

THE AGE OF ATHEISM
(1914-1925)

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AN ESSAY IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY
From an Orthodox Christian Point of View

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The Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills, and sets over it the basest of men.
Daniel 4.17.

If My people had heard Me, if Israel had walked in My ways, quickly would I have humbled their enemies, and upon their oppressors would I have laid My hand...
Psalms 81.12-13.

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sins diminish tribes.
Proverbs 14.35.

Touch not Mine anointed ones.
Psalms 104.15.

Hard is God's punishment when He takes away reason, it's the beginning of the end.
Gregory Yefimovich Rasputin (1914).

Russia has become a cupola without a cross.
V.A. Maklakov (December, 1916).

If you don't want your own Russian authority, you will get a foreign one.
St. Makary, Metropolitan of Moscow (+1926).

The removal of tsar and dynasty during the most monumental war would exacerbate nearly every governing problem it had been meant to solve.
Stephen Kotkin, Stalin (2014).

The Tsar was the embodiment of the Russian people's... readiness to submit the life of the state to the righteousness of God: therefore do the people submit themselves to the Tsar, because he submits to God... From the day of [the Tsar's] abdication, everything began to collapse. It could not have been otherwise. The one who united everything, who stood guard for the truth, was overthrown...
St. John Maximovich.

Calculating malice did its work: it separated Russia from her tsar, and at that terrible moment in Pskov he remained abandoned... The terrible abandonment of the Tsar... But it was not he who abandoned Russia: Russia abandoned him, who loved Russia more than his own life. Seeing this, and in hope that his self-humiliation would calm the stormy passions of the people, his Majesty renounced the throne... They rejoiced who wanted the deposition of the Tsar. The rest were silent. There followed the arrest of his Majesty and the further developments were inevitable... His Majesty was killed, Russia was silent.
St. John Maximovich.

These people, while promising everything, will give nothing – instead of peace, civil war; instead of bread – famine; instead of freedom – robbery, anarchy and murder.
General Alexander Verkhovsky (1917).

The world must be made safe for democracy.
President Woodrow Wilson (1917).

*The man who recognizes the revolutionary historic importance of the very fact of the
existence of the Soviet system must also sanction the Red Terror.*
Leon Trotsky, Terrorism and Communism (1920).

*Priests are to be arrested as counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs, to be shot
mercilessly everywhere. And as many as possible.*
Lenin, instruction No.13666/2.

*Socialism does not mean getting together in a parliament and passing laws. Socialism
means us overthrowing the ruling classes with all the brutality that the proletariat is
capable of deploying in the struggle.*
Rosa Luxemburg (1918).

*The world war formally ended with the conclusion of the armistice... In fact, however,
everything from that point onward that we have experienced and continue to
experience is a continuation and transformation of the world war.*
Peter Struve (1919).

*An apparition different from everything that had been seen on earth until then, had
taken the place of Russia. . . . We had before us a state without nation, an army
without country, a religion without God. This government, which was born by
revolution and nourished by terror . . . had declared that between it and society no
good faith could exist in public and private relations, no understanding had to be
respected. . . . That is how there was no more Russia but only an emptiness that
persists in human affairs.*
Sir Winston Churchill, The Aftermath (1929).

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.*
W.B. Yeats, The Second Coming (1919).

*By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.
But at my back in a cold blast I hear
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.*
T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land (1922).

Our children and grandchildren will not be able even to imagine that Russia in which we once (that is, yesterday) lived, which we did not value and did not understand – all that might, complexity, wealth and happiness...

Ivan Bunin.

I have come from the apes. But this man affirms that he was created in the image and likeness of God. But look: what great progress I have made by comparison with the apes, and how strongly this man has been degraded by comparison with God.

Lunacharsky (about Fr. Alexander Vvedensky).

Terror can be a very effective weapon against a reactionary class that does not want to leave the scene.

Trotsky.

. Totalitarianism of the Left bred totalitarianism of the Right; Communism and fascism were the hammer and the anvil on which liberalism was broken to pieces.

Paul Johnson, Modern Times (1998).

The Tsar and Russia are inseparable from each other. If there is no Tsar, there is no Russia. If there will be no Tsar, there will be no Russia, and the Russian state will unavoidably veer from the path appointed for it by God. And this is understandable, for that which God entrusts to His Anointed One cannot be entrusted to the mob. The tasks of the Russian Tsar laid on him by the Providence of God go far beyond the bounds of the tasks of the supreme bearer of state power. He is not the head of state elected by the people and pleasing the people, by whom he is appointed and on whom he depends. The Russian Tsar is anointed to the kingdom by God and is foreordained to be the image of God on earth: His work is to do the work of God, to be the expresser of the will of God, the bearer and preserver of the pan-Christian ideal of earthly life. Correspondingly the tasks of the Russian Tsar, going far beyond the bound of Russia, embraced the whole world. The Russian Tsar established peaceful equilibrium in the relations between the peoples of both hemispheres. He was the defender of the weak and persecuted, he united by his supreme authority the various tribes and peoples, he stood on guard for Christian civilization and culture... That is what the mission of the Russian Orthodox Autocratic Tsar consisted! In these encroachments on the autocracy of the Russian Orthodox Tsar we see that great sin of Russia people as a result of which the Lord withdrew His grace from Russia, and Russia perished. And as long as Russian people do not understand the mission of the Autocratic Russian Tsar they will not recognize in which consisted and must consist the tasks of the Autocracy and the God-anointed One, and as long as they do not swear to God to help the Tsar in accomplishing these tasks, the grace of God will not return to Russia and there will be no peace upon earth.

Prince Nikolai Davidovich Zhevakov.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1914 the English composer Ralph Vaughan-Williams composed his great work, “The Lark Ascending”, a piece that is phenomenally popular to the present day, owing its popularity to its near-perfect evocation of simplicity and peace.¹ Before he could finish the work, Vaughan Williams was enrolled in the British army as an ambulance-driver on the front line in France (he survived the war and so was able to complete his work). Thus he came to understand, from his own experience, that history has exceedingly few periods of peace, and that, generally speaking, “history is hell”, as the writer Douglas Murray says.²

This is true, to a greater or lesser degree, of all epochs and for the privileged as well as for the poor. But it is most true of the period described in this, the ninth volume in my series *An Essay in Universal History*. For this was the age of the common man, of popular self-government. And “the wars of the peoples will be more terrible than the wars of kings,” said Winston Churchill in 1901. Moreover, in the period 1914-25 men’s theories of *time and historical development changed as never before*. Only a few years before, in 1905, Einstein had published his Special Theory of Relativity, which appeared to dispense with the concept of time altogether, or at any rate make it a less fundamental concept than matter and energy. Some modern physicists even believe that it does not exist...

At the same time, physics came to have one absolute: *light*. Thus for Polchinski the constant speed of light “provides a reference of both space and time. A light ray always moves at one unit of space per unit of time – a constant diagonal on any graph of space against time. ‘The direction that light rays travel is in neither space nor time; we call it “null”. ‘It’s on the edge between space and time,’ says Polchinski. ‘A lot of people have this intuition that in some sense the existence of these null directions might be more fundamental than space or time.’”³

Now light is a very important reality and symbol in Orthodox theology. It is the very first creation of God (Genesis 1.3), which by its unchanging value mirrors or symbolizes the unchanging Creator Himself, Who is above space and time because He created them. But we can say more than that: the Creator Himself “dwells in unapproachable Light” (I Timothy 6.16), and at His Transfiguration revealed Himself *to be* Light in His Divine, Uncreated Energies. Christ said: “I am the Light of the world”; He is “Light of Light, true God of true God”. For that reason “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13.8). He is the unchanging criterion of all things created; it is against His uncreated Light that all faiths and moralities are measured. And he has created light with its unchanging properties in relation to everything that passes to teach us that some things never change...

¹ Diana Rigg, introducing the BBC4 programme, “The Lark Ascending”.

² “The Madness of Crowds? Julia Hartly-Brewer meets Douglas Murray”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTviaHRguVU>.

³ Polchinski, in Anil Ananthaswamy, “Space against Time”, *New Scientist*, 15 June, 2013, p. 37.

Western philosophy began with the writings of two philosophers who said absolutely contradictory things. On the one hand was Parmenides, who said that "being is uncreated and imperishable, whole, unique, unwavering, and complete". And on the other hand was Heraclitus, who said that "All is flux, nothing stands still, nothing endures but change". From the light-filled vantage point of Christianity, we can say that both were right, but that Parmenides was more fundamentally right than Heraclitus. Hence the Platonic tradition in Western philosophy, which sees eternity and the eternal ideas as being logical prior and morally superior to the ever-changing world of material things. For everything does indeed change in this material, temporal world. But just as created light does not change even while time itself charges, so there will come a time "when time shall be no more" (Revelation 10.6), when there will be no rush to keep up with the latest fashions and technologies and doctrinal innovations of men but all will be caught up to be judged forever and without appeal in the unchanging Light of eternity.

The period 1914-25 turned the world upside down as no other period had done since the decade that followed the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. But while Christ's Resurrection opened the path to mankind from hell to heaven, the First World War and the Russian Revolution plunged it back into hell. Its main subject is the destruction of Christian monarchism through the emergence of anti-Christian Jewish power from the ghettos of Gentile civilization onto three summits of power: in Russia as a result of the Bolshevik victory in Russia in 1917, in Palestine as a result of Lord Balfour's bestowal of a Homeland for the Jews there in the same year of 1917, and in America, where the levers of financial and therefore of political power, the banks, fell into the hands of Jews committed to the destruction of Russia and the Orthodox Church...

The book begins with the Russian empire at its peak, about to enter a war that would decide whether or not it would emerge as the most powerful state in the world, potentially capable of leading the whole world to a knowledge of the True God in Orthodoxy. It continues with the defeat of Russia, the Russian revolution and the disappearance of the very name of Russia from the map of the world, blotted out by the new state of the Soviet Union. The Russian revolution was the decisive event of modern times, making possible the rise of the totalitarian dictators and the biggest bloodlettings in history - the Soviet Gulag, the Holocaust and the Second World War. If the revolution had not taken place, Russia would probably have defeated the Germans in the First World War and become the most powerful nation in Europe - just the outcome Germany had started the war in order to avert.

It was the war that precipitated the revolution; so if Russia had never entered the war, the outcome for the world would have been immeasurably better. As Douglas Smith writes, "Had Russia stayed out of the war, it is hard to imagine there would have been a revolution, or at least one so violent and catastrophic. The suffering that would have been avoided is unimaginable.

And without the Russian revolution of 1917, it is difficult to conceive of the rise of Nazi Germany.”⁴ But Russia could not have remained honourably out of the war. It, and the revolution that followed, was her destiny, decreed by God in punishment for her sins and the sins of the whole of the western world...

However great the political consequences of the Russian revolution, its profoundest and most destructive results were not political, but religious. The Soviet Union was the first officially atheist state in history, which came to power on the ruins of the most Christian state of modern times. The result was the greatest persecution of the true faith in history, a huge “Orthodox Christian Holocaust” that has been largely ignored by the “Christian” states of the West to this day. However, having applauded the death of Orthodox Russia, the rest of Europe floundered, without coming to any resolution of its own problems. For there could be no peace and order, let alone true prosperity, until the problem of Russia was solved. Having lost its gendarme, Europe became *de facto* atheist through its tolerance and recognition of the atheist state cursed by God, and its adherence, to a greater or lesser degree, to the same atheist ideologies espoused by that state.

Of course, atheism did not begin with the Soviet Union, and did not end with its fall in 1991. It was prepared by the whole history of western civilization since the Great Schism of 1054. It was accelerated by horrific developments in nineteenth-century pseudo-science, notably Darwinism and Freudianism, and by a Social Darwinist approach to political and social development in most countries, including the liberal ones.

The official churches of the West contributed to the general loss of faith that followed the First World War by their inability to explain that war and its evil consequences. The so-called “problem of evil” was a problem, not so much for true Christians, as for pseudo-Christians, now the vast majority, who no longer believed in the main dogmas of the faith and secretly – or not so secretly – subscribed to the dominant secular – that is, atheist – ideologies, albeit with a Christian sugar-coating. The most atheist of all the atheist ideologies of the age was ecumenism, the idea that *it does not matter what we believe* so long as we are at peace with each other – and at war with God...

A rational response to the catastrophe would have been to ask: where did we go wrong? At what point in our history did we leave the true way, and how do we return to it? However, instead of such a rational, but at the same time religious striving, what we see is a continuing faith in *the state* as the solution to all problems and the purveyor of all human needs.

The state is no longer seen, as in earlier ages, as the servant of a higher and wider world-view. It is seen as no more than the servant of man’s lowest instincts, his need to survive and provide a minimum of prosperity – but for that very reason to be worshipped as higher than any god. This was less true

⁴ Smith, *Rasputin*, London: Pan Books, 2016, p. 365.

of the liberal democracies that dominated the Versailles peace conference of 1919; but the difference between them and the emerging totalitarian regimes further east was only relative – and fast disappearing. For everywhere the primitive ideals of materialism and biological determinism were exalted as if there neither could nor should be anything higher. The state assumed to itself the right to decree the rules both of public and private morality; and while priests and lay believers might protest against this or that attitude, in the end their protests would be brushed aside without the need, generally, for active persecution. The only major exception was Russia, where, by Satan's decree, the old faith and civilization had to be exterminated root and branch...

The world's first atheist state was no advertisement for atheism: in the first few years of its existence, it demonstrated itself to be a disaster zone unprecedented in modern history, a failed state that brought only misery to itself and its neighbours. And yet the worship of the state not only did not abate, but seemed to intensify. Thus the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci meditated from a Fascist prison cell on "the educative and formative role of the state. Its aim is always that of creating new and higher types of humanity."⁵

And it was not only communists who believed in creating a "new and higher" type of atheist man, mainly by environmental, but also partially by eugenicist means carried out by the state in complete defiance of the existence of God and His laws, and of man's spiritual nature.

If there was anything higher than the state, it was *science*, - more precisely, *scientism*, - whose white-coated priesthood was well on the way to fulfilling Dostoyevsky's prophecy about "half science" in *The Devils*. If there was a modern equivalent to the ancient "symphony of powers", it was between the atheist state and atheist science. All states agreed that science was above all. And if for the time being the political leaders appeared to use science rather than the other way round, there would come a time, a hundred years later, during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the men in white coats would dictate to the politicians and the peoples, closing down their economies and cultural and personal lives, not to mention their churches...

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

⁵ Gramsci, in Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 88.

I. WAR AND REVOLUTION (1914-1918)

1. THE SERBIAN GOLGOTHA

The First World War was more global in its scope than is generally realized. In Western Europe there were at least four major fronts. In France and Belgium, the French and British (and later, the Americans) faced the Germans and the Austrians. In the Alps and Slovenia, the Austrians faced the Italians. In Eastern Europe the Russians faced the Germans and the Austrians. In the Balkans, the Germans, the Austrians and the Bulgarians faced the Serbs, the Romanians, the French and the British. In the Middle East, major conflicts took place between the Ottoman Turks and the British at the Dardanelles, in Iraq and in Palestine, and between the Turks and the Russians in the Caucasus. Smaller colonial wars took place: in Africa, between the Germans and the British, the South Africans and the Italians, and, in China and the Pacific, between the Germans and the Japanese. At sea, there were battles not only in the North Sea and the North Atlantic, but also in the South Atlantic, the Pacific and the Mediterranean.

The world war elicited other kinds of wars. As Keith Jeffrey writes, "The forces released by the war simultaneously stiffened imperial rule in Africa (and Asia) and provoked resistance among indigenous peoples. Viewed globally, as John Iliffe, the historian of Tanganyika (Tanzania) has observed, 'the First World War was both the culmination of European imperialism and the beginning of its decline.' In order to secure victory, 'colonial powers tightened control over subject people and increased demands upon them', but 'at the same time the demands and opportunities of war stimulated political awareness and organization among subject peoples'."⁶

In the slightly (but not very much) longer term, the war elicited the rise of Fascism and Communism, whose antagonism, it could plausibly be argued, are even now being played out on the streets of the United States...

And it all began with what was thought would be only a short war between Austria and Serbia sparked by that shot fired by a Nietzschean student in Sarajevo...

On August 12 the Austrians launched an infantry offensive. In the third week of August, the Serbs scored a notable victory on Cer Mountain. "Both sides," writes Misha Glenny, "suffered heavy casualties in this opening battle. Almost 30,000 Austrians were wounded and 6-10,000 killed. The Serbs lost some 5-10,000 men with over 15,000 wounded. But above all the battle of Cer was significant as the first military success for the Entente..."

"In the first three months of the war, the Serbs mounted an astonishing military operation. The Habsburg forces successfully invaded Serbia in the middle of September. In November, the final struggle of the campaign, the battle of Kolubara, began soon after Austro-Hungarian troops occupied Belgrade. Less than a month later, however, the Serbian army inflicted a second

⁶ Jeffrey, 1916, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 211-212.

humiliating defeat on the Austrians, pushing them out of Belgrade and following them into Bosnia and Croatia. For a short period, the Serbs threatened to conquer Sarajevo.”⁷

A lull in the fighting now set in as typhus swept through the armies. The Austrians sued for a separate peace. But in August, 1915 the Serb parliament in Niš voted to continue the war of liberation; the Austrian overtures were rejected...

“Serbia’s resources were stretched very thin in 1915, by which stage over 700,000 men had been mobilized for military service, over a sixth of the total population, and the country was dangerously short of food and military materiel. After the Allied landings at Gallipoli in April 1915, Berlin had begun to worry about sustaining their Ottoman ally and began to make plans for a renewed offensive against Serbia through which the most effective communication to Turkey ran. Bulgaria was tempted to join the Central Powers with the promise of Serbian as well as Greek territory, and also part of Romania, should it come in against the Allies. It was at this point, aiming to support the Serbs and encourage [neutral] Greece to join the Allies, the French (followed by the British) began to land forces at Salonika, but this deployment was far too little and far too late to be of any help to Serbia.”⁸

In October, the Austrians advanced again, but now stiffened by German troops under General Mackensen and supported by the Bulgarians from the East. The Serbs were forced to retreat through Kosovo, and then over the Albanian and Montenegrin mountains to Durazzo on the Adriatic. Crown Prince Alexander led the terrible and heroic retreat, known as “the Serbian Golgotha”, in which tens of thousands began to die. But when he arrived at Durazzo, the promised Allied help in the form of Italian supplies and transports was not to be seen... ..

Alexander “trusted Nicholas II and knew him to be a friend. So from his sick bed he dictated a letter to the Tsar: ‘In hope and faith that on the Adriatic shore we should receive succour promised by our Allies, and the means to reorganize, I have led my armies over the Albanian and Montenegrin hills. In these most grievous circumstances I appeal to Your Imperial Majesty, on whom I have ever relied as a last hope, and I beseech Your high intervention on our behalf to save us from sure destruction and to enable us to recoup our strength and offer yet further resistance to the common enemy. To that end it will be necessary for the Allied fleet to transport the army to some more secure place, preferably Salonika. The famished and exhausted troops are in no condition to march to Valona as designated by the Allied higher command. I hope that this my appeal may find response from Your Imperial Majesty, whose fatherly love for the Serbian people has been constant and that You will intervene with the

⁷ Glenny, *The Balkans. 1804-1999*, London: Granta, 2000, pp. 316-317.

⁸ Jeffrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-281.

Allies to save the Serbian Army from a catastrophe which it has not deserved, a catastrophe otherwise inevitable.'

"No one stirred to save the Serbian Army till the Tsar got busy. The governments of the West paid little attention to the Serbian exploit, which only became famous after the war was over. It needed a sharp note from Sazonov to spur the Allies to activity.

"Tsar Nicholas replied: 'With feelings of anguish I have followed the retreat of the brave Serb troops across Albania and Montenegro. I would like to express to Your Royal Highness my sincere astonishment at the skill with which under Your leadership, and in face of such hardships and being greatly outnumbered by the enemy, attacks have been repelled everywhere and the army withdrawn. In compliance with my instructions my Foreign Minister has already appealed repeatedly to the Allied Powers to take steps to insure safe transport from the Adriatic. Our demands have now been repeated and I have hope that the glorious troops of Your Highness will be given the possibility to leave Albania. I firmly believe that Your army will soon recover and be able once more to take part in the struggle against the common enemy. Victory and the resurrection of great Serbia will be consolation to You and our brother Serbs for all they have gone through.'"9

The Tsar proved to be a faithful ally. He informed the Entente powers by telegram that they must immediately evacuate the Serbs, otherwise he would consider the fall of the Serbs as an act of the greatest immorality and he would withdraw from the Alliance. This telegram brought prompt action...

As the Serbian Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovič) wrote: "Great is our debt to Russia. The debt of Serbia to Russia, for help to the Serbs in the war of 1914, is huge – many centuries will not be able to contain it for all following generations. This is the debt of love, which without thinking goes to its death, saving its neighbour. 'There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his neighbour.' These are the words of Christ. The Russian Tsar and the Russian people, having taken the decision to enter the war for the sake of the defence of Serbia, while being unprepared for it, knew that they were going to certain destruction. The love of the Russians for their Serbian brothers did not fear death, and did not retreat before it. Can we ever forget that the Russian Tsar, in subjecting to danger both his children and millions of his brothers, went to his death for the sake of the Serbian people, for the sake of its salvation? Can we be silent before Heaven and earth about the fact that our freedom and statehood were worth more to Russia than to us ourselves? The Russians in our days repeated the Kosovo tragedy. If the Russian Tsar Nicholas II had been striving for an earthly kingdom, a kingdom of petty personal calculations and egoism, he would be sitting to this day on his throne in Petrograd. But he chose the Heavenly Kingdom, the Kingdom of sacrifice in

9 Stephen Graham, *Alexander of Yugoslavia*, Yale University Press, 1939, Hamden, Conn.: Archon Book, 1972, pp. 98-99.

the name of the Lord, the Kingdom of Gospel spirituality, for which he laid down his own head, for which his children and millions of his subjects laid down their heads..."¹⁰

The Serbian retreat of 1915, heroic though it was, contained a message that few Serbs were ready to receive at that time. In 1912 Serbian troops had conquered Kosovo, and Montenegrin troops – Northern Albania, after inflicting terrible atrocities on the Albanians. Now, three years later, they were retreating across the same territory – and the Albanians inflicted revenge. Was there not an element of Divine justice accompanying this all-too-human vengeance? For while not formally responsible for the assassination at Sarajevo in 1914, or of the retreat through Kosovo in 1915, in a deeper sense the Serbs had been responsible – not solely, but definitely in part – for the terrible cycle of vengeance that took over the whole region in these years, beginning with the struggle for Macedonia and continuing with the Balkan Wars and the First World War. Since the mid-nineteenth century the Serbs had elevated the land and the battle of Kosovo to a mythic status that hardly accorded with Orthodox teaching. The true significance of the original Battle of Kosovo lay in Tsar Lazar's choice of a Heavenly Kingdom in preference to an earthly kingdom, heavenly rewards (salvation, Paradise, God's glory) over earthly ones (lands, power, vainglory). From the mid-nineteenth century the more nationalist among the Serbs completely turned round this message to read: the conquest of the earthly land of Kosovo (and other formerly Serbian lands) is worth any sacrifice and justifies almost any crime, including even regicide (King Alexander and his queen in 1903, Archduke Ferdinand in 1914). The Russian Tsar-Martyr had been more faithful to the true message of Tsar-Martyr Lazar than the Serbs themselves...

"On January 11 1916, to Greek protests and with the very reluctant acquiescence of the British and the Italians (who wanted it for themselves), the French began occupying the Greek island of Corfu to use it as a sanctuary for the Serbian army. In order to justify yet another infraction of Greek neutrality the French falsely claimed that the island had been used as a station for supplying Austrian submarines. By the end of February some 135,000 Serbs had been evacuated [by dozens of Italian, French and English ships] to the island, and another 10,000 refugees to Bizerta in the French North African colony of Tunisia. Once the Serbs had recovered and been resupplied the plan was to deploy them on the Salonika front. In March 1916 an Allied scheme to move them to the Greek mainland and thence by train to Salonika was categorically vetoed by the Greek government, anxious still to retain some semblance of neutrality, and in the end they were moved by ship directly. By July over 150,000 Serbs had been concentrated at Salonika..."

¹⁰ Victor Salni and Svetlana Avlasovich, "Net bol'she toj liubvi, kak esli kto polozhit dushu svoiu za drugi svoia" (There is no greater love than that a man should lay down his life for his friend), http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page*pid=966.

Cajoled by the Serbian Prince-Regent Alexander, who travelled to Paris, London and Rome to garner support for the "Army of the East", by December, 1916 there were twenty Allied divisions in Salonika, "including Italians, two Russian brigades and two regiments of the Greek National (Venizelist) Force – as the city was transformed into an entrenched camp nicknamed the 'Birdcage' against a possible Bulgarian attack, with elaborate barbed-wire defences around a seventy-mile perimeter."¹¹

The Army of the East's offensive was delayed by a massive outbreak of malaria: "over the whole Salonika campaign... of the 481,262 battlefield casualties, 162, 517 resulted from malaria."¹² However, 'with British forces pinning down Bulgarian and German units in the Struma Valley, [the French commander-in-chief] Sarrail began his offensive on 12 September, The chief burden was taken by the Serbs, buoyed up by the prospect of once more setting foot on their homeland, which they reached on 30 September. Although the Germans rushed reinforcements to the front, the Allies pushed on during late October. On 19 November, Serbian and French cavalry entered Monastir [Bitola], closely followed by French and Russian infantry. Running out of steam and with extended supply lines, the Allied forces could go no further and the front stabilized just north of Monastir, where it remained for almost two years."¹³

They dug in for the winter. The next year America entered the war, and thousands of Serb, Croat and Slovene immigrants joined the Army of the East. In June, Alexander signed a Corfu Declaration to the effect that he was fighting for a free Yugoslav state combining the three peoples, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, in one.

In the same month, laying a good foundation for his new Kingdom of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes, Prince Alexander had "Apis", the organizer of both the regicide of 1903 and the assassination in Sarajevo, tried and executed...

¹¹ Jeffrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 289, 291.

¹² Jeffrey, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

¹³ Jeffrey, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

2. FROM THE MARNE TO THE SOMME

In August, 1914 the Germans began to execute their so-called Schlieffen Plan, which was to invade Luxembourg and Belgium and then, as Sir Llewellyn Woodward writes, “make a great enveloping move through Northern France and bring about a French surrender, or at least a complete French defeat, within about six weeks. The Germans could then turn against Russia... As to the intervention of Great Britain, the German authorities at first thought it most improbable. If Austria acted quickly and decisively, Russia would not intervene. If neither Russia nor France intervened, Great Britain would not go to war on behalf of the Serbs. In any case, if the war extended to the five Great Powers, British intervention would have no effect on the issue. The German General Staff thought the British Army (whose unexpected appearance in the way of the German advance was in fact one of the main reasons for the defeat of the Schlieffen timetable) too small to affect the decision in France; the Germans did not try to prevent or even to hamper the landing of the British Expeditionary Force, since they expected to capture it in the general French *débâcle*. The war would be over before British naval power could affect the issue.”¹⁴

In the event, the Germans smashed through French and British defences in August, and were threatening Paris, but were held at the Battle of the Marne (September 6-9), which destroyed the Schlieffen Plan. The Plan was foiled by three factors. First, the Austrians did not act quickly and decisively, but were defeated by the Serbs at the battle of Cer Mountain. Serbian resistance continued to be strong, necessitating German intervention to help the Austrians. Secondly, Russia did intervene – and much more quickly than purely Russian interests dictated. This led to a major defeat at Tannenberg in East Prussia – but forced the Germans to withdraw two army corps and one cavalry division from the Western to the Eastern Front on August 31, weakening the German offensive in the West at a critical moment. Thirdly, the British, too, intervened, aroused by reports of German atrocities inflicted on Belgian civilians. On September 4, the British, French and Russians signed the Pact of London, each nation promising not to seek a separate peace. Although the British intervention was neither large nor decisive at this stage of the conflict, it distracted the Germans from their original course at a critical point in the battle.

On the Western front the two sides settled into a relatively immobile war of trenches and barbed wire stretching from the Channel to Switzerland until the beginning of 1918. Its aim, on the Entente side, was to bleed the enemy to death, to kill more of them than they killed. But this aim was not fulfilled. In fact, the reverse happened: “according to the best available totals for wartime military deaths, some 5.4 million men fighting for the Entente powers and their allies lost their lives, the overwhelming majority of them killed by the enemy. The equivalent total for the Central Powers is just over 4 million...”

¹⁴ Woodward, *Prelude to Modern Europe, 1815-1914*, London: Methuen, 1972, pp. 143-144.

Moreover, “the Central Powers *permanently incapacitated* 10.3 million enemy soldiers, while losing only 7.1 million in the same way...”¹⁵

In the spring of 1915 the Germans violated two provisions of the Hague Convention that they had signed up to: the use of poison gas and the torpedoing of merchant vessels without prior warning. “The damage done to Allied shipping by U-boat warfare was limited, but that done to Germany’s international reputations was huge. In particular, the sinking of the British passenger liner *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915 led to outrage in neutral countries – above all in the United States, as 120 of the 1,200 dead were U.S. citizens...”¹⁶

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There was one Western politician who did not believe in the war of attrition – the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. He believed that technology and machines – airplanes and tanks, of which he was the most enthusiastic advocate – should be given greater priority, thereby saving men’s lives. He also thought that another front should be opened further east to circumvent the trenches.

The Dardanelles in Turkey was chosen because this was of particular importance to the Russians, for the Ottoman caliph had declared a *jihad* against the French, the British and the Russians, and it was through the Dardanelles that the grain exports vital for the Russian economy passed. So the Russians were delighted “when the British raised the question of the future of Constantinople and the Dardanelles at the end of 1914. This was ‘the highest prize of the entire war,’ Britain’s ambassador announced to the Tsar’s officials. Control was to be handed to Russia once the war was over, though Constantinople ought to remain a free port ‘for goods in transit to and from non-Russian territory’, alongside the concession that ‘there shall be commercial freedom for merchant ships passing through the Straits.’”¹⁷ And so in March 1915 British, French and Australasian (ANZAC) forces tried to break through the Straits at Gallipoli, which would have opened the way to Constantinople and the Bosphorus. But they were bloodily defeated (200,000 casualties on both sides) by the Turks led by Mustafa Kemal, the future Atatürk.

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The Dardanelles campaign having failed, as Robert Tombs writes, in December 1915 “a ‘Western’ strategy for breaking the stalemate was agreed at a conference of Allied commanders... French, Russians, British, Serbians and Italians (who had entered the war that May) would launch simultaneous offensives in the summer of 1916 with the maximum of troops. This would

¹⁵ Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War. 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 2012, pp. 294, 296-297.

¹⁶ Jurgen Tampuske, *A Perfidious Distortion of History*, London: Scribe, 2018, p. 45.

¹⁷ Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 336.

force the enemy to fight everywhere at once, 'wear out' – i.e. kill – their reserves, and finally overwhelm them. The biggest effort would be a joint Franco-British attack astride the River Somme. But the Germans struck first, before 'the balance of numbers' deprived them, in the words of their commander, General von Falkenhayn, 'of all remaining hope'. He saw no chance of a military breakthrough, even less of invading 'the arch-enemy', Britain. He decided instead to 'bleed the French army to death', destroying French morale, and forcing the inexperienced British to attack them to help their ally, thus suffering huge casualties too. France and Britain might then see the war as hopeless and sue for peace. The chosen killing ground was the exposed fortress town of Verdun. Beginning on 21 February 1916, the German and French armies embarked on a vast and hideous mutual slaughter, each eventually losing over 300,000 men..."

At the Somme on July 1, 1916, continues Tombs, "the British army began the biggest and bloodiest battle in its history... By the end of the day, there were 19,240 dead and 37, 646 wounded or missing, including 75 percent of all the officers engaged, among them two generals..."

