanding that the Jews abandon Judaism completely and transform their plea for equal rights into a general campaign for human liberation both from religion and from state tyranny.

"Marx replied to Bauer’s work in two essays published in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher in 1844, the same year Disraeli published Tancred. They are called ‘On the Jewish Question’. Marx accepted completely the savagely anti-Semitic context of Bauer’s argument, which he said was written ‘with boldness, perception, with and thoroughness in language that is precise as it is vigorous and meaningful’. He quoted with approval Bauer’s maliciously exaggerated assertion that ‘the Jews determines the fate of the whole [Austrian] empire by his money power... [and] decides the destiny of Europe’. Where he differed was in rejecting Bauer’s belief that the anti-social nature of the Jew was religious in origin and could be remedied by tearing the Jew away from his religion. In Marx’s view, the evil was social and economic. ‘Let us,’ he wrote, ‘consider the real Jew. Not the Sabbath Jew... but the everyday Jews.’ What, he asked, was ‘the profane basis of Judaism? Practical need, self-interest. What is the worldly cult of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly god? Money.’ The Jews had gradually conveyed this ‘practical’ religion to all society: ‘Money is the jealous God of Israel, besides which no other god may exist. Money abases all the gods of mankind and changes them into commodities. Money is the self-sufficient value of all things. It has, therefore, deprived the whole world, both the human world and nature, of their own proper value. Money is the alienated essence of man’s work and existence: this essence dominates him and he worships it. The god of the Jews has been secularised and has become the god of this world.’

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

Oleg Platonov has developed this argument as follows: “Under the influence of Jewish economics the personal worth of a man was turned into an exchange value, into merchandise. Instead of the spiritual freedom given to the people of the New Testament, Jewish-Masonic civilization brought ‘the shameless freedom of trade’. As the Jewish philosopher Moses Hesse wrote, ‘money is the alienated

843 Johnson, op. cit., pp. 350-351.
wealth of a man, attained by him in commercial activity. Money is the quantitative expression of the worth of a man, the brand of our enslavement, the seal of our shame, of our grovelling. Money is the coagulated blood and sweat of those who at market prices trade their inalienable property, their wealth, their vital activity, for the sake of accumulating that which is called capital. And all this is reminiscent of the insatiability of the cannibal.'

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

"In creating economics on the antichristian foundations of the Talmud, Jewry not only acquired for itself financial power. Through Jewry money became a world power, by means of its control over the Christian peoples. The gold-digging spirit of Jewish economics, crossing the frontiers of Jewry, began to corrupt the Christians themselves; and in the precise expression of K. Marx, ‘with the help of money the Jews liberated themselves to the same extent as the Christians became Jews.’"844

There was much truth in Marx’s analysis; but it was one-sided. Contemporary European and American civilization was based on a complex intertwining of apostate Jewry and heretical Christianity. If the Jews had taught the Christians the worship of money, and gone on to enslave them thereby, the Christians had nevertheless prepared the way for this by betraying their own Christian ideals and introducing to the Jews the semi-Christian, semi-pagan ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, human rights, etc. The Jews had seized on these ideas to emancipate themselves and then take them to their logical extreme in the proletarian revolution, taking control both of money power in the heights, and of political power in the depths of society. And so the relationship between the Jews and the Christians was mutually influential and mutually destructive.

The only question that remained was Lenin’s: kto kogo?, who would control whom? The answer to this was: the Jews would control the Christians. Why? Because the Christians, though fallen away from the true faith, nevertheless retained vestiges of Christian values and morality that restrained them from ultimate evil; they lacked that extra insight and ruthlessness that was given to the Jews for their greater ambition, greater hatred, greater proximity to Satan... And so heretical Christians might cooperate with apostate Jews in the overthrow of Christian civilization, as Engels cooperated with Marx. But in the end the heretical Christians would do the will of the apostate Jews, as Engels did the will of Marx. The only power that could effectively stand against both – and was therefore hated by both – was the power of the true faith, the Orthodox faith,

upheld by the Russian Orthodox Empire. It was logical, therefore, for Marx and Engels to see in Russia the main obstacle to the success of the revolution...

Johnson continues: “Marx’s solution, therefore, is not like Bauer’s, religious, but economic. The money-Jew had become the ‘universal anti-social element of the present time’. To ‘make the Jew impossible’ it was necessary to abolish the ‘preconditions’ and the ‘very possibility’ of the kind of money activities for which he was notorious. Once the economic framework was changed, Jewish ‘religious consciousness would evaporate like some insipid vapour in the real, life-giving air of society’. Abolish the Jewish attitude to money, and both the Jew and his religion, and the corrupt version of Christianity he had imposed on the world, would simply disappear: ‘In the final analysis, the emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind from Judaism.’ Or again: ‘In emancipating itself from bucksterism and money, and thus from real and practical Judaism, our age would emancipate itself.’

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

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

Johnson’s definition of socialism as the intellectuals’ anti-Semitism has great psychological plausibility; but it needs to be extended and deepened. The original irrational rebellion against civilized society was the rebellion of the Jews, the former people of God, against their Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This was the original anti-Semitism, in that it was directed both against the greatest Semite, Jesus Christ, and his Semitic disciples, and against the original, pure religion of the Semites, which Jesus Christ came to fulfill in the Church founded on Himself, “in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek”. As Christianity spread among the Gentiles, this original anti-Semitism, full of hatred and “on the basis not of individual guilt but merely of a condemned group”, was transmuted into the anti-Gentilism of the Talmud, being directed against the whole of Gentile Christian society. As Christian society degenerated into heresy, the Jewish virus of anti-Christian hatred infected the Christians themselves, becoming standard anti-Semitism. The sign that this anti-Semitism was simply the reversal of the same Jewish disease of anti-Gentilism is the fact that its object ceased to be the Talmudic religion, the real source of the disease, but the Jews as a race and as a whole.

However, with the gradual assimilation of the Jews into Western Christian society during the nineteenth century, Jewish radicals such as Marx joined with Gentile intellectuals such as Engels to create a new strain of the virus, a strain directed not against Jews alone or Christians alone, but against a whole class, the class of the bourgeois rich. In this perspective we can see that Marx’s view that the solution of “the Jewish question” lay in economics was wrong. Bauer was right that its solution was religious; but he was wrong in thinking that simply destroying the Talmud would cure the disease. For what was to be put in its place? The heretical, lukewarm Christianity of the West, which hardly believed in itself any more and was in any case, as we have seen, deeply infected by both Jewish and pagan elements?

As the example of Disraeli proves, that could never satisfy the spiritual quest of the more intelligent Jews. It could only prepare the way for a new, more virulent strain of the virus, which is in fact what we see in Marxism. The only solution was a return to the original, untainted faith of the Apostles... But that was only to be found in the East, and especially in Russia – where, however, the true faith of the Apostles lived in conjunction with both Jewish anti-Gentilism and Gentile anti-Semitism, and where the most virulent form of the virus, Marxism, would find its most fertile breeding-ground...

Although English and French socialism contributed to Marx's thought, he probably owed even more to German atheism and historicism. Marx had no need of teachers in respect of atheism. There is some evidence that in his youth he turned against God and became a Satanist because God did not give him the girl he loved. As he said: "I shall build my throne high overhead", which is a more or less direct quotation of Satan's words in Isaiah 14.13. Again, in his doctor's thesis he wrote: 'Philosophy makes no secret of the fact: her creed is the creed of Prometheus - 'In a word, I detest all the gods.' This is her device against all deities of heaven or earth who do not recognize as the highest divinity the human self-consciousness itself.\(^847\)

In later life Marx was known as "Old Nick", and his little son used to call him "devil".\(^848\) "In spite of all Marx's enthusiasm for the 'human'," writes the socialist Edmund Wilson, "he is either inhumanly dark and dead or almost superhumanly brilliant".\(^849\)

Marx's atheism received an impetus from Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), which reduced God to a psychological idea: "The divine essence is nothing else than the essence of man; or, better, it is the essence of man when freed from the limitations of the individual, that is to say, actual corporeal man, objectified and venerated as an independent Being distinct from man himself.\(^850\) Marx, too, defined religion as a purely human product: "the heart of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions, the opium of the people."\(^851\) He praised Feuerbach, according to Isaiah Berlin, "for showing that in religion men delude themselves by inventing an imaginary world to redress the balance of misery in real life - it is a form of escape, a golden dream, or, in a phrase made celebrated by Marx, the opium of the people; the criticism of religion must therefore be anthropological in character, and take the form of exposing and analysing its secular origins. But Feuerbach is accused of leaving the major task untouched: he sees that religion is an anodyne unconsciously generated by the unhappy to soften the pain caused by the contradictions of the material world, but then fails to see that these contradictions must, in that case, be removed: otherwise they will continue to breed comforting and fatal delusions: the revolution which alone can do so must occur not in the superstructure - the world of thought - but in its material substratum, the real world of men and things. Philosophy has hitherto treated ideas and beliefs as possessing an intrinsic validity of their own; this has never been true; the real content of a belief is the action in which it is expressed. The real convictions and principles of a man or a society are expressed in their acts, not their words. Belief and act are one; if acts do not themselves express avowed beliefs, the beliefs are lies - 'ideologies', conscious or not, to cover the opposite of what they profess.\(^851\)

\(^846\) Richard Wurmbrand, *Was Karl Marx a Satanist?*, Diane Books (USA), 1976.
\(^847\) Wilson, *To the Finland Station*, p. 122.
\(^848\) Wilson, *op. cit.* pp. 118-119.
\(^849\) Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
Theory and practice are, or should be, one and the same. 'Philosophers have previously offered various interpretations of the world. Our business is to change it.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

The other fundamental axiom of Marx’s theory was economic materialism. Everything is determined, according to Marx, by man’s struggle for economic survival, which in turn depends on his relationship to the economic conditions of production. The juridical, political, religious, aesthetic and philosophical aspects of man’s existence are all simply “ideological forms of appearance” of the only true reality, his economic position in society – that is, his class membership. As he put it in his famous epigram: “It is not the consciousness of man that determines his existence – rather, it is his social existence that determines his consciousness.” For “I was led,” he wrote, “to the conclusion that legal relations, as well as forms of state, could neither be understood by themselves, nor explained by the so-called general progress of the human mind, but that they are rooted in the material conditions of life which Hegel calls... civil society. The anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy.”

As Maria Hsia Chang writes, “Classical Marxism (the ideas of Marx and Engels) conceived society’s economic base as composed of the forces of production (means of production) that determine the relations of production (the nature of economic classes and their relations – who gets what, when, and how). The economic base, in turn determines the epiphenomenal superstructure composed of such elements as law, philosophy, religion, and ideology. The relations of production were subordinate to and contingent upon the productive

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855 Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.  

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forces – as productive forces change, social relations change; as social relations change, all of life changes.

“Marx was unequivocal on the determinant role of the forces of production. In the 1859 Preface to his Critique of Political Economy, he wrote that ‘in the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will,’ relations that ‘correspond to a definite state of development of their material productive forces.’ ‘The multitude of productive forces accessible to men determines the nature of society’ as well as the ‘forms of intercourse’ between human beings. Even the ‘phantoms formed in the human brain’ – religious convictions, ethics, and law – were ‘sublimates’ of the more fundamental processes of production. In the final analysis, the ‘productive forces… are the basis of all… history.’

“It follows that socialism could only be a product of a fully developed economy. As early as the German Ideology of 1845, Marx had insisted that socialist revolution could come only to advanced industrial systems because only those systems would inherit the productive potential to fully satisfy human needs without having recourse to invidious class distinctions and oppressive political rule. If an attempt were made to introduce socialism into an economically underdeveloped environment, Engels foresaw the consequence to be a ‘slide back… to [the] narrow limits’ of the old system. True socialist liberation was a function of ‘the level of development of the material means of existence’. To attempt to build communism on a primitive economic base could only be a ‘chiliastic, dream fantasy’.”^856

“The single operative cause,” writes Berlin, “which makes one people different from another, one set of institutions and beliefs opposed to another is, so Marx now came to believe, the economic environment in which it is set, the relationship of the ruling class of possessors to those whom they exploit, arising from the specific quality of the tension which persists between them. The fundamental springs of action in the life of men, he believed, all the more powerful for not being recognised by them, are their relationships to the alignment of classes in the economic struggle: the factor, knowledge of which would enable anyone to predict successfully men’s basic line of behaviour, is their actual social position – whether they are outside or inside the ruling class, whether their welfare depends on its success or failure, whether they are placed in a position to which the preservation of the existing order is or is not essential. Once this is known, men’s particular personal motives and emotions become comparatively irrelevant to the investigation: they may be egoistic or altruistic, generous or mean, clever or stupid, ambitious or modest. Their natural qualities will be harnessed by their circumstances to operate in a given direction, whatever their natural tendency. Indeed, it is misleading to speak of a ‘natural tendency’ or an unalterable ‘human nature’. Tendencies may be classified either in accordance with the subjective feeling which they engender (and this is, for purposes of scientific prediction, unimportant), or in accordance with their actual aims, which are socially conditioned. Men behave before they start to

reflect on the reasons for, or the justification of, their behaviour; the majority of
the members of a community will act in a similar fashion, whatever the
subjective motives for which they will appear to themselves to be acting as they
do. This is obscured by the fact that in the attempt to convince themselves that
their acts are determined by reasons or by moral or religious beliefs, men have
tended to construct elaborate rationalisations of their behaviour. Nor are these
rationalisations wholly powerless to affect action, for, growing into great
institutions like moral codes or religious organisations, they often linger on long
after the social pressures, to explain away which they arose, have disappeared.
Thus these great organised illusions themselves become part of the objective
social situation, part of the external world which modifies the behaviour of
individuals, functioning in the same way as the invariant factors, climate, soil,
physical organism, function in their interplay with social institutions.

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

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

Marx differed from Hegel also in his vision of the final outcome of the historical process. Whereas for Hegel the self-realization of the Divine Idea culminated in the Prussian State (although, looking towards America, he was inclined to hedge his bets), for Marx it culminated in the victory of the proletariat, and finally in the withering away of the now unnecessary state... One thing was certain: the bourgeoisie could not stand. For Marx and Engels understood the characteristic of the industrial, bourgeois age that distinguished it from all previous ages – its dynamism. Whereas previous ages aimed to preserve the social structure in order to preserve their place in it, the bourgeois were in effect constantly changing it, knowing that technological advance was constantly making present relationships obsolete and unprofitable. Not only did it overthrow the old, patriarchal and feudal society that came before it: it was constantly working to overthrow itself. “The bourgeoisie,” they wrote, “cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their trace of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into the air.”

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

The first axiom of Marx’s theory, the idea that class conflict is the sole determinant of world history, is clearly false: there are countless counter-examples that disprove it. If his second axiom, that man’s thought is determined by his economic status, is true, then there is no reason for believing it to be true insofar as Marx’s thought, too, must be determined by his economic status.

And so, since both his fundamental axioms are false, there is no reason for believing the rest of his theory. As for his prediction that true socialism could only succeed in an economically advanced society, this is disproved by its “success” in such peasant societies as Russia and China. The almost universal fall of those same societies in the late twentieth century is still further proof that Marx was a false prophet.

Marxism is “a creed complete with prophet, sacred texts and the promise of a heaven shrouded in mystery. Marx was not a scientist, as he claimed. He founded a faith. The economic and political systems he inspired are dead or dying. But his religion is a broad church, and lives on.”

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

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860 Popper cites the conflict between the popes and emperors, both of the same class (op. cit., p. 116).
One of those who profited from the change in mood after 1848 was the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, whose main work, *The World as Will and Representation*, had been written in 1819 but only now became popular. He became famous, writes Golo Mann, "because of historical trends which he would have disapproved of if he had been clear about them: post-revolutionary disappointment of the middle class, a temporary lack of interest in politics. These trends helped Schopenhauer, who despised history and politics."

While retaining German idealism's characteristic starting-point in psychology (or meta-psychology), and its post-Hegelian emphasis on history and becoming, Schopenhauer changed its direction by arguing that the essence of reality, the "thing-in-itself", was not Idea or Mind or Reason, but Will. This idea could be said to be a German challenge to the Frenchman Descartes' "I think, therefore I am." For Schopenhauer, by contrast, the fundamental axiom of philosophy was: "I will, therefore I am." This will, however, destined to ultimate extinction, which gives Schopenhauer's philosophy an extremely pessimistic colouring: "We begin in the madness of carnal desire and the transport of voluptuousness, we end in the dissolution of all our parts and the musty stench of corpses. And the road from one to the other goes, in regard to our well-being and enjoyment in life, steadily downhill: happily dreaming childhood, exultant youth, toil-filled years of manhood, infirm and often wretched old age, the torment of the last illness and finally the throes of death."

According to Bertrand Russell, "Schopenhauer's system is an adaptation of Kant's, but one that emphasizes quite different aspects of the *Critique from those emphasized by Fichte or Hegel. They got rid of the thing-in-itself, and thus made knowledge metaphysically fundamental. Schopenhauer retained the thing-in-itself, but identified it with will. Kant had maintained that a study of the moral law can take us beyond phenomena, and give us knowledge which sense-perception cannot give; he also maintained that the moral law is essentially concerned with the will."

It was not that Schopenhauer denied the sphere of thought. But he ascribed the primacy to will over knowledge, desire over thought; for him, knowledge and thought were at all times the servants of will and desire. In this way he provided the philosophical justification of that critical transition in German life from the dreamy, brilliant but somewhat ineffective Romantic period to the intensely active, entrepreneurial period that began after the 1848 revolution and continued after 1871 into the Second Reich. Moreover, the emphasis on will and desire corresponded to the intense development of the science of biology in this period.

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863 Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
As John Gray has pointed out, Schopenhauer anticipated Freud in his emphasis on the dominance of unconscious desire over conscious thought, on the importance of the sexual impulse, slips of the tongue, repressed emotions, and so on. Yanis Varoufakis develops this theme, which links Schopenhauer not only with Freud but also with Nietzsche and Marx: “The German philosopher Schopenhauer castigated us modern humans for deceiving ourselves into thinking that our beliefs and customs are subject to our consciousness. Nietzsche concurred, suggesting that all the things we believe in, at any given time, reflect not truth but someone else’s power over us. Marx dragged economics into this picture, reprimanding us all for ignoring the reality that our thoughts have become hijacked by capital and its drive to accumulate. Naturally, although it follows its own steely logic, capital evolves mindlessly. No one designed capitalism and no one can civilize it now that it is going at full tilt…”

Copleston asks: "How does Schopenhauer arrive at the conviction that the thing-in-itself is Will? To find the key to reality I must look within myself. For in inner consciousness or inwardly directed perception lies 'the single narrow door to the truth'. Through this inner consciousness I am aware that the bodily action which is said to follow or result from volition is not something different from volition but one and the same. That is to say, the bodily action is simply the objectified will: it is the will become idea or presentation. Indeed, the whole body is nothing but objectified will, will as a presentation to consciousness. According to Schopenhauer anyone can understand this if he enters into himself. And once he has this fundamental intuition, he has the key to reality. He has only to extend his discovery to the world at large.

"This Schopenhauer proceeds to do. He sees the manifestation of the one individual Will in the impulse by which the magnet turns to the north pole, in the phenomena of attraction and repulsion, in gravitation, in animal instinct, in human desire and so on. Wherever he looks, whether in the inorganic or in the organic sphere, he discovers empirical confirmation of his thesis that phenomena constitute the appearance of the one metaphysical Will.

"The natural question to ask is this. If the thing-in-itself is manifested in such diverse phenomena as the universal forces of Nature, such as gravity, and human volition, why call it 'Will'? Would not 'Force' or 'Energy' be a more appropriate term, especially as the so-called Will, when considered in itself, is said to be 'without knowledge and merely a blind incessant impulse', 'an endless striving'? For the term 'Will', which implies rationality, seems to be hardly suitable for describing a blind impulse or striving.

"Schopenhauer, however, defends his linguistic usage by maintaining that we ought to take our descriptive term from what is best known to us. We are immediately conscious of our own volition. And it is more appropriate to describe the less well known in terms of the better known than the other way round.

Besides being described as blind impulse, endless striving, eternal becoming and so on, the metaphysical Will is characterized as the Will to live. Indeed, to say 'the Will' and to say 'the Will to live' are for Schopenhauer one and the same thing. As, therefore, empirical reality is the objectification or appearance of the metaphysical Will, it necessarily manifests the Will to live. And Schopenhauer has no difficulty in multiplying examples of this manifestation. We have only to look at Nature's concern for the maintenance of the species. Birds, for instance, build nests for the young which they do not yet know. Insects deposit their eggs where the larva may find nourishment. The whole series of phenomena of animal instinct manifests the omnipresence of the Will to live. If we look at the untiring activity of bees and ants and ask what it all leads to, what is attained by it, we can only answer 'the satisfaction of hunger and the sexual instinct', the means, in other words, of maintaining the species in life. And if we look at man with his industry and trade, with his inventions and technology, we must admit that all this striving serves in the first instance only to sustain and to bring a certain amount of additional comfort to ephemeral individuals in their brief span of existence, and through them to contribute to the maintenance of the species.

Now, if the Will is an endless striving, a blind urge or impulse which knows no cessation, it cannot find satisfaction or reach a state of tranquillity. It is always striving and never attaining. And this essential feature of the metaphysical Will is reflected in its self-objectification, above all in human life. Man seeks satisfaction, happiness, but he cannot attain it. What we call happiness or enjoyment is simply a temporary cessation of desire. And desire, as the expression of a need or want, is a form of pain. Happiness, therefore, is 'the deliverance from a pain, from a want'; it is 'really and essentially always only negative and never positive'. It soon turns to boredom, and the striving after satisfaction reasserts itself. It is boredom which makes beings who love one another so little as men do seek one another's company. And great intellectual powers simply increase the capacity for suffering and deepen the individual's isolation.

Each individual thing, as an objectification of the one Will to live, strives to assert its own existence at the expense of other things. Hence the world is the field of conflict, a conflict which manifests the nature of the Will as at variance with itself, as a tortured Will. And Schopenhauer finds illustrations of this conflict even in the inorganic sphere. But it is naturally to the organic and human spheres that he chiefly turns for empirical confirmation of his thesis. He dwells, for example, on the ways in which animals of one species prey on those of another. And when he comes to man, he really lets himself go. 'The chief source of the most serious evils which afflict man is man himself: homo homini lupus. Whoever keeps this last fact clearly in view sees the world as a hell which surpasses that of Dante through the fact that one man must be the devil of another.' War and cruelty are, of course, grist for Schopenhauer's mill. And the man who showed no sympathy with the Revolution of 1848 speaks in the sharpest terms of industrial exploitation, slavery and such like social abuses.

We may not that it is the egoism, rapacity and hardness and cruelty of men which are for Schopenhauer the real justification of the State. So far from being a
divine manifestation, the State is simply the creation of enlightened egoism which tries to make the world a little more tolerable than it would otherwise be."\footnote{Copleston, \textit{A History of Philosophy}, vol. 7, part II, pp. 37-39.}

The philosopher understands that there is only this constant striving and suffering, and therefore no other path for him except the decision to renounce the Will to live, which is the cause of all suffering. But this is not accomplished through suicide, as one might expect, for suicide is in fact an attempt to escape certain evils, and therefore the expression of a concealed will to live.

Only two things relieve the bleakness of this nihilist vision to any degree: art and asceticism… In the contemplation of art - especially music, which exhibits the inner nature of the Will, the thing-in-itself - desire is temporarily stilled. For "it is possible for me to regard the beautiful object neither as itself an object of desire nor as a stimulant to desire but simply and solely for its aesthetic significance."\footnote{Copleston, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43.}

However, "aesthetic contemplation affords no more than a temporary or transient escape from the slavery of the Will. But Schopenhauer offers a lasting release through renunciation of the Will to live. Indeed, moral progress must take this form if morality is possible at all. For the Will to live, manifesting itself in egoism, self-assertion, hatred and conflict, is for Schopenhauer the source of evil. 'There really resides in the heart of each of us a wild beast which only waits the opportunity to rage and rave in order to injure others, and which, if they do not prevent it, would like to destroy them.' This wild beast, this radical evil, is the direct expression of the Will to live. Hence morality, if it is possible, must involve denial of the Will. And as man is an objectification of the Will, denial will mean self-denial, asceticism and mortification."\footnote{Copleston, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 47-48.}

"We must banish the dark impression of that nothingness which we discern behind all virtue and holiness as their final goal, and which we fear as children fear the dark; we must not even evade it like the Indians, through myths and meaningless words, such as reabsorption in Brahma or the Nirvana of the Buddhists. Rather do we freely acknowledge that what remains after the entire abolition of will is for all those who are still full of will certainly nothing; but, conversely, to those in whom the will has turned and has denied itself, this our world, which is so real, with all its suns and milky ways - is nothing."\footnote{Schopenhauer, in Russell, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 785. Here, perhaps, we see the influence of Buddhism. “In his study,” notes Russell, “he had a bust of Kant and a bronze Buddha.” (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 785).}

With the surrender of the Will, "all those phenomena are also abolished; that constant strain and effort without end and without rest at all the grades of objectivity in which and through which the world consists; the multifarious forms succeeding each other in gradation; the whole manifestation of the will; and, finally, also the universal forms of this manifestation, time and space, and
also its last fundamental form, subject and object; all are abolished. No will: no idea, no world. Before us there is certainly only nothingness.

So, contrary to the Christian vision, there is no positive end to the self-denial that Schopenhauer recommends. Nor could there be. For there is nothing other than the Will to live, which is neither God nor any positive ideal, but pure egoism "objectified" in various forms and ending in death.

The most a man can hope for as a result of his self-denial is to "penetrate the veil of Maya [illusion] to the extent of seeing that all individuals are really one. For they are all phenomena of the one undivided Will. We then have the ethical level of sympathy. We have goodness or virtue which is characterized by a disinterested love of others. True goodness is not, as Kant thought, a matter of obeying the categorical imperative for the sake of duty alone. True goodness is love, agape or caritas in distinction from eros, which is self-directed. And love is sympathy. 'All true and pure love is sympathy (Mitleid), and all love which is not sympathy is selfishness (Selbstsucht). Eros is selfishness; agape is sympathy.'

However, the existence of a "true and pure love" attainable by philosophy and self-denial seems to be inconsistent with the premises of Schopenhauer's system. For how can there be a selfless love when all that exists is the selfish Will to live? Indeed, for Schopenhauer "existence, life, is itself a crime: it is our original sin. And it is inevitably expiated by suffering and death." Since for Schopenhauer there is no paradisiac innocence, but only original sin, there can be no escape from sin, and no return to paradise, but only the vain and self-contradictory attempt of existence to deny itself.

Schopenhauer's vision represents a significant new turn in European philosophy. On the one hand, it reflects the highly practical spirit (will rather than mind) of the early industrial age. On the other, it reflects the underlying scepticism of the post-1848 age in which it was read (rather than the age in which it was written). Gone is the optimism of the Enlightenment, and its belief in reason and the perfectibility of man; gone, too, the innocence and freshness of the first wave of Romanticism. In its place we find Byronic despair and Eastern pessimism, the despair of a man who has cut himself off from the last vestiges of the Christian Good News, who believes neither in God nor in anything else except his baser instincts, and is preparing to escape from his suffering by plunging into what he insists will be a sea of nothingness, but which he fears will be something very different and much more terrifying...

870 Schopenhauer, in Russell, op. cit., p. 785.
873 "Nevertheless," writes Mann, "he was a Christian [!] and distinguished between two basic tendencies in Christianity: an optimistic one promising paradise on earth, which he regarded as Jewish in origin, and an ascetic one proclaiming the misery and treachery of the world, teaching resignation and compassion' (op. cit., pp. 142-143).
63. DARWIN'S THEORY OF EVOLUTION

The Bible of the new, Victorian rationalism was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859 but written considerably earlier.\(^{874}\) The year 1859, according to M.S. Anderson, "can be seen as the beginning of a new era in intellectual life"; for it "gave birth not merely to the *Origin of Species* but also to Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.\(^{875}\) If eighteenth-century Deism had banished God to the heavens, leaving for Him only the function of Creator, Darwinism deprived Him even of this function, ascribing all creativity to the blind will of nature working entirely through chance. Of course, this could be seen as the height of irrationalism - which it was, and a return to the crudest pagan nature-worship - which it also was. But Darwin succeeded in ascribing to his pagan mysticism the aura of *science* - and few there were, in the 1860s, who dared to question the authority of science.

The theory maintains that all life, even the most complex, has evolved from the simplest organisms over a period of hundreds of millions of years. This process is entirely random, being propelled forward by two mechanisms: *natural selection*, which "selects out" for survival those organisms with advantageous variations (this was Darwin's preferred mechanism), and *genetic mutations*, which introduce variations into the genotypes of the organisms (this is the favoured mechanism of the "neo-Darwinists").

"Therefore," writes Bertrand Russell, "among chance variations those that are favourable will preponderate among adults in each generation. Thus from age to age deer run more swiftly, cats stalk their prey more silently, and giraffes' necks become longer. Given enough time, this mechanism, so Darwin contended, could account for the whole long development from the protozoa to *homo sapiens*.\(^{876}\)

"Given enough time..." Time - enormous amounts of it - was indeed a critical ingredient in Darwin's theory; in fact it took the place of a satisfactory causal mechanism. But such a theory chimed in with the historicist temper of the times. It also chimed in with the idea, as Jacques Barzun writes, "that everything is alive and in motion - a dynamic universe\(^{877}\), which in turn chimed in with the great dogma of the day, the idea of PROGRESS.

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\(^{874}\) Darwin may have waited many years before publishing his theory partly because, as Tomb writes, "the socio-economic and political climate was calmer" *(op. cit., p. 470)* and partly because, as David Quammen writes, he was anxious "about announcing a theory that seemed to challenge conventional religious beliefs - in particular, the Christian beliefs of his wife, Emma. Darwin himself quietly renounced Christianity during his middle age, and later described himself as an agnostic. He continued to believe in a distant, impersonal deity of some sort, a greater entity that had set the universe and its laws into motion, but not in a personal God who had chosen humanity as a specially favored species. Darwin avoided flaunting his lack of religious faith, at least partly in deference to Emma. And she prayed for his soul..." *("Was Darwin Wrong?", National Geographic, November, 2004, p. 9)*


\(^{876}\) Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 752.

Liberals believed in gradual progress, socialists believed in progress through revolution, everyone except for a few diehards like the Pope believed that things had to change, and that change had to be for the better. Above all, evolution appealed to man's pride, in the belief that man was destined for greater and greater things. "You know," says Lady Constance in Disraeli's novel *Tancred* (1847), "all is development - the principle is perpetually going on. First, there was nothing; then - I forget the next - I think there were shells; then fishes; then we came - let me see - did we come next? Never mind, we came at last and the next change will be something very superior to us, something with wings."878

It will be noted that this was written twelve years before Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, which shows that the "scientific" theory filled an emotional need already expressed by poets and novelists. Evidently not feeling this need himself, Disraeli said that as between the idea that man was an ape or an angel, he was "on the side of the angels"879; but he forgot that, as Lady Constance had opined in his novel, evolution was for many a way of attaining angelic status ("something with wings") in the very long run. For those who did not believe in the deification of man through Christ, evolution provided another, secular and atheist form of deification. This elicited the not unfounded derision of the conservatives. Thus Gobineau said that man was "not descended from the apes, but rapidly getting there".880

Thus "doubts there were aplenty", writes A.N. Wilson, about various questions. "But... the Victorian capacity... to live, very often, with double standards, is what makes so many of them – individually and collectively – seem to be humbugs and hypocrites."881

Darwin himself was not a hypocrite. He knew that his theory was incompatible with Christianity. Thus in 1880 he wrote to Francis McDermott: "I am sorry to have to inform you that I do not believe in the Bible as a divine revelation & therefore not in Jesus Christ as the son of God."882

But the great and the good of the British establishment managed – to their satisfaction at any rate - to square the circle of Christianity and the *de facto* atheism of evolutionism. Thus Newman "regarded Darwin’s theory as compatible with his Catholic beliefs. Darwinism was soon being interpreted optimistically as the means used by God in creating a progressive universe. As the devout High Church Anglican Gladstone put it, 'Evolution, if it be true, enhances in my judgement the proper idea of the greatness of God.'"883

In 1860 a famous debate on Darwinism took place between Thomas Huxley and Samuel Wilberforce ("soapy Sam"), the Bishop of Oxford, at the British

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878 Disraeli, in Barzun, op. cit., p. 502.
879 Barzun, op. cit., p. 571.
880 Barzun, op. cit., p. 571.
881 Wilson, op. cit., p. 53.
883 Tombs, op. cit., p. 470.
Association for the Advancement of Science. According to Isabella Sidgwick, “The Bishop rose, and in a light scoffing tone, florid and fluent, he assured us there was nothing to the idea of evolution, rock-pigeons were what rock-pigeons had always been. Then, turning to his antagonist with a smiling insolence, he begged to know, was it through his grandfather or his grandmother that he claimed his descent from a monkey? On this Mr. Huxley slowly and deliberately arose. A slight tall figure stern and pale, very quiet and very grave, he stood before us and spoke these tremendous words – words which no one seems sure of now, nor I think, could remember just after they were spoken for their meaning took away our breath, though it left us in no doubt as to what it was. He was not ashamed to have a monkey for his ancestor, but he would be ashamed to be connected with a man who used great gifts to obscure the truth...”

Paradoxically, Darwin's book never actually discussed the origin of species - the very first and simplest step in evolution, the supposed transformation of inorganic matter into organic. This was perhaps because Darwin knew of Louis Pasteur's contemporary discovery that spontaneous generation is impossible. But modern scientists have continued to try and prove the impossible to be possible in their laboratories, if not in nature - with no success whatsoever.

Darwin himself had doubts about natural selection. "To suppose,” he wrote. “that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.” Instead he turned to the discredited theory of Lamarck, that acquired characteristics are inherited - a theory accepted, in modern times, only by Stalin's Lysenko...

The German philosopher Nietzsche rejected Darwinism, pointing out, as Copleston writes, "that during most of the time taken up in the formation of a certain organ or quality, the inchoate organ is of no use to its possessor and cannot aid it in its struggle with external circumstances and forces. The influence of ‘external circumstances’ is absurdly overrated by Darwin. The essential factor in the vital process is precisely the tremendous power to shape and create forms from within, a power which uses and exploits the environment.” Nietzsche’s insight has been definitively vindicated by the modern discovery of DNA, which shows that most characteristics of species are implanted in them from birth in accordance with a pre-existing code. More recently, Michael Behe has proved that even the simplest living cell is irreducibly complex - that is, it cannot be built up piece-meal from simpler ingredients, but every single ingredient has to be in its place in the extraordinarily complex structure of the cell from the beginning.

884 Sidgwick, in Evans, op. cit., p. 472.
The idea that all things came into being out of nothing by chance was rejected already in the fourth century by St. Basil the Great: "Where did you get what you have? If you say that you received it by chance, you are an atheist, you do not know your Creator and are not grateful to your Benefactor." And St. Nectarios of Pentapolis, writing in 1885, was withering in his rejection of this new version of a very old heresy: "The followers of *pithecogeny* [the derivation of man from the apes] are ignorant of man and of his lofty destiny, because they have denied him his soul and Divine revelation. They have rejected the Spirit, and the Spirit has abandoned them. They withdrew from God, and God withdrew from them; for, thinking they were wise, they became fools... If they had acted with knowledge, they would not have lowered themselves so much, nor would they have taken pride in tracing the origin of the human race to the most shameless of animals. Rightly did the Prophet say of them: 'Man being in honour, did not understand; he is compared to the dumb beasts, and is become like unto them.'

A little later, St. Nektary of Optina affirmed that the fossils, the only scientific evidence for evolution, were actually laid down by the Great Flood and had nothing to do with what St. Theophan the Recluse called the "geological madness" of Darwinism: "Once a man came to me who simply couldn't believe that there had been a flood. Then I told him that on very high mountains in the sand are found shells and other remains from the ocean floor, and how geology testifies to the flood, and he came to believe. You see how necessary learning is at times." And again the elder said: "God not only permits, but demands of man that he grow in knowledge. However, it is necessary to live and learn so that not only does knowledge not ruin morality, but that morality not ruin knowledge."

St. Nektary's fellow-elder at Optina, St. Barsanuphius (+1912), emphasized the ruination of morality by Darwinism: “Darwin created an entire system according to which life is a struggle for existence, a struggle for the strong against the weak, where those that are conquered are doomed to destruction. This is already the beginning of a bestial philosophy, and those who come to believe in it wouldn't think twice about killing a man, assaulting a woman, or robbing their closest friend - and they would do all this calmly, with a full recognition of their right to commit their crimes.”

It was the implicit denial of the rational, free and immaterial soul that particularly shocked the early critics of Darwinism. For as Darwinism rapidly evolved from a purely biological theory of origins into the metaphysical theory universal evolutionism, going back to what scientists now call the Big Bang, the image of man that emerged was not simply animalian but completely material. Man was made in the image, not of God, but of dead matter.

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887 St. Basil the Great, *Sermon on Avarice.*
888 St. Nectarios, *Sketch concerning Man,* Athens, 1885.
Moreover, evolutionism turned out to be an explanation of the origins of the whole universe on the basis of a supposedly new philosophy or religion that was in fact very old and very pagan. For "all things were made" now, not by God the Word, the eternal Life and Light of the world, but by blind mutation and "natural selection" (i.e. death). These were the two hands of original Chaos, the father of all things - a conception as old as the pre-Socratic philosophers Anaximander and Heraclitus and as retrogressive as the pre-Christian religions of Egypt and Babylon.

Darwin’s idea of species evolving into and from each other also recalls the Hindu idea of reincarnation. A more likely contemporary influence was Schopenhauer’s philosophy of Will. For both Schopenhauer and Darwin the blind, selfish Will to live was everything; for both there was neither intelligent design nor selfless love, but only the struggle to survive; for both the best that mankind could hope for was not Paradise but a kind of Buddhist nirvana.

Schopenhauer in metaphysics, Darwin in science, and Marx in political theory formed a kind of unholy and unconsubstantial trinity of false prophets, whose essence was Will. Marx liked Darwinism because it appeared to justify the idea of class struggle as the fundamental mechanism of human evolution. "The idea of class struggle logically flows from 'the law of the struggle for existence'. It is precisely by this law that Marxism explains the emergence of classes and their struggle, whence logically proceeds the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Instead of racist pre-eminence class pre-eminence is preached."

However, Darwinism’s blind historicism and implicit atheism was also congenial to Marx. As Richard Wurmbrand notes: "After Marx had read The Origin of Species by Charles Darwin, he wrote a letter to Lassalle in which he exults that God - in the natural sciences at least - had been given 'the death blow'. "Karl Marx," writes Hieromonk Damascene, 'was a devout Darwinist, who in Das Kapital called Darwin's theory 'epoch making'. He believed his reductionist, materialistic theories of the evolution of social organization to be deducible from Darwin's discoveries, and thus proposed to dedicate Das Kapital to Darwin. The funeral oration over Marx's body, delivered by Engels, stressed the evolutionary basis of communism: 'Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history.'

“Darwinism and Marxism,” wrote Fr. Seraphim Rose, “are inextricably linked. Karl Marx, one of world history’s biggest villains, dedicated his book Das Kapital to Darwin. The five biggest mass murderers in world history, Pol Pot, Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao, were all heavily influenced by Darwin. With

891 Marx’s task was “to convert the ‘Will’ of German philosophy and this abstraction into a force in the practical world” (A.N. Wilson, After the Victorians, London: Hutchinson, 2005, p. 126).
893 Wurmbrand, Was Karl Marx a Satanist?, Diane Books (USA), 1976, p. 44.
Darwinist-utilitarian logic, Pol Pot stated, ‘Keeping you is no gain. Losing you is no loss.’ Adolf Hitler dedicated his memoir *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) to the subtitle of *The Origin of Species*, and tried to put Darwin’s theory into practice by conducting the Holocaust. Vladimir Lenin said, ‘Darwin put an end to the belief that the animal and vegetable species bear no relation to one another, except by chance, and that they were created by God, and hence immutable.’ He also owned a bronze statue of bronze statue of an ape gazing at an oversized human skull on a stack of his books, one of them being *The Origin of Species*. His right-hand man Leon Trotsky also talked about Darwin’s influence on himself. When Joseph Stalin came across Darwin as a young kid, he became convinced that God does not exist, and told a classmate all about him. When he took power, he said, ‘There are three things that we do to disabuse the minds of our seminary students. We had to teach them the age of the earth, the geologic origin, and Darwin’s teachings.’ Stalin also tried to create ape-men super warriors by putting human semen into female apes. Mao Tse-tung listed Darwin as the most influential Westerner in his life, along with Darwin’s followers Thomas Huxley, Darwin’s cousin Francis Galton, and Herbert Spencer. Mao also said ‘The basis of Chinese socialism rest on Darwin and his theory of evolution.’

"The years after 1870," writes Gareth Stedman Jones, "were dominated by the prestige of the natural sciences, especially that of Darwin. Playing to these preoccupations, Engels presented Marx’s work, not as a theory of communism or as a study of capitalism, but as the foundation of a parallel ‘science of historical materialism’. Socialism had made a transition from ‘utopia’ to ‘science’..."

Not only Marxism, but also its rival, Capitalism, found support in Darwinism. For Darwinism can be seen as the application of the principles of capitalist competition to nature. Thus Bertrand Russell writes: ‘Darwinism was an application to the whole of animal and vegetable life of Malthus's theory of population, which was an integral part of the politics and economics of the Benthamites - a global free competition, in which victory went to the animals that most resembled successful capitalists. Darwin himself was influenced by Malthus, and was in general sympathy with the Philosophical Radicals. There was, however, a great difference between the competition admired by orthodox economists and the struggle for existence which Darwin proclaimed as the motive force of evolution. 'Free competition,' in orthodox economics, is a very artificial conception, hedged in by legal restrictions. You may undersell a competitor, but you must not murder him. You must not use the armed forces of the State to help you to get the better of foreign manufacturers. Those who have the good fortune to possess capital must not seek to improve their lot by revolution. 'Free competition', as understood by the Benthamites, was by no means really free.

"Darwinian competition was not of this limited sort; there were no rules against hitting below the belt. The framework of law does not exist among animals, nor is war excluded as a competitive method. The use of the State to
secure victory in competition was against the rules as conceived by the Benthamites, but could not be excluded from the Darwinian struggle. In fact, though Darwin himself was a Liberal, and though Nietzsche never mentions him except with contempt, Darwin's 'Survival of the Fittest' led, when thoroughly assimilated, to something much more like Nietzsche's philosophy than like Bentham's. These developments, however, belong to a later period, since Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859, and its political implications were not at first perceived...

As for the political implications of Darwin's book, they are obvious from its full title: *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the struggle for life.* Darwin did not mean by "races" races of men, but species of animals. However, the inference was easily drawn that certain races of men are more “favoured” than others; and this inference was still more easily drawn after the publication of *The Descent of Man* in 1871.

Darwin's writings are definitely racist. In *The Descent of Man* he wrote, “At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world.” And again: “With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated. … We civilized men, on the other hand … build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed and the sick. … Thus the weak members propagate their kind. No one who had attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. … Hardly anyone is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed. …” Darwin continued: “Civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races throughout the world. … The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilized state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla.”

Very soon different races or classes or groups of men were being viewed as if they were different species. "Applied to politics," writes Jacques Barzun, "[Darwinism] bred the doctrine that nations and other social groups struggle endlessly in order that the fittest shall survive. So attractive was this 'principle' that it got the name of Social Darwinism." Thus Social Darwinism may be defined as the idea that "human affairs are a jungle in which only the fittest of nations, classes, or individuals will survive".

Social Darwinism leads to the conclusion that certain races are congenitally superior to others. "Only congenital characteristics are inherited," writes Russell, "apart from certain not very important exceptions. Thus the congenital differences between men acquire fundamental importance."

\[897\] Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 807-808


As Fr. Timothy Alferov writes: "The ideas of racial pre-eminence - racism, Hitlerism - come from the Darwinist teaching on the origin of the races and their unequal significance. The law of the struggle for existence supposedly obliges the strong races to exert a strong dominance over the other races, to the extent of destroying the latter. It is not necessary to describe here the incarnation of these ideas in life in the example of Hitlerism, but it is worth noting that Hitler greatly venerated Darwin."\textsuperscript{901}

Social Darwinism also had an important effect on criminology. Thus, as Evans writes, “Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), who served with the Italian army in 1863 fighting brigands in Calabria, came to the view that criminals were not made but born, representing throwbacks to an earlier stage of human evolution. In 1876 he published \textit{Criminal Man}, which took advantage of the development of photography to argue that born criminals had long arms, simian features and other physical attributes of the ape. Lombroso’s idea of atavism, of criminals as evolutionary throwbacks, never received much support, and as time went on he modified his arguments to suggest that hereditary criminality was also the consequence of generations of alcoholism, or sexually transmitted diseases, or malnutrition; but more generally the basic idea that criminality was inherited began to exert a growing influence across Europe in the late nineteenth century.

“The consequences of Lambroso’s basic argument, popularized by his student Enrico Ferri (1856-1929) in Italy, by Gustav Aschaffenburg (1866-1944) in Germany, by Francis Galton (1822-1911) in Britain, and by Rafael Salillas (1854-1923) in Spain, were momentous. The study of crime and criminality became the province not of law and its practitioners but of medicine and of professional criminology. Increasingly, in the 1890s and beyond, arguments began to be raised in favour of the compulsory sterilization of the ‘inferior’ who might be found work but should not be allowed to reproduce. Lombroso himself, along with many others who shared at least some of his views, began to argue for capital punishment on new grounds, namely that the extremely degenerate offender, the criminal with inherited violent traits, could neither be rendered safe nor removed from the chain of heredity unless he or she was eliminated altogether. Punishment had come full circle, from the medieval and early modern punishment of the body to the Enlightenment and Victorian punishment of the mind, and back again to the turn-of-the-century punishment of the body again.”\textsuperscript{902}

However, while appearing to widen the differences between races and classes of men, Social Darwinism also \textit{reduces} them between men and other species - with startling consequences.

Thus Russell writes: "If men and animals have a common ancestry, and if men developed by such slow stages that there were creatures which we should not know whether to classify as human or not, the question arises: at what stage in

\textsuperscript{901} Alferov, \textit{Pravoslavnoe Mirovoozrenie i Sovremennoe Estesvoznanie} (The Orthodox World-View and the Contemporary Science of Nature), Moscow: "Palomnik", 1998, pp. 157-158.