"But the battle was not over in one day: it continued as a four-and-a-half month campaign with successive British and French offensives, including the first use of tanks, major use of aircraft and vastly increased artillery. Wrote one German soldier: 'The strain was too immense... the English... surprised us in a manner never seen before. They came on unstoppably.' German aircraft and artillery were 'as good as eliminated', units were bled 'like lemons in a press,' and lost large numbers of officers and NCOs... The Germans lost heavily due to their policy of defending every foot of ground and immediately counter-attacking every British advance – proof that German professionalism could be as prodigal of men as British amateurism... Total casualties defy the imagination: some 420,000 British, 200,000 French, 465,000 Germans. From a strategic viewpoint, the campaign helped to save Verdun and preserve the French army, and it forced the Germans onto the defensive. The Somme, wrote one young German officer, had been 'the muddy grave' of the German army..."

"The Somme, especially its first day, has taken on emblematic meanings. First, of the inhuman logic of the First World War: huge battles fought not to capture or liberate countries, or even seize resources or vital strategic objectives, but to kill enemy soldiers. After the disaster of Gallipoli, no one in any country would come up with any other way of fighting. The Somme – like its ghostly twin Verdun – epitomizes the implacable war of attrition..."

"The fundamental cause of the carnage... was not military or social, but political and ideological: few in England, or any other country, were willing to surrender or even accept semi-defeat. The loss of life increased the determination to win, to justify the sacrifice. Only when the whole fabric of society began to unravel in some countries did resolve evaporate."¹⁸

¹⁸ Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopfer, 2014, pp. 624, 625, 627.

For this war was *total*, involving the whole of society either waging the war at the front or supporting and provisioning it from the back. It did not involve small professional armies, as in the eighteenth century: it was truly *the people's war*, symbolized by the fact that (from 1914 in Germany and France, 1916 in Britain) there was conscription and the enrolment of the whole of the nation-state. As such, defeat implied the defeat of the whole people, not just of a government – and this was unacceptable to the nationalist ethos. If there was any historical precedent, it was the struggle against Napoleon, which was similarly total and ideological, and similarly threatened the destruction of Holy Rus', the last outpost of true religion in the world. Only this time, by God's just judgement, Rus' *was* destroyed...

3. THE WAR ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT

On July 31, 1914 the Tsar published his order for general mobilization – the die was now cast. The Germans declared war the next day, August 1. That was the feastday inaugurated by the tsar himself commemorating the translation of the relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov in 1903 – that is, the feast of the great prophet of the last times, who had foretold both the Great War and how tragically it would end for the Tsar and for Russia...

On August 1, as Lubov Millar writes, “large patriotic crowds gathered before the Winter Palace, and when the Emperor and Empress appeared on the balcony, great and joyful ovations filled the air. When the national anthem was played, the crowds began to sing enthusiastically.

“In a sitting room behind this balcony waited Grand Duchess Elizabeth, dressed in her white habit; her face was aglow, her eyes shining. Perhaps, writes Almedingen, she was thinking, ‘What are revolutionary agents compared with these loyal crowds? They would lay down their lives for Nicky and their faith and will win in the struggle.’ In a state of exaltation she made her way from the Winter Palace to the home of Grand Duke Constantine, where his five sons – already dressed in khaki uniforms – were preparing to leave for the front. These sons piously received Holy Communion and then went to the Romanov tombs and to the grave of Blessed Xenia of Petersburg before joining their troops.”¹⁹

“The Tsar’s declaration of war first aroused a spirit of national unity. Workers’ strikes came to a halt. Socialists united behind the defence of the fatherland. There were mass arrests of the Bolsheviks and other extremists. The Duma dissolved itself, declaring on 8 August that it did not want to burden the government with ‘unnecessary politics’ at a time of war.”²⁰

Only Lenin, living in Switzerland, and a few other international terrorists rejected all claims by their homeland on their services and loyalty...

“Before the war,” as Hew Strachan writes, “the incidence of strikes – which had both soared in number and become increasingly politicized – peaked in July 1914, and conservatives had warned against war for its ability to stoke revolution. The actual experience of mobilization suggested that such fears had been exaggerated: ‘As if by magic the revolutionary disorders had died down at the announcement of war’. In Petrograd (as St. Petersburg had been renamed), ‘patriotic fervour had gripped the workmen... They cheered us enthusiastically as we marched by their factories.’ Ninety-six per cent of reservists reported for duty, a rate not far behind that of France.”²¹

¹⁹ Lyubov Millar, *Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia*, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Publication Society, 1993, p. 171.

²⁰ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, p. 72.

²¹ Strachan, *The First World War*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 141.

"But, as in France, public demonstrations of enthusiasm were urban phenomena, and of all the major armies of 1914 Russia's was overwhelmingly made up of peasants... They had crops to harvest and families to feed. Mobilisation prompted rioting in 49 out of 101 provinces [*oblast*] in European and Asiatic Russia."²²

One of the great tragedies of the war was that the lofty patriotic-religious mood prevalent at least in some parts of the country at the beginning did not last, and those who rapturously applauded the Tsar in August, 1914 were baying for his blood less than three years later...

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The war, writes S.A. Smith, "had a devastating effect on the [Russian] empire. Over 14 million men were mobilized; about 67 million people in the western provinces came under enemy occupation; over 6 million were forcibly displaced, of whom half a million were Jews expelled from front-line areas. The eastern front was less static than the western, but neither side was able to make a decisive breakthrough and offensives proved hugely costly. Perhaps 3.3 million died or were lost without trace – a higher mortality than any other belligerent power (although Germany had a higher number of counted dead) – and the total number of casualties reached over 8 million..."

"Russian soldiers fought valiantly and generally successfully against Turks and Austrians, but proved no match for the German army in matters of organization, discipline, and leadership."²³

This became clear in the very first campaign of the war... On hearing of the successful German advance into France in August, 1914, Grand-Duke Nicholas, the commander-in-chief of the Russian armies, reversed the entire Russian strategic plan and, disregarding the incomplete concentration of his armies and woeful preparations in general, ordered an advance into East Prussia. At first he was successful, and the Germans were forced to transfer troops from the West at a critical stage, with the result that Paris was saved. As the French General Cherfils remarked in *La Guerre de la Délivrance*, "The spirit in which this offensive was undertaken is something which demands the greatest attention. It was conceived as an intervention, a diversionary operation, to assist and relieve the French Front. As Russian Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke behaved more like an ally than a Russian and deliberately sacrificed the interests of his own country to those of France. In these circumstances his strategy can be termed as 'anti-national'."²⁴

²² Strachan, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

²³ Smith, *The Russian Revolution. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 12-13.

²⁴ Cherfils, in Arsène de Goulévitch, *Czarism and Revolution*, Hawthorne, Ca.: Omni Publications, 1962, p. 184. Colonel Dupont, French chief of intelligence, asserted: "Let us render

Ivan Solonevich asserts that the advance into East Prussia was undertaken at the personal initiative of the Tsar rather than that of Grand Duke Nicholas. In any case, the Second Army was destroyed at Tannenburg with the loss of 100,000 prisoners. General Samsonov committed suicide. "But Paris was saved. Consequently Russia, too, was saved – from everything that Stalin and Hitler did to her in 1941-45. For if Paris had been taken, France would have been finished. And then Russia would have been faced by the whole of Germany, the whole of Austria and the whole of Turkey. And then, perhaps, the matter would not have ended on the Volga..."²⁵

This was followed, in 1915, by a series of heavy defeats caused mainly by a continuing catastrophic lack of munitions. On January 31, at the battle of Bolimow, the Germans used poison gas on a large scale for the first time (three months later, they also employed it at Ypres on the Western front).²⁶ In May, the ill-equipped Russians lost the battle of Gorlice-Tarnow, south-east of Krakow in Galicia with 743,000 casualties and 895,000 soldiers taken prisoner.²⁷ Poland was lost...

However, in the East Turkey was defeated by Russia, which now stood as the defender of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Orthodox Christians, whom the Turks, under cover of the war, were planning to annihilate.

The Turkish policy of ethnic cleansing "was stirred up by pan-Islamism and religious fanaticism. Christians were considered infidels (*kafir*). The call to Jihad, decreed on 29 November 1914 and instigated and orchestrated for political ends, was part of the plan" to "combine and sweep over the lands of Christians and to exterminate them." "As with the Armenians, eyewitness accounts tell of the sadistic eye-gouging of Assyrians and the gang rape of their children on church altars. According to key documents, all this was part of 'an Ottoman plan to exterminate Turkey's Christians.'"²⁸

In 1915 Tsar Nicholas ordered the Russo-Turkish frontier to be opened to let in 375,000 Armenians fleeing from the Turkish murderers. G. Ter-Markarian writes: "At the very border, in the open air, many tables were set out, at which Russian officials received the Armenian refugees without any formalities, giving each member of each family a royal rouble and a special document giving them the right for one year to set themselves up anywhere in the Russian Empire with the use of all forms of transport. Starving people were fed from field kitchens and clothing was handed out to those who needed it. Russian doctors and nurses gave out medicines and first aid to the sick, wounded and

to our Allies the homage that is their due, for one of the elements of our victory was their debacle" (in Tuchman, *op. cit.*, pp. 519-520).

²⁵ Solonevich, "Mif o Nikolae II" (The Myth about Nicholas II), 1949.

²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Bolimów

²⁷ Tampke, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

²⁸ *Year of the Assyrian Genocide* (1917); Raymond Ibrahim, "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day: Revisiting Islam's Greatest Slaughter of Christians", *PJ Media*, April 24, 2019.

pregnant. In all more than 350,000 Turkish Armenians were let through the frontier at that time and given asylum and salvation in Russia.”²⁹

“On January 25 1915,” writes Sebastian Sebag Montefiore, “Nikolasha and [his chief-of-staff] Yanushkevich ordered a ‘cleansing’ of the entire theatre of operations through the expulsion of ‘all Jews and suspect individuals’... The Jews, who spoke the Germanic Yiddish, were suspected of treason. Nikolasha took Jewish hostages and executed suspects. Around 500,000 Jews were expelled in scenes of such desperate misery that even interior minister Maklakov complained, ‘I’m not Judaeophile but I disapprove’.”³⁰ The irony was that this took place in the Pale of Settlement, where the Jews had been confined. But now the Jews were forced to flee eastwards, to the major cities of Central Russia, where they swelled the ranks of the revolutionaries...

It was not only the Jews who suffered. The state forcibly moved “approximately a million Russian citizens of German ethnicity, along with Jews and Muslims too, nationalizing their property, and handing it over to so-called ‘favored groups’.”³¹ In June, 1916 the army imposed labour conscription on the native population of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Until then, the Ottoman caliph’s call to all Muslims to conduct a holy war against the Allies had not elicited the feared reaction in Russia. But now there was a major rebellion of the Muslims, especially in Semirechiye, bordering on China, which was put down with severity, causing thousands of deaths and the fleeing of 300,000 Kirgiz to China.³² Indeed, “By the beginning of 1917, the total number of displaced people in the Russian empire alone has been calculated at just over 6 million. Across Russia, there was, in Peter Garrell’s suggestive, resonant phrase, ‘a whole empire walking’.”³³

The revolutionaries and their liberal supporters were counting on Russia losing the war and therefore stirred up defeatist sentiments in the population. This extended even into the Council of Ministers. Thus on June 16, 1915, the new Minister of War Polivanov, a protégé of Guchkov who had replaced the loyalist Sukhumlimov, said that the Homeland was in danger. Meanwhile, voluntary organizations, such as the Zemstvo Union, its partner the Union of Towns (zemgor) and Guchkov’s Military-Industrial Committee, came into existence. Led by Prince Lvov, a zemstvo activist since the 1890s, the Zemstvo Union quickly grew into a huge national infrastructure, an unofficial government, with 8,000 affiliated institutions, several hundred thousand employees, and a budget of a billion roubles, partly financed by the public and

²⁹ In 1990 Professor Pavel Nikolayevich Paganucci said: “75 years have passed since 23% of the whole Armenian population of Turkey was saved by his Majesty. Nobody, now or in the past, has recalled what he did for the Armenian people. For this saving deed alone he should be counted among the saints.”

³⁰ Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, London: Vintage, 2016, p. 581.

³¹ Douglas Smith, *Rasputin*, London: Pan Books, 2016, p. 481.

³² Keith Jeffery, *1916*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 180-190.

³³ Jeffery, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

partly by the state.”³⁴ There was a strong suspicion that they were using the money they received from the state for anti-state purposes. Certainly, one of their aims was to “win more influence for themselves and their allies in the Duma in the wartime regulation of industry. All but three of the ministers of the First Provisional Government of 1917 (which would be led by Prince Lvov) would emerge as national leaders through Zemgor or the War Industries Committee. Through their combined initiatives, these public bodies were able to form an effective political force. They enjoyed the support of several liberal-minded ministers...”³⁵

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Early in August, 1915, the Tsar announced that he was taking control of the Russian army as Supreme Commander. There were many good reasons to remove Nikolasha (he was sent to the Caucasian front), not least the military defeats in Poland and the chaos of the retreat, including the “ethnic cleansing” of the Jews. However, there was general outrage among the liberals. Many thought that this decision was due to Rasputin’s influence, but it was not: the tsar had expressed his desire to lead the army as early as July, 1914.³⁶ Even many of the tsar’s supporters, such as Prime Minister I.L. Goremykin, were unhappy, because it meant that if things went badly on the battlefield the Tsar would be blamed as being directly responsible. But “God’s will be done,” wrote the Tsar to the Tsaritsa after arriving at headquarters. “I feel so calm” – like the feeling, he said, “after Holy Communion”. He considered this his duty as Tsar, and told Goremykin that he could not forgive himself for not having placed himself at the head of the army during the Russo-Japanese War.³⁷

In the same month of August, as Yakoby writes, “at the house of A.I. Konovalov in Moscow, a conference of the leaders of the opposition took place. It was decided to take immediate decisive steps to seize power. To this end it was necessary first of all to force the Government to retire and obtain from his Majesty the appointment of a new ministry under the presidency either of Rodzianko or Prince Lvov, while giving the portfolio of foreign affairs to Milyukov, of war to Guchkov, of trade and industry to Konovalov, and of justice to Maklakov. At the same time, they would have to fight with all their powers against the decision of his Majesty to take upon himself the Supreme Command. And if the Monarch remained unbending in his decision, then it was necessary, for the sake of propaganda, to present this measure in the eyes of public opinion as unkindness and ingratitude to Great Prince Nicholas Nikolayevich, and turn him into a national hero who would be constantly contrasted with the Tsar. A strange turn in the ardent campaign that the opposition had conducted until then against the Great Prince!”³⁸

³⁴ Orlando Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, p. 79.

³⁵ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 80.

³⁶ Smith, *Rasputin*, pp. 429-30. He heard a voice standing in front of an icon of Christ.

³⁷ I.P. Yakoby, *Imperator Nikolaj II i Revoliutsia* (Emperor Nicholas II and the Revolution), Moscow, 2010, p. 83.

³⁸ Yakoby, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

In fact, taking advantage of the Tsar's absence at Stavka, the liberals in the Duma now formed a "progressive bloc" consisting of most of the Duma and several members of the State Council, which claimed that in order to bring the war to a successful conclusion, the authorities had to be brought into line with the demands of "society". By "society" they meant the social organizations controlled by them that had come into existence during the war – the Zemstvo Union, the Union of Cities and the Military-Industrial Committee.

On August 16 a session of the Council of Ministers under the presidency of the Tsar took place in Tsarskoye Selo, at which the Tsar, under pressure, made it clear he was not changing his mind...

The debate now heated up. Goremykin and Justice Minister A.S. Khvostov spoke against the demands of the Moscow conference. But A.D. Samarin, the over-procurator of the Holy Synod, who believed (falsely) that the Tsar's decision had been dictated by Rasputin, insisted on the government's capitulation. The leftist ministers – joined now by foreign minister Sazonov – wanted to force the Tsar to yield under the threat of the collective resignation of all the ministers. Goremykin wisely and courageously replied that this was in effect an ultimatum to the Tsar, and that the demand that Nikolasha should become Supreme Commander was simply the means to carry out a purely political intrigue against the Tsar.

Goremykin showed that he was a true monarchist, and what the attitude of all the ministers should have been by declaring: "In my conscience his Majesty the Tsar is the Anointed of God, the bearer of supreme power. He personifies Russia. He is 47 years old. It is not since yesterday that he has reigned and disposed of the destinies of the Russian people. When the will of such a person is defined and the path of action determined, his subjects must obey, whatever the consequences. Beyond that, it is the will of God. That is what I think and I will die with that conviction. I am a man of the old school, for me the command of his Majesty is law. When there is a catastrophe on the front, his Majesty considers it the sacred duty of the Russian Tsar to be with the army and either conquer with them or die. You will not by any arguments dissuade his Majesty from the step he has decided on. No intrigue or any influence has played any role in this decision. It remains for us only to bow before the will of our Tsar and help him..."

Eventually eight ministers sent a collective letter to the Tsar, demanding the recall of Nikolasha as commander-in-chief, pointing to their disagreement with Goremykin. The Bloc also put forward several political demands: a broad political amnesty and the return of all political exiles; Polish autonomy; reconciliation with Finland; the removal of repressive measures against the Ukrainians and the removal of restrictions on the Jews; equal rights for the peasants; the reform of zemstvo and city self-administration, etc.

All these were questions that the Tsar by no means despised. He considered them "important, state matters, but not vital for the present moment". He wanted all attention to be concentrated for the moment on winning the war.³⁹ A very reasonable demand - which the Duma deputies very unreasonably despised.

The Bloc's letter to the Tsar ended with the words: "Being in such conditions, we are losing faith and the possibility of serving you and the Homeland with the consciousness of being of use."

Such defeatism bordering on treason tried even the Tsar's renowned patience to the limit. On September 16 he summoned the Council of Ministers to himself at Stavka, tore up their letter in front of their eyes, and said: "This is child's play. I do not accept your resignations, and I have faith in Ivan Longinovich [Goremykin]." For a supposedly weak-willed man, this was a strong performance by the Tsar...

Already he had ordered the Prime Minister to suspend the Duma (on September 3 - it did not reconvene until February, 1916). Now he sacked the ministers who supported the Bloc. As he wrote to his wife on September 22: "The behaviour of some of the ministers continues to amaze me! After all that I told them... I thought that they understood me and the fact that I was seriously explaining what I thought. What matter? - so much the worse for them! They were afraid to close the Duma - it was done! I came away here and replaced N, in spite of their advice; the people accepted this move as a natural thing and understood it as we did. The proof - numbers of telegrams which I receive from all sides, with the most touching expressions. All this shows me clearly one thing: that the ministers, always living in town, know terribly little of what is happening in the country as a whole. Here I can judge correctly the real mood among the various classes of the people: everything must be done to bring the war to a victorious ending, and no doubts are expressed on that score. I was told this officially by all the deputations which I received some days ago, and so it is all over Russia. Petrograd and Moscow constitute the only exceptions - two minute points on the map of the fatherland."⁴⁰

Paradoxically, in view of the liberals' democratic propaganda, in which they thought they were imitating Europe, no other parliament in Europe during the war made such demands on their governments. For all major decisions were taken in small war cabinets (this was the case in Britain, for example, when Lloyd George came to power in December, 1916). The tendency was towards a kind of despotism bypassing the parliamentary status. Only in Autocratic Russia did the parliamentarians demand more and more of a voice.⁴¹

³⁹ Oldenburg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II*, Belgrade, 1939, vol. II, p. 177.

⁴⁰ Tsar Nicholas, in Lieven, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

⁴¹ Viktor Aksiuchits, "Pervaia Mirovaia - neizbeznaia ili ne nuzhnaia?" (chast' 2), *Rodina*, August 5, 2013.

Thus the Progressive Bloc led by Guchkov now demanded “a ministry of trust” and “a government endowed with the country’s trust”. Essentially, it was an attempt to seize power from the autocrat...

Nor was it just words... In September, 1915, writes G.M. Katkov, “after the failure of its negotiations with the government, the liberals and radicals felt a sharp need for a conspiratorial organization whose members would penetrate all spheres of Russian life. And it seems we must ascribe to the beginning of September a project for a certain ‘Committee of National Salvation’. The ‘Committee of National Salvation’ signed a very remarkable document that was found, it is asserted, among the papers of Guchkov (*Krasnij Arkhiv*, XXVI). It is headed ‘Disposition No. 1’ and dated 8 September 1915.

“In this document it is asserted that two wars were being waged in Russia: one against the Germans, and the other, no less important, against ‘the inner enemy’. Victory over the Germans could not be achieved without a prior victory over the inner enemy (reactionary forces supported by the autocracy). Those who were conscious of the impossibility of any kind of compromise with the government were called to form a ‘headquarters’ in the form of ten people appointed in recognition of their ‘conscientiousness and firmness of will and faith that the struggle for the rights of the people must be waged in accordance with the rules of military centralization and discipline.’ The methods of the struggle for the rights of the people had to be peaceful, but firm and skillful. Strikes harmful for the war and for the interests of the populace and state were inadmissible. People who did not submit to the directives of the Committee of ten would be ‘boycotted’, that is, subjected to ostracism and driven out of public life. Three people were put forward as the core of the headquarters for the struggle with ‘the inner enemy’ – Prince Lvov, A.I. Guchkov, A.F. Kerensky. Guchkov was characterized in this document as the person uniting in himself the confidence of the army and Moscow – ‘from now not only the heart, but also the central will of Russia’.”⁴²

This was clearly the liberal forerunner of Lenin’s “Democratic [in fact, Despotism] Centralism”... The revolution had begun... And not only from the “moderate”, liberal left. In August, 1915, while the liberal ministers were trying to impose their will on the Tsar, thirty-three delegates from various left socialist parties met in Zimmerwald in Switzerland in an attempt to impose their will on the whole nation. By this time the patriotic surge that had made Lenin so isolated the year before had receded and his anti-patriotic defeatism was becoming popular again. The conference manifesto declared: “*The war which has produced this chaos is the outcome of imperialism, of the attempt on the part of the capitalist classes of each nation, to foster their greed for profit by the exploitation of human labor and of the natural treasures of the entire globe.*”⁴³

⁴² Katkov, *Fevral'skaia Revoliutsia* (The February Revolution), Paris: YMCA Press, 1967, 1984, pp. 175-176.

⁴³ <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/social-democracy/zimmerwald/manifesto-1915.htm>.

And so Lenin's call for immediate peace and the turning of the imperialist war into a civil one was passed, strengthening revolutionary sentiment inside Russia.

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"In the autumn," writes Robert Massie, "the Tsar brought his son, the eleven-year-old Tsarevich, to live with him at Army Headquarters. It was a startling move, not simply because of the boy's age but also because of his haemophilia. Yet, Nicholas did not make his decision impetuously. His reasons, laboriously weighed for months in advance, were both sentimental and shrewd.

"The Russian army, battered and retreating after a summer of terrible losses, badly needed a lift in morale. Nicholas himself made constant appearances, and his presence, embodying the cause of Holy Russia, raised tremendous enthusiasm among the men who saw him. It was his hope that the appearance of the Heir at his side, symbolizing the future, would further bolster their drooping spirits. It was a reasonable hope, and, in fact, wherever Alexis appeared he became a center of great excitement..."⁴⁴

The Tsar had always been devoted to the army, and when he heard of the difficulties in getting supplies to the front, he said: "I can't get to sleep at all at night when I think that the army could be starving."⁴⁵

The strain was such that the Tsar himself declined in health, becoming emaciated. "Baroness Sophie Bukshoeveden wondered whether he had problems with his kidneys. When she put the question to the [future martyr] Dr. Evgeni Botkin, he confided: 'His heart isn't in order. I'm giving His Majesty iodine, but that's between you and me.'"⁴⁶

Nevertheless, under the Tsar's command, the fortunes of the Russian armies revived, and in the autumn of 1915 the Great Retreat was halted.

As Hindenburg, the German commander, wrote: "For our GHQ the end of 1915 was no occasion for the triumphal fanfare we had anticipated. The final outcome of the year's fighting was disappointing. The Russian bear had escaped from the net in which we had hoped to entrap him, bleeding profusely, but far from mortally wounded, and had slipped away after dealing us the most terrible blows."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, London: Indigo, 2000, p. 282.

⁴⁵ Robert Service, *The Last of the Tsars*, London: Pan, 2015, p. 13.

⁴⁶ Service, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Hindenburg, in Goulévitch, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

The recovery continued into 1916. In May, the Tsar's armies under Brusilov launched a successful offensive against the Austrians in Galicia. The Austrians lost 600,000 killed and 400,000 captured, a shattering defeat which Hindenburg, who was hastily called to take direct command of the Habsburg forces, called "the worst crisis the eastern front has known". In his *Memoirs* Hindenburg wrote that "the only solution to relieve a desperate state of affairs" was "a policy of defence on all fronts, in the absence of some unforeseen and untoward event"⁴⁸ – like a revolution... This triumph "resulted not just from excellent leadership and planning, but they also testified to the improvement in Russia's munitions supply by 1916."⁴⁹

It would be churlish to deny some of the credit for this rapid turn-around to the Tsar, the commander-in-chief of the Russian armies – but that is just what his enemies did...

"The consequences of this victorious operation," writes Goulévitch, "were at once manifest on the other theatres of war. To relieve the Austrians in Galicia the German High Command took over the direction of both armies and placed them under the sole control of Hindenburg. The [Austrian] offensive in Lombardy was at once abandoned and seven Austrian divisions withdrawn to face the Russians. In addition, eighteen German divisions were brought from the West, where the French and British were strongly attacking on the Somme. Further reinforcements of four divisions were drafted from the interior as well as three divisions from Salonica and two Turkish divisions, ill as the latter could be spared. Lastly, Romania threw in her lot with the Allies..."⁵⁰

"The news of Romania's entry into the war, writes Adam Tooze, "'fell like a bomb. William II completely lost his head, pronounced the war finally lost and believed we must now ask for peace.' The Habsburg ambassador in Bucharest, Count Ottokar Czernin, predicted 'with mathematical certainty the complete defeat of the Central Powers and their allies if the war were continued any longer.'"⁵¹

Unfortunately, the ill-equipped and ill-led Romanian forces did not provide the fillip to the Allied cause that many had expected. After advancing into Transylvania (where there were many ethnic Romanians), the Romanians were thrust back in the west by German and Austrian forces under Falkenhayn and in the south by Bulgarian and Ottoman forces under von Mackensen. The government and the shattered remnants of the army reassembled in Moldavia, while the Germans captured Bucharest on December 6 and helped themselves to the oil and grain of the southern plains.

⁴⁸ Hindenburg, in Goulévitch, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁴⁹ Jeffery, 1916, p. 359.

⁵⁰ Goulévitch, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193.

⁵¹ Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 47.

Nevertheless, writes Sir Winston Churchill, "Few episodes of the Great War are more impressive than the resuscitation, re-equipment and renewed giant effort of Russia in 1916. It was the last glorious exertion of the Czar and the Russian people for victory before both were to sink into the abyss of ruin and horror. By the summer of 1916 Russia, which eighteen months before had been almost disarmed, which during 1915 had sustained an unbroken series of frightful defeats, had actually managed, by her own efforts and the resources of her allies, to place in the field – organized, armed and equipped – sixty Army Corps in place of the thirty-five with which she had begun the war. The Trans-Siberian railway had been doubled over a distance of 6,000 kilometres, as far east as Lake Baikal. A new railway 1,400 kilometres long, built through the depth of winter at the cost of unnumbered lives, linked Petrograd with the perennially ice-free waters of the Murman coast. And by both these channels munitions from the rising factories of Britain, France and Japan, or procured by British credit from the United States, were pouring into Russia in broadening streams. The domestic production of every form of war material had simultaneously been multiplied many fold.

"The mighty limbs of the giant were armed, the conceptions of his brain were clear, his heart was still true, but the nerves which could transform resolve and design into action were but partially developed or non-existent [he is referring to the enemy within, the Duma and the anti-monarchists]. This defect, irremediable at the time, fatal in its results, in no way detracts from the merit or the marvel of the Russian achievement, which will forever stand as the supreme monument and memorial of the Empire founded by Peter the Great."52

By the autumn of 1916 the Russian armies were clearly increasing in strength. Thus the British military attaché said that Russia's prospects were better in the winter of 1916-17 than a year before. This estimate was shared by Grand Duke Sergius Mikhailovich, who was at Stavka as Inspector-General of Artillery. As he said to his brother, Grand Duke Alexander: "Go back to your work and pray that the revolution will not break out this very year. The Army is in perfect condition; artillery, supplies, engineering, troops – everything is ready for a decisive offensive in the spring of 1917. This time we will defeat the Germans and Austrians; on condition, of course, that the rear will not deprive us of our freedom of action. The Germans can save themselves only if they manage to provoke revolution from behind..."53

F. Vinberg, a regimental colonel in Riga, wrote: "Already at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917 many knew that, insofar as it is possible to calculate the future, our victories in the spring and summer of 1917 were guaranteed. All the deficiencies in the material and technical sphere, which had told so strongly in 1914 and 1915, had been corrected. All our armies had every kind of

52 Churchill, *The World Crisis, 1916-1918*, vol. 1, pp. 102-103, London, 1929.

53 Grand Duke Sergei, in Lyubov Millar, *Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia*, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Publication Society, 1993, p. 182.

provisions in abundance. While in the German armies the insufficiency in everything was felt more strongly every day..."⁵⁴

"By 1916," writes David Stevenson, "Russia, exceptionally among the belligerents, was experiencing a regular boom, with rising growth and a bullish stock exchange: coal output was up 30 per cent on 1914, chemicals output doubled, and machinery output trebled. Armaments rode the crest of the wave: new rifle production rose from 132,844 in 1914 to 733,017 in 1915, and 1,301,433 in 1916; 76mm field guns from 354 to 1,349 to 3721 in these years; 122mm heavy guns from 78 to 361 to 637; and shell production (of all types) from 104,900 to 9,567,888 to 30,974,678. During the war Russia produced 20,000 field guns, against 5,625 imported; and by 1917 it was manufacturing all its howitzers and three-quarters of its heavy artillery. Not only was the shell shortage a thing of the past, but by spring 1917 Russia was acquiring an unprecedented superiority in men and *materiel*."⁵⁵

"The price of this Herculean effort, however, was dislocation of the civilian economy and a crisis in urban food supply. The very achievement that moved the balance in the Allies' favour by summer 1916 contained the seeds of later catastrophe."⁵⁶

Fr. Lev Lebedev cites figures showing that military production equalled production for the non-military economy in 1916, and exceeded it in 1917, presaging complete collapse in 1918. So if Russia were to win, she had to do it *now*, while the military supply situation was still good and the tsar still ruled...⁵⁷ The future of Russia and Orthodoxy depended on the tsar remaining in power – something that, tragically, the Allies understood less well than the Germans...

⁵⁴ Vinberg, *Krestnij Put'* (The Way of the Cross), Munich, 1920, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 149.

⁵⁵ Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War*, London: Penguin, 2005, p. 237.

⁵⁶ Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁵⁷ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 465.

4. THE PLOTTERS GET TO WORK

As we have seen, a significant proportion of the Duma deputies were not in fact interested in carrying on the war to final victory under their Sovereign, but were engaged in plotting to overthrow him.

Some of the plotters were actually considering regicide. Thus Shtormakh writes: "'In 1915,' recounts the Mason A.F. Kerensky in his memoirs, 'speaking at a secret meeting of representatives of the liberal and moderate conservative majority in the Duma and the State Council, which was discussing the Tsar's politics, V.A. Maklakov, who was to the highest degree a conservative liberal, said that it was possible to avert catastrophe and save Russia only by repeating the events of March 11, 1801 (the assassination of Paul I).' Kerensky reasons that the difference in views between him and Maklakov came down only to timing, for Kerensky himself had come to conclude that killing the Tsar was 'a necessity' ten years earlier. 'And besides,' continues Kerensky, 'Maklakov and those who thought like him would have wanted that others do it. But I suggested that, in accepting the idea, one should assume the whole responsibility for it, and go on to execute it personally'. Kerensky continued to call for the murder of the Tsar. In his speech at the session of the State Duma in February, 1917 he called for the 'physical removal of the Tsar,' explaining that they should do to the Tsar 'what Brutus did in the time of Ancient Rome'."58

According to Guchkov, they worked out several variants of the seizure of power. One involved seizing the Tsar in Tsarskoye Selo or Peterhof. Another involved doing the same at Headquarters. This latter plan would have had to involve some generals who were members of the military lodge, such as Alexeyev or Ruzsky. However, this might lead to a schism in the army, which would undermine its capability for war. So it was decided not to initiate the generals into the plot – although, as we shall see, they played a very important role quite independently of Guchkov's band, prevented loyal military units from coming to the aid of the Tsar, and themselves demanded his abdication.⁵⁹

A third plan, worked out by another Mason, Prince D.L. Vyazemsky, envisaged a military unit taking control of the Tsar's train between Military Headquarters and Tsarskoye Selo and forcing him to abdicate in favour of the Tsarevich. This was the plan eventually adopted.