\textsuperscript{902} Evans, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 439-440.
evolution did men, or their semi-human ancestors, begin to be all equal? Would Pithecanthropus erectus, if he had been properly educated, have done work as good as Newton’s? Would the Piltdown Men have written Shakespeare’s poetry if there had been anybody to convict him of poaching? A resolute egalitarian who answers these questions in the affirmative will find himself forced to regard apes as the equals of human beings. And why stop at apes? I do not see how he is to resist an argument in favour of Votes for Oysters. An adherent of evolution should maintain that not only the doctrine of the equality of all men, but also that of the rights of man, must be condemned as unbiological, since it makes too emphatic a distinction between men and other animals.903

Since Russell’s time this idea of the essential quality between men and animals has come to be taken more seriously than he evidently took it…

Arthur Balfour, who became British Prime Minister in 1902, described the world-view that universal evolutionism proclaimed as follows: "A man - so far as natural science is able to teach us, is no longer the final cause of the universe, the Heaven-descended heir of all the ages. His very existence is an accident, his story a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Of the combination of causes which first converted a dead organic compound into the living progenitors of humanity, science indeed, as yet knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings famine, disease, and mutual slaughter, fit nurses of the future lords of creation, have gradually evolved after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to feel that it is vile, and intelligent enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past, and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish…”904

A truly melancholy philosophy – but fortunately there is no reason to believe in it. C.S. Lewis wrote: "By universal evolutionism I mean the belief that the very formula of universal process is from imperfect to perfect, from small beginnings to great endings, from the rudimentary to the elaborate, the belief which makes people find it natural to think that morality springs from savage taboos, adult sentiment from infantile sexual maladjustments, thought from instinct, mind from matter, organic from inorganic, cosmos from chaos. This is perhaps the deepest habit of mind in the contemporary world. It seems to me immensely implausible, because it makes the general course of nature so very unlike those parts of nature we can observe. You remember the old puzzle as to whether the

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903 Russell, op. cit., p. 753. A British television programme once seriously debated the question whether apes should have the same rights as human beings, and came to a positive conclusion… See Joanna Bourke, What it Means to be Human, London: Virago, 2011.
The modern acquiescence in universal evolutionism is a kind of optical illusion, produced by attending exclusively to the owl's emergence from the egg. We are taught from childhood to notice how the perfect oak grows from the acorn and to forget that the acorn itself was dropped by a perfect oak. We are reminded constantly that the adult human being was an embryo, never that the life of the embryo came from two adult human beings. We love to notice that the express engine of today is the descendant of the 'Rocket'; we do not equally remember that the 'Rocket' springs not from some even more rudimentary engine, but from something much more perfect and complicated than itself - namely, a man of genius. The obviousness or naturalness which most people seem to find in the idea of emergent evolution thus seems to be a pure hallucination…  

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IV. THE EAST: THE GENDARMEE OF EUROPE (1830-1861)
Tsar Nicholas was one of the most powerful and important rulers in history. And, contrary to much commentary on him, he did not rule by the knout alone. Nor was he ruled by personal ambition and lust for power, but by force of personality and iron devotion to what he saw as his duty to God and empire. This can be seen in the following anecdote related by Sebag Sebastian Montefiore: “As Poland’s rebellion was crushed, a cholera outbreak sparked rioting on the Haymarket in Petersburg. Hastening there with just two adjutants, Nicholas faced down the mob, then ordered them to their knees. ‘I have to ask God’s mercy for your sins,’ thundered God’s own emperor. ‘You have offended Him deeply. You’ve forgotten your duty of obedience to me and I must answer to God for your behavior! Remember you’re not Poles, you’re not Frenchmen, you’re Russians. I order you to disperse immediately.’ The rioters obeyed. No wonder Nicholas believed he was the sacred personification of Russia. ‘I am only here,’ he told his children preciously, ‘to carry out her orders and her intentions.’ Nicholas was convinced that ‘Our Russia was entrusted to us by God,’ once praying aloud at a parade: ‘O God, I thank Thee for having made me so powerful.’

“No one was better created for the role,” wrote Anna Tyutcheva, a young maid-of-honour who later wrote a superbly indiscreet diary. ‘His impressive handsomeness, regal bearing and severe Olympian profile – everything, down to the smile of a condescending Jupiter, breathed earthly deity.’ He played the role perfectly: ‘There is nothing more terrible on earth than the gaze of his colourless pewter eyes.’

“After the failure of the Decembrist conspiracy,” writes Sir Llewellyn Woodward, “a movement developed among the students and the Russian intelligentsia to widen the basis of the revolutionary party. The term intelligentsia is itself Russian and denoted those who earned a living by their ideas in contrast with the well-to-do liberals of the noble class. Obviously not all of the so-called intelligentsia were revolutionary and not all revolutionaries belonged to the intelligentsia, but without this class there would have been no revolutionary party.”

The destroyer of the Decembrist rebellion, Tsar Nicholas I, had never been swayed by the liberal ideas of the intelligentsia. Having tasted something of the flavour of democratic life in France during the reign of his father, he said to Golenischev-Kutuzov: “If, to our misfortune, this evil genius transferred all these clubs and meetings, which create more noise than substance, to us, then I would beseech God to repeat the miracle of the confusion of the tongues or, even better, deprive those who use their tongues in this way of the gift of speech.”

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908 V.F. Ivanov, Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo ot Petra I do nashikh dnei (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry from Peter I to our days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, pp. 316-317.
A man of strict life and strict opinions, who was venerated by Saints Seraphim of Sarov and Theophilus of the Kiev Caves, his rule was made still stricter by the fact that he came to the throne in the midst of the Decembrist rebellion and therefore had to punish the rebels as his first task.

Some have portrayed the Tsar as having been unreasonably strict and censorious. However, he wanted to abolish serfdom, and took important preparatory measures towards that great act carried out in the end by his son. Moreover, he had the ability to convert, and not simply crush, his opponents. Thus it was after a long, sincere conversation with the liberalizing Pushkin that he was able to say: “Gentlemen, I present to you a new Pushkin!”

“And it was truly thus,” writes Lebedev. “Not out of fear before the authorities, not hypocritically, but sincerely and truly, Pushkin, the friend of the ‘Decembrists’, the worldly skiver, in life as in poetry, after 1826 renounced his free-thinking and Masonry and created his best and greatest works!”

“Having rejected a rotten support, the nobility,” writes Lebedev, Tsar Nicholas “made his supports the Orthodox Church, the system of state institutions (in which the class of bureaucrats, of officials, acquired great significance) and the Russian people which he loved! Having grasped this main direction of the Tsar’s politics, Count S. Uvarov, the minister of enlightenment expressed in the remarkable formula: Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality”. “Our duty,” declared Uvarov in his memorandum to the Tsar in November, 1833, “is to see that in accordance with the supreme intention of our August Monarch, the education of the people is carried out in the united spirit of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality.”

“This schema,” writes Sergius Firsov, “can be called a political reincarnation of the Byzantine theory of ‘the symphony of powers’ in the changed conditions of State realities in Russia.”

The three elements of the formula were closely linked, and there was a definite order in them. First came Orthodoxy (as opposed to Catholicism and Protestantism), then Autocracy (as opposed to Absolutism and Democracy), and then Nationality (as opposed to Internationalism and Nationalism). The supreme value was Orthodoxy, whose first line of defence was the Autocracy, and second - national feeling. Any attempt to invert this order – as, for example, by making Orthodoxy merely a support for Autocracy, or both as supports of Nationality, would be equivalent to idolatry and lead to the downfall of Russia.

Some, such as D.S. Khomiakov, thought that an inversion of this order did indeed take place: “Orthodoxy as the everyday faith of the Russian people can be respected also by others, even by non-Christians. This is, so to speak, the

910 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 319.
911 Firsov, Russkaiia Tserkov’ nakanune peremen (konets, 1890-x – 1918 gg.) (The Russian Church on the eve of the changes (the end of the 1890s to 1918)), Moscow, 2002, p. 51.
inner pledge of the life of the Russian people, and it is completely possible to respect it and even make up to it while remaining in the sphere of personal conscience a complete and irreconcilable opponent of ‘ecclesiastical-dogmatic Orthodoxy’. It is hardly likely that the government of the 30s of the 19th century reasoned like that: but it seems undoubted that unconsciously it understood the matter in this way. It truly represented Orthodoxy as an ecclesiastical-everyday institution founded a long time ago for the enlightenment of the people; and as such the people got used to it completely in the sense of a cult and especially as a ‘teaching on unquestioning obedience to the civil, God-given authorities’. In this form, truly, Orthodoxy closely touches the sphere of the State and fits in well into the general picture for the programme of state education. With Orthodoxy of such a kind, strictly speaking, anyone can get on, of whatever faith he may be – since he only recognises the main part of the programme, its root – Autocracy (absolutism, according to the official understanding, also). This part was obligatory for absolutely everybody; but the first and third were meant only to serve as a certain ethnographic colouring for the middle member [of the programme’s triad]: everyone was obliged to recognise that its essence was Autocracy. Of what kind? Russian. But the concept of what is Russian falls into two parts: the Orthodox-Russian and the ethnographic-Russian. Thus for a purely Russian youth the programme had its complete significance, that is, the first and last concepts were obligatory only as defining the sole completely essential concept in it, ‘Autocracy’ (absolutism). Of course, however diluted the concept of Orthodoxy may be so as to fit into the government’s programme of civil education, it was, to a large degree, inseparable from the Church’s teaching and dogma. But in the present case we have to firmly establish the position that, without in any way rejecting the absolute significance of Orthodoxy as the expression of the faith and the ethics that flows from that, we are dealing with it here in a somewhat different sense, as it is placed at the foundation of civil education, that is, in the sense of its application to civil and cultural life, which are expressed firstly by the term ‘Autocracy’ and secondly by the term ‘Nationhood’: and this is because (to repeat) Orthodoxy in the absolute sense can stand only ‘for itself’ and excludes the possibility of a union with any state task whatever, and even with any national task. Orthodoxy is universal, it is far higher than states and peoples; it denies neither statehood nor nationalities, but it is united with nothing...

“None of these questions were clarified officially; and the Orthodoxy of Nicholas Pavlovich and Count Uvarov remained the same diffuse concept as the liberté of the French revolution. It in fact remained at the level only of a negative concept, as did the concept ‘Nationality’. Only ‘Autocracy’ received a positive meaning, because, firstly, this is in essence a more concrete concept than the other two; and then mainly because it was and is a term clearly understood by those who established the formula. Autocracy for them is, both theoretically and practically, absolutism. Nobody was mistaken in this meaning and there were no misunderstandings concerning it: the more so in that it indeed revealed itself graphically. But Orthodoxy was understood only as not Roman Catholicism – a very convenient faith from the state’s point of view; and not Protestantism, which unleashed the undesirable liberty, not only in the sphere of the faith alone (if you can criticize the faith, then all the more the rest, also); and not as
sectarianism – also a teaching displeasing to the police. In the same way ‘Nationality’ did not find a concrete expression of itself; and in the absence of this it settled on language: the spread of the Russian language was respected as the spread also of the Russian spirit – its nationality…” 912

However, Khomiakov’s view was not shared by Archpriest Lev Lebedev, who wrote: “Beginning already with Paul I, the rapprochement of imperial power with the Church continued under Nicholas I, being raised to a qualitatively higher level. The All-Russian Autocrat from now on did not oppose himself to the Church and did not even consider himself ‘self-sufficient’ or ‘independent’ of her. On the contrary, he saw himself as a faithful son of the Orthodox Church, completely sharing the faith of his people and bound in all his politics to be guided by the commandments of God, proceeding precisely from the Orthodox world-view (and not from the demands of a certain non-existent ‘religion of nature’, as under Catherine II). This was a good, grace-filled radical change. It made itself immediately felt also in the relations of the two powers – the tsar’s and the Church’s. From now on the over-procurators of the Synod were people who enjoyed the respect and trust of the Russian hierarchs and considered themselves faithful children of the Church. Such were Admiral Shishkov and Count Protasov. There was not always unanimity between them and the members of the Synod. Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov), for example, more than once ‘warred’ with Protasov. But these were quarrels about separate matters, where both sides were governed by the single desire to benefit Holy Orthodoxy (even if they understood this differently).” 913

This beneficial change in Church-State relations was reflected in the voluntary reunion of the uniates in the western territories with the Orthodox Church. Favourable conditions for this change had been created by the fall of Poland in 1815, the expulsion of the Jesuits from Russia in 1820 and the suppression of the Polish rebellion in 1830-1831. Then, in 1835, a secret committee on the uniate question was formed in St. Petersburg consisting of the uniate bishop Joseph Semashko, the real soul of the movement, Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, the over-procurator of the Holy Synod and the minister of the interior. By 1839 1,600,000 had converted to Orthodoxy. 914 In spite of these positive changes, a true “symphony” was not attained. In fact, formally speaking, the power of the Tsar over the Church was increased. Thus in 1832 a new collection of the Fundamental Laws was published that said: “The Emperor as the Christian sovereign is the supreme defender and preserver of the dogmas of the dominant faith and the supervisor of right faith and every good order in the Holy Church”. In the administration of the Church, intoned articles 42 and 43, “the autocratic power acts by means of the Holy Governing Synod, which was founded by it.” 915

913 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 321.
915 Nicholas entrusted this work to the Mason Speransky, because his expertise in the subject was unrivalled. However, above him he placed his former teacher Balugiansky, saying: “See that he
In these formulae, writes Fr. Georges Florovsky, “there is clearly and faithfully conveyed the State’s consciousness of itself and self-definition: in them there is taken to its logical conclusion the thought of Peter, who considered himself to be ‘the supreme judge’ of the Spiritual College, and who openly derived its privileges from his own autocratic power – ‘when it was established by the Monarch and under his rule’”. 916

Such an overbearing attitude of the State towards the Church was bound to lead to friction. And yet when there were clashes between the Tsar and the hierarchs on matters of conscience, the Tsar showed himself ready to give way, which gives strength to Lebedev’s claim that a qualitatively higher level of Church-State relations had been attained.

Thus once Metropolitan Philaret refused to bless a triumphal monument because it had some pagan hieroglyphs and representations of pagan gods. The Emperor, showing a good grasp of church history, said: “I understand, but tell him [Philaret] that I am not Peter the Great and he is not St. Metrophan.” Still, he allowed Philaret not to take part in the ceremony. 917 According to another account, on hearing of Philaret’s disinclination to serve, the Emperor said: “Prepare the horses; I’m leaving today”, so that the ceremony took place without either Tsar or metropolitan. 918

Afterwards, Philaret asked his spiritual father, Archimandrite Anthony: “Did I act well? I annoyed the Tsar. I don’t have the merits of the hierarch Metrophan.” “Don’t take them upon yourself,” replied Fr. Anthony, “but remember that you are a Christian bishop, a pastor of the Church of Christ, to whom only one thing is terrible: to depart from the will of Jesus Christ.”

Then the hierarch revealed that the previous night St. Sergius had entered his locked room, come up to his bed, and said: “Don’t be disturbed, it will all pass…” 919

Again, in 1835 the Emperor wanted his son and heir, the Tsarevich Alexander Nikolaevich, to become a member of the Holy Synod. But Metropolitan Philaret, together with the other hierarchs, was against the idea, and on meeting the tsarevich, asked him when he had received clerical ordination. Shamed, the tsarevich henceforth refrained from attending sessions of the Holy Synod. 920

(Speransky) does not get up to the same pranks as in 1810. You will answer for that to me” (in Ivanov, op. cit., p. 317).

916 Florovsky, “Filaret, mitropolit Moskovskij” (Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow), in Vera i Kul’tura (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 260. Nicholas had a bust of Peter on his desk.

917 Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ mitropolita Philareta (The Life and Activity of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow), Tula, 1994, p. 238.


920 Sergius and Tamara Fomin, Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. I, p. 322.
We have discussed Orthodoxy and Autocracy in Tsar Nicholas’ ideological schema. What about the third term, Nationality?

“While nationality,” writes Serhii Plokhy, “was introduced as a new element of the official Russian belief system, it came in as a distant third in Uvarov’s own thinking as expressed in his memorandum to the tsar, and he did not conceive of it as an equivalent of modern nationalism. He understood ‘nationality’ as native tradition rooted in Russia’s historical development, linking the throne and the church in order to ensure their stability.

“Ironically, from today’s viewpoint, but quite normally for Uvarov’s time, his program of Russian nation-building was written in French, which was still the prevailing idiom of the Russian elites. Uvarov defined his new principle as nationalité, which his clerks subsequently translated as narodnost’. The Russian term is best translated in English as ‘national way of life’...

“According to Uvarov, nationality was the traditional way of life that was supposed to ensure the continuity of the other two key elements of Russian identity – religion and autocracy – in an age shaped by new European ideas. If in Europe the idea of nation, closely associated with the principle of popular representation, challenged political autocracy, in Russia it was supposed to support the traditional tsarist regime. Uvarov did not seek to justify the tsar’s autocratic rule by claiming that it was based on divine right, as was customary at the time in the imperial capital; not did he look to the church to legitimize it. Instead he linked autocracy with nationality, claiming that ‘one and other flow from the same source and are conjoined on every page of the history of the Russian people.’ He stopped short, however, of suggesting that the Russian nation was the source of autocratic power.

“Uvarov was clearly being selective in introducing the Western idea of nationality to Russia. He ignored Schlegel’s emphasis on national language and culture, stressing attachment to traditional institutions. Since the Russian Empire was multiethnic, the idea of ethnic particularity threatened it with the kind of mobilization against Russian political dominance that the Poles had demonstrated in 1830. There was also the prospect that Russian nationalists might define their rights and interests differently from those of the monarchy. Uvarov sought to link empire and nationality in the hope that the latter would strengthen the former. He concluded his memorandum with a reference to the responsibility that he felt to ‘God, Sovereign and Fatherland’. This was a reprise of the triad enunciated by Admiral Shishkov, Russia’s chief propagandist at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, indicating the link between Uvarov’s formula and established imperial tradition.

“Despite Uvarov’s conservative intentions, the introduction of the term ‘nationality’ into Russian politics meant that European nationalism had arrived in the Russian Empire. Peter I’s chief ideologue, Teofan Prokopovych, had used the term ‘fatherland’; it had not been transmuted into ‘nation’ (prefigured in the
Synopsis of 1674, where ‘nation’ was also used in a traditional rather than a revolutionary sense). What ‘nationality’ would mean in practice was not yet clear, either to the author of the new ideological triad or his addressee, the tsar himself. It would take generations to resolve the political issues implicit in the term. What were the borders of Russian nationality? Did it suffice for a subject of the empire to profess loyalty to the tsar and the Orthodox faith, or were there other essential elements of Russianness as well? Nowhere were these questions more pressing, in the wake of the Polish uprising of 1830-1831, than in the former territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth annexed to the Russian Empire..."^921

^921 Plokhy, Lost Kingdom, London: Allen Lane, 2017, pp. 82-84.
65. POLISH AND UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM

Tsar Nicholas saw it as his duty and destiny to suppress the revolution not only at home, but also abroad. But he decided not to intervene in the revolutions in France and Belgium in 1830.

Encouraged by this, the Poles rose against Tsarist authority later that year, although, as we have seen, they had been given a very liberal constitution by Tsar Alexander in 1815.

This time the Tsar did act. As he wrote to his brother, who ruled the Polish Kingdom: “It is our duty to think of our security. When I say ours, I mean the tranquility of Europe.”922 “In November, 1830,” continues Plokhy, “young Polish cadets tried to assassinate their Russian military commander, Grand Duke Constantine, sparking a revolt that would become known as the November Uprising. The grand duke survived the attempt, fleeing his resident in women’s clothes, but the façade of dynastic union between Russia and Poland was now gone. The Polish Diet convoked by the rebels not only declared the secession of the Kingdom of Poland from the Russian Empire but also sought to regain the pre-partition Polish territories that were not part of the kingdom. The rebels sent troops and reinforcements to Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine and chose delegates to go to St. Petersburg to demand those territories.”923

And so the rebellion was crushed. Europe was saved again – and was again uncomprehending and ungrateful. Moreover, the tsar earned the undying hatred of Poles: “I know they want to kill me, but if God doesn’t will it, nothing will happen, so I am quite calm.”924

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

923 Plokhy, op. cit., p. 78.
924 Montefiore, op. cit., p. 356.
revolutionary movement in Western Europe]. Poland was divided into provinces and completely included into the composition of the Russian Empire. The language of business was declared to be Russian. Russian landowners received land in Poland. A Deputy was now placed at the head of the Kingdom of Poland. He became Paskevich with the new title of Prince of Warsaw. In connection with all this it became clear that the Polish magnates and landowners who had kept their land-holdings in Belorussia and Ukraine had already for some time been persecuting the Orthodox Russians and Little Russians and also the uniates, and had been occupied in polonizing education in general the whole cultural life in these lands. Tsar Nicholas I was forced to take severe measures to restore Russian enlightenment and education in the West Russian and Ukrainian land. In particular, a Russian university was opened in Kiev. The part of the Belorussian and Ukrainian population headed by Bishop Joseph Semashko which had been in a forcible unia with the Catholic Church since the end of the 16th century desired reunion with Orthodoxy. Nicholas I decided to satisfy this desire and in 1839 all the uniates (besides the inhabitants of Kholm diocese) were united to ‘to the ancestral Orthodox All-Russian Church’, as they put it. This was a great feast of Orthodoxy! Masses of uniates were united voluntarily, without any compulsion. All this showed that Russia had subdued and humbled Poland not because she wished to lord it over her, and resist her independence, but only because Poland wanted to lord it (both politically and spiritually) over the ages-old Russian population, depriving it of its own life and ‘ancestral’ faith! With such a Poland as she was then striving to be, there was nothing to be done but completely subdue her and force her to respect the rights of other peoples! But to the Polish Catholics Russia provided, as usual, every opportunity of living in accordance with their faith and customs.”

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

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

“Mickiewicz had established his reputation as Poland’s foremost lyric poet in the 1820s, and enhanced his political credentials by his exile in Russia, where he met several prominent Decembrists and grew close to Pushkin [who, however, did not sympathize with his views on Poland]. In 1829 Mickiewicz received

925 Lebedev, Velikorossia, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 326. About 1,600 uniate priests and 1.5 million laypeople were joined to Orthodoxy in the Act of Union (Plokhy, op. cit., p. 100).
926 Chopin, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 551.
927 Mickiewicz, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 551.
permission to go to Germany to take the waters. He met Mendelssohn and Hegel in Berlin, Metternich in Marienbad, and August Schlegel in Bonn, and attended Goethe’s eightieth birthday party in Weimar. Goethe kissed him on the forehead, gave him the quill with which he had worked on Faust, and commissioned a portrait of him for his collection. Mickiewicz then went to Italy where, apart from a de rigueur trip to Switzerland (Chillon and Altdorf, with Byron and Schiller’s Wilhelm Tell in his hand), he spent the next year-and-half. It was in Rome that news of the November Rising [in Warsaw] reached him. He set off for Poland, but his attempts to cross the border were foiled by Cossack patrols, and he was obliged to watch the debacle from Dresden.

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

“In Paris in 1832 Mickiewicz published a short work entitled Books of the Polish Nation and of the Pilgrimage of Poland. It was quickly translated into several languages and caused a sensation. It is a bizarre work, couched in biblical prose, giving a moral account of Polish history. After an Edenic period, lovingly described, comes the eighteenth century, a time when ‘nations were spoiled, so much so that among them there was left only one man, both citizen and soldier’— a reference to Lafayette. The ‘Satanic Trinity’ of Catherine of Russia, Frederick of Prussia and Maria Theresa of Austria decided to murder Poland, because Poland was Liberty. They crucified the innocent nation while degenerate France played the role of Pilate. But that was not to be the end of it. ‘For the Polish nation did not die; its body lies in the tomb, while its soul has left the earth, that is public life, and visited the abyss, that is the private life of peoples suffering slavery at home and in exile, in order to witness their suffering. And on the third day the soul will re-enter the body, and the nation will rise from the dead and will liberate all the peoples of Europe from slavery.’ In a paraphrase of the

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928 Chopin also blamed the French. For “Lafayette moved heaven and earth to make France go to war in support of Poland, but he could not move Louis Philippe. He formed a committee to help the Poles, with the participation of Victor Hugo and a string of artists and heroes” (Zamoyski, Holy Madness: Romantics, Patriots and Revolutionaries, 1776-1871, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 278). (V.M.)

929 The passage continues: “And three days have already passed; the first ending with the first fall of Warsaw; the second day with the second fall of Warsaw; and the third day cometh but it shall have no end. As at the resurrection of Christ the sacrifice of blood ceased upon the earth, so at the resurrection of the Polish Nation shall war cease in Christendom.” “This,” comments Neal
Christian Creed, Liberty will then ascend the throne in the capital of the world, and judge the nations, ushering in the age of peace.

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

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

“Most of Mickiewicz’s countrymen read his works and wept over them. They identified with them and learned them by heart. They did not follow the precepts laid down in them, nor did they really believe in this gospel in any literal sense. These works were a let-out, an excuse even, rather than a guiding rule. But they did provide an underlying ethical explanation of a state of affairs that was otherwise intolerable to the defeated patriots. It was an explanation that made moral sense and was accepted at the subconscious level. It was a spiritual and psychological lifeline that kept them from sinking into a Slough of Despond. It made misfortune not only bearable, but desirable…”

55,000 Polish troops and 6,000 civilians who made a great exodus to the West and Paris kept this cult alive, not in Polish hearts only, but throughout Europe. Only the Russians were not seduced by its masochistic charm...

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Ascherson, “was the extraordinary doctrine of Messianism, the identification of the Polish nation as the collective reincarnation of Christ. Messianism steadily gained strength over the next century-and-a-half. History saw to that” (Black Sea, London: Vintage, 1995, p. 160). (V. M.)

It was only natural that the Russians should fear the spread of the nationalist virus from Poland eastwards, into the Ukrainian lands that had once been under Polish dominion. However, both linguistically and culturally the Ukrainians were closer to the Russians than to the Poles; and they belonged to the same Orthodox Church. Moreover, “by the second half of nineteenth century,” as Sir Geoffrey Hosking writes, “the Ukrainian sense of separate identity was in any case rather weak, being borne mainly by intellectuals and professional people in the smaller towns. Large numbers of peasants spoke variants of Ukrainian, but they had no wider national consciousness, and their colloquial tongue was viewed by most Russians as a farmyard dialect of Russian. However, the survival of Ukrainian culture was quite strong, thanks to the heritage of the poet Taras Shevchenko, the writings of historians such as Mykhaylo Drahomaniw, and the possibility of smuggling materials across the frontier from Habsburg Galicia, where Ukrainian identity was officially fostered as a counterweight to Polish influence.”931

Shevchenko was typical of this early, Proto-Ukrainian nationalism. “Born as a serf in the early nineteenth century, Shevchenko published Kobzar, his first collection of poetry, when he was twenty-six. The series of musings on Ukrainian identity, written in the Ukrainian language, probably did more than anything else to create a sense of nation among the descendants of the Cossacks.”932

Things began to change on March 31, 1847, when a young professor of history at Kiev University, Mykola (Nikolai) Kostomarov, was arrested in accordance with an order proceeding from the emperor himself. “It was given,” writes Serhii Plokhy, “by Count Aleksei Orlov, head of the Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery – the body responsible for political surveillance. The heir to the throne, the future Tsar Alexander II, was briefed on the case, which involved a number of Kyivan intellectuals – government officials, teachers, and students. One of them, Taras Shevchenko, an artist and popular poet who wrote in Ukrainian, was arrested on April 5, upon his arrival in Kyiv and also escorted to St. Petersburg. There were further arrests and more deportations to the capital, where the liberal public was at a loss to explain the authorities’ actions.

“The governor general of Kyiv, Podolia, and Volhynia, Dmitrii Bibikov, was then in St. Petersburg, reporting on, among other things, a proclamation that had been found on the wall of a building in Kyiv. It read: ‘Brothers! A great hour is upon us, an hour in which you are being given the opportunity to wash off the dishonor inflicted on the dust of our ancestors, on our native Ukraine, by the base hand of our eternal foes. Who among you will not lend a hand to this great undertaking? God and good people are with us! The ever loyal sons of Ukraine, foes of the katsapy [derogatory term for Russians].’

“The appeal was as anti-Russian as could be imagined, but it was written in Russian, not Polish, and not addressed to the Polish nobles who then dominated Kyiv society. It was addressed to ‘the faithful sons of Ukraine’ – people whom the imperial government considered Russian by nationality. Bibikov was sent back to Kyiv with order to take over supervision of the Kyiv educational district...

“There was no doubt that this manifestation of disloyalty came from the very institutions that had been created to ensure the loyalty of the region’s inhabitants to tsar and empire. Mykola Kostomarov taught at the university, while Taras Shevchenko, who had been appointed instructor of drawing there, had earlier been employed by the Archaeographic Commission, which aimed to document the Russian identity of Right-Bank Ukraine. Official policy appeared to have backfired. Instead of solidifying a common front between the government and the ‘Russian’ population of the western provinces against the Polish threat, it had contributed to dividing the imperial Russian nation and promoted the development of a separate nation that would claim equal rights with the Great Russians in the core areas of the empire in the course of the next few decades. A new Ukrainian nation was emerging from the cocoon of the old Little Russian identity. The imperial government would do everything in its power to stop its development and put the Ukrainian genie back into the Little Russian bottle.

“The Third Section’s investigation into the activities of Kostomarov, Shevchenko and others uncovered the existence of a clandestine organization, the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Its goal was the creation of a voluntary federation of Slavic nations, with Ukraine at its core. The investigation of the brotherhood became known in government circles as the Slavophile case, later renamed the case of the Ukrainian Slavophiles...

“Among the key figures of the Slavophile movement mentioned by investigators of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius in their reports were two Moscow University professors, Mikhail Pogodin and Stepan Shevyrev. Pogodin, whom Uvarov had rejected as the prospective author of a Russian history textbook integrating the western provinces into the empire, taught history at Moscow University; Shevyrev lectured there on philology and literature. The two also served as copublishers of the journal Moskvitianin (The Muscovite), which later became a mouthpiece of the Slavophile movement in the 1840s. Pogodin was a leading figure in the emerging pan-Slavic movement, which regarded all Slavs as a single family. By stressing the uniqueness (samobytnost’) and self-awareness (samoznanie) of the Russian nation, the Slavophiles, for all their pan-Slavic ecumenism, set an example to non-Russian Slavs who wished to celebrate the distinctiveness of their own peoples and, consequently, their right to autonomy and independence.

“Early on, Ukraine took a special place in the Slavophile imagination. Pogodin and Shevyrev in particular showed great interest in the culture and history of Ukraine, or, as they called it, Little Russia. In the 1830s, Mykola Kostomarov, then a student at Kharkiv University in eastern Ukraine, had been strongly influenced by Stepan Shevyrev, whose lectures he attended. Shevyrev,
who referred to Little Russia as Great Russia’s elder sister, put a strong emphasis on nationality and encouraged the study of popular culture. But there was a problem, since ‘nationality’ meant different things in Moscow and Kharkiv. When Kostomarov went to the people to collect their lore, he had to speak to them in Ukrainian, and by 1839 he was already writing in that language. Kostomarov was not the first admirer of nationality to bring back texts from his field trip that were written in a language difficult to understand, if not entirely foreign, to enthusiasts of nationality in Moscow and St. Petersburg...

“Mikhail Pogodin saw cultural differences between Russians and Ukrainians that went beyond language and history. He wrote in 1845, ‘The Great Russians live side by side with the Little Russians, profess one faith, have shared one fate and, for many years, one history. But how many differences there are between the Great Russians and the Little Russians!’

“By the mid-nineteenth century, the Slavophiles’ belief in the unity of Great and Little Russia and their treatment of the latter as the fountainhead of Russian culture was being challenged by the Little Russians’ search for a nationality of their own. Encouraged by like-minded individuals in Moscow and St. Petersburg to investigate and embrace issues of nationality, the Ukrainians brought to the salons of St. Petersburg and Moscow not only a language quite different from Russian but also a history distinct from that of the Russian people and state. It would soon become clear that language, history, and culture could be used not only to construct a past separate from that of the Great Russians but also a different future. In that new vision, Little Russia would turn into Ukraine, an entity still close to Russia but also very different and quite separate from it…”

When Shevchenko died in 1861, “a funeral procession accompanied his coffin down the Dnieper River from Kiev to Kaniv, where he was buried as a national hero, albeit of a nation that as yet had no state…”

The great Ukrainian – but at the same time classical Russian – writer Nikolai Gogol wrote as follows about this most problematic of national relationships in 1844: “I would give no preference either to the Little Russian over the Russian or to the Russian over the citizen of the Little Russian. Both natures are too richly endowed by God, and each includes in itself what is not in the other – a clear sign that they must complement each other. For this each of the very histories of their past life includes that which is not in the other, so that their different strengths and characters should be nourished separately, so that later, having been merged into one, they might constitute that which is most perfect in humanity.”

66. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH AND THE ANGLICANS

It was in the reign of Tsar Nicholas I that a beginning was made to ecumenical relations with the western confessions. Surprisingly, in view of the political tensions between the two Great Powers, it was with England and the Anglican Church that these relations were the warmest. This was largely because certain individuals in the Anglo-Catholic arm of the Anglican Church, believing fervently in the “branch theory” of the Church, according to which the Orthodox, the Catholics and the Anglicans were the three branches of the One Church, were very eager that their theory should be tested in Russia…

The pioneer in these ecumenical relations on the Orthodox side was Alexei Khomiakov, whose correspondence with the Anglican Deacon William Palmer is one of the earliest and best examples of how to conduct ecumenical relations without betraying the truth. He was very well informed about the religious situation in both East and West, clearly longed for union, and was not seeking merely to “score points” over an adversary. He was generous about what was good in the West, and not afraid to admit weaknesses in the East. But he was unbendingly firm in his defence of the Orthodox position on questions of faith (e.g. the Filioque) and ecclesiology (i.e. where the True Church is and where it is not). However, the matter did not end well; for Palmer was shocked to learn that the Greeks would receive him into communion by baptism, and the Russians by chrismation only, considering this divergence in practice to indicate a fundamental confusion in thinking. In spite of Khomiakov’s attempts to explain the Orthodox use of condescension or “economy”, Palmer remained dissatisfied by what he saw as a difference in ecclesiology between the Greeks and the Russians, and eventually joined the Roman Catholic Church.

When Palmer criticised the dominance of the State over the Church in Russia (completely ignoring the Erastianism of the Anglicans), Khomiakov replied: “That the Church is not quite independent of the state, I allow; but let us consider candidly and impartially how far that dependence affects, and whether it does indeed affect, the character of the Church. The question is so important, that it has been debated during this very year [1852] by serious men in Russia, and has been brought, I hope, to a satisfactory conclusion. A society may be dependent in fact and free in principle, or vice-versa. The first case is a mere historical accident; the second is the destruction of freedom, and has no other issue but rebellion and anarchy. The first is the weakness of man; the second the depravity of law. The first is certainly the case in Russia, but the principles have by no means been damaged. Whether freedom of opinion in civil and political questions is, or is not, too much restrained, is no business of ours as members of the Church (though I, for my part, know that I am almost reduced to complete silence); but the state never interferes directly in the censorship of works written about religious questions. In this respect, I will confess again that the censorship is, in my opinion, most oppressive; but that does not depend upon the state, and is simply the fault of the over-cautious and timid prudence of the higher clergy. I
am very far from approving of it, and I know that very useful thoughts and books are lost in the world, or at least to the present generation.

“But this error, which my reason condemns, has nothing to do with ecclesiastical liberty; and though very good tracts and explanations of the Word of God are oftentimes suppressed on the false supposition of their perusal being dangerous to unenlightened minds, I think that those who suppress the Word of God itself should be the last to condemn the excessive prudence of our ecclesiastical censors. Such a condemnation coming from the Latins would be absurdity itself. But is the action of the Church quite free in Russia? Certainly not; but this depends wholly on the weakness of her higher representatives, and upon their desire to get the protection of the state, not for themselves, generally speaking, but for the Church. There is certainly a moral error in that want of reliance upon God Himself; but it is an accidental error of persons, and not of the Church, and has nothing to do with our religious convictions. It would be a different case, if there was the smallest instance of a dogmatic error, or something near to it, admitted or suffered without protestation out of weakness; but I defy anybody to find anything like that…”

In spite of his ardent desire for union, Khomiakov was pessimistic about its prospects; and this not so much because of the doctrinal obstacles, as of the moral obstacles. As he explained to Palmer: “A very weak conviction in points of doctrine can bring over a Latin to Protestantism, or a Protestant to the Latins. A Frenchman, a German, an Englishman, will go over to Presbyterianism, to Lutheranism, to the Independents, to the Cameronians, and indeed to almost every form of belief or misbelief; he will not go over to Orthodoxy. As long as he does not step out of the circles of doctrines which have taken their origin in the Western world, he feels himself at home; notwithstanding his apparent change, he does not feel that dread of apostasy which renders sometimes the passage from error to faith as difficult as from truth to error. He will be condemned by his former brethren, who will call his action a rash one, perhaps a bad one; but it will not be utter madness, depriving him, as it were, of his rights of citizenship in the civilized world of the West. And that is natural. All the Western doctrine is born out of the Latins; it feels (though unconsciously) its solidarity with the past; it feels its dependence on one science, on one creed, on one line of life; and that creed, that science, that life was the Latin one. This is what I hinted at, and what you understand very rightly, viz., that all Protestants are Crypto-Papists; and, indeed, it would be a very easy task to show that in their theology (as well as philosophy) all the definitions of all the objects of creed or understanding are merely taken out of the old Latin System, though often made negative in the application. In short, if it was to be expressed in the concise language of algebra, all the West knows but one datum, a; whether it be preceded by the positive sign +, as with the Latins, or with the negative -, as with the Protestants, the a remains the same. Now, a passage to Orthodoxy seems indeed like an apostasy from the

past, from its science, creed, and life. It is rushing into a new and unknown world, a bold step to take, or even to advise.

“This, most reverend sir, is the moral obstacle I have been speaking about; this, the pride and disdain which I attribute to all the Western communities. As you see, it is no individual feeling voluntarily bred or consciously held in the heart; it is no vice of the mind, but an involuntary submission to the tendencies and direction of the past. When the unity of the Church was lawlessly and unlovingly rent by the Western clergy, the more so inasmuch as at the same time the East was continuing its former friendly intercourse, and submitting to the opinion of the Western Synods the Canons of the Second Council of Nicaea, each half of Christianity began a life apart, becoming from day to day more estranged from the other. There was an evident self-complacent triumph on the side of the Latins; there was sorrow on the side of the East, which had seen the dear ties of Christian brotherhood torn asunder – which had been spurned and rejected, and felt itself innocent. All these feelings have been transmitted by hereditary succession to our time, and, more or less, either willingly or unwillingly, we are still under their power. Our time has awakened better feelings; in England, perhaps, more than anywhere else, you are seeking for the past brotherhood, for the past sympathy and communion. It would be a shame for us not to answer your proferred friendship, it would be a crime not to cultivate in our hearts an intense desire to renovate the Unity of the Church; but let us consider the question coolly, even when our sympathies are most awakened.

“The Church cannot be a harmony of discords; it cannot be a numerical sum of Orthodox, Latins, and Protestants. It is nothing if it is not perfect inward harmony of creed and outward harmony of expression (notwithstanding local differences in the rite). The question is, not whether the Latins and Protestants have erred so fatally as to deprive individuals of salvation, which seems to be often the subject of debate – surely a narrow and unworthy one, inasmuch as it throws suspicion on the mercy of the Almighty. The question is whether they have the Truth, and whether they have retained the ecclesiastical tradition unimpaired. If they have not, where is the possibility of unity?...  

“Do not, I pray, nourish the hope of finding Christian Truth without stepping out of the former protestant circle. It is an illogical hope; it is a remnant of that pride which thought itself able and wished to judge and decide by itself without the Spiritual Communion of heavenly grace and Christian love. Were you to find all the truth, you would have found nothing; for we alone can give you that without which all would be vain – the assurance of Truth.”

In spite of Khomiakov’s pessimism, successive over-procurators, supported by the Holy Synod, took great interest in the idea of an Orthodox mission in England. Thus in 1856 the convert Stephen Hatherley, who had been baptized in

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the Greek Church, turned for help to the Russians, who decided to bless and financially support his idea of a mission church in Wolverhampton. However, the Russians did not satisfy Hatherley’s request that he be ordained for that mission; so he turned to the Greeks and received ordination in Constantinople in 1871. But then the Greeks, succumbing to intrigues on the part of the Anglicans, banned Hatherley from making any English converts. Hatherley obeyed this directive, which unsurprisingly led to the collapse of his mission…

For all the enthusiasm of the Russians, the fruit of their labours in England was meager. Some of the reasons for this were well pinpointed by Archpriest Joseph Wassilief in a report sent to the Holy Synod in 1865 after a visit to England:

“… 2. Plans for union with the Orthodox Church are curiously conceived by those who promote this movement and they cannot be reconciled with Orthodox or any other theological approaches to their realization. Thus the practical and mutual benefits of union are given preference over and against the necessity for a preliminary agreement in doctrine.

“3. Only a few individuals recognize the necessity for unity of dogmas and labour to reconcile the differences, but without decisive concessions on the part of the Anglican Church.’

“Father Wassilief,” continues Fr. Christopher Birchall, “was frustrated by the lack of any real desire to face the dogmatic issues and ascribed this, in part, to the fact that the Church of England had existed for centuries without any real unity of belief. Consequently, [they] assumed that union with the Orthodox could be achieved on the same basis. Part of the Anglican hierarchy would have liked to strengthen its position by being recognized by the Orthodox, but nothing could be done without the consent of Parliament and the laity, who would resist any change. ‘The past and its customs give support to any opposition,’ he wrote, ‘in England they are virtually idolized.’ Echoing the ideas of Khomiakov, he continued, ‘One of the reasons for the Anglican’s faithfulness to his tradition and establishment lies in an exaggerated sense of superiority before other people, and in personal and national pride. He also extends this feeling to his Church, which is a national creation and thus national property. It is extremely difficult for the Anglican to admit that his forefathers constructed the Anglican Church unsuccessfully, that this sphere of life is higher, truer and firmer in Russian and among other Eastern peoples, who in all other respects are less favoured than the English.’

“Another factor hindering unity, Wassilief noted, was the Anglican Church’s ‘enormous possessions and income.’ ‘If only some of the Anglican bishops together with a number of priests and faithful would unite with the Orthodox Church in rejecting the 39 heretical Articles of the Anglican Church as ratified by

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Parliament, then the government might well consider this society a sect, and
might deprive its pastors of their worldly benefits by which they profit in the
Anglican Church and condemn them to a life which would be the more arduous
since their present life is so full of abundance and luxury. For a bishop or a dean
to renounce his salary, he would have to possess an immutable belief and an
exceptional faith...”

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In 1864, four years after Khomiakov’s death, Pastor Jung, a delegate of the
New York convocation of the Episcopalian Church with authority from some of
the bishops there to enter into relations with the older Russian hierarchs, came to
Russia. In a meeting with Metropolitan Philaret and other bishops, he explained
the significance of the 39 articles for the Anglicans and Episcopalians. The
metropolitan said that a rapprochement between the Russian and American
Episcopalian Churches might create problems with their respective “mother
churches” in England and Greece. For example, the Greeks were less
accommodating with regard to the canonicity of baptism by pouring than their
Russian co-religionists. The metropolitan probably had in mind here the
experience of William Palmer...

In 1867, the metropolitan expressed the following opinion: “A member of the
Anglican Church, who has definitely received a baptism in the name of the
Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, even though it be by effusion
(pouring), can, in accordance with the rule accepted in the Church of Russia
(which the Church of Constantinople considers to be a form of condescension),
be received into the Orthodox Church without a new baptism, but the sacrament
of chrismation must be administered to him, because confirmation, in the
teaching of the Anglican Church, is not a sacrament...

“The question as to whether an Anglican priest can be received into the
Orthodox Church as an actual priest awaits the decision of a Church Council,
because it has not yet been clarified whether the unbroken Apostolic Succession
of hierarchical ordination exists in the Anglican Church, and also because the
Anglican Church does not acknowledge ordination as a sacrament, although it
recognizes the power of grace in it...”

In another meeting with Pastor Jung, Metropolitan Philaret posed five
questions relating to the 39 articles:

1. How can the 39 articles not be a stumbling-block to the union of the
Churches?
2. How can the teaching of the American Episcopalian Church’s teaching on
the procession of the Holy Spirit [the Filioque] be made to agree with the
teaching of the Eastern Church?

3. Is the uninterruptedness of apostolic hierarchical ordination fully proven in the American Church?

4. Does the American Church recognize reliable Church Tradition to be a subsidiary guiding principle for the explanation of Holy Scripture and for Church orders and discipline?

5. What is the view of the American Church on the sevenfold number of sacraments in the Eastern Church?

At another meeting the pastor gave preliminary replies to these questions, and insisted that the 39 articles had a political rather than a spiritual meaning, and did not have a fully dogmatic force.

Although the two sides parted on friendly terms, nothing positive came from the meeting. The public in America were not ready for this, and there even began something in the nature of a reaction. Learning about this, Philaret sadly remarked: “The reconcilers of the churches... are weaving a cover for division, but are not effecting union.” “How desirable is the union of the Churches! But how difficult to ensure that the movement towards it should soar with a pure striving for the Truth and should be entirely free from attachment to entrenched opinions.” “O Lord, send a true spirit of union and peace.”

“Will the idea of the union of the churches, which has lit up the west like a glow on the horizon, remain just the glow of sunset in the west, or will it turn into an Eastern radiance of sunrise, in the hope of a brighter morning? Thou knowest, O Lord.”

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Perhaps the most distinguished Western converts to Orthodoxy in this period were the Anglicized German Dr. Joseph Overbeck and the Frenchman Fr. Vladimir Guettée. “Dr. Julian Joseph Overbeck (1820-1905) was perhaps the most well-known of Western Roman Catholic converts to Orthodoxy in the later half of the 19th century in the English speaking world. A German by nation[ality], he was raised in the Papist Faith, eventually becoming a priest in it. He was also an extremely learned man, knowing around 12 ancient languages, and many modern. His grasp of ancient and medieval Christian history was as good as any; any mistakes he makes are generally no worse than that of other scholars. However, as Dr. Overbeck stated ‘history was always the weak point of the Jesuits, and consequently of the Papists.’ His study led him away from Romanism; in initial despair he contemplated perhaps having something to do with some form of high Lutheranism. Yet, he could not ultimately swallow such. He eventually immigrated to England and became a Professor in German at the Royal Military Academy in 1863. In 1865, convinced of the equal untenability and imminent collapse of both Papism and Protestantism, and sure of the Truth of the Orthodox Faith, he was received into

940 Snychev, op. cit., p. 357.
941 Birchall, op. cit., p. 91.
the Orthodox Church by Fr. Eugene Popoff, chaplain of the Russian Embassy in London.

“For the next 40 years he was a constant antagonist of the heterodox, an opponent of the earliest forms of proto-ecumenism (which he saw as being fundamentally of Anglican-Protestant origination and heresy), and thus the finest proponent and only apologists and polemicist for the Orthodox Christian Faith in the English speaking world. He was in concourse with the famed Fr. Vladimir (Guettée) (i.e. Abbe Guettée) who had a similar story to Dr. Overbeck; the difference being that Dr. Overbeck, having left Roman Catholicism and the Papist priesthood, was later married. However, upon his conversion to Orthodoxy, the Russian Church told Dr. Overbeck that he could not serve as a priest since he was married after ordination (the Russian Church had the practice of receiving Roman Catholic clergy by vesting); though, Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow had supposedly informed him that if he had joined Orthodoxy via the Greek Church, he would have been baptized, and the question would have been handled entirely differently. Despite this, Dr. Overbeck continued his work. His errors are no more than those of the time and of the contemporary Russian Church (i.e., a semi-scholasticized understanding of some of the Mysteries); his projects, while seemingly ‘fantastical’ to the Anglican critic (and modern) were supported by the Synod in Russia (and others), and while many never came to full fruition in his own lifetime, they did demonstrate a wholesale devotion to Orthodoxy in all matters (thus, his gaining approval from the Holy Governing Synod of Russia and the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the idea of an Orthodox Western rite based upon Orthodox Canon Law and pre-Schism praxis of the West [something entirely ignored by the later Antiochian proponents who found Dr. Overbeck equally repugnant for his polemic against Anglicanism and nascent anti-ecumenism]; the resurrection of local Orthodox sees in the West, etc.).