58 <http://rushistory.3dn.ru/forum/4-86-1>.

59 Sedova, after arguing that the generals were never initiated into Guchkov's plot, goes on: "Finally, nevertheless, Guchkov revealed his plan to Ruzsky. But this took place already after the coup. On learning of the plot, Ruzsky cried out: 'Ach, Alexander Ivanovich, if you had told me about this earlier, I would have joined you.' But Guchkov said: 'My dear, if I had revealed the plan, you would have pressed a button, and an adjutant would have come and you would have said: Arrest him'." ("Ne Tsar', a Ego Poddanie Otvetssvenny za Fevral'skij Perevorot 1917 Goda" (Not the Tsar, but his Subjects were Responsible for the Coup of 1917), *Nasha Strana*, N 2864, March 14, 2009, p. 4)

Yet another plan was to seize the Tsar (on March 1) and exile him abroad. Guchkov claims that the agreement of some foreign governments to this was obtained.

The Germans got wind of these plans, and not long before February, 1917 the Bulgarian Ambassador tried to warn the Tsar about them. The Germans, according to one version of events, were looking to save the Tsar in order to establish a separate peace with him. But the Tsar, in accordance with his promise to the Allies, rejected this out of hand.

Yet another plan was worked out by Prince G.E. Lvov. He suggested forcing the Tsar to abdicate and putting Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich on the throne in his place, with Guchkov and Lvov as the powers behind the throne. The Mason A.I. Khatisov, a friend of the Grand Duke, spoke with him and his wife about this, and they were sympathetic to the idea. Sedova claims that Lvov actually offered the throne to Nikolasha...⁶⁰

At a meeting between members of the Duma and some generals in the study of Rodzyanko in February, 1917 another plot to force the Tsar to abdicate was formed. The leading roles in this were to be played by Generals Krymov and Ruzsky and Colonel Rodzyanko, the Duma leader's son.

Finally, the so-called naval plot was formed, as Shulgin recounts, according to which the Tsaritsa (and perhaps also the Tsar) was to be invited onto a warship and taken to England.⁶¹

Besides the formal conspirators, there were many others who helped them by trying to undermine the resolve of the Tsar. Thus "before the February *coup*," writes Yana Sedova, "in the Russian empire there were more and more attempts on the part of individual people to 'open the eyes of his Majesty' to the internal political situation.

"This 'search for truth' assumed a particularly massive character in November, 1916, beginning on November 1, when Great Prince Nicholas Mikhailovich arrived at Stavka to have a heart-to-heart conversation with his Majesty...

"Very many considered it their duty to 'open the eyes of his Majesty': Grand Dukes Nicholas and Alexander Mikhailovich, Nicholas Nikolayevich and Paul Alexandrovich, the ministers Ignatiev and Pokrovsky, Generals Alexeyev and N.I. Ivanov, the ambassadors of allied governments Buchanan and Paléologue, the president of the Duma M. Rodzyanko, Protopresbyter of the army and navy G. Shavelsky, the court commandant V.N. Voejkov, the chief representative of the Red Cross P.M. Kaufmann-Turkestansky, the official A.A. Klopov, the dentist S.S. Kostritsky...

⁶⁰ Sedova, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ <http://rushistory.3dn.ru/forum/4-86-1>.

“This is far from a complete list. It includes only conversations, but many addressed his Majesty in letters or tried to influence the Empress (Great Prince Alexander Mikhailovich both spoke with his Majesty and sent him a very long letter and spoke with the Empress). ‘It seemed,’ wrote Rodzyanko later, ‘that the whole of Russia was beseeching his Majesty about one and the same thing, and it was impossible not to understand and pay heed to the pleas of a land worn out by suffering’.

“But what did ‘the whole of Russia’ ask about? As a rule, about two things: the removal of ‘dark powers’ and the bestowing of ‘a ministry of confidence’. The degree to which the boundaries between these two groups was blurred is evident from the fact that the Duma deputy Protopopov at first considered himself a candidate for the ‘responsible ministry’, but when his Majesty truly appointed him a minister, the name of Protopopov immediately appeared in the ranks of the ‘dark powers’. By the ‘dark powers’ was usually understood Rasputin and his supposed protégés. Few began to think at that time that ‘the Rasputin legend’ was invented, and not invented in vain.

“It was less evident what the ‘responsible ministry’ was. For many this term had a purely practical meaning and signified the removal from the government of certain ministers who were not pleasing to the Duma and the appointment in their place of Milyukov, Rodzyanko and other members of the Duma.

“But the closer it came to the February coup, the more demands there were in favour of a really responsible ministry, that is, a government which would be formed by the Duma and would only formally be confirmed by his Majesty. That a responsible ministry was no longer a real monarchy, but the end of the Autocracy, was not understood by everyone. Nobody at that time listened to the words of Scheglovitov: ‘A monarchist who goes with a demand for a ministry of public confidence is not a monarchist’.

“As for the idea of appointed people with no administrative experience, but of the Duma, to the government in conditions of war, this was evidently thought precisely by those people. All these arguments about ‘dark forces’ and ‘a ministry of confidence’ first arose in the Duma and were proclaimed from its tribune. Evidently the beginning of the mass movements towards his Majesty in November, 1916 were linked with the opening of a Duma session at precisely that time. These conversations were hardly time to coincide with the opening of the Duma: rather, they were elicited by the Duma speeches, which were distributed at the time not only on the pages of newspapers, but also in the form of leaflets. ‘We,’ wrote Shulgin later, ‘ourselves went mad and made the whole country mad with the myth about certain geniuses, ‘endowed with public confidence’, when in fact there were none such...’

“In general, all these conversations were quite similar and usually irrelevant. Nevertheless, his Majesty always listened attentively to what was

expressed in them, although by no means all his interlocutors were easy to listen to.

“Some of them, like many of the Great Princes and Rodzyanko, strove to impose their point of view and change his political course, demanding a ministry endowed with confidence or even a responsible ministry. His Majesty listened to them in silence and thanked them for their ‘advice’.

“Others, like General Alexeyev or S.S. Kostritsky, were under the powerful impression (not to say influence) of the Duma speeches and political agitation, which the truly dark forces who had already thought up the February coup were conducting at the time. Those who gave regular reports to his Majesty and whom he trusted were subjected to particularly strong pressure. If they began a heart-to-heart conversation, his Majesty patiently explained to them in what he did not agree with them and why.

“There existed a third category which, like P.M. Kaufmann, got through to his Majesty, even though they did not have a report to give, so as to tell him ‘the whole bitter truth’. They did not clearly know what they wanted, and simply said ‘everything that had built up in their souls’. Usually they began their speeches with the question: could they speak to him openly (as if his Majesty would say no to such a question!), and then spoke on the same two subjects, about the ‘dark powers’ and the government, insofar as, by the end of 1916, the same things, generally speaking, had built up in all their souls. The speech of such a ‘truth-seeker’ usually ended in such a sad way (Kaufmann just said: ‘Allow me: I’ll go and kill Grishka!’) that his Majesty had to calm them down and assure them that ‘everything will work out’.

“One cannot say that his Majesty did not listen to his interlocutors. Some ministers had to leave their posts precisely because of the conversations. For example, on November 9, 1916 his Majesty wrote to the Empress that he was sacking [Prime Minister] Shturmer since nobody trusted that minister: ‘Every day I hear more and more about him. We have to take account of that.’ And on the same day he wrote in his diary: ‘My head is tired from all these conversations’.

“From the beginning everyone noticed his tiredness, and his interlocutors began more often to foretell revolution to him. Earlier he could say to the visitor: ‘But you’ve gone out of your mind, this is all in your dreams. And when did you dream it? Almost on the very eve of our victory?! And what are you frightened of? The rumours of corrupt Petersburg and the babblers in the Duma, who value, not Russia, but their own interests?’ (from the memoirs of Mamantov). And then the conversation came to an end. But now he had to reply to the most senseless attacks. And he replied. To the rumours of betrayal in the entourage of the Empress: ‘What, in your opinion I’m a traitor?’ To the diagnosis made by the Duma about [Interior Minister] Protopopov: ‘When did he begin to go mad? When I appointed him a minister?’ To the demand ‘to

deserve the confidence of the people': 'But is it not that my people has to deserve my confidence?' However, they did not listen to him..."⁶²

Prince N.D. Zhevakhov, deputy Procurator of the Holy Synod, wrote: "There was nobody at Headquarters capable of understanding his Majesty's profound nature. If not everybody, then a significant majority explained his Majesty's religiosity as 'mysticism', and the people who supported his faith and feelings were out of favour... His Majesty was not only alone and had no spiritual support, but was also in danger, for he was surrounded by people of other convictions and feelings, cunning and insincere people. On the smooth and polished background of subordination, where everyone, it would seem, trembled at the name of the Tsar, and everyone bowed down and crawled in a servile manner, there was going on behind the scenes a furious battle, the more terrible in that it was taking place at the front's forward positions... There was the struggle with the Germans, here was a struggle between the 'old' and the 'new', between the age-old traditions of generations created by religion, - and the new tendencies, born from the theory of socialism; between tears and prayers, and that which found such a vivid expression in the words of Protopresbyter [George] Shavelsky spoken during a cross procession: This is no time to be occupied with trivialities.» I could tangibly feel the whole horror of the situation, the more so in that the war itself seemed to me to be unnecessary and to be, in itself, the victory of the 'new', to which all those who had incited it were striving without restraint, and behind whom were lightmindedly going all those who had renounced the old."

⁶² Sedova, "'Razgovory po dusham' Fevral'skikh Impotentov" ('Heart-to-heart Conversation of the February Impotents'), *Nasha Strana* (Our Country), N 2834, December 29, 2007, p. 7.

5. THE RASPUTIN FACTOR

In 1914, Archbishop Andrei of Ufa, the future hieromartyr, gave an important analysis in the journal *Den'* (Day) of who, or what, would be the cause of the catastrophe. He rejected a focus on external enemies, like the Jews or the Germans, or on particular internal leaders or classes, such as the Tsar or the nobility. He "insisted that the true danger was domestic and that it was coming from the most primitive elements of the Russian narod. Russia had entered a new era, he wrote, that of 'false prophets and prophecies', an era characterized by the decay of the narod itself, even if the country's leaders, who had fallen under the 'hypnosis' of these dangerous figures, had so far failed to recognize the decay. The blind were leading the blind, he warned, straight off 'a precipice'. The latest of such false prophets Andrei called 'The Traitor'. He never gave his name, but then there was no need: everyone knew who he was. Andrei wrote he had known the man a long time (since Rasputin's arrival in Kazan, in fact). He was a 'criminal', a wolf in sheep's clothing, and 'big-time charlatan'. This 'Mister Traitor' offered him a high position in the world if he would just answer correctly one simple question: 'Do you believe in me?' Andrei refused to answer. Russia was facing a 'spiritual catastrophe'. No one would escape unpunished. The coming 'dark epoch' would be marked in the pages of history, and their only hope was to pray to God it 'would not last long'."⁶³

It was not so much that Rasputin alone would cause the catastrophe: he was rather, as a man of the people, the symbol of the people's true state - possessed, like society in Dostoyevsky's *The Devils*. It was the spiritual degradation of the people as a whole that would elicit God's wrath. Nevertheless, the man himself, on his own and shorn of any symbolic meaning, was an important factor...

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As of 1914, writes Douglas Smith, "Nicholas had rarely ever taken Rasputin's advice on important matters and when he did, it was restricted to religious affairs. It was not until a year later after Nicholas had assumed supreme command of the armed forces in 1915 and was away at headquarters (Stavka) that he showed any willingness, and then reluctantly and rarely to follow Rasputin's advice."⁶⁴ Montefiore agrees, speaking of "the great myth of Alexandra's and Rasputin's influence" on the Tsar during the great crisis of July, 1914.⁶⁵

It is indeed a myth. However, there is no doubt that during the war itself, Rasputin became more influential and dangerous than before, showering the Tsar with all kinds of demands from the relatively trivial to major questions of military strategy, and senior ministerial and hierarchical appointments. Most

⁶³ Smith, *Rasputin*, pp. 324-325.

⁶⁴ Smith, *Rasputin*, p. 364.

⁶⁵ Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 571.

of these demands were mediated through the Tsarina, who believed in his wisdom at all times and was annoyed by the Tsar's refusal to carry out all of them. Her main concern was that the Interior Ministry and police should protect Rasputin from his ever-growing numbers of enemies... But so corrupt was even the Interior Ministry that in the spring of 1916, in an unheard-of scandal, the Interior Minister A.N. Khvostov, was discovered to have attempted to *murder* the man he was supposed to protect – Rasputin! Even the Tsaritsa was forced to admit that this appointment, pushed on an unwilling Tsar by the Tsaritsa and Rasputin, had been disastrous!⁶⁶

Voeikov points out that from 1914 Rasputin and the Tsaritsa's and Rasputin's friend Vyubova "began to take a greater and greater interest in questions of internal politics". The Tsaritsa and Rasputin showered the Tsar with advice. But at the same time, argues Voeikov, the number of appointments actually made by them were few...⁶⁷ Bakhanov calculates that there were no more than eleven... But these few included Prime Ministers, Interior Ministers and church metropolitans! It is hardly surprising, in those circumstances, that Rasputin should have been seen around the country as the real ruler of Russia while the reputation of the Royal Couple suffered because of their refusal to remove him...

Perhaps the most disastrous appointment of all, since it undermined the Tsar's long-standing and deeply felt desire to liberate the Church from the captivity imposed on it by Peter the Great and his *Spiritual Regulation* of 1721, came after the death of Metropolitan Flavian of Kiev in the autumn of 1915. The man the Tsar chose to fill the vacant post was Metropolitan Vladimir, the first hierarch of the Church a hero of the 1905 revolution and future first bishop-martyr of the Russian revolution. At the same time, he appointed a disreputable Rasputinite called Pitirim to fill the now-vacant see of the capital, Petrograd. The over-procurator Volzhin "had tried to stop Nicholas by presenting him with a report highlighting Pitirim's unacceptable behavior [he was a homosexual], but the tsar ignored it. He even overrode the established authority of the Synod to approve such decisions. Nicholas chose to thumb his nose at tradition, and so provoked the anger of the very men he relied on to uphold the sanctity of his reign. The anger was such that there was talk among the clergy in Petrograd and Moscow of breaking from the Synod's authority altogether and creating what they called a 'free Orthodox church'. Among the supporters of the idea was [the former, sacked over-procurator] Samarin, who saw it as a tragic but necessary move...

"The actions of Pitirim sent most churchmen into paroxysms of rage. He appointed a man by the name of Filaret father superior of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Petrograd. Filaret lived openly with his mistress and started demanding bribes to use the monastery. Pitirim threw wild parties at the monastery, some of which Rasputin attended; it was said Rasputin had women

⁶⁶ Bakhanov, *Imperator Nikolaj II*, Moscow, 1998, p. 371.

⁶⁷ Voeikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 143.

smuggled in through the side gates for the priests' pleasure. Even more shocking to Petrograders was Pitirim's preference for in such matters. He came to the capital with a handsome young priest name Antony Guriysky, who was, like Pitirim, a homosexual, and he kept other homosexual men around him, such as Melkhizedek (Mikhail Paevsky), rector of the Tiflis Seminary, and the future bishop of Kronstadt, and Ivan Osipenko, Pitirim's lover and personal secretary. There was continuing talk of financial improprieties. Rumor had it that Piirim skimmed money of the sale of burial plots to line his pockets and pay back Rasputin for his support. The truth of such talk is difficult to ascertain."⁶⁸

Difficult to verify such stories may well have been, like so much else in the Rasputin saga. However, one thing is indisputable: the Tsar was impinging on the canonical rights of the Orthodox Church in an Orthodox state – a sin that Patriarch Nikon back in the seventeenth century had declared was in essence an antichristian act. It raised the clear threat that He Who said: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" was about to come hard down not only on the enemies of the Romanov dynasty, like Guchkov and the Masons, but also on its supposed friends, like Rasputin, but even on the Royal Couple that had given him so much leeway to undermine the foundations of the kingdom and the Church...

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There was "never any military reason," writes Dominic Lieven, "for Russia to seek a separate peace between August 1914 and March 1917. Too much attention is usually paid to the defeats of Tannenberg in 1914 and Gorlice-Tarnow in 1915. Russia's military effort in the First World War amounted to much more than this. If on the whole the Russian army proved inferior to the German forces, that was usually true of the French and British as well. Moreover, during the Brusilov offensive in 1916 Russian forces had shown themselves quite capable of routing large German units. Russian armies usually showed themselves superior to Austrian forces of comparable size, and their performance against the Ottomans in 1914-16 was very much superior to that of British forces operating in Gallipoli, Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Russian defence industry performed miracles in 1916 and if there were legitimate doubts as to whether this level of production could be fully sustained in 1917, the same was true of the war economies of a number of other belligerents. It is true that Rumania's defeat necessitated a major redeployment of troops and supplies to the southern front in the weeks before the revolution and that this, together with a particularly severe winter, played havoc with railway movements on the home front. Nevertheless, in military terms there was absolutely no reason to believe that Russia had lost the war in February 1917.

"Indeed, when one raised one's eyes from the eastern front and looked at the Allies' overall position, the probability of Russian victory was very great,

⁶⁸ Smith, *Rasputin*, pp. 516-517.

so long as the home front could hold. Although the British empire was potentially the most powerful of the Allied states, in 1914-16 France and Russia had carried the overwhelming burden of the war on land. Not until July 1916 on the Somme were British forces committed en masse against the Germans, and even then the British armies, though courageous to a fault, lacked proper training and were commanded by amateur officers and generals who lacked any experience of controlling masses of men. Even so, in the summer of 1916 the combined impact of the Somme, Verdun and the Brusilov offensive had brought the Central Powers within sight of collapse. A similar but better coordinated effort, with British power now peaking, held out excellent prospects for 1917. Still more to the point, by February 1917 the German campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare made American involvement in the war in the immediate future a near certainty: the Allied superiority in resources would thereby become overwhelming.

“Once stalemate set in on the battlefield in 1914, the First World War became as much as anything a contest over which belligerent’s home front would collapse first. This fate befell Russia in large part because even its upper and middle classes, let alone organized labour, were more hostile to the existing regime and less integrated into the legal political order than was the case even in Italy, let alone in France, Germany or Britain in 1914. In addition, opposition to the regime was less divided along ethnic lines than was the case in Austria-Hungary, and Russia was more geographically isolated from military and economic assistance from its allies than was the case with any of the other major belligerents. Nevertheless, unrest on the domestic front was by no means confined to Russia. The Italian home front seemed on the verge of collapse after the defeat of Caporetto in 1917 and the French army suffered major mutinies that year. In the United Kingdom the attempt to impose conscription in Ireland made that country ungovernable and led quickly to civil war. In both Germany and Austria revolution at home played a vital role in 1918, though in contrast to Russia it is true that revolution followed decisive military defeats and was set off in part by the correct sense that the war was unwinnable.

“The winter of 1916-17 was decisive not just for the outcome of the First World War but also for the history of twentieth-century Europe. Events on the domestic and military fronts were closely connected. In the winter of 1915-16 in both Germany and Austria pressure on civilian food consumption had been very severe. The winter of 1916-17 proved worse. The conviction of the German military leadership that the Central Powers’ home fronts could not sustain too much further pressure on this scale was an important factor in their decision to launch unrestricted submarine warfare in the winter of 1916-17, thereby (so they hoped) driving Britain out of the war and breaking the Allied blockade. By this supreme piece of miscalculation and folly the German leadership

brought the United States into the war at precisely the moment when the overthrow of the imperial regime was preparing Russia to leave it..." 69

Russia was therefore not defeated militarily from without, but by revolution from within, a revolution prepared by Russian and International Masonry and reinforced by the general loss of respect for, and trust in, the Tsar and his government caused especially by his failure to get rid of the influence of Rasputin on the government.

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Another cause – although not a decisive cause – of Russia's defeat was the massive losses sustained by Russia during the war. Russia's warrior class, the pre-revolutionary aristocracy that constituted most of her officers, was almost completely wiped out in the first two years.⁷⁰ And in the first year almost all the old military cadres, from privates to colonels, – that is, the best and the most loyal to the Tsar – were killed. From 1916, to fill up the losses in the ranks of the junior and middle commanders, the officer schools were forced to take 9/10ths of their entrance from non-noble estates. These new commanders were of much lower quality than their predecessors, who had been taught to die for the Faith and the Fatherland. Especially heavy losses were suffered in the same period by the military chaplains. The older generation of clergy had enjoyed considerable spiritual authority among the soldiers. But they were replaced by less experienced men enjoying less authority.⁷¹

The critical factor was not lack of armaments, as in 1915, but a loss of morale among the rank and file. In general, the appeals of the extreme socialists at the Zimmerwald conference that the workers of different countries should not fight each other had not been successful. Patriotic feelings turned out to be stronger than class loyalties. However, the terrible losses suffered in the war, the evidence of massive corruption and incompetence in arms deliveries, the propaganda against the Tsar and Tsarina over Rasputin, and the return of Bolshevik agitators – all these factors began to take their toll.

S.S. Oldenburg writes that in the autumn of 1916 "the spirit of military regulations, the spirit of the old tsarist army was strong, even the shadow of tradition turned out to be sufficient to maintain discipline in the eight-million mass of soldiers".⁷²

69 Lieven, "Russia, Europe and World War I", in Edward Acton, Vladimir Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.), *A Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution, 1914-1921*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

70 Arsène de Goulévitch, *Czarism and Revolution*, Hawthorne, Ca.: Omni Publications, 1962, p. 191; Sergei Vladimirovich Volkov, "Pervaya mirovaia vojna i russkij ofiterskij korpus", *Nasha Strana*, N 2874, August 29, 2009, p. 3.

71 Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 463- 464. There were some notable exceptions, however. One was Hieromonk Alexander (Orlov) of Omsk, who was greatly admired by the men of his regiment and became a Catacomb Church Confessor, reposing in 1977.

72 Oldenburg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II*, Belgrade, 1939, vol. II, p. 210.

However, more recent authorities paint a darker picture. Stephen Kotkin claims that in the autumn of 1916 “a clutch of mutinies broke out, including whole regiments, in Petrograd’s outskirts, where rear units had swelled with untrained call-ups who fraternized with workers”.⁷³ This would explain why the Petrograd garrison proved to be unfaithful to the tsar during the February revolution...

According to Stevenson, “Evidence suggests that many soldiers were convinced by 1915 that they could not beat the Germans, and that by the end of 1916 they were full of despondency and recrimination against the authorities who had sent them into war without the wherewithal to win. The evidence that victory was as remote as ever, despite Brusilov’s initial successes and another million casualties, produced a still uglier mood. Soldiers’ letters revealed a deep anxiety about the deteriorating quality and quantity of their provisions (the daily bread ration was reduced from three pounds to two, and then to one, during the winter), as well as anger about rocketing inflation and scarcities that endangered their loved ones’ welfare. Many wanted to end the war whatever the cost, and over twenty mutinies seem to have occurred in October-December 1916 (the first on this scale in any army during the war), some involving whole regiments, and in each case taking the form of a collective refusal of orders to attack or to prepare to attack.”⁷⁴

This was not a situation that one man, even one at the summit of power, could reverse. For Russia was now that nation of which the prophet cried: “Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it. But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, strangers devour your land in your presence” (Isaiah 1.4-7).

“The whole head was sick” in Russia: to some degree the Tsar himself, insofar as he had not acted against Rasputin, but especially the Duma politicians, who considered themselves the real leaders of the country. And without their cooperation the Tsar could do little. For real one-man rule had become almost impossible by 1916. Not only had democratic sentiments spread everywhere in all the Great Powers: public opinion as expressed in the press was a force that no ruler could ignore: The sheer complexity of ruling a large, increasingly differentiated and rapidly industrializing society inevitably involved a large measure of devolution of power with a corresponding loss of control from the head if the lower members did not obey him.

⁷³ Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power. 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 163.

⁷⁴ Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

Now Tsar Nicholas was highly educated and intelligent, and probably as capable of coping with the vast complexity of ruling a twentieth-century empire as any man. Nor, contrary to the accepted opinion, did he lack decisiveness or courage. But it is true to say that he found it difficult to impose his will on his subordinates (with the exception of his wife). He was the most tactful and merciful of men, and the least inclined, as the Tsarina noticed, to lay down the law in a masterful fashion. And yet such masterfulness was sometimes necessary, if not sufficient, and especially at this time. For "to the lot of the emperor," according to Baroness Sophia Buksgeveden, the Tsarina's lady-in-waiting, "fell a task whose successful execution would have required the appearance on the throne of Napoleon and Peter the Great in one person..."⁷⁵ But the tsar, to his credit, did not have the ruthlessness of those tyrants. Once the head of the police promised him that there would be no revolution in Russia for a hundred years if he would permit 50,000 executions. The Tsar quickly rejected this proposal...

And yet he could manifest firmness, and was by no means as weak-willed as has been claimed. Thus once, in 1906, Admiral F.V. Dubasov asked him to have mercy on a terrorist who had tried to kill him. The Tsar replied: "Field tribunals act independently and independently of me: let them act with all the strictness of the law. With men who have become bestial there is not, and cannot be, any other means of struggle. You know me, I am not malicious: I write to you completely convinced of the rightness of my opinion. It is painful and hard, but right to say this, that 'to our shame and gall' [Stolypin's words] only the execution of a few can prevent a sea of blood and has already prevented it."⁷⁶

However, it was not the execution of a few (or even 50,000) revolutionaries that was the question or the solution ten years later, in the autumn of 1916. Only in the factories of St. Petersburg was the revolution well-entrenched with its defeatist programme. The real problem was the the progressive bloc in the Duma, which professed to want the war continued to a successful end, but argued that success could be attained, in effect, only by destroying the Russian autocracy and replacing it by a constitutional monarchy in which the real power remained in their own hands. What many of them, notably Guchkov, really hoped for was the defeat of Russia followed by the fall of the monarchy, which would enable them to assume power. To this end they employed all kinds of dishonourable, lying means. They concealed from the general public the improving situation in the army; they insinuated that the Tsar was ruled by Rasputin, when he was not⁷⁷; that the Tsarina was pro-German and even a German spy, which she was not⁷⁸; that the Tsar's ministers with German

⁷⁵ Buksgeveden, *Ventsenosnitsa Muchenitsa* (The Crown-Bearing Martyr), Moscow, 2010, p. 372.

⁷⁶ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

⁷⁷ In fact, the Tsar as often as not ignored Rasputin's advice. See Oldenburg, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.

⁷⁸ . This slander can be refuted by many excerpts from the Empress's diary; and the French ambassador, Maurice Paléologue, wrote: "{The Empress's] education and upbringing, her

names, such as Prime Minister Stürmer, were Germanophiles, which they were not.

The Tsar might have survived if had had the support of the Church and the army. But the Church, though loyal, was hugely discontented by his arranging the appointment of Pitirim as first-hierarch., and then of Over-Procurator Raev and of his deputy, Prince Zhevakhov.⁷⁹ Smith comments: "Rasputin had gained control over the Church [at its highest level, at any rate]. The defeat of his opponents was complete..."⁸⁰ Not only one, but both pillars of the Orthodox symphony of powers were shaking...

As for the army, it, as we shall see, had been penetrated at the highest level by the Masonic plotters against the throne...

mental and moral formation, are completely English;... the basis of her character is completely Russian ... She loves Russia with a burning love..." (*La Russie des Tsars pendant la Grande Guerre* (The Russia of the Tsars during the Great War), vol. V, 1, pp. 249-50.).

⁷⁹ Smith, *Rasputin*, p. 549.

⁸⁰ Smith, *Rasputin*, p. 550.

6. STUPIDITY OR TREASON?

In the Duma on November 1, 1916, the leader of the Cadet party, Paul Milyukov, holding a German newspaper in his hand and reading the words: "the victory of the court party grouped around the young Tsarina", uttered his famously seditious evaluation of the regime's performance: "Is it stupidity – or treason?" insinuating that the authorities wanted a separate peace with Germany. To which some in the auditorium replied: "Treason", and others: "Stupidity". Major-General V.N. Voeikov, who was with the Tsar at the time, wrote: "The most shocking thing in this most disgusting slander, unheard of in the annals of history, was that it was based on German newspapers..."

"For Germany that was at war with us it was, of course, necessary, on the eve of the possible victory of Russia and the Allies, to exert every effort and employ all means to undermine the might of Russia.

"Count P.A. Ignatiev, who was working in our counter-espionage abroad, cites the words of a German diplomat that one of his agents overheard: 'We are not at all interested to know whether the Russian emperor wants to conclude a separate peace. What is important to us is that they should believe this rumour, which weakens the position of Russia and the Allies.' And we must give them their due: in the given case both our external and our internal enemies showed no hesitation: one example is the fact that our public figures spread the rumour coming from Duma circles that supposedly on September 15, 1915 Grand Duke Ludwig of Hesse, the brother of the Empress, secretly visited Tsarskoye Selo. To those who objected to this fable they replied: if it was not the Grand Duke, in any case it was a member of his suite; the mysterious visit was attributed to the desire of Germany, with the cooperation of the Empress, to conclude a separate peace with Russia.

"At that time nobody could explain to me whether the leader of the Cadet party, Miliukov himself, was led by stupidity or treason when he ascended the tribune of the State Duma, holding in his hands a German newspaper, and what relations *he* had with the Germans..."⁸¹

Treason was certainly afoot – but among the liberals, masons and socialists, not in the Royal Family or their entourage. Every attempt by the Tsar to appoint a Prime Minister who would be able to work with the Duma – first Sturmer then Protopopov, then Trepov, then Golitsyn – was met by the deputies with a storm of abuse (they accused Protopopov of being "a Judas"⁸²). Stirred up by the plotters, they were making government impossible.

⁸¹ Voeikov, *So Tsarem i Bez Tsaria* (With and Without the Tsar), Moscow, 1995, p. 137. In fact, two months after the February revolution, Miliukov revealed to his colleagues in the Provisional Government that he knew (from whom?) that the revolutionary movement was being financed by the Germans.

⁸² Smith, *Rasputin*, p. 563.

It could therefore be argued that the Tsar should have acted against the conspirators at least as firmly in 1916-17 as he had against the revolutionaries in 1905-06.

This was precisely what the Tsaritsa argued in private letters to her husband: "Show to all, that you are the Master & your will shall be obeyed – the time of great indulgence & gentleness is over – now comes your reign of will & power, & obedience..." (December 4, 1916). And again: "Be Peter the Great, John [Ivan] the Terrible, Emperor Paul – crush them all under you." (December 14, 1916). She urged him to prorogue the Duma, remove Trepov (who had replaced Stürmer) and send Lvov, Miliukov, Guchkov and Polivanov to Siberia...

The Tsar did replace Trepov with the last Prime Minister of Russia, Prince Nikolai Golitsyn. However, even if the Tsar had had the necessary ruthlessness of character (which, as we have seen, he did not), the days were past when the banishment of a few conspirators could have saved the situation. Soon even the generals would rebel against their commander-in-chief, compelling his abdication. At this point there was nothing that the righteous tsar could do except place his beloved country in the hands of the All-Just and All-Merciful God...