“Dr. Overbeck was a constant opponent and antagonist of the Anglican heresy just as much as he was of the Roman. The Romans, in general, tried to ignore him and belittle him (as they did Fr. Vladimir until the spigots of threats were turned on); the Anglicans tried the same, but found themselves unable. At the Bonn Conference in the 1870s, an early attempt by the Orthodox Church to bring the nascent Old Catholic movement wholesale into Orthodoxy, Dr. Overbeck was present at the commission discussions. He and other Russian Church delegates had stalwartly opposed the introduction of Anglican representatives to have any part in the debates between the Orthodox and Old Catholics. Overbeck saw them as meddlesome interlopers who would only muddy the water and provide cover for the Old Catholics on issues that caused their continuing separation from the Church. However, the Anglicans insinuated themselves into the affair, and the results were largely disastrous; the Old Catholic movement, though abandoning the Filioque clause in 1877, was never to make good on anything. It was continually to degenerate and fall more and more into the Anglican orbit (ecclesially, theologically, liturgically), which is exactly what Dr. Overbeck had noted would happen if they did not become Orthodox. He thus wrote them off, just as he did the Anglicans, looking only for individual conversions.
“The experience of the Anglicans with Dr. Overbeck at the conference had made Overbeck a target for Anglican criticism and slander for the rest of his life. Yet, despite this, he continued to publish the first apologetic, polemic, and historical journals in English that taught the Orthodox position in the English language (the Orthodox Catholic Review; it is difficult to find copies of all the volumes which were published monthly from 1867-1885)...”

“… Dr. Overbeck (and many other Orthodox) foresaw massive changes ahead with the creation of “Papal Infallibility”; which in essence is the elevation of man above God. He says as much when addressing it. He stated, ‘The poisonous seed is sown: what may the plant, the full grown plant be? We do not indulge in fancies or unsubstantial apprehensions.’ Well, we know today more than ever.

“Indeed, if Dr. Overbeck were walking upon the Earth today, it would not just be Papism and Protestantism he would target, but, it would be the modern Ecumenical Patriarchate and its sister Patriarchates for their desired union with the former in the heresy of ecumenism; not to mention their wholesale embrace of the modernist heresy.”

Tsar Alexander’s project of settling the Jews as farmers on the new territories of Southern Russia had proved to be a failure, in spite of very generous terms offered to them – terms that were not offered to Russian peasants.

In spite of this failure, writes Alexander Solzhenitsyn, in his Statute of 1835, which replaced Alexander’s of 1804, Nicholas “not only did not abandon Jewish agriculture, but even broadened it, placing in the first place in the building of Jewish life ‘the setting up of the Jews on the basis of rules that would open to them a free path to the acquisition of a prosperous existence by the practice of agriculture and industry and to the gradual education of their youth, while at the same time cutting off for them excuses for idleness and unlawful trades’. If before a preliminary contribution of 400 roubles was required for each family [settling in the new territories] from the Jewish community, now without any condition ‘every Jew is allowed “at any time” to pass over to agriculture’, and all his unpaid taxes would immediately be remitted to him and to the community; he would be allowed to receive not only State lands for an unlimited period, but also, within the bounds of the Pale of Settlement, to buy, sell and lease lands. Those passing over to agriculture were freed from poll-tax for 25 years, from land tax for 10, and from liability to military service – for 50. Nor could any Jew ‘be forced to pass over to agriculture’. Moreover, ‘trades and crafts practised in their village life’ were legalised.

“(150 years passed. And because these distant events had been forgotten, an enlightened and learned physicist formulated Jewish life at that time as ‘the Pale of Settlement in conjunction with a ban [!] on peasant activity’. But the historian-publicist M.O. Gershenzon has a broader judgement: ‘Agriculture is forbidden to the Jew by his national spirit, for, on becoming involved with the land, a man can more easily become rooted to the place’.)”

In general, the Statute of 1835 “did not lay any new restrictions on the Jews’, as the Jewish encyclopaedia puts it in a restrained way. And if we look into the details, then according to the new Statute ‘the Jews had the right to acquire any kind of real estate, including populated estates, and carry out any kind of trade on the basis of rights identical with those granted Russian subjects’, although only within the bounds of the Pale of Settlement. The Statute of 1835 defended all the rights of the Jewish religion, and introduced awards for rabbis and the rights of the merchants of the first guild. A rational age for marriage (18 and 16 years) was established [contrary to the rabbis, who married off young Jews at much younger ages]. Measures were undertaken that Jewish dress should not be so different, separating Jews from the surrounding population. Jews were directed to productive means of employment (forbidding the sale of wine on credit and on the security of household effects), all kinds of manufacturing activity (including the farming of wine distilleries). Keeping Christians in servitude was forbidden only for constant service, but it was allowed ‘for short jobs’ without indication of exactly how long, and also ‘for assisting in arable farming,”

943 A.I. Solzhenitsyn, Doesti Let Vmeste (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, p. 114.
gardening and work in kitchen gardens’, which was a mockery of the very idea of ‘Jewish agriculture’. The Statute of 1835 called on Jewish youth to get educated [up to then the rabbis had forbidden even the learning of Russian. No restrictions were placed on the entry of Jewish to secondary and higher educational institutions. Jews who had received the degree of doctor in any branch of science... were given the right to enter government service. (Jewish doctors had that right even earlier.) As regards local self-government, the Statute removed the Jews’ previous restrictions: now they could occupy posts in dumas, magistracies and town councils ‘on the same basis as people of other confessions are elected to them’. (True, some local authorities, especially in Lithuania, objected to this: the head of the town on some days had to lead the residents into the church, and how could this be a Jew? Or how could a Jew be a judge, since the oath had to be sworn on the cross? The opposition proved to be strong, and by a decree of 1836 it was established for the western provinces that Jews could occupy only a third of the posts in magistracies and town councils.) Finally, with regard to the economically urgent question linked with cross-frontier smuggling, which was undermining State interests, the Statute left the Jews living on the frontiers where they were, but forbade any new settlements.

“For a State that held millions of its population in serfdom, all this cannot be characterised as a cruel system…” 944

This is an important point in view of the persistent western and Jewish propaganda that Nicholas was a persecutor of the Jews. And in this light even the most notorious restriction on the Jews – that they live in the Pale of Settlement – looks generous. For while a peasant had to live in his village, the Jews could wander throughout the vast territory of the Pale, an area the size of France and Germany combined; while for those who were willing to practise agriculture, or had acquired education, they could go even further afield.

“In 1827,” writes Montefiore, “he ordered conscription into the army of Jewish boys from the age of twelve for twenty-five years ‘to move them most effectively to change their religion.’” 945

Of particular importance were the Tsar’s measures encouraging Jewish education, by which he hoped to remove the barriers built up around the Jews by the rabbis. “Already in 1831 he told the ‘directing’ committee that ‘among the measures that could improve the situation of the Jews, it was necessary to pay attention to their correction by teaching... by the building of factories, by the banning of early marriage, by a better management of the kahals,... by a change of dress’. And in 1840, on the founding the ‘Committee for the Defining of Measures for the Radical Transformation of the Jews in Russia’, one of its first aims was seen to be: ‘Acting on the moral formation of the new generation of Jews by the establishment of Jewish schools in a spirit opposed to the present Talmudic teaching’…” 946

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944 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., pp. 115-117.
945 Montefiore, op. cit., p. 372.
946 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 122.
“The masses, fearing coercive measures in the sphere of religion, did not go.

“However, the school reform took its course in... 1844, in spite of the extreme resistance of the ruling circles among the kahals. (Although ‘the establishment of Jewish schools by no means envisaged a diminution in the numbers of Jews in the general school institutions; on the contrary, it was often pointed out that the general schools had to be, as before, open for Jews’.) Two forms of State Jewish schools ['on the model of the Austrian elementary schools for Jews’] were established: two-year schools, corresponding to Russian parish schools, and four-year schools, corresponding to uyezd schools. In them only Jewish subjects were taught by Jewish teachers. (As one inveterate revolutionary, Lev Deutsch, evaluated it: ‘The crown-bearing monster ordered them [the Jews] to be taught Russian letters’.) For many years Christians were placed at the head of these schools; only much later were Jews also admitted.

“’The majority of the Jewish population, faithful to traditional Jewry, on learning or guessing the secret aim of Uvarov [the minister of enlightenment], looked on the educational measures of the government as one form of persecution. (But Uvarov, in seeking possible ways of bringing the Jews and the Christian population closer together through the eradication ‘of prejudices instilled by the teaching of the Talmud’, wanted to exclude it completely from the educational curriculum, considering it to be an antichristian codex.) In their unchanging distrust of the Russian authorities, the Jewish population continued for quite a few years to keep away from these schools, experiencing ‘school-phobia’: ‘Just as the population kept away from military service, so it was saved from the schools, fearing to give their children to these seed-beds of “free thought”’. Prosperous Jewish families in part sent other, poor people’s children to the State schools instead of their own... And if by 1855 70 thousand Jewish children were studying in the ‘registered’ heder [rabbinic schools], in the State schools of both types there were 3,200.”947

This issue of education was to prove to be crucial. For when, in the next reign, the Jews did overcome their “school-phobia”, and send their children to the State schools, these had indeed become seed-beds of “free-thinking” and revolution. It is ironic and tragic that it was the Jews’ education in Russian schools that taught them how to overthrow the Russian Orthodox Autocracy...

They were also taught by foreign Jews – like Sir Moses Montefiore, “a wealthy baronet and brother-in-law of the banker N.M. Rotshchild”. As his descendant relates, he came to Petersburg in 1861 and met Tsar Alexander II, who thought that he was “‘kind and honest yet a Jew and a lawyer – and for this it is forgivable for him to wish many things.’ On his way home, Montefiore was mobbed by the Jews of Vilna, the Jerusalem of the North. The Third Section secret policeman reported the excitement of the ‘greedy Yids’ who flocked to ‘the English Messiah’…”948

948 Montefiore, op. cit., p. 373.
68. RUSSIAN HEGELIANISM

The most important influence on young intellectuals in Russia in the 1820s was German idealism, especially the philosophy of Hegel. Many went to Germany and listened to the lectures of Hegel himself, and of other important German philosophers such as Schelling. The influence of these lectures on the Russian intelligentsia lasted deep into the nineteenth century.

Evans writes: “In the emerging world of the intelligentsia in Russia during the 1830s and 1840s, as Alexander Herzen, author of Who is to Blame? (1845-6), one of the first Russian social novels, later remembered, Hegel’s writings were discussed deep into the night. ‘Every insignificant pamphlet... in which there was a mere mention of Hegel was ordered and read until it was tattered, smudged, and fell apart in a few days.’ Hegel’s dialectic sharpened vague perceptions of the differences between East and West and forced Russian intellectuals to take sides. The literary critic Ivan Kireyevsky (1806-56), whose religious father was so vehemently hostile to the atheism of Voltaire that he bought multiple copies of the Frenchman’s books solely in order to burn them in huge piles in his garden, attended Hegel’s lectures in Berlin and concluded that Russia was destined to belong to the East, founding its society on collectivism rather than individualism, and building its moral character on the doctrines of the Orthodox Church. However, Hegel’s philosophy of history convinced others that Russia was on a preordained trajectory towards a liberated future by acquiring the freedoms common in the West. The young literary critic, Vissarion Belinsky (1811-48) began labelling everything he thought backward in the culture and politics of his native land ‘Chinese’. Herzen drew similar consequences from a reading of Hegel, but stopped short of advocating violent revolution in order to achieve them.

“That step was taken by the most radical of the Russian Hegelians, Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76), who imbibed the works of the German philosopher while studying in Moscow. Bakunin was a man of violent, volcanic temperament, described by his friend Belinsky as ‘a deep, primitive, leonine nature’, also notable, however, for ‘his demands, his childishness, his braggadocio, his unscrupulousness, his disingenuousness’. In 1842, by now in Paris, Bakunin published a lengthy article urging ‘the realization of freedom’ and attacking ‘the rotted and withered remains of conventionality’. The article breathed a spirit of Hegelianism so abstract that for long stretches it was almost incomprehensible. But it ended with a chilling prophecy of the violent, anarchist extremism of which Bakunin was the founding father: ‘The passion for destruction is also a creative passion.’ These sentiments expressed the influence of a group of German philosophers known as the Neo-Hegelians, whose atheism led to their expulsion by the pious King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795-1861), soon after he came to the throne in 1840. Bakunin met them in Paris, publishing an article in one of their short-lived magazines, edited by Arnold Ruge (1802-80). It was also in Paris that Bakunin met another Hegelian, Karl Marx (1818-83), who was to be his rival in the small and intense world of revolutionary activists and thinkers for most of the rest of his life. The two men disliked each other on first
sight. Marx, as Bakunin later recalled, ‘called me a sentimental idealist, and he was right. I called him morose, vain and treacherous, and I too was right.’

“In Russia, as elsewhere,” writes Richard Pipes, “the principal consequence of Idealism was greatly to enhance the creative role of the human mind. Kant’s critique of empirical theories had this inadvertent result that it transformed the mind from a mere recipient of sensory impressions into an active participant in the process of cognition. The manner in which intelligence, through its inbuilt categories, perceived reality was in itself an essential attribute of that reality. With this argument, the Idealist school which sprung up to overshadow Empiricism, gave a weapon to all those interested in promoting the human mind as the supreme creative force – that is, in the first place, the intellectuals. It was now possible to argue that ideas were every bit as ‘real’ as physical facts, if not more so. ‘Thought’ broadly defined to include feelings, sensations, and, above all, creative artistic impulses was raised to a status of equality with ‘Nature’. Everything fitted together; nothing was accidental: intelligence merely had to grasp how phenomena related to ideas. ‘I owe to Schelling the habit I now have of generalizing the least events and the most insignificant phenomena which I encounter’, wrote V.F. Odoevskii, a leading Schellingian of the 1820s. In the late 1830s when Russian intellectuals became drunk on Hegel, the addiction acquired extreme forms. Alexander Herzen, having returned from exile, found his Moscow friends in a kind of collective delirium:

“Nobody at this time would have disowned such as sentence as this: ‘The concrescence of abstract ideas in the sphere of the plastic represents that phase of the self-questing spirit in which it, defining itself for itself, is potentialized from natural immanence into the harmonious sphere of the formal consciousness in beauty’... Everything that in fact is most immediate, all the simplest feelings were erected into abstract categories and returned from thence as pale, algebraic ghosts, without a drop of living blood... A man who went for a walk... went not just for a walk, but in order to give himself over to the pantheistic feelings of his identification with the cosmos. If, on the way, he met a tipsy soldier or a peasant woman who tried to strike up a conversation, the philosopher did not simply talk with them, he determined the substantiality of the popular element, both in its immediate and its accidental manifestations. The very tear which might arise to his eye was strictly referred to its proper category: to Gemütth or the ‘tragic element in the heart’.”

“Secondly, and only slightly less importantly, Idealism injected into philosophy a dynamic element. It conceived reality, both in its spiritual and physical aspects, as undergoing constant evolution, as ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’. The entire cosmos was evolving, the process leading towards a vaguely defined goal of a perfectly free and rational existence. This ‘historicist’ element, present in all Idealist doctrines, has become ever since an indispensable ingredient of all ‘ideologies’. It gave and continues to give the intelligentsia the assurance that the reality with which they happen to be surrounded and in varying degrees repudiate is by the very nature of things transitory, a stepping

949 Evans, op. cit., pp. 176-177.
stone to something superior. Furthermore, it allows them to argue that whatever discrepancy there might exist between their ideas and reality is due to the fact that reality, as it were, has not yet caught up with their ideas. Failure is always temporary for ideologues, as success is always seen by them to be illusory for the powers that be.

“The net effect of Idealism was to inspire Russian intellectuals with a self-confidence which they had never possessed before. Mind was linked with nature, both participating in a relentless unfolding of historical processes; compared to this vision, what were mere governments, economies, armies and bureaucracies? Prince Odoyevskii thus describes the exaltation he and his friends experienced on being first exposed to these heady concepts:

“’What solemn, luminous, and joyful feeling permeated life once it had been shown that it was possible to explain the phenomena of nature by the very same laws to which the human spirit is subject in its evolution, seemingly to close forever the gap separating the two realms, and fashion them into a single receptacle containing the eternal idea and eternal reason. With what youthful and noble pride did we at that time envisage the share which had been allotted to man in this universal existence! By virtue of the quality and right of thought, man transposed visible nature within himself and analysed it in the innermost recesses of his own consciousness: in short, he became nature’s focal point, judge and interpreter. He absorbed nature and in him it revived for rational and inspired existence... The more radiantly the eternal spirit, the eternal idea reflected themselves in man, the more fully did he understand their present in all the other realms of life. The culmination of the whole [Idealist] outlook were moral obligations, and one of the most indispensable obligations was to emancipate within oneself the divine share of the world idea from everything accidental, impure, and false in order to acquire the right to the blessings of a genuine, rational existence.’

“Of course, not all Russian intellectuals succumbed to such ecstasy. Idealism had also more sober followers, as, for example, among academic historians who took from Hegel little more than a general scheme of development of human societies. But in some degree, in the reign of Nicholas I (1825-55) Idealism was an all-pervading philosophy of the Russian intelligentsia, and its influence persisted well into the second half of the nineteenth century, after its principal tenets had been repudiated and replaced by materialism...”

But idealism was not replaced only by materialism... Some of the Russian Hegelians became materialists and Marxists. But others began to return to the roots of Russian national and religious consciousness in the movement known as Slavophilism...

There were some positive things that the Russians gained from Hegelianism. Among them was the idea of universal history. Thus the great novelist Nicholas Gogol wrote: “Universal history, in the true meaning of the term, is not a

collection of particular histories of all the peoples and states without a common
link, plan or aim, a bunch of events without order, in the lifeless and dry form in
which it is often presented. Its subject is great: it must embrace at once and in a
complete picture the whole of humanity, how from its original, poor childhood it
developed and was perfected in various forms, and, finally, reached the present
age. To show the whole of this great process, which the free spirit of man
sustained through bloody labours, struggling from its very cradle with
ignorance, with nature and with gigantic obstacles – that is the aim of universal
history! It must gather into one all the peoples of the world scattered by time,
chance, mountains and seas, and unite them into one harmonious whole; it must
compose out of them one majestic, complete poem. The event having no
influence on the world has no right to enter here. All the events of the world
must be so tightly linked amongst themselves and joined one to another like the
rings of a chain. If one ring were ripped out, the chain would collapse. This link
must not be understood in a literal sense: it is not that visible, material link by
which events are often forcibly joined, or the system created in the head
independently of facts, and to which the events of the world are later arbitrarily
attached. This link must be concluded in one common thought, in one
uninterrupted history of mankind, before which both states and events are but
temporary forms and images! The must be presented in the same colossal size as
it is in fact, penetrated by the same mysterious paths of Providence that are so
unattainably indicated in it. Interest must necessarily be elicited to the highest
degree, in such a way that the listener is tormented by the desire to know more,
so that either he cannot close the book, or, if it is impossible to do that, he starts
his reading again, so that it is evident how one event gives birth to another and
how without the original event the last event would not follow. Only in that way
must history be created…”

However, it will be noted that there is no hint of Hegelian determinism in this
picture: it is “the free spirit of man” that propels universal history forward. The
determinism of Hegel did not attract the Russian thinkers; and characteristic of
almost all of them was their emphasis on the importance of the individual and
individual freedom. Those who inherited the Hegelians’ determinism later took
the more radical road of atheism and Marxism.

Another difference between the Hegelian and the Russian interest in history
was the greater concentration, among the Russians, on Hegel’s concept of “the
historical nation”, and on Herder’s idea of the unique essence of every nation,
which stimulated Russian thinkers to take a more historical and dialectical
approach to the study of their own land.

Thus the nobleman Peter Chaadaev, a convert to Catholicism, according to
Andrej Kompaneets, “attached a great importance to history in his
investigations. Chaadaev was sure: if humanity allowed itself to see in their true
light the causes and consequences of the historical process, then even
nationalities divided up to now ‘would unite for the attainment of an agreed and

951 Gogol, “O Prepodavanii Vseobschej Istorii” (On the Teaching of Universal History), in Polnoe
Sobranie Sochinenij (Complete Works), vol. 8, pp. 50-51.
general result’. The aim of the philosophy of history is ‘to attain a clear representation of the general law governing the succession of epochs’, but this law constituted a certain idea (a moral idea) moving civilizations. But when this idea is exhausted, the state perishes. Thus, for example, the Roman Empire, Egypt, Alexandria: ‘these were rotting corpses; they (the barbarians – A.K.) only scattered their dust in the wind’.”

“What was the relationship between the old, pre-Petrine Russia and the new, post-Petrine Russia?” they asked. “Could these antithetical Russias be reconciled in a new synthesis of the future?” “Is it necessary decisively to choose the one and reject the other?”

More particularly, it was Hegel’s failure “to find room for the Slavs”, as G. Vernadsky put it, that provoked and intrigued the Russian intellectuals, both westerners like Chaadaev and Herzen and Slavophiles like Khomiakov and Kireyevsky. For Hegel wrote: “[The Slavs] did indeed found kingdoms and sustain vigorous conflicts with the various nations that came across their path. Sometimes, as an advance guard – an intermediate nationality – they took part in the struggle between Christian Europe and unchristian Asia. The Poles even liberated beleaguered Vienna from the Turks; and Slavs have to some extent been drawn within the sphere of Occidental Reason. Yet this entire body of peoples remains excluded from our consideration because hitherto it has not appeared as an independent element in the series of phases that reason has assumed in the world.”

Was Russia no more than “an intermediate nationality”?, asked the Russian intellectuals indignantly. Had History really passed the Slavs by? Were they just a footnote to “the sphere of Occidental Reason”? Or did they have something original to contribute? In the next stage of the historical dialectic perhaps? After all, if Hegel thought that the Romano-French period of history had been overtaken by the German, why should not the German in its turn be overtaken by the Slav?...

The failure of the 1848 revolution in Europe, in which Tsar Nicholas had played a decisive – and laudable - part by sending his troops to crush the Hungarian revolutionaries, also heralded the end of the Hegelian phase of Russian thought. Censorship, already tight, became still tighter, and the gulf between liberals and radicals, and between supporters and opponents of the autocracy, increased. This was no time for abstract armchair theorizing...

As Sir Isaiah Berlin writes. “The prison walls within which Nicholas I had enclosed the lives of his thinking subjects… led to a sharp break with the polite civilization and the non-political interests of the past, to a general roughening of fibre and exacerbation of political and social differences. The gulf between the

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953 Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of History; quoted in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 175.
right and the left – between the disciples of Dostoevsky and Katkov and the followers of Chernyshevsky or Bakunin – all typical radical intellectuals in 1848 – had grown very wide and deep. In due course there emerged a vast and growing army of practical revolutionaries, conscious – all too conscious – of the specifically Russian character of their problems, seeking specifically Russian solutions. They were forced away from the general current of European development (with which, in any case, their history seemed to have so little in common) by the bankruptcy in Europe of the libertarian movement of 1848: they drew strength from the very harshness of the discipline which the failure in the West had indirectly imposed upon them. Henceforth the Russian radicals accepted the view that ideas and agitation wholly unsupported by material force were necessarily doomed to impotence; and they adopted this truth and abandoned sentimental liberalism without being forced to pay for their liberation with that bitter, personal disillusionment and acute frustration which proved too much for a good many idealistic radicals in the West. The Russian radicals learnt this lesson by means of precept and example, indirectly as it were, without the destruction of their inner resources. The experience obtained by both sides in the struggle during these dark years was a decisive factor in shaping the uncompromising character of the later revolutionary movement in Russia…"\textsuperscript{955}

69. RUSSIA AND EUROPE: (1) CHAADAEV VS. PUSHKIN

There were two schools of thought on the nature and destiny of Russia: the westerners, who basically thought that the westernizing path chosen by Peter had been correct, and the Slavophiles, who believed in Orthodoxy, in the pre-Petrine symphony of powers, and in a special, distinct path chosen by God for Russia. Almost the whole of the public intellectual life of Russia until the revolution could be described as increasingly complex variations on these two viewpoints and the various intermediate positions: Chaadaev and Pushkin, Belinsky and Gogol, Herzen and Khomiakov, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Soloviev and Pobedonostev, Lenin and Tikhomorov. The result was paradoxical: an increasing westernization of the noble educated classes, and an increasing “Slavophilisation” of the tsars themselves, culminating in the most Orthodox and Slavophile of all the tsars, Nicholas II.

The great debate began in 1836 with the publication, by Peter Chaadaev, of the first of his *Philosophical Letters* (1829 – 1831). N.O. Lossky writes: "The letters are ostensibly addressed to a lady who is supposed to have asked Chaadaev’s advice on the ordering of her spiritual life. In the first letter Chaadaev advises the lady to observe the ordinances of the Church as a spiritual exercise in obedience. Strict observance of church customs and regulations may only be dispensed with, he says, when ‘beliefs of a higher order have been attained, raising our spirit to the source of all certainty;’ such beliefs must not be in contradiction to the ‘beliefs of the people’. Chaadaev recommends a well-regulated life as favorable to spiritual development and praises Western Europe where ‘the ideas of duty, justice, law, order’ are part of the people’s flesh and blood and are, as he puts it, not the psychology, but the physiology of the West. He evidently has in mind the disciplinary influence of the Roman Church.

As to Russia, Chaadaev is extremely critical of her. Russia, in his opinion, is neither the West nor the East. ‘Lonely in the world, we have given nothing to the world, have taught it nothing; we have not contributed one idea to the mass of human ideas.’ ‘If we had not spread ourselves from [the] Behring Straits to [the] Oder, we would never have been noticed.’ We do not, as it were, form part of the human organism and exist ‘solely in order to give humanity some important lesson’." According to Chaadaev, “not a single useful thought has sprouted in our country’s barren soil; not a single great truth has emerged from our ambit…. Something in our blood repulses all true progress. In the end we have lived and now live solely to serve as some inscrutable great lesson for the distant generations that will grasp it; today, whatever anyone may say, we are a void in the intellectual firmament.”

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956 The idea that Church regulations and customs, such as fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, could be dispensed with was an attitude of the nobility that St. Seraphim of Sarov, in particular, criticized. He said that he who does not fast is not Orthodox. (V.M.)
Sir Isaiah Berlin sums up the matter well: “Chaadaev’s attack, with its deification of Western traditions, ideas and civilisation, was the key to later Russian ‘social thought’. Its importance was enormous. It set the tone, it struck the dominant notes which were echoed by every major Russian writer up to and beyond the Revolution. Everything is there: the proclamation that the Russian past is blank or filled with chaos, that the only true culture is the Roman West, and that the Great Schism robbed Russia of her birthright and left her barbarous, an abomination of the creative process, a caution to other peoples, a Caliban among nations. Here, too, is the extraordinary tendency toward self-preoccupation which characterises Russian writing even more than that of the Germans, from whom this tendency mainly stems. Other writers, in England, France, even Germany, write about life, love, nature and human relations at large; Russian writing, even when it is most deeply in debt to Goethe or Schiller or Dickens or Stendhal, is about Russia, the Russian past, the Russian present, Russian prospects, the Russian character, Russian vices and Russian virtues. All the ‘accursed questions’ (as Heine was perhaps the first to call them) turn in Russian into notorious proklyatyye voprosy – questions about the destinies (sud’by) of Russia: Where do we come from? Whither are we bound? Why are we who we are? Should we teach the West or learn from it? Is our ‘broad’ Slav nature higher in the spiritual scale than that of the ‘Europeans’ – a source of salvation for all mankind – or merely a form of infantilism and barbarism destined to be superseded or destroyed? The problem of the ‘superfluous man’ is here already; it is not an accident that Chaadaev was an intimate friend of the creator of Eugene Onegin [Pushkin]. No less characteristic of this mental condition is Chaadaev’s contrary speculation that was also destined to have a career in subsequent writing, in which he wondered whether the Russians, who have arrived so late at the feast of the nations and are still young, barbarous and untried, do not thereby derive advantages, perhaps overwhelming ones, over older or more civilised societies. Fresh and strong, the Russians might profit by the inventions and discoveries of the others without having to go through the torments that have attended their mentors’ struggles for life and civilisation. Might there not be a vast positive gain in being late in the field? Herzen and Chernyshevsky, Marxists and anti-Marxists, were to repeat this with mounting optimism. But the most central and far-reaching question was still that posed by Chaadaev. He asked: Who are we and what should be our path? Have we unique treasures (as the Slavophiles maintained) preserved for us by our Church – the only true Christian one – which Catholics and Protestants have each in their own way lost or destroyed? Is that which the West despises as coarse and primitive in fact a source of life – the only pure source in the decaying post-Christian world? Or, on the contrary, is the West at least partially right: if we are ever to say our own word and play our part and show the world what kind of people we are, must we not learn from the Westerners, acquire their skills, study in their schools, emulate their arts and sciences, and perhaps the darker sides of their lives also? The lines of battle in the century that followed remained where Chaadaev drew them: the weapons were ideas which, whatever their origins, in Russian became matters of the deepest concern – often of life and death – as they never we in England or France or, to such a degree, in Romantic Germany.
Kireyevsky, Khomiakov and Aksakov gave one answer, Belinsky and Dobrolyubov another, Kavelin yet a third.”

Chaadaev’s letter had an enormous impact on Russian society; Herzen remarked that it “shook the whole of intellectual Russia”. The tsar was furious. Klementy Rosset, an officer of the General Staff, wrote to the famous poet Alexander Pushkin: “The Emperor has read Chaadaev’s article and found it absurd and extravagant, saying that he was sure ‘that Moscow did not share the insane opinions of the Author’, and has instructed the governor-general Prince Golitsyn to inquire daily as to the health of Chaadaev’s wits and to put him under governmental surveillance…”

This letter, together with the other Philosophical Letters, elicited from Pushkin the first, and one of the best statements of the opposing, Slavophile position. Pushkin had known Chaadaev for a long time. In 1818, when his views were more radical (and blasphemously atheist) than they came to be at the end of his life, he had dedicated to Chaadaev the following lines:

Comrade, believe: joy’s star will leap
Upon our sight, a radiant token;
Russia will rise from her long sleep;
And where autocracy lies, broken,
Our names shall yet be graven deep.

But even here anti-autocratic sentiments are combined with a belief in Russia. So although Pushkin admitted to the Tsar that he would have participated in the Decembrist rebellion if he had not been in exile, he was never a typical westernizer. This fact, combined with his deep reading in Russian history, the stabilising experience of marriage and, as we have seen, an enlightening interview with the Tsar himself, led Pushkin to a kind of conversion to Russia, to Tsarism and to a belief in her significance as a phenomenon independent of Europe: “Why is it necessary that one of us [the tsar] should become higher than all and even higher than the law itself? Because in the law a man hears something cruel and unfraternal. You don’t get far with merely the literal fulfillment of the law: but none of us must break it or not fulfill it: for this a higher mercy softening the law is necessary. This can appear to men only in a fully-empowered authority. The state without a fully-empowered monarch is an automaton: many, if attains to what the United States has attained. But what is the United States? A corpse. In them man has disappeared to the point that he’s not worth a brass farthing. A state without a fully-empowered monarch is the same as an orchestra without a conductor. However good the musicians, if there is not one among them who gives the beat with the movement of his baton, the concert gets nowhere…”

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962 Razgovory Pushkina (The Conversations of Pushkin), Moscow, 1926.
“Of course,” writes Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), “when Pushkin pronounced [these words], he knew well that there were big defects in state administration under the tsarist autocracy. They inevitably occur when the autocratic monarchs violate this, the best state order, by their opposition to the Divine laws. Nevertheless, as we see from his words, it was impossible to compare this form of government in Russia with any other form of government in the countries that did not have autocracy, just as it is impossible to compare heaven with the earth.”

The sincerity of his conversion was demonstrated during the Polish rebellion in 1830. Although “enlightened” Europe condemned the Tsar for crushing the rebellion, on August 2, 1830, just three weeks before the taking of Warsaw by Russian troops, Pushkin wrote “To the Slanderers of Russia”. From that time, as the friend of the poet’s brother, Michael Yuzefovich, wrote, “his world-view changed, completely and unalterably. He was already a deeply believing person: [he now became] a citizen who had changed his mind, having understood the demands of Russian life and renounced utopian illusions.”

However, Chaadaev had not undergone this conversion, and was still not convinced that Russia’s past was anything more than “a blank sheet of paper”, “an unhappy country with neither past, present nor future”.

Valery Lepakhin and Andrei Zavarzin summarised the debate between Chaadaev and Pushkin as follows: “Russia and Europe. This problem especially occupied the minds of Russians at the beginning of the 19th century. Chaadaev considered the schism (the division of the Churches [in 1054]) as a tragedy for Russia, which separated it from Christianity (of course, from Catholicism, and not from Christianity, but at that time these terms were synonymous for Chaadaev), from ‘the world idea’, form ‘real progress’, from ‘the wonderworking principle’, from ‘the enlightened, civilized peoples’. In principle Pushkin agreed with Chaadaev, but specified that ‘the schism disunited us from backward Europe’: first, it separated ‘us’, that is, not only Russia, but in general the whole of the eastern branch of Christianity, and secondly, it separated simply from ‘backward Europe’, and not from ‘enlightened and civilized people’, as Chaadaev claimed. In reading the Russian chronicles, sermons and lives of saints, it is impossible not to notice the fact that they are full of gratitude to God for the fact the Rus’ accepted baptism from Orthodox Constantinople, and not from Catholic Rome. This fact is never viewed as a tragedy in Russian literature and history, rather the opposite: beginning with the description of the holy Prince Vladimir’s choice of faith, this event became the subject of poetry and chant. And not out of hostility to Catholicism, and from faith in Divine Providence, which judged that it should be so and which the consciousness of believers perceived with gratitude, for Providence cannot err. But Chaadaev,

964 At the time of the baptism of Rus’ in 988, Rome was still formally Orthodox and in communion with Constantinople. Nevertheless, heretical tendencies were already deeply rooted in the West. (V.M.)
who speaks so much about Christianity, sees in this fact ‘the will of fate’ in a
pagan manner.

“Pushkin agreed with his friend of many years that ‘we did not take part in
any of the great events which shook her (Europe)’. But it does not occur to
Chaadaev to ask the simple question: why should Rus’ have taken part. Or, for
example, would not this ‘participation’ have been for the worse, both for Europe
and for Rus’? Pushkin gives a simple, but principled reply at this point: Russia
has ‘her own special calling’, which Pushkin in another place calls ‘lofty’: ‘It was
Russia and her vast expanses that were swallowed up by the Mongol invasion.
The Tartars did not dare to cross our western frontiers and leave us in their rear.
They departed for their deserts, and Christian civilization was saved... By our
martyrdom the energetic development of Catholic Europe was delivered from
all kinds of hindrances’. From Pushkin’s reply it follows that indirectly at any
rate Russia did take part in the life of Western Europe, and, in accordance with
its historical significance, this participation was weighty and fraught with
consequences for the West. It was not a direct participation insofar as Russia had
a different calling. The complete opposition of Pushkin’s and Chaadaev’s views
on the problem is characteristic. For the latter the Tartar-Mongol yoke was a
‘cruel and humiliating foreign domination’. For Pushkin this epoch was
sanctified by the lofty word ‘martyrdom’, which Russia received not only for
herself, but also for her western brothers, for Christian civilization generally. In
his reply Pushkin links the special calling of Russia with her reception of
Orthodoxy, and see in it not ‘the will of fate’, but Russia’s preparation of herself
for this martyrdom.

“Chaadaev’s attitude to Byzantium also elicited objections from Pushkin.
Chaadaev called Byzantium ‘corrupt’, he affirmed that it was at that time (the
10th century – the reception of Christianity by Rus’) ‘an object of profound
disdain’ for the West European peoples. Now it is difficult even to say what
there is more of in this passage from Chaadaev: simple ignorance of the history
of Byzantium and Europe and complete absorption in his speculative
historiosophical conception, or the conscious prejudice of a westerniser. The
beginning of the 10th century in Byzantium was marked by the activity of Leo VI,
‘the Wise’, the middle – by the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogennitus, and
the end – by the victories of Basil II the Bulgar-slayer. It was precisely this period
that saw the development of political theories and the science of jurisprudence,
thoretical military thought and knowledge of the natural sciences. New schools
were opened, and a good education was highly prized both in the world and in
the Church. Significant works were produced in the sphere of philosophy,
literature and the fine arts, and theology produced such a light as Simeon the
New Theologian, the third (after the holy Evangelist John the Theologian and St.
Gregory the Theologian) to be given the title ‘theologian’ by the Orthodox
Church. ... This period is considered by scientists to be the epoch of the
flourishing of Byzantine aesthetic consciousness, of architecture and music. If
one compares the 10th century in Byzantium and in Europe, the comparison will
not be in favour of the latter. Moreover, Chaadaev himself speaks of the
‘barbarism’ of the peoples that despised Byzantium.
“'You say,' writes Pushkin, ‘that the source from which we drew up Christianity was impure, that Byzantium was worthy of disdain and was disdained', but, even if it was so, one should bear in mind that ‘from the Greeks we took the Gospel and the traditions, and not the spirit of childish triviality and disputes about words. The morals of Byzantium never were the morals of Kiev. For Chaadaev it was important ‘from where’, but for Pushkin ‘how’ and ‘what’ they took it. After all, ‘was not Jesus Christ Himself born as a Jew and was not Jeru'salem a proverb among the nations?’ Pushkin did not want to enter into polemics on the subject of Byzantium insofar as that would have dragged out his letter. Moreover, the problem was a special one not directly connected with the polemic surrounding the history of Russia. For him it was evident that Russia, as a young and healthy organism, had filtered through her Byzantine heritage, assimilated the natural and cast out that which was foreign and harmful. Above mention was made of the fact that in the chronicles praise was often offered to God for the reception of Christianity by Rus’ from Byzantium. But no less often do we find critical remarks about the Greek metropolitans, and of the Greeks and Byzantium in general. Therefore Pushkin placed the emphasis on the critical assimilation of the Byzantine heritage. For him, Rus’ received from Byzantium first of all ‘the light of Christianity’….

“Both Chaadaev and Pushkin highly esteemed the role of Christianity in world history. In his review of The History of the Russian People by N. Polevoj, the latter wrote: ‘The greatest spiritual and political turning-point [in the history of] of our planet is Christianity. In this sacred element the world disappeared and renewed itself. Ancient history is the history of Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome. Modern history is the history of Christianity.’ Chaadaev would also have signed up to these words, but immediately after this common affirmation differences would have arisen. For Chaadaev true Christianity rules, shapes and ‘lords over everything’ only in Catholic Europe – ‘there Christianity accomplished everything’. Chaadaev even considers the history of Catholic Europe to be ‘sacred, like the history of the ancient chosen people’.

“He recognises the right of the Russians, as, for example, of the Abyssinians, to call themselves Christians, but in the Christianity of the former and the latter that ‘order of things’, which ‘constitutes the final calling of the human race’ was not realised at all. ‘Don’t you think,’ says Chaadaev to his correspondent, ‘that these stupid departures from Divine and human truths (read: Orthodoxy) drag heaven down to earth?’ And so there exist Catholic Europe, the incarnation of Christianity, and Russia, Abyssinia and certain other historical countries which have stagnated in ‘stupid departures from Divine and human truths’. Chaadaev refuses these countries the right to their own path, even the right to have a future.

“In one of his reviews Pushkin indirectly replies to Chaadaev: ‘Understand,’ he writes, ‘that Russia never had anything in common with the rest of Europe; her history demands other thoughts, other formulae, different from the thoughts and formulae extracted by Guizot from the history of the Christian West’. For Pushkin it is absolutely obvious that any schema of historical development will remain a private, speculative schema and will never have a universal character.
Any conception is built on the basis of some definite historical material, and to transfer it, out of confidence in its universality, to other epochs or countries would be a mistake. After all, as often as not that which does not fit into a once-worked-out schema is cut off and declared to have no significance and not worthy of study or analysis. But Pushkin makes his own generalisations, proceeding from history, from concrete facts. S. Frank wrote: ‘The greatest Russian poet was also completely original and, we can boldly say, the greatest Russian political thinker of the 19th century’. This was also noticed by the poet’s contemporaries. Vyzamesky wrote: ‘In Pushkin there was a true understanding of history… The properties of his mind were: clarity, incisiveness, sobriety… He would not paint pictures according to a common standard and size of already-prepared frames, as is often done by the most recent historians in order more conveniently to fit into them the events and people about to be portrayed’. But it was precisely this that was the defect of Chaadaev’s method. Moreover, the non-correspondence of schema and historical reality (frame and picture) was sometimes so blatant with him that he had completely to reject the historical and religious path of Russia for the sake of preserving his schema of world development.

“Pushkin also disagreed with Chaadaev concerning the unity of Christianity, which for Chaadaev ‘wholly consisted in the idea of the merging of all the moral forces of the world’ for the establishment of ‘a social system or Church which would have to introduce the kingdom of truth among people’. To this Pushkin objected already in his letter of 1831: ‘You see the unity of Christianity in Catholicism, that is, in the Pope. Does it not consist in the idea of Christ, which we find also in Protestantism?’ Pushkin notes the Catholico-centrism of Chaadaev, and reminds him of the Protestant part of the Western Christian world. But the main point is that Pushkin turns out to be better-theologically than Chaadaev. The Church is the Body of Christ, and Christ Himself is Her Head, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 1.23, 4.16; Colossians 1.18, etc.). Here Pushkin in a certain sense anticipates the problems of Dostoyevsky, who considered that Rus’ had preserved that Christ that the West had lost, and that the division of the Churches had taken place precisely because of different understandings of Christ.

“Pushkin considered it necessary to say a few words also about the clergy, although Chaadaev had not directly criticized them in his first letter. ‘Our clergy,’ writes the poet, ‘were worthy of respect until Theophan [Prokopovich]. They never sullied themselves with the wretchedness of papism..., and, of course, they would never have elicited a Reformation at a moment when mankind needed unity more than anything.’ In evaluating the role of the clergy in Russian history, Pushkin distinguished between two stages: before Peter and after Peter. The role of the clergy in Russian life before Peter was exceptionally great. Ancient Rus’ inherited from Byzantium, together with the two-headed eagle on her arms, the idea of the symphony of secular and ecclesiastical power.

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965 For Chaadaev “the supreme principle” was “unity”, which he saw incarnate in Western Catholic Christendom – completely forgetting that the West was torn by the division between Catholicism and Protestantism. See Pushkin’s remark below. (V.M.)
This idea was equally foreign both to caesaropapism and papocaesarism and the
democratic idea of the separation of the Church from the State. Of course,
symphony never found its full incarnation in State life, but it is important that as
an idea it lived both in the Church and in the State, and the role of the clergy as
the necessary subject of this symphony was naturally lofty and indisputable. But
even outside the conception of ‘symphony’, the clergy played an exceptionally
important role in the history of Russia. In the epoch of the Tatar-Mongol yoke
they were almost the only educated class in Russian society: ‘The clergy, spared
by the wonderful quick-wittedness of the Tatars alone in the course of two dark
centuries kept alive the pale sparks of Byzantine education’. In another place
Pushkin even found it necessary to contrast the Russian and Catholic clergy –
true, without detailed explanations of his affirmation: ‘In Russia the influence of
the clergy was so beneficial, and in the Roman-Catholic lands so harmful…
Consequently we are obliged to the monks of our history also for our
enlightenment’.

“A new era began from the time of Theophan Prokopovich (more exactly:
Peter I), according to Pushkin. In a draft of a letter dated 1836 he wrote to
Chaadaev: ‘Peter the Great tamed (another variant: ‘destroyed’) the clergy,
having removed the patriarchate’. Peter made the clergy into an institution
obedient to himself and destroyed the age-old idea of symphony. Now they had
begun to be excised from the consciousness both of the clergy and of the simple
people, and of state officials. In losing their role in society, the clergy were
becoming more and more backward, more and more distant from the needs and
demands of the life of society. They were being forced to take the role of
‘fulfillers of the cult’.

“In Pushkin’s opinion, a serious blow against the clergy was later delivered
by Catherine II. And if we are to speak of the backwardness of the Russian
clergy, it is there that we must see its source. ‘Catherine clearly persecuted the
clergy, sacrificing it to her unlimited love of power, in the service of the spirit of
the times… The seminaries fell into a state of complete collapse. Many villages
did not have priests… What a pity! For the Greek [Orthodox Christian]
confession gives us our special national character’. If Chaadaev reproaches
Russia for not having ‘her own face’, then for Pushkin it is evident that Russia
has ‘her own face’ and it was formed by Orthodoxy. Therefore a sad note is
heard in Pushkin’s evaluation of the era of Catherine: she has her own face, her
own ‘special national character’, if only she does not lose it because of ill-
thought-out reforms and regulations foreign to the spirit of Russian life. In
contrast to Chaadaev, Pushkin linked the backwardness of the contemporary
clergy not with the reception of Christianity from Byzantium, but with the recent
transformations in Russian State and Church life, and sought the roots of this
backwardness not in the 10th century but in the 18th century, in the reforms of
Peter and in the epoch of the so-called Enlightenment…”

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966 Lepakhin and Zavarzin, “Poet i Philosoph o Sud’bakh Rossii” (A Poet and A Philosopher on
the Destinies of Russia), Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia (Herald of the Russian
Such was the debate in its main outlines. And yet, just as Pushkin moved towards the Slavophile position later in life, so, less surely, did Chaadaev. Thus in 1830 he praised Pushkin’s nationalist poems on the Warsaw insurrection. And later, in his Apology of a Madman (1837), he was inclined to think that the very emptiness of Russia’s past might enable her to contribute to the future. Indeed, he then believed that Russia was destined “to resolve the greater part of the social problems, to perfect the greater part of the ideas which have arisen in older societies, to pronounce judgement on the most serious questions which trouble the human race”.67 Moreover, in the same Apology, he spoke of the Orthodox Church as “this church that is so humble and sometimes so heroic”. And in a conversation with Khomiakov in 1843 he declared: “Holy Orthodoxy shines out for us from Holy Byzantium”.68

However, while Slavophile tendencies sometimes surfaced in Chaadaev, as in other westerners, his fundamentally westernizing radicalism was revealed by his anti-monarchical remark on the occasion of the European revolutions in 1848: “We don’t want any king except the King of heaven”.69

68 But Byzantium, he notes, was still in communion with Rome at that time, and “there was a feeling of common Christian citizenship”. (Wil van den Bercken, Holy Russia and Christian Europe, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 198).
69 Lossky, op. cit., p. 49. Moreover, in 1854, during the Crimean War, he wrote: “Talking about Russia, one always imagines that one is talking about a country like the others; in reality, this is not so at all. Russia is a whole separate world, submissive to the will, caprice, fantasy of a single man, whether his name be Peter or Ivan, no matter – in all instances the common element is the embodiment of arbitrariness. Contrary to all the laws of the human community, Russia moves only in the direction of her own enslavement and the enslavement of all the neighbouring peoples. For this reason it would be in the interest not only of other peoples but also in that of her own that she be compelled to take a new path” (in Pipes, op. cit., p. 266).
The figure of Peter the Great continued to be a critical point of difference between the Westerners and the Slavophiles. The Westerners admired him (for Chaadaev he was, with Alexander I, almost the only significant Russian): the Slavophiles criticized him as the corrupter of the true Russian tradition. All felt they had to interpret his place in Russian history.

Once again it was Pushkin who began the reappraisal with his famous poem on the statue of Peter, The Bronze Horseman. However, it was the literary critic Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky who made the decisive contribution from the Westerners’ side. And another writer, Nicholas Vasilyevich Gogol, who took the Slavophile argument one step further…

Unlike most of the intellectuals of the time, Belinsky was not a nobleman, but a raznochinets (that is, of undetermined or “sundry” rank, a nobleman by birth who did not occupy himself with a nobleman’s pursuits). Moreover, he was an atheist. In fact, he rejected all the traditional pillars of Russian life. He was one of the first to recognize the greatness of Pushkin. And he was equally perceptive of the talent of Gogol and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky. And yet these writers, “discovered” by Belinsky, turned decisively against his westernising philosophy...

Belinsky was concerned, writes Walicki, “above all with the role of Peter the Great and the antithesis of pre-and post-reform Russia. In his analysis, he made use of a dialectical scheme current among the Russian Hegelians, although he was the first to apply it to Russian history. Individuals as well as whole nations, he argued, pass through three evolutionary stages: the first is the stage of ‘natural immediacy’; the second is that of the abstract universalism of reason, with its ‘torments of reflection’ and painful cleavage between immediacy and consciousness; the third is that of ‘rational reality’, which is founded on the ‘harmonious reconciliation of the immediate and conscious elements’.

“Belinsky developed this idea in detail as early as 1841, in his long essay on ‘The Deeds of Peter the Great’, in which he wrote: ‘There is a difference between a nation in its natural, immediate and patriarchal state, and this same nation in the rational movement of its historical development’. In the earlier stage, he suggested, a nation cannot really properly be called a nation (natsiia), but only a people (narod). The choice of terms was important to Belinsky: during the reign of Nicholas the word narodnost’, used… by the exponents of Official Nationality [together with the words ‘Orthodoxy’ and ‘Autocracy’ to express the essence of Russian life], had a distinctly conservative flavour; natsional’nost’, on the other hand, thanks to its foreign derivation evoked the French Revolution and echoes of bourgeois democratic national developments.

“Belinsky’s picture of pre-Petrine Russia was surprisingly similar to that presented by the Slavophiles, although his conclusions were quite different from theirs. Before Peter the Russian people (i.e. the nation in the age of immediacy)
had been a close-knit community held together by faith and custom – i.e. by the unreflective approval of tradition idealized by the Slavophiles. These very qualities, however, allowed no room for the emergence of rational thought or individuality, and thus prevented dynamic social change.

“Before Russians could be transformed into a nation it was necessary to break up their stagnating society... Belinsky argued that the emergence of every modern nation was accompanied by an apparently contradictory phenomenon – namely the cleavage between the upper and lower strata of society that so disturbed the Slavophiles. He regarded this as confirmation of certain general rules applying to the formation of modern nation-states: ‘In the modern world,’ he wrote, ‘all the elements within society operate in isolation, each one separately and independently... in order to develop all the more fully and perfectly... and to become fused once more into a new and homogeneous whole on a higher level than the original undifferentiated homogeneity’. In his polemics with the Slavophiles, who regarded the cleavage between the cultivated elite and the common people as the prime evil of post-Petrine Russia, Belinsky argued that ‘the gulf between society and the people will disappear in the course of time, with the progress of civilization’. This meant ‘raising the people to the level of society’, he was anxious to stress, and not ‘forcing society back to the level of the people’, which was the Slavophiles’ remedy. The Petrine reforms, which had been responsible for this social gulf, were therefore, in Belinsky’s view, the first and decisive step toward modern Russia. ‘Before Peter the Great, Russia was merely a people [narod]; she became a nation [natsiia] thanks to the changes initiated by the reformer.’”

Berlin writes: “The central question for all Russians concerned about the condition of their country was social, and perhaps the most decisive single influence on the life and work of Belinsky was his social origin. He was born in poverty and bred in the atmosphere, at once bleak and coarse, of an obscure country town in a backward province. Moscow did, to some degree, soften and civilise him, but there remained a core of crudeness, and a self-conscious, rough, sometimes aggressive tone in his writing. This tone now enters Russian literature, never to leave it. Belinsky spoke in this sort of accent because this kind of raised dramatic tone, this harshness, was as natural to him as to Beethoven. Belinsky’s followers adopted his manner because they were the party of the enragés, and this was the traditional accent of anger and revolt, the earnest of violence to come, the rough voice of the insulted and the oppressed peasant masses proclaiming to the entire world the approaching end of their suffering at the hands of the discredited older order.

“Belinsky was the first and most powerful of the ‘new men’, the radicals and revolutionaries who shook and in the end destroyed the classical aristocratic tradition in Russian literature. The literary élite, the friends of Pushkin, despite radical ideas obtained abroad after the Napoleonic wars, despite Decembrist tendencies, was on the whole conservative, if not in conviction, yet in social habits and temper, connected with the court and the army, and deeply patriotic.

970 Walicki, op. cit., pp. 93-94.
Belinsky, to whom this seemed a retrograde outlook, was convinced that Russia had more to learn from the West than to teach it, that the Slavophile movement was romantic illusion, at times blind nationalistic megalomania, that Western scientific progress offered the only hope of lifting Russia from her backward state. And yet this same prophet of material civilisation, who intellectually was so ardent a Westerner, was emotionally more deeply and unhappily Russian than any of his contemporaries, spoke no foreign language, could not breathe freely in any environment save that of Russia, and felt miserable and persecution-ridden abroad. He found Western habits worthy of respect and emulation, but to him personally quite insufferable. When abroad he began to sigh most bitterly for home and after a month away was almost insane with nostalgia. In this sense he represents in his person the uncompromising elements of a Slav temperament and way of life to a far sharper degree than any of his contemporaries, even Dostoyevsky.

“This deep inner clash between intellectual conviction and emotional – sometimes almost physical – predilection is a very characteristically Russian disease. As the nineteenth century developed, and as the struggle between social classes became sharper and more articulate, this psychological conflict which tormented Belinsky emerges more clearly: the revolutionaries, whether they are social democrats, or social revolutionaries, or communists, unless they are noblemen or university professors – that is, almost professionally members of an international society – may make their bow with great conviction and sincerity to the West in the sense that they believe in its civilisation, above all its sciences, its techniques, its political thought and practice, but when they are forced to emigrate they find life abroad more agonising than other exiles...

“To some degree this peculiar amalgam of love and hate is intrinsic to contemporary Russian feeling about Europe: on the one hand intellectual respect, envy, admiration, desire to emulate and excel; on the other emotional hostility and suspicion and contempt, a sense of being clumsy, de trop, of being outsiders; leading as a result to an alternation between excessive self-prostration before, and aggressive flouting of, Western values. No recent visitor to the Soviet Union can have failed to remark this phenomenon: a combination of intellectual inadequacy and emotional superiority, a sense of the West as enviably self-restrained, clever, efficient and successful; also cramped, cold, mean, calculating and fenced in, incapable of large views or generous emotion, incapable of feeling which at times rises too high and overflows its banks, unable to abandon everything and sacrifice itself in response to some unique historical challenge; incapable of ever attaining a rich flowering of life. This attitude is the most constant element in Belinsky’s most personal and characteristic writings: if it is not the most valuable element in him, it is the most Russian: Russian history past and present is not intelligible without it, today more palpably than ever...”

The Slavophiles were free of this neurotic attitude to the West that Belinsky typified among the westerners; they were both more critical of the West, and calmer in relation to it. The reason was that they, unlike the Westerners, had

discovered the heart of Russia, her Orthodox Christianity. For them, the critical
event in European history was not the Catholic-Protestant schism, but the
schism between Eastern and Western Christianity in the middle of the eleventh
century. In thus tracing the origins of the difference between East and West to
the religious schism between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics of the
eleventh century, as opposed to later events such as the Protestant Reformation of
the sixteenth century or the reforms of Peter the Great in the eighteenth century,
the Slavophiles made a very important step towards the reintegration of Russian
historical thought with the traditional outlook on history of Orthodox
Christianity. This wider and deeper historical perspective enabled them to see
that, after the schisms of the West from the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and
Apostolic Church of the East for so many centuries, it was inevitable that a new
kind of man, *homo occidentalis*, with a new psychology, new aims and new forms
of social and political organization, should have been created in the West, from
where it penetrated into the Orthodox East.

One of the first to see this clearly was Gogol. Having made his name by
satirical and fantastical works such as *Notes of a Madman*, *The Greatcoat*, *The
Government Inspector* and, above all, *Dead Souls*, he suddenly and quite
unexpectedly turned to Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationhood. This change of
heart was clearly proclaimed in *Correspondence with Friends*.

While Belinsky looked forward to the rationalism of Tolstoy, Gogol’s views
on the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy both looked back to Pushkin and
forward to Dostoyevsky’s *Pushkin Speech*. “All these Slavists and Europeans,” he
wrote, “or old believers and new believers, or easterners and westerners, they
are all speaking about two different sides of one and the same subject, without in
any way divining that they are not contradicting or going against each other.”
The quarrel was “a big misunderstanding”. And yet “there is more truth on the
side of the Slavists and easterners”, since their teaching is more right “on the
whole”, while the westerners are more right “in the details”. 972

“The main theme of the book,” writes I.M. Andreev, “was God and the
Church. And when Gogol was reproached for this, he replied, simply and with
conviction: ‘How can one be silent, when the stones are ready to cry out about
God.’

“Like Khomiakov and Ivan Kireyevsky, Gogol summoned all ‘to life in the
Church’.

“The pages devoted to the Orthodox Church are the best pages of the book!
No Russian writer had expressed as did Gogol such sincere, filial love for the
Mother Church, such reverence and veneration for Her, such a profound and
penetrating understanding both of Orthodoxy as a whole and of the smallest
details of the whole of the Church’s rites.

“'We possess a treasure for which there is no price,' is how he characterizes the Church, and he continued: 'This Church which, as a chaste virgin, has alone been preserved from the time of the Apostles in her original undefiled purity, this Church, which in her totality with her profound dogmas and smallest external rites has been as it were brought right down from heaven for the Russian people, which alone has the power to resolve all our perplexing knots and questions… And this Church, which was created for life, we have to this day not introduced into our life’…

“The religio-political significance of Correspondence was huge. This book appeared at a time when in the invisible depths of historical life the destiny of Russia and Russian Orthodox culture was being decided. Would Russia hold out in Orthodoxy, or be seduced by atheism and materialism? Would the Russian Orthodox autocracy be preserved in Russia, or would socialism and communism triumph? These questions were linked with other, still more profound ones, that touched on the destinies of the whole world. What was to come? The flourishing and progress of irreligious humanistic culture, or the beginning of the pre-apocalyptic period of world history?

“Gogol loudly and with conviction proclaimed that the Truth was in Orthodoxy and in the Russian Orthodox Autocracy, and that the historical ‘to be or not to be’ of Russian Orthodox culture, on the preservation of which there also depended the destiny of the whole world in the nearest future, was now being decided. The world was on the edge of death, and we have entered the pre-apocalyptic period of world history.

“Correspondence came out in 1847. Pletnev published it at Gogol’s behest.

“This book, in its hidden essence, was not understood by its contemporaries and was subjected to criticism not only on the part of enemies, but also of friends (of course, the former and the latter proceeded from completely different premises).

“The enemies were particularly disturbed and annoyed by Gogol’s sincere and convinced approval of the foundations of those social-political ordered which to so-called ‘enlightened’ people seemed completely unsustainable.”

Belinsky was furious. “Russia expects from her writers salvation from Orthodox, Nationality and Autocracy,” he wrote in his Letter to Gogol in 1847. And he now called Gogol a “preacher of the knout, apostle of ignorance, champion of superstition and obscurantism”. Russia, he thundered, “does not need sermons (she has had her fill of them!), nor prayers (she knows them by heart), but the awakening in people of the feeling of human dignity, for so many centuries buried in mud and dung; she needs laws and rights compatible not with the doctrines of the church, but with justice and common sense.”

974 Hosking, op. cit., p. 299.
Gogol’s friends, continues Andreyev, “criticized Correspondence for other reasons… The most serious and in many respects just criticism belonged to the Rzhev Protopriest Fr. Matthew Konstantinovsky, to whom Gogol, who did not yet know him personally, sent his book for review. Fr. Matthew condemned many places, especially the chapter on the theatre, and wrote to Gogol that he ‘would give an account for it to God’. Gogol objected, pointing out that his intention had been good. But Fr. Matthew advised him not to justify himself before his critics, but to ‘obey the spirit living in us, and not our earthly corporeality’ and ‘to turn to the interior life’.

“The failure of the book had an exceptionally powerful effect on Gogol. After some resistance and attempts to clarify ‘the whirlwind of misunderstandings’, without rejecting his principled convictions, Gogol humbled himself and acknowledged his guilt in the fact that he had dared to be a prophet and preacher of the Truth when he personally was not worthy of serving it. Even to the sharp and cruel letter of Belinsky Gogol replied meekly and humbly: ‘God knows, perhaps there is an element of truth in your words.’”975

975 Andreyev, op.cit., p. 175.
Belinsky had deified the West, but never felt at home there. Alexander Herzen was the first Westernizer to symbolize the westerners’ exile from Russian values by permanently settling in the West, in London. From there, writes Berlin, “he established his free printing press, and in the 1850s began to publish two periodicals in Russia, The Pole Star [recalling the Masonic lodge of the same name] and The Bell (the first issues appeared in 1855 and 1857 respectively), which marked the birth of systematic revolutionary agitation – and conspiracy – by Russian exiles directed against the tsarist regime.”976

Herzen followed Belinsky and the westerners in his disdain for Russia’s pre-Petrine past: “You need the past and its traditions, but we need to tear Russia away from them. We do not want Russia before Peter, because for us it does not exist, but you do not want the new Russia. You reject it, but we reject ancient Rus”977

However, after the failure of the 1848 revolution, Herzen began to lose faith in the western path to happiness. He began to see the futility (if not the criminality) of violent revolution, and of such senseless slogans as Proudhon’s “all property is theft”, or Bakunin’s “the Passion to destroy is the same as the Passion to create”. The revolution had only left the poor poorer than ever, while the passion to destroy seemed as exhilarating as the passion to create only in the heat of the moment, and not when the pieces had to be picked up and paid for the next day...

“A curse on you,” he wrote with regard to 1848, “year of blood and madness, year of the triumph of meanness, beastliness, stupidity!... What did you do, revolutionaries frightened of revolution, political tricksters, buffoons of liberty?... Democracy can create nothing positive... and therefore it has no future... Socialism left a victor on the field of battle will inevitably be deformed into a commonplace bourgeois philistinism. Then a cry of denial will be wrung from the titanic breast of the revolutionary minority and the deadly battle will begin again... We have wasted our spirit in the regions of the abstract and general, just as the monks let it wither in the world of prayer and contemplation.”978

And again: “If progress is the goal, or whom are we working? Who is this Moloch who, as the toilers approach him, instead of rewarding them, draws back; and, as a consolation to the exhausted and doomed multitudes, shouting ‘morituri te salutant’ [‘those who are about to die salute you’], can only give the... mocking answer that after their death all will be beautiful on earth. Do you truly wish to condemn the human beings alive today to the sad role... of wretched galley-slaves who, up to their knees in mud, drag a barge... with... ‘progress in the future’ upon its flag?... a goal which is infinitely remote is no

977 Herzen, in Lebedev, op. cit., p. 333.
978 Herzen, From the Other Shore, 1849; in Cohen & Major, op. cit., p. 563.
goal, only... a deception; a goal must be closer – at the very least the labourer’s wage, or pleasure in work performed.”

“He was disillusioned with western civilization and found that it was deeply penetrated by the petty bourgeois spirit, and was built on ‘respect for the sacred right of property’ and ‘has no other ideals except a thirst for personal security’.

“‘Europe,’ said Herzen, ‘is approaching a terrible cataclysm. The medieval world is collapsing. The political and religious revolutions are weakening under the burden of their own powerlessness, they have done great things, but they have not fulfilled their task... They have destroyed faith in the throne and the altar, but have not realized freedom, they have lit in hearts a desire which they are not able to satisfy. Parliamentarism, Protestantism – all these were deferments, temporary salvation, powerless outposts against death and degeneration; their time has passed. From 1849 they began to understand that neither ossified Roman law nor cunning casuistry nor nauseating deistic philosophy nor merciless religious rationalism are able to put off the realization of the destinies of society.’

“Herzen did not believe in the creative function of contemporary democracy, he considered that it possessed only a terrible power of destruction, but not the capacity to create.

“‘In democracy,’ said Herzen, ‘there is a terrible power of destruction, but when it takes it upon itself to create something, it gets lost in student experiments, in political etudes. There is no real creativity in democracy.’

“Hence Herzen drew the merciless conclusion that the perishing order must be destroyed to its foundations.

“This destruction had to be universal, it would come in a storm and blood.

“‘Who knows what will come out of this blood? But whatever comes out, it is enough that in this paroxysm of madness, revenge, discord and retribution the world that restricts the new man, and hinders him from living, hinders him from establishing himself in the future, will perish. And that is good, and for that reason let chaos and destruction flourish and may the future be constructed.’”

But then the unexpected: disillusioned with the West, this westernizer par excellence turns in hope to – Russia. “‘The future,’ declared Herzen, not without some pride, ‘belongs to the Russian people, who is called to bring an end to the decrepit and powerless world and clear a place for the new and beautiful [world].’

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980 Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 341-342.
“In 1851 in a letter to Michelet Herzen wrote: ‘Amidst this chaos, amidst this dying agony and tormented regeneration, amidst this world falling into dust around its cradle, men’s gaze is involuntarily directed towards the East.’”

And when Alexander II emancipated the peasants in 1861, he hailed him in the words of Julian the Apostle to Christ: “You have conquered, Galilaean!”

That which particularly aroused the hopes of Herzen for Russia was the peasant commune or mir. He thought that this was a specifically Russian kind of socialism. As N.O. Lossky writes: “Disappointed with Western Europe and its ‘petty bourgeois’ spirit, he came to the conclusion that the Russian village commune and the artel hold a promise of socialism being realized in Russia rather than in any other country. The village commune meant for him peasant communism ['The Russian People and Socialism', 1852, II, 148]. In view of this he came to feel that reconciliation with the Slavophiles was possible. In his article ‘Moscow Panslavism and Russian Europeanism’ (1851) he wrote: Is not socialism ‘accepted by the Slavophiles as it is by us? It is a bridge on which we can meet and hold hands’ (I, 338).”

What was the truth about the commune?

"The commune," writes Richard Pipes, "was an association of peasants holding communal land allotments. This land, divided into strips, it periodically redistributed among members. Redistribution (peredely), which took place at regular intervals - ten, twelve, fifteen years or so, according to local custom - were carried out to allow for changes in the size of household brought about by deaths, births, and departures. They were a main function of the commune and its distinguishing characteristic. The commune divided its land into strips in order to assure each member of allotments of equal quality and distance from the village. By 1900, approximately one-third of communes, mostly in the western and southern borderlands, had ceased the practice of repartitioning even though formally they were still treated as 'repartitional communes'. In the Great Russian provinces, the practice of repartition was virtually universal.

"Through the village assembly, the commune resolved issues of concern to its members, including the calendar of field work, the distribution of taxes and other fiscal obligations (for which its members were held collectively responsible), and disputes among households. It could expel troublesome members and have them exiled to Siberia; it had the power to authorize passports, without which peasants could not leave the village, and even to compel an entire community to change its religious allegiance from the official church to one of the sects. The assembly reached its decisions by acclamation: it did not tolerate dissent from the will of the majority, viewing it as antisocial behaviour."
Certainly, Herzen had some reason for hoping for some agreement with the Slavophiles on the commune. The most famous of them, Alexis Stepanovich Khomiakov, praised “its meetings that passed unanimous decisions and its traditional justice in accordance with custom, conscience, and inner truth.” As Pipes writes, the Slavophiles “became aware of the peasant commune as an institution confined to Russia, and extolled it as proof that the Russian people allegedly lacking in the acquisitive ‘bourgeois’ impulses of western Europeans, were destined to solve mankind’s social problems. Haxthausen popularised this view in his book, published in 1847. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Russian mir became in Western Europe the starting-point of several theories concerning communal land-tenure of primitive societies...” Moreover, there seemed to be some *prima facie* similarity between Herzen’s idea of “Russian socialism” and Khomiakov’s key idea of sobornost’, although the latter is religious in essence.

For both Slavophiles and Westerners the institution of the commune was the essence of Russianness. For Slavophiles, it was a patriarchal institution of pre-Petrine Russia, while for the Westerners it was "Russian socialism". However, Fr. Lev Lebedev points out that the commune was by no means as anciently Russian as was then thought: 'In ancient Rus' (Russia) the peasants possessed or used plots of land completely independently, according to the right of personal inheritance or acquisition, and the commune (mir) had no influence on this possession. A certain communal order obtained only in relation to the matter of taxes and obligations. To this ancient 'commune' there corresponds to a certain degree only the rule of 'collective responsibility' envisaged by the Statute of 1861 in relation to taxes and obligations. But in Rus' there was never any 'commune' as an organization of communal land-use with the right of the mir to distribute and redistribute plots among members of the 'commune'.'

Again, according to Pipes, "the origins of the Russian commune are obscure and a subject of controversy. Some see in it the spontaneous expression of an alleged Russian sense of social justice, while others view it as the product of state pressures to ensure collective responsibility for the fulfilment of obligations to the Crown and landlord. Recent studies indicate that the repartitional commune

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985 Lossky, op. cit., p. 39.  
986 Pipes, op. cit., p. 17. “In 1854, however, this whole interpretation was challenged by Boris Chicherin, a leading spokesman for the so-called Westerner camp, who argued that the peasant commune as then known was neither ancient nor autochthonous in origin, but had been introduced by the Russian monarchy in the middle of the eighteenth century as a means of ensuring the collection of taxes. Until then, according to Chicherin, Russian peasants had held their land by individual households. Subsequent researches blurred the lines of the controversy. Contemporary opinion holds that the commune of the imperial period was indeed a modern institution, as Chicherin claimed, although older than he had believed. It is also widely agreed that pressure by the state and landlord played a major part in its formation. At the same time, economic factors seem also to have affected its evolution to the extent that there exists a demonstrable connection between the availability of land and communal tenure: where land is scarce, the communal form of tenure tends to prevail, but where it is abundant it is replaced by household or even family tenure” (op. cit., pp. 17-18).  
first appeared toward the end of the fifteenth century, became common in the sixteenth, and prevalent in the seventeenth. It served a variety of functions, as useful to officials and landlords as to peasants. The former it guaranteed, through the institution of collective responsibility, the payment of taxes and delivery of recruits; the latter it enabled to present a united front in dealings with external authority. The principle of periodic redistribution of land ensured (at any rate, in theory) that every peasant had enough to provide for his family and, at the same time, to meet his obligations to the landlord and state.\textsuperscript{988}

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Khomiakov had not gone through the tormenting journey from westernism to Orthodoxy that his friend Kireyevsky had undergone, but had remained that rarity in the Russian educated classes – a committed Orthodox who practised his faith openly and without shame while remaining completely \textit{au courant} with modern developments (he had several technological inventions to his credit). As Roy Campbell writes, “he was as far removed from the ‘ridiculousness of conservatism’ as he was from the revolutionary movement with its ‘immoral and passionate self-reliance’”.\textsuperscript{989}

“In contradistinction to Kireyevsky and K. Aksakov,” writes Lossky, “Khomiakov does not slur over the evils of Russian life but severely condemns them. At the beginning of the Crimean War (against Turkey, France and England, 1854-1855) he denounced with the fire and inspiration of a prophet the Russia of his day (before the great reforms of Alexander II) and called her to repentance.

“Western Europe has failed to embody the Christian ideal of the wholeness of life through overemphasizing logical knowledge and rationality; Russia has so far failed to embody it because complete, all-embracing truth from its very nature develops slowly… Nevertheless Khomiakov believes in the great mission of the Russian people when it comes fully to recognize and express ‘all the spiritual forces and principles that lie at the basis of Holy Orthodox Russia.’ ‘Russia is called to stand at the forefront of universal culture; history gives her the right to do so because of the completeness and manysidedness of her guiding principles; such a right given to a nation imposes a duty upon every one of its members.’ Russia’s ideal is not to be the richest or most powerful country but to become ‘the most Christian of all human societies’.

“In spite of Khomiakov’s… critical attitude toward Western Europe,… [he] speaks of it in one of his poems as ‘the land of holy miracles’. He was particularly fond of England. The best things in her social and political life were due, he thought, to the right balance being maintained between liberalism and conservatism. The conservatives stood for the organic force of the national life developing from its original sources while the liberals stood for the personal, individual force, for analytical, critical reason. The balance between these two

\textsuperscript{988} Pipes, op. cit., p. 98.
\textsuperscript{989} Roy E. Campbell, “Khomiakov and Dostoyevsky: A Genesis of Ideas”, 1988 (MS).
forces in England has never yet been destroyed because ‘every liberal is a bit of a conservative at bottom because he is English’. In England, as in Russia, the people have kept their religion and distrust analytical reason. But Protestant scepticism is undermining the balance between the organic and the analytic forces, and this is a menace to England in the future...”

In another place, Khomiakov saw the menace to England in her conservatism: “England with her modest science and her serious love of religious truth might give some hope; but - permit the frank expression of my thoughts - England is held by the iron chain of traditional custom.”

While attached to England, when it came to comparing the Eastern and Western forms of Christianity, Khomiakov was severe in his judgements. Influenced by Elder Ambrose of Optina as Kireyevsky had been by Elder Macarius, he had a deep, unshakeable confidence in the Orthodox Church. “Peter Christoff characterizes Khomiakov’s belief as follows, ‘Although Khomiakov respected and valued much in the Western nations he was absolutely convinced of the superiority of Orthodoxy.’ The Slavic world-view and the Russian peasant commune specifically served as a foundation for a new social order with the emphasis on the Orthodox Church. To refer to Khomiakov’s Christian Orthodox messianism would in no way do him an injustice. Khomiakov believed that Russia had a mission to bring the whole world under the ‘roof’ of the Orthodox Church.”

“The Church,” he wrote in his famous ecclesiological tract, The Church is One, “does not recognize any power over herself other than her own, no other’s court than the court of faith”. The Church is One, declared Khomiakov, and that Church is exclusively the Orthodox Church. “Western Christianity has ceased to be Christianity,” he wrote. “In Romanism [Roman Catholicism] there is not one word, not one action, upon which the seal of spiritual life might lie”. “Both Protestantisms (Roman and German)... already bear death within themselves; it is left to unbelief only to take away the corpses and clean the arena. And all this is the righteous punishment for the crime committed by the ‘West’.”

This points to the fundamental difference between the Slavophiles and westerners: their attitude to the faith: the Slavophiles embraced Orthodoxy, while the westernizers rejected it. “It is to Herzen that there belongs the most apt word expressing the difference between the two camps. Not without sorrow

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990 Lossky, op. cit., p. 40.
993 Khomiakov, The Church is One, in Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij (Complete Works), Moscow, 1907, vol. II.
at the collapse of his friendship with Kireyevsky, Herzen wrote: ‘The walls of the church were raised between us.’

Paradoxically, however, some have accused Khomiakov of degrading the theological mystery of sobornost’ into a secular, westerning ideal, of confusing sobornost’ with democracy, the spiritual warmth of communion in Christ with the natural warmth of a family or society.

It is certainly true to say that for Khomiakov, as for the other early Slavophiles, there was a close connection between his teaching on the Church and his teaching on the peasant commune, the mir.

Indeed, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, “the hidden meaning of the Slavophile teaching becomes completely clear only when we divine that both these, at first sight discordant teachings coincide completely, in that what the commune should be in the sphere of external inter-human relationships, in the sphere of ‘earthly’ life, is what the Church is in the order of the spiritual life of the person. And the other way round: the commune is that form of social existence which is realized as a result of the application of the principles of Orthodox ecclesiasticism to the question of social inter-relations.”

“One could even say,” writes S. Khoruzhij, “that the social aspect, the interpretation of sobornost’ as the principle of social existence, in time came to occupy centre stage, leaving the original ecclesiological meaning of the concept in the background and almost forgotten. Here we see a fairly systematic evolution. From the beginning there lived in the minds of the early Slavophiles an idea of the communal ideal expressing the harmonious management of social life. They were in agreement in considering the closest historical approximation to it the village commune, the peasant mir, and, correspondingly, the ideal was usually called ‘communality’ or ‘communal unity’, being defined as ‘unity which consists in... the concept of a natural and moral brotherhood and inner justice’ (I, 99). It is a banal tradition to reproach the Slavophiles for idealizing the communal set-up and Russian history. For all its triteness, the reproach is just; although Khomiakov tried to moderate this tendency (especially after the Crimean war), he never managed to measure with one measure and judge with an equal judgement home and abroad, Russia and the West. But we must point something else out here. However embellished were his descriptions of the sources and bases of Russian history and statehood, embellishment never became deification, nor was communality identified with sobornost’. They were two different principles, and Khomiakov did not think of merging them into each other, bringing a human, secular matter to the level of the Theandric and grace-filled. He saw an impassible boundary between the one and the other.

995 Kusakov, “Iuridicheskaia eres’ i Pravoslavnaia Vera”, in Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Dogmat Iskuplenia (The Dogma of Redemption), Moscow, 2013, pp. 76-77.
996 Florovsky, “Vechnoe i prekhodiaschee v uchenii russkih slavianofilov” (The eternal and the passing in the teaching of the Russian Slavophiles”), in Vera i Kul’tura, op. cit., p. 93.
“However, it was not long before people with frightening ease lost the ability to discern this boundary — and then learned to deny it. Sobornost’ was inexorably, with greater and greater strength and openness, brought down to earth, deprived of its grace-filled content and reduced to a simple social and organic principle: to a certain degree this process was the very essence of the ideological evolution of Slavophilism, from its earlier to its later variants, and from it to the conservatism of the last reign, to post-revolutionary Eurasianism and still further. In this process of the degeneration of the path of sobornost’ it crossed paths with the socialist idea: as has been pointed out more than once, ‘in this attraction to the ideal of... the commune it is not difficult to discern a subconscious and erroneous thirst for sobornost’ [Florovsky]. Therefore in the same descending line we find in the end all the communard variations on the theme of collectivisation, Soviet patriotism and even National Bolshevism... At the same time as grace freedom is cast out — and, as a result, sobornost’ completely lost its spiritual nature, being turned into the regulative principle either of mechanical statehood, or of the organic life of the primitive community. The link with the Church, churchness, was for the most part preserved externally. However, it goes without saying that the very idea of the Church could here degenerate as much as the idea of sobornost’. In the first case the Church was likened to the state to the point of being indistinguishable from it, and in the second it was a primitively pagan institution for the sanctification of life and manners. They claimed to be preserving churchness, while rejecting the principle of freedom — and this was spiritual blindness. ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom’, says Paul, and Orthodoxy reveals his covenant through the ascetic principle of synergy: the grace of the Holy Spirit lives in the Church, but each member of the Church acquires it by his personal spiritual activity, to the realization of his own personal liberty. And only in ‘the agreement of personal liberties’ (Khomiakov) is the grace-filled Body of the Lord put together.”

We have seen that the Slavophiles believed that western civilization since the Schism in the eleventh century had created a new kind of man, *homo occidentalis*. The question, then, was: what were the main characteristics of this new man, and in what did he differ from *homo orientalis*, the older, original kind of Christian and European, who was now to be found only in Russia and the Balkans? The first clear answer to this question was expounded by Ivan Vasilievich Kireyevsky, a man of thoroughly western education, tastes and habits, who converted to the Orthodox ideal in adult life, becoming a disciple of the Optina Elder Macarius. In his *Reply to Khomiakov* (1839) and *On the Character of European Civilization and Its Relationship to Russian Civilization* (1852), he gave his own answer to the question of the cause of the appearance of *homo occidentalis* - the growth of western rationalism.

The beginning of Kireyevsky’s spiritual emancipation may be said to date to 1829, when, as Fr. Sergius Chetverikov writes, he “appeared for the first time in the field of literature with an article about Pushkin, which revealed a remarkably clear understanding of the works of this poet. In this article he already expressed doubt in the absolute truth of German philosophy and pointed out the pressing need for the development of a school of original Russian scientific thought. ‘German philosophy cannot take root in us. Our philosophy must arise from current questions, from the prevailing interest of our people and their individual ways of life.’ But at the same time we must not reject the experience of Western European thought. ‘The crown of European enlightenment served as the cradle of our education. It was born when the other states had already completed the cycle of their intellectual development; and where they finished, there we began. Like a young sister in a large harmonious family, Russia was enriched by the experience of her older brothers and sisters prior to her entry into the world.’”

“Europe,” wrote Kireyevsky in 1830, “now presents an image of stupor. Both political and moral development have come to an end in her.” Only two peoples “from the whole of enlightened humanity... are not taking part in the general falling asleep; two peoples, young and fresh, are flourishing with hope: these are the United States and our fatherland.”

At this stage the full uniqueness and saving truth of Orthodoxy was perhaps not yet fully revealed to Kireyevsky. The decisive moment in his conversion, as Nina Lazareva writes, was his marriage to Natalya Petrovna Arbeneva in 1834: “The beginning of his family life was for Ivan Vasilievich also the beginning of the transformation of his inner world, the beginning of his coming out of that dead-end in which his former rationalistic world-view had led him. The difference between the whole structure of Natalya Petrovna’s life, educated as

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she had been in the rules of strict piety, and that of Ivan Vasilievich, who had passed his days and nights in tobacco-filled rooms reading and discussing the latest philosophical works, could not fail to wound both of them.

“In the note written by A.I. Koshelev from the words of N.P. Kireyevsky and entitled ‘The Story of Ivan Vasilievich’s Conversion’, we read: ‘In the first period after their marriage her fulfilment of our Church rites and customs made an unpleasant impression on him, but from the tolerance and delicacy that was natural to him he did not hinder her in this at all. She on her side was still more sorrowfully struck by his lack of faith and complete neglect of all the customs of the Orthodox Church. They had conversations which ended with it being decided that he would not hinder her in the fulfilment of her obligations, and he would be free in his actions, but he promised in her presence not to blaspheme and by all means to cut short the conversations of his friends that were unpleasant to her. In the second year of their marriage he asked his wife to read Cousin. She willing did this, but when he began to ask her for her opinion of this book, she said that there was much good in it, but that she had not found anything new, for in the works of the Holy Fathers it was all expounded in a much profounder and more satisfying way. He laughed and was quiet. He began to ask his wife to read Voltaire with him. She told him that she was ready to read any serious book that he might suggest to her, but she disliked mockery and every kind of blasphemy and she could neither hear nor read them. Then after some time they began to read Schelling together, and when great, radiant thoughts stopped them and I.V. Kireyevsky demanded wonderment from his wife, she first said that she knew these thoughts from the works of the Holy Fathers. She often pointed them out to him in the books of the Holy Fathers, which forced Ivan Vasilievich to read whole pages sometimes. It was unpleasant for him to recognise that there really was much in the Holy Fathers that he had admired in Schelling. He did not like to admit this, but secretly he took his wife’s books and read them with interest.’

“At that time the works of the Holy Fathers were hardly published in Russia, lovers of spiritual literature transcribed them themselves or for small sums of money they engaged transcribers. Natalya Petrovna made notes from those books which her spiritual father, Hieromonk Philaret (Puliashkin) gave her to read. In his time he had laboured much to prepare the Slavonic Philokalia for publication. These were works of the Holy Fathers collected by St. Paisius Velichkovsky which contained instructions on mental prayer, that is, on the cleansing of the soul from passions, on the means to attaining this and in particular on the union of the mind and the heart in the Jesus prayer. In 1836 Ivan Vasilievich for the first time read the works of St. Isaac the Syrian, who was called the teacher of silence. Thus the philosopher came into contact with the hitherto unknown to him, centuries-old Orthodox enlightenment, which always witnessed to the True Light, our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Acquaintance with the Novospassky monk Philaret, conversations with the holy elder and the reading of various works of the Holy Fathers gave him pleasure and drew him to the side of piety. He went to see Fr. Philaret, but each time as it were unwillingly. It was evident that he wanted to go to him, but
forcing was always necessary.’ This continued until, according to the Providence of God, and thanks to the clairvoyance of Elder Philaret and his knowledge of the human soul, a truly wondrous event took place: ‘I.V. Kireyevsky in the past never wore a cross round his neck. His wife had more than once asked him to do that, but Ivan Vasilyevich had not replied. Finally, he told her once that he would put on a cross if it would be sent to him by Fr. Philaret, whose mind and piety he warmly admired. Natalya Petrovna went to Fr. Philaret and communicated this to him. The elder made the sign of the cross, took it off his neck and said to Natalya Petrovna: ‘Let this be to Ivan Vasilyevich for salvation.’

“When Natalya Petrovna went home, Ivan Vasilyevich on meeting her said: ‘Well, what did Fr. Philaret say?’ She took out the cross and gave it to Ivan Vasilyevich. Ivan Vasilyevich asked her: ‘What is this cross?’ Natalya Petrovna said to him that Fr. Philaret had taken it off himself and said: let this be to him for salvation. Ivan Vasilyevich fell on his knees and said: ‘Well, now I expect salvation for my soul, for in my mind I had determined: if Fr. Philaret takes off his cross and sends it to me, then it will be clear that God is calling me to salvation.’ From that moment a decisive turnaround in the thoughts and feelings of Ivan Vasilyevich was evident.”

Soon Kireyevsky met the famous Optina Elder Macarius, with whom he started the series of Optina translations of the works of the Holy Fathers into Russian. This, as well as being of great importance in itself, marked the beginning of the return of a part of the educated classes to a more than nominal membership of the Church. It was on the basis of the teaching of the Holy Fathers that Kireyevsky determined to build a philosophy that would engage with the problems felt by the Russian intelligentsia of his day and provide them with true enlightenment.

A very important element in this philosophy would be a correct “placing” of Russia in relation to Western Europe.

According to Kireyevsky, “three elements lie at the foundation of European [i.e. Western European] education: Roman Christianity, the world of the uneducated barbarians who destroyed the [western] Roman empire, and the classical world of ancient paganism.

“This classical world of ancient paganism, which did not enter into the inheritance of Russia, essentially constitutes the triumph of the formal reason of man over everything that is inside and within him – pure, naked reason, based on itself, recognizing nothing higher than or outside itself and appearing in two forms – the form of formal abstraction and the form of abstract sensuality. Classicism’s influence on European education had to correspond to this same character.

1000 Lazareva, “Zhizneopisanie” (“Biography”), introduction to I.V. Kireyevsky, Razum na puti k Istine (Reason on the Path to Truth), Moscow: “Pravilo very”, 2002, pp. XXXVI- XXXIX.
“Whether it was because Christians in the West gave themselves up unlawfully to the influence of the classical world, or because heresy accidentally united itself with paganism, the Roman Church differs in its deviation from the Eastern only in that same triumph of rationalism over Tradition, of external ratiocination over inner spiritual reason. Thus it was in consequence of this external syllogism drawn out of the concept of the Divine equality of the Father and the Son [the Filioque] that the dogma of the Trinity was changed in opposition to spiritual sense and Tradition. Similarly, in consequence of another syllogism, the pope became the head of the Church in place of Jesus Christ. They tried to demonstrate the existence of God with a syllogism; the whole unity of the faith rested on syllogistic scholasticism; the Inquisition, Jesuitism – in a word, all the particularities of Catholicism, developed by virtue of the same formal process of reason, so that Protestantism itself, which the Catholics reproach for its rationalism, proceeded directly from the rationalism of Catholicism…

“Thus rationalism was both an extra element in the education of Europe at the beginning and is now an exclusive characteristic of the European enlightenment and way of life. This will be still clearer if we compare the basic principles of the public and private way of life of the West with the basic principles of the same public and private way of life which, if it had not developed completely, was at least clearly indicated in old Russia, when she was under the direct influence of pure Christianity, without any admixture from the pagan world.

“The whole private and public way of life of the West is founded on the concept of individual, separate independence, which presupposes individual isolation. Hence the sacredness of formal relationships; the sacredness of property and conditional decrees is more important than the personality. Every individual is a private person; a knight, prince or city within his or its rights is an autocratic, unlimited personage that gives laws to itself. The first step of each personage into society is to surround himself with a fortress from the depths of which he enters into negotiations with others and other independent powers.

“… I was speaking about the difference between enlightenment in Russia and in the West. Our educative principle consisted in our Church. There, however, together with Christianity, the still fruitful remnants of the ancient pagan world continued to act on the development of enlightenment. The very Christianity of the West, in separation from the Universal Church, accepted into itself the seeds of that principle which constituted the general colouring of the whole development of Greco-Roman culture: the principle of rationalism. For that reason the character of European education differs by virtue of an excess of rationalism.

“However, this excess appeared only later, when logical development had already overwhelmed Christianity, so to speak. But at the beginning rationalism, as I said, appeared only in embryo. The Roman Church separated from the Eastern because it changed certain dogmas existing in the Tradition of the whole of Christianity into others by deduction. She spread other dogmas by means of the same logical process, again in opposition to Tradition and the spirit of the
Universal Church. Thus a logical belief lay at the very lowest base of Catholicism. But the first action of rationalism was limited to this at the beginning. The inner and outer construction of the Church, which had been completed earlier in another spirit, continued to exist without obvious changes until the whole unity of the ecclesiastical teaching passed into the consciousness of the thinking part of the clergy. This was completed in the philosophy of scholasticism, which, by reason of the logical principle at the very foundation of the Church, could not reconcile the contradictions of faith and reason in any other way than by means of syllogism, which thereby became the first condition of every belief. At first, naturally, this same syllogism tried to demonstrate the truth of faith against reason and subdue reason to faith by means of rational arguments. But this faith, logically proved and logically opposed to reason, was no longer a living, but a formal faith, not faith as such, but only the logical rejection of reason. Therefore during this period of the scholastic development of Catholicism, precisely by reason of its rationality, the Western church becomes an enemy of reason, its oppressive, murderous, desperate enemy. But, taken to its extreme, as the continuation of this same logical process, this absolute annihilation of reason produced the well-known opposite effect, the consequences of which constitute the character of the present enlightenment. That is what I meant when I spoke of the rational element of Catholicism.

“Christianity in the East knew neither this struggle of faith against reason, nor this triumph of reason over faith. Therefore its influence on enlightenment was dissimilar to that of Catholicism.

“When examining the social construction of old Russia, we find many differences from the West, and first of all: the formation of society into so-called mirs [communes]. Private, personal idiosyncracy, the basis of western development, was as little known among us as was social autocracy. A man belonged to the mir, and the mir to him. Agricultural property, the fount of personal rights in the West, belonged with us to society. A person had the rights of ownership to the extent that entered into the membership of society.

“But this society was not autonomous and could not order itself, or itself acquire laws for itself, because it was not separated from other similar communities that were ruled by uniform custom. The innumerable multitude of these small communes, which constituted Russia, was all covered with a net of churches, monasteries and the remote dwellings of hermits, whence there spread everywhere identical concepts of the relationship between social matters and personal matters. These concepts little by little were bound to pass over into a general conviction, conviction – into custom, whose place was taken by law, which established throughout the whole space of the lands subject to our Church one thought, one point of view, one aim, one order of life. This universal uniformity of custom was probably one of the reasons for its amazing strength, which has preserved its living remnants even to our time, in spite of all the opposition of destructive influences which, in the course of two hundred years, strove to introduce new principles in their place.
“As a result of these strong, uniform and universal customs, it was impossible for there to be any change in the social order that was not in agreement with the order of the whole. Every person’s family relationships were defined, first of all, by his birth; but in the same predetermined order the family was subject to the commune, and the wider commune to the assembly, the assembly to the veche, and so on, whence all the private circles came together in one centre, in one Orthodox Church. No personal reasoning, no artificial agreement could found any new order, think up new rights and privileges. Even the very word right was unknown among us in its western sense, but signified only justice, righteousness. Therefore no power could be given to any person or class, nor could any right be accorded, for righteousness and justice cannot be sold or taken, but exist in themselves independently of conditional relationships. In the West, by contrast, all social relationships are founded on convention or strive to attain this artificial basis. Outside convention there are no correct relationships, but only arbitrariness, which in the governing class is called autonomy, in the governed – freedom. But in both the one and the other case this arbitrariness demonstrates not the development of the inner life, but the development of the external, formal life. All social forces, interests and rights exist there in separation, each in itself, and they are united not by a normal law, but either accidentally or by an artificial agreement. In the first case material force triumphs, in the second – the sum of individual reasonings. But material force, material dominance, a material majority, the sum of individual reasonings in essence constitute one principle only at different moments of their development. Therefore the social contract is not the invention of the encyclopaedists, but a real ideal to which all the western societies strove unconsciously, and now consciously, under the influence of the rational element, which outweighs the Christian element.”

“Private and social life in the West,’ Kireyevsky wrote, ‘are based on the concept of an individual and separate independence that presupposes the isolation of the individual. Hence the external formal relations of private property and all types of legal conventions are sacred and of greater importance than human beings”.

“Only one serious thing was left to man, and that was industry. For him the reality of being survived only in his physical person. Industry rules the world without faith or poetry. In our times it unites and divides people. It determines one’s fatherland, it delineates classes, it lies at the base of state structures, it moves nations, it declares war, makes peace, changes mores, gives direction to science, and determines the character of culture. Men bow down before it and erect temples to it. It is the real deity in which people sincerely believe and to which they submit. Unselfish activity has become inconceivable; it has acquired the same significance in the contemporary world as chivalry had in the time of Cervantes.”

1001 Kireyevsky, “V otvet A.S. Khomiakovo” (In Reply to A.S. Khomiakov), Razum na puti k Istine (Reason on the Path to Truth), Moscow, 2002, pp. 6-12.
This long and tragic development had its roots, according to Kireyevsky, in the falling away of the Roman Church. "In the ninth century the western Church showed within itself the inevitable seed of the Reformation, which placed this same Church before the judgement seat of the same logical reason which the Roman Church had itself exalted... A thinking man could already see Luther behind Pope Nicolas I just as... a thinking man of the 16th century could foresee behind Luther the coming of 19th century liberal Protestantism..."1003

According to Kireyevsky, just as in a marriage separation or divorce takes place when one partner asserts his or her self against the other, so in the Church schisms and heresies take place when one party asserts itself over against Catholic unity. In the early, undivided Church “each patriarchate, each tribe, each country in the Christian world preserved its own characteristic features, while at the same time participating in the common unity of the whole Church.”1004

A patriarchate or country fell away from that unity only if it introduced heresy, that is, a teaching contrary to the Catholic understanding of the Church. The Roman patriarchate fell away from the Unity and Catholicity of the Church through an unbalanced, self-willed development of its own particular strength, the logical development of concepts, by introducing the Filioque into the Creed in defiance of the theological consciousness of the Church as a whole. But it fell away from that Unity and Catholicity in another way, by preaching a heresy about Unity and Catholicity. For the Popes taught that the Church, in order to be Catholic, must be first and above all Roman – and “Roman” not in the sense employed by the Greeks when they called themselves Roman, that is, belonging to the Christian Roman Empire and including both Italians and Greeks and people of many nationalities. The Popes now understood “Rome”, “the Roman Church” and “the Roman Faith” in a different, particularist, anti-Catholic sense – that is, “Roman” as opposed to “Greek”, “the Roman Church” as opposed to “the Greek Church”, “the Roman Faith” as opposed to, and something different from and inherently superior to, “the Greek Church”. From this time that the Roman Church ceased to be a part of the Catholic Church, having trampled on the dogma of Catholicity. Instead she became the anti-Catholic, or Romanist, or Latin, or Papist church.