"Several days later," writes I.P. Yakobi, "the former minister of the interior N.A. Maklakov delivered in the State Council a speech that was murderous for the opposition. With figures at his finger-tips, the orator demonstrated that the so renowned 'social organizations' who were supposed to have supplied the army instead of the incapable Tsarist Government had in reality done almost nothing for the war. Thus, for example, the military-industrial committee, which was ruled by Guchkov, had hardly been able to provide *one-and-a-half percent* of all the artillery orders, which had been fulfilled by state factories. 'The opposition does everything for the war,' said A.N. Maklakov, 'but for the war against order; they do everything for victory, but the victory over the Government. Here, in the rear, they are trying to deceive Russia, but we shall not betray her. We have served her, we have believed in her and with this feeling we shall fight and die for her.' "83

These were prophetic words! For twenty months later Maklakov was to suffer a martyric death at the hands of the Bolsheviks... Prophetic also was his prediction in November that the day after parliamentarism triumphed would come "social revolution... communes... the end of the monarchy and of the property-owning class and the triumph of the peasant, who will become a bandit."⁸⁴

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83 Yakobi, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

84 Maklakov, in Dominic Lieven, *Nicholas II*, London: Pimlico, 1993, p. 229.

We come back to the question why the Tsar did not immediately imprison the plotters against his throne. Archpriest Lev Lebedev supposes that the Tsar, too, was tempted to deal with them “simply and speedily. We remember his words, that ‘with men who have become bestial there is not, and cannot be, any other means of struggle’ (*besides shooting them*) and that ‘only the execution of a few can prevent a sea of blood’. But there appeared before the Tsar at that time in the persons of Lvov, Rodzyanko, Guchkov, etc. not ‘bestialized’ criminal murderers like the Bolsheviks, but respectable people with good intentions! Yes, they were *in error* in thinking that by removing the Tsar from power they could rule Russia better [than he]. But this was a *sincere error*, they *thought* that they were truly *patriots*. It would have been wrong to kill *such* people! *Such* people should not even have been sent to Siberia (that is, into prison). It was necessary to *show* them that they *were mistaken*. And how better to show them than by *victory* over the external enemy, a victory which was already in their hands, and would be inevitable in four or five *months*! The tsar *did not know* that his closest generals had already prepared to arrest him and deprive him of power on February 22, 1917. And the generals did not know that they were doing this precisely in order that in four or five months’ time *there should be no victory*! That had been decided in Bnai-Brith, in other international Jewish organizations (Russia must not be ‘among the victor-countries’!). Therefore through the German General Staff (which also *did not know* all the plots, but thought only about its own salvation and the salvation of Germany), and also directly from the banks of Jacob Schiff and others (we shall name them later) huge sums of money had already gone to the *real murderers* of the Tsar and the Fatherland - the Bolsheviks. This was *the second echelon* [of plotters], it hid behind the first [the Russian Masons]. It was on them (and not on the ‘noble patriots’) that the world powers of evil placed their hopes, for they had no need at all of a transfigured Russia, even if on the western (‘their’) model. What they needed was that Russia and the Great Russian people should *not exist* as such! For they, the powers of evil, *knew Great Russia better* (incomparably better!) than *the whole* of Russian ‘society’ (especially the despised intelligentsia). Did Guchkov know about the planned murder of the whole of Great Russia? *He knew!* The Empress accurately called him ‘cattle’. Kerensky also knew, and also several *specially initiated* Masons, who hid this from *the overwhelming majority* of all the ‘brothers’ – the other Russian Masons. The specially initiated had already for a long time had secret links (through Trotsky, M. Gorky and several others) with Lenin and the Bolsheviks, which *the overwhelming majority* of the Bolsheviks, too, *did not know!*

“And what did his Majesty know? He knew that society was eaten up by Judaeo-Masonry, that in it was *error* and cowardice and deception. But he *did not know* that at the base of the error, in its secret places, was *treason*. And he also *did not know* that treason and cowardice and deception were all around him, that is, everywhere throughout the higher *command* of the army. And what is the Tsar without an army, without troops?! Then there is the question: could the Tsar have learned in time about the treachery among the generals? Why not! Let’s take, for example, Yanushkevich, or Gurko, or Korfa (or all of them together), whom Sukhomlinov had pointed to as plotters already in 1909 (!). In

prison, *under torture* – such torture as they had with Tsars Ivan and Peter – they would have said everything, *given up all the rest...*! But then he, Nicholas II, would have needed to be truly like Ivan IV or Peter I from the beginning – that is, a *satanist* and a born murderer (psychologically), not trusting *anyone*, suspecting *everyone*, sparing *nobody*. It is significant that her Majesty joined to the names of these Tsars the name of Paul I. That means that she had in mind, not Satanism and bestiality, but only *firmness...* But she *felt* with striking perspicacity that her husband was ‘suffering for the mistakes of his royal predecessors’. Which ones?! Just as we said, first of all and mainly for the ‘mistakes’ *precisely of Ivan IV and Peter I*. Not to become like them, these predecessors, to overcome the temptation of *replying to evil with evil means* – that was the task of Nicholas II. For *not everything is allowed, not all means* are good for the attainment of what would seem to be the most important ends. *The righteousness of God* is not attained by diabolic methods. Evil is not conquered by evil! There was a time when they, including also his Majesty Nicholas II, suppressed evil by evil! But in accordance with the Providence of God *another time* had come, a time to show where the Russian Tsar could himself become a *victim of evil* – voluntarily! – and endure evil *to the end*. *Did he believe in Christ and love Him truly in such a way as to suffer voluntarily like Christ?* The same Divine providential *question as was posed for the whole of Great Russia!* This was the final test of faith – *through life and through death*. If one can live only by killing and making oneself *one* with evil and the devil (as those whom one has to kill), then it would be better *not to live!* That is the reply of the Tsar and of Great Russia that he headed! The more so in that it was then a matter of earthly, *historical* life. Here, in *this* life and in *this* history to die in order to live again in the eternal and new ‘history’ of the Kingdom of Heaven! For there is no other way into this Kingdom of Heaven – *the Lord* left no other. He decreed that it should be experienced only *by this entry...* That is what turned out to be His, God’s will!

“We recall that his Majesty Nicholas II took all his most important decisions after ardent prayer, having felt *the goodwill of God*. Therefore now, on considering earnestly why he then, at the end of 1916 and very beginning of 1917, did not take those measures which his wife so warmly wrote to him about, we must inescapably admit one thing: he *did not have* God’s goodwill in relation to them! Her Majesty’s thought is remarkable in itself, that the Tsar, if he had to be ruled by anyone, should be ruled only by one who was himself ruled by God! But there was no such person near the Tsar. Rasputin was *not that* person. His Majesty already understood this, but the Tsaritsa did not yet understand it. In this question he was condescending to her and delicate. But, as we see, he did not carry out the advice of their ‘Friend’, and did not even mention him in his replies to his wife. The Tsar entrusted all his heart and his thoughts to God and was forced to be ruled by Him alone.”⁸⁵

There is much of value in this hypothesis of Lebedev, but it is too kind to the Masonic plotters. Yes, they were “sincere” – but so were the Bolsheviks! It

85 Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 473-475.

seems unlikely that the Tsar should have considered the Bolsheviks worthy of punishment, but the Masons not. More likely is that he thought that acting against the Masons would bring forward the revolution at precisely the moment when he wanted peace in the rear of the army. It must be remembered the Masons controlled the public organizations, like the Military-Industrial Committee, whose leader was Guchkov, and the *zemstva*, whose leader was Prince George Lvov (who also happened to be the leader of Russian Masonry). These, in spite of their disloyalty, were nevertheless making their contribution to providing *some* ammunition for the army and helping the wounded. The Emperor held the opinion that "in wartime one must not touch the public organizations".⁸⁶

And so it was the war that both created the conditions that made the revolution possible, and prevented the Tsar from taking the steps that were necessary in order to crush it...

Many people and historians think that the Russian revolution was the result of an elemental movement of the masses. This is not true of the February revolution, which was a carefully hatched plot involving about three hundred Masons, whose main organizer was Guchkov. What is true is that the majority of the people, primed by many decades of anti-monarchist propaganda, accepted, and even rejoiced at, the February revolution, making themselves thereby worthy of the horrors of the October revolution...

For while the Masonic plot against the Tsar was successful, it succeeded in eventually bringing to power, not the Masonic plotters, but the Bolsheviks, who destroyed all the plotters and all their Masonic lodges, forcing the Masons themselves to flee back to their mother lodges abroad... Thus in October Kerensky and his Masonic colleagues fled to France, where they set up lodges under the aegis of the Grand Orient.⁸⁷

Most of the plotters later repented of their actions. Thus "in the summer of 1917," writes F. Vinberg, "in Petrograd and Moscow there circulated from hand to hand copies of a letter of the Cadet leader Milyukov. In this letter he openly admitted that he had taken part, as had almost all the members of the State Duma, in the February coup, in spite of the fact that he understood the danger of the 'experiment' he had undertaken. 'But,' this gentleman cynically admitted in the letter, 'we knew that in the spring we were about to see the victory of the Russian Army. In such a case the prestige and attraction of the Tsar among the people would again become so strong and tenacious that all our efforts to shake and overthrow the Throne of the Autocrat would be in vain. That is why we had to resort to a very quick revolutionary explosion, so as to avert this danger. However, we hoped that we ourselves would be able to finish the war

86 Sedova, "Ne Tsar", a Ego Poddanie Otvetsvenny za Febral'skij Perevorot 1917 Goda" (Not the Tsar, but his Subjects were Responsible for the Coup of 1917), *Nasha Strana*, N 2864, March 14, 2009, p. 3.

87 G. Katkov, *Fevral'skaia Revoliutsia* (The February Revolution), Paris, 1984, pp. 175-82.

triumphantly. It turned out that we were mistaken: all power was quickly torn out of our hands by the plebs... Our mistake turned out to be fatal for Russia'..."⁸⁸

So we must conclude that it was *both* stupidity *and* treason that manifested themselves in the actions of the February plotters. They were undoubtedly traitors in violating their oath of allegiance to the Tsar. But they were also stupid because they did not understand that the overthrow of the Tsar would lead to their own overthrow...

88 F. Vinberg, *Krestnij Put'* (The Way of the Cross), Munich, 1920, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 151. Milyukov wrote: "In response to your questions, how I look at the revolution we have accomplished, I want to say that what happened, we certainly did not want. We believed that power would be concentrated and remain in the hands of the first cabinet, that we would stop the enormous devastation in the army quickly, if not with our own hands, then with the hands of the allies, we would achieve victory over Germany, we would pay for the overthrow of the tsar with only some delay in this victory. We must confess that some, even from our own party, pointed out to us the possibility of what happened next. Of course, we must acknowledge that the moral responsibility lies with us.

"You know that we made a firm decision to use the war to carry out a coup soon after the start of the war, you also know that our army had to go on the offensive, the results of which would fundamentally stop all hints of discontent and cause an explosion of patriotism in the country and jubilation. You understand now why I hesitated at the last minute to give my consent to the coup, you also understand what my inner state should be like at the present time. History will curse the leaders of the so-called proletarians, but it will also curse us, who caused the storm.

"What to do now, you ask. I don't know, that is, inside we all know that the salvation of Russia lies in the return of the monarchy, we know that all the events of the last two months clearly prove that the people were not able to accept freedom, that the mass of the population, not participating in rallies and congresses, were disposed to the monarchy, and that many, many who voted for a republic did so out of fear. All this is clear, but we cannot admit it. Recognition is the collapse of the whole business, our whole life, the collapse of the entire worldview, of which we are representatives." (*Russian Resurrection*, Paris, April 17, 1955, p. 3).

7. THE DEATH OF RASPUTIN

By December, 1916 respect for the throne in Russia had largely vanished, mainly because of the perceptions, both true and false, of Rasputin's influence on the Royal Couple. An air of imminent doom hung over the country. Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna made a last attempt "to convince her sister to send Rasputin away. She felt she had to open Alexandra's eyes to the danger of the situation and the need for quick, decisive action. But Alexandra received her coldly and would not hear a word of it. Upon leaving, Ella said to her, 'Remember the fate of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.' The following day Alexandra sent Ella a note instructing her to return to Moscow. Ella tried to speak to Nicholas but he also refused to see her. Before she left Ella saw Yusupov. 'She drove me away like a dog!' she told him through her tears. 'Poor Nicky, poor Russia!' She never saw her sister again...

[On December 2,] "at the XIIIth Congress of the Union of United Nobility, a resolution was passed on the danger of the 'dark forces' [i.e. Rasputin] that had taken control of the highest levels of the state and the church and called for the necessity of removing these forces once and for all. Russia, the resolution noted, was passing through 'a threatening historic hour'. It called for a strong, unified government that enjoyed the confidence of the people and was willing to work together with all legislative bodies and at the same time recognize its responsibility to the emperor. The resolution was highly significant in that it was issued by one of the main pillars of the Romanov regime. Criticism from the Duma or the press was not surprising, but that the nobility, one of the most traditional, loyal institutions of the state, was now agitating against the dark forces showed the extent to which the throne had lost all support. It was difficult to imagine how much longer the monarchy could survive..."⁸⁹

Rasputin was killed on December 16, 1916 at the hands of Great Prince Dmitri Pavlovich Romanov, Prince Felix Yusupov and a right-wing member of the Duma, Purishkevich. Yusupov lured him to his flat on the pretext of introducing him to his wife, the beautiful Irina, the Tsar's niece. He was shot twice, but neither bullet killed him. Finally he was shot a third time – perhaps by a British secret agent⁹⁰ – before being pushed under the ice of the River Neva.

⁸⁹ Douglas Smith, *Rasputin*, p. 579.

⁹⁰ See Douglas Smith, *Rasputin*, pp. 630-634; Michael Smith, *A History of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service*, London: Dialogue; Annabel Venning, "How Britain's First Spy Chief Ordered Rasputin's Murder", *Daily Mail*, July 22, 2010, pp. 32-33; Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, pp. 606-. It is also probable, according to Christopher Danziger, that Yusupov had contacts with the SIS through his Oxford friends, who included Oswald Rayner ("The Prince, the Spy and the Mad Monk", *Oxford Today*, Michaelmas Term, 2016, p. 33). However, John Penycate writes: "Danzinger quotes an autopsy report saying Rasputin drowned. [However,] Professor Dmitri Kosorotov of the Russian Imperial Military Medical Academy, who carried out Rasputin's autopsy, wrote that he was killed by a bullet to the forehead. You can see the bullet hole in the photograph of Rasputin's post-mortem. Kosorotov adds that the three bullets that struck Rasputin came from three different guns. Felix Yusupov and Vladimir Purishkevich, the conspirator who was a member of the Duma, described in their memoirs firing the first two

Yusupov was justified by his close friend, Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, who said that he had only done his patriotic duty – “you killed a demon,” she said. (To Yusupov’s parents she wrote: “May the Lord bless the patriotic exploit of your son”⁹¹). Then, as Yusupov himself writes in his *Memoirs*, “she informed me that several days after the death of Rasputin the abbesses of monasteries came to her to tell her about what had happened with them on the night of the 30th. During the all-night vigil priests had been seized by an attack of madness, had blasphemed and shouted out in a voice that was not their own. Nuns had run down the corridors crying like hysterics and tearing their dresses with indecent movements of the body...”⁹² It is as if the demons that had possessed the body of Rasputin now chose to take up their dwelling in the bodies of his adversaries...

To the Tsar, who did not condone the murder, St. Elizabeth wrote on December 29: “Crime remains crime, but this one being of a special kind, can be counted as a duel and it is considered a patriotic act... Maybe nobody has had the courage to tell you now, that in the streets of the towns people kissed like at Easter week, sang the hymn in the theatres and all moved by one feeling – at last the black wall between us and our Emperor is removed.”⁹³

But she was wrong. The black wall was still there and had even become thicker and darker. For it was quickly realized that if the Tsaritsa remained alive and defiant, Rasputin’s death solved nothing. She also would have to be killed – which is what one Grand Duke, Nikolai Mikhailovich, wanted to do.

The disunity of the Romanov family itself was now exposed. Most of the Romanovs rejoiced at the murder of Rasputin and were determined that his murderers, who included their relative, Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich, should not be punished, or even put on trial, for their crime. Prime Minister Trepov supported this view; only the Interior Minister Protopopov wanted them at least put on trial. The Tsar had been insisting that murder was murder, whether committed by a grand duke or a peasant; but in the end he resolved the problem (after a fashion) by treating the main murderers with astonishing leniency, banishing Great Prince Dmitri to the army in Persia (where he got a hero’s welcome), and Yusupov – to his estate in the country. In this way, at the cost of justice, a rebellion by the Romanovs against the Romanov tsar was avoided...

shots. But not the coup de grace. The former ‘C’ of MI6, Sir John Scarlett (Magdalen, 1966), assured me that he didn’t – the official line now for a century, but probably true” (“Rasputin Disputed”, *Oxford Today*, Trinity term, 2017, p. 6). Keith Jeffrey also rejects the idea that the British secret service was involved: “Rayner’s involvement, if he was present at all, can only have been as an acquaintance of Yusupov’s, and perhaps as an enthusiastic if misguided participant in the scheme to rid Russia of a turbulent priest” (1916, p. 341). However, according to a recent joint British and Russian police investigation, the gun that killed him was British...

⁹¹ Yusupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 235.

⁹² Yusupov, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

⁹³ Alexander Bokhanov, Manfred Knodt, Vladimir Oustimenko, Zinaida Peregudova, Lyubov Tyutyunnik, *The Romanovs*, London: Leppi, 1993, p. 237.

The situation was both unresolved and unprecedented. As the Duma Deputy V.A. Maklakov said in his report on Rasputin on December 27, 1916: "Now there is taking place in the minds and souls of the Russian people the most terrible revolution that has ever happened in history. It is not a revolution – it is a catastrophe: the whole, ages-old world-view, faith in the tsar and in the righteousness of his power, in the idea of its Divine establishment. And this catastrophic revolution has been created in the hidden depths of the soul, not by any evil-intentioned revolutionaries, but by the power itself, drawn by some kind of fate.... This will not be a political revolution that could proceed in a systematic manner, but a revolution of oppression and revenge by the dark lower classes, that could not fail to be elemental, convulsive and chaotic."⁹⁴

And truly: the death of Rasputin was followed, only weeks later, by the abdication of the Tsar and the revolution, as he had predicted. Was this a coincidence? Or can we discern a deeper meaning in this "coincidence" created by Divine Providence?

The murder of Rasputin, when he had already so deeply undermined the authority of the Tsar, suited the anti-tsarist plotters well. "It was truly a master stroke," according to Yakobi: "to impel a 'representative of the people' [Purishkevich] and a relative of the Royal Family [Yusupov] to the crime: counting on the impunity of the murderers, the plotters arranged a pan-national demonstration of the open rebellion by the upper classes and the helplessness of the government. "If Miliukov's speech was the first blow and the tolling of the bell for the revolution, Prince Yusupov's shot was the second blow on the bell. The third and final one had to sound out in Pskov, as a signal for the dark forces to tear apart unhappy Russia, covered in blood..."⁹⁵

It could be argued that the causes of the fall of the Second and Third Romes were similar: in each case, the imperial power gained a supremacy over the ecclesiastical power that was uncanonical and harmful to both Church and State, allowing foreign enemies to conquer it. In the case of Nicholas II the issue is less simple in that his instincts were by no means tyrannical, he was a pious Orthodox Christian who wanted to reform Church-State relations at a future Sobor in the direction of increasing the independence of the Church. He cannot be compared in his relation to the Church with, say, Peter the Great or Catherine the Great or even Nicholas I. Nevertheless, in his refusal to listen to the Church's pleas to remove the false "elder" Rasputin, who was allowed to interfere with Church appointments at the highest level, he undermined the authority of both Church and State, and their mutual relations, in a manner that contributed materially to the success of the revolution.

⁹⁴ Maklakov, in D.P. Anashkin, "The Real Rasputin?: A Look at His Admirers' Revisionist History", *Orthodox Life*, May 4, 2017; Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

⁹⁵ Yakobi, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

As we have seen, the peasant's faith in the Autocracy and the Church (for the two were closely linked in their eyes) had declined sharply from the abortive revolution of 1905; the peasant riots and manor-burnings then had shown that their religiosity and loyalty could no longer be taken for granted. It is not that the peasants suddenly became democrats or constitutional monarchists. On the contrary. At that time they believed religiously in Tsarism. But they also heard and believed the rumours about Rasputin, which offended their religious sensibilities. For they passionately believed that the Tsar, being the Anointed of God, should *rule* and should not himself be ruled by any favourite or "friend", whether he was a noble or a peasant.

The matter was made worse by the murder of Rasputin, which, according to the great singer F.I. Shaliapin, "strengthened the people's belief in the presence at the court of treason [the supposed pro-German activities of the Tsarina and Rasputin]: it had been noticed and avenged by the murder. And since that was the case – everything they said about Rasputin was true!"⁹⁶

Which did not speak well for the Tsar, whose authority declined still further... As in the Time of Troubles, the people wondered whether the Tsar in power at the time was a real authority. And as for the Church authorities who told them to obey the powers that be, they were also under critical scrutiny... The Tsar's detractors were wrong in much of what they said about him, but one cannot deny that they had reason to criticize for weakness in listening to his wife and not expelling Rasputin – and then not bringing his murderers to trial. The result was the decay of tsarist power and prestige, which so weakened the restraints on violence and lawlessness that what Durnovo called "the unconscious socialism" of the peasants erupted, together with a disrespect for authorities in general.

"Rasputin," writes Radzinsky perceptively, "is a key to understanding both the soul and the brutality of the Russia that came after him. He was a precursor of the millions of peasants who, with religious consciousness in their souls, would nevertheless tear down churches, and who, with a dream of the reign of Love and Justice, would murder, rape, and flood the country with blood, in the end destroying themselves..."⁹⁷

"[Deputy Minister of the Interior] Gurko," writes Douglas Smith, "wrote there were two extremes battling inside Rasputin's soul: one seeking the monastery, the other ready to burn down the village. Kokovstov said Rasputin could one minute make the sign of the cross and the next strangle his neighbor with a smile on his face."⁹⁸ This was of course not literally true of Rasputin – but it was close to the truth in relation to the peasantry, as the revolution was soon to show, with its millions both of God-haters and of martyrs for Christ.

⁹⁶ Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 480.

⁹⁷ Radzinsky, *Rasputin*, p. 501.

⁹⁸ Smith, *Rasputin*, London: Pan, 2017, p. 441.

Thus Rasputin was indeed a symbol of the state of the peasantry in the last days of the empire. Though basically Orthodox and monarchist, it was infected with spiritual diseases that manifested themselves in the apostasy, lust, violence and sheer demon-possession of so many peasants and workers during the revolution. The support of the peasants kept the monarchy alive just as Rasputin kept the tsarevich alive, stopping the flow of blood that represented the ebbing spiritual strength of the dynasty. But it was not the tsar or any monarchist party or leader that the peasants supported and voted for in November, 1917, but the terrorist Bolsheviks and Social Revolutionaries...

However, while Rasputin lost grace and the majority of Russians descended into the madness of socialism and Bolshevism, it was a different story for the royal family. The Empress had put her trust in a demonized charlatan, and the Emperor, to prevent her "hysterics", as he told Stolypin, went along with the deception, thereby repeating the story of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden. For such sins, as was revealed to Metropolitan Makary of Moscow in a vision, they suffered exile, humiliation and deprivation in 1917, and violent death in 1918. But inwardly they had remained pure and faithful to God, and so were finally counted worthy of the crown of martyrdom. And so, while the dynasty was cut off, "the child," the Tsarevich Alexei, the future of the dynasty, "who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron" and over whom Rasputin appeared to have had such power, "was caught up to God and His throne" (Revelation 12.5)...

8. APOCALYPTIC VISIONS

On February 21, 1917, just before the February revolution, a 14-year-old Kievan novice, Olga Zosimovna Boiko, fell into a deep trance lasting for forty days during which many mysteries were revealed to her. She saw the following: "In blinding light on an indescribably wonderful throne sat the Saviour, and next to Him on His right hand – our sovereign, surrounded by angels. His Majesty was in full royal regalia: a radiant white robe, a crown, with a sceptre in his hand. And I heard the martyrs talking amongst themselves, rejoicing that the last times had come and that their number would be increased. They said that they would be tormented for the name of Christ and for refusing to accept the seal [of the Antichrist], and that the churches and monasteries would soon be destroyed, and those living in the monasteries would be driven out, and that not only the clergy and monastics would be tortured, but also all those who did not want to receive 'the seal' and would stand for the name of Christ, for the Faith and the Church."⁹⁹

So the coming age was to be an apocalyptic struggle against the Antichrist, an age of martyrdom for Christ's sake – and the Tsar would be among the martyrs.

More was revealed a few weeks later, on March 2, the very day of the Tsar's abdication, when the Mother of God appeared to the peasant woman Eudocia Adrianovna and said to her: "Go to the village of Kolomenskoye; there you will find a big, black icon. Take it and make it beautiful, and let people pray in front of it." Eudocia found the icon at 3 o'clock, the precise hour of the abdication. Miraculously it renewed itself, and showed itself to be the "Reigning" icon of the Mother of God, the same that had led the Russian armies into war with Napoleon. On it she was depicted sitting on a royal throne dressed in a dark red robe and bearing the orb and sceptre of the Orthodox Tsars, as if to show that the sceptre of rule of the Russian land had passed from earthly rulers to the Queen of Heaven...¹⁰⁰

So the Orthodox Autocracy, as symbolized by the orb and sceptre, had not been destroyed, but was being held "in safe keeping", as it were, by the Queen of Heaven, until the earth should again be counted worthy of it...¹⁰¹

99 Letter of Sergius Nilus, 6 August, 1917; in V. Gubanov, *Tsar' Nikolai II-ij i Novie Mucheniki* (Tsar Nicholas II and the New Martyrs), Moscow, 2000, p. 121.

100 It is also said that during the siege of the Moscow Kremlin in October, 1917, the Mother of God ordered the "Reigning" icon to be taken in procession seven times round the Kremlin, and then it would be saved. However, it was taken round only once... (Monk Epiphany (Chernov), *Tserkov' Katakombnaia na Zemle Rossijskoj* (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land), Old Woking, 1980 (MS), <http://www.vs-radoste.narod.ru/photoalbum09.html>)

101 However, both the facts about the appearance of the icon and its theological interpretation are disputed. See M. Babkin, "2 (15) marta 1917 g.: iavlenie ikony 'Derzhavnoj' i otrechenie ot prestola imperatora Nikolaia II" (March 2/15, 1917: the appearance of the "Reigning" icon and Emperor Nicholas II's abdication from the throne), *Posev*, March, 2009, pp. 21-24.

A third vision was given in this year to Metropolitan Makary (Parvitsky) of Moscow, who alone in the Church's hierarchy had refused to accept the Provisional Government and was removed in March, 1917: "I saw a field. The Saviour was walking along a path. I went after Him, crying,

"Lord, I am following you!"

"Finally we approached an immense arch adorned with stars. At the threshold of the arch the Saviour turned to me and said again:

"Follow me!"

And He went into a wondrous garden, and I remained at the threshold and awoke. Soon I fell asleep again and saw myself standing in the same arch, and with the Saviour stood Tsar Nicholas. The Saviour said to the Tsar:

"You see in My hands two cups: one which is bitter for your people and the other sweet for you."

"The Tsar fell to his knees and for a long time begged the Lord to allow him to drink the bitter cup together with his people. The Lord did not agree for a long time, but the Tsar begged importunately. Then the Saviour drew out of the bitter cup a large glowing coal and laid it in the palm of the Tsar's hand. The Tsar began to move the coal from hand to hand and at the same time his body began to grow light, until it had become completely bright, like some radiant spirit. At this I again woke up.

"Falling asleep yet again, I saw an immense field covered with flowers. In the middle of the field stood the Tsar, surrounded by a multitude of people, and with his hands he was distributing manna to them. An invisible voice said at this moment:

"The Tsar has taken the guilt of the Russian people upon himself, and the Russian people is forgiven."

But how could the Russian people could be forgiven through the Tsar? Some people believe that this is a heretical thought. However, A.Ya. Yakovitsky has expressed the following interpretation. The aim of the Provisional Government was to have elections to the Constituent Assembly, which would finally have rejected the monarchical principle. But this would also have brought the anathema of the *Zemsky Sobor* of 1613 upon the whole of Russia, because the anathema invoked a curse on the Russian land if it ever rejected Tsar Michael Romanov and his descendants. Now according to Yakovitsky, the vision of Metropolitan Makary demonstrates that through his martyric patience the Tsar obtained from the Lord that the Constituent Assembly should not come to pass (it was dissolved by the Bolsheviks in January, 1918). Moreover, his distributing manna to the people is a symbol of the distribution of the Holy Gifts of the Eucharist. So the Church hierarchy, while it wavered in its loyalty

in 1917, did not finally reject monarchism, and so did not come under anathema and was able to continue feeding the people spiritually. By taking upon himself the sin of the removal of the autocracy, the Tsar saved his people from falling as whole, with the Church, under the 1613 anathema.

However, for their betrayal of the Tsar, the people still had to suffer... Returning to the Reigning icon, Yakovitsky writes: "Through innumerable sufferings, blood and tears, and after repentance, the Russian people will be forgiven and Royal power, preserved by the Queen of Heaven herself, will undoubtedly be returned to Russia. Otherwise, why should the Most Holy Mother of God have preserved this Power?"¹⁰² "With this it is impossible to disagree. The sin committed can be purified only by blood. But so that the very *possibility of redemption* should arise, some other people had to receive power over the people that had sinned, as Nebuchadnezzar received this power over the Jewish people (as witnessed by the Prophet Jeremiah), or Baty over the Russian people (the first to speak of this after the destruction was the council of bishops of the Kiev metropolia)... Otherwise, the sufferings caused by fraternal blood-letting would only deepen the wrath of God..."¹⁰³

So redemption could be given to the Russian people only if they expiated their sin through the sufferings of martyrdom and repentance, and provided that they did not reject the Orthodox Autocracy *in principle*. The Tsar laid the foundation to this redemption by his petition before the throne of the Almighty. The New Martyrs built on this foundation through their martyric sufferings.

And yet redemption, as revealed in the restoration of the Orthodox Autocracy, has not yet come. And that because the third element – the repentance of the whole people – has not yet taken place.

In the same fateful year of 1917 Elder Nektary of Optina prophesied: "Now his Majesty is not his own man, he is suffering such humiliation for his mistakes. 1918 will be still worse. His Majesty and all his family will be killed, tortured. One pious girl had a vision: Jesus Christ was sitting on a throne, while around Him were the twelve apostles, and terrible torments and groans resounded from the earth. And the Apostle Peter asked Christ:

"O Lord, when will these torments cease?"

"And Jesus Christ replied: 'I give them until 1922. If the people do not repent, do not come to their senses, then they will all perish in this way.'

"Then before the throne of God there stood our Tsar wearing the crown of a great-martyr. Yes, this tsar will be a great-martyr. Recently, he has redeemed

102 Yakovitsky, in S. Fomin (ed.), *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 2003, p. 235.

103 Yakovitsky, "Sergianstvo: mif ili real'nost'", *Vernost' (Fidelity)*, N 100, January, 2008.

his life, and if people do not turn to God, then not only Russia, but the whole of Europe will collapse..."¹⁰⁴

Within twenty years, the whole of Europe had collapsed, as a result of the Second World War, the greatest war in human history.

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Having described three true, God-given visions of 1917, it will not be out of place to mention a false, satanic vision that was nevertheless to play an important role in Church life later in the century.

In 1917, on the thirteenth day of the month of May, and for six months thereafter the Virgin Mary supposedly appeared to three shepherd girls in Fatima, Portugal. The girls were entrusted with "three secrets", the second of which is the most important. This supposedly revealed that, in order to avoid terrible calamities in the world and the persecution of the Catholic Church, the Virgin will ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. If her request is granted, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace. If not, then she [Russia] will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecution of the Church. "The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she shall be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world."

Now from the point of view of the Orthodox Saints and Holy Fathers, these visions and revelations are clear examples of demonic deception and not to be trusted. In May, 1917 it was not difficult to see that Russia was descending into chaos, and the devil used the opportunity to try and persuade people that the chaos could be averted only through the submission of Russia to his tool, the Catholic Church. Not surprisingly, the Vatican seized on these "revelations" and in 1930 pronounced them worthy of trust; and every Pope since then has been committed to belief in the Fatima phenomenon.