“Christianity penetrated the minds of the western peoples through the teaching of the Roman Church alone – in Russia it was kindled on the candle-stands of the whole Orthodox Church; theology in the West acquired a ratiocinative-abstract character – in the Orthodox world it preserved an inner wholeness of spirit; where there was a division in the powers of the reason – here a striving for their living unity; there: the movement of the mind towards the truth by means of a logical chain of concepts – here: a striving for it by means of an inner exaltation of self-consciousness towards wholeness of heart and

1003 Kireyevsky, quoted by Fr. Alexey Young, A Man is His Faith: Ivan Kireyevsky and Orthodox Christianity, London: St. George Information Service, 1980.
1004 Kireyevsky, in Young, op. cit.
concentration of reason; there: a searching for external, dead unity - here: a striving for inner, living unity; there the Church was confused with the State, uniting spiritual power with secular power and pouring ecclesiastical and worldly significance into one institution of a mixed character - in Russia it remained unmixed with worldly aims and institution; there: scholastic and juridical universities - in ancient Russia: prayer-filled monasteries concentrating higher knowledge in themselves; there: a rationalist and scholastic study of the higher truths - here: a striving for their living and integral assimilation; there: a mutual growing together of pagan and Christian education - here: a constant striving for the purification of truth; there: statehood arising out of forcible conquest - here: out of the natural development of the people's everyday life, penetrated by the unity of its basic conviction; there: a hostile walling-off of classes - in ancient Russia their unanimous union while preserving natural differences; there: the artificial connection of knights' castles with what belonged to them constituted separate states - here: the agreement of the whole land spiritually expresses its undivided unity; there: agrarian property is the first basis of civil relationships - here: property is only an accidental expression of personal relationships; there: formal-logical legality - here: legality proceeding from everyday life; there: the inclination of law towards external justice - here: preference for inner justice; there: jurisprudence strives towards a logical codex - here: instead of an external connectedness of form with form, it seeks the inner connection of lawful conviction with convictions of faith and everyday life; there improvements were always accomplished by violent changes - here by a harmonious, natural growth; there: the agitation of the party spirit - here: the unshakability of basic conviction; there: the pursuit of fashion - here: constancy of everyday life; there: the instability of personal self-rule - here: the strength of familial and social links; there: the foppishness of luxury and the artificiality of life - here: the simplicity of vital needs and the exuberance of moral courage; there: tender dreaminess - here: the healthy integrity of rational forces; there: inner anxiety of spirit accompanied by rational conviction of one's moral perfection - among the Russians: profound quietness and the calm of inner self-consciousness combined with constant lack of trust of oneself and the unlimited demands of moral perfection - in a word, there: disunity of spirit, disunity of thoughts, disunity of sciences, disunity of state, disunity of classes, disunity of society, disunity of family rights and obligations, disunity of the whole unity and of all the separate forms of human existence, social and personal - in Russia, by contrast, mainly a striving for integrity of everyday existence both inner and outer, social and personal, speculative and practical, aesthetic and moral. Therefore if what we have said above is just, *disunity and integrity, rationalism* [*rassudohnost’*] and *reason* [*razumnost’*] will be the final expression of West European and Russian education.”

We may wonder whether the contrast between East and West has been drawn too sharply, too tidily here. But there can be no doubt that Kireyevsky has unerringly pointed to the main lines of bifurcation between the development of

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1005 Kireyevsky, “O kharaktere prosveschenia Evropy i o ego otnoshenii k prosvescheniu Rossii” (On the Character of the Enlightenment of Europe and its Relationship to the Enlightenment of Russia), in Razum na puti k istine, op. cit., pp. 207-209.
the Orthodox East and the Catholic-Protestant West. The explanation lies in his spiritual development. “Having himself been a son of the West and gone to study with the most advanced philosophers,” writes Fr. Seraphim Rose, ‘Kireyevsky was thoroughly penetrated with the Western spirit and then became thoroughly converted to Orthodoxy. Therefore he saw that these two things cannot be put together. He wanted to find out why they were different and what was the answer in one’s soul, what one had to choose…”1006

1006 Monk Damascene Christenson, Not of this World: The Life and Teaching of Fr. Seraphim Rose, Forestville, Ca.: Fr. Seraphim Rose Foundation, 1993, pp. 589-590
Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky had, like Gogol, been a protégé of Belinsky. But, again like Gogol, he had broken with him because of his atheism and readiness to subordinate art to propaganda. However, he did not decisively cast off his socialist acquaintances, and his return to conscious Christianity was correspondingly tortuous, slow and punctuated by harsh lessons from life.

Dostoyevsky’s Christian critique of socialism, though not yet fully articulate in the 1840s, had already begun to reveal itself in his relations with Belinsky, of whom he wrote much later: “Treasuring above all reason, science and realism, at the same time he comprehended more keenly than anyone that reason, science and realism alone can merely produce the ant’s nest, and not social ‘harmony’ within which man can organize his life. He knew that moral principles are the basis of all things. He believed, to the degree of delusion and without any reflex, in the new moral foundations of socialism (which, however, up to the present have revealed nothing but abominable perversions of nature and common sense). Here was nothing but rapture. Still, as a socialist he had to destroy Christianity in the first place. He knew that the revolution must necessarily begin with atheism. He had to dethrone that religion whence the moral foundations of the society rejected by him had sprung up. Family, property, personal moral responsibility – these he denied radically. (I may observe that, even as Herzen, he was also a good husband and father.) Doubtless, he understood that by denying the moral responsibility of man, he thereby denied also his freedom; yet, he believed with all his being (much more blindly than Herzen, who, at the end, it seems, began to doubt) that socialism not only does not destroy the freedom of man, but, on the contrary, restores it in a form of unheard-of majesty, only on a new and adamantine foundation.

“At this juncture, however, there remained the radiant personality of Christ Himself to contend with, which was the most difficult problem. As a socialist, he was duty bound to destroy the teaching of Christ, to call it fallacious and ignorant philanthropy, doomed by modern science and economic tenets. Even so, there remained the beatific image of the God-man, its moral inaccessibility, its wonderful and miraculous beauty. But in his incessant, unquenchable transport, Belinsky did not stop even before this insurmountable obstacle, as did Renan, who proclaimed in his *Vie de Jésus* – a book permeated with incredulity – that Christ nevertheless is the ideal of human beauty, an inaccessible type which cannot be repeated even in the future.

“‘But do you know,’ he screamed one evening (sometimes in a state of great excitement he used to scream), ‘do you know that it is impossible to charge man with sins, to burden him with debts and turning the other cheek, when society is organized so meanly that man cannot help but perpetrate villainies; when, economically, he has been brought to villainy, and that it is silly and cruel to demand from man that which, by the very laws of nature, he is impotent to perform even if he wished to…?’
“That evening we were not alone: there was present one of Belinsky’s friends whom he respected very much and obeyed in many ways. Also present was an author, quite young, who later gained prominence in literature [Dostoyevsky].

“I am even touched to look at him,’ said Belinsky, suddenly interrupting his furious exclamations, turning to his friend and pointing at me. ‘Every time I mention Christ his face changes expression, as if he were ready to start weeping... But, believe me, naïve man,’ he jumped at me again, ‘believe me that your Christ, if He were born in our time, would be a most imperceptible and ordinary man; in the presence of contemporary science and contemporary propellers of mankind, He would be effaced!’”

The essence of “The Parable of the Grand Inquisitor” is in that scene, with Belinsky in the role of Inquisitor and Dostoyevsky - in that of the silent Christ.

However, Dostoyevsky was not yet ready to break decisively with the socialist camp. As he wrote: “All these new ideas of those days were very appealing to us in Petersburg; they seemed holy in the highest degree and moral, and – most important of all – cosmopolitan, the future law of all mankind in its totality. Even long before the Paris revolution of ’48 we fell under the fascinating influence of these ideas. Already in ’46 I had been initiated by Belinsky into the whole truth of that future ‘regenerated world’ and into the whole holiness of the forthcoming communist society. All these convictions about the immorality of the very foundations (Christian) of modern society, the immorality of religion, family, right of property; all these ideas about the elimination of nationalities in the name of universal brotherhood of men, about the contempt for one’s native country as an obstacle to universal progress, and so on and so forth – all these constituted such influences as we were unable to overcome and which, contrariwise, swayed our hearts and minds in the name of some magnanimity. At any rate, the theme seemed lofty and far above the level of the then prevailing conceptions, and it was precisely this that was tempting...

“The human mind, once having rejected Christ, may attain extraordinary results. This is an axiom. Europe, in the persons of her highest intellectual representatives, renounces Christ, while we, as is known, are obligated to imitate Europe...”

* * *

The revolution of 1848 in Europe, writes V.F. Ivanov, “gave wings of hope to all the antichristian and destructive forces.

“The profound thinker V.A. Zhukovsky, in January, 1848, in an excerpt from a letter, What is Going to Happen, prophetically foretold the bloody chaos of which we are the witnesses in our own days.

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1008 Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, 1873, pp. 148-149, 151.
“‘We live,’ wrote Zhukovsky, ‘on the crater of a volcano which not long ago was giving out fire, which calmed down and which is now again preparing to throw up. Its first lava flow has not yet cooled, and already in its depths a new one is bubbling, and the thunder of stones flying out of the abyss is announcing that it will soon pour out. One revolution has ended, and another stepping on its toes, and what is remarkable is that the course of the last is observing the same order as did the first, in spite of the difference in their characters. The two are similar in their first manifestations, and now, as then, they are beginning with a shaking of the main foundation of order: religion. But now they are doing it in a bolder way and on a broader scale. Then they attack the faith obliquely, preaching tolerance, but now they are directly attacking every faith and blatantly preaching atheism; then they were secretly undermining Christianity, apparently arming themselves against the abuses of Church authorities, but now they are yelling from the roots that both Christianity and the Church and the Church authorities and every authority is nothing other than abuse. What is the aim of the present reformers? – I am speaking about those who sincerely desire what is better, sincerely believe in the reality and beneficence of their speculations – what is the aim of the present reformers?, who are entering on the same path which their predecessors trod, whose end we saw with shuddering, knowing that the desired improvement would never be found there. What is the aim of the present reformers? They themselves do not clearly see it. It is very probable that many of them are deceiving themselves, and, while going forward with banners on which there shine the words of our age: forward, freedom, equality, humanity, they themselves are sure that their path leads straight to the promised land. And perhaps it is fated for them, as for many others of their predecessors, to shudder on the edge or on the bottom of this abyss, which will soon open up under their feet.

“‘Behind these preachers of education and progress, who are acting openly, others are acting in secret, who are not blinded, who have a practical aim which they see clearly in front of them: for them it is no longer a matter of political transformation, or of the destruction of privileges and age-old historical formations (that was already accomplished in the first revolution), but simply of the annihilation of the difference between yours and mine, or, more correctly, of turning yours into mine.’”

The first revolutionary movement in Russia after 1848 was the “Petrashevtsy”, named after its leader, Michael Petrashevsky. He expressed his “realist” views thus: “[Naturalism] means a science which holds that by thought alone, without the help of tradition, revelation, or divine intervention, man can achieve in real life a state of permanent happiness through the total and independent development of all his natural faculties. In the lower phases of its evolution, naturalism considers the appearance of the divine element in positive religions to be a falsehood, the result of human rather than divine action. In its further evolution, this science - having absorbed pantheism and materialism - conceives divinity as the supreme and all-embracing expression of human understanding, moves towards atheism, and finally becomes transformed into
anthropotheism - the science that proclaims that the only supreme being is man himself as a part of nature. At this stage of its rational evolution, naturalism considers the universal fact of the recognition of God in positive religions to be a result of man's deification of his own personality and the universal laws of his intellect; it considers all religions that reflected the historical evolution of mankind to be a gradual preparation for anthropotheism, or - in other words - total self-knowledge and awareness of the vital laws of nature.¹⁰¹⁰

The Petrashevtsy especially admired Fourier; and on his birthday D.D. Akhsharumov declared: “We venerate his memory because he showed us the path we must follow, he revealed the source of wealth, of happiness. Today is the first banquet of the Fourierists in Russia, and we are all here: ten people, not much more! Everything begins from something small and grows into something big. Our aim is to destroy the capitals and cities and use all their materials for other buildings, and turn the whole of this life of torment, woes, poverty and shame into a life that is luxurious, elegant, full of joy, wealth and happiness, and cover the whole poor land with palaces and fruits and redecorate them in flowers. We here, in our country, will begin its transfiguration, and the whole land will finish it. Soon the human race will be delivered from intolerable sufferings…”¹⁰¹¹

One member of the circle, the proud, silent and handsome Nikolai Speshnev, considered all distinctions between beauty and ugliness, good and evil to be “a matter of taste”. He did not believe in the transformation of Russia from the top, but in a socialist revolution from below, to which end only verbal propaganda was necessary. “I intend to use it, without the slightest shame or conscience, to propagandise socialism, atheism, terrorism, and all that is good.”¹⁰¹² Speshnev formed his own “Russian Society”, which was joined by Dostoyevsky. He called him his “Mephistopheles”, and was fascinated by him. But he was never wholly convinced by him, and continued to believe in Christ...

However, in 1849 the Petrashevtsy, including Dostoyevsky, were arrested – Dostoevsky, for reading Belinsky’s Letter to Gogol in public. They were imprisoned in the Peter and Paul fortress, and then, after a mock-execution, sent to four years’ hard labour in Siberia. The experience – recounted in The House of the Dead – brought Dostoevsky to repentance. As he wrote to his brother: “In my absolute spiritual solitude, I re-examined the whole of my former life. I scrutinized every minute detail. I thought very carefully about my past. Alone as I was, I judged myself harshly, without mercy. Sometimes I even thanked my fate because it had sent me into solitude, for without it, this new judgement of myself would never have happened…”¹⁰¹³ As St. Ambrose of Optina said: “This is a man who repents!”¹⁰¹⁴

¹⁰¹¹ Aksharumov, in Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 323-324.
¹⁰¹³ Dostoevsky, in Kjetsaa, op. cit., p. 105.
Then, in Siberia, by being “personally classed with villains”, he came to know the Russian people as they really were for the first time. And through them, as he wrote later, “I again received into my soul Christ, Who had been revealed to me in my parents’ home and Whom I was about to lose when, on my part, I transformed myself into a ‘European liberal’.” The moral idea is Christ,” wrote Dostoyevsky. “In the West, Christ has been distorted and diminished. It is the kingdom of the Antichrist. We have Orthodoxy. As a consequence, we are the bearers of a clear understanding of Christ and a new idea for the resurrection of the world... If faith and Orthodoxy were shaken in the people, then they would begin to disintegrate... The whole matter lies in the question: can one believe, being civilized, that is, a European, that is, believe absolutely in the Divinity of the Son of God, Jesus Christ? (for all faith consists in this)... You see: either everything is contained in faith or nothing is: we recognize the importance of the world through Orthodoxy. And the whole question is: can one believe in Orthodoxy? If one can, then everything is saved: if not, then better to burn... But if Orthodoxy is impossible for the enlightened man, then... all this is hocus-pocus and Russia’s whole strength is provisional... It is possible to believe seriously and in earnest. Here is everything, the burden of life for the Russian people and their entire mission and existence to come...”

And so Dostoyevsky became, after Pushkin and Gogol, the third great Russian writer to be rescued from European atheism and converted to “the Russian God”, Jesus Christ... Like the other Slavophiles, Dostoyevsky saw the beginning of the European disease in the reforms of Peter the Great. Unlike them, however, he came to believe that this turning to the West was providential – and not only in that enabled Russians to acquire European arts and sciences. “Throughout these hundred and fifty years after Peter we have done nothing but live through a communion with all human civilization, affiliating ourselves with their history and their ideals. We have learned, and trained ourselves, to love the French, the Germans and everybody else, as if they were our brethren – notwithstanding the fact that they never liked us and made up their minds never to like us. However, this was the essence of our reform – the whole Peter cause; we have derived from it, during that century and a half, an expansion of our view, which, perhaps, was unprecedented and cannot be traced in any other nation, whether in the ancient or the new world. The pre-Peter Russia was active and solid, although politically she was slow to form herself; she had evolved unity within herself and she had been ready to consolidate her border regions. And she had tacitly comprehended that she bore within herself a treasure which was no longer existent anywhere else – Orthodoxy; that she was the conservatrix of Christ’s truth, genuine truth – the true image of Christ which had been dimmed in all other religions and in all other nations. This treasure, this eternal truth inherent in Russia and of which she had become the custodian, according to the view of the best Russians of those days, as it were, relieved their conscience of the duty of any other enlightenment. Moreover, in Moscow the conception had been formed that any closer intercourse with Europe might even

1015 Dostoyevsky, The Diary of a Writer, 1880.
exercise a harmful and corrupt influence upon the Russian mind and the Russian idea; that it might distort Orthodoxy itself and lead Russia along the path to perdition ‘much in the same way as all other peoples’. Thus ancient Russia, in her isolation, was getting ready to be unjust – unjust to mankind, having taken the resolution to preserve passively her treasure, her Orthodoxy, for herself, to seclude herself from Europe – that is, mankind – much as our schismatics who refuse to eat with you from the same dish and who believe it to be a holy practice that everyone should have his own cup and spoon. This is a correct simile because prior to Peter’s advent, there had developed in Russia almost precisely this kind of political and spiritual relation with Europe. With Peter’s reform there ensued an unparalleled broadening of the view, and herein – I repeat – is Peter’s whole exploit. This is also that very treasure about which I spoke in one of the preceding issues of the Diary – a treasure which we, the upper cultured Russian stratum, are bringing to the people after our century-and-a-half absence from Russia, and which the people, after we ourselves shall have bowed before their truth, must accept from us sine qua non, ‘without which the fusion of both strata would prove impossible and everything would come to ruin.’ Now, what is this ‘expansion of the view’, what does it consist of, and what does it signify? Properly speaking, this is not enlightenment, nor is it science; nor is it a betrayal of the popular Russian moral principles for the sake of European civilization. No, this is precisely something inherent only in the Russian people, since nowhere and at no time has there ever been such a reform. This is actually, and in truth, almost our brotherly fifty-year-long living experience of our intercourse with them. This is our urge to render universal service to humanity, sometimes even to the detriment of our own momentous and immediate interests. This is our reconciliation with their civilizations; cognition and excuse of their ideals even though these be in discord with ours; this is our acquired faculty of discovering and revealing in each one of the European civilizations – or, more correctly, in each of the European individualities – the truth contained in it, even though there be much with which it would be impossible to agree. Finally, this is the longing, above all, to be just and to seek nothing but truth. Briefly, this is, perhaps, the beginning of that active application of our treasure – of Orthodoxy – to the universal service of mankind to which Orthodoxy is designated and which, in fact, constitutes its essence. Thus, through Peter’s reform our former idea – the Russian Moscow idea – was broadened and its conception was magnified and strengthened. Thereby we got to understand our universal mission, our individuality and our role in humankind; at the same time we could not help but comprehend that this mission and role do not resemble those of other nations since, there, every national individuality lives solely for, and within, itself. We, on the other hand, will begin – now that the hour has come – precisely with becoming servants to all nations, for the sake of general pacification. And in this there is nothing disgraceful; on the contrary, therein is our grandeur because this leads to the ultimate unity of mankind. He who wishes to be first in the Kingdom of God must become a servant to everybody. This is how I understand the Russian mission in its ideal.”

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74. RUSSIAN MONARCHISM: (1) KIREYEVSKY

We have discussed Orthodoxy and Nationality, but said little about the central element in the tripartite formula of Nicholas I’s reign: Autocracy, which was coming more and more under attack from the westerners as the century wore on. With the exception of Kireyevsky, the Slavophiles had little to say about Autocracy. As Lev Tikhomirov writes, “the greatest merit of the Slavophiles consisted not so much in their working out of a political teaching, as in establishing the social and psychological bases of public life.” They were not opposed to the autocracy; but the emphasis of their thought, especially Khomiakov’s, was on the people rather than on the autocracy.

Thus Khomiakov wrote: “The people transferred to the Emperor all the power with which it itself was endowed in all its forms. The sovereign became the head of the people in Church matters as well as in matters of State administration. The people could not transfer to its Emperor rights that it did not itself have. It had from the beginning a voice in the election of its bishops, and this voice it could transfer to its Emperor. It had the right, or more precisely the obligation to watch that the decisions of its pastors and their councils were carried out – this right it could entrust to its chosen one and his successors. It had the right to defend its faith against every hostile attack upon it, - this right it could also transfer to its Sovereign. But the Church people did not have any power in questions of dogmatic teaching, and general Church piety – and for that reason it could not transfer such power to its Emperor.” Here again we see the myth of an early pact between the Tsar and the people. For this was what the Slavophiles were above all concerned to emphasize: that the Tsar is not separated from his people, that Tsar and people form one harmonious whole and have a single ideal.

Khomiakov was also concerned to emphasize that it was not the Tsar who ruled the Russian Orthodox Church, as the Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire might have suggested. “‘It is true,’ he says, ‘the expression “the head of the local church” has been used in the Laws of the Empire, but in a totally different sense than it is interpreted in other countries’ (II, 351). The Russian Emperor has no rights of priesthood, he has no claim to infallibility or ‘to any authority in matters of faith or even of church discipline’. He signs the decisions of the Holy Synod, but this right of proclaiming laws and putting them into execution is not the same as the right to formulate ecclesiastical laws. The Tsar has influence with regard to the appointment of bishops and members of the Synod, but it should be observed that such dependence upon secular power is frequently met with in many Catholic countries as well. In some of the Protestant states it is even greater (II, 36-38, 208).”

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1019 Florovsky writes that the Slavophiles “opposed their ‘socialism’ to the statism of West European thought, both in its absolutist-monarchist and in its constitutional-democratic varieties” (“The Eternal and the Passing in the Teaching of the Russian Slavophiles”, in Vera i Kul’tura, p. 95).
1020 Lossky, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
“The whole pathos of Slavophilism,” writes Bishop Dionysius (Alferov), “lay in ‘sobornost’, ‘zemstvo’, in ‘the popular character of the monarchy, and not in its service as ‘he who restrains [the coming of the Antichrist]’. Byzantium, in which there were neither Zemskie Sobory nor self-government of the land, elicited only irritation in them and was used by them to put in the shade the free ‘Slavic element’. The Russian Tsar for the Slavophiles was first of all ‘the people’s Tsar’, and not the Tsar of the Third Rome. According to the witness of Konstantin Leontiev, Tsar Nicholas Pavlovich himself noticed that under the Slavophiles’ Russian caftan there stuck out the trousers of the most vulgar European democracy and liberalism.”

This estimate is probably least true in relation to Kireyevsky, although of all the Slavophiles he had the most problems with the Tsarist censor. At one point he was required to give an assurance to the minister of popular enlightenment that in his thinking he did not “separate the Tsar from Russia”. Offended by the very suggestion, Kireyevsky proceeded to give one of the earliest and best justifications of the Autocracy in post-Petrine Russian history... He began from the fact that “the Russian man loves his Tsar. This reality cannot be doubted, because everyone can see and feel it. But love for the Tsar, like every love, can be true and false, good and bad – I am not speaking about feigned love. False love is that which loves in the Tsar only one’s advantage; this love is base, harmful and, in dangerous moments, can turn to treachery. True love for the Tsar is united in one indivisible feeling with love for the Fatherland, for lawfulness and for the Holy Orthodox Church. Therefore this love can be magnanimous. And how can one separate in this matter love for the Tsar from the law, the Fatherland and the Church? The law is the will of the Tsar, proclaimed before the whole people; the Fatherland is the best love of his heart; the Holy Orthodox Church is his highest link with the people, it is the most essential basis of his power, the reason for the people’s trust in him, the combination of his conscience with the Fatherland, the living junction of the mutual sympathy of the Tsar and the people, the basis of their common prosperity, the source of the blessing of God on him and on the Fatherland.

“But to love the Tsar separately from Russia means to love an external force, a chance power, but not the Russian Tsar: that is how the Old Ritualist schematics and Balts love him, who were ready to serve Napoleon with the same devotion when they considered him stronger than Alexander. To love the Tsar and not to venerate the laws, or to break the laws given or confirmed by him under the cover of his trust, under the protection of his power, is to be his enemy under the mask of zeal, it is to undermine his might at the root, to destroy the Fatherland’s love for him, to separate the people’s concept of him from their concept of justice, order and general well-being – in a word, it is to separate the Tsar in the heart of the people from the very reasons for which Russia wishes to have a Tsar, from those good things in the hope of which she so highly venerates him. Finally, to love him without any relation to the Holy Church as a powerful Tsar, but not as the Orthodox Tsar, is to think that his rule is not the service of God

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and His Holy Church, but only the rule of the State for secular aims; it is to think that the advantage of the State can be separated from the advantage of Orthodoxy, or even that the Orthodox Church is a means, and not the end of the people’s existence as a whole, that the Holy Church can be sometimes a hindrance and at other times a useful instrument for the Tsar’s power. This is the love of a slave, and not that of a faithful subject; it is Austrian love, not Russian; this love for the Tsar is treason before Russia, and for the Tsar himself it is profoundly harmful, even if sometimes seems convenient. Every counsel he receives from such a love bears within it a secret poison that eats away at the very living links that bind him with the Fatherland. For Orthodoxy is the soul of Russia, the root of the whole of her moral existence, the source of her might and strength, the standard gathering all the different kinds of feelings of her people into one stronghold, the earnest of all her hopes for the future, the treasury of the best memories of the past, her ruling object of worship, her heartfelt love. The people venerates the Tsar as the Church’s support; and is so boundlessly devoted to him because it does not separate the Church from the Fatherland. All its trust in the Tsar is based on feeling for the Church. It sees in him a faithful director in State affairs only because it knows that he is a brother in the Church, who together with it serves her as the sincere son of the same mother and therefore can be a reliable shield of her external prosperity and independence...

“He who has not despaired of the destiny of his Fatherland cannot separate love for it from sincere devotion to Orthodoxy. And he who is Orthodox in his convictions cannot not love Russia, as the God-chosen vessel of His Holy Church on earth. Faith in the Church of God and love for Orthodox Russia are neither divided nor distinguished in the soul of the true Russian. Therefore a man holding to another confession cannot love the Russian Tsar except with a love that is harmful for the Tsar and for Russia, a love whose influence of necessity must strive to destroy precisely that which constitutes the very first condition of the mutual love of the Tsar and Russia, the basis of his correct and beneficent rule and the condition of her correct and beneficent construction.

“Therefore to wish that the Russian government should cease to have the spirit and bear the character of an Orthodox government, but be completely indifferent to the confessions, accepting the spirit of so-called common Christianity, which does not belong to any particular Church and was thought up recently by some unbelieving philosophers and halfbelieving Protestants – to wish for this would signify for the present time the tearing up of all bonds of love and trust between the government and the people, and for the future, - that is, if the government were to hide its indifference to Orthodoxy until it educates the people in the same coldness to its Church, - it would produce the complete destruction of the whole fortress of Russia and the annihilation of the whole of her world significance. For for him who knows Russia and her Orthodox Faith, there can be no doubt that she grew up on it and became strong by it, since by it alone is she strong and prosperous.”

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1022 Kireyevsky, “Ob otnoshenii k tsarskoj vlasti” (On the relationship to Tsarist power), in Razum na puti k istine, op. cit., pp. 51-53, 62.
In a critical review of an article by the Protestant Pastor Wiener, who was defending the principle of complete separation of Church and State and complete tolerance, Kireyevsky wrote: “The author says very justly that in most states where there is a dominant religion, the government uses it as a means for its own private ends and under the excuse of protecting it oppresses it. But this happens not because there is a dominant faith in the state, but, on the contrary, because the dominant faith of the people is not dominant in the state apparatus. This unfortunate relationship takes place when, as a consequence of some chance historical circumstances, the rift opens up between the convictions of the people and of the government. Then the faith of the people is used as a means, but not for long. One of three things must unfailingly happen: either the people wavers in its faith and then the whole state apparatus wavers, as we see in the West; or the government attains a correct self-knowledge and sincerely converts to the faith of the people, as we hope; or the people sees that it is being deceived, as we fear.

“But what are the normal, desirable relations between the Church and the State? The state must not agree with the Church so as to search out and persecute heretics and force them to believe (this is contrary to the spirit of Christianity and has a counter-productive effect, and harms the state itself almost as much as the Church); but it must agree with the Church so as to place as the main purpose of its existence to be penetrated constantly, more and more, with the spirit of the Church and not only not look on the Church as a means to its own most fitting existence, but, on the contrary, see in its own existence only a means for the fullest and most fitting installation of the Church of God on earth.

“The State is a construction of society having as its aim earthly, temporal life. The Church is a construction of the same society having as its aim heavenly, eternal life. If society understands its life in such a way that in it the temporal must serve the eternal, the state apparatus of this society must also serve the Church. But if society understands its life in such a way that in it earthly relationships carry on by themselves, and spiritual relations by themselves, then the state in such a society must be separated from the Church. But such a society will consist not of Christians, but of unbelievers, or, at any rate, of mixed faiths and convictions. Such a state cannot make claims to a harmonious, normal development. The whole of its dignity must be limited by a negative character. But there where the people is bound inwardly, by identical convictions of faith, there it has the right to wish and demand that both its external bonds – familial, social and state – should be in agreement with its religious inspirations, and that its government should be penetrated by the same spirit. To act in hostility to this spirit means to act in hostility to the people itself, even if these actions afford it some earthly advantages.”

Another Russian supporter of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality who is sometimes classified as a Slavophile was the poet and diplomat Fyodor Ivanovich Tiutchev. Already at the age of 19, in his poem, *On Pushkin’s Ode on Freedom*, he had rebuked his fellow-poet for disturbing the hearts of the citizens by his call to freedom. While sharing the world-view of the Slavophiles, he took their sympathies and antipathies to their logical conclusions. Thus he posed the contrast between Russia and the West as a struggle between Christ and Antichrist. “The supreme power of the people,” he wrote, “is in essence an antichristian idea.” Popular power and Tsarist power mutually exclude each other. So it was not a question of two cultures living side by side with each other and complementing each other in some sense. No: it was a fight to the death between the Russian idea and the European idea, between the Rome of the Papacy and the political and social structures it evolved, and the Third Rome of the Orthodox Tsar…

Tiutchev believed in “the Great Greco-Russian Eastern Empire”, whose soul was the Orthodox Church and whose body the Slavic race. The Empire’s destiny was to unite the two halves of Europe under the Russian Emperor, with some Austrian lands going to Russia. There would be an Orthodox Pope in Rome and an Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople. The Empire was a principle, and so indivisible. Western history had been a struggle between the schismatic Roman papacy and the usurper-empire of Charlemagne and his successors. This struggle “ended for the one in the Reformation, i.e. the denial of the Church, and for the other in the Revolution, i.e. the denial of the Empire”. The struggle between Russia and Napoleon had been the struggle “between the lawful Empire and the crowned Revolution”.

As a diplomat Tiutchev knew much about the threat to the Orthodox autocracy posed by the 1848 revolution; and in April, 1848, just as this revolution was gathering pace, he wrote: “There have long been only two real powers in Europe – the revolution and Russia. These two powers are now opposed to each other, and perhaps tomorrow they will enter into conflict. Between them there can be no negotiations, no treaties; the existence of the one is equivalent to the death of the other! On the outcome of this struggle that has arisen between them, the greatest struggle that the world has ever seen, the whole political and religious future of mankind will depend for many centuries.

“The fact of this rivalry is now being revealed everywhere. In spite of that, the understanding of our age, deadened by false wisdom, is such that the present generation, faced with a similar huge fact, is far from completely comprehending its true significance and has not evaluated its real causes.

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1024 As Demetrius Merezhkovsky expressed it, Tiutchev put bones into the soft body of Slavophilism, crossed its ‘t’ s and dotted its ‘i’ s (*Dve tajny russkoj poezii. Nekrasov i Tiutchev* (Two Mysteries of Russian Poetry. Nekrasov and Tiutchev), St. Petersburg, 1915).

“Up to now they have sought for its explanation in the purely political sphere; they have tried to interpret by a distinction of concepts on the exclusively human plane. In fact, the quarrel between the revolution and Russia depends on deeper causes. They can be defined in two words.

“Russia is first of all the Christian Empire; the Russian people is Christian not only by virtue of the Orthodoxy of its convictions, but also thanks to something more in the realm of feelings than convictions. It is Christian by virtue of that capacity for self-denial and self-sacrifice which constitutes as it were the basis of her moral nature. The revolution is first of all the enemy of Christianity! Antichristian feeling is the soul of the revolution: it is its special, distinguishing feature. Those changes in form to which it has been subjected, those slogans which it has adopted in turn, everything, even its violence and crimes have been secondary and accidental. But the one thing in it that is not accidental is precisely the antichristian feeling that inspires it, it is that (it is impossible not to be convinced of this) that has acquired for it this threatening dominance over the world. He who does not understand this is no more than a blind man present at a spectacle that the world presents to him.

“The human I, wishing to depend only on itself, not recognizing and not accepting any other law besides its own will – in a word, the human I, taking the place of God, - does not, of course, constitute something new among men. But such has it become when raised to the status of a political and social right, and when it strives, by virtue of this right, to rule society. This is the new phenomenon which acquired the name of the French revolution in 1789.

“Since that time, in spite of all its permutations, the revolution has remained true to its nature, and perhaps never in the whole course of this development has it recognized itself as so of one piece, so sincerely antichristian as at the present moment, when it has ascribed to itself the banner of Christianity: ‘brotherhood’. In the name of this we can even suppose that it has attained its apogee. And truly, if we listen to those naively blasphemous big words which have become, so to speak, the official language of the present age, then will not everyone think that the new French republic was brought into the world only in order to fulfill the Gospel law? It was precisely this calling that the forces created by the revolution ascribed to themselves - with the exception, however, of that change which the revolution considered it necessary to produce, when it intended to replace the feeling of humility and self-denial, which constitutes the basis of Christianity, with the spirit of pride and haughtiness, free and voluntary good works with compulsory good works. And instead of brotherhood preached and accepted in the name of God, it intended to establish a brotherhood imposed by fear on the people-master. With the exception of these differences, its dominance really promises to turn into the Kingdom of Christ!

“And nobody should be misled by this despicable good will which the new powers are showing to the Catholic Church and her servers. It is almost the most important sign of the real feeling of the revolution, and the surest proof of the position of complete power that it has attained. And truly, why should the revolution show itself as hostile to the clergy and Christian priests who not only
submit to it, but accept and recognize it, who, in order to propitiate it, glorify all its excesses and, without knowing it themselves, become partakers in all its unrighteousness? If even similar behaviour were founded on calculation alone, this calculation would be apostasy; but if conviction is added to it, then this is already more than apostasy.

“However, we can foresee that there will be no lack of persecutions, too. On that day when concessions have reached their extreme extent, the catholic church will consider it necessary to display resistance, and it will turn out that she will be able to display resistance only by going back to martyrdom. We can fully rely on the revolution: it will remain in all respects faithful to itself and consistent to the end!

“The February explosion did the world a great service in overthrowing the pompous scaffolding of errors hiding reality. The less penetrating minds have probably now understood that the history of Europe in the course of the last thirty three years was nothing other than a continuous mystification. And indeed with what inexorably light has the whole of this past, so recent and already so distant from us, been lit up? Who, for example, will now not recognize what a laughable pretension was expressed in that wisdom of our age which naively imagined that it had succeeded in suppressing the revolution with constitutional incantations, muzzling its terrible energy by means of a formula of lawfulness? After all that has happened, who can still doubt that from the moment when the revolutionary principle penetrated into the blood of society, all these concessions, all these reconciling formulas are nothing other than drugs which can, perhaps, put to sleep the sick man for a time, but are not able to hinder the further development of the illness itself…”

In spite of his fervent support for the Autocracy, Tiutchev criticized the Tsarist imposition of censorship. In 1857 he wrote: “It is impossible to impose on minds an absolute and too prolonged restriction and yoke without substantial harm for the social organism…. Even the authorities themselves in the course of time are unable to avoid the disadvantages of such a system. Around the sphere in which they are present there is formed a desert and a huge mental emptiness, and governmental thought, not meeting from outside itself either control or guidance or even the slightest point of support, ends by weakening under its own weight even before it destined to fall under the blows of events.”

“Why,” he wrote 1872, “can we oppose to harmful theories and destructive tendencies nothing except material suppression? Into what has the true principle of conservatism been transformed with us? Why has our soul become so horribly stale? If the authorities because of an insufficiency of principles and moral convictions pass to measures of material oppress...
Other Slavophiles, such as the Aksakov brothers, similarly combined a belief in the autocracy and the imperial mission of Russia with a belief in civil liberties. This sometimes brought them into conflict with Tsar Nicholas.

Thus in his memorandum, *The Eastern Question* (February, 1854), Constantine Aksakov hoped that the Tsar would promote “an alliance of all Slavs under the supreme patronage of the Russian Tsar... Galicia and the whole Slavonic world will breathe more easily under the patronage of Russia once she finally fulfills her Christian and fraternal duty.”

Konstantin’s brother Ivan was somewhat more cautious. He recognized that “The Catholicism of Bohemia and Poland constitutes a hostile and alien element” and in any case “the greater part of these Slavic peoples are already infected by the influence of Western liberalism which is contrary to the spirit of the Russian people and which can never be grafted onto it.”1028

So Ivan was less “Pan-Slavist” than Constantine...

However, both brothers believed in the spiritual freedom of the individual within the autocratic state. Thus, as N. Lossky writes, “on the accession of Alexander II to the throne in 1855 [Constantine] Aksakov submitted to him, through Count Bludov, a report ‘On the Inner Condition of Russia’. In it he reproached the Government for suppressing the people’s moral freedom and following the path of despotism, which has led to the nation’s moral degradation. He pointed out that this might popularise the idea of political freedom and create a striving to attain it by revolutionary means. To avoid these dangers he advised the Tsars to allow freedom of thought and of speech and to re-establish the practice of calling Zemski Sobors.”1029

There was some truth in this. The government’s oppressive measures could be undiscerning, and its inability to develop a coherent philosophy to counteract the revolutionary propaganda limited its success in counteracting it. This was due in large part to the superficial Orthodoxy of the ruling circles.

This “semi-Orthodoxy” of the ruling elites was expressed by Tiutchev as follows:

Not flesh, but spirit is today corrupt,
And man just pines away despairingly.
He strives for light, while sitting in the dark,
And having found it, moans rebelliously.
From lack of faith dried up, in fire tossed,
The unendurable he suffers now.
He knows right well his soul is lost, and thirsts

For faith – but ask for it he knows not how.
Ne’er will he say, with prayers and tears combined,
However deep before the cloسد door his grief:
“O let me in, my God, O hear my cry!
Lord, I believe! Help Thou mine unbelief!”

By contrast, Tiutchev continued to believe in the Orthodoxy of the common
people and in the unique destiny of Russia, poor in her exterior aspect but rich in
inner faith and piety:

These poor villages which stand
Amidst a nature sparse, austere –
    O beloved Russian land,
Long to pine and persevere!
The foreigner’s disdainful gaze
Will never understand or see
The light that shines in secret rays
    Upon your humility.
Dear native land! While carrying
The Cross and struggling to pass through,
    In slavish image Heaven’s King
Has walked across you, blessing you.

However, the successes of government measures are easily forgotten. We
have already noted the conversion of Pushkin, Gogol and Dostoyevksy.
Moreover, those who were urging the government to remove censorship were
not supported by the leading churchmen of the age, and showed a dangerous
naivety about the way in which the forces of evil could – and, in the reign of
Alexander II, did – exploit this freedom.

This naivety manifested itself in a certain anti-statism, an attempt to bypass
the state as being irrelevant to the deeper life of the people, the “ancient Russian
freedom” that existed in the peasant communes and the Church.

We see this particularly clearly, as Walicki writes, “in the historical writings
of Konstantin Aksakov. Republican liberty, he argued, was political freedom,
which presupposed the people’s active participation in political affairs; ancient
Russian freedom, on the other hand, meant freedom from politics – the right to live
according to unwritten laws of faith and tradition, and the right to full
realization in a moral sphere on which the state would not impinge.

“This theory rested on a distinction the Slavophiles made between two kinds
of truth: the ‘inner’ and the ‘external’ truth. The inner truth is in the individual
the voice of conscience, and in society the entire body of values enshrined in
religion, tradition, and customs – in a word, all values that together form an
inner unifying force and help to forge social bonds based on shared moral

1030 Tiutchev, Nash Vek (Our Age).
1031 Tiutchev, translated in Christensen, op. cit., p. 645.
convictions. The external truth, on the other hand, is represented by law and the state, which are essentially conventional, artificial, and ‘external’ – all the negative qualities Kireyevsky and Khomiakov ascribed to institutions and social bonds that had undergone a rationalizing and formalizing process. Aksakov went even further than the other Slavophiles in regarding all forms of legal and political relations as inherently evil; at their opposite pole was the communal principle embodied in the village commune, based (in Aksakov’s view) purely on truth and unanimity and not on any legal guarantees or conditions and agreements characteristic of a rational contract. For Aksakov the difference between Russia and the West was that in Russia the state had not been raised to the ‘principle’ on which social organization was largely founded. When the frailty of human nature and the demands of defense appeared to make political organization necessary, Russians ‘called’ their rulers from ‘beyond the sea’ in order to avoid doing injury to the ‘inner truth’ by evolving their own statehood; Russian tsars were given absolute powers so that the people might shun all contacts with the ‘external truth’ and all participation in affairs of state. Relations between ‘land’ (that is the common people who lived by the light of the inner truth) and state rested upon the principle of mutual non-interference. Of its own free will the state consulted the people, who presented their point of view at Land Assemblies but left the final decision in the monarch’s hands. The people could be sure of complete freedom to live and think as they pleased, while the monarch had complete freedom of action in the political sphere. This relationship depended entirely on moral convictions rather than legal guarantees, and it was this that constituted Russia’s superiority to Western Europe. ‘A guarantee is an evil,’ Aksakov wrote. ‘Where it is necessary, good is absent; and life where good is absent had better disintegrate than continue with the aid of evil.’ Aksakov conceded that there was often a wide gap between ideal and reality, but ascribed this entirely to human imperfections. He strongly condemned rulers who tried to interfere in the inner life of the ‘land’, but even in the case of Ivan the Terrible, whose excesses he condemned, he would not allow that the ‘land’ had the right to resistance and he praised its long-suffering loyalty.”

Although there is some truth in this account, it is exaggerated. Certainly, the “inner truth” of Orthodoxy was more important than the “external truth” of government and law; and it was true that the presence of this inner truth in Russia had prevented statehood becoming the “primary principle” it had become in the West, where “inner truth” had been lost. And yet from the beginning the Russian State had always taken a very active and essential role in Russian life in protecting and fostering the internal freedom provided by the Orthodox way of life, and was accepted as such with gratitude by the people.

Moreover, it was inaccurate to represent the power of the Russian tsars as being “external” to the true life of the people. For the tsars were themselves Orthodox Christians anointed for their role by the Church and guided in their decisions by the Church.

1032 Walicki, op. cit., pp. 96-97.
Paradoxically, Aksakov betrays the influence of precisely that western political tradition – in its English liberal variant – which he sincerely claimed to deplore. As Walicki writes, “he subconsciously adopted and applied to Russia’s past one of the chief assumptions of Western European liberal doctrine – the principle of the total separation of the political and social spheres. At the same time he rejected both liberal constitutionalism and the very content of the liberal idea of freedom. Aksakov’s interpretation of the freedom of the ‘land’ is not to be confused with the freedom of the individual, since in his interpretation freedom only applied to the ‘land’ as a whole; it was not the freedom of the individual in the community, but the community’s freedom from outside interference in matters of faith, traditions, or customs. This non-interference had nothing to do with the liberal doctrine of laissez-faire, since, according to Aksakov, the moral principles of the ‘land’ rendered economic individualism out of the question. Even his call for freedom of speech was not a truly liberal postulate since it did not envisage the acceptance of pluralistic beliefs or of minority oppositions within society. While demanding freedom in the non-political sphere, Aksakov wanted every individual to submit totally to his mir – a submission, moreover, that was to be ‘according to conscience’ and not only ‘according to law’. His ideal was a ‘free unity’ based on a total unanimity that would reduce external constraints to a minimum but at the same time exclude individual autonomy and any departure from communal tradition.”

1033 Walicki, op. cit., pp. 97-98.
**76. RUSSIAN MONARCHISM: (3) METROPOLITAN PHILARET OF MOSCOW**

Useful as the work of lay intellectuals might be, the task of defending the Autocracy from its westernizing critics fell in the first place on the Church...

Now the most outstanding hierarch in the Holy Synod at this time was Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov). 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.

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.”

During the Decembrist rebellion that followed on the supposed death of Tsar Alexander I in 1825, Metropolitan Philaret’s wise refusal to reveal the contents of the Tsar’s will immediately helped to guarantee the transfer of power to his brother, Tsar Nicholas I. Philaret continued to defend Russia against Masonry and other western heresies throughout his life, but was pessimistic about the future. 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.”1035

Particularly important and enlightening were Philaret’s views on the Autocracy, and on the relationship between the Church and the State. 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.”1036

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.'"1037

1037 Snychev, Zhizn’ i Deiatel’nost’ Filareta, Mitropolita Moskovskogo (The Life and Activity of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow), Tula, 1994, p. 177.
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 representatives of the Royal Family. But he was one of the very few archpastors who had the courage to resist the tendency - very characteristic of Russian conditions - to reduce Orthodoxy to 'glorification of the tsar'. Thus, contrary to many hierarchs, who from feelings of servility warmly accepted Nicholas I's attempt to introduce the heir among the members of the Synod, he justly saw in this a manifestation of caesaropapism..., and in the application of attributes of the Heavenly King to the earthly king - a most dangerous deformation of religious consciousness..., and in such phenomena as the passing of a cross procession around statues of the emperor - a direct return to paganism."

Metropolitan Philaret, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, "distinctly and firmly reminded people of the Church's independence and freedom, reminded them of the limits of the state. And in this he sharply and irreconcilably parted with his epoch, with the whole of the State's self-definition in the new, Petersburgian Russia. Philaret was very reserved and quiet when speaking. By his intense and courageous silence he with difficulty concealed and subdued his anxiety about what was happening. Through the vanity and confusion of events he saw and made out the threatening signs of the righteous wrath of God that was bound to come. Evil days, days of judgement were coming - 'it seems that we are already living in the suburbs of Babylon, if not in Babylon itself,' he feared... 'My soul is sorrowful,' admitted Metropolitan Philaret once. 'It seems to me that the judgement which begins at the house of God is being more and more revealed... How thickly does the smoke come from the coldness of the abyss and how high does it mount'... And only in repentance did he see an exit, in universal repentance 'for many things, especially in recent years'.

"Philaret had his own theory of the State, of the sacred kingdom. And in it there was not, and could not be, any place for the principles of state supremacy. It is precisely because the powers that be are from God, and the sovereigns rule by the mercy of God, that the kingdom has a completely subject and auxiliary character. 'The State as State is not subject to the Church', and therefore the servants of the Church already in the apostolic canons are strictly forbidden 'to take part in the administration of the people'. Not from outside, but from within must the Christian State be bound by the law of God and the ecclesiastical order. In the mind of Metropolitan Philaret, the State is a moral union, 'a union of free moral beings' and a union founded on mutual service and love - 'a certain part of the general dominion of the Almighty, outwardly separate, but by an invisible power yoked into the unity of the whole'... And the foundation of power lies in the principle of service. In the Christian State Philaret saw the Anointed of God, and before this banner of God's good will he with good grace inclined his head.

'The Sovereign receives the whole of his lawfulness from the Church's anointing', that is, in the Church and through the Church. Here the Kingdom inclines its head before the Priesthood and takes upon itself the vow of service to the Church, and its right to take part in ecclesiastical affairs. He possesses this not by virtue of his autocracy and authority, but precisely by virtue of his obedience and vow. 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 Nicolaitan spirit and time, and how demanding and childish it seemed to them. Philaret did not believe in the power of rebukes and reprimands. He did not attach great significance to the external forms of life - 'it is not some kind of transformation that is needed, but a choice of men and supervision', he used to say. And above all what was necessary was an inner creative uplift, a gathering and renewal of spiritual forces. What was needed was an intensification of creative activity, a strengthening and intensification of ecclesiastical and pastoral freedom. As a counterweight to the onslaught of the State, Metropolitan Philaret thought about the reestablishment of the living unity of the local episcopate, which would be realized in constant consultative communion of fellow pastors and bishops, and strengthened at times by small congresses and councils, until a general local Council would
become inwardly possible and achievable. Metropolitan Philaret always emphasized that 'we live in the Church militant'... And with sadness he recognized that 'the quantity of sins and carelessnesses which have mounted up in the course of more than one century almost exceeds the strength and means of correction'... Philaret was not a man of struggle, and was weighed down 'by remaining in the chatter and cares of the city and works of men'. He lived in expectation 'of that eternally secure city, from which it will not be necessary to flee into any desert', He wanted to withdraw, to run away, and beyond the storm of affairs to pray for the mercy and longsuffering of God, for 'defence from on high'.

The State 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."

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."

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1039 '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.)

1040 Florovsky, "Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij" (Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow), in Vera i Kul'tura (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 261-264.


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.

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 ante-chamber 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 Himsel 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…"1043

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

1043 Metropolitan Philaret, "Slovo v den' Blagochestivejshego Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia Pavlovich" (Sermon on the day of his Most Pious Majesty Emperor Nicholas Pavlovich), in Kozlov, op. cit., pp. 274-275, 277-279.
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 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 havit 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.”

77. THE OLD RITUALISTS ACQUIRE A HIERARCHY

From 1843 the Old Ritualists had begun to seek a degree of legality from the State and permission to build churches and prayer houses. Tsar Nicholas would have none of it, and large Old Ritualist centres were closed: first in Irgiz (1839), then in Vyg, in Moscow and Petersburg (at the beginning of the 1850s). "At the closing of the Irgiz monasteries," writes S.A. Zenkovsky, "the Old Ritualists resisted and, in view of the application by the administration of armed force, many of them suffered physically. But again these were victims of the conflict, and not of tortures or executions of arrested Old Ritualists. These were not religious persecutions, but the desire of Nicholas I and his ministers of the interior to introduce 'order' into the religious life of the country and control the religious communities of the Old Ritualists that were de facto independent of the administration."1046

Metropolitan Philaret supported the Tsar's policy. He was very disturbed by the Old Ritualists' not commemorating the Emperor during their services. And he reported that in the Preobrazhensky workhouse the Old Ritualists were distributing books that taught "that no marriages should be recognized; the schismatics in marital unions with people not belonging to the schism should have their union broken; that bodily relationship should not be recognized in Christian marriages; that from 1666 married Christians are a satanic nest of vipers and the most shameful dwelling-place of his demons; that now satan is thinking about the multiplication of the human race and a soul is being given from the devil for the conception of a child."1047

At about this time the Popovtsi Old Ritualists began to look for a bishop overseas. No such bishop was found in the Caucasus, Syria, Palestine, Persia and Egypt. Finally, writes Dobroklonsky, they "lured to themselves a former metropolitan of Bosnia, the Greek Ambrose, who had been deprived of his see and was living in Constantinople.1048 In 1846 he was brought to Belaia Krinitsa (in Bukovina, in Austria) and was received into the communion of the Popovtsi by cursing some supposed heresies and chrismation. In 1847, in accordance with the wish of the schismatics, he consecrated Bishop Cyril as his deputy and Arcadius for the Nekrasovtsy (in Turkey). Thus was the existence of the Belokrinitsky hierarchy established. Although in the following year, at the insistence of the Russian government, Ambrose was removed from Belaia Krinitsa to restricted residence in the city of Tsilla (in Styria) and the

1046 Zenkovsky, "Staroobriadchestvo, Tserkov' i Gosudarstvo" (Old Ritualism, the Church and the State), Russkoe Vozrozhdenie (Russian Regeneration), 1987 - I, pp. 93-94.
1047 Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), Zhizn' i Deiatel'nost' Filareta, Mitropolita Moskovskogo, Tula, 1994, p. 319.
1048 "In 1866 Patriarch Anthimus of Constantinople wrote an epistle to Metropolitan Joseph of Karlovtsy, in which he wrote the following about Metropolitan Ambrose: 'The hierarch whom we are discussing, being considered subject to trial because of his flight, canonically cannot carry out hierarchical actions" (Archbishop Nicon (Rklitsky), Zhizneopisanie Blazhennyshego Antonia, Mitropolitan Kievskago i Galitskago (Life of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), volume 3, New York, 1957, p. 167). (V.M.)
Belokrimitsky monastery was sealed, in 1859 the Austrian government again recognised the lawfulness of the Belokrimitsky metropolia and the monastery was unsealed. Cyril, who succeeded Ambrose, took care to consecrate new bishops, and such soon appeared for the Turkish, Moldavian and, finally, Russian schismatics. The first of the Russians was the shopkeeper Stephen Zhirov, who was made bishop of Simbirsk with the name Sophronius in 1849; by 1860 there were already up to 10 schismatic dioceses within the boundaries of Russia. A 'spiritual council' was formed in Moscow to administer church affairs; it was composed of false bishops and false priests. Sophronius was dreaming of founding a patriarchate, and even set up a patriarch, but, at the insistence of the schismatics, himself condemned his own undertaking. At first the government repressed the Old Ritualist hierarchs and the priests ordained by them. However, the Austrian priesthood continue to spread. From the time of Alexander II it began to enjoy toleration, although the government did not recognize it as lawful. In spite of a visible success, the Austrian hierarchy from the very beginning of its existence displayed signs of disintegration. Quarrels constantly arose between the schismatic bishops. They became especially fierce after the publication in 1862 in the name of the spiritual council of a certain 'encyclical of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church'. It was composed by an inhabitant of Starodub, Hilarion Egorovich Kabanov with the aim of condemning the reasonings of the Bespopovtsi, whose distribution had dealt a blow to the Austrian priesthood. Having examined several books of the Bespopovtsi, the epistle expressed [the following] view of the Orthodox Church: 'The ruling church in Russia, as also the Greek, believe in the same God as we (the Old Ritualists), the Creator of heaven and earth& Therefore, although we pronounce and write the name of the Saviour 'Isus', we do not dare to condemn that which is written and pronounced 'Iisus' as being the name of some other Jesus, the opponent of Christ, as certain Bespopovtsi think to do. Similarly, we do not dishonour and blaspheme the cross with four ends.' It was also recognised that the true priesthood of Christ continued in the Orthodox Church (Great Russian and Greek) and would remain until the day of judgement. While some accepted the epistle, others condemned it. Thus there appeared mutually opposing parties of 'encycicalers' and 'anti-encycicalers'. The latter, who had tendencies towards Bespopovshchina, began to affirm that the name 'Iisus', as accepted by the Orthodox Church, is the name of another person than 'Isus', and is the name of the Antichrist. Both parties had their own bishops.\textsuperscript{1049}

\textsuperscript{1049} Dobroklonsky, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 702-703. For more on Bishop Ambrose, see S.G. Wurgaft, I.A. Ushakov, \textit{Staroobriadchestvo} (Old Ritualism), Moscow: "Tserkov", 1996, pp. 18-22. The following revelation given to Novice John Sorokin (a former Old Ritualist) is found in the Solovetski Patericon: "One morning," he (the future Novice John) related, 'after the cell prayer in which I asked God with tears: 'Lord, tell me the way I should follow'; I fell asleep and dreamt that I was in some splendid palace and I heard a voice coming from above: 'Go to the Church for it is impossible to be saved outside the Church.' I answered: 'There are many temptations and tares in the Church.' The voice said: 'Why should you worry about that? You will be more special than wheat.' I said: 'There is a Church with a bishop and clergy in Austria.' The voice replied: 'The Austrian Church is not a true Church, because it separated from the Eastern Church, and there is no salvation in it.'"
After the creation of the Belokrinitsky hierarchy, the attitude of the Russian government towards the Old Ritualists became stricter. In 1854 they were deprived of all rights as merchants, and their chapel in the Rogozhsky cemetery was closed. However, from the beginning of Alexander II's reign, they were allowed to have services in the cemetery. In 1865 the government wanted to introduce a further weakening of the legislation against the Old Ritualists, and only the voice of Metropolitan Philaret stopped it. "In 1858, for example, he complained that the Old Believers [Ritualists] were increasingly confident that the government would refrain from enforcing various restrictions on their influence and activities. Warming of the Old Believers' pernicious moral influence, Philaret insisted on the need for strict control and rejected the idea of religious tolerance then gaining popularity in educated society. Philaret appealed not to tradition or canons, but to the state's own self-interest: 'The idea [of religious tolerance] appears good, but it is fair only when the subject and limits are precisely and correctly determined. The idea of protecting the unity of the ruling confession in the state (thereby preserving the popular spirit - a source of strength for the state and an important aid to governance) should come before the idea of religious tolerance and should impose limits on the latter.' Hence, he noted, European countries (even liberal England) imposed limits on religious freedom. Moreover, the state had a particular interest in defending the Church against the Old Belief [Rite]: 'But tolerance extended without limits to the schism (which emerged as much from a refusal to obey the Church as from a rebellion against the state, and through its intensified proselytism constantly acts to harm the unity of the Church and state) would be both an injustice to the Church and a serious political mistake.' Despite such arguments, Philaret could do little to halt the gradual liberalization of policy toward Old Believers that only fuelled their expectations for still more concessions. Unable to arrest this process, Philaret darkly warned that, 'if the secular government fails to show sufficient caution against the pseudo-bishops and pseudo-priests [of the schism], then this will fall on its conscience before God, the Church, and the fatherland.'"

However, Snychev argues that "the struggle of the holy hierarch with the schism in the last years of his life had, if not a very large, at any rate a definite success. Many of the schismatics joined either Orthodoxy or the Yedinoverie. Thus in 1854 some schismatics from the Preobrazhensky cemetery joined the Yedinoverie, and in 1865 the following activists of the Belokrinitsky metropolia joined the Orthodox Church with the rights of the Yedinoverie: among the bishops, the metropolitan's deputy, Onuphrius of Braila, Paphnutius of Kolomna, Sergius of Tula and Justin of Tulchinsk; Hieromonk Joasaph; the archdeacon of Metropolitan Cyril, his secretary and the keeper of the archives Philaret; Hierodeacon Melchizedek, who was able to take the archive of the metropolia and transfer it across the Russian frontier. The success might have been greater if the government had more actively supported Philaret."}

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1051 Snychev, op. cit., p. 359.
THE CRIMEAN WAR

With the failure of the 1848 revolution in Europe, hopes were raised in the hearts of Russian Slavophiles that the time had at last come for the fulfilment of the age-old dream of Russia the Third Rome. Tiutchev had his own idiosyncratic version of this dream, seeing Russia as the new Slavic Empire which could liberate the East Europeans, including even the Czechs and Moravians, from the false empire, church and civilization of the West. According to V. Tsimbursky, Tiutchev called on Nicholas I "to play on the revolutionary self-destruction of western civilization to place on its ruins the 'ark' of the new Empire: may 'the Europe of Peter' take the place of 'the Europe of Charles'. With Tiutchev, as in the fears of the West, the Europeanization of Russia becomes the growth of a power called to take the place and replace Romano-German Europe. Tiutchev... in return for the Florentine unia of 1439, puts forward a project for helping the Roman papacy out of the corner it was driven into by the Italian revolution on condition of its honourable return to Orthodoxy."^{1052}

However, Tsar Nicholas did not share this vision. Alone among the rulers of Europe, he believed in the legitimacy of Europe’s existing regimes, - with the exception of revolutionary France but including Austria’s, - in which many Slavs lived. For as K.N. Leontiev wrote, he “was a true and great ‘legitimist’. He did not like even the Orthodox ‘rayas’ [peoples of the Ottoman Empire] permitting themselves to rebel against the Sultan, reasonably ascribing to himself alone the lawful right to conquer the Sultan and bring him into submission, as the right of a tsar...

“The unsuccessful and lightmindedly liberal Decembrist rebellion of the nobility had a less profound influence on his royal mind than the later events of the 1830s, which shook him and made him understand. From that time the Tsar became an opponent of all emancipation, all equalization, all confusion both in Russia and in other countries....

“Of special interest is the explanatory note which the young [I.S.] Aksakov was forced to present in reply to the questions of the Third Department in 1849. Some passages in this reply were underlined by Tsar Nicholas Pavlovich, and objections against them were made by the Tsar in his own hand. Opposite the place where Aksakov writes about ‘the heartfelt sympathy of the so-called Slavophiles for the western Slavs and in general for the situation of their co-religionist and consanguineous brothers’, the Emperor made the following comment: ‘Under the guise of sympathy for the Slavic tribes supposedly oppressed in other states, there is hidden the criminal thought of a rebellion against the lawful authority of neighbouring and in part allied states, and of a general union they expect to attain not through the will of God’....

“By these ‘states’ we must understand, of course, first of all Austria, and then in part Turkey... Nicholas Pavlovich recognized himself to have the right of

exerting pressure on the Sultan in favour of his co-religionists, the right to war with him and even subject him to himself, but did not recognize the right of the subjects of the Sultan to carry out their own self-willed liberation….

“Nicholas Pavlovich understood at that time that liberationist politics beyond the bounds of one’s own state is something that, while useful at the beginning, is in essence extremely dangerous and can, with the slightest incaution, turn onto the head of the liberator.

“He understood half a century ago that of which it is impossible to convince many of us even now, in spite of all the crude evidence of events, in spite of the fact that everything is simply ‘bursting at the seams’ both in old Europe and in the Orthodox countries of the East!

“Emperor Nicholas was called by Divine Providence to hold back for a time the general disintegration which even now nobody knows how to stop…

“…Tsar Nicholas Pavlovich did not live to the end of the 19th century, when ‘reaction’ is beginning little by little to acquire for itself theoretical justifications and foundations. However, he felt by his political instinct not only that the West was on the path to a corruption which could be contagious for us, too, but also that our Russia herself under him had attained its cultural-state apogee, after which living state construction would come to an end and on which it was necessary to stop as far as possible and for as long as possible, not fearing even a certain stagnation. And all his major political actions and sympathies are explained by this conservative instinct of genius: his revulsion from the liberal monarchy of Louis Philippe; his defence of the ‘crafty’, but necessary for some time to come, perhaps, Austria; the Hungarian war; his helping of the Sultan against Mehmed Ali; his good disposition toward England, which was still at that time aristocratic and conservative; his desire that the Eastern Christians should not of their own will rise up against the lawful and autocratic Turkish government; and finally, his disillusionment in emancipated Greece, which was expressed in his words (legendary or historical, it doesn’t matter): ‘I will not give an inch of land to this demagogic people.’”

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The Tsar might consider most of European governments legitimate, but they did not return the favour… Gratitude to Russia for suppressing the revolution of 1848, never strong, had completely disappeared with the rise of a new generation of leaders. In 1851 the exiled Hungarian revolutionary Kossuth denounced Russian "despotism" in front of a cheering crowd in London. Meanwhile, the French Emperor Napoleon III was looking to win popularity among French Catholics by challenging the Vienna settlement of 1815 and dividing Austria and Russia…


Nevertheless, it was a remarkable turn-around for these countries to ally themselves with the Ottoman empire against a Christian state, Russia, when they were in no way threatened by Russia...

One factor making for instability was the gradual weakening of the power of Turkey, "the sick man of Europe", in the Tsar's phrase. Clearly, if Turkey collapsed, its subject peoples of Orthodox Christian faith would look to Russia to liberate them. But the Western Powers were determined to prevent this, which would threaten their hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean and greatly increase the power of their rival, Russia.

There were also religious rivalries. The Tsar, as head of the Third Rome, saw himself as the natural protector of the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman empire. He had already demonstrated this in his critical support for the Greeks during their war of liberation from the Turks in 1839-31. And in 1841 he initiated negotiations with the Turkish authorities to obtain for Russian pilgrims the right of travel within Palestine and the establishment of a guest house for them. Later the Russian Church sent its representative to the Holy Land, Archimandrite Porfiry, who was instrumental in creating an Ecclesiastical Seminary for Arabs in the Monastery of the Holy Cross and organized there studies of Arabic, Greek, Russian and Church Slavonic. Textbooks in Arabic began to appear...

However, the Catholics, whose main political protector was France, were not prepared to allow the Orthodox to play such a prominent role in the Holy Land... "The spark to the tinderbox," writes Trevor Royle, was the key to the main door of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. By tradition, history, and a common usage which had been built up over the centuries, the great key was in the possession of the monks of the eastern, or Greek Orthodox... Church; they were the guardians of the grotto in which lay the sacred manger where Christ himself was... born. That state of affairs was contested with equal fervour by their great rivals, the monks of the Roman Catholic, or Latin, church who had been palmed off with the keys to the lesser inner doors to the narthex (the vestibule between the porch and the nave). There was also the question of whether or not a silver star adorned with the arms of France should be permitted to stand in the Sanctuary of the Nativity, but in the spring of 1852 the rivals' paramount thoughts were concentrated on the possession of the great key to the church's main west door.

"[Alexander] Kinglake wrote: 'When the Emperor of Russia sought to keep for his Church the holy shrines of Palestine, he spoke on behalf of fifty millions of brave, pious, devoted subjects, of whom thousands for the sake of the cause would joyfully risk their lives. From the serf in his hut, even up to the great Tsar himself, the faith professed was the faith really glowing in his heart.'"

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"Nicolas I had both temporal and spiritual reasons for wanting to extend his protection of the Eastern Church within the Ottoman Empire. Napoleon III's were rather different. Having dismissed the French parliament he needed all the support he could get, most especially from the Roman Catholics, before he could declare himself emperor. It suited him therefore to have France play a greater role in Palestine and 'to put an end to these deplorable and too-frequent quarrels about the possession of the Holy Places'. To that end the Marquis de Lavalette, his ambassador to the Porte - or the Sublime Porte, the court or government of the Ottoman Empire - insisted that the Turks honour the agreement made in 1740 that confirmed that France had 'sovereign authority' in the Holy Land. Otherwise, hinted de Lavalette, force might have to be used.

"On 9 February 1852 the Porte agreed the validity of the Latin claims but no sooner had the concession been made than the Turks were forced to bow once more, this time to Russian counter-claims. Basing his argument on an agreement, or firman, of 1757 which restored Greek rights in Palestine and on the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainarji (1774) which gave Russia protection of the Christian religion within the Ottoman Empire, Nicholas's ambassador succeeded in getting a new firman ratifying the privileges of the Greek Church. This revoked the agreement made to the French who responded by backing up their demands with a show of force.

"Later that summer, much to Nicholas's fury and to Britain's irritation, Napoleon III ordered the 90-gun steam-powered battleship Charlemagne to sail through the Dardanelles. This was a clear violation of the London Convention of 1841 which kept the Straits closed to naval vessels, but it also provided a telling demonstration of French sea power. It was nothing less than gunboat diplomacy and it seemed to work. Impressed by the speed and strength of the French warship, and persuaded by French diplomacy and money, Sultan Abd-el-Medjid listened ever more intently to the French demands. At the beginning of December he gave orders that the keys to the Church of the Nativity were to be surrendered to the Latins and that the French-backed church was to have supreme authority over the Holy Places. On 22 December a new silver star was brought from Jaffa and as Kinglake wrote, in great state 'the keys of the great door of the church, together with the keys of the sacred manger, were handed over to the Latins'.

"Napoleon III had scored a considerable diplomatic victory. His subjects were much gratified, but in so doing he had also prepared the ground for a much greater and more dangerous confrontation. Given the strength of Russian religious convictions Tsar Nicholas was unwilling to accept the Sultan's decision - which he regarded as an affront not just to him but to the millions of Orthodox Christians under his protection - and he was determined to have it reversed, if need be by using force himself."1057

In October, 1852, the Tsar arrived in Kiev and confided to the metropolitan: "I do not want to shed the blood of the faithful sons of the fatherland, but our

1057 Royle, op. cit., 19-20.
vainglorious enemies are forcing me to bare my sword. My plans are not yet made - no! But my heart feels that the time is nearing and they will soon be brought to fulfillment."

Seeking advice, the Tsar asked if there were any holy elders in Kiev. The Metropolitan mentioned Hieroschemamonk Theophilus. They set off there immediately. On the way, they saw Blessed Theophilus lying by the side of the road in the middle of an ant-hill, not moving. His arms were folded on his chest crosswise, as in death, and his eyes were completely closed. Ants swarmed in masses all over his body and face, but he, as if feeling nothing, pretended to be dead. Puzzled, the Tsar and the Metropolitan returned to Kiev.

Russian troops moved into the Romanian Principalities, and on July 2, 1853, the Tsar proclaimed: "By the occupation of the Principalities we desire such security as will ensure the restoration of our dues [in Palestine]. It is not conquest that we seek but satisfaction for a just right so clearly infringed." As he told the British ambassador in St. Petersburg, Seymour: "You see what my position is. I am the Head of a People of the Greek religion, our co-religionists of Turkey look up to me as their natural protector, and these are claims which it is impossible for me to disregard. I have the conviction that good right is on my side, I should therefore begin a War, such as that which now impends, without compunction and should be prepared to carry it on, as I have before remarked to you, as long as there should be a rouble in the Treasury or a man in the country."

Nevertheless, when the Powers drew up a compromise "Note", Nicholas promptly accepted it. However, the Turks rejected it, having been secretly assured of Franco-British support. On October 4, 1853 they delivered an ultimatum to the Russians to leave the Principalities within a fortnight. When the Tsar rejected the ultimatum, war broke out. On the same day A.F. Tiutcheva noted in her diary: "A terrible struggle is being ignited, gigantic opposing forces are entering into conflict with each other: the East and the West, the Slavic world and the Latin world, the Orthodox Church in her struggle not only with Islam, but also with the other Christian confessions, which, taking the side of the religion of Mohammed, are thereby betraying their own vital principle."

The British, the French and later the Sardinians joined the Turks. In March, 1854, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston in a secret memorandum prepared for the cabinet wrote of the Russian empire's "dismemberment. Finland would be restored to Sweden, the Baltic provinces would go to Prussia, and Poland would become a sizable kingdom. Austria would renounce her Italian possessions but gain the Danubian principalities and possibly even Bessarabia in return, and the Ottoman empire would regain the Crimea and Georgia."

1058 Royle, op. cit., p. 52.
1059 Tiutcheva, Pri Dwore Dvukh Imperatorov (At the Court of Two Emperors), Moscow, 1990, p. 52; in N.Yu. Selischev, "K 150-letiu nachala Krymskoj vojny" (Towards the 150th Anniversary of the Crimean War), Pravoslavnaia Rus' (Orthodox Rus'), N 24 (1741), December 15/28, 2003, p. 11.
As A.S. Khomiakov wrote: "Whatever political bases and excuses there may be for the struggle that is convulsing Europe now, it is impossible not to notice, even at the most superficial observation, that on one of the warring sides stand exclusively peoples belonging to Orthodoxy, and on the other - Romans and Protestants, gathered around Islam." And he quoted from an epistle of the Catholic Archbishop of Paris Sibur, who assured the French that the war with Russia "is not a political war, but a holy war; not a war of states or peoples, but solely a religious war". All other reasons were "in essence no more than excuses". The true reason was "the necessity to drive out the error of Photius [his opposition to the Filioque]; to subdue and crush it". "That is the recognized aim of this new crusade, and such was the hidden aim of all the previous crusades, even if those who participated in them did not admit it."[1061]

On February 18, 1855, the Tsar, worn out and intensely grieved by the losses in the war, died. (According to one version, he was poisoned by the medic Mandt on the orders of Napoleon III.[1062]) Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev asked his valet whether he remembered the trip with the Tsar to Blessed Theophilus, and the fool-for-Christ's strange behaviour. "Up to now I could not understand his strange behaviour. Now, the prophecy of the Stares is as clear as God's day. The ants were the malicious enemies of our fatherland, trying to torment the great body of Russia. The arms folded on his chest and the closed eyes of Theophilus were the sudden, untimely death of our beloved Batiushka-Tsar."[1063]

Sebastopol fell in September, 1855. In 1856 the new Tsar, Alexander II, signed the Treaty of Paris, thereby bringing the Crimean war to an end. While the Russians had lost some battles and the port of Sebastopol, they retained Kars, which (with Erzurum) they had conquered from the Turks. At the Peace Conference, both Russia and Turkey were forbidden to have fleets in the Black Sea (although Alexander II abrogated this clause in 1870), the Straits were closed for warships, and the Aland islands in the Baltic were demilitarized. On the other hand, as the Russian representative A.F. Orlov telegraphed to St. Petersburg: "The English claims on the independence of Mingrelia, the Trans-Caucasus and other demands have been completely rejected. The quarrels over Nikolaev stirred up by Lord Clarendon have been resolved by our replies."[1064] As Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow put it: "In spite of all this, in Europe we were unconquered, while in Asia we were conquerors. Glory to the Russian army!"[1065]

So in purely military terms, the Crimean war was not such a disaster for Russia; and if the war had continued, might well have ended with victory as superior Russian manpower began to tell. The situation had been much more

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1062 Ivanov, op. cit., p. 327.
1064 Orlov, in Selischev, op. cit., p. 12.
perilous for Russia in 1812, and yet they had gone on to enter Paris in triumph. As Tsar Alexander II had written to the Russian commander Gorchakov after the fall of Sebastopol: "Sebastopol is not Moscow, the Crimea is not Russia. Two years after we set fire to Moscow, our troops marched in the streets of Paris. We are still the same Russians and God is still with us."\textsuperscript{1066}

Nevertheless, writes Evans, “the inadequacies of the respective performances of the various armies led to far-reaching reforms in military organization and supply both in Russia and the United Kingdom… In Russia, Tsar Alexander II, who was the grandson of Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia and thus, like many if not most European monarchs of the nineteenth century, part German, reacted to the defeat by embarking on a series of fundamental reforms. The most significant of these was the emancipation of the serfs, carried out after lengthy preparations in 1861. Creating an army who soldiers had a positive stake in Russia’s military success was one of the motivations for the emancipation, which was followed by a reorganization of government in the provinces. The abolition of serfdom had significant implication for rural Russian administration.

“Ending the landlords’ police powers meant introducing a centralized system of policing, while on the other hand a sense of loyalty to the regime was to be encouraged by establishing locally elected assemblies, introduced in 1864. The assemblies, or \textit{zemstva}, existed at district and provincial levels and were elected separately by nobles, townmen and peasants (the last-named indirectly). At the provincial level, nobles predominated, a factor that dissuaded liberal reformers from pressing for a national assembly; the idea was opposed by conservatives in the tsar’s entourage anyway. Thus the autocracy continued. Alexander made efforts to reform the judicial system, introducing western European-style courts and public trials in 1865, with irremovable judges and jury trials for criminal offences. The police retained powers of ‘administrative arrest’ and exile to Siberia without trial for political offenders, but the reform was still a significant one: in due course, the courts became major centres for the free expression of opinion. In 1862 preventive censorship was replaced by prosecutions after publication. Universities were given greater autonomy, with the professors free to teach what they wanted, and the school system was restructured and extended. Serious attempts were made to purge corrupt bureaucrats and improve the standard of administration. The decentralization of many functions of government to the \textit{zemstva} undoubtedly helped this process.

“Alexander II appointed the liberal Dmitry Alexeyevich Milyutin (1816-1912) as Minister of War in 1861 with the task of reforming the army. Between 1861 and 1881 Milyutin streamlined the administration, reducing the volume of correspondence by 45 per cent, divided the empire into fifteen military districts, integrated the various branches of the army, reorganized and professionalized the military schools and training centres, and increased the available reserve from 210,000 in 1861 to 553,000 by 1870. After tremendous struggles with conservatives at Court who wanted nobles to remain exempt from military service, Milyutin finally succeeded in persuading the tsar to introduce universal

conscription in 1874, with a six-year period of service followed by nine in the reserve. Milyutin was also concerned by the low level of literacy among recruits – a mere 7 per cent in the 1860s – and set up educational schemes within the army that resulted in a swift increase in the literacy rate among soldiers, half of whom were able to read by 1870 and a quarter of whom could write as well. Thus Russia entered the second half of the 1870s far better prepared for war than it had been two decades before...”

And it showed: within a generation of the Crimean War, Russian armies were at the gates of Constantinople...

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However, the fact remained that while the war of 1812-14 had ended in the rout of Russia’s enemies and the triumph of the Christian monarchical principle, this had not happened in 1854-56. Russia had "not yet been beaten half enough", in Palmerston’s words; but her losses had been far greater than those of the Allies (143,000 deaths as opposed to 21,000 British and 95,000 French deaths), and the war had revealed that Russia was well behind the Allies in transport and weaponry, especially rifles. In this respect, Nicholas I’s intensely conservative and militaristic approach to ruling the empire had not served it well. For he had failed to take account of the technological advances made since 1815 by his chief enemies, France and Britain; and his insistence that the Russian army was the same in 1855 as it had been 1815 only served to guarantee that it would fail to modernize adequately. Moreover, as he himself admitted, his system of censorship and spying, while probably necessary in the first half of his reign when rebellions had to be crushed, paradoxically made it difficult for him to get reliable information from a system of informants who were afraid to tell their master certain uncomfortable truths.

Russia’s anti-monarchist enemies had taken heart from her defeat; and her primary war-aim, the retention of her right to act as guardian of the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, had not been achieved - she now had to share the guardianship with four other Great Powers.

Still more serious was the dispiriting effect that the war had on public opinion. Observers had noted the enthusiasm of the simple people for the war, which they considered to be a holy; the soldiers in the Crimea had shown feats of heroism; and the intercession of the Mother of God had clearly been seen in the deliverance of Odessa through her "Kasperovskai" icon. However,

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1067 Evans, op. cit., pp. 237-239.
1068 See “Zhitie sviatitelia Innokentia Khersonskogo” (“The Life of the holy Hierarch Innocent of Cherson”), in Zhitiia i Tvorenia Russikh Sviatyh (The Lives and Works of the Russian Saints), Moscow, 2001, pp. 701-702. Archbishop Innocent of Kherson and Odessa, within whose jurisdiction the Crimea fell, had had sermons "widely circulated to the Russian troops in the form of pamphlets and illustrated prints (lubki). Innocent portrayed the conflict as a 'holy war' for the Crimea, the centre of the nation's Orthodox identity, where Christianity had arrived in Russia. Highlighting the ancient heritage of the Greek Church in the peninsula, he depicted the Crimea as a 'Russian Athos', a sacred place in the 'Holy Russian Empire'
examples of unbelief had been seen among the commanding officers at Sebastopol, and some of the intelligentsia, such as B.N. Chicherin, openly scoffed the idea of a holy war. One scoffer was a young officer who was soon to make a worldwide reputation in another field - Count Leo Tolstoy. In his Sebastopol Sketches he made unflattering comparisons between the western and the Russian armies. His comments on the defenders of Sebastopol were especially unjust: "We have no army, we have a horde of slaves cowed by discipline, ordered about by thieves and slave traders. This horde is not an army because it possesses neither any real loyalty to faith, tsar and fatherland - words that have been so much misused! - nor valour, nor military dignity. All it possesses are, on the one hand, passive patience and repressed discontent, and on the other, cruelty, servitude and corruption."[1069]

Tolstoy was to cast his ferociously cynical eye over much more than the army in the course of his long life as a novelist and publicist. Idolized by the public, he would subject almost every aspect of Russian life and faith to his withering scorn. For, as the poet Athanasius Fet noted, he was distinguished by an "automatic opposition to all generally accepted opinions"[1070]; and in this way was in a real sense "the mirror of the Russian revolution".

The leading Slavophiles of the prewar period, such as Khomiakov and Kireyevsky, died soon after the war, and with their deaths the ideological struggle shifted in favour of the westerners. While the war of 1812 had united the nation behind the Tsar, the Crimean war was followed by increasing division and dissension. The conclusion drawn by Constantine Aksakov (who, in spite of his anti-statism, ardently supported the war) was as follows: "From the very beginning the reason for all our failures has lain, not in the power, strength or skill of our enemies, but in us ourselves; we ourselves, of course, have been our most terrible adversaries. It is no wonder that we have been overcome when we ourselves give in and retreat... Believe me, the danger for Russia is not in the Crimea, and not from the English, the French and the Turks, no, the danger, the real danger is within us, from the spirit of little faith, the spirit of doubt in the help of God, a non-Russian, western spirit, a foreign, heterodox spirit, which weakens our strength and love for our brothers, which cunningly counsels us to make concessions, to humiliate ourselves, to avoid quarrels with Germany, to wage a defensive war, and not to go on the offensive, and not go straight for the liberation of our brothers. We have protected ourselves! That is the source of our enslavement and, perhaps, of our endless woes. If we want God to be for us, it is necessary that we should be for God, and not for the Austrian or in general for the German union, for the sake of which we have abandoned God's work. It is necessary that we should go forward for the Faith and our brothers. But we,

connected by religion to the monastic centre of Orthodoxy on the peninsula of Mount Athos in northeastern Greece. With [Governor] Stroganov’s support, Innocent oversaw the creation of a separate bishopric for the Crimea as well as the establishment of several new monasteries in the peninsula after the Crimean War" (Figes, op. cit., p. 423). However, in the end it was on the other side of the Black Sea, in Abkhazia, that the great monastery of New Athos was constructed shortly before the First World War.

[1070] Fet, in Figes, op. cit., p. 446
having excited the hopes of our brothers, have allowed the cross to be desecrated, and abandoned our brothers to torments... The struggle, the real struggle between East and West, Russia and Europe, is in ourselves and not at our borders.”

In the foreign sphere, the most important long-term consequence was the destruction of the Holy Alliance of Christian monarchist powers established by Tsar Alexander I in 1815. Russia had been the main guarantor of the integrity of both Prussia and Austria, and in 1848 had saved Austria from the revolution. But a bare seven years later, Austria had turned her against her benefactor...

“Hitherto,” writes Bernard Simms, “the Tsarist Empire had tried to stay on good terms with both Prussia and Austria, but tilted strongly towards the latter on ideological grounds. During the war, both powers had blotted their copybooks in St. Petersburg, but Austria’s humiliating ultimatum [“in December 1855, the Austrians joined the French and the British in an ultimatum to the new tsar... to end hostilities or face combined action against him”] had given far more offence than Prussia’s timid neutrality. Henceforth, the Russians saw the Austrians as the principal barrier to their Balkan ambitions, and the idea that the path to Constantinople ran through Vienna – a common slogan in later decades – began to gain currency in St. Petersburg. Even more crucially, the Russians were determined that they would never again face the full force of the German Confederation under the aegis of Austria. Vienna would have to be unbolted from the leadership of Germany. So in late August 1856 the new Russian foreign minister, Gorchakov, announced in a widely discussed circular that the tsar would no longer support his fellow monarchs. The message was clear: the Habsburgs would face the next revolutionary challenge on their own...”

1071 C. Aksakov, in E.N. Annenkov, “Slaviano-Khristianskie' idealy na fone zapadnoj tsivilizatsii, russkie spory 1840-1850-kh gg.” ("Slavic-Christian' ideas against the background of western civilization, Russia quarrels in the 1840s and 50s"), in V.A. Kotel'nikov (ed.), Khristianstvo i Russkaia Literatura (Christianity and Russian Literature), St. Petersburg: "Nauka", 1996, pp. 143-144. Cf. Yury Samarin: “We were defeated not by the external forces of the Western alliance, but by our own internal weakness... Stagnation of thought, depression of productive forces, the rift between government and people, disunity between social classes and the enslavement of one of them to another... prevent the government from deploying all the means available to it and, in emergency, from being able to count on mobilising the strength of the nation” (“O krepostnom sostojanii i o perekhode iz nego k grazhdanskoj svobode” (“On serfdom and the transition from it to civil liberty”), Sochinenia (Works), vol. 2, Moscow, 1878, pp. 17-20; quoted in Hosking, op. cit., p. 317).

In spite of her defeat in the Crimean War, Russia continued to extend her influence into Asia. Her missions to Siberia and Central Asia, China, Japan and Alaska were to bring forth rich fruit; later Persia would feel her beneficial influence. And she fulfilled her mission as the Third Rome in her protection of the ancient Orthodox kingdom of Georgia.

Georgia depended for her very survival on the support of Russia against the Muslim peoples to the south. Correspondingly, Russia's constant aim in the Caucasus region was to establish a firm and reliable bridge to Georgia across the Caucasus mountains. To this end, as Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes, "it was necessary to overcome the opposition of Persia and Turkey and the warlike mountain peoples of the Northern Caucasus and the Caspian and Black Sea coasts whom they often stirred up.

"It is fashionable to talk about the cruelties committed by the Russian armies in this 'Caucasian war'. But it is not fashionable to talk about the bestial acts of the Muslim mountaineers in relation to the Russians, and also in relation to those of their own people who had accepted Orthodoxy (for example, the Ossetians and Georgians). And these acts exceeded all human imagination. War is war! The mutual hardening of the sides was, alas, inevitable here. And so there were also excesses of violence and cruelty on the side of the Russians... Gradually, at a dear price, Russia managed to break the opposition of the mountaineers and thereby guarantee a constant safe 'bridge' of communication with Orthodox Georgia."

Russia first made contact with the Caucasian mountaineers when she achieved her great victory over the Tatar Mohammedans at the taking of Kazan. In 1552 two Cherkassian princes asked Ivan IV, the conqueror of Kazan, to receive them as subjects to help them in their struggle against the Turkish sultan and his vassal, the Crimean Khan. In 1557 two Kabardinian princes, Temryuk and Tizryut, asked for the same in their struggle against Shamkhal of Tarki. Soon there were Cossacks on the banks of Terek, and in 1586 the Russian Tsar and King Alexander of Georgia formed an alliance against Shamkhal, as a result of which Tarki was stormed in 1594. But Sultan-Muta, son of Shamkhal, and the whole of Dagestan rebelled against the Russians. Tarki was destroyed in 1604 and the Russian armies were destroyed. It was not until over a century later, in 1722, that Peter I resumed the Russian advance and conquered the Caspian coast. This brought the Russians in conflict with the Shah of Persia, who in 1741 tried to conquer the area, but was defeated.

"To some extent," writes Dominic Lieven, "the Russians were pulled into the Trans-Caucasus - in other words, across the mountains - by appeals for support from the Georgians, a fellow Orthodox people. Georgia was too weak to defend itself against increasing pressure from both the Ottomans and the Persians.

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1073 Lebedev, Velikorossia, pp. 324, 325.
Georgia had good reason to seek the protection of empire and to escape the anarchy, economic devastation and loss of population that had resulted from existing in an insecure borderland. In the mid-thirteenth century there were five million Georgians, by 1770 there were barely 500,000. In the last decades of the eighteenth century Petersburg wavered as to whether it was worthwhile to take on the burden of defending and ruling Georgia. In the end what mattered most were strategic and geopolitical considerations. Given both traditional hostility to the Ottoman Empire and growing rivalry with Napoleonic France and Britain in Persia and the Ottoman Empire, it was decided to annex Georgia as Russia's base and centre of power beyond the Caucasus. Once established in the region, however, the Russians to some extent had to obey the laws of local geopolitics. This entailed, for example, conquering the land and sea communications between the Trans-Caucasus and Russia. Subduing the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus proved a hugely expensive and time-consuming struggle, not concluded until the 1860s.¹⁰⁷⁴

In 1785-87 Sheikh Mansur led Chechnya and Dagestan in rebellion against the Russians. He was defeated. However, in 1812 rebellion flared up again. Then, "in 1826," writes Lebedev, "for the sake of her interests in Georgia and without a declaration of war, Persia invaded Transcaucasia. General Ermolov, the commander-in-chief of the Russian armies in the Caucasus, was not able with his forces to deal with the invasion. There came to his help the armies led by General Paskevich. In a series of battles Paskevich defeated the Persians, took Erivan (Yerevan), invaded Persia and headed for its capital - Teheran. The Persian Shah sought peace, which was concluded in 1828 in Turkmanchay, in accordance with which the lands of present-day Armenia and Azerbaidjan passed permanently to Russia. An end was placed to Persia's pretensions. Nicholas I bestowed the title of Count of Erivan on Paskevich. It was more difficult to bring into submission the mountain tribes of the Northern Caucasus, with whom the Russian Cossack settlements on the Terek and Kuban had long had dealings. The Chechens, the Cherkessy and other warlike peoples not only warred against the Cossacks, they also lived next to them and entered into peaceful relations with the Russians, encountering in these cases a completely friendly response from the Russians. But in 1825 there began the 'Miurizm' movement, which was introduced from Turkey. The 'Miuridy' (novices) were obliged to wage a holy war against the 'infidel' Russians under the leadership of 'holy elders' - imams and sheiks - with the aim of creating an extensive 'caliphate' from Stambul to the Kuban. The imams Kazi-mullah and later Shamil became popular leaders.¹⁰⁷⁵

From the middle of the 1840s Shamil became both the political and the religious leader of the state of Imamat, "the ruler of the right-believing"; all executive, judicial and legislative power was in his hands. Declaring all the tribal leaders who submitted to the Russians to be traitors and apostates, he united all the North Caucasus mountaineers for the first time.¹⁰⁷⁶ As the French consul in Tiflis wrote: "We have to distinguish two personalities united in Shamil.... On the

one hand, the political leader, dictator, to whom limitless power was presented by events with a democratic system based on the principle of absolute equality. But at the same time he is a religious leader, to whom the calling of the great imam, the supreme head of the right believers, a sacred character is attached. Having this dual calling, he is the only judge in the question of offering the sacrifices demanded by the war. His power is firmly organized."\(^{1077}\)

However, God was with the Russian armies. Thus on December 24, 1853 Archbishop Isidore, the exarch of Georgia, wrote to Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow: "The captured Turks told us openly that when the battle near Alexandropol' became fierce, and the whole Russian detachment became involved, the Turks saw a radiant woman coming down from heaven holding a banner in her hands and accompanied by two warriors. The light from her was so bright that it was like the shining of the sun, and no eye could stand it. This appearance produced horror in the ranks of the fighters and was the reason why, on seeing that God was on the side of Rus', all the Turks turned to flight and lost the battle. The Russians did not see this appearance. By the Providence of God our foreign enemies witnessed to it."\(^{1078}\)

In 1859 Shamil was captured, and by 1864 the war had come to an end. It had claimed the lives of nearly 100,000 Russians killed since 1801. At this point, writes Lieven, most of the population of the western region of the Caucasus "were 'encouraged' to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire amidst great suffering and loss of life. The Chechens and Dagestanis of the eastern region, who had resisted the Russians with equal determination, were allowed to remain in their homeland. The reason for this was that the western region, bordering on a Black Sea on which Russia [after the Crimean War] was not permitted to have a navy, was acutely vulnerable to Ottoman or British attack. In the aftermath of the Crimean War, St. Petersburg's perception was that Russia was dangerously weak, and Palmerston's England on the offensive worldwide. Palmerston himself commented that 'these half-civilized governments such as those of China, Portugal, Spanish America require a Dressing every eight or ten years to keep them in order', and no one who knew his views on Russia could doubt his sense that she too deserved to belong to this category of states. The Russians were not therefore prepared to leave on this coastline a Sunni population whom they quite rightly believed to be potential allies of the Ottomans in any future war. A British historian of the 'Great Game' (i.e. Anglo-Russian nineteenth-century rivalry in Central Asia) comments that 'the forcible exile of six hundred thousand Circassians from the Black Sea Coast deprived the Turks and the British of their most valuable potential allies within the Russian Empire.'\(^{1079}\)

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\(^{1077}\) Kaziev, op. cit., p. 53.  
\(^{1078}\) Snychev, op. cit., p. 325.  
\(^{1079}\) Lieven, op. cit., pp. 213-214. The historian referred to is David Gillard.
Special mention should be made of Crimea, which, though geographically part of Europe, was culturally and religiously part of Asia.

In spite of the region’s close links, first with Byzantium, and then with the Rus’ of St. Vladimir (who was baptized there), it became predominantly Muslim in the later Middle Ages. For, as Shaun Walker writes, “descendants of the Mongols mingled with various indigenous people of the peninsula, and eventually became known as Crimean Tatars. The Tatar khans ruled from Bakhchisarai, their alluring capital in the heart of Crimea’s hilly interior. The Crimean Tatars were a force to be reckoned with fearsome warriors in fur-rimmed spiked helmets, masters of their rugged horses and with a reputation for brutality in their raids for slaves and cattle. In 1571, a Crimean Tatar force invaded Russia, burning Moscow and taking tens of thousands of prisoners before retreating back to Crimea. They would not trouble the Russian capital again, but even as Russia expanded inexorably, the Tatars remained firmly ensconced in the Kirim (‘the Fortress’, which comes the Russian Krym and the English Crimea), ruled by their khan, who was not a hereditary monarch but elected via the nobility. The khanate secured backing from Constantinople, and functioned as a protectorate of the Ottomans, Russia’s main rival by the eighteenth century.

“In 1782 Grigory Potemkin, Catherine the Great’s erstwhile lover and the man in charge of her new provinces in what is now called Ukraine, passionately urged the empress to annex the peninsula. The status quo was dangerous because the Ottomans ‘could reach our heart’ through Crimea, Potemkin warned Catherine. It was worth acting decisively to seize the peninsula while the Ottomans were weak, preoccupied with riots and plague, and the British and French were still distracted by the war in America, Potemkin told the empress. It was a similar pre-emptive logic to reasoning used in 2014: that Russia had to move decisively to prevent a hypothetical future NATO member Ukraine from kicking the Russian fleet out of Sevastopol and turning the Black Sea into a NATO sea.

“Catherine was not immediately convinced. What about the international repercussions, she wondered. Potemkin told her it was naïve to think about such vagaries, given that nobody else did. ‘There is no power in Europe that has not participated in the carving up of Asia, Africa, America,’ he told Catherine, much as Putin would later use Western misdeeds to justify his own flagrant violations of international law.