The present leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, by its desperate attempts to unite with the Pope, thereby making possible the Vatican's centuries-old dream, supported by false prophecies, of conquering Russia, has become perhaps the main obstacle to the redemption of Russia through the restoration of the Orthodox Autocracy.

¹⁰⁴ I. Kontsevich, *Optina Pustyn' i ee Vremia* (Optina Desert and its Time), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1977.

8. KERENSKY TAKES THE LEAD

“At the end of 1916, Prince Vladimir A. Obolensky asked Guchkov about the rumours of a forthcoming coup. Obolensky wrote, ‘Guchkov began to relate to me all the facts of the conspiracy and to name its main participants... I realized I had fallen into the very nest of the conspiracy. The Chairman of the Duma, Rodzianko, Guchkov and Alexeev were at the head of it. Others such as General Ruzsky and even A.A. Stolypin, brother of Peter Arkadievich Stolypin, took part in it.’”¹⁰⁵

The Masons began to execute their plans in January, 1917. Amidst rumours of palace coups, “the public organizations systematically boycotted all those in whom they saw supporters of the tsar, almost literally following the principles laid out in Disposition No.1 of the mysterious Committee of National Salvation...

“But the Disposition was written in 1915, when the liberals still hoped to incline the tsar to carry out the demands of the Duma and the public organizations. But now, in 1917, Prince Lvov supposed that there was nothing more to talk about. In a speech which he had intended to deliver at the December (1916) congress of the Zemstvo Union (the congress was banned by the police), Prince Lvov wrote: ‘What we wanted to say eye-to-eye to the leader of the Russian people fifteen months ago, has not become the common cry of the whole people... Do we have to name the names of the secret sorcerers and magicians of our state administration and dwell on the feelings of annoyance, disdain and hatred? It is not these feelings that point the way to our salvation. Let us leave that which is despised and hated. The fatherland is in peril. From the State Council and the State Duma to the last hut, all feelings are identical... The old state ulcer of dissension between the authorities and society has covered, as with leprosy, the whole country without sparing the tsar’s palaces, while the country prays for healing and suffers...’

“At the end Prince Lvov gave practical instructions to his supporters: ‘Abandon any further attempts to carry out cooperative work with the present authorities! They are doomed to failure, they will only distance us from our aim. Do not entertain illusions! Turn away from figments of the imagination! There is no authority... The country needs a monarch protected by a government that is responsible before the country and the Duma.’...

‘The refusal of the leader of the public organizations to make any attempt to come to an agreement with the government led to rumours of a palace coup being spread aloud in the army and throughout the country. They began to take hold of the minds of society, and especially the intelligentsia and semi-intelligentsia. Even among the members of the Royal Family patriotism no longer meant faithfulness to the ruling monarch. Murder, rebellion and trampling on the emperor and his wife was glorified throughout the country

¹⁰⁵ *The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, p. 215.

as an exploit, an act of patriotic self-sacrifice comparable to the miracle of the dragon, the exploit of St. George, when he liberated the country from a shameful slavery...

“As the end of the prerogatives of the Fourth Duma approached, Rodzyanko started a campaign to put off the proroguing of the Duma until the end of the war, referring to the order established in the Allied countries whereby elections were generally put off until the end of military operations.”¹⁰⁶

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On January 19, there began in Petrograd an Allied Conference including 50 representatives of England, France and Italy (the English delegation was led by Lord Milner, now in the war cabinet), who had made the long journey from London via Murmansk to plan a combined Allied strategy for the coming year.¹⁰⁷ The senior British soldier at the conference, Henry Wilson, “learned that there was much talk of revolution, even, as he noted in his diary, to the extent of Russian officials speaking openly about ‘the advisability of murdering the Tsar & the Empress or the Empress alone & so on. An extraordinary state of affairs...’”¹⁰⁸ Indeed; and after meeting with Guchkov, who was president of the Military-Industrial Committee, Prince George Lvov, president of the State Duma Rodzyanko, General Polivanov (who had been dismissed from his post as Minister of War in March), Sazonov, the English ambassador Buchanan, the Cadet leader P.N. Miliukov and others, the mission was emboldened to present the following demands to the Tsar:

- (i) The introduction into the Staff of the Supreme Commander of allied representatives with the right of a deciding vote.
- (ii) The renewal of the command staff of all the armies on the indications of the heads of the Entente.
- (iii) The introduction of a constitution with a responsible ministry.

The Tsar replied to these demands, which amounted to a demand that he renounce both his autocratic powers and his powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies, as follows:

- (i) “The introduction of allied representatives is unnecessary, for I am not suggesting the introduction of my representatives into the allied armies with the right of a deciding vote.”
- (ii) “Also unnecessary. My armies are fighting with greater success than the armies of my allies.”
- (iii) “The act of internal administration belongs to the discretion of the Monarch and does not require the indications of the allies.”

¹⁰⁶ Katkov, *Fevral'skaia Revoliutsia*, pp. 224-225, 227.

¹⁰⁷ Gubanov, *Nikolaj II i Novie Mucheniki*, Moscow, 2000, p. 802.

¹⁰⁸ Keith Jeffrey, 1916, London: Pimlico, 2017, p. 356.

When this truthful and courageous reply was made known to the plotters, they assembled in the English Embassy and decided: "To abandon the lawful path and step out on the path of revolution".

As Miliukov explained: "We knew that in the spring there would be victories for the Russian Army. In that case the prestige and glamour of the Tsar among the people would become so strong that all our efforts to shake and overthrow the Throne of the Autocrat would be in vain. That is why we had to resort to a very speedy revolutionary explosion, so as to avert this danger." 109

Thus "the English Embassy," wrote Princess Paley, "on the orders of Lloyd George, became a nest of propaganda. The liberals, and Prince Lvov, Miliukov, Rodzyanko, Maklakov, etc., used to meet there constantly. It was in the English embassy that the decision was taken to abandon legal paths and step out on the path of revolution." 110

The English ambassador was "devoted" personally to the Tsar. But, as Great Duke Alexander Mikhailovich wrote, he was with the plotters: "The most grievous thing that I got to know was that the British ambassador at the Imperial Court, Sir George Buchanan, had countenanced the plotters: he fancied that such conduct would be the best way to protect the Allies' interests and that the succeeding Russian liberal government would lead Russia from victory to victory. He realized his mistake no longer than twenty-four hours after the triumph of the revolution..." 111

Elena Ilyina writes: "In his report in Paris on April 8, 1917, the worker in French intelligence Captain de Maleisy said: 'A prominent organizer [of the plot] was the British ambassador, Sir George Buchanan, who supervised it all from above with Guchkov. During the revolution Russian agents serving the English handed out packets of roubles to the soldiers, inciting them to put on revolutionary cockades.' A participant in the plot, Prince Vladimir Obolensky, confirmed in his memoirs that many meetings took place in Buchanan's house." 112

On January 27, on the basis of reports from the Petrograd Okhrana, the members of a working group of Guchkov's Military-Industrial Committee that served as a link with the revolutionary workers' organizations, were arrested. The documents seized left no doubt about the revolutionary character of the

109 Miliukov, in Tatyana Groyan, *Tsariu Nebesnomu i Zemnomu Vernij* (Faithful to the Heavenly and Earthly King), Moscow, 1996, p. XCIV. Cf. Armis (a Duma delegate), "Skrytaia Byl'" (The Hidden Story), *Prizyv'* (Summons), N 50, Spring, 1920; in Vinberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

110 Paley, *Souvenir de Russie, 1916-1919*, p. 33.

111 Alexander Bokhanov, Manfred Knodt, Vladimir Oustimenko, Zinaida Peregodova, Lyobov Tyutynnik, *The Romanovs*, London: Leppi Publications, 1993, p.282.

112 Ilyina, "Nikolaj II privel stranu k porogu pobedy v Pervoj Mirovoj Vojne" (Nicholas II brought his country to the verge of victory in the First World War), https://за-царя.рф/facts/nikolay-ii-privyol-stranu-k-porogu-pobedy-v-pervoy-mirovoy-voyne?fbclid=IwAR2j4Yt344BBiy0r4-vGIfN7darJa5nurm-BNt2OCaY_b9BJbNVkWjZbBXg.

working committee... But the new Prime Minister, Prince Golitsyn, softened the sentences of the plotters. 113

And so "the sessions of the workers in the Committee continued. However, the Okhrana department lost its informers from the workers' group."114

At the beginning of February the Tsar summoned N.A. Maklakov and entrusted him with composing a manifesto for the prorogation of the Duma – in case it should step out on the path of open revolution.115

For, as he said to the former governor of Mogilev in early February: "I know that the situation is very alarming, and I have been advised to dissolve the State Duma... But I can't do this... In the military respect we are stronger than ever before. Soon, in the spring, will come the offensive and I believe that God will give us victory, and then moods will change..."116

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The real leader of the disturbances in Petrograd in February was Alexander Kerensky, whose real name was Aaron Kirbits.¹¹⁷ "Kerensky was very familiar with the many different layers of revolutionary and opposition movements. As early as 1915, the Okhrana mentioned Kerensky as a man leader of the revolutionary underground, 'recently beginning to play a dominant role', as well as being a leader of the Social Revolutionary Party. He also played a leading role in the Petrograd Bolshevik organizations. Kerensky was one of the loudest enemies of the monarchy and Nicholas II, and travelled across Russia meeting with revolutionaries, teaching them that 'a criminal and inept government cannot fight an external enemy,' victory only being possible after the establishment of a Constituent Assembly.

"In January 1917, Kerensky stated that 'We need a revolution, even if it means defeat at the front'."118

When the State Duma reassembled on February 14/27, Kerensky proclaimed his aim openly: "The historical task of the Russian people at the present time is the task of annihilating the medieval regime immediately, at whatever cost... How is it possible to fight by lawful means against those whom the law itself has turned into a weapon of mockery against the people?... There is only one way with the violators of the law – their physical removal."119

113 Oldenburg, *Tsarstvoovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II*, Belgrade, 1939, vol. II, p. 233.

114 Sedova, "Ne Tsar...", p. 3.

115 Oldenburg, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 233. On February 10, in his last report to the Duma, Rodzyanko said that "the country had finally lost faith in the present government".

116 Lieven, *Nicholas II*, p. 231.

117 Voeikov, *So Tsarem i Bez Tsaria* (With and Without the Tsar), Moscow, 1995, p. 260.

118 *The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, pp. 221-222.

119 Kerensky, in *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History), 1990, N 10, p. 144.

Unlike most of the bourgeois plotters, Kerensky envisioned the complete destruction of the monarchy, not a replacement of the autocracy with a constitutional monarchy. On this same day, the Bolsheviks called on the workers of St. Petersburg to protest against the State Duma, the failure of which reassured the authorities that the opposition and revolutionaries were not capable of a powerful performance.

“The following day, however, Kerensky began an aggressive campaign in the Duma, calling for the overthrow of the monarchy, signaling to the revolutionary forces that it is ‘now or never’. So the protagonist of the revolution at the start of the unrest in Petrograd was Kerensky rather than the Progressive Bloc. In this way, the workers and residents of St. Petersburg did not go out with slogans of protecting the Duma or of revolution, but rather under the banner of hunger, with the revolutionary underground directed by Kerensky.

“Using the slogan ‘Bread’ was a strong move by the conspirators, since marching with revolutionary slogans would have meant immediate dispersal by troops. However, it was a much more difficult matter to require troops to disperse ‘hungry’ women and children asking for bread.

“The Social Democrats ensured a supply of flour to the garrison soldiers to prevent their taking part in a suppression of the insurrection. Social Democrat B.V. Avilov recalled that in those eventful February days they had several thousand pounds of bread and scores of wagon-cars worth of flour.

“The Bolsheviks and Kerensky cooperated for the organization of a strike by the Putilov factory, which was to be the catalyst for the events in St. Petersburg. On 22 February, a group of workers from the Putilov factory came to Kerensky letting him know a political movement was beginning at the factory, which would have far reaching consequences. On that same day, the Vyborg district Bolsheviks came out in support of the Putilovites and decided to organize a strike on the 23rd in the Narva and Vyborg districts, in solidarity with the Putilovites.

“Historian S.V. Kolyaev writes that the Bolsheviks ‘at the very least initiated the outpouring of workers into the streets.’ It should be noted that in February 1917, the Putilov factory was administered by the [Masonic] Chief Artillery Directorate General A.A. Manikovsky, who after the October Revolution joined the Red Army, making its connection with the Bolsheviks in February 1917 something that can be considered almost proved. At the same time, Manikovsky was in very close relations with Guchkov and Kerensky. This all, taken together, suggests joint actions on behalf of Kerensky and the Bolsheviks in the organization of the riots, carried out through an intermediary, General Manikovsky. In this way, Guchkov and Kerensky, in spite of their external

difference, shared a general plan for a coup d'état, calling for the overthrow of the throne of Emperor Nicholas II."¹²⁰

And yet loyal patriots still existed. Thus on February 21, two days before the start of the revolution, Bishop Agapit of Yekaterinoslav together with members of the Yekaterinoslav section of the Union of the Russian People, headed by their president, Obratzov, wrote to the chancellery of the Over-Procurator: "The gates of hell will not prevail over the Church of Christ, but the destiny of Orthodoxy in our fatherland is indissolubly bound up with the destiny of the Tsarist Autocracy. Remembering on the Sunday of Orthodoxy the merits of the Russian Hierarchs before the Church and the State, we in a filial spirit dare to turn to your Eminence and other first-hierarchs of the Russian Church: by your unanimous blessings and counsels in the spirit of peace and love, strengthen his Most Autocratic Majesty to defend the Sacred rights of the Autocracy, entrusted to him by God through the voice of the people and the blessing of the Church, against which those same rebels who are encroaching against our Holy Orthodox Church are now encroaching."¹²¹

¹²⁰ *The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, pp. 222-223.

¹²¹ Tatyana Groyan, *Tsariu Nebesnomu i Zemnomu Vernij* (Faithful to the Heavenly and Earthly King), Moscow, 1996, pp. CXX-CXXI.

9. THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

The Tsar stayed in Tsarskoye Selo until February 22, when he was summoned urgently to Stavka by General Alexeyev. This surprised the Tsar, who did not see the need for it and wanted to stay close to the capital. It was clearly part of the plot – as Baroness Sophia Bukshoeveden points out, it was precisely in the next eight days, when the Tsar was away at the front, that the revolution took place...¹²²

“In the middle of 1916,” writes Fr. Lev Lebedev, “the Masons had designated *February 22, 1917* for the revolution in Russia. But on this day his Majesty was still at Tsarskoye Selo, having arrived there more than a month before from Headquarters, and only at 2 o’clock on the 22nd did he leave again for Mogilev. Therefore everything had to be put back for one day and begin on *February 23*.¹²³ By that time special trains loaded with provisions had been *deliberately* stopped on the approaches to Petrograd on the excuse of heavy snow drifts, which immediately elicited a severe shortage of bread, an increase in prices and the famous ‘tails’ – long queues for bread. The population began to worry, provocateurs strengthened the anxiety with rumours about the approach of inevitable famine, catastrophe, etc. But it turned out that the military authorities had reserves of food... that would allow Petrograd to hold out until the end of the snow falls.¹²⁴ Therefore into the affair at this moment there stepped a second very important factor in the plot – the soldiers of the reserve formations, who were in the capital waiting to be sent off to the front. There were about 200,000 of them, and they since the end of 1916 had been receiving 25 roubles a day (a substantial boost to the revolutionary agitation

¹²² Buxhoeveden, *Ventsenosnitsa Muchenitsa* (The Crown-Bearing Martyr), Moscow, 2011, p. 390.

¹²³ There is conflicting evidence on this point. Sedova writes: “Later Guchkov said that the coup was planned for March-April, 1917. However his comrades in the plot were more sincere. In Yekaterinoslav, where Rodzyanko’s estate was situated, there came rumours from his, Rodzyanko’s house that the abdication of the Tsar was appointed for December 6, 1917. At the beginning of 1917 Tereshchenko declared in Kiev that the coup, during which the abdication was supposed to take place, was appointed for February 8” (Sedova, “Ne Tsar’..”, p. 3). (V.M.)

¹²⁴ On February 24 the Petrograd commandant Khabalov posted notices on the walls (with glue that didn’t work) saying there was no need to worry: there was more than half a million pounds of flour in the city, enough to feed it for twelve days, and deliveries were continuing without interruption (I.P. Yakoby, *Imperator Nikolaj II i Revoliutsia* (Emperor Nicholas II and the Revolution), Moscow, 2010, p. 151). As Voeikov wrote: “From February 25 the city’s public administration had begun to appoint its representatives to take part in the distribution of food products and to oversee the baking of bread. It became clear that in Petrograd at that time there were enough reserves of flour: in the warehouses of Kalashnikov Birzh there were over 450,000 pounds of flour, so that fears about a lack of bread were completely unfounded” (*op. cit.*, p. 161). However, already in November, 1917 Prince Vladimir Mikhailovich Volkonsky, former vice-president of the Duma and assistant to the Minister of the Interior Protopopov had told Baroness Sophia Bukshoeveden that the administration of the transport of food was so bad that there could be hunger riots in the city (Bukshoeveden, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-388). And Lubov Millar writes: “While bread lines in Petrograd got longer, trainloads of wheat and rye stood rotting all along the Great Siberian Railway line; the same was true in the southwestern part of Russia. Even so, there was enough bread to feed the capital” (*Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia*, Richfield, N.Y.: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 2009, p. 35). (V.M.).

that had been constantly carried out among them) from a secret 'revolutionary fund'. Most important of all, they did not want to be sent to the front. They were reservists, family men, who had earlier received a postponement of their call-up, as well as new recruits from the workers, who had been under the influence of propaganda for a long time. His Majesty had long ago been informed of the unreliability of the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison and had ordered General Alexeyev to introduce guards units, including cavalry, into the capital. However, Alexeyev *had not carried out the order*, referring to the fact that, according to the information supplied by the commandant of the Petrograd garrison General Khabalov, all the barracks in the capital were filled to overflowing, and there was nowhere to put the guardsmen!... In sum, against 200,000 unreliable reservists who were ready to rebel, the capital of the Empire could hardly number 10,000 soldiers – mainly junkers and cadets from other military schools – who were faithful to his Majesty. The only Cossack regiment from the reserves was by that time also on the side of the revolution. The plotters were also successful in gaining the appointment of General Khabalov to the post of commandant of the capital and district. He was an inexperienced and extremely indecisive man. Had Generals Khan-Hussein of Nakhichevan or Count Keller been in his place, everything might have turned out differently.”¹²⁵

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While men had their reasons for transferring the starting date of the revolution to February 23, Divine Providence, which is over all, ordained this date in order to point to three highly significant “coincidences”. The first was the coincidence of the beginning of the revolution with the first new feast of the godless socialists, International Women’s Day. The second was its coincidence with the beginning of Diocletian’s Great Persecution of 303, the greatest persecution in Christian history. And the third was its coincidence with the Jewish feast of Purim.

“International Women’s Day” was the revolutionary feast of the women-internationalists. It was established on March 8, 1910 on the initiative of Clara Zetkin at a socialist conference in Copenhagen. At first it was conceived as the feast of the woman revolutionary, and not simply of women.

Orlando Figes writes: “8 March (23 February in the old Russian calendar) – was International Women’s Day, an important day in the socialist calendar. By midday of that day in 1917 there were tens of thousands of mainly women congregating on the Nevsky Prospekt, the principal avenue in the centre of the Russian capital, Petrograd, and banners started to appear.

“The slogans on the banners were patriotic but also made forceful demands for change: ‘Feed the children of the defenders of the motherland,’ read one;

¹²⁵ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

another said: 'Supplement the ration of soldiers' families, defenders of freedom and the people's peace.'

"The crowds of demonstrators were varied. The city's governor, AP Balk, said they consisted of 'ladies from society, lots more peasant women, student girls and, compared with earlier demonstrations, not many workers'. The revolution was begun by women, not male workers.

"In the afternoon the mood began to change as female textile workers from the Vyborg side of the city came out on strike in protest against shortages of bread. Joined by their menfolk, they swelled the crowds on the Nevsky, where there were calls of 'Bread!' and 'Down with the tsar!' By the end of the afternoon, 100,000 workers had come out on strike, and there were clashes with police as the workers tried to cross the Liteiny Bridge, connecting the Vyborg side with the city centre. Most were dispersed by the police but several thousand crossed the ice-packed river Neva (a risky thing to do at -5C) and some, angered by the fighting, began to loot the shops on their way to the Nevsky.

"Balk's Cossacks struggled to clear the crowds on the Nevsky. They would ride up to the demonstrators, only to stop short and retreat. Later it emerged that they were mostly young reservists who had no experience of dealing with crowds. By an oversight they had not been supplied with the whips used by Cossacks to disperse civilian crowds. This weakness emboldened the workers to come out in even greater numbers in the following days.

"On 24 February as many as 150,000 workers had taken to the streets. They marched from the industrial areas, crossed the bridges, and occupied the Nevsky, looting shops, and overturning trams and carriages. There were fights with the police and Cossacks on the bridges. By mid-afternoon the crowds on the Nevsky had been swollen by students, shopkeepers, office workers and spectators. Balk described the crowds as 'consisting of the ordinary people'.

"Historians have long argued about whether these demonstrations were spontaneous or organised by revolutionaries. My own view is that they were more spontaneous than organised but that they had an internal organisation of their own in the form of unnamed members of the crowd who shouted out directions. Then there was the political topography of Petrograd – defined by the bridges, the Nevsky, Znamenskaya Square, the Tauride Palace, or seat of the Duma – that set the movements of the crowds.

"On 24 February Znamenskaya Square became the focus of attention, as a large rally amassed there in the afternoon. The huge equestrian statue of Alexander III – a symbol of immovable autocracy popularly nicknamed 'the Hippopotamus' – was conquered by revolutionary orators, who made their speeches from it, calling for the downfall of the monarchy. Few in the vast crowd could hear what they were saying, but it did not matter: the people knew what they wanted to hear and the mere sight of this act of free speech – in full

view of the police – was enough to confirm in their minds that a ‘revolution’ was taking place. Later that evening, after the crowds had finally dispersed, the police found the word ‘Hippopotamus’ engraved on the plinth of the statue.”¹²⁶

“On February 23,” writes Lebedev, “at a command, 30,000 (according to other data, 90,000) workers went on strike with the slogans ‘Bread!’ and ‘Down with the War!’ The police had difficulty in dispersing their demonstrations. On February 24 up to 170,000 workers poured out onto the streets of Petrograd. Their slogans were: ‘Down with the Tsarist Government!’, ‘*Long Live the Provisional Government!*’ (although it did not exist yet!) and ‘Down with the War!’. About 40,000 gathered in Nevsky Prospekt. The police and the soldiers pushed them away, but they went into the side streets, smashed shop windows, robbed the shops, stopped trams, and already sang the ‘Marseillaise’ and ‘Rise, Stand up, Working People!’ However, Protopopov reported to her Majesty in Tsarskoye that the disorders were elicited only by a lack of bread. In the opinion of many ministers, everything had begun with a chance ‘women’s rebellion’ in the queues. They did not know, or simply *were frightened to know*, that a *previously organized* revolution had begun. The Cossacks did nothing, protecting the demonstrators. On February 25 already 250,000 people were on strike! In their hands they held a Bolshevik leaflet (‘... All under the red flag of the revolution. Down with the Tsarist monarchy. Long live the Democratic Republic... Long live the Socialist International’.) At a meeting at the Moscow station the police constable Krylov hurled himself at a demonstrator in order to snatch a red flag from him, and was killed... *by a Cossack!* The crowd lifted the murderer on their shoulders. In various places they were beating, disarming and killing policemen. At the Trubochny factory Lieutenant Hesse shot an agitator, and those who had assembled, throwing away their red flags and banners, ran away. The same happened in the evening on Nevsky, where the demonstrators opened fire on the soldiers and police, and in reply the soldiers shot into the crowd (several people were immediately killed), who then ran away. The speeches of the workers, as we see, were the work of the hands of the second echelon of the revolution (the social democrats). But it is also evident that without the soldiers it would not have worked for either the first or the second echelon...”

“On the evening of the same February 25, a Saturday, his Majesty sent Khabalov a personal telegram: ‘I order you to stop the disturbances in the capital tomorrow, disturbances that are inadmissible in the serious time of war against Germany and Austria. Nicholas.’ Khabalov panicked. Although everything indicated that there was no need to panic, decisive action even by those insignificant forces that were faithful and reliable, that is, *firing* against the rebels, could have stopped everything in its tracks. The Duma decreed that their session should stop immediately. But the deputies remained and continued to gather in the building of the Tauride palace.

¹²⁶ Figes, “The women’s protest that sparked the Russian Revolution” *The Guardian*, March 8, 2017.

“On February 26, a Sunday, it was peaceful in the morning and Khabalov *hastened* to tell his Majesty about this. What lengths does fear for themselves and for their position or career take people to!... On that day the newspapers did not come out, and at midday demonstrations began again and the Fourth company of the reserve battalion of the Pavlovsky regiment mutinied. It was suppressed, and the mutineers arrested. It was difficult to incite soldiers to rebel, even those like the Petrograd reservists. They replied to the worker-agitators: ‘You’ll go to your homes, but we’ll get shot!’... The plotters understood that the troops could be aroused only by some kind of exceptional act, after which it would no longer be possible for them to go back. Such an act could only be a serious military crime – a murder... The heart of the Tsar sensed the disaster. On the evening of the 26th he noted in his diary: ‘This morning during the service I felt a sharp pain in my chest... I could hardly stand and my forehead was covered with drops of sweat.’ On that day Rodzyanko sent the Tsar a telegram in which, after describing the disorders in the capital, the clashes of military units and the firing, he affirmed: ‘It is necessary immediately to entrust a person enjoying *the confidence of the country* (!) to form *a new government*. There must be no delay. Delay is like death. I beseech God that at this hour responsibility may not fall on the Crown-bearer.’ A liar and a hypocrite, Rodzyanko had more than once very bombastically expressed his ‘devotion’ to his Majesty, while at the same time preparing a plot against him. He immediately sent copies of this telegram to the commanders of the fronts – Brusilov and Ruzsky, asking them to support his demand for a ‘new government’ and a ‘person’ with the confidence of the country before his Majesty. They replied: ‘task accomplished’.”¹²⁷

The change in slogans from “Bread and Peace” to “New Government” was significant. For it meant a change from simply sympathizing with suffering people to a potential act of *treason*. However, it appears that the soldiers were not yet republicans... “Colonel N.I. Artabalevsky writes: ‘The shooters and all the other military officials decided and approved the slogan with which they opposed the old government: “Tsar, new government, war to victory”. With this, we went to the Duma. With difficulty we made our way into the Catherine Hall. Everything was jam-packed with the most disparate public. Rodzyanko immediately came to us and delivered a short speech with a call to order, to which they answered, ‘Hurray!’ and a toast ‘to the first citizen of Russia’. Having learned from me the slogan with which we came, he visibly brightened his face. I snuck into the room next to the one in which the Executive Committee of the State Duma was sitting. Then a member of the Duma approached me: tall, with a black beard, exquisitely dressed. I could not find out who it was. He told me that Emperor Nicholas II would probably be forced to hand over the

127 Lebedev, *op. cit.* This telegram, writes Yakoby, “was very cleverly written. Its jerky, emotional phrases were bound to elicit in the Tsar increasing anxiety, the fear of responsibility and a desire to transfer this responsibility on him whose name was clearly insinuated – Rodzyanko himself.

“However the Duma president himself feared an open rift with legality and preferred to receive power from the hands of the Sovereign rather than ‘by the will of the people’” (*op. cit.*, p. 154)

throne to his son, Tsarevitch Alexei, and for his juvenile caretaker to be Empress Alexandra Fedorovna, and the regent will be Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich.

“At that moment, Milyukov intervened in the conversation. I did not think that he would make such a repulsive impression on me – a sly, two-faced fox. The eyes that ran around the pince-nez glasses did not inspire me with any confidence. Cunningly looking at me, then around, he was interested to find out from me about the attitude of the shooters towards Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich. I answered him that I did not understand the question. If the sovereign finds it necessary to transfer his throne to another, then our duty is to serve the new sovereign. Miliukov did not answer this, and, smiling unpleasantly, withdrew from me.

“It is clear from these memoirs of Artabalevsky that the slogan with which the army took to the streets, ‘Tsar, new government, war to victory’ was similar to the requirements of Rodzianko and the Duma. It was the external monarchism of the latter that deceived the troops, who believed that they were in favour of the tsar and the people against the traitors in the old government. But from the same passage one can see how the Duma opposition, in this case in the person of Miliukov, was ready to change the monarchist slogans that were used to deceive the army when they were no longer needed. Rodzianko, in this case, was used by conspirators in the dark. He overshadowed those oppositionists with a monarchist screen, who sought to overthrow the monarchy as such, and not specifically Nicholas II. With this ‘monarchism’ Rodzianko misled those who wished for the overthrow of Nicholas II and for a ‘responsible ministry’ but who were against the overthrow of the monarchy. It is this deception that explains the fact that the Generals of the Stavka supported Rodzianko’s betrayal of the tsar with such zeal: the preservation of the throne in exchange for a ‘responsible ministry’.”¹²⁸

Lebedev continues the story: “On the night from the 26th to the 27th in the Reserve battalion of the Light-Guards of the Volhynia regiment (the regiment itself was at the front), the under-officer of the Second Company Kirpichnikov (a student, the son of a professor) convinced the soldiers ‘to rise up against the autocracy’, and gained their promise to follow his orders. The whole night the same agitation was going on in other companies. By the morning, when Captain Lashkevich came into the barracks, they told him that the soldiers had decided not to fire at the people any more. Lashkevich hurled himself at under-officer Markov, who had made this declaration, and was immediately killed. After this the Volhynians under the command of Kirpichnikov went to the reserves of the Preobrazhensky regiment. There they killed the colonel. The rebels understood that now they could escape punishment (and at the same time, being sent to the front) only if they would all act *as a group, together* (there was no going back). The ‘professional’ revolutionaries strengthened them in their feelings. The Volhynians and Preobrazhenskys were joined on the same

¹²⁸ *The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, pp. 225-226.

morning of the 27th by a company of the Lithuanian regiment, the sappers, a part of the Moscow regiment (reservists, of course). The officers saved themselves from being killed, they started firing and ran. The workers united with the soldiers. Music was playing. They stormed the police units and the 'Kresty' prison, from which they freed all those under arrest, including recently imprisoned members of the 'Working Group' of the Military-Industrial Committee [headed by Guchkov], who had fulfilled the task of being the link between the Masonic 'headquarters' and the revolutionary parties, and first of all – the Bolsheviks. They burned the building of the District Court. The appeal sounded: 'Everyone to the State Duma'. And a huge crowd rolled into the Tauride palace, sacked it, ran amok in the halls, but did not touch the Duma deputies. But the Duma delegates, having received on the same day an order from his Majesty to prorogue the Duma until April, did not disperse, but decided to form a *Provisional Committee of the State Duma* 'to instil order in the capital and to liaise with public organizations and institutions'.¹²⁹ The Committee was joined by the whole membership of the bureau of the 'Progressive Bloc' and Kerensky and Chkeidze (the first joining up of the first and second echelons). *Immediately*, in the Tauride palace, at the same time, only in different rooms, revolutionaries of the second echelon, crawling out of the underground and from the prisons, formed the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies (which later added 'and of Soldiers' to its name). The Soviet was headed by Alexandrovich, Sukhanov (Gimmer) and Steklov (Nakhmkes), and all the rest (97%) were Jews who had never been *either workers or soldiers*. Immediately the Executive Committee sent invitations round the factories for deputies to the Congress of Soviets, which was appointed to meet at 7 o' clock in the evening, and organized 'requisitions' of supplies from the warehouses and shops for 'the revolutionary army', so that the Tauride Palace immediately became *the provisioning point* for the rebels (the Provisional Committee of the Duma had not managed to think about that!).

"The authorities panicked. Khabalov hastily gathered a unit of 1000 men under the command of Colonel A.P. Kutepov, but with these forces he was not able to get through to the centre of the uprising. Then soldiers faithful to his Majesty, not more than 1500-2000 men (!) gathered in the evening on Palace Square in front of the Winter Palace. With them were the Minister of War Belyaev, and Generals Khabalov, Balk and Zankevich. Khabalov telegraphed the Tsar that he could not carry out his instructions. He was joined by Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovich, who declared that the situation was hopeless. Then, during the night, there arrived Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, the (younger) brother of the Tsar, who said that the soldiers would have to be taken out of the Palace since he 'did not want the soldiers to fire at the people from the House of the Romanovs'. And he suggested telegraphing the Tsar to ask him to appoint Prince Lvov as the new President of the Council of

¹²⁹ It was at this point, writes Yakoby, that "the Duma openly took the side of the rebellion" (*op. cit.*, p. 155) (V.M).

Ministers...¹³⁰ The completely bewildered generals were moved to the Admiralty, and the soldiers began to disperse. On the afternoon of the 28th their remnants left the Admiralty at the demand of the Minister of the Navy and, laying down their weapons, dispersed. One should point out that many members of the Imperial House behaved very unworthily in those days. They even discussed a plan for a 'palace coup' (to overthrow his Majesty and 'seat' one of the Great Princes on the throne). And some of the Great Princes directly joined the revolution. There were still some members of the Council of Ministers and the State Council in the Mariinsky Palace. They advised Protopopov (who was especially hated by 'society') to say that he was ill, which he did. Prince Golitsyn telegraphed the Tsar with a request that he be retired and that he grant a 'responsible ministry'. His Majesty replied that he was appointing a new leader of the Petrograd garrison, and gave an order for the movement of troops against Petrograd. He gave Golitsyn all rights in civil administration since he considered 'changes in the personal composition (of the government) to be inadmissible in the given circumstances'. His Majesty was very far from a 'non-resistance to evil' Tolstoyan! On the same day, the 27th, he gave an order to send a whole group of military units that were brave and faithful to the Fatherland from all three fronts to Petrograd, and told everyone that on the 28th he would personally go to the capital. At the same time his Majesty ordered General N.I. Ivanov to move on Petrograd immediately with a group of 700 Georgievsky cavalymen, which he did the next day. At that time, on February 27, the ministers and courtiers, gathering together for the last time, suddenly received the news that an armed crowd was heading for the Mariinsky Palace. They decided to disperse! They dispersed forever! The crowd came and began to sack and loot the Mariinsky.

130 Michael arrived on the scene at 5 p.m. At 9 Rodzyanko asked him to become dictator. He refused. At 10.30 he telegraphed the Tsar proposing that he make Lvov prime minister. The Tsar refused, confirming Golitsyn as head of the civil administration (Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 619).

Grand Duke Michael had "phoned Duma chairman Mikhail Rodzyanko from his residence in Gatchina on 10 March in despair about the Petrograd situation. Rodzyanko could offer him no comfort. The two of them agreed to meet in the capital for a discussion in front of witnesses, and Rodzyanko laid bare what he thought was the minimum that urgently had to be done and advised Mikhail to cable his brother and tell him that he was standing on the edge of an abyss. Nicholas had to accept the need to transfer Alexandra to his palace at Livadia by the Black Sea so that people could see that she no longer influenced public policy. At the same time he should permit the State Duma to announce the intention to form a 'responsible government'.

"Rodzyanko wrote to plead with Nicholas to get rid of his government and appoint a new one, warning that, if Protopopov remained in office, there would be trouble on the streets. Golitsyn, chairman of the Council of Ministers, gave eager support to Rodzyanko, and they both urged the emperor to recognize the urgency of the situation. A cabinet had to be formed that might command broader political backing, and the idea was proposed that either Prince Lvov or Rodzyanko himself should head it. Grand Duke Mikhail called Alexeev on the direct line, begging him to contact Golitsyn and put the same case to Nicholas. Although Alexeev was suffering from a fever at the time, he found the strength to leave his bed and seek an audience, and he pleaded with Nicholas along the lines that Rodzyanko and Golitsyn had asked. Nicholas heard him out but refused to change his position: he had made up his mind [correctly] that people were out to deceive him or were themselves deceived. He left Rodzyanko's telegram without an answer. He did, though, write to Golitsyn stating briskly that a change of government was inappropriate in the current situation..."¹³⁰ (V.M.)

"It was all over with the government of Russia. On the evening of the 27th, as has been noted, there took place the first session of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, who elected Chkheidze as their president. They also elected a 'literary commission' and ordered the publication of the Soviet's *Izvestia*. At that point, on the night from the 27th to the 28th, the Provisional Committee of the State Duma began to try and persuade Rodzyanko 'to take power into his hands', since, in the words of Miliukov, 'the leaders of the army were in cahoots with him'. 15 minutes of tormented waiting passed. Finally, Rodzyanko agreed. The Provisional Committee proclaimed itself to be the 'power' of Russia. But..., as became clear, with the prior agreement of the Soviet's Executive Committee! From that moment all the members of the Provisional Government, that is, the first 'echelon', would be led by the leaders of the Soviet, that is, the second 'echelon' of the revolution, although few knew about that.

"On February 28th the uprising spread to the suburbs of Petrograd. In Kronstadt drunken soldiers killed Admiral Viren and tens of officers. In Tsarkoye Selo the troops who were guarding the Family of his Majesty [under the command of Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovich] declared that they were 'neutral'.

"At 6 o'clock in the morning of February 28, 1917 Rodzyanko twice telegraphed General Alexeyev in Headquarters. The first telegram informed him that 'power has passed to the Provisional Committee', while the second said that this new power, 'with the support of the troops and with the sympathy of the population' would soon instill complete order and 're-establish the activity of the government institutions'. It was all a lie!"¹³¹

A little before this, at 3 a.m., Grand Duke Michael "was driven with a military escort to the Winter Palace, only just escaping the revolutionaries by accelerating away. At the palace he found General Khabalov and a thousand loyal troops, but ordered them not to defend the palace..."¹³²

It was during the night of February 27-28 that the February revolution reached its first climax. When the government led by Golitsyn collapsed, and as long as the Tsar and General Ivanov were still on their way to Petrograd, Rodzyanko could have seized power as being the leader of the Duma, the only other lawful organ of power in the city. But he hesitated; and while the Duma deputies wasted time on speeches, precious time was lost. Meanwhile, in room number 12 of the same building, the Tauride palace, in which the Duma was meeting, a new, completely illegal organ of power, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' deputies, was being formed. On hearing of this, writes Yakoby, "the group of Rodzyanko and Milyukov entered into negotiations with the leaders of the Soviet, and at exactly midnight these negotiations led to the creation of

¹³¹ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, pp. 478-481.

¹³² Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 618.

an executive committee of the State Duma, on which power was temporarily conferred.

“This committee seemed quite moderate in its composition, although representatives of the rightist parties were not admitted into it, and the representatives of the leftists – Kerensky and Chkeidze – were given a very prominent role. In essence, this was the most complete capitulation of the ‘bourgeois’ elements of the revolution before the representatives of the proletariat. Never in their wildest dreams had Rodzyanko and those who thought like him gone further than a constitutional monarchy ruled by the highest financial circles and headed by a Sovereign playing only a decorative role. That noisy and disheveled monster that suddenly jumped from room number 12 like a demon from a box finally confused the irreconcilable opponents of ‘tsarism’...”¹³³

For at that point, continues Yakobi, “Rodzyanko suggested to the socialists of the Soviet that they take power completely themselves. A pitiful recognition of helplessness, a complete capitulation of the bourgeois elements before the fist of the Second International, which was preparing the way for Bolshevism! But the Soviet refused. The ‘bourgeoisie had started the revolution, they themselves were obliged to dig the grave in which their hopes would be buried.

“The Soviet used the same methods for exerting pressure on the Duma committee as had been applied by the opposition to terrorize the Tsarist Government – frighten them with the spectre of bloodshed: but Chkeidze and the other agents of Bolshevism played their game more decisively than Rodzyanko. The slightest attempt at resistance was suppressed with the aid of an artificially elicited disturbance of the mob in the street.”¹³⁴

On March 1 the composition of the Provisional Committee was announced. It contained two leaders of the Soviet: Kerensky and Chkeidze, together with Rodzyanko, Shulgin, Miliukov, Konovalov, Dmitriukov, Rzhevsky, Shidlovsky, Nekrasov, Lvov.¹³⁵

On the same day Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovich composed and signed a manifesto in the name of the Tsar giving a constitution. (This was the same date on which Tsar Alexander II had been killed after signing a similar document!) He sent it to the Tsaritsa for her signature, but she refused, for no signature could take the place of the Tsar’s in such an act. He then sent it to Grand Dukes Michael Alexandrovich and Cyril Vladimirovich, who both signed it. It was then sent to Miliukov, who glanced at it and then stuffed it carelessly into his portfolio, saying: “That’s an interesting document” ...¹³⁶

¹³³ Yakoby, op. cit., pp. 159-160.

¹³⁴ Yakoby, op. cit., p. 173.

¹³⁵ Yakoby, op. cit., p. 180.

¹³⁶ Yakoby, op. cit., pp. 159-160.

¹³⁶ Yakoby, op. cit., p. 170.

10. THE ABDICATION OF TSAR NICHOLAS

However, all was not lost yet: the Master of the House had not yet appeared on the scene... On February 28, the Tsar, having sent Ivanov to crush the revolution in Petrograd, set off by train from Army Headquarters to his family in Tsarskoye Selo. He had been delayed several critical hours by the open disobedience of Quarter-master General Lukomsky, who tried to make him stay at Headquarters.¹³⁷ Then, in accordance with Guchkov's plan, the train was stopped first at Malaya Vishera, then at Dno. This was supposedly because the stations further down the line were in the hands of the rebels. ¹³⁸ The Russian word "Dno" means "bottom" or "abyss" – it was precisely at this spot that Imperial Russia reached the bottom of her historical path, and Orthodox Russia stood at the edge of the abyss...

Lebedev continues: "Movement along the railway lines was already controlled by the appointee of the Masons and revolutionary Bublikov (a former assistant of the Minister of Communications). Incidentally, he later admitted: 'One disciplined division from the front would have been sufficient to put down the rebellion'. But Alexeyev, Brusilov and Ruzsky *did not allow even one* division as far as Petrograd, as we shall now see! It was decided to direct the Tsar's train to Pskov, so as then to attempt to get through to Tsarskoye Selo via Pskov. The Tsar hoped that the whole situation could be put right by General Ivanov, who at that moment was moving towards Tsarskoye Selo by another route. So everything was arranged so that his Majesty should be in Pskov, where the Headquarters of the Commander of the Northern Front, General Ruzsky, was. The Tsar was very much counting on him. Not knowing that he was one of the main traitors... It has to be said again that this lack of knowledge was not the result of bad work on the part of the police. The Masons had done their conspiring well. Moreover, it did not enter the heads either of the police or of his Majesty that fighting generals, commanders of fronts, the highest ranks in the army, 'the most noble gentlemen' from the Duma, the ministries and institutions could be plotters!...

"On March 1 there arrived at the Duma new military units, or their deputations, with declarations of fidelity to 'the new power'. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon there arrived Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovich at the head of the Guards Naval Squadron.¹³⁹ He told Rodzyanko that he was at his disposal...

"On the same March 1 the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies issued the famous 'Order No. 1' to the army, signed by the Mason N.D. Sokolov. Its essence was that soldiers' committees should be elected by the troops and that

¹³⁷ Yakoby, op. cit., p. 166.

¹³⁸ "The plotters had earlier prepared a group to seize the train from among the reserve Guards units in the so-called Arakcheev barracks in Novgorod province. That is why the train had to be stopped nearer these barracks, and not in Pskov" (Sedova, "Ne Tsar...", p. 4).

¹³⁹ According to Bukshoeveden, he withdrew his men to Petrograd from the garrison at the Alexandrovsky palace in Tsarskoye Selo, where the Royal Family was, on the morning of March 2 (op. cit., p. 408). (V.M.)

only those orders of the Military Commission of the State Duma should be carried out which did not contradict the orders of the Soviet (!), and that all the weapons of the army should be at the disposal and under the control of the company and battalion elected committees and in no circumstances were 'to be given to the officers, even at their demand'. Saluting and addressing [officers] by their titles were also rescinded. This was the beginning of the collapse of the Russian army. After the departure of his Majesty from Stavka General Alexeyev at 1.15 a.m. on March 1, without the knowledge of the Tsar, sent General Ivanov telegram No. 1833, which for some reason he dated February 28, in which he held Ivanov back from decisive actions by referring to 'private information' to the effect that 'complete calm had arrived' in Petrograd, that the appeal of the Provisional Government spoke about 'the inviolability of the monarchical principle in Russia', and that everyone was awaiting the arrival of His Majesty in order to end the matter through peace, negotiations and the averting of 'civil war'. Similar telegrams with completely false information were sent at the same time to all the chief commanders (including Ruzsky). The source of this lie was the Masonic 'headquarters' of Guchkov. 'Brother' Alexeyev could not fail to believe the 'brothers' from the capital, moreover he passionately *wanted to believe*, since only in this could there be a 'justification' of his treacherous actions."

Meanwhile, writes the Brotherhood of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God, "England and France, having betrayed their duty as allies, even before the abdication of his Majesty Nicholas II, supported the revolution and officially declared on March 1/14 through their ambassadors that they were 'entering into business relations with the Provisional Executive Committee of the State Duma, as being the expression of the true will of the people and the only lawful temporary government of Russia'.

"Prime Minister Lloyd George in the British parliament welcomed 'with a feeling of the most lively joy' the overthrow of the Russian Tsar and openly admitted: 'The British government is sure that these events mark the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the world, being the first victory of the principles for which we began the war'; 'loud cries of approval resounded from all around'. Commenting on this declaration, the English newspaper *Daily News* characterized the February revolution as 'the greatest of all victories sustained by the Allies up to now... This coup is an incomparably more important event than the victory on the front'..."

Lebedev continues: "General Ivanov slowly, but surely moved towards the capital. The railwaymen were forced, under threat of court martial, to carry out his demands. At the stations, where he was met by revolutionary troops, he acted simply - by commanding them: 'On your knees!' They immediately carried out the command, casting their weapons on the ground..."¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, pp. 477-482.

However, Ivanov got no further than Vyritsa, from where he was summoned to Mogilev after the abdication of the Tsar.¹⁴¹

"Meanwhile, continues Lebedev, "the Tsar arrived in Pskov. On the evening of March 1, 1917 there took place between him and General Ruzsky a very long and difficult conversation. N.V. Ruzsky, who thought the same about the situation in the capital as Alexeyev, on the instructions of Rodzyanko kept saying unashamedly to the members of the royal suite: '*It remains only to cast ourselves on the mercy of the conquerors*', supposing that 'the conquerors' were the Masonic 'Progressive Bloc' of the State Duma... Unexpectedly for Nicholas II, Ruzsky 'heatedly' began to demonstrate to him the necessity of a 'responsible ministry'.¹⁴² His Majesty calmly objected: '*I am responsible before God and Russia for everything that has happened and will happen*'; it does not matter whether the ministers will be responsible before the Duma and the State Council. If I see that what the ministers are doing is not for the good of Russia, I will never be able to agree with them, comforting myself with the thought that the matter is out of my hands.' The Tsar went on to go through the qualities of all the main actors of the Duma and the 'Bloc', showing that none of them had the necessary qualities to rule the country. However, all this was not simply an argument on political questions between two uninvolved people. From time to time in the course of this strange conversation his Majesty received witnesses to the fact that this was the position not only of Ruzsky, but also of Alexeyev. The latter sent a panicky telegram from Headquarters about the necessity *immediately* of bestowing 'a responsible ministry' and even sent him the text of a *royal manifesto* composed by him to this effect! Besides, it turned out that his Majesty *could not* even communicate with anyone by direct line! The Tsar sent Voeikov (the palace commandant) to telegraph his reply to Alexeyev. Voeikov demanded access to the telegraph apparatus from General Davydov (also a traitor from Ruzsky's headquarters). Ruzsky heard the conversation and declared that it was impossible to hand over the apparatus. Voeikov said that he was only carrying out 'the command of his Majesty'. Ruzsky said that 'he would not take such an insult (!), since he, Ruzsky, was the commander-in-chief here, and his Majesty's communications *could not* take place through his headquarters without his, Ruzsky's, knowledge, and that at the present worrying time he, Ruzsky *would not allow* Voeikov to use the apparatus at all! The Tsar understood that practically speaking *he was already separated from the levers and threads of power*. The members of his suite also understood this. One of them recalled that the behaviour and words of Ruzsky (on casting themselves 'on the mercy of the conquerors') 'undoubtedly indicated that not only the Duma and Petrograd, but also the higher commanders at the front

141 Buksgevdén, *op. cit.*, p. 408. According to Norman Lowe, Ivanov and his troops "were stopped because railway workers had torn up the tracks, when the soldiers learned what had happened in Petrograd" (*Mastering Twentieth-Century Russian History*, Houndmill: Palgrave, 2002, p. 82).

142 "'One must accept the formula 'the monarch reigns but the government rules', explained Ruzsky. This, explained the emperor, was incomprehensible to him, and he would need to be differently educated, born again. He could not take decisions against his conscience." (Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 619). (V.M.)

were acting *in complete agreement* and had decided to carry out *a coup*. We were only perplexed when this took place.¹⁴³ It began 'to take place' already in 1915, but *the final* decision was taken by Alexeyev and Ruzsky during a telephone conversation they had with each other on the night *from February 28 to March 1*. I. Solonevich later wrote that 'of all the weak points in the Russian State construction *the heights of the army* represented *the weakest point*. And all the plans of his Majesty Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich were shattered *precisely at this point*'.

"In view of the exceptional and extraordinary importance of the matter, we must *once again* ask ourselves: why was it precisely this point in the 'construction' that turned out to be the weakest? And once again we reply: because it was eaten up from within by the rust of *Masonry*, its propaganda. Then there is one more question: how did this become possible in the Russian Imperial army? And again the reply: only because, since the time of *Peter I*, through the implanting of *Masonry* into Russia, the ideological *idol* of 'service to Russia and the Fatherland' was raised in the consciousness of the nobility, and in particular the serving, *military* nobility, *above* the concept of service to God and the Tsar, as was demanded by the direct, spiritual-mystical *meaning of the Oath* given by the soldiers *personally*, not to some abstraction, but to a given, concrete *Sovereign before God!* The emperors of the 19th century did not pay due attention to this danger, or were not able to destroy this idol-worship. In truth, the last of them, his Majesty Nicholas II, was now paying in full for this, '*suffering for the mistakes of his predecessors*'.

"Seeing the extreme danger of the situation, at 0.20 a.m. on the night from March 1 to March 2 the Tsar sent this telegram to General Ivanov, who had already reached Tsarskoye Selo: 'I ask you to undertake no measures before my arrival and your report to me.' It is possible that, delighted at this text, Ruzsky, behind the back of his Majesty, *on his own authority* and against the will of the Tsar, immediately *rescinded* the sending of soldiers of the Northern Front to support Ivanov and ordered them to *return* the military echelons which had already been sent to Petrograd. *At the same time* Alexeyev from Headquarters, *in the name of his Majesty, but without his knowledge and agreement*, ordered all the units of the South-Western and Western fronts that had earlier been sent to Petrograd to return and stop the loading of those who had only just begun to load. The faithful officers of the Preobrazhensky regiment recalled with pain how they had had to submit to this command. They did not know that this was not the command of the Tsar, but that *Alexeyev had deceived them!*"

"At 2 a.m., now on 2 March," writes Montefiore, "Nicholas agreed to appoint Rodzianko prime minister, while he retained autocratic power. Then he went to bed. Ruzsky informed Rodzianko, who replied at 3.30 a.m., 'It's obvious neither his Majesty nor you realize what's going on here...there is no

143 As we have seen, however, Guchkov claimed that the generals were not initiated into the plot, but acted independently. Sedova agrees with this assessment, as, it would seem, did Oldenburg. (V.M.)

return to the past. The threatening demands for an abdication in favour of the son with Michael Alexandrovich as regent are becoming quite definite.’¹⁴⁴ In the course of that evening the bewhiskered gents of the Duma, who wished to preserve the monarchy, and the leather-capped Marxists of the Petrograd Soviet, who wanted a republic, had compromised to form a Provisional Government – and seek Nicholas’s abdication in favour of Alexei. The new premier was Prince Lvov, with Kerensky as justice minister. Now that they knew Nicholas was in Pskov, the Dumas sent two members, Guchkov and Vasily Shulgin, to procure his abdication. They set off immediately.”¹⁴⁵

However, as Lebedev writes, “Rodzianko again, without any gnawing of conscience, *lied* to Alexeyev and Ruzsky that the Provisional Government had complete control of the situation, that ‘everybody obeyed him (i.e. Rodzianko) alone’...¹⁴⁶ He was hiding the fact that ‘everyone’ (that is, the Soviet first of all) *was frightened*, as of fire, of the return of the Tsar to the capital! For they were not sure even of the mutinous reservists, and if even only one warlike unit (even if only a division) were to arrive from the front – that would be the end for them all and for the revolution! We can see what the real position of the Provisional Government was from the fact that already on March 1 the Soviet had *expelled* it from its spacious accommodation in the Tauris palace, which it occupied itself, into less spacious rooms, and refused Rodzianko a train to go to negotiate with the Tsar. So Rodzianko was compelled to *beg*. The Soviet gave him two soldiers to go to the post, since on the road the ‘ruler of Russia’, whom everyone supposedly obeyed, might be attacked or completely beaten up... One of the main leaders of the Soviet in those days was Sukhanov (Himmer). In his notes he conveyed an accurate general picture of the state of things. It turns out that the ‘progressivists’ of the Duma on that very night of March 1 in a humiliating way *begged* Himmer, Nakhamkes and Alexandrovich to *allow* them to create a ‘government’. Himmer wrote: ‘The next word was mine. I noted either we could restrain the masses or nobody could. The real power, therefore, was with us or with nobody. There was only one way out: agree to *our* conditions and accept them as *the government programme*.’ And the Provisional Committee (the future ‘government’) *agreed*! Even Guchkov (!) refused to take part in such a government. He joined it later, when the

¹⁴⁴ During the conversation between Ruzsky and Rodzianko, Rodzianko said: “It is obvious that His Majesty and you have not taken what is happening here into account. One of the most terrible revolutions has begun, which it will not be so easy to overcome... The people’s passions are so inflamed that it will hardly be possible to contain them, troops are completely demoralized – they not only disobey but murder their officers; hatred of Her Majesty the Empress has reached extremes. To avoid bloodshed, we were forced to imprison all the ministers except for War and Navy, in the Peter and Paul Fortress. I very much fear that I will meet the same fate, because protests are directed against any whose demands are more moderate or limited. I consider it necessary to inform you that what you have proposed is already insufficient and that the dynastic question has been raised point-blank.” (*The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, pp. 231-232). (V.M.)

¹⁴⁵ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, pp. 619-620. The Duma was terrified of the mob. So “the gods of the revolution needed a sacrifice. That sacrifice had to be the Tsar” (Yakobi, *op. cit.*, p. 174).

¹⁴⁶ Rodzianko’s vainglorious remark was proved to be wrong by the fact that when the Provisional Government was constituted, he himself was not part of it! (V.M.)

Bolsheviks *allowed* them to *play a little* at a certain self-sufficiency and supposed 'independence' before the public.

"... But Rodzianko lied and *deceived the generals*, since it was his direct responsibility before the 'senior brothers' by all means not to allow the arrival of military units and the Tsar into Petrograd at that moment!

"At 10.15 a.m. on March 2 Alexeyev on his own initiative sent to all the front-commanders and other major military leaders a telegram in which, conveying what Rodzianko was saying about the necessity of the abdication of his Majesty for the sake of *the salvation of the Monarchy*, Russia and the army, and for victory over the external foe, he added *personally on his own part*...: 'It appears that the situation does not allow any other resolution.' By 2.30 on March 2 the replies of the commanders had been received. Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich replied, referring to the 'fateful situation': 'I, as a faithful subject (!), consider it necessary, in accordance with the duty of the oath and in accordance with the spirit of the oath, *to beseech Your Imperial Majesty on my knees*' (... to abdicate). General Brusilov (the future Bolshevik 'inspector of cavalry') also replied that without the abdication 'Russia will collapse'. General Evert expressed the opinion that 'it is impossible to count on the army in its present composition for the suppression of disorders'. This was not true! The army as a whole, and some units in particular, was devoted to his Majesty. Masonic and revolutionary propaganda was indeed being carried out in it, but it did not have the necessary success *as long as the Tsar remained at the head of his Army*. General Sakharov, while reviling the Duma for all he was worth ('a thieving band of men... which has taken advantage of a propitious moment'), nevertheless, 'sobbing, was forced to say that abdication was the most painless way out'... To these replies Alexeyev appended his own opinion, which was also in favour of the abdication of the Tsar. Only the commander of the Guards Cavalry, General Khan-Hussein of Nakhichevan (a Muslim) remained faithful to the Russian Orthodox Autocrat! 'I beseech you not to refuse to lay at the feet of His Majesty the boundless devotion of the Guards Cavalry and our readiness to die for our adored Monarch', was his reply to Alexeyev. But the latter *did not pass on* this reply to the Tsar in Pskov. They also did not tell him that Admiral Rusin in Headquarters had more or less accused Alexeyev and his assistant General Lukomsky of 'treason' when they had suggested that the admiral sign the text of a general telegram to his Majesty in the name of all the commanders expressing the opinion that abdication was necessary. Then Rusin voluntarily refused to serve the enemies of Russia and resigned his post. So at that time there were still leaders who were completely faithful to the Tsar, and not only traitors like Alexeyev, Lukomsky, Ruzsky and Danilov, or like Generals Brusilov, Polivanov, Manikovsky, Bonch-Bruyevich, Klembovsky, Gatovsky, Boldyrev and others, who tried to please the Bolsheviks. At 10 a.m. on March 2 his Majesty was speaking to Ruzsky about the abdication: 'If it is necessary that I should step aside for the good of Russia, I am ready, but I am afraid that the people will not understand this'... At this point they brought the text of Alexeyev's telegram to the commanders. It was decided to wait for the replies. By 3 p.m. the replies had arrived from Headquarters. Ruzsky, accompanied by

Danilov and Savich, came with the text of the telegram to his Majesty's carriage. The Tsar, as Danilov recalled, 'seemed calm, but was paler than usual: it was evident that he had passed most of the night without sleep. He was dressed in a dark blue Circassian coat, with a dagger in a silver sheath in his belt.' Having sat down at the table, his Majesty began to listen to Ruzsky. He informed him of the events of the past hours and handed the Tsar the replies of the commanders. The Tsar read them. Ruzsky, 'emphasizing each word', began to expound his own opinion, which consisted in the fact that his Majesty had to act *as the generals advised him*. The Tsar asked the opinion of those present. Danilov and Savich said the same as Ruzsky. 'A deathly silence ensued,' wrote Danilov. 'His Majesty was visibly perturbed. Several times he unconsciously looked at the firmly drawn window of the carriage.' His Majesty's widowed mother, Empress Maria Fyodorovna, later, from the words of her son, affirmed that Ruzsky had even dared to say: 'Well, decide.'" 147

"Nicholas was shaken. His face paled. He stood up, went to the window of the car, opened it, and stuck out his head. In the car absolute quiet reigned. No one spoke, and most, recognizing how critical this moment was for all of Russian history, breathed with difficulty.

"If Nicholas disregarded the condition of the political leaders in St. Petersburg and of his generals, what could be accomplished afterward? The army and even his faithful guard had deserted. And even if he found faithful troops who would support him, the only option would be military confrontation with the rebels. That, in fact, essentially signified a civil war in the midst of the war with Germany, who would wholeheartedly rejoice in this development. Such a thing must not be permitted. It would mean handing Russia over to her enemies. Furthermore, such immediate and almost unanimous judgement from all the generals showed that his abdication had already been discussed in detail, and that they had already decided to demand it at the first opportunity...

"Turning back to those present, Nicholas said:

"'Are you sure – can you promise – that my abdication will benefit Russia?'

"'Your Majesty, it is the only thing to save Russia at the present crisis,' they replied.

"Then he stated with a steady and clear voice:

"'For the sake of the well-being, peace, and salvation of Russia, which I passionately love, I am prepared to abdicate from the throne in favour of my son. I ask you all to serve him truly and sincerely.'

147 Lebedev, *op. cit.*, pp. 481-486.

“As soon as he finished this sentence, he made the sign of the Cross. At 3.00 PM Nicholas signed the official document of his abdication and transfer of power to his son.”¹⁴⁸

In the night of March 14-15 the Duma's Provisional Committee “had chosen two of its members, Alexander Guchkov and Vasily Shulgin, to travel by rail to Pskov and call upon Nicholas to abdicate. The journey took them seven hours, being frequently disrupted by troops who crowded every station on the way. Guchkov and Shulgin reached their destination at 10 p.m. on 15 March 1917. By that time the entire political environment had changed in Petrograd because the Provisional Committee, meeting early in the afternoon, threw its lot in with the revolution and established a Provisional Government with Georgi Lvov as minister-chairman. The new cabinet declared freedom of the press, organization and assembly while committing itself to holding elections to a Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Ministers felt that Russia's performance in the Great War would benefit from the revolution that they headed. They were convinced that Nicholas's removal would allow them to rally patriotic support. Obviously it would ease the situation if he could be persuaded to step down without a struggle – and this sharpened the importance of the mission that Guchkov and Shulgin were carrying out.”¹⁴⁹

Before they arrived, Nicholas had a conversation with the Tsarevich's doctor, Feodorov, who confirmed that his haemophilia was incurable, what that would mean for his carrying out of his duties, and the fact that he would never be allowed to leave Russia. So by the time Guchkov and Shulgin arrived, the Tsar had decided to keep Alexei with himself and abdicate in favour, not of his son, but of his brother Michael, which was not in accordance with Tsar Paul's Basic Laws, but was in accordance with what historically had been considered to be within the autocrat's rights.

On their arrival holding the text of the manifesto they had composed, Guchkov and Shulgin “found that it was not necessary. The Tsar gave them his. And they had to admit with shame how much more powerful, spiritual and majestic in its simplicity was the manifesto written by the Tsar than their talentless composition.”¹⁵⁰ They *begged* the Tsar to *appoint* Prince Lvov as President of the Council of Ministers and General L.G. Kornilov as Commander of the Petrograd military district. The Tsar signed the necessary orders. These were the last appointments made by *the Tsar*.

¹⁴⁸ *The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, pp. 232, 233.

¹⁴⁹ Service, *The Last Tsar*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁰ Shulgin wrote: “How pitiful seemed to me the sketch that we had brought him... It is too late to guess whether his Majesty could have not abdicated. Taking into account the position that General Ruzsky and General Alexeyev held, the possibility of resistance was excluded: his Majesty's orders were no longer passed on, the telegrams of those faithful to him were not communicated to him... In abdicating, his Majesty at least retained the possibility of appealing to the people with his own last word” (in S.S. Oldenburg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II* (The Reign of Emperor Nicholas II), Belgrade, 1939, vol. 2, p. 253). (V.M.)

“Seeing themselves as the controllers of the destinies and rulers of Russia, Guchkov and Shulgin both arrived in a concealed manner, bewildered, unshaven, in noticeably dirty collars, and departed with all the papers they had been given in a conspiratorial manner, looking around them and concealing themselves from ‘the people’ whom they thought to rule... Thieves and robbers! Guchkov’s plan had been carried out, while as for Guchkov himself – what a boundlessly pitiful situation did this very clever Mason find himself in, he who had worked for so many years to dig a hole under Tsar Nicholas II!