“The first Russian takeover of Crimea used the carrot as much as the stick. In 1771, Shahin Girey, a Tatar noble who would go on to become the last of the Tatar khans, travelled to St. Petersburg. Catherine invited him to watch dancing girls in a closed, exclusive circle, wooing him with access and jewels. It was the tsarist equivalent of the white telephone and Putin’s financial offers to the Crimean Tatar Dzhemilev more than two centuries later. The next year Shahin Girey returned to the Russian capital, and left with 20,000 rubles, a gold sword, and a good disposition towards the Russians. A few years later he was elected khan, and in 1783 gave up power under Russian pressure without a fight. He
was kept under an honourable house arrest in St. Petersburg, while the Tatar nobility were bought off with promises that their customs and Islamic faith would suffer no repression. Among later generations, the final khan became a byword for cowardice and collaboration. ‘Nobody wants to be the second Shahin Girey,’ Dzhemilev told me, explaining why he turned down Putin’s offer of cash.

“Relations between the Tatars and their new Russian overlords were initially cordial, but arriving Russian landowners seized much Tatar land, and by the turn of the century, there were stories of Russian soldiers amusing themselves by taking pot-shots with their muskets at mullahs during the midday all to prayer. The Russians also provoked ire among the locals for using headstones from Tatar cemeteries as building materials. The relationship deteriorated to the extent that during the Crimean War in the mid-nineteenth century, the Tatars provided the allies (Britain, France, and the Ottomans) with logistical and intelligence support. They paid for it in a series of reprisals in the aftermath, and by 1867, around 192,000 Tatars had fled the peninsula for Turkey, out of a total population of 300,000. They left 784 deserted villages and 457 abandoned mosques. Russian peasants flooded the region, and the aristocracy built palaces along its coastline, of which the splendid Livadia outside Yalta was one of many. Crimea’s demographic makeup was changed forever, and it was really only from this point onwards that Crimea could in any way be considered ‘historically Russian’ [as Putin claims].”

Unlike the Caucasus and Crimea, Central Asia and the Far East did not represent areas of vital geopolitical importance to Russia; and so Russian conquests there must be evaluated in a different way.

In 1859, following the victory of Britain over China in the Second Opium War, and as a British and French force of 18,000 men was approaching Peking to enforce the terms that had been agreed, Count Nicholas Ignatiev managed to secure the weakened Emperor’s formal ceding of Manchuria to Russia. (In 1858 the Chinese had recognized the Russian seizure of the Amur province as a fait accompli.) Then, when the foreign troops had left Peking after securing the agreement they wanted, Ignatiev signed the Treaty of Peking with the Chinese. Peter Hopkirk writes: "It had been a Machiavellian performance of the highest order by the young Ignatiev, then still in his late twenties, and a remarkable diplomatic triumph for the Russians. First, they had formally added a vast tract of territory, the size of France and Germany together, to their already huge northern Asiatic empire. Second, they had got the Chinese to agree to their opening consulates at Kashgar, in Eastern Turkestan, and at Urga, the capital of Mongolia, then both under Peking’s rule. They had thereby stolen a march on their rivals, the British, who had obtained no such facility, for the establishment of consulates meant that Russian merchants and goods would have exclusive

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access to these important new markets. It was with considerable satisfaction, therefore, that Ignatiev left Peking on November 22 and rode hard for St. Petersburg. 'Not since 1815,' one British historian has written, 'had Russia concluded such an advantageous treaty, and probably never before had such a feat been carried off by so young a Russian diplomat. The successes of 1860 went far to obliterate the bitter memories of the Crimean defeat, the more especially as they had been achieved in good measure by hoodwinking the English.'

Machiavellianism? Hoodwinking? From the Russian Tsars? Such an idea would have been considered outrageously unjust in relation to Alexander I or Nicolas I, both of whom conducted their foreign policy on the basis of high principle: Alexander (from 1815, at any rate) - on the basis of the Sacred Union of Christian powers against the revolution, and Nicholas on the basis of the interests of the Orthodox Christian commonwealth as a whole. But in the new reign a group of senior army officers and diplomats, determined to take revenge for their country's defeat in the Crimean War, took advantage of the inexperience of the young tsar to push through a foreign policy that was often Machiavellian, sometimes outrightly deceitful and imperialist in the western sense - that is, designed, not for any higher spiritual purpose, such as the spreading of the Orthodox Christian Faith among the pagans, but simply in order to increase the political and economic power of Russia and steal a march on the scheming British.

However, true missionary work continued whatever the motivations of soldiers and diplomats. Thus as Jeremias Norman writes, in China “the mission finally began to bear real fruit under Archimandrite Gury (Karpov)\textsuperscript{1082}, who was responsible for translating the Gospels into Chinese. After the treaty of Tientsin, in 1858, China was opened to foreign missionary work. It was after this that the mission launched genuine missionary work among the local population and ceased to minister exclusively to the Albazintsy. The mission was also freed from its diplomatic tasks and allowed to devote itself entirely to the work of evangelization. Nonetheless, in 1860 there were no more than 200 Orthodox Christians in China, and these were almost entirely restricted to Beijing and it environs.”\textsuperscript{1083}

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From 1864 the Russians gradually acquired huge territories in Central Asia by a series of sudden coups and advances, each time declaring that they had no intention of acquiring more territory.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1082] Fr. Gury worked for twenty year in the Chinese mission, translating the Gospels, Service Books, Lives of the Saints as well as other religious works into Chinese. Later he became Archbishop of Tauris. In 1929 his body was found to be incorrupt (\url{http://orthodox.cn/saints/20080421gurykarpov_en.htm}). (V.M.)
\end{footnotes}
The first such disavowal came in December, 1864, when just after the Russians had seized the oasis towns of Chinkent and Turkestan from the Khan of Khokand, the Russian Foreign Minister Prince Gorchakov issued a memorandum to the European Powers: "The position of Russia in Central Asia, declared this celebrated document, 'is that of all civilized States which are brought into contact with half-savage nomad populations possessing no fixed social organization. In such cases it always happens that the more civilized State is forced, in the interests of the security of its frontiers and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over those whose turbulent and unsettled character make them undesirable neighbours.' In their turn these newly pacified regions had to be protected from the depredations of the lawless tribes beyond them, and so on. The Russian government therefore had to choose between bringing civilization to those suffering under barbarian rule and abandoning its frontiers to anarchy and bloodshed. 'Such has been the fate,' Gorchakov wrote, 'of every country which has found itself in a similar position.' Britain and the other colonial powers had been 'irresistibly forced, less by ambition than by imperious necessity, into this onward march.' The greatest difficulty, he concluded, lay in deciding where to stop. Nonetheless, having consolidated its frontier with Khokand, Russia was intending to advance no further.

'We find ourselves,' he assured the other powers, 'in the presence of a more solid, less unsettled and better organized State, fixing for us with geographical precision that point at which we must halt.' Whether he himself really believed this, or whether he was merely playing for time on behalf of a government already bent on subjugating the khanates, is a question which still exercises scholars. Certainly N.A. Khalfin, the Soviet historian of this era, believes that it was a deliberate smokescreen aimed at deceiving the British. Needless to say, the Russian advance did not stop there as Gorchakov had promised. Within a few months they were driving south once more. The great Russian push into Central Asia was about to begin."

In 1868 the Russians defeated the emir of Bukhara and annexed Samarkand. "We’ve got to teach these Asiatics a lesson," said Tsar Alexander in true colonialist fashion. He decided to offer the British a free hand in Afghanistan if he was allowed to conquer Khiva. Khiva duly fell, followed by Tashkent. The British were alarmed, but decided on a policy of “masterful inactivity” in this “great game” of colonial conquest between the two Great Powers; for neither power could protest too much without displaying obvious hypocrisy. And so by 1881, the Russians had consolidated their border along the northern frontier of Afghanistan, while that country stood as the neutral buffer between Russia and British India. (In 1842 the British had tried to conquer Afghanistan, but all except one of the 13,000 troops sent to do the job were slaughtered by the tribesmen.)

"In 1874," writes Figes, "the Ministry of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg hosted an extraordinary exhibition by the artist Vasily Vereshchagin, whose enormous battle scenes of the Turkestan campaign had recently returned with

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1084 Hopkirk, op. cit., pp. 304-305.
high acclaim from a European tour. Huge crowds came to see the exhibition (30,000 copies of the catalogue were sold in the first week) and the building of the Ministry became so cramped that several fights broke out as people jostled for a better view. Vereshchagin's pictures were the public's first real view of the Imperial war which the Russians had been fighting for the past ten years against the Muslim tribes as the Tsar's troops conquered Turkestan. The Russian public took great pride in the army's capture of the khanates of Kokand, Bukhara and Khiva, followed by its conquest of Tashkent and the arid steppe of Central Asia right up to the borders with Afghanistan and British India. After its defeat in the Crimean War, the campaign showed the world that Russia was a power to be reckoned with. But Vereshchagin's almost photographic battle images revealed a savagery which had not been seen by civilians before. It was not clear who was more 'savage' in his pictures of the war: the Russian troops or their Asiatic opponents. There was 'something fascinating, something truly horrifying, in the wild energy of these canvases', concluded one reviewer in the press. 'We see a violence that could not be French or even from the Balkans: it is half-barbarian and semi-Asiatic - it is a Russian violence.'

"It had not originally been the painter's aim to draw this parallel. Vereshchagin started out as an official war artist, and it was not part of his remit to criticize the conduct of the Russian military... But his experience of the war in Turkestan had given rise to doubts about the 'civilizing mission' of the Russian Empire in the East. On one occasion, after the Russian troops had massacred the people of a Turkmen village, Vereshchagin dug their graves himself. None of his compatriots would touch the dead. Vereshchagin came to see the war as a senseless massacre... The message of Vereshchagin's epic canvases was clearly understood. He portrayed the Asian tribesmen, not as savages, but as simply human beings who were driven to defend their native land. 'What the public saw,' Stasov later wrote, 'was both sides of the war - the military conquest and the human suffering. His paintings were the first to sound a loud protest against the barbarians of the Imperial war.'

"There was a huge storm of controversy. Liberals praised the artists for his stance against all war. Conservatives denounced him as a 'traitor to Russia', and mounted a campaign to strip him of his Order of St. George. General Kaufman became so enraged when he saw the artist's pictures that he began to shout and swear at Vereshchagin and physically attacked him in the presence of his fellow officers. The General Staff condemned his paintings as a 'slander against the Imperial army', and called for them to be destroyed; but the Tsar, ironically, was on the liberals' side...

"In Russia's educated circles the military conquest of the Central Asian steppe produced two opposing reactions. The first was the sort of imperialist attitude which Vereshchagin's paintings had done so much to offend. It was based on a sense of racial superiority to the Asiatic tribes, and at the same time a fear of those same tribes, a fear of being swamped by the 'yellow peril' which reached fever pitch in the war against Japan. The second reaction was no less imperialist but it justified the empire's eastern mission on the questionable grounds that Russia's cultural homeland was on the Eurasian steppe. By marching into Asia,
the Russians were returning to their ancient home. This rationale was first advanced in 1840 by the orientalist Grigoriev. 'Who is closer to Asia than we are?' Grigoriev had asked. 'Which of the European races retained more of the Asian element than the Slavic races did, the last of the great European peoples to leave their ancient homeland in Asia?' It was 'Providence that had called upon the Russians to reclaim the Asian steppe'; and because of 'our close relations with the Asiatic world', this was to be a peaceful process of 'reunion with our primeval brothers', rather than the subjugation of a foreign race. During the campaign in Central Asia the same thesis was advanced. The Slavs were returning to their 'prehistoric home', argued Colonel Veniukov, a geographer in Kaufman's army, for 'our ancestors had lived by the Indus and the Oxus before they were displaced by the Mongol hordes'. Veniukov maintained that Central Asia should be settled by the Russians. The Russian settlers should be encouraged to intermarry with the Muslim tribes to regenerate the 'Turanian' race that had once lived on the Eurasian steppe. In this way the empire would expand on the 'Russian principle' of 'peaceful evolution and assimilation' rather than by conquest and by racial segregation, as in the empires of the European states.

"The idea that Russia had a cultural and historic claim in Asia became a founding myth of the empire. During the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway in the 1890s, Prince Ukhtomsky, the press baron and adviser to the young Tsar Nicholas II, advocated the expansion of the empire across the whole of the Asian continent, reasoning that Russia was a sort of 'older brother' to the Chinese and the Indians. 'We have always belonged to Asia,' Ukhtomsky told the Tsar. 'We have lived its life and felt its interests. We have nothing to conquer.'"

"Inspired by the conquest of Central Asia, Dostoyevsky, too, advanced the notion that Russia's destiny was not in Europe, as had so long been supposed, but rather in the East. In 1881 he told the readers of his Diary of a Writer: 'Russia is not only in Europe but in Asia as well... We must cast aside our servile fear that Europe will call us Asiatic barbarians and say that we are more Asian than European... This mistaken view of ourselves as exclusively Europeans and not Asians (and we have never ceased to be the latter)... has cost us very dearly over these two centuries, and we have paid for it by the loss of our spiritual independence... It is hard for us to turn away from our window on Europe; but it is a matter of our destiny... When we turn to Asia, with our new view of her, something of the same sort may happen to us as happened to Europe when America was discovered. For, in truth, Asia for us is that same America which we still have not discovered. With our push towards Asia we will have a renewed upsurge of spirit and strength... In our Europe we were hangers-on and slaves, while in Asia we shall be the masters. In Europe we were Tatars, while in Asia we can be Europeans. Our mission, our civilizing mission in Asia will encourage our spirit and draw us on; the movement needs only to be started.'"¹⁰⁸⁵

In Siberia, great progress was made evangelizing the region of the High Altai. "The High Altai regions in the mid-19th century were still 'pagan' and we may describe their religion as 'Shamanism'. In the past there had been waves of various cultural influences: from the Chinese and hence of Buddhism and Taoism and also from the Turkic peoples to the south spread Islamic ideas and perhaps even Manichaeism and Nestorianism. Nevertheless these influences were weak and the main religion was Shamanism. The Russian Orthodox mission to the area was founded by Fr. Makary in 1828. He settled in Biisk as permanent priest in residence in 1830. The missionaries, especially those who were sympathetic to the Altai native people (which was mostly the case) made a fundamental contribution to the work of establishing a written Altai language which became a classic of its type. Later, following the model, the grammars of many other Turkic languages were to be defined. Archimandrite Makary introduced a version of the Bible in the Altai language in the late 1830s. It is amazing to think that this work was begun in 1837 at Easter, not somewhere in highly educated Orthodox centres in the West but far on the frontiers in pagan Altai, in a small place called Ulala.

"Fr. Makary was certainly an exceptional figure. He was a well-educated theologian who commanded several languages, including Greek and Hebrew. He translated the Bible into modern Russian. In his early years he studied the philosophy of the German philosopher Herder and was also familiar with the botanical work of Linneus and Denandel and the works of the astronomer Herschel and in general took a great interest in the natural science. For some time he was professor at the Theological Academy. From contemporary descriptions he seems to have been a man of great holiness who gave incorruptible service and love to the native peoples. In his approach to missionary work he advocated a definite program: it was not only to baptize the 'natives' and turn them into true children of the Heavenly Kingdom but also to lead them to a settled way of life, to literacy and to encourage them towards a more developed and more profitable form of agricultural practice. His program demanded of the missionaries a thorough knowledge of the Altai language, some basic ideas of science and medicine and an understanding of agrarian economics. He prepared for the mission practically useful objects such as seeds for market gardening and fruit growing, agricultural tools and so on. He produced the first translation into Altai of prayers and texts for church services. For the first time in the history of the missionary movement he took seriously the organization of missionary activities for women. He appointed female assistants. The first among these were the Russia Praskovia Landysheva and the Frenchwoman, Sofia Belmont. Among their duties were the education of the newly converted Altai women in the skills of childcare, sewing, bread making, elementary medical care and the fundamentals of midwifery. He even established an icon-painting studio where some gifted students learned about the fine arts to the extent that in time they established the Altai school of painting which spread over the whole region."1086

Russia certainly did have a civilizing mission in Asia: to bring Orthodoxy to its peoples. Unfortunately, this mission was often forgotten in the ardour of nationalist or commercial passion. In the wake of Russia's conquering armies, Orthodoxy did make gains - but more among the pagans than among the Muslims, and even more in Russian America - Alaska - than in Asia proper.

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 his 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 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.”

1088 Montefiore, The Romanovs, p. 140.
1089 Golder, Father Herman, Alaska’s Saint, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2004, pp. 7-8.
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 the Valaam monk St. Herman of Alaska, who stood up for the native population against the deprivations of the Russian traders. He lived as a hermit on Spruce Island and died in 1837, being canonized in 1970.

"From 1823," writes Lebedev, "there begins a second special Church mission, whose most prominent representative turned out to be the young priest Fr. 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 Altai 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 fraternal 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...

St. Innocent’s labours, together with those of Archimandrite Makary in the Altai and Archbishop Nicholas in Japan, give the lie to the idea that Russian Orthodoxy in this period was "ossified" or "paralyzed". 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!"
However, in 1867, following the collapse of the fur trade in the North-West Pacific region, the Tsar sold Alaska and the Aleutian islands to the United States for $7.2 million\textsuperscript{1092} - that is, at about two cents per acre.\textsuperscript{1093} 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, who had fought Russia in the Crimean War, when the United 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 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 29\textsuperscript{th} 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 30\textsuperscript{th}, 1867. The agreed price was $7.2 million, equivalent to around $20 million today, which works out at about two cents an acre.

\textsuperscript{1092} The full text of the agreement: http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/1867(03)18.alyaska.php.
\textsuperscript{1093} Evans, op. cit., p. 641.
“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...”

However, the Orthodox Aleut and Tlingit 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 and oil 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.

1095 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).
AS INDEPENDENT GREECE

As was pointed out earlier, East European nationalism was influenced more by the more mystical, blood-and-soil nationalism of Germany than by the more civic nationalism of France. A particularly important influence coming from Germany was that of Johann Gottfried von Herder, whose concept of the unique essence of each nation was also to influence Russian Hegelian thinkers in the 1840s. According to Daniel P. Payne, “the importance of Herder for East European nationalism” has been demonstrated by Peter Sugar.

“According to Sugar, Herder’s concept of the Volk was transformed in the Eastern European context. In the concept of the Volk, Herder simply meant nationality and did not imply the nation as such. In his arguments against the search for the ideal state, Herder maintained that the concept of liberty must conform to the needs of each particular nationality. Sugar notes: ‘This is a romantic and, even more, a humanitarian concept. It condemns those who place the state, even the ideal state, ahead of people.’ Consequently, in Eastern Europe this contextualization on the basis of each particular nationality led to a unique messianism in the particularization of each Volk. In this particularization a ‘confusion of nationality and nation, of cultural, political, and linguistic characteristics was further extended to justify the Volk’s mission. This mission could be accomplished only if it had free play in a Volksstaat, nation-state.’ Thus, the concept of the nation-state as it developed in Eastern Europe was very different from the Western understanding. In the East each Volk needed its own nation-state in order to fulfill its messianic mission rooted in the Volksville. Herder’s romanticism combined with the political ideas of the West, creating the form of cultural-political nationalism that is uniquely its own.”

However, there were special factors that distinguished Balkan nationalism from German, Herderian nationalism. The most important of these was the role of the Orthodox Church. Whereas in Western Europe the Churches, with the exception of the Catholic Church in Ireland, played only a small role, in the Balkans the Orthodox Church played a decisive part. We have seen how it was Metropolitan Germanos of Patras who actually raised the standard of revolution in the Peloponnese in 1821, and the Church was equally important in the Serbian revolution. At the same time, the Church by her nature, being an international community with a universalist message, was opposed to the divisive tendencies introduced by the various nationalisms.

Thus on the one hand the Orthodox Church supported the struggles for national independence insofar as they were struggles for the survival of the Orthodox faith against Islam. The Ottoman Muslim yoke had a similar effect in stimulating nationalism in the Balkans as Napoleon’s victories had had in stimulating nationalism in Germany. And the Church was on the side of the people against the infidel oppressor.


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On the other hand, the Church in the Ottoman Empire could not afford to identify too closely with the individual national revolutions. And this for two main reasons. First, because the revolutions had caused atrocities – for example, the wiping out of every Turkish man, woman and child in the Peloponnese (57,000 people) – that the Church could not possibly approve of. And secondly because while the Orthodox Christian people of the Balkans constituted a single millet, or people, ruled by a single head – the Ecumenical Patriarch, the individual nationalisms competed with each other and even fought wars against each other. Thus Serbs fought Bulgarians, and Bulgarians fought Greeks – and all three nations fought the Turks, not together, but in competition with each other. Even the Patriarch, who should have been the symbol of Orthodox unity, tended to further Greek interests at the expense of those of his Slav parishioners. This encouraged anti-clerical tendencies among the Slav nationalists.

Thus Payne writes: “With the advent of nationalism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Eastern Europe, which led to the eventual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the various nationalities revolted not only against their Ottoman overlords but also their clerical authorities, especially the Ecumenical Patriarch (EP). Under the leadership of the Greek patriarch, a process of Grecification had occurred to insure ecclesiastical unity in the millet. Instead of the use of Church Slavonic in the Slav churches, the Greek liturgy and practice was enforced, especially in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Additionally, the high taxes placed upon the Orthodox people by the hierarchical authorities to insure their positions with the Sublime Porte produced increasing anti-clericalism in the Balkan peoples. This anti-clericalism against the Greek bishops was also rooted in the Enlightenment ideas of Western Europe. Borrowing the Erastian model of church–state relations that developed in Western Europe, whereby the Church was placed under the authority of the state, East European secular nationalists, desiring their own independent churches, argued for the creation and subjection of national churches to the political authorities. As Aristeides Papadakis argues, ‘Significantly, one of the first steps taken by these independent states was to separate the church within their frontiers from the authority of Constantinople. By declaring it autocephalous, by “nationalizing” it, they hoped to control it.’

“At the time of the development of nationalism in the Balkans, there were two differing opinions as to the direction of the polity to succeed the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, many of the Phanariots believed that the Ottoman Empire eventually would become Greek, allowing for the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire. Thus, they did not support the various nationalist movements that led to the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. Instead, they looked to its natural devolution. This understanding was supported by the traditional Byzantine political ideology of the oikoumene, which holds that the one empire has only one church. In a modified position, Rigas Phereas Vestinlis articulated an understanding of an Orthodox commonwealth of nations in the succeeding empire, with the EP as its head. However, the Western-educated secular nationalists contested the vision of Rigas and what Zakynthos calls ‘neo-byzantine universalism,’ employing instead the Enlightenment ideas of Voltaire to articulate the development of independent nation-states with autocephalous
national churches. Adopting the secular national vision of the state with its concomitant national church led to the transmogrification of the Orthodox understanding of the ‘local church.’

“Greek sociologist Paschalis Kitromilides argues similarly, using Benedict Anderson’s concept of ‘imagined communities,’ that the national historiographies smoothed over the antinomical relationship between Orthodoxy and nationalism. He states: ‘It was the eventual abandonment of the ecumenicity of Orthodoxy, and the “nationalization” of the churches, that brought intense national conflicts into the life of the Orthodox Church and nurtured the assumption concerning the affinity between Orthodoxy and nationality.’ The various national histories created imagined national communities whereby the Church’s opposition to nationalism was dismissed and its support as a nation-building institution was promoted. Kitromilides argues that the Church instead opposed nationalism and the Enlightenment ideas underlying it in order to sustain its traditional theological position of being the ‘one’ Church. However, under the influence of secular nationalism, the Church’s position eventually changed, assuming a nationalist position, especially in regards to the Macedonian crisis of the late nineteenth century…”

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A period of anarchy followed on the assassination of Capodistrias in 1831. Then, on May 7, 1832 Britain, France, Russia and Bavaria signed a treaty in London guaranteeing Greece’s independence and naming the seventeen-year-old Prince Otto von Wittelsbach (1815-67), son of King Ludwig I of Bavaria, as king. “As a good Classicist,” writes Evans, “Otto moved the capital from Nafplio to Athens, but he imported so many of his fellow countrymen into government and administration that his reign was popularly known in Greece as Bavarokratia, the rule of the Bavarians. In the following years Otto was to struggle vainly to retain control over events, though he won some support by backing Greek nationalist attempts to enlarge Greece’s borders to as to include many Greeks who were still under Ottoman rule, a policy that itself was hardly designed to bring stability to the region.”

And yet Greece’s independence was purely nominal. The country had to bribe the Ottomans to recognize them, and Otto remained on his throne only thanks to the support of the European powers. When Byron was dying in Greece in 1824, the Duc d’Orléans had commented “that he was dying so that one day people would be able to eat sauerkraut at the foot of the Acropolis”. He was not far from the truth; for Greece was now under a German Catholic king ruling through German ministers and maintained in power by German troops.

Until King Otto came of age, three regents were appointed by the Great Powers to rule Greece in his name: Colonel Heideck, a Philhellene and the only

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1098 Payne, op. cit.
choice of the Tsar but a liberal Protestant, Count Joseph von Armansperg, a Catholic but also a Freemason, and George von Maurer, a liberal Protestant. Pressed by the British and French envoys, von Armansperg and von Maurer worked to make Greece as independent of Russia and the patriarchate in Constantinople as possible. Russian demands that the king (or at any rate his children) become Orthodox, and that the link with the patriarchate be preserved, were ignored… It was Maurer who was entrusted with working out a new constitution for the Church. He “found an illustrious collaborator, in the person of a Greek priest, Theocletus Pharmacides. This Pharmacides had received his education in Europe and his thought was exceedingly Protestant in nature; he was the obstinate enemy of the Ecumenical Patriarch and of Russia.”

Helped by Pharmacides, Mauer proceeded to work out a constitution that proposed autocephaly for the Church under a Synod of bishops, and the subordination of the Synod to the State on the model of the Bavarian and Russian constitutions, to the extent that "no decision of the Synod could be published or carried into execution without the permission of the government having been obtained".

As Frazee comments: “If ever a church was legally stripped of authority and reduced to complete dependence on the state, Maurer’s constitution did it to the church of Greece.”

In spite of the protests of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Tsar, and the walk-out of the archbishops of Rethymnon and Adrianople, this constitution was ratified by thirty-six bishops on July 26, 1833. The conservative opponent of Pharmacides in the government was Protopresbyter Constantine Oikonomos. He said that the constitution was “from an ecclesiastical point of view invalid and non-existent and deposed by the holy Canons. For this reason, during the seventeen years of its existence it was unacceptable to all the Churches of the Orthodox, and no Synod was in communion with it.”

Not only did the Ecumenical Patriarchate condemn the new Church: many Greeks in Greece were also very unhappy with their situation.

In effect, the Greek Church had exchanged the uncanonical position of the patriarchate of Constantinople under Turkish rule for the even less canonical position of a Synod unauthorized by the patriarch and under the control of a Catholic king and a Protestant constitution! In addition to this, all monasteries with fewer than six monks were dissolved (425 out of 500, according to one estimate, 600 according to another), and heavy taxes imposed on the remaining monasteries. And very little money was given to a Church which had lost six to seven thousand clergy in the war, and whose remaining clergy had an abysmally low standard of education.

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Among the westernising reforms envisaged at this time was the introduction of the new, Gregorian calendar. Thus Cosmas Flammiatos wrote: “First of all they were trying in many ways to introduce into the Orthodox States the so-called new calendar of the West, according to which they will jump ahead 12 days [now 13], so that when we have the first of the month they will be counting 13 [now 14]. Through this innovation they hope to confuse and overthrow the feastdays and introduce other innovations.”

And again: “The purpose of this seminary in Halki of Constantinople which has recently been established with cunning effort, is, among other things, to taint all the future Patriarchs and, in general, all the hierarchy of the East in accordance with the spirit of corruption and error, through the proselytism of the English, so that one day, by a resolution of an ‘ecumenical council’ the abolition of Orthodoxy and the introduction of the Luthero-Calvinist heresy may be decreed; at the same time all the other schools train thousands and myriads of likeminded individuals and confederates among the clergy, the teachers and lay people from among the Orthodox youth.”

For his defence of Orthodoxy, Cosmas was imprisoned together with 150 monks of the Mega Spilaion monastery. The monks were released, but Cosmas died in prison through poisoning.

In 1843 Greece experienced a liberal revolution “when a conspiracy of leading civilian politicians and army veterans of the War of Independence in the 1820s staged a bloodless coup against the ‘Bavarocracy’ of German officials brought in by King Otto when he had been imposed on the country by the Great Powers in 1832. Storming out of their barracks, the soldiers gathered before Otto’s palace window, shouting ‘Long Live the Constitution!’ Reluctantly, the king yielded, appointing one of the leading conspirators, Andreas Metaxas (1790-1860), Prime Minister in what was now a constitutional monarchy with a restored legislative assembly elected by universal male suffrage. Otto never fully accepted the Constitution, and his continued intrigues against it, combined with his failure to produce an heir, eventually led to another conspiracy that overthrew him in 1863. Told to accept this fait accompli by Britain and France, who had called the shots in Greece throughout his reign, Otto went back to Munich, where he would regularly appear in the Bavarian Court in traditional Greek dress until his death in 1867…”

In 1852 the schism between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Free Greek Church was healed. But there was no sign that the Greeks (on either side) had fully understood the cause of the schism - the evil doctrine of revolutionary nationalism. To this day, March 25 is a national holiday in Greece; those who

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1103 Flammiatos, cited in Monk Augustine, “To imerologiakon skhisma apo istorikis kai kanonikis apopseos exetazomenou” (The calendar schism from an historical and canonical point of view), Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenitis, 129, January-February, 1992, p. 12 (in Greek).
1105 Evans, op. cit., p. 223.
died in the revolution are "ethnomartyrs" (a term unknown to the Holy Fathers); and the "great idea", while watered down to correspond to the realities of modern Greece's small-power status, remains a potent psychological force...

The question that arose after 1832 was: who were the Greeks? "Although," as Roderick Beaton writes, "just about all the citizens of the kingdom with the exception of the king and his advisers who came from Bavaria, were united by the Greek language and the Orthodox religion, many more co-religionists and Greek speakers lived beyond its boundaries, in territories still under the control of the Ottomans. Since a state now existed, and the very concept of European statehood had previously been foreign to traditional Greek concepts of themselves, it followed that in order to live up convincingly to that concept, the Greek state would have to include all the Greeks. Greek irredentism is therefore as old as the Greek state, a logical consequence of the Romantic concept of nationhood used to define that state from the beginning.

"The inescapable requirement for the state to incorporate all its ‘nationals’ within its boundaries in order to justify its own self-definition, was first articulated in a famous speech to the Constituent Assembly in Athens in January 1844 by Ioannis Kolettis, a veteran strategist of the war of independence and soon to become prime minister: ‘Greece is geographically placed at the centre of Europe, between East and West, her destiny in decline [i.e. the destiny of ancient Greece] to spread light to the West, but in her rebirth in the East. The former task our forefathers achieved, the latter falls to us. In the spirit of this oath [i.e. to liberate Greece] and of this great idea I have consistently seen the nation’s representatives gathered here to decide the fate not only of Greece, but of the Greek race.’…"  

In the same speech Kolettis went on to say: "The kingdom of Greece is not Greece; it is only a part, the smallest and poorest, of Greece. The Greek is not only he who inhabits the kingdom, but also he who lives in Janina, or Thessaloniki, or Serea, or Adrianople, or Constantinople, or Trebizond, or Crete, or Samos, or any other country of the Greek history or race. There are two great centers of Hellenism, Athens and Constantinople. Athens is only the capital of the kingdom; Constantinople is the great capital, the City, I Polis, the attraction and the hope of all the Hellenes."  

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So the revolutionary aim of the new nationalism was to unite Constantinople and Greek-speaking Anatolia – and perhaps even the whole of the territory formerly ruled by Alexander the Great and the Byzantine autocrats! - to the Kingdom of Greece, although Athens and Constantinople were disunited not only politically but also ecclesiastically. Fortunately, the ecclesiastical schism, as

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1107 Kolettis, in Glenny, *op. cit.* Italics mine (V.M.).
we have seen, was healed in 1852. However, the political schism was never healed because the revolution failed disastrously in 1922. The vast majority of Anatolian Greeks were indeed united with their Free Greek cousins, but only through an exchange of populations in 1922-23. Even after the collapse of the Ottoman empire, Constantinople and Anatolia remained in Turkish hands...

Sir Steven Runciman writes: "Throughout the nineteenth century, after the close of the Greek War of Independence, the Greeks within the Ottoman Empire had been in an equivocal position. Right up to the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913 they were far more numerous than their fellow-Greeks living within the boundaries of the Kingdom of Greece, and on average more wealthy. Some of them still took service under the Sultan. Turkish government finances were still largely administered by Greeks. There were Greeks in the Turkish diplomatic service, such as Musurus Pasha, for many years Ottoman Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Such men served their master loyally; but they were always conscious of the free Greek state, whose interests often ran counter to his. Under the easygoing rule of Sultans Abdul Medjit and Abdul Azis, in the middle of the century, no great difficulties arose. But the Islamic reaction under Abdul Hamit led to renewed suspicion of the Greeks, which was enhanced by the Cretan question and the war, disastrous for Greece, of 1897. The Young Turks who dethroned Abdul Hamit shared his dislike of the Christians, which the Balkan War seemed to justify. Participation by Greeks in Turkish administrative affairs declined and eventually was ended.

"For the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople the position throughout the century was particularly difficult. He was a Greek but he was not a citizen of Greece. By the oath that he took on his appointment he undertook to be loyal to the Sultan, even though the Sultan might be at war with the Kingdom of Greece. His flock, envious of the freedom of the Greeks of the Kingdom, longed to be united with them; but he could not lawfully encourage their longing. The dilemma that faced Gregory V in the spring of 1821 was shared, though in a less acute form, by all his successors. He no longer had any authority over the Greeks of Greece. Hardly had the Kingdom been established before its Church insisted on complete autonomy [i.e. autocephaly] under the Archbishop of Athens. It was to Athens, to the King of Greece, that the Greeks in Turkey now looked for the fulfilment of their aspirations. Had the Christian Empire been restored at Constantinople the Patriarch would indeed have lost much of his administrative powers; but he would have lost them gladly; for the Emperor would have been at hand to advise and admonish, and he would have enjoyed the protection of a Christian government. But as it was, he was left to administer, in a worsening atmosphere and with decreasing authority, a community whose sentimental allegiance was given increasingly to a monarch who lived far away, with whom he could not publicly associate himself, and whose kingdom was too small and poor to rescue him in times of peril. In the past the Russian Tsar had been cast by many of the Greeks in the role of saviour. That had had its advantages; for, though the Tsar continually let his Greek clients down, he was at least a powerful figure whom the Turks regarded with awe. Moreover he did not interfere with the Greeks' allegiance to their Patriarch. Whatever Russian ambitions might be, the Greeks had no intention of ending as Russian subjects.
As it was, the emergence of an independent Greece lessened Russian sympathy. Greek politicians ingeniously played off Britain and France against Russia, and against each other and Russia found it more profitable to give her patronage to Bulgaria: which was not to the liking of the Greeks.

"We may regret that the Patriarchate was not inspired to alter its role. It was, after all, the Oecumenical [i.e. Universal] Patriarchate. Was it not its duty to emerge as leader of the Orthodox Oecumene? The Greeks were not alone in achieving independence in the nineteenth century. The Serbs, the Roumanians, and, later, the Bulgarians all threw off the Ottoman yoke. All of them were alive with nationalistic ardour. Could not the Patriarchate have become a rallying force for the Orthodox world, and so have checked the centrifugal tendencies of Balkan nationalism?

"The opportunity was lost. The Patriarchate remained Greek rather than oecumenical. We cannot blame the Patriarchs. They were Greeks, reared in the Hellene tradition of which the Orthodox Church was the guardian and from which it derived much of its strength. Moreover in the atmosphere of the nineteenth century internationalism was regarded as an instrument of tyranny and reaction. But the Patriarchate erred too far in the other direction. Its fierce and fruitless attempt to keep the Bulgarian Church in subjection to Greek hierarchs, in the 1860s, did it no good and only increased bitterness. On Mount Athos, whose communities owed much to the lavish, if not disinterested, generosity of the Russian Tsars, the feuds between the Greek and Slav monasteries were far from edifying. This record of nationalism was to endanger the very existence of the Patriarchate in the dark days that followed 1922."\textsuperscript{108}

The philhellene Russian diplomat C.N. Leontiev wrote in the 1880s: "The movement of contemporary political nationalism is nothing other than the spread of cosmopolitan democratization with the difference only in the methods. There has been no creativity; the new Hellenes have not been able to think up anything in the sphere of higher interests except a reverent imitation of progressive-democratic Europe. As soon as the privileged Turks, who represented something like a foreign aristocracy among the Greeks, had removed themselves, nothing was found except the most complete plutocratic and grammatocratic egalitarianism. When a people does not have its own privileged, more or less immobile classes, the richest and most educated of the citizens must, of course, gain the superiority over the others. Therefore in an egalitarian-liberal order a very mobile plutocracy and grammatocracy having no traditions or heritage inevitably develop. At that time [1821-32] the new Greece could not produce a king of their own blood, to such a degree did her leaders, the heroes of national liberty, suffer from demagogic jealousy! It, this new Greece, could not even produce a president of her native Greek blood, Count Kapodistrias, without soon killing him."

According to Leontiev, the Greek revolution, which continued throughout the nineteenth century, represented a new kind of Orthodox nationalism, a

nationalism influenced by the ideas of the French revolution that did not, as in earlier centuries, seek to strengthen national feeling for the sake of the faith, but rather used religious feeling for the sake of the nation. This was the reason why, in spite of the fact that the clergy played such a prominent role in the Greek revolution, their influence fell sharply after the revolution in those areas liberated from the Turks. "The Greek clergy complain that in Athens religion is in decline (that is, the main factor insulating [the Greeks] from the West has weakened), and makes itself felt much more in Constantinople than in Athens, and in general more under the Turks than in pure Hellas."^1109

"The religious idea (Orthodoxy) was taken by the Greek movement only as an aid. There were no systematic persecutions of Orthodoxy itself in Turkey; but there did exist very powerful and crude civil offences and restrictions for people not of the Mohammedan confession. It is understandable that in such a situation it was easy not to separate faith from race. It was even natural to expect that the freedom of the race would draw in after it the exaltation of the Church and the strengthening of the clergy through the growth of faith in the flock; for powerful faith in the flock always has as its consequence love for the clergy, even if it is very inadequate. With a strong faith (it doesn't matter of what kind, whether unsophisticated and simple in heart or conscious and highly developed) mystical feeling both precedes moral feeling and, so to speak, crowns it. It, this mystical feeling, is considered the most important, and for that reason a flock with living faith is always more condescending also to the vices of its clergy than a flock that is indifferent. A strongly believing flock is always ready with joy to increase the rights, privileges and power of the clergy and willingly submits to it even in not purely ecclesiastical affairs.

"In those times, when the peoples being freed from a foreign yoke were led by leaders who had not experienced the 'winds' of the eighteenth century, the emancipation of nations did not bring with it a weakening of the influence of the clergy and religion itself, but even had the opposite effect: it strengthened both the one and the other. In Russian history, for example, we see that from the time of Demetrius Donskoj and until Peter I the significance, even the political significance of the clergy was constantly growing, and Orthodoxy itself was becoming stronger and stronger, was spreading, and entering more and more deeply into the flesh and blood of the Russian nation. The liberation of the Russian nation from the Tatar yoke did not bring with it either the withdrawal of the clergy from the political sphere or a lessening of its weight and influence or

^1109 Leontiev, "Natsional'naia politika kak orudie vsemirnoj revoliutsii" (National Politics as a Weapon of Universal Revolution), in Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo, op. cit., pp. 513, 514-515. However, religious zeal had by no means been banished from the Free Church of Greece. Thus "in 1901 there were riots in Athens over a new translation of the New Testament into demotic Greek, carried out in London and published in Athens by the daily newspaper, Acropolis. After it was condemned as blasphemous by the Patriarchate, students took to the streets, trashed the paper’s offices, and on 8 November held a mass demonstration outside the Temple of Zeus to demand the excommunication of the translators. The Prime Minister called in the army, who shot eight demonstrators dead and wounded another seventy. In the ensuing furore he was forced to resign, along with the Metropolitan, who had approved the translation." (Richard Evans, The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 462).
religious indifference in the higher classes or cosmopolitanism in morals and customs. The demands of Russian national emancipation in the time of St. Sergius of Radonezh and Prince Ivan Vasilievich III were not combined in the souls of the people's leaders with those ideals and ideas with which national patriotism has been yoked in the nineteenth century in the minds of contemporary leaders. What seemed important then were the rights of the faith, the rights of religion, the rights of God; the rights of that which Vladimir Soloviev so successfully called God's power.

"In the nineteenth century what was thought to be important first of all was the rights of man, the rights of the popular mob, the rights of the people's power. That is the difference."

Leontiev concludes: "Now (after the proclamation of 'the rights of man') every union, every expulsion, every purification of the race from outside admixtures gives only cosmopolitan results [by which he means 'democratization within and assimilation (with other countries) without'].

"Then, when nationalism had in mind not so much itself as the interests of religion, the aristocracy, the monarch, etc., then it involuntarily produced itself. And whole nations and individual people at that time became more varied, more original and more powerful.

"Now, when nationalism seeks to liberate and form itself, to group people not in the name of the various, but interrelated interests of religion, the monarchy and privileged classes, but in the name of the unity and freedom of the race itself, the result turns out everywhere to be more or less uniformly democratic. All nations and all people are becoming more and more similar and as a consequence more and more spiritually poor.

"In our time political, state nationalism is becoming the destroyer of cultural, life-style nationalism."

81. INDEPENDENT SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

As we have seen, a major idea underpinning the varieties of Balkan nationalist ideologies was that the national state had the right to extend its boundaries to include everyone of the same race within its territory, even if these ethnic enclaves had for centuries belonged to other states. Since no state was ethnically homogeneous, and since almost every nation had ethnic enclaves in more than one state, this was a recipe for almost permanent nationalist warfare and revolution, and especially in the bewildering patchwork of interwoven national enclaves that constituted the Balkans. The most consistent and determined advocates of this idea were the Serbs...

As we have seen, the Greek revolution was to a large extent inspired by the ideology of the French revolution. This was not the case in Serbia, which had very few western-educated intellectuals infected by this ideology. But in both countries’ liberation the Orthodox Church played an important role.

There were two Serbian Orthodox Churches: the metropolitanate of Karlovtsy in Slavonia, founded in 1713, which by the end of the nineteenth century had six dioceses with about a million faithful\textsuperscript{1111}, and the Peć patriarchate, which was abolished by the Ecumenical Patriarch Samuel in 1766, but which recovered its autocephaly in the course of the revolution.\textsuperscript{1112} In spite of this administrative division, and foreign oppression, the Serbian Church preserved the fire of faith in the people. "For the Cross and Golden Freedom" was the battle-cry.

In 1791 Austria-Hungary ended its war with Turkey at the Treaty of Sistovo. Simon Winder writes: “A critical element at Sistov, now the Danubian Bulgarian town of Svishtov, was the decision to hand over Belgrade to the Turks. This gesture was designed to be generous enough to ensure that fighting could come to an end and troops moved to France, but it had head-spinning and quite unintended consequences. If Belgrade had been part of the new Habsburg Empire as it emerged during the following decade, then not only would Vienna have controlled the only major hub in the northern Balkans, but the Serbs would have become an important group in the Empire much like the Czechs, rather than just a small element in parts of Hungary. The history of the nineteenth century then takes a dazzlingly different turn. As it was, the Serbs soon revolted and pushed the Turks out of Belgrade on their own. This formed the kernel of an independent state that would never have been allowed to exist if it had still been under Habsburg rule.”\textsuperscript{1113}

\textsuperscript{1111} Adrian Fortescue, \textit{The Orthodox Eastern Church}, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1920, p. 308.

\textsuperscript{1112} The Serbian Peć Patriarchate was founded as an autocephalous archiepiscopate by St. Savva in 1218-19, raised to the rank of a patriarchate with its see in Peć in 1375, and abolished in 1766. It should not be confused with the Bulgarian Ochrid archiepiscopate, which was founded by Emperor John Tsimiskes in Preslava in 971, moved to Sophia, Voden, Prespa and finally Ochrid, and was abolished on January 16, 1767.

But the Serbian revolution was hindered by the rivalry of its two main peasant leaders, Karadžordje and Obrenović. Karadžordje took command of the first uprising in 1804, which paradoxically was fought by the Serbian peasants in the name of the Sultan against four Dahi, local Muslim lords who had rebelled against the Sultan's authority and had begun to oppress the Serbian peasantry. As a result of Karadžordje's victories over the Dahi, he was able to extract some concessions from the Sultan for the Serbian pashalik. But the Serbs could not hope to liberate their nation fully and permanently from the Ottomans without the active support of the Russians, who in 1806 declared war on the Porte. However, in 1812, the Russian Tsar Alexander was forced to sign the Treaty of Bucharest with the Sultan and withdraw his troops from the Balkan to face Napoleon's Great Army in Russia. And so in 1813 the Ottomans were free to invade Serbia, Karadžordje was forced to flee, and his rival Obrenović took over the leadership of the liberation movement.

Several Serbs were martyred at this time, including the holy New Martyr Paisius who was igumen of the Annunciation monastery in Trnava near Cacak. After the collapse of Karageorge's revolt in 1813, the Turks began a reign of terror against the Serbs. Disease also swept the area because of the many bodies left unburied. The people attempted another revolt under Hadž-Prodan Gligorijevic, and the monks of Trnava became involved in it. The rebellion took place on the Feast of the Cross (September 14), but it was crushed by the Turks. Many people were captured, and some were executed on the spot as a warning to others.

Some of the prisoners were sent to Suleiman Pasha in Belgrade, among whom were Sts Paisius and Avakum. The holy deacon Avakum sang "God is with us" (from Compline) in the prison cell, while St Paisius prayed. The Turks offered to free anyone who would convert to Islam. Some of the prisoners agreed to this,

St Paisius was taken from prison and forced to carry a stake to the place of execution. He was impaled, and the stake was set into the ground. The holy martyr exclaimed, "Glory to God." Then the vizier clapped his hands to signal his soldiers to draw their swords and begin killing some of the other prisoners. Forty-eight people were killed, and their bodies were raised up on posts. After suffering for some time, St Paisius surrendered his soul to God, thereby obtaining the crown of martyrdom on December 17, 1814.

"In 1817," writes Tim Judah, "Karadžordje slipped back into Serbia. Sensing danger for both himself and his plans, Obrenović sent his agents who murdered Karadžordje with an axe. His skinned head was stuffed and sent to the sultan. This act was to spark off a feud between the families which was periodically to convulse Serbian politics until 1903.

"Miloš Obrenović was as rapacious as any Turk had been in collecting taxes. As his rule became ever more oppressive, there were seven rebellions against
him including three major uprisings between 1815 and 1830. In 1830 the sultan nevertheless formally accepted Miloš's hereditary princeship.

Mazower writes: “The two new states [Serbia and Greece] were impoverished, rural countries. Serbia was, in Lamartine’s words, ‘an ocean of forests’, with more pigs than humans. Serbian intellectual life in the Habsburg lands was far more advanced than in Belgrade. Perhaps 800,000 Greeks inhabited the new Greek Kingdom, while more than 2 million still remained subjects of the Porte. No urban settlement in Greece came close to matching the sophistication and wealth of Ottoman cities such as Smyrna, Salonika and the capital itself. There were, to be sure, impressive signs of revitalization for those who wished to look: the rapidly expanding new towns built on modern grid patterns which replaced the old Ottoman settlements in Athens, Patras, Tripolis and elsewhere, for example, or the neo-classical mansions and public buildings commissioned by newly independent government. ‘some barracks, a hospital, a prison built on the model of our own,’ wrote Blanqui from Belgrade in 1841, ‘announce the presence of an emergent civilization.’ In fact, similar trends of town planning and European architecture were transforming Ottoman cities as well.