“Nicholas II’s manifesto declared: ‘During the days of the great struggle against the external foe which, in the space of almost three years, has been striving to enslave our Native Land, it has pleased the Lord God to send down upon Russia a new and difficult trial. The national disturbances that have begun within the country threaten to reflect disastrously upon the further conduct of the stubborn war. The fate of Russia, the honour of our heroic army, the well-being of the people, the entire future of our precious Fatherland demand that the war be carried out to a victorious conclusion, come what may. The cruel foe is exerting what remains of his strength, and nor far distant is the hour when our valiant army with our glorious allies will be able to break the foe completely. In these decisive days in the life of Russia, We have considered it a duty of conscience to make it easy for Our people to bring about a tight-knit union and cohesion of all our national strength, in order that victory might be the more quickly attained, and, in agreement with the State Duma We have concluded that it would be a good thing to abdicate the Throne of the Russian State and to remove Supreme Power from Ourselves. Not desiring to be separated from Our beloved Son, We transfer Our legacy to Our Brother Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, and bless Him to ascend the Throne of the Russian State. We command Our Brother to conduct State affairs fully and in inviolable unity with the representatives of those men who hold legislative office, upon those principles which they shall establish, swearing an inviolable oath to that effect. In the name of our ardently beloved Native Land We call upon all faithful sons of the Fatherland to fulfil their sacred duty before it, by submitting to the Tsar during the difficult moment of universal trials, and, aiding Him, together with the representatives of the people, to lead the Russian State out upon the path of victory, well-being and glory. May the Lord God help Russia. Pskov. 2 March, 15.00 hours. 1917. Nicholas.’ Countersigned by the Minister of the Court Count Fredericks.¹⁵¹

Nicholas came out with this revised manifesto at 11.40 p.m. However, “so that it might not be said that he had acted under pressure he pre-timed the manifesto at 3 p.m. the same day. Guchkov and Shulgin received what they wanted. According to Alexander Kerensky,... the news was immediately communicated that night by a direct line to Petrograd. Nicholas also wrote a

¹⁵¹ Lebedev’s text has been slightly altered to include the whole text of the manifesto (V.M.). For more on the text of the manifesto, and proof that it was written by the Tsar himself, see “Manifest ob otrechenii i oktiabrskij perevorot: Kniaz’ Nikolai Davydovich Zhevakov” (1874-1939)”, <http://www.zhevakhov.info/?p=465>.

letter to Prince Georgi Lvov putting his security into his hands. It was over. The emperor of all Russia had stepped down from the throne without a fight... At 1.45 a.m. on [3/]16 March 1917, he sent the following telegram to his brother Mikhail: 'Petrograd. To His Highness - I hope to see you soon. Nicky.' This was the first time that anyone had addressed the Grand Duke in that way."¹⁵²

As Lebedev writes, the Tsar also asked the new Emperor's forgiveness "that he 'had not been able to warn' him. But this telegram *did not reach* its addressee.

"Then the train set off. Left on his own, in his personal compartment, the Tsar prayed for a long time by the light only of a lampada that burned in front of an icon. Then he sat down and wrote in his diary: 'At one in the morning I left Pskov greatly affected by all that had come to pass. All around me I see treason, cowardice, and deceit.'

"This is the condition that *reigned* at that time in 'society', and especially in democratic, Duma society, in the highest army circles, in a definite part of the workers and reservists of Petrograd..."¹⁵³

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The autocrat, according to the Orthodox understanding, can rule only in partnership or "symphony" with the Church. Moreover, the leaders of neither Church nor State can rule if the people rejects them; for in Deuteronomy 17.14 the Lord had laid it down as one of the conditions of the creation of a God-pleasing monarchy that the people should *want* a God-pleasing king.¹⁵⁴ In view of this, the Tsar, who very well understood the true meaning of the autocracy, could not continue to rule if the Church and people did not want it. Just as it takes two willing partners to make a marriage, so it takes a head and a body who are willing to work with each other to make a Christian state. The bridegroom in this case was willing and worthy, but the bride was not...

In an important address entitled "Tsar and Patriarch", P.S. Lopukhin approaches this question by noting that the Tsar's role was one of *service*, service in the Church and for the Church. And its purpose was to bring people to the Church and keep them there, in conditions maximally conducive to their salvation. But if the people of the Church, in their great majority, cease to

¹⁵² Service, *The Last Tsar*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁵³ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, pp. 488-489.

¹⁵⁴ As Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov writes: "Without establishing a kingdom, Moses foresaw it and pointed it out in advance to Israel... It was precisely Moses who pointed out in advance the two conditions for the emergence of monarchical power: it was necessary, first, that the people itself should recognize its necessity, and secondly, that the people itself should not elect the king over itself, but should present this to the Lord. Moreover, Moses indicated a leadership for the king himself: 'when he shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom, he must... fulfil all the words of this law'." (*Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 127-129).

understand the Tsar's role in that way, then he becomes literally of no service to them.

"The understanding of, and love and desire for, the 'tsar's service' began to wane in Russia. Sympathy began to be elicited, by contrast, by the bases of the rationalist West European state, which was separated from the Church, from the religious world-view. The idea of the democratic state liberated from all obligation in relation to God, the Church and the spiritual state of the people began to become attractive. The movement in this direction in the Russian people was long-standing and stubborn, and it had already a long time ago begun to elicit profound alarm, for this movement was not so much 'political' as spiritual and psychological: the so-called Russian 'liberation' and then 'revolutionary movement' was mainly, with rare and uncharacteristic exceptions, an a-religious and anti-religious movement.

"It was precisely this that elicited profound alarm in the hearts of St. Seraphim, Fr. John of Kronstadt, Dostoyevsky and Metropolitan Anthony...

"This movement developed inexorably, and finally there came the day when his Majesty understood that he was alone in his 'service of the Tsar'...

"The Orthodox Tsar has authority in order that there should be a Christian state, so that there should be a Christian-minded environment. The Tsar bears his tsarist service for this end.

"When the desire for a Christian state and environment is quenched in the people, the Orthodox monarchy loses both the presupposition and the aim of its existence, for nobody can be forced to become a Christian. The Tsar needs Christians, not trembling slaves.

"In the life of a people and of a man there are periods of spiritual darkening, of 'stony lack of feeling', but this does not mean that the man has become completely stony: the days of temptation and darkness pass, and he is again resurrected. When a people is overcome by passions, it is the duty of the authorities by severe means to sober it up and wake it up. And this must be done with decisive vividness, and it is healing, just as a thunderstorm is healing.

"But this can only be done when the blindness is not deep and when he who is punished and woken up understands the righteousness of the punishment. Thus one peasant reproached a landowner, asking why he had not begun to struggle against the pogroms with a machine-gun. "Well, and what would have happened then?" "We would have come to our senses! But now we are drunk and we burn and beat each other."

"But when the spiritual illness has penetrated even into the subconscious, then the application of force will seem to be violence, and not just retribution, then the sick people will not longer be capable of being healed. Then it will be

in the state in which was the sinner whom the Apostle Paul 'delivered to Satan for the tormenting of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved' (I Corinthians 5.5).

"At the moment of his abdication his Majesty felt himself to be profoundly alone, and around him was 'cowardice, baseness and treason', and to the question how he could have abdicated from his tsarist service, it is necessary to reply: he did this because we abdicated from his tsarist service, from his sacred and sanctified authority..."¹⁵⁵

Vladimir Lavrov writes: "The headquarters, the senior generals and the commanders of the fronts, the State Duma, all the parties from the Octobrists to the Bolsheviks, and the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, joined the side of the revolution, while the noble and monarchist public organizations as it were died out..."¹⁵⁶

As St. John Maximovich put it: "Calculating malice did its work: it separated Russia from her tsar, and at that terrible moment in Pskov he remained abandoned... The terrible abandonment of the Tsar... But it was not he who abandoned Russia: Russia abandoned him, who loved Russia more than his own life. Seeing this, and in hope that his self-humiliation would calm the stormy passions of the people, his Majesty renounced the throne... They rejoiced who wanted the deposition of the Tsar. The rest were silent. There followed the arrest of his Majesty and the further developments were inevitable... His Majesty was killed, Russia was silent..."

These explanations of why the Tsar abdicated agree with each other and are essentially true. But we can go still further and deeper. Michael Nazarov argues that the Tsar, seeing that it was impossible to stem the tide of apostasy at that time, offered himself as a sacrifice for the enlightenment of *future* generations, in accordance with the revelation given to Metropolitan Makary (see above): "His Majesty Nicholas II very profoundly felt the meaning of his service as tsar. His tragedy consisted in the fact that at the governmental level of the crisis fewer and fewer co-workers were appearing who would combine in themselves administrative abilities, spiritual discernment and devotion. 'All around me are betrayal and cowardice and deception', wrote his Majesty in his diary on the day of the abdication... Therefore, in the conditions of almost complete betrayal, his humble refusal to fight for power was dictated not only by a striving to avoid civil war, which would have weakened the country before the external enemy. This rejection of power was in some way similar to Christ's refusal to fight for His life before His crucifixion – for the sake of the future salvation of men. Perhaps his Majesty Nicholas II, the most Orthodox of all the Romanovs, intuitively felt that there was already no other way for Russia

¹⁵⁵ Lopukhin, "Tsar' i Patriarkh" (Tsar and Patriarch), *Pravoslavnij Put'* (The Orthodox Way), Jordanville, 1951, pp. 103-104.

¹⁵⁶ Lavrov, "Mozhno li dostoverno govorit' ob otrechenii Nikolaia II?" (Can one truly speak of the abdication of Nicholas II).

to be saved – except *the path of self-sacrifice for the enlightenment of descendants*, hoping on the help and the will of God...”¹⁵⁷ For by sacrificing himself in this way, as Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) writes, “he saved and preserved for future generations the idea of the Orthodox Tsar, the Anointed of God, for whom power is an unmercenary ascetic service to God and men for the affirmation of goodness, righteousness and peace on earth”.¹⁵⁸

From this point of view it was the will of God that the Tsar abdicate, even though it meant disaster for the Russian people, just as it was the will of God that Christ be crucified, even though it meant the destruction of the Jewish people. Hence the words of Eldress Paraskeva (Pasha) of Sarov (+1915), who had foretold the Tsar’s destiny during the Sarov Days: “Your Majesty, descend from the throne yourself”.¹⁵⁹ On the one hand, his abdication was wrong both in the sense that it meant “the removal of him who restrains” the coming of the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.7) But on the other hand, it was right and inevitable in a mystical, eschatological sense, in that it preserved the Autocracy pure and unimpaired, ready for the time when the bride would awake from her profound sleep and return with penitence and joy to her bridegroom... ¹⁶⁰ As Blessed Duniushka of Ussuruisk (+1918) said: “The Tsar will leave the nation, which shouldn’t be, but this has been foretold to him from Above. This is his destiny. There is no way that he can evade it...”¹⁶¹

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In recent times the question has arisen: did the Tsar in fact abdicate?

It has been argued that Tsar Nicholas’ abdication had no legal force. First, it would have to have been confirmed by the Senate.¹⁶² Again, as Michael Nazarov points out, the Basic Laws of the Russian Empire, which had been drawn up by Tsar Paul I, “do not foresee the abdication of a reigning Emperor (‘from a religious... point of view the abdication of the Monarch, the Anointed of God, is contrary to the act of His Sacred Coronation and Anointing; it would be possible only by means of monastic tonsure’ [N. Korevo]). Still less did his Majesty have the right to abdicate for his son in favour of his brother; while his brother Michael Alexandrovich had the right neither to ascend the Throne during the lifetime of the adolescent Tsarevich Alexis, nor to be crowned, since he was married to a divorced woman, nor to transfer power to the Provisional

¹⁵⁷ Nazarov, *Kto Naslednik Rossijskogo Prestola?* (Who is the Heir of the Russian Throne?), Moscow, 1996, pp. 72-73. Italics mine (V.M.).

¹⁵⁸ Gribanovsky, in S. Fomin and T. Fomina, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. II, p. 137.

¹⁵⁹ N. Gubanov (ed.), *Nikolai II-ij i Novie Mucheniki*, St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 70.

¹⁶⁰ On hearing the news of the abdication, the Tsar’s earthly bride wrote to him: “I fully understand your action, my own hero... I know that you could not sign against what you swore at your coronation. We know each other through and through – need no words.”

¹⁶¹ <http://www.geocities.com/kitezhgrad/prophets/duniushka.html>.

¹⁶² Lavrov, *op. cit.*

government, nor refer the resolution of the question of the fate of the monarchy to the future Constituent Assembly.

“Even if the monarch had been installed by the will of such an Assembly, ‘this would have abolished the Orthodox legitimizing principle of the Basic Laws’, so that these acts would have been ‘juridically non-existent’¹⁶³... ‘Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich... performed only an act in which he expressed his personal opinions and abdication, which had an obligatory force for nobody. Thereby he estranged himself from the succession in accordance with the Basic Laws, which juridically in his eyes did not exist, in spite of the fact that he had earlier, in his capacity as Grand Duke on the day of his coming of age, sworn allegiance to the decrees of the Basic Laws on the inheritance of the Throne and the order of the Family Institution’.

“It goes without saying that his Majesty did not expect such a step from his brother, a step which placed the very monarchical order under question...”¹⁶⁴

There are also strong reasons for believing that the supposed original of the manifesto, discovered in 1929, is not the original, but a fake...

This is a somewhat academic, legalistic question in that there can be no doubt that, if not *de jure* at any rate *de facto*, the abdication did take place. And it was believed to have taken place by such well-placed witnesses as the Dowager-Empress Maria Fyodorovna, Tsaritsa Alexandra Fyodorovna and Fr. Afanasy Beliaev, the Tsar’s confessor. Moreover, as we have seen, the Tsar addressed his brother as the Tsar in the early morning of March 3/16, which strongly suggests that he recognized he, Nicholas, was no longer tsar... Nevertheless, this debate highlights the very important fact that, as Lavrov points out, “while *de facto* Nicholas II ceased to be tsar after the February revolution, in a mystical and deeply juridical sense he remained the Russian tsar and died as the Tsar...”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ M.V. Zyzykin, *Tsarskaia Vlast'*, Sophia, 1924. (V.M.)

¹⁶⁴ Nazarov, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹⁶⁵ Lavrov, *op. cit.*

11. THE REASONS FOR THE ABDICATION

Why did the Tsar abdicate?

A very important factor, according to Fr. Sergei Chechanichev, was the fact that his family was completely at the mercy of the revolutionaries. Still more important was the impossibility of calling on any substantial forces to execute his decisions, which were consistently ignored.

"The affirmation," writes Chechanichev, "that in Pskov or in Mogilev there were armies or people faithful to his Majesty to whom he could turn, is unproven. There were no faithful people. There was not even anybody to whom he could turn, for everyone had either betrayed him, or indifferently stepped aside, or were simply cowards. As his Majesty noted in his Diary: 'Around me are betrayal, cowardice and deception.' 'Around me' meant that there did not exist even chinks allowing a choice of 'free expression of will'. The revolutionaries had surrounded his Majesty very reliably...

"Nor should his Majesty have been obliged to address anybody. In the army there was one's duty before the Sovereign. They had given oaths of allegiance. It was they who were obliged to address him, not he them."¹⁶⁶

Yana Sedova goes back to the similar crisis of October, 1905. "His Majesty wrote that he had to choose between two paths: a dictatorship and a constitution. A dictatorship, in his words, would give a short 'breathing space', after which he would 'again have to act by force within a few months; but this would cost rivers of blood and in the end would lead inexorably to the present situation, that is, the power's authority would have been demonstrated, but the result would remain the same and reforms could not be achieved in the future'. So as to escape this closed circle, his Majesty preferred to give a constitution with which he was not in sympathy.

"These words about a 'breathing-space' after which he would again have to act by force could perhaps have been applied now [in 1917]. In view of the solitude in which his Majesty found himself in 1917, the suppression of the revolution would have been the cure, not of the illness, but of its symptoms, a temporary anaesthesia – and, moreover, for a very short time."¹⁶⁷

"By contrast with Peter I, Tsar Nicholas II of course was not inclined to walk over other people's bodies. But he, too, was able, in case of necessity, to act firmly and send troops to put down the rebellious city. He could have acted in this way to defend the throne, order and the monarchical principle as a whole. But now he saw how much hatred there was against himself, and that the

¹⁶⁶ Chechanichev, "Tajna Molchania Gosudaria" (The Mystery of the Tsar's Silence), *Russkaia Narodnaia Linia*, May 19, 2020.

¹⁶⁷ Sedova, "Pochemu Gosudar' ne mog ne otrech'sa?" (Why his Majesty could not avoid abdication), *Nasha Strana*, March 6, 2010, N 2887, p. 2.

February revolution was as it were directed only personally against him. He did not want to shed the blood of his subjects to defend, not so much his throne, as himself on the throne..."¹⁶⁸

Archpriest Lev Lebedev agrees that the Tsar agreed to abdicate because he believed that the general dissatisfaction with his *personal* rule could be assuaged by his *personal* departure from the scene. But he never saw in this the renunciation of the Monarchy and its replacement by a republic, but only the transfer of power from himself to another member of the Dynasty – his son, under the regency of his brother. This, he thought, would placate the army and therefore ensure victory against Germany.

The Tsar wrote in his diary-entry for March 2: "My abdication is necessary. Ruzsky transmitted this conversation [with Rodzianko] to the Staff HQ, and Alexeyev to all the commanders-in-chief of the fronts. The replies from all arrived at 2:05. The essence is that that for the sake of the salvation of Russia and keeping the army at the front quiet, I must resolve on this step. I agreed. From the Staff HQ they sent the draft of a manifesto. In the evening there arrived from Petrograd Guchkov and Shulgin. I discussed and transmitted to them the signed and edited manifesto. At one in the morning I left Pskov greatly affected by all that had come to pass. All around me I see treason, cowardice, and deceit."

Commenting on these words, Fr. Lev writes: "The Tsar was convinced that this treason was personally directed to him, and not to the Monarchy, not to Russia! The generals were *sincerely* convinced of the same: they supposed that in betraying the Tsar they were not betraying the Monarchy and the Fatherland, but were even serving them, acting for their true good!... But betrayal and treason to *God's* Anointed is treason to everything that is headed by him. The Masonic consciousness of the generals, drunk on their supposed 'real power' over the army, could not rise even to the level of this *simple* spiritual truth! And meanwhile the traitors had already been *betrayed*, the deceivers *deceived*! Already on the following day, March 3, General Alexeyev, having received more detailed information on what was happening in Petrograd, exclaimed: 'I shall never forgive myself that I *believed* in the sincerity of certain people, obeyed them and sent the telegram to the commanders-in-chief on the question of the abdication of his Majesty from the Throne!' ... In a similar way General Ruzsky quickly '*lost faith* in the new government' and, as was written about him, 'suffered great moral torments' concerning his conversation with the Tsar, and the days March 1 and 2, 'until the end of his life' (his end came in October, 1918, when the Bolsheviks finished off Ruzsky in the Northern Caucasus). But we should not be moved by these belated 'sufferings' and 'recovery of sight' of the generals (and also of some of the Great Princes). They did not have to possess information, nor be particularly

¹⁶⁸ Sedova, "Ataka na Gosudaria Sprava" (An Attack on his Majesty from the Right), *Nasha Strana*, September 5, 2009.

clairvoyant or wise; they simply had to be *faithful to their oath* – and nothing more!..

“... At that time, March 1-2, 1917, the question was placed before the Tsar, his consciousness and his conscience in the following way: the revolution in Petrograd is being carried out under *monarchical* banners: society, the people (Russia!) are standing for the preservation of tsarist power, for the planned carrying on of the war to victory, but this is being hindered only by one thing – general dissatisfaction *personally* with Nicholas II, general distrust of his *personal* leadership, so that if he, for the sake of the good and the victory of Russia, were to depart, he would *save* both the Homeland and the Dynasty!

“Convinced, as were his generals, that everything was like that, his Majesty, who never suffered from love of power (he could be powerful, but not power-loving!), after 3 o’clock in the afternoon of March 2, 1917, immediately sent two telegrams – to Rodzyanko in Petrograd and to Alexeyev in Mogilev. In the first he said: ‘*There is no sacrifice that I would not undertake in the name of the real good of our native Mother Russia. For that reason I am ready to renounce the Throne in favour of My Son, in order that he should remain with Me until his coming of age, under the regency of My brother, Michael Alexandrovich*’. The telegram to Headquarters proclaimed: ‘In the name of the good of our ardently beloved Russia, her calm and salvation, I am ready to renounce the Throne in favour of My Son. I ask everyone to serve Him faithfully and unhypocritically.’ His Majesty said, as it were between the lines: ‘Not as you have served Me...’ Ruzsky, Danilov and Savich went away with the texts of the telegrams.

“On learning about this, Voeikov ran into the Tsar’s carriage: ‘Can it be true... that You have signed the abdication?’ The Tsar gave him the telegrams lying on the table with the replies of the commanders-in-chief, and said: ‘What was left for me to do, when they have all betrayed Me? And first of all – Nikolasha (Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich)... Read!’”¹⁶⁹

As in 1905, so in 1917, probably the single most important factor influencing the Tsar’s decision was the attitude of his uncle and the former Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich Romanov, “Nikolasha” as he was known in the family. It was indeed the case that there was very little he could do in view of the treason of the generals and Nikolasha.¹⁷⁰ He could probably continue to defy the will of the social and political élite, as he had done more than once in the past – but not the generals... As S.S. Oldenburg writes: “One can speculate whether his Majesty could have not abdicated. With the position taken by General Ruzsky and

¹⁶⁹ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, pp. 486-488; Voeikov, *op. cit.*, p. 212; Mark Steinberg and Vladimir Khrustalev, *The Fall of the Romanovs*, Yale University Press, 1995, pp. 89-90, citing State Archive of the Russian Federation, document f.601, op. 1, d. 2102, 1.1-2.

¹⁷⁰ Nikolasha was blessed by Metropolitan Platon, Exarch of Georgia to ask the Tsar to abdicate. See N.K. Talberg, “K sorokaletiu pagubnogo evlogianskogo raskola” (On the Fortieth Anniversary of the Destructive Eulogian Schism”), *Pravoslavnij Put’* (The Orthodox Way), Jordanville, 1966, p. 36; Groyan, *op. cit.*, p. CLXI, note.

General Alexeyev, the possibility of resistance was excluded: the commands of his Majesty were not delivered, the telegrams of those who were loyal to him were not communicated to him. Moreover, they could have announced the abdication without his will: Prince Mark of Baden announced the abdication of the German emperor (9.11.1918) when the Kaiser had by no means abdicated! His Majesty at least retained the possibility of addressing the people with his own last word... His Majesty did not believe that his opponents could cope with the situation. For that reason, to the last moment he tried to keep the steering wheel in his own hands. When that possibility had disappeared – it was clear that he was in captivity – his Majesty wanted at least to do all he could to make the task of his successors easier... Only he did not want to entrust his son to them: he knew that the youthful monarch could not abdicate, and to remove him they might use other, bloody methods. His Majesty gave his opponents everything he could: they still turned out to be powerless in the face of events. The steering wheel was torn out of the hands of the autocrat-‘chauffeur’ and the car fell into the abyss...”¹⁷¹

E.E. Alferev echoes this assessment and adds: “The Empress, who had never trusted Ruzsky, on learning that the Tsar’s train had been held up at Pskov, immediately understood the danger. On March 2 she wrote to his Majesty: ‘But you are alone, you don’t have the army with you, you are caught like a mouse in a trap. What can you do?’”¹⁷²

Even if he had been able to count on the support of some military units, the result would undoubtedly have been a civil war, whose outcome was doubtful, but whose effect on the war with Germany could not be doubted: the Germans would have been given a decisive advantage at a critical moment when Russia was about to launch a powerful spring offensive. This last factor was decisive for the Tsar: he would not contemplate undermining the war effort for any reason. For the first duty of an Orthodox Tsar after the defence of the Orthodox faith is the defence of the country against external enemies – and in the case of the war with Germany the two duties coincided.

The Tsar had always steadfastly refused to consider any internal constitutional changes during the war for the very good reason that such changes were bound to undermine the war effort. But his enemies wanted to force him to make such changes precisely while the war was still being waged. For, as George Katkov penetratingly observes, the Russian liberals’ and radicals’ “fear of the military failure and humiliation of Russia was, if we are not mistaken, only the decent cover for another feeling – the profound inner anxiety that the war would end in victory before the political plans of the opposition could be fulfilled, and that the possibilities presented to it by the exceptional circumstances of wartime, would be missed”.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Oldenburg, *op. cit.*, pp. 641-642.

¹⁷² Alferov, *Imperator Nikolaj II kak chelovek sil'noj voli* (Emperor Nicholas II as a Man of Strong Will), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, 2004, p. 121.

¹⁷³ Katkov, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

Although he had abdicated, the Tsar considered himself to be still Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. That is why his train now moved towards Mogilev, and why neither Ruzsky nor Alexeyev nor even Guchkov prevented him from returning there.

General Voeikov writes: "Immediately the train had moved from the station, I went into the Tsar's compartment, which was lit by one lampada burning in front of an icon. After all the experiences of that heavy day, the Tsar, who was always distinguished by huge self-possession, could not control himself. He embraced me and sobbed... My heart broke into pieces at the sight of such undeserved sufferings that had fallen to the lot of the noblest and kindest of tsars. He had only just endured the tragedy of abdicating from the throne for himself and his son because of the treason and baseness of the people who had abdicated from him, although they had received only good from him. He was torn away from his beloved family. All the misfortunes sent down upon him he bore with the humility of an ascetic... The image of the Tsar with his tear-blurred eyes in the half-lit compartment will never be erased from my memory to the end of my life..."¹⁷⁴

"Afterwards, 'I slept long and deeply,' wrote Nicholas. 'Talked with my people about yesterday. Read a lot about Julius Caesar.' Then he remembered Misha: 'to his Majesty Emperor Michael. Recent events have led me to decide irrevocably to take this extreme step. Forgive me if it grieves you and also for no warning – there was no time.'"¹⁷⁵

At Stavka the Tsar appointed Nikolasha supreme commander of the armed forces, and Prince George Lvov – president of the Council of Ministers of the Provisional Government. For the last time, he listened to a report by General Alexeyev on the military situation. At the end of it, in a low voice he said that it was difficult for him to part from them, and it was sad for him to be present for the last time at a report, "but it is evident that the will of God is stronger than my will".¹⁷⁶

Sister Florence Farmborough, an English Red Cross nurse serving at the Russian Front, writes: "Deprived of Throne and Power, his visit was sorrowful in the extreme. He spent only a few days there and was visited by his mother, the Dowager Empress Marie. There they parted; she, to return to her home in Kiyev; he, to return as a prisoner to his family in Tsarskoe Selo [the Village of the Tsar]. Those who saw him in Mogilev were amazed at the self-control and courage with which he carried out the final ceremonies. He wrote to his

¹⁷⁴ Voeikov, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

¹⁷⁵ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 623. Well he might remember Julius Caesar. For like Caesar, the Tsar was stabbed in the back on the Ides of March...

¹⁷⁶ Alferov, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

fighting men on the various Fronts and addressed the troops in person. He told them that he was leaving them because he felt that he was no longer necessary; thanked them for their never-failing loyalty; praised them for their unwavering patriotism and besought them to obey the Provisional Government, to continue the war and to lead Russia to Victory. Only his mournful, hollow eyes, and extreme pallor told of the effort he was making to preserve the calm demanded of him.¹⁷⁷

“Even before he left Mogilev, vociferous celebrations were taking place in the town; large red flags blazed in the streets; all photographs of himself and family had disappeared; Imperial emblems were being pulled down from walls, cut off uniforms; and, while the ex-Tsar sat alone in his room, the officers who had visited him, cheered his brave words and bowed low – many in tears – before him as he bid them farewell, were at that moment queuing up in the open air, outside his window, to take the Oath of Allegiance to the Provisional Government.”¹⁷⁸

On March 5, in the presence of the Tsar and the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God, a liturgy was served at which the tsar was commemorated but no longer as ‘his most autocratic majesty and emperor’. A hum went through the congregation, and many wept.

On March 7 the Provisional Government ordered the arrest of the Tsar, and on March 8 four Duma deputies came to Mogilev and arrested him. This meant that he could not leave Russia (even if he had wanted to, which he and the Tsarina did not), and was the step that led inexorably to his martyrdom in Yekaterinburg the following year...

And for almost a whole week he had continued to lead all the Armed Forces of Russia!... But, although there were many senior officers there who were ready to die for him, the Tsar made no move to make use of his powerful position to march against the revolution. For, according to Lebedev, he was sincerely convinced that “his departure from power could help everyone to come together for the decisive and already very imminent victory over the external enemy (the general offensive was due to take place in April). Let us recall his words to the effect that *there was no sacrifice* which he was not prepared to offer for the good of Russia. In those days the Tsar expressed himself still more definitely: ‘... *If Russia needs an atoning sacrifice, let me be that*

¹⁷⁷ Contrary to the confident assertions of some, the Tsar’s abdication was welcomed by no means all the soldiers. Thus General Denikin wrote: “The troops were stunned – it is difficult to define with another word the first impression that the manifestos made. No joy, no sorrow. Silent, concentrated silence... and tears flowed down the cheeks of the old soldiers... There was no resentment personally against the Sovereign nor against the Royal Family. On the contrary, everyone was interested in their fate and feared for it.” (*The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, p. 239) (V.M.)

¹⁷⁸ Farmborough, *Nurse at the Russian Front. A Diary 1914-18*, London: Book Club Associates, 1974, pp. 271-272. Alexeyev reported the Tsar’s last address to the army to Guchkov, now War Minister. Guchkov forbade the distribution of the speech... (Alferov, p. 108)

sacrifice'. The Tsar was convinced (and they convinced him) that... the Provisional Government, society and the revolution were all (!) for *the preservation of the Monarchy* and for carrying through the war to a glorious victory..."¹⁷⁹

Lebedev is not convincing here. The Tsar's first priority was undoubtedly a successful conclusion to the war. After all, on the night of his abdication, he wrote in his diary: "I decided to take this step for the sake of Russia, *and to keep the armies in the field.*" But it is hard to believe that he *still*, after all the treason he had seen around him, believed that "the Provisional Government, society and the revolution [!] are all for the preservation of the Monarchy" ...

It is more likely that he believed that without the cooperation of the generals and the Duma Russia could not win the war, which was the prime objective, upon which everything else depended. And so he abdicated, not because he had any illusions about the Provisional Government, but because, as a true patriot, he wanted Russia to win the war...

One of the best comments on the overthrow of the Tsar in the February revolution came from Winston Churchill, a minister in the British government at the time, but one who, unlike so many others, did not rejoice in the fall of the Tsar: "Surely to no nation has Fate been more malignant than to Russia. Her ship went down in sight of port... Every sacrifice had been made; the toil was achieved... In March the Tsar was on the throne: the Russian Empire and the Russian army held up, the front was secured and victory was undoubted. The long retreats were ended, the munitions famine was broken; arms were pouring in; stronger, larger, better equipped armies guarded the immense front... Moreover, no difficult action was now required: to remain in presence: to lean with heavy weight upon the far stretched Teutonic line: to hold without exceptional activity the weakened hostile forces on her front: in a word to endure – that was all that stood between Russia and the fruits of general victory... According to the superficial fashion of our time, the tsarist order is customarily seen as blind, rotten, a tyranny capable of nothing. But an examination of the thirty months of war with Germany and Austria should correct these light-minded ideas. We can measure the strength of the Russian Empire by the blows which it suffered, by the woes it experienced, by the inexhaustible forces that it developed, and by the restoration of forces of which it showed itself capable... In the government of states, when great events take place, the leader of the nation, whoever he may be, is condemned for failures and glorified for successes. The point is not who did the work or sketched the plan of battle: reproach or praise for the outcome is accorded to him who bears the authority of supreme responsibility. Why refuse this strict examination to Nicholas II? The brunt of supreme decisions centred upon him. At the summit where all problems are reduced to Yea and Nay, where events transcend the faculties of men and where all is inscrutable, he had to give the answers. His was the function of the compass needle. War or no war? Advance or retreat?

¹⁷⁹ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

Right or left? Democratise or hold firm? Quit or persevere? These were the battlefields of Nicholas II. Why should he reap no honour for them?...