“The inhabitants of the new states were as viciously divided among themselves in peace as they had been in war. In Serbia adherents of the Karageorge and Obrenović factions tussled for power, locals vied with the so-called ‘Germans’ (Serb immigrants from the Habsburg lands), Turcophiles fought Russophiles. In Greece there were similar struggles between regional factions, between supporters of the various Powers, who each sponsored parties of their own, and between ‘autochthones’ and ‘heterochthones’. These divisions embittered politics from the start…”

The early history of the Serbian principedom was not inspiring. Karadjordje had killed his stepfather before being killed by his godfather, and the pattern of violence continued. But "behind the drama of intrigue, shoot-outs and murder," writes Misha Glenny, "lay a serious struggle concerning the constitutional nature of the Serbian proto-state. Karadjordje wanted to establish a system of monarchical centralism while his baronial opponents were fighting for an oligarchy in which each leader would reign supreme in his own locality. A third, weaker force was made up of tradesmen and intellectuals from Vojvodina in the Habsburg Empire. They argued for an independent judiciary and other institutions to curb the power of both Karadjordje and the regional commanders. The modernizing influence of the Vojvodina Serbs was restricted to the town of Belgrade.”

Gradually the monarchical idea prevailed over the oligarchical one. But somehow the idea of the sacred person of the monarch, and the sacred horror at

1115 Mazower, op. cit., p. 95.
1116 Glenny, op. cit., p. 17.
the thought of regicide, never caught on in Serbia... Thus when Karadjordje's son Alexander replaced Miloš's son Milan in 1842, he purged the Obrenović faction.

But in 1858 the Obrenovićes returned to power. Then in 1868 Prince Michael and his family were murdered...

In 1844 Ilija Garašanin, Minister of Internal Affairs under Prince Alexander of Serbia, published his Načertanije, or "Blueprint". This was in effect a blueprint for a Greater Serbia that would include the Bosnian Croats, since they were considered to be Catholicized Serbs.

“Garašanin's project,” writes Misha Glenny, “was informed by a historicist approach, recalling the supposed halcyon days of Tsar Dušan's medieval Serbian empire, and by a linguistic-cultural criterion. The sentiment underlying the Načertanije seemed to imply that where there was any doubt, it could be assumed that a south Slav was a Serb, whether he knew it or not.”

The Načertanije, according to John Etty, “was the main development in Serbian nationalism. Though concerned about upsetting them, this secret document identified Turkey and Austria-Hungary as obstacles to Serbian greatness and detailed, in order of ease of acquisition, the annexation of all Serbian-speaking regions. Although implementation was delayed by domestic disruption, such expansionist aspirations were significant. Before 1890, Nikolai Pašić (future Prime Minister) referred to the Načertanije when he explained ‘the Serbs strive for the unification of all Serb tribes on the basis of tradition, memory and the historical past of the Serb race.’”

Garašanin looked to Russia as a likely patron of Greater Serbia; but Nicholas I’s foreign minister Nesselrode was not interested in the idea of a Greater Serbia, which would inevitably drag Russia into yet another war with the Ottoman empire...

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Serbian nationalism flourished especially in Montenegro, a tiny Serbian principality on the Adriatic coast that was de jure part of the Ottoman Empire, but de facto, as Norman Russell writes, “autonomous under the vague suzerainty of Russia. Since the end of the seventeenth century Montenegro had been ruled by a member of the Petrovich family, who was also the bishop, and who passed on the succession to a nephew or cousin.”

Probably the greatest of the Montenegrin Prince-Bishops was Petar I, who became a monk at the age of twelve and metropolitan at the age of twenty-three. “He ruled almost half a century, from 1782 to 1830. Petar I was a wise bishop

and a great military commander who won many crucial victories against the Ottomans, including at Martinici and Krusi in 1796. With these victories, Petar I liberated and consolidated control over the Highlands that had been the focus of constant warfare, and also strengthened bonds with the Bay of Kotor, and consequently the aim to expand into the southern Adriatic coast.

“In 1806, as French Emperor Napoleon advanced toward the Bay of Kotor, Montenegro, aided by several Russian battalions and a fleet of Dmitry Senyavin, went to war against the invading French forces. Undefeated in Europe, Napoleon’s army was however forced to withdraw after defeats at Cavtat and at Herceg-Nov. In 1807, the Russian–French treaty ceded the Bay to France. The peace lasted less than seven years; in 1813, the Montenegrin army, with ammunition support from Russia and Britain, liberated the Bay from the French. An assembly held in Dobrota resolved to unite the Bay of Kotor with Montenegro. But at the Congress of Vienna, with Russian consent, the Bay was instead granted to Austria. In 1820, to the north of Montenegro, the Morača won a major battle against an Ottoman force from Bosnia.

“During his long rule, Petar strengthened the state by uniting the often quarreling tribes, consolidating his control over Montenegrin lands, and introducing the first laws in Montenegro. He had unquestioned moral authority strengthened by his military successes. His rule prepared Montenegro for the subsequent introduction of modern institutions of the state: taxes, schools and larger commercial enterprises. When he died, he was by popular sentiment proclaimed a saint.”

St. Petar always lived in a narrow monastic cell. His incorrupt relics and many healings bear witness to his sanctity.

He died in 1830 and was succeeded by his nephew, Petar Petrovic Njegoš, who was then only seventeen years old. “He was nevertheless immediately tonsured and three years later sent to Russia to be made a bishop. He had not had any inclination towards the ecclesiastical life but accepted the burden as part of his duty to his people.

“He was a good and enlightened ruler, attempting in very different circumstances to create the rudiments of a modern state. On his return from Russia to Centinje, the capital, he opened the first school. He built cisterns and a windmill, and opened a gunpowder works. The last project must have commended itself to the warlike people, but when he attempted to introduce a modest degree of taxation they rebelled. The exploitation of the situation by Austria and Turkey was only one of the many serious problems which continually confronted him. Njegosh was acutely conscious of his lonely isolation. ‘I am a ruler among barbarians and a barbarian among rulers,’ he once

1121 See https://oca.org/saints/lives/2015/10/18/108067-st-peter-of-cetinje.
exclaimed. Under the strain of single-handed government his health broke down, and he died in 1851 at the age of thirty-eight.”¹¹²²

In view of the Serbian wars of the 1990s, it is important to note the long-term influence of Njegoš’s poem, *The Mountain Wreath*, which glorifies the mass slaughter of Muslims who refuse to convert to Christianity. The principal character, Vladyka Danilo, says:

*The blasphemers of Christ’s Name*
*We will baptize with water or with blood!*
*We’ll drive the plague out of the pen!*
*Let the son of horror ring forth,*
*A true altar on a blood-stained rock!*

In another poem Njegoš writes that "God’s dearest sacrifice is a boiling stream of tyrant’s blood."¹¹²³ A defensive armed struggle against the infidel for the sake of Christ can be a good deed. But there is little that is Christian here.

Even Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, an admirer of Njegoš, had to admit: "Njegoš’s Christology is almost rudimentary. No Christian priest has ever said less about Christ than this metropolitan from Cetinje."¹¹²⁴ Some of his ideas, such as that of the pre-existent celestial Adam appear to be gnostic.¹¹²⁵

This bloodthirsty and only superficially Christian tradition was continued by such figures as the poet Vuk Karadžić, who called the Serbs "the greatest people on the planet" and boosted the nation’s self-esteem "by describing a culture 5,000 years old and claiming that Jesus Christ and His apostles had been Serbs."¹¹²⁶ However, it must be remembered that the truly Christian tradition of St. Savva continued to exist alongside the bloodthirsty one in Serbia...

In 1852, Njegoš was succeeded by his nephew Danilo, who wanted to marry. So he “refused to be ordained bishop and turned the prince-bishopric into an ordinary secular princedom.”¹¹²⁷

**82. INDEPENDENT ROMANIA**

Romania, unlike the other Balkan Christian States, had never had a long spell as a unified, independent State. The reign of Stephen the Great in the fifteenth century was the nearest they ever came to it; but this brief moment of genuine Romanian Orthodox autocracy, sandwiched between the fall of the Byzantine autocracy and the rise of the Russian one, had been snuffed out by the Ottoman sultans, who handed over administration of Wallachia and Moldavia to rich Greek Phanariots from Constantinople. From the end of the sixteenth century until 1711, Romanian rulers were crowned by the Ecumenical Patriarch, but the Ottomans took over closer control thereafter.

Closer geographically to Russia than Bulgaria or Serbia, but without the Slavic blood ties that linked those States to Russia (although there were many Slavic words in the Romanian language, and the Romanian Church had for long been under the jurisdiction of Trnovo in Bulgaria), Romania finally regained her unity and independence as a result, first, of Russia’s gradual weakening of Ottoman power in a series of wars (between 1711 and 1829, seven major wars were fought on Romanian territory), and then of the power vacuum created by Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War.

Dan Ioan Mureșan writes: “During the last Russian occupation, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church name Gavril Bănulescu Bodoni as exarch (1787-92, 1806-12), interfering directly in the jurisdiction of the ecumenical patriarchate. This prelate of Romanian origin encouraged a movement of opposition against Greek influence that led directly to the autocephaly of the reunited Romanian Church. In 1812, after the annexation of the eastern half of Moldavia (Bessarabia) by the Russian Empire, Bodoni became the new metropolitan of Chișinău, developing here a Romanian cultural politics. But all his Russian successors strove for the integration of the diocese in the bosom of the Russian Church. One of them even confiscated all the Romanian books in the monasteries and burnt them in an unmatched auto-da-fé.

“The Regulamentul Organic (‘Organic Rules’) issued by the Russian general Count Pavel Dmitrievich Kiseleff, for the two principalities in 1828 reduced the civil importance of the prelates and confined the church to spiritual matters.”

A movement towards Romanian independence began during the Greek revolution of 1821. “In January 1821,” writes Glenny, “Tudor Vladimirescu, a minor boyar and former soldier in the Russian army, led an uprising of militiamen whose primary aim was to depose the Greek prince, the hospodar, and banish Phanariot rule from the two Principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia. Throughout the eighteenth century the hospodars had sucked the cultural and economic lifeblood out of the Principalities, as illustrated by the mutation of the Greek word kiverneo, meaning ‘to govern’, into its Romanian derivative chiverniseala, which means ‘to get rich’. Subordinate to the Porte, the hospodars

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administered an economic region that forced Romania's indigenous aristocracy, the boyars, to sell a large part of their produce to Constantinople at prices fixed below the value of the goods in Western Europe. At a time when the Ottoman Empire's ability to harvest declining resources was under pressure, the _hospodar_ system, which ensured the steady flow of annual tribute, commodities and tax revenue, was extremely useful.

"The Vladimirescu uprising was driven by hostility to Greeks. Herein lies a bizarre paradox: carried out by Romanians in the heart of Wallachia, the uprising was conceived and executed as the first act of the Greek Revolution. It was intended to soften up the Principalities' defences to facilitate Alexander Ypsilantitis's invasion from Russia into Moldavia. The affair was planned by the Philiki Etairia whose leadership hoped it would trigger a wave of instability throughout the Empire, leading to the eventual liberation not of the Romanians but of the Greeks.

"Vladimirescu and Ypsilantitis failed to ignite a broader revolution because they did not receive the expected support from Russia. St. Petersburg and Istanbul were old enemies, but Tsar Alexander was deeply conservative and felt obliged to resist revolution wherever it occurred, whether in Russia or in neighbouring empires. While it was legitimate to beat the Turk on the battlefield, it was not done to subvert him from within. Thus the first lesson from the debacle was that no revolutionary movement in the Principalities could succeed without the backing of a great power... The Principalities stood at the intersection of the Russian, Austrian and Turkish empires, and acted as the last land bridge which Russian armies had to cross into the Balkan peninsula. In the eyes of St. Petersburg, their strategic importance among the proto-states of the Balkans was unparalleled. The fate of such a crucial region could not possibly be left to the people who happened to live there..."\(^\text{1129}\)

This last statement is unfair to St. Petersburg, and an analysis of why it is unfair is revealing. The tsars had been engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the Turks for centuries. Their own security depended on a weakening of Turkish power, and it was in the interests of all the Orthodox Christians that they should succeed. For under which regime was Orthodoxy more likely to be protected – the Russian or the Ottoman? This is not to say that there were not acts of Russian cultural vandalism in Romania – as in Georgia, which was in a similar position in relation to the Russian Empire. But there is no question that overall, it was better for Orthodox Romanians to be under the only Orthodox great power than under infidel Turkey...

Nor could the region simply “be left to the people who happened to live there”. For the native Orthodox were not yet strong enough to have their own independent state, and if left without supervision would simply fall into the hands of another great power – if not the Turks, then the still more dangerous Austro-Hungarians, who during the eighteenth century were persecutors of the Orthodox faith.

\(^{1129}\)Glenny, _op. cit._, pp. 58-59.
Glenny continues: "Disillusioned with Ypsilantis and the Etairia, Vladimirescu nonetheless found himself in control of Bucharest. Here he assumed the role of revolutionary Prince to replace the hospodar who had been poisoned by Vladimirescu’s co-conspirators. But Vladimirescu soon found himself in trouble with his own people. The peasants around Bucharest seized the revolutionary moment to make their own demands, mainly to abolish the hated feudal obligation, the clacă, which obliged the peasant to work an unlimited number of days for his landlord every year. When the Turkish army crossed the Danube to restore order, the Romanian landowners were greatly relieved.

"The Turks did agree to do away with the hospodars, who had become too unreliable. The boyars were happy to continue collecting the tribute for the Porte while augmenting their economic power with political influence. For the peasantry, however, a greedy Romanian oligarchy had replaced a Greek kleptocracy. Landowners did not pay taxes, peasants did. In Greece and Serbia, the peasants had formed the backbone of the military force that shook Ottoman rule, and while this did not eliminate tension between the emerging elites and the peasantry, it did mean that peasant interests were not ignored. In Wallachia and Moldavia, it never entered the boyars' heads that the peasants had any legitimate demands whatsoever.

"Nonetheless, French revolutionary ideas were transmitted to Romania more swiftly than to anywhere else in the Ottoman Empire because of the close linguistic affinity between Romanian and French. The sons of rich boyars, especially from Wallachia, were sent to study in Paris where they quickly adopted French political culture as their own. During the reign of the hospodars, the hitherto hereditary title of boyar had been devalued by regulations allowing its sale. The proliferation of noble titles created a new type of boyar, less wedded to the countryside but eager to exercise political influence. This urban boyar became first the agent of western ideas in the Principalities and later the backbone of the Liberal party, just as the landowning boyar would later support the Conservatives.

"The works of Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau flooded into the private and public libraries of the Principalities, particularly Wallachia. Boyars, intellectuals, and merchants from Bucharest and Iași made the pilgrimage to Paris. The appearance of Romanian cities was transformed over a twenty-year period from the mid-1820s. The boyars embarked on the large-scale cultivation of wheat, which was sent up the Danube to western markets. The barges returned loaded with clothes, furniture and cigars. Fashion changed dramatically, as the Ottoman robes of the east were discarded in favour of the hats and suits of St. Petersburg and Vienna. One contemporary commentator noted in 1829 how Bucharest had been struck by 'the disease of love'. Divorce, affairs, elopement and rape appear to have been part of the staple culture of the Wallachian capital's nobility."
"With their awakened passion for national revival, the boyars established the principle of joint citizenship for the people of Wallachia and Romania. The idea of being Romanian, with a common heritage, was invented in its modern form. The demand for the unification of the Principalities was heard ever louder, especially in Bucharest where people regarded the city as the natural centre of power in a future Romanian state. Although dramatic, these changes affected a small proportion of society. As the leading historian of modern Romania puts it, the boyars had listened to only one part of the revolutionary message from France, 'the foreign policy and the revival of nationalism, completely ignoring its democratic aspect, social equality'.

"Four peculiar circumstances - an absentee landlord, the Sultan; an indigenous landlord class; proximity to Russia and Austria; and the growing influence of Enlightenment ideas - allowed the Principalities to stumble into autonomy in the late 1820s. Unlike the Serbs and the Greeks, the Wallachians and Moldavians did not have to run the gauntlet of full-scale armed insurrection against the Muslim landlord. The boyars continued much as before, accommodating themselves to the vagaries of great-power politics.

"The decisive event came in 1829 with the Treaty of Adrianople, which concluded the Russo-Turkish war and drove the Ottomans from the Principalities in all but name. Although the Principalities were still obliged to pay an annual tribute to the Porte and recognize the Sultan as sovereign, Russia now dominated Wallachia and Moldavia, creating a quasi-constitution, known as the Organic Regulations, for each Principality. The boyars were no longer restricted to the Ottoman markets - they could sell their produce wherever they wanted."\textsuperscript{1130}

The period of the Russian protectorate was in general good for Romania, allowing both the economy (with some restrictions) and the political institutions (two assemblies composed of 800 boyars subordinated to an elected prince) to develop at a steady pace. At the same time, Tsar Nicholas I acted as a restraining power on the spread of revolutionary ideas. But then came the revolution of 1848. The tsar crushed the revolution in Hungary, thereby relieving the pressure of the Hungarian Catholics on the Romanian Orthodox of the Hungarian province of Transylvania. But when the Organic Regulations were burned in Bucharest, the tsar, ever the legitimist and enemy of revolution, joined with the Sultan to occupy the Principalities and suppress the revolution.

"A central goal of the revolutionaries had been unification of the two Principalities, but they faced internal opposition. A broad political division separated the Moldavian and Wallachian elites, symbolized by the different intellectual influences in their two capitals, Iaşi and Bucharest. Among intellectuals in the Moldavian capital, the influence of German Romantic nationalism, especially the ideas of J.G. Herder, was paramount. Herder's work suggested that the essence of national identity was transmitted through popular language and culture. During the nineteenth century his theories were adopted

\textsuperscript{1130}Glenny, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 58-60.
by conservative nationalists who believed that national identity could not be learned, but only transmitted through blood. In contrast, the Bucharest intellectuals had imbibed the French conception of nationhood which saw commitment to a particular culture as the central requirement in establishing a person's national identity. (Everyone could be considered French provided they accepted French culture - unless, of course, they had yet to attain 'civilization', like the Algerians.) For this latter group, anyone, regardless of origin, could join the Romanian national struggle by accepting its goals (but Romania's Jews were excluded from this liberal embrace).

"Bucharest intellectuals, like Ion C. Brătianu and C.A. Rosetti, who established the revolutionary government of 1848 and would later inspire the founding of the Liberals, were the first to advance the theory that Romanians formed the last outpost of western culture in south-eastern Europe. Their ethnic identity and autonomous traditions, they believed, meant that they shared much more in common with French and English culture than with the 'Asiatic' values of the other regions of the Ottoman Empire."\(^{1131}\)

These anti-Orthodox ideas, if allowed to develop, would have been extremely dangerous for the future of Romania, and would have torn her away from the Orthodox Christian commonwealth. Not coincidentally, therefore, Divine Providence arranged for foreign intervention. Thus in 1853 Tsar Nicholas occupied the Principalities in the opening stage of the Crimean War. "The two princes of Moldavia and Wallachia were forced out of office and fled to Vienna. The Russian authorities introduced a harsh military regime and suppressed political organizations."\(^{1132}\)

However, the Russians were forced out by the Austrians and Ottomans, who occupied the country until the end of the war. In spite of that, things turned out reasonable well. As Barbara Jelavich writes, "primarily with French aid, the Romanian leaders were able to secure the election of a single prince, Alexander Cuza, for both Wallachia and Moldavia. He then united the administrations and legislatures of the two provinces. During Cuza's reign important reforms to improve the condition of the peasants were introduced."\(^{1133}\)

Romania's greatest saint, Callinicus of Cernica, "took part in the sessions of the Parliament of 1857, as one of the deputies representing the clergy of Oltenia [of which he was bishop]. It was this Parliament which on 2nd November 1857 requested that those who should inherit the throne of the united Romanian lands should be of the Orthodox religion, and that the language to be written and spoken in Parliament should be that which 'the people understand'. On 12th December 1857 St. Callinicus was among those who declared that they would not participate in further sessions of the Parliament, until the great powers of Europe had accepted the desires of the Romanian nation for unity and national


\(^{1132}\) Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

independence. During this time of struggle for the Romanian people he urged his clergy, through his diocesan letters to pray in their churches ‘for the union of the Romanians in a single heart and soul’. When, on 24th January 1859, Prince Cuza was elected as Prince of both the Romanian principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia, St. Callinicu was one of the members of the Assembly. He was amongst those who signed the official statement sent to Cuza, at Iaşi, informing him that he had been elected Prince of Romania.”

During the reign of this Prince, St. Callinicu was constantly at his side, supporting his measures of reform, and dissenting only in some of his ecclesiastical “reforms”, such as the seizure of monastic lands. Prince Cuza for his part, as N. Iorga observes, ‘knew how to honour this man of many qualities, even though so different from his own’. Cuza honoured and appreciated him, since he saw in him ‘a true and holy man of God’, declaring that ‘such another does not exist in all the world’...

As Mureşan writes, Cuza “proclaimed the autocephaly of the Romanian Church in 1865 under the presidency of a new primate, the metropolitan of Walachia.... It has recently been been proved that in 1864 Alexandru Ioan Cuza became the last Romanian prince to accept princely unction in the ancient Byzantine rite by the ecumenical patriarch. The prince seems then to have arrogated a series of prerogatives derived from this ceremony, acting in some crucial instances with an authority imitating that of a Byzantine emperor: like Nicephorus Phokas, he tried to delimit the abuses of monastic property; like Justinian and Basil II, he created an autocephalous church in opposition to the patriarchate...”

For a brief moment Romania had acquired something like that "symphony of powers" which is the only normal and Divinely blessed form of government for an Orthodox nation. But in 1866 a group of conspirators led by Brâtianu and called "the monstrous coalition" forced their way into Prince Cuza’s bedroom and forced him to abdicate - the revolution was underway again. Agents scoured Europe for a western prince that would be favoured by the western powers and came up with Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a member of the Catholic branch of the Prussian royal family, later known as King Carol I. The Moldavian Orthodox hierarchy protested, and for half a day there were demonstrations in Iaşi with placards such as: ‘Revolution: Fear Not. Hold on a Few Hours, the Russians Are Coming to Our Aid”.

But the Russians didn't come, and all the great powers abstained from intervention. Romania was “free”. However, this was not the freedom that St. Callinicu had prayed for. Freedom from Ottoman rule - yes. Monarchy, albeit one limited by a parliament and constitution - yes. But a Catholic monarch, with


1135 Mureşan, op. cit., p. 149.

1136 Glenny, op. cit., p. 68.
all that implied for the future penetration of Romania by western heresy - no. The saint died on April 11, 1868 standing, as if there was still an important job to be done, a vital war to be won...\textsuperscript{1137}

Mureșan continues: “The autocephaly of the church was inscribed in the Constitution of 1866 and finally in the church law of 1872. After the proclamation of the kingdom in 1881, the Romanian Synod itself consecrated the holy chrism in 1882. This aroused the stern opposition of Patriarch Joachim III, but his successor Joachim IV bowed to the reality: the Synod in Constantinople officially recognized the autocephaly by the Tomos of 25 April 1885.”\textsuperscript{1138}

A word about the Romanian Church in Hungarian-dominated Transylvania. Originally, the Karlovtsys metropolitanate in Slavonia had jurisdiction over the Romanians of Hungarian Transylvania. However, in 1864 (or 1865) the authorities allowed the creation of a separate Romanian Church in Hungary, the metropolitanate of Hermannstadt (Nagy-Szeben).\textsuperscript{1139} From 1873 there was also a metropolitanate of Černovtsy with jurisdiction over all the Orthodox (mainly Serbs and Romanians) in the Austrian lands.\textsuperscript{1140}

“In Transylvania,” writes Mureșan, “Bishop Andrei Șaguna (1848-73) achieved the restoration of his metropolitanate in 1865, emancipating it from Serbian jurisdiction, and established cordial relations with the Romanian Uniate Church which in 1852 had herself been released from Hungarian jurisdiction and reorganized as a metropolitanate. A specialist of canon law and excellent manager, Șaguna issued the new Organic Rules of his metropolitanate, founded on the autonomy of the church in respect of the state and the large participation of the Christian laity in the affairs of the church. At the same time, the Orthodox Church of Bukovina also acceded to the metropolitan rank (1873), almost a century after the annexation of this ancient Moldavian province by the Habsburg Empire (1775).”\textsuperscript{1141}

\textsuperscript{1137} Fr. Dumitru Staniloae, “St. Callinicus of Cernica”, in Allchin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{1138} Mureșan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{1139} Fortescue, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 316.
\textsuperscript{1140} Fortescue, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 323-325.
\textsuperscript{1141} Mureșan, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 149-150.
We have seen that the national revolutions of Greece, Serbia and Romania were all ambiguous affairs, mixtures of good intentions and evil acts. The essential flaw in all of them (but not in all their participants) was their inversion of the true order of values, their placing of national freedom above religious faith, the earthly kingdom above the Heavenly Kingdom. As often as not, the laudable aim of national freedom from the Turks or Austro-Hungarians was placed higher than "the one thing necessary" - true faith and love, - and therefore became corrupted by evil passions. The national movements raised the banner of political freedom, understood in the heretical sense of the French revolutionaries, and not that of spiritual freedom, that is, Orthodoxy. The result was a general decline of religious life throughout the region, even when - or rather, especially when - political freedom had been attained.

Hardly less distressing was the way in which the national movements took place in more or less complete separation from each other. There was no general, united movement of the Orthodox Balkans against oppression, but only uncoordinated insurgencies of Greeks, Serbs, Romanians, etc. There was no real unity within or between the Orthodox nations; and without such unity real success - that is, success that was pleasing to God - was impossible.

Where could Orthodox leadership be found that was not in thrall to particularist nationalist ambitions or western revolutionary ideologies? There were only two possibilities. One was the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which had jurisdiction over all the Orthodox of the Balkans and could therefore be expected to acts in the interest of Orthodoxy as a whole. Unfortunately, however, as we have seen, the Patriarchate was not truly ecumenical; it was more universal in its ambitions than in its love. Though less tied to Greek nationalism than the Church of the Free State of Greece, it still aimed to subdue the whole of the Balkans to the Greeks, as it showed through its abolition of the Serbian and Bulgarian patriarchates in 1766-1767 and its support for Greek Phanariot rule in Romania. In any case, the Ecumenical Patriarch was an ecclesiastical, not a political leader. His political role as exarch of the Orthodox millet had been imposed upon him by the Turks, but was not, according to Orthodox teaching, consistent with his role as patriarch.

The other source of Orthodox unity was the Russian Tsar. The only Orthodox great power, Russia had steadily grown in power since she inherited the mantle of Byzantium in the fifteenth century. At great cost to herself, she had pushed the boundaries of her dominion southward, weakening the Ottomans' dominion over the Balkan Orthodox. Without Russian military, diplomatic and financial help the Balkan Orthodox would have been in a much worse situation. The trouble was: with the partial exception of the Serbs, they did not recognize this; for many of the Balkan Orthodox Russia was not "the Third Rome", but just another foreign power with no particular authority over them.
The Ecumenical Patriarch's political loyalties were divided between the Turkish Sultan, to whom he had sworn an oath of allegiance, the King of Greece, to whom his nationalist sympathies drew him, and the Tsar of Russia, to whom his religious principles should have led him. After all, in 1598 Patriarch Jeremiah II had called the tsar the sovereign "of all Christians throughout the inhabited earth," and explicitly called his empire "the Third Rome". But now, centuries later, the image of Russia the Third Rome had faded from the minds of the Patriarchs; it was the image of a resurrected New Rome, or Byzantium, that attracted them and their Greek compatriots - this was the truly "great idea". The Russians were, of course, Orthodox, and their help was useful; but the Greeks would liberate themselves. To adapt a phrase of Elder Philotheus of Pskov, it was as if they said: "Constantinople is the Second Rome, and a Third Rome there will not be"...

But what of the oath of allegiance that the Patriarch had sworn to the Sultan, which was confirmed by his commemoration at the Divine Liturgy? Did not this make the Sultan his political master to whom he owed obedience? Certainly, this was the position of Patriarch Gregory V in 1821, as we have seen, and of other distinguished teachers of the Greek nation, such as the Chian, Athanasios Parios. Moreover, the Tsar who was reigning at the time of the Greek Revolution, Alexander I, also recognized the Sultan as a lawful ruler, and as lawful ruler of his Christian subjects, even to the extent of refusing the Greeks help when they rose up against the Sultan in 1821. Even his successor, Tsar Nicholas I, who did come to the rescue of the Greeks in 1827 and again in 1829, continued to regard the Sultan as a legitimate ruler.

However, the situation was complicated by the fact that, even if the Patriarch commemorated the Sultan at the Liturgy, almost nobody else did! Thus Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov writes: "In Mohammedan Turkey the Orthodox did not pray for the authorities during Divine services, which was witnessed by pilgrims to the Sepulchre of the Lord in Jerusalem. Skaballonovich in his "Interpreted Typicon" writes: 'With the coming of Turkish dominion, the prayers for the kings began to be excluded from the augmented and great litanies and to be substituted by: "Again we pray for the pious and Orthodox Christians" (p. 152)."\textsuperscript{1142}

But perhaps commemoration and obedience are different matters, so that commemoration of an authority may be refused while obedience is granted... Or perhaps the Sultan could not be commemorated by name because no heterodox can be commemorated at the Divine Liturgy, but could and should have been prayed for in accordance with the apostolic command... For St. Paul called on the Christians to pray "for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2.2), although the authorities at that time were pagans...

\textsuperscript{1142} Zhukov, Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Rodine i za Rubezhom (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, pp. 18-19.
However, there was one important difference between the pagan authorities of St. Paul's time and the heterodox authorities of the nineteenth century. In the former case, the pagan Roman empire was the only political authority of the Oecumene. But in the latter case, there was a more lawful authority than the heterodox authorities - the Orthodox Christian authority of the Tsar.

The critical question, therefore, was: if there was a war between the Muslim Sultan, on the one side, and the Orthodox Tsar, on the other, whom were the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans to pray for and support?...

Precisely this situation arose during the Crimean War. The Russians were fighting for a cause dear to every Orthodox Christian heart: the control of the Holy Places. And their enemies were an alliance of three of the major anti-Orthodox powers, Muslim (Turkey), Catholic (France) and Protestant (England). So the supreme loyalty inherent in faithfulness to Orthodox Christianity - a loyalty higher than any oath given to an infidel enemy of the faith under duress - would seem to have dictated that the Patriarch support the Russians. But he neither supported them, nor even prayed for the Russian Tsar at the liturgy.

Perhaps the likely terrible retribution of the Turks on the Balkan Orthodox was a sufficient reason not to support the Tsar openly. But could he not commemorate the Tsar at the liturgy, or at any rate not commemorate the Sultan as other Balkan Churches did not? For even if the Sultan was accepted as a legitimate authority to whom obedience was due in normal situations, surely his legitimacy failed when his used his authority to undermine the much higher authority of the Orthodox Christian Empire?

Certainly, the Athonite Elder Hilarion (whom we have met before as Fr. Ise, confessor of the Imeretian King Solomon II) felt that loyalty to the Tsar came first in this situation, although he was not Russian, but Georgian. He instructed his disciple, Hieromonk Sabbas, to celebrate the Divine Liturgy every day and to pray for the Russians during it, and to read the whole Psalter and make many prostrations for the aid of "our Russian brethren". And the rebuke he delivered to his ecclesiastical superior, the Ecumenical Patriarch, was soon shown to have the blessing of God.

"When some time had passed," witnesses Hieromonk Sabbas, "the elder said to me: 'Let's go to the monastery, let's ask the abbot what they know about the war, whether the Russians are winning or the enemies.' When we arrived at the monastery, the abbot with the protoses showed us a paper which the Patriarch and one other hierarch had sent from Constantinople, for distributing to all the serving hieromonks in the monasteries. The Patriarch wrote that they were beseeching God, at the Great Entrance in the Divine Liturgy, to give strength to the Turkish army to subdue the Russians under the feet of the Turks. To this was attached a special prayer which had to be read aloud. When the abbot, Elder Eulogius, had read us this patriarchal epistle and said to the elder: 'Have you understood what our head, our father is writing to us?', my elder was
horrified and said: 'He is not a Christian,' and with sorrow asked: 'Have you read this in the monastery during the Liturgy, as he writes?' But they replied: 'No! May it not be!' But in the decree the Patriarch was threatening any monastery that did not carry out this order that it would suffer a very severe punishment. The next day we went back to our cell. A week passed. A monk came from Grigoriou monastery for the revealing of thoughts, and my elder asked him: 'Did you read this prayer which the Patriarch sent to the monasteries?' He replied: 'Yes, it was read last Sunday during the Liturgy.' The elder said: 'You have not acted well in reading it; you have deprived yourselves of the grace of Holy Baptism, you have deprived your monastery of the grace of God; condemnation has fallen on you!' This monk returned to the monastery and told his elders and abbot that 'we have deprived the monastery of the grace of God, the grace of Holy Baptism - that is what Papa Hilarion is saying.' On the same day a flood swept away the mill, and the fathers began to grumble against the abbot: 'You have destroyed the monastery!' In great sorrow the abbot hurried to make three prostrations before the icon of the Saviour and said: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, I'm going to my spiritual father Hilarion to confess what I have done, and whatever penance he gives me I will carry it out, so that I should not suffer a stroke from sorrow.' Taking with him one hierodeacon and one monk, he set off for the cell of the Holy Apostle James, where we living at the time. When they arrived, my elder was outside the cell. The abbot with his companions, on seeing my elder, fell face downwards in prostrations to the earth and said: 'Bless, holy spiritual father.' Then they went up to kiss his hand. But my elder shouted at them: 'Go away, away from me; I do not accept heretics!' The abbot said: 'I have sinned, I have come to ask you to give me a penance.' But the elder said: 'How did you, wretched one, dare to place Mohammed higher than Christ? God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ says to His Son: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet" (Psalm 109.1), but you ask Him to put His Son under the feet of His enemies! Get away from me, I will not accept you.' With tears the abbot besought the elder to receive him in repentance and give him a penance. But my elder said: 'I am not your spiritual father, go, find a spiritual father and he will give you a penance.' And leaving them outside his cell weeping, the elder went into it and locked the door with a key. What could we do? We went into my cell and there served an all-night vigil, beseeching God to incline the elder to mercy and give a penance to the abbot. In the morning the elder went into the church for the Liturgy, not saying a word to those who had arrived, and after the dismissal of the Liturgy he quickly left for his cell. Those who had arrived with the abbot began to worry that he would suffer a heart attack; they asked me to go in to the elder and call him; perhaps he would listen to me. I went, fell at his feet and asked him: 'Be merciful, give them a penance - the abbot may suffer a stroke in the heart attack with fatal consequences.' Then the elder asked me: 'What penance shall I give them? God on high is angry with them. What epitimia should I give them which would propitiate God?' When I said to my father: 'Elder, since I read the whole Psalter of the Prophet-King David every day, as you told me, there is one psalm there which fits this case - the 82nd: "O God, who shall be likened unto Thee? Be Thou not silent, neither be still, O God..." Command them to read this psalm tomorrow during the Liturgy, when the Cherubic hymn is being sung, at the Great Entrance; let the
hieromonk who read the prayer of the Patriarch before stand under the great chandelier, and when all the fathers come together during the Great Entrance, the priest must come out of the altar holding the diskos and chalice in his hands, then let one monk bring a parchment with this psalm written on it in front, and let the hieromonk, who has been waiting under the chandelier, read the whole psalm loudly to the whole brotherhood, and while they are reading it from the second to the ninth verses let them all repeat many times: "Lord, have mercy". And when the remaining verses are being read, let them all say: "Amen!" And then the grace of God will again return to their monastery.' The elder accepted my advice and asked me to call them. When they joyfully entered the cell and made a prostration, the elder said to them: 'Carry out this penance, and the mercy of God will return to you.' Then they began to be disturbed that the exarch sent by the Patriarch, who was caring for the fulfilment of the patriarchal decree in Karyes, might learn about this and might bring great woes upon the monastery. They did not know what to do. The elder said: 'Since you are so frightened, I will take my hieromonk and go to the monastery; and if the exarch or the Turks hear about it, tell them: only Monk Hilarion the Georgian ordered us to do this, and we did it, and you will be without sorrow.' Then the abbot said: 'Spiritual father, we are also worried and sorrowful about you, because when the Turks will learn about this, they will come here, take you, tie you up in sacks and drown you both in the sea.' My elder replied: 'We are ready, my hieromonk and I, let them drown us.' Then we all together set off in the boat for Grigoriou monastery. When the brothers of the monastery saw us, they rejoiced greatly. In the morning we arranged that the hieromonk who had read the prayer of the Patriarch should himself liturgize; they lit the chandelier during the Cherubic hymn, and when all the fathers were gathered together and the server had come out of the altar preceded by the candle and candle-holder and carrying the chalice and diskos on his head and in his hands, he declared: "May the Lord remember you all in His Kingdom", and stopped under the great chandelier. Then one monk, having in his hand the parchment with the 82nd psalm written on it, stood in front of the priest and began to read: "O God, who shall be likened unto Thee? Be Thou not silent, neither be still, O God..." - to the end. Meanwhile the fathers called out: "Lord, have mercy" until the 10th verse, and then everyone said: "Amen" many times. And they all understood that the grace of God had again come down on the monastery, and the elders from joy embraced men, thanking me that I had done such a good thing for them; and everyone glorified and thanked God.'

"All this took place under Patriarch Anthimus VI. At the end of the war he was again removed from his throne. After this he came to Athos and settled in the monastery of Esphigmenou, where he had been tonsured. Once, in 1856, on a certain feast-day, he wanted to visit the monastery of St. Panteleimon, where Fr. Hilarion was at that time. During the service the Patriarch was standing in the cathedral of the Protection on the hierarchical see. Father Hilarion passed by him with Fr. Sabbas; he didn't even look at the venerable Patriarch, which the latter immediately noticed. The Patriarch was told about the incident with the prayer in Grigoriou monastery. At the end of the service, as usual, all the guests were invited to the guest-house. The Patriarch, wanting somehow to extract himself
from his awkward situation in the eyes of the Russians and Fr. Hilarion, started a conversation on past events and tried to develop the thought that there are cases when a certain 'economia' is demanded, and the care of the Church sometimes requires submission also to some not very lawful demands of the government, if this serves for the good of the Church. 'And so we prayed for the granting of help from on high to our Sultan, and in this way disposed him to mercifulness for our Church and her children, the Orthodox Christians.' When Patriarch Anthimus, under whom the schism with the Bulgarians took place, arrived on Athos after his deposition, and just stepped foot on the shore, the whole of the Holy Mountain shuddered from an underground quake and shook several times. All this was ascribed by the Athonites to the guilt of the Patriarch, and the governing body sent an order throughout the Mountain that they should pray fervently to God that He not punish the inhabitants of the Holy Mountain with His righteous wrath, but that He have mercy according to His mercy."1143

Thus there was a fine line to be drawn between submission to the Sultan as the lawful sovereign, and a too-comfortable adaptation to the conditions of this Babylonian captivity. The Tsar considered that the Orthodox peoples did not have the right to rebel against the Sultan of their own will, without the blessing of himself as the Emperor of the Third Rome. But the corollary of this view was that when the Tsar entered into war with the Sultan, it was the duty of the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan to pray for victory for the Tsar. For, as Fr. Hilarion said, echoing the words of St. Seraphim of Sarov: 'The other peoples' kings often make themselves out to be something great, but not one of them is a king in reality, but they are only adorned and flatter themselves with a great name, but God is not favourably disposed towards them, and does not abide in them. They reign only in part by the condescension of God. Therefore he who does not love his God-established tsar is not worthy of being called a Christian.'1144

And yet back home, in Russia, the foundations of love for the God-established tsar were being shaken, as were all the foundations of the Christian life. As St. Macarius, the great Elder of Optina, wrote: "The heart flows with blood, in pondering our beloved fatherland Russia, our dear mother. Where is she racing headlong, what is she seeking? What does she await? Education increases but it is pseudo-education, it deceives itself in its hope. The young generation is not being nourished by the milk of the doctrine of our Holy Orthodox Church but has been poisoned by some alien, vile, venomous spirit, and how long can this continue? Of course, in the decrees of God's Providence it has been written what must come to pass, but this has been hidden from us in His unfathomable wisdom..."1145

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1144 Hieromonk Anthony of the Holy Mountain, Ocherki Zhizni i Podvigov Startsa Ieroskhimon Akha Ilariona Gruzina (Sketches of the Life and Struggles of Elder Hieroschemamonk Hilarion the Georgian), Jordanville, 1985, p. 95.
In spite of this, the Orthodox Church in the mid-nineteenth century presented an impressive God-established reality that was quite capable of attracting the souls of westerners dissatisfied with the sterility of the western heterodox confessions. Thus the Anglican priest John Mason Neale wrote in his *History of the Eastern Church*: “Uninterrupted successions of Metropolitans and Bishops stretch themselves to Apostolic times; venerable liturgies exhibit doctrine unchanged, and discipline uncorrupted; the same Sacrifice is offered, the same hymns are chanted, by the Eastern Christians of today, as those which resounded in the churches of St. Basil or St. Firmilian... In the glow and splendor of Byzantine glory, in the tempests of the Oriental middle ages, in the desolation and tyranny of the Turkish Empire, the testimony of the same immutable church remains. Extending herself from the sea of Okhotsk to the palaces of Venice, from the ice-fields that grind against the Solovetsky monastery to the burning jungles of Malabar, embracing a thousand languages, and nations, and tongues, but binding them together in the golden link of the same Faith, offering the Tremendous Sacrifice in a hundred Liturgies, but offering it to the same God, and with the same rites, fixing her Patriarchal Thrones in the same cities as when the Disciples were called Christians first at Antioch, and James, the brother of the Lord, finished his course at Jerusalem, oppressed by the devotees of the False Prophet, as once by the worshippers of false gods, - she is now, as she was from the beginning, multiplex in her arrangements, simple in her faith, difficult of comprehension to strangers, easily intelligible to her sons, widely scattered in her branches, hardly beset by her enemies, yet still and evermore, what she delights to call herself, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic...”

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CONCLUSION. LEFT WING AND RIGHT WING

It was during the French Revolution that the political terms left wing and right wing arose. These terms have dominated political discourse in the West ever since. The distinction between them is close to that between revolution and counter-revolution, but has acquired more levels of meaning in the last two centuries.

Both Communism and Fascism have their roots in the great conflict between the French revolution and the German counter-revolution of the early nineteenth century. Neither ideology 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 leftist revolutionary, or cosmopolitans and globalists and people of the wrong colour and genes if you were a rightist counter-revolutionary. Both were militarist and expansionist; the logical consequence of their inhabiting the same planet was constant and total war, war if necessary to the destruction of the whole world.

Let us bring the development of the left/right dichotomy first formed in the Age of Revolution up to date... “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?

1147 “They are based on the seating arrangements in the French National Assembly — those who sat on the left of the chair of the parliamentary president supported the revolution and a secular republic, and opposed the monarchy of the old regime. The people on the left were in favor of radical change, socialism and republicanism i.e. a strong French republic instead of the monarchy.

“Those who sat to the right supported the institutions of the monarchist old regime or ancient regime. The stronger your opposition to radical change and desire to preserve traditional society, the more you were to the right. Tradition, institutional religion and privatization of the economy were considered the core values of the right-wing.” (Diffen, https://www.diffen.com/difference/Left_Wing_vs_Right_Wing)

1148 Daley, “Worms begin to turn on an arrogant elite caste that abhors their existence”, Sunday Telegraph, August 27, 2107, p. 18.
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 or St. Athanasius of Brest was sent by the Mother of God to the Polish Sejm to remonstrate on behalf of the Orthodox peasants.

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.

It was at this point that the Left/Right contrast originated (as we have seen, 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 making 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
type 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, very often, of the elite alone
(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, it had taken over large parts of Africa and Asia. It looked as if it might eventually conquer the whole world.

6. Murder and artificial famine: the systematic elimination of dissidents or potential 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, like the Bildebergers).

Dennis Prager has also identified the following sharp differences between the Left and the Christian or Biblical world-view:

• The biblical view is that people are not basically good. Evil therefore comes from within human nature. For the Left, human nature is not the source of evil. Capitalism, patriarchy, poverty, religion, nationalism, or some other external cause is the source of evil.

• The biblical view is that nature was created for man. The left-wing view is that man is just another part of nature.

• The biblical view is that man is created in the image of God and, therefore, formed with a transcendent, immaterial soul. The left-wing view — indeed, the view of all secular ideologies — is that man is purely material, another assemblage of stellar dust.

• The biblical view is that the human being has free will. The left-wing view — again, the view of all secular outlooks — is that human beings have no free will. Everything we do is determined by environment, genes, and the matter of which we are composed. Firing neurons, not free will, explain both murders and kindness.

• The biblical view is that while reason alone can lead a person to conclude that murder is wrong, murder is ultimately and objectively wrong only because there is a transcendent source of right and wrong — God — who deems murder evil.

• The biblical view is that God made order out of chaos. Order is defined by distinctions. One such example is male and female — the only inherent human distinction that matters to God. There are no racial or ethnic distinctions in God’s order; there is only the human sex distinction. The Left loathes this concept of a divine order. That is the primary driver of its current attempt to obliterate the male-female distinction.

• The biblical view is that the nuclear family is the basic unit of society — a married father and mother and their children. This is the biblical ideal. All good people of faith recognize that the reality of this world is such that many people do not or cannot live that ideal. And such people often merit our support. But that does not change the fact that the nuclear family is the one best suited to create thriving individuals and a healthy society, and we who take the Bible
seriously must continue to advocate the ideal family structure as the Bible defines it. And for that, perhaps more than anything, we are mocked.

- The biblical view holds that wisdom begins with acknowledging God. The secular view is that God is unnecessary for wisdom, and the left-wing view is that God is destructive to wisdom. But if you want to know which view is more accurate, look at the most godless and Bible-less institution in our society: the universities. They are, without competition, the most foolish institutions in our society.\textsuperscript{1149}

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 under a Marxist regime).

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 outlined above: egalitarianism and internationalism. For it was, of course, both hierarchical and nationalist. Nor was it explicitly anti-monarchist and anti-theist. Nevertheless, it shackled all traditional faiths to the worship of the totalitarian state, just as in the 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…”

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 recognise yourself in us; yourselves and the strength of your will?… You may think you hate us, but what you really hate is yourselves in us… Our victory will be your victory… And if you should conquer, then we shall perish only to live in your victory.”

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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, to adapt the story of Esau and Jacob in the Bible: 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 ever since the Right has been trying 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

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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?

Let us see…

After quoting from John Lennon’s song:

Imagine there’s no countries
   It isn’t hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
   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.”1152

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".1153

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

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1153 Daily Mail, August 22, 2017, p. 15.
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 leads 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, always surrendering ground. 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
express concern for women’s supposed rights, and 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, unlike some of his northern counterparts, did not
own slaves? 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 Liberal 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.

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…”

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, hillbillys 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

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1155 “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

1156 James S. Robbins, “Trump is right – violent extremists on both sides are a threat”, USA Today, August 17, 2017.
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 an 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).