“The regime which he personified, over which he presided, to which his personal character gave the final spark, had at this moment won the war for Russia. Now they crush him. A dark hand intervenes, clothed from the beginning in madness. The Tsar departs from the scene. He and all those whom he loved are given over to suffering and death. His efforts are minimized; his actions are condemned; his memory is defiled...”¹⁸⁰

Only in recent decades has the good name of Tsar Nicholas II been resurrected in the Orthodox world. Meanwhile, the old false clichés about him continue to be repeated in Western historiography.

¹⁸⁰ Churchill, *The World Crisis. 1916-18*, vol. I, London, 1927, pp. 223-225. Churchill had been a Mason, Master of “Rosemary” lodge no. 2851, since 1902. However, he evidently played no part in the international Masonic conspiracy; he remained an admirer of the Tsar, and a fierce anti-communist.

12. MICHAEL ALEXANDROVICH ROMANOV: TSAR FOR A DAY?

Although the Tsar had addressed a telegram to “Emperor Michael Alexandrovich” (it reached him in the late morning of March 16)¹⁸¹, Michael was destined to be emperor, if he really was emperor, for no more than a day. But without an autocratic tsar Russia was bound to descend into anarchy; the fruit of February was bound to be October...

The February revolution had not been taking place only in Petrograd. “In Moscow on February 28th there were massive demonstrations under red flags. The garrison (also composed of reservists) passed over to the side of the rebellion on March 1. In those days a Soviet of workers’ deputies and a Committee of public organizations was formed in the Moscow Duma, as in Petrograd. Something similar took place also in Kharkov and Nizhni-Novgorod. In Tver a crowd killed Governor N.G. Byunting, who, as the crowd approached, had managed to make his confession [by telephone] to the bishop...”¹⁸²

In such circumstances, the Duma and the Provisional Government, which always followed rather than led public opinion, could not be for the continuation of the Monarchy. It will be remembered that the leaders of the Duma had originally wanted the preservation of the monarchy, but without Nicholas II and with a “responsible ministry”. But in the course of the revolution, and with the Soviet breathing down their necks, the Duma leaders, even the monarchists among them, changed course...

“In the middle of the day on [3/]16 March a group of Provisional Government ministers and Duma leaders met at Mikhail’s small salon in Petrograd to discuss the idea of his becoming emperor [although technically, as we have already seen, he already was emperor]. Guchkov and Shulgin had just arrived back from Pskov, and Rodzyanko invited them to join the gathering. Rodzyanko also asked them not to publish the news of Nicholas’s act of abdication. Politicians had to prepare for whatever might be the next stage in the emergency in Petrograd.

“Rodzyanko, Guchkov, Milyukov, Kerensky and the liberal industrialist Alexander Konovalov were among those present, and there was a forceful exchange of opinions. It was a painful occasion for everyone. Guchkov insisted that the country needed a tsar; he was pleased for Mikhail to accept the throne from his brother with a commitment to convoking a Constituent Assembly. Milyukov too wanted the throne to pass to Mikhail, but got into a short though fiery dispute with Guchkov about the Basic Law. This boded ill for the Provisional Government’s prospects of settling the political situation in the capital. Guchkov argued that each and every action taken by ministers could

¹⁸¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4orSmDAU-w>

¹⁸² Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 489.

be justified in the light of the wartime emergency. But whereas Guchkov and Milyukov agreed that Mikhail should become tsar, Kerensky strongly opposed the whole idea and urged Mikhail to reject the throne in recognition of the fact that the streets were full of thousands of angry workers and soldiers demonstrating against the monarchy. He warned of civil war if Mikhail tried to succeed his brother. For Kerensky this was the main practical point rather than any republican principle. He added that Mikhail would be putting his own life in danger if he complied with what Nicholas wanted.”¹⁸³

Rodzyanko and Lvov supported Kerensky. They “ardently tried to prove the impossibility and danger of such an act at the present time. They said openly that in that case Michael Alexandrovich could be killed, while the Imperial Family and all the officers could ‘have their throats cut’. A second historically important moment had arrived. What would the Grand Duke decide, who was then from a juridical point of view already *the All-Russian Emperor?*”¹⁸⁴

The Grand Duke was a fine soldier and a gentle man whom everybody liked. But before the war he had defied the Tsar in marrying a divorcée, Countess Natalia Brassova, in Switzerland, for which he was exiled for several years. Moreover, he had cooperated with the liberal revolutionaries during the February revolution. So strength of character in defence of the autocracy was not to be expected of him. He said he wanted to speak to his wife on the telephone and would appreciate time to consult his conscience. Then he returned.

Edvard Radzinsky describes the scene:-

“Michael came in, tall, pale, his face very young.

“They spoke in turn.

“Alexander Kerensky: ‘By taking the throne you will not save Russia. I know the mood of the masses. At present everyone feels intense displeasure with the monarchy. I have no right to conceal that the dangers that taking power would subject you to personally. I could not vouch for your life.’

“Then silence, a long silence. And Michael’s voice, his barely audible voice: ‘In these circumstances, I cannot.’

“Michael was crying. It was his fate to end the monarchy. Three hundred years – and it all ended with him.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Robert Service, *The Last Tsar*, London: Pan, 2017, p. 20.

¹⁸⁴ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* p. 491.

¹⁸⁵ Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar*, p. 173.

According to Montefiore, “the ministers tried to intimidate Michael into abdicating. He asked if they could guarantee his safety. ‘I had to answer in the negative,’ said Rodzianko, but Pavel Milyukov, the foreign minister, argued that this ‘frail craft’ – the Provisional Government – would sink in ‘the ocean of national disorder’ without the raft of the monarchy. Kerensky, the only one who could speak for the Soviet, disagreed, threatening chaos: ‘I can’t answer for Your Highness’s life.’

“Princess Putiatina invited them all for lunch, sitting between the emperor and the prime minister. After a day of negotiations, Michael signed his abdication: ‘I have taken a firm decision to assume the Supreme Power only if such be the will of our great people by universal suffrage through its representatives to the Constituent Assembly.’ Next day, he sent a note to his wife Natasha: ‘Awfully busy and extremely exhausted. Will tell you many interesting things.’ Among these interesting things, he had been emperor of Russia for a day – and after 304 years the Romanovs had fallen.”¹⁸⁶

The explanation of Michael’s pusillanimity was simple: as Fr. Sergei Chechanichev writes, “*he was a participant in the conspiracy*.” Grand Duke Michael wrote in his diary on February 27, 1917: ‘At 5 o’clock Johnson [his English secretary] and I went by train to Petrograd. In the Mariinsky palace I conferred with M.V. Rodzianko, Nekrasov, Savich, Dmitriurkov.’ He himself confirmed that he had conferred with the enemies of his Majesty. He conducted negotiations with them, defending his brother’s right to power as the lawful Sovereign, and conducted negotiations with his Majesty in the name of the conspirators. On March 1 in a telegram he called on his Majesty: ‘Forgetting all that is past, I beseech you to proceed along the new path indicated by the people’ – that is, that of the conspirators.

“Even if we close our eyes to all the ‘fakery’ of the documents called ‘abdications’, then that power which his Majesty supposedly transferred to Grand Duke Michael should have been returned, in the case of Michael’s rejection, to his Majesty. Insofar as Michael did not accept the power, he could not transfer it to the Provisional Government. He simply did not have the authority to do that.

“... In his so-called ‘abdication’ it is written in black and white: ‘I have taken the firm decision to accept the Supreme power only if that is the will of our great people.’ But if the Grand Duke did not accept the Supreme power, what right did he have to transfer it to anybody else?”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 623.

¹⁸⁷ Chechanichev, “Tajna Molchania Gosudaria” (The Mystery of the Tsar’s Silence), *Russkaia Narodnaia Linia*, May 19, 2020. Italics mine (V.M.).

This is a powerful argument. We must conclude that Michael Alexandrovich never became tsar; as Service writes, his act was not one of abdication, but of renunciation.¹⁸⁸ The last tsar was Nicholas II...

*

However, Michael's actions were significant in another, important respect. As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes, "Michael Alexandrovich... did not decide [completely] as Kerensky and the others wanted. He did not abdicate from the Throne directly *in favour of the Provisional Government*. In the manifesto that he immediately wrote he suggested that the question of his power and in general of the form of power in Russia should be decided *by the people itself*, and in that case he would become ruling Monarch if 'that will be the will of our Great People, to whom it belongs, by universal suffrage, through their representatives in a Constituent Assembly, to establish the form of government and the new basic laws of the Russian State'. For that reason, the manifesto goes on to say, 'invoking the blessing of God, I beseech all the citizens of the Russian State to submit to the Provisional Government, which has arisen and been endowed with all the fullness of power *at the initiative of the State Duma* (that is, in a self-willed manner, not according to the will of the Tsar – Prot. Lebedev), *until the Constituent Assembly, convened in the shortest possible time on the basis of a universal, direct, equal and secret ballot, should by its decision on the form of government express the will of the people.* Michael.' The manifesto has been justly criticised in many respects. But still it is not a direct transfer of power to the 'democrats'!"¹⁸⁹

The historian Mikhail Babkin agrees with Lebedev: Just as Michael Alexandrovich never became tsar, so he never transferred power to the Duma (even assuming he had the right to do that), but said that he would agree to become tsar if the people wanted it. "The talk was not about the Great Prince's abdication from the throne, but about the impossibility of his occupying the royal throne without the clearly expressed acceptance of this by the whole people of Russia."¹⁹⁰

However, by effectively giving the people the final say in how they were to be ruled, Tsar Michael effectively *introduced the democratic principle, making the people the final arbiter of power*. Tsar Nicholas clearly saw what had happened, writing in his diary: "God knows who gave him the idea of signing such rot."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Service, *The Last Tsar*, p. 30.

¹⁸⁹ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

¹⁹⁰ Babkin, "Sviatetskij Sinod Pravoslavnoj Rossijskoj Tserkvi i Revoliutsionnie Sobytia Fevralia-Marta 1917 g." ("The Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Revolutionary Events of February-March, 1917"), <http://www.monarhist-spb.narod.ru/D-ST/Babkin-1>, p. 3.

¹⁹¹ Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar*, p. 172. It has been argued that Tsar Nicholas had also given a certain impulse towards the democratic anarchy when he declared in his manifesto: "We command Our Brother to conduct State affairs fully and in inviolable unity with the

Unlike Tsar Nicholas, who simply tried (unsuccessfully) to transfer power from himself to his brother, Michael Alexandrovich undermined the very basis of the Monarchy by acting as if the true sovereign were the people. Like King Saul in the Old Testament he listened to the voice of the people (and out of *fear* of the people) rather than the voice of God – with fateful consequences for himself and the people. It was he who finally destroyed the autocracy...

We can see the confusion and searching of consciences all this caused in a letter of some Orthodox Christians to the Holy Synod dated July 24, 1917: “We Orthodox Christians most ardently beseech you to explain to us in the newspaper *Russkoe Slovo* [*Russian Word*] what... the oath given to us to be faithful to the Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich, means. People are saying in our area that if this oath is worth nothing, then the new oath to the new Tsar [the Provisional Government?] will be worth nothing. Which oath must be more pleasing to God. The first or the second? Because the Tsar is not dead, but is alive and in prison...”¹⁹²

Since Michael had presented the choice of the form of State government to the Constituent Assembly, many opponents of the revolution were prepared to accept the Provisional Government on the grounds that it was just that – provisional. Moreover, they could with some reason argue that they were acting in obedience to the last manifestation of lawful, tsarist power in Russia... They were not to know that the Constituent Assembly would be forcibly dissolved by the Bolsheviks in January, 1918. So the results of the Tsar’s abdication for Russia were different from what he had hoped and believed. Instead of an orderly transfer of power from one member of the royal family to another, the whole dynasty and autocratic order collapsed. And instead of preventing civil war for the sake of victory in the world war, the abdication was followed by defeat in the world war and the bloodiest civil war in history, followed by the greatest persecution of the faith in history. Michael’s renunciation of the throne “was the beginning”, as Bukshoeveden writes, “of universal chaos. All the structures of the empire were destroyed. The natural consequences of this were a military rebellion that was supported by the civil population, which was also discontented with the actions of the cabinet. And all this, to sum up, led to a complete collapse. The supporters of the monarchy, of whom there were not a few in the rear and at the front, found themselves on their own, while the revolutionaries used the universal madness to take power into their own hands.”¹⁹³

representatives of those men who hold legislative office, upon those principles which they shall establish, swearing an inviolable oath to that effect.” The principles established by the State Duma were, of course, democratic, not monarchical. And on September 15, 1917, Kerensky even declared, in defiance of the whole aim of the Constituent Assembly as defined by Michael Alexandrovich in his manifesto, that Russia was now a republic... But perhaps the Tsar meant, not a Constituent Assembly, but a *Zemsky Sobor*, of the kind that brought Tsar Michael Romanov to the throne in 1613...

¹⁹² Groyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 122, 123.

¹⁹³ Bukshoeveden, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

What about the other Romanovs? Could not any of them have claimed the throne after the abdication of Michael?

Robert Massie writes: "After Nicholas II's sisters, nephews, and nieces, the tsar's closest surviving relatives were the Vladimirovichi, then comprising his four first cousins, Grand Dukes Cyril, Boris, and Andrew and their sister, Grand Duchess Helen, all children of Nicholas's eldest uncle, Grand Duke Vladimir. In normal times, the near-simultaneous deaths of a tsar, his son, and his brother, as happened in 1918, automatically would have promoted the eldest of these cousins, Cyril, who was forty-two in 1918, to the Imperial throne. In 1918, however, there was neither empire nor throne, and, consequently, nothing was automatic. Succession to the Russian throne followed the Salic law, meaning that the crown passed only to males, through males, until there were no more eligible males. When an emperor died and neither a son nor a brother was available, the eldest eligible male from the branch of the family closest to the deceased monarch would succeed. In this case, under the old laws, this was Cyril. After Cyril stood his two brothers, Boris and Andrew, and after them the only surviving male of the Pavlovich line, their first cousin Grand Duke Dimitri, the son of Nicholas II's youngest uncle, Grand Duke Paul. Nicholas II's six nephews, the sons of the tsar's sister Xenia, were closer by blood than Cyril but were ineligible because the succession could not pass through a woman..."¹⁹⁴

However, there were powerful objections to Cyril's candidacy. He had married a Lutheran and his first cousin, Victoria Melita, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria, who, moreover, had been married to and divorced from Tsaritsa Alexandra's brother, Grand Duke Ernest of Hesse. By marrying a divorced and heterodox woman who was his cousin, he violated Basic Laws 183 and 185 as well as the Church canons. The Tsar exiled him from Russia, and then, in 1907, deprived him and his descendants of the right to inherit the throne in accordance with Basic Law 126. Although the Tsar later allowed him and his wife to return, the couple plotted against him, and on March 1, even before the abdication, Cyril withdrew his Naval Guard from guarding the Tsaritsa and her family at Tsarskoye Selo and went to the Duma to hail the revolution, sporting a red cockade. He renounced his rights to the Throne, and hoisted the red flag above his palace and his car...¹⁹⁵

In July, noting the anti-monarchist mood in Petrograd, he moved to nearby Finland, and only moved again to Switzerland in 1920, when it was clear that there was no hope of the restoration of the monarchy in the near future.

¹⁹⁴ Massie, *The Romanovs: The Final Chapter*, London: Arrow, 1995, p.261.

¹⁹⁵ Massie, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-269.

Cyril eventually emigrated to France, but was at first cautious about putting forward his claim to the throne. "The Dowager Empress Marie would not believe that her son and his family were dead and refused to attend any memorial service on their behalf. A succession proclamation by Cyril would have shocked and deeply offended the old woman. Further, there was another, not very willing pretender: Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaevich, former commander-in-chief of the Russian Army, was from the Nicholaevichi, a more distant branch of the Romanov tree, but, among Russians, he was far more respected and popular than Cyril. Nicholas Nicholaevich was forceful and Russia's most famous soldier whereas Cyril was a naval captain, who, having had one ship sunk beneath him, refused to go to sea again. Nevertheless, when émigré Russians spoke to Grand Duke Nicholas about assuming the throne in exile, he refused, explaining that he did not wish to shatter the hopes of the dowager empress. Besides, Nicholas agreed with Marie that if Nicholas II, his son, and his brother really were dead, the Russian people should be free to choose as their new tsar whatever Romanov – or whatever Russian – they wished.

"In 1922, six years before the death of Marie and while the old soldier Nicholas Nicholaevich still had seven years to live, Cyril decided to wait no longer. He proclaimed himself first Curator of the Throne and then, in 1924, Tsar of All the Russias – although he announced that for everyday use he still should be addressed by the lesser title Grand Duke. He established a court around his small villa in the village of Saint-Briac in Brittany, issued manifestos, and distributed titles..."¹⁹⁶

His claim to be Tsar was recognized by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), first-hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad, but not by Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris. Evlogy was in Karlovtsy in the autumn of 1922, when "I received a telegram: 'At the request of Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovich, we ask you insistently to come immediately to Paris.' I arrived... I was presented with a group of generals led by General Sakharov, and a group of dignitaries asked me to go and visit Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovich in Saint-Briac so as to perform a Divine service for him and give him my blessing to assume the imperial throne. I refused..."¹⁹⁷

Most of the Romanov family living in exile also rejected Cyril's claim... The other leading Romanovs were either killed or made their peace with the new regime. Thus the behavior of Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich ("Nikolasha") was, according to Mikhail Nazarov, "unforgiveable: he didn't move a finger to avert the plot that he knew was being prepared..., pushed Nicholas II to abdicate, and, having again been appointed by him Commander-in-Chief of the Army, swore to the plotters: 'The new government already exists and there can be no changes. I will not permit any reaction in any form...'

¹⁹⁶ Massie, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-262.

¹⁹⁷ Evlogy, *Puti moej zhizni* (The Paths of My Life), Paris: YMCA Press, 1947, p. 604.

“In those days the other members of the Dynasty also forgot about their allegiance to the Tsar and welcomed his abdication. Many signed their own rejection of their rights to the Throne...: Grand Dukes Dmitri Konstantinovich, Gabriel Konstantinovich, Igor Konstantinovich, George Mikhailovich and Nicholas Mikhailovich. The latter, following Cyril, also paid a visit of loyalty to the revolutionary Duma on March 1... In the press there appeared declarations by Grand Dukes Boris Vladimirovich, Alexander Mikhailovich, Sergei Mikhailovich and Prince Alexander Oldenburg concerning their ‘boundless support’ for the Provisional government...

“The identical form of these rejections and declarations witness to the fact of a corresponding demand on the part of the new authorities: these were a kind of signature of loyalty to the revolution. (It is possible that this conceals one of the reasons for the monarchical apathy of these members of the Dynasty in emigration. Only ‘Cyril I’ felt not the slightest shame: neither for the plans of his mother ‘to destroy the empress’, nor for his own appeal to the soldiers to go over to the side of the revolution...)

“It goes without saying that in rebelling against his Majesty before the revolution, such members of the Dynasty did not intend to overthrow the monarchy: they would thereby have deprived themselves of privileges and income from their Appanages. They hoped to use the plotters in their own interests, for a court coup within the Dynasty, - but were cruelly deceived. The Provisional government immediately showed that even loyal Romanovs - ‘symbols of Tsarism’ - were not needed by the new authorities: Nicholas Nikolayevich was not confirmed in the post of Commander-in-Chief, and Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich found himself under house arrest in his own palace for ‘being slow to recognize the new order’... We have some reason to suppose that by their ‘signatures of loyalty’ and renunciations of their claims to the Throne the Grand Dukes bought freedom for themselves. Kerensky declared at the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies: ‘You have doubts about the fact that some members of the Royal Family have remained in freedom. But only those are in freedom who have protested with us against the old regime and the caprices of Tsarism.’

“The Februarists from the beginning did not intend to give the Royal Family freedom. They were subjected to humiliating arrest in the palace of Tsarskoye Selo, and were restricted even in their relations with each other. And none of the previously active monarchists spoke out for them. True, many of them had already been arrested, the editors of their newspapers and their organizations had been repressed. But even more monarchist activists kept silent, while some even signed declarations of loyalty to the new government...”¹⁹⁸

198 Nazarov, *Kto Naslednik Rossijskogo Prestola?* (Who is the Heir of the Russian Throne?), Moscow, 1996, p. 375.

13. AUTOCRACY VERSUS CONSTITUTIONALISM

There is much talk today about a possible revival of the Russian monarchy. The position most often taken, even by monarchists, and even among the surviving Romanovs themselves, is that the new tsar should not be an *autocrat*, but rather a *constitutional monarch*. This is both ironic and sad, for it implies that even if the Russian monarchy were restored now with the enthronement of one of the Romanovs, it would not be a true restoration, but a surrender to that liberal and emasculated view of monarchy which Tsar Nicholas and his predecessors and the Russian saints fought so hard against and which in the end destroyed Holy Rus'. For it is important to realize that the fall of the Romanov dynasty was not engineered in the first place by Russian-Jewish Bolsheviks or American-Jewish bankers, nor by the German General Staff. It was engineered and carried out by what Lebedev calls "the first echelon" of the revolution – the Mason-Cadets and Octobrists, such as Rodzianko and Guchkov. Their creed was not revolution – or, at any rate, not the full-blooded revolution that aimed at regicide and the complete overthrow of the existing social order; for they had too much to lose from such an upheaval. Their ideal was the more moderate but thoroughly unRussian one of *English constitutional monarchy*.

Indeed, with the exception of some republicans such as Kerensky, the conspirators of February would probably have been content with simply stripping the Tsar of his autocratic powers and turning him into their puppet, a constitutional monarch on the English model – provided he did not interfere with their own supreme power. They forced him to abdicate only when they saw that he would not play their game, but was determined to preserve the Autocracy – if not in his own person, then in the person of his appointed heir. But their lack of understanding of the revolutionary process that they had initiated, meant that their rule was short-lived and served only as a transition from full Autocracy to the victory of the Bolsheviks.

The Russian constitutionalists demanded of Tsar Nicholas that he give them a "responsible" government, by which they meant a government under *their* control. But the rule of Tsar Nicholas was already responsible in the highest degree – to God. For this is the fundamental difference between the Orthodox autocrat and the constitutional monarch, that the autocrat truly governs his people, whereas the constitutional monarch "reigns, but does not rule". The first is responsible to God alone, but the latter, even if he claims to rule "by the Grace of God", in fact fulfils the will of the people rather than God's. As St. John Maximovich writes, "the Russian sovereigns were never tsars by the will of the people, but always remained Autocrats by the Mercy of God. They were sovereigns in accordance with the dispensation of God, and not according to the 'multimutinous' will of man."¹⁹⁹

199 St. John Maximovich, *Proiskhozhdenie Zakona o Prestolonasledii v Rossii* (The Origin of the Law of Succession in Russia), quoted in "Nasledstvennost' ili Vybornost'" ("Heredity or

And so we have three kinds of king: the Orthodox autocrat, who strives to fulfill the will of God alone, and is responsible to Him alone, being limited only by the Faith and Tradition of the people as represented by the Orthodox Church; the absolute monarch, such as the French Louis XIV or the English Henry VIII, who fulfills only his own will, is responsible to nobody, and is limited by nothing; and the constitutional monarch, who fulfills the will of the people, and can be applauded or ignored or deposed by them as they see fit.

Monarchy by the Grace of God and monarchy by the will of the people are incompatible principles. The very first king appointed by God in the Old Testament, Saul, fell because he tried to combine them; he pretended to listen to God while in fact obeying the people. Thus he spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, together with the best of his livestock, instead of killing them all, as God had commanded, "because I listened to the voice of the people" (*I Kings* 15.20). In other words, he abdicated his God-given authority and *became, spiritually speaking, a democrat*, listening to the people rather than to God.

The significance of the reign of Tsar Nicholas II lies in the fact that he demonstrated what a true Orthodox autocrat – as opposed to an absolutist despot or a constitutional monarch – really is. This knowledge had begun to fade in the minds of the people, and with its fading the monarchy itself had become weaker. But Tsar Nicholas restored the image to its full glory, and thereby preserved the possibility of the complete restoration of the autocracy in a future generation...

Appearances can be deceptive. There is a famous photograph of the Russian Tsar Nicholas II and the English King George V standing together, looking as if they were twins (they were in fact cousins) and wearing almost identical uniforms. Surely, one would think, these were kings of a similar type, even brothers in royalty? After all, they called each other "Nicky" and "Georgie", had very similar tastes, had ecumenical links (Nicky was godfather of Georgie's son, the future Edward VIII, and their common grandmother, Queen Victoria, was invited to be godmother of Grand Duchess Olga²⁰⁰), and their empires were similar in their vastness and diversity (Nicholas was ruler of the greatest land empire in history, George – of the greatest sea power in history). Moreover, the two cousins never went to war with each other, but were allies in the First World War. They seem to have been genuinely fond of each other, and shared a mutual antipathy for their bombastic and warmongering "Cousin Willy" – Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany. To crown it all, when Tsar Nicholas abdicated in 1917, Kerensky suggested that he take refuge with Cousin Georgie in England.

Elections?"), *Svecha Pokaiania* (Candle of Repentance), N 4, February, 2000, p. 12. The phrase "multimutinous" is that of Tsar Ivan the Terrible.

200 Miranda Carter, *The Three Emperors*, London: Penguin, 2011, p. 177.

But Cousin Georgie betrayed Cousin Nicky; in August, 1917 he withdrew his invitation for fear of a revolution in England.

As Roy Hattersley writes, in view of the failure of rescue attempts from within Russia, “the future of the Tsar and his family grew ever more precarious. It was the Prime Minister who initiated the meeting with George V’s private secretary at which, for a second time, ‘it was generally agreed that the proposal we should receive the Emperor in this country... could not be refused’. When Lloyd George proposed that the King should place a house at the Romanovs’ disposal he was told that only Balmoral was available and that it was ‘not a suitable residence at this time of year’. But it transpired that the King had more substantial objections to the offer of asylum. He ‘begged’ (a remarkably unregal verb) the Foreign Secretary ‘to represent to the Prime Minister that, from all he hears and reads in the press, the residence in this country of the ex-Emperor and Empress would be strongly resented by the public and would undoubtedly compromise the position of the King and Queen’. It was the hereditary monarch, not the radical politician, who left the Russian royal family to the mercy of the Bolsheviks and execution in Ekaterinburg.”²⁰¹

The result was that, as Frances Welch writes, “eleven months later, the Tsar, the Tsarina and their five children were all murdered. But when the Tsar’s sister finally reached London in 1919, King George V brazenly blamed his Prime Minister for refusing a refuge to the Romanovs. Over dinner, he would regularly castigate Lloyd George as ‘that murderer’...”²⁰²

Nor was this the first or only betrayal: in a deeper sense English constitutionalism betrayed Russian autocracy in February, 1917. For it was a band of constitutionalist Masons supported by the Grand Orient of France and the Great Lodge of England, that plotted the overthrow of the Tsar in the safe haven of the English embassy in St. Petersburg. (Surprising as it may seem in view of the Masons’ overt republicanism, they were patronized by the British monarchy; there is a photograph of King Edward VII, Georgie’s father, in the full regalia of a Grand Master...²⁰³)

And so it was constitutional monarchists who overthrew the Russian autocratic monarchy. The false kingship that was all show and no substance betrayed the true kingship that perished in defence of the truth in poverty and humiliation. For Tsar Nicholas died in true imitation of the Christ the King. And with Him he could have said: “You say rightly that I am a king: for this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth!” (John 18.37).

201 Roy Hattersley, *The Great Outsider: David Lloyd George*, London: Abacus, 2010, p. 472.

202 Welch, “A Last Fraught Encounter”, *The Oldie*, N 325, August, 2015, p. 26.

203 See the photo on the back cover of Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999.

The Tsar's attachment to the autocratic principle never wavered: as he said to Count Witte in 1904: "I will never, in any circumstances, agree to a representative form of government, for I consider it harmful for the people entrusted to me by God."²⁰⁴ And his choice was vindicated by his own reign, which so benefited the people both materially and spiritually. Moreover, no autocrat conducted himself with more genuine humility and love for his subjects, and a more profound feeling of responsibility before God. He was truly an autocrat, and not a tyrant. He did not sacrifice the people for himself, but himself for the people. The tragedy of the Russian people was that they exchanged the most truly Christian of monarchs for the most horrific of all tyrannies – in the name of freedom!

The tsar's commitment to the autocratic principle was reinforced by the tsarina, who, as Hew Strachan writes, "despite being the granddaughter of a British queen, believed, according to [the British ambassador] Buchanan, that 'autocracy was the only regime that could hold the Empire together'.

"Writing after the war, Buchanan confessed that she might have been right. It was one thing for well-established liberal states to move in the direction of authoritarianism for the duration of the war; it was quite another for an authoritarian government to move towards liberalism which many hoped would last beyond the return to peace. Moreover, the strains the war had imposed on Russian society, and the expectations that those strains had generated, looked increasingly unlikely to be controlled by constitutional reform..."²⁰⁵

The constitutionalists then as now criticize the Orthodox autocracy mainly on the grounds that it presented a system of absolute, uncontrolled power, and therefore of tyranny. They quote the saying of the historian Lord Acton: "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely". But this is and was a serious misunderstanding. The Russian autocracy was based on the anointing of the Church and on the faith of the people; and when it betrayed either – by disobeying the Church, or by trampling on the people's faith, – it lost its legitimacy, as we see in the Time of Troubles. It was therefore limited, not absolute. But it was limited, not by parliament or any secular power, still less the money power that governed the British Monarchy from 1689, but by the teachings of the Orthodox Faith and Church, and as such must not be confused with the system of absolutist monarchy that we see in, for example, the French King Louis XIV, or the English King Henry VIII.

The Tsar could have refused to abdicate and started a civil war against those who sought to overthrow him. But this would have meant imposing his will in an absolutist manner on the majority of his people, whose faith was now no longer the faith of Tsarist Russia but that of the "enlightened" West. So, like Christ the King in Gethsemane, he told his friends to put up their swords, and

204 Nicholas II, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 376.

205 Strachan, *The First World War*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, pp. 234-235.

surrendered himself into the hands of his enemies; “for this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (Luke 22.53). He showed that the Orthodox Autocracy was not a form of western-style absolutism, whose right lies exclusively in its might, but something completely *sui generis*, whose right lies in its faithfulness to the truth of Christ and the sacrament of anointing. He refused to treat his power as if it were *independent of or over* the Church and people, but showed that it was a form of *service to* the Church and the people *from within* the Church and the people; and if the people now renounced him (and the Church), so be it - there was no longer any place for him in Russia.

The tragedy of Russia was that in rebelling against the Tsar and forcing his resignation she was about to exchange the most truly Christian of monarchs for the most horrific and antichristian of all tyrannies – all in the name of freedom!

But in what resides true freedom? The Anglophile liberals claimed that only a constitution can guarantee the freedom and equality of its citizens. But the idea that autocracy is necessarily inimical to freedom and equality was refuted by the monarchist Andozerskaya in Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s novel, *The Red Wheel*: “Under a monarchy it is perfectly possible for both the freedom and the equality of citizens to flourish. First, a firm hereditary system delivers the country from destructive disturbances. Secondly, under a hereditary monarchy there is no periodic upheaval of elections, and political disputes in the country are weakened. Thirdly, republican elections lower the authority of the power, we are not obliged to respect it, but the power is forced to please us before the elections and serve us after them. But the monarch promised nothing in order to be elected. Fourthly, the monarch has the opportunity to weigh up things in an unbiased way. The monarchy is the spirit of national unity, but under a republic divisive competition is inevitable. Fifthly, the good and the strength of the monarch coincide with the good and the strength of the whole country, he is simply forced to defend the interests of the whole country if only in order to survive. Sixthly, for multi-national, variegated countries the monarch is the only bond and the personification of unity...”²⁰⁶

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If we compare the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917 with that of his godson, the British King Edward VIII in 1936, we immediately see the superiority, not only of the Tsar over the King personally, but also of Orthodox autocracy over English constitutional monarchy. Edward VIII lived a debauched life, flirted with the Nazis, and then abdicated, not for the sake of the nation, but because he could not have both the throne and continue to live with his mistress at the same time. He showed no respect for Church or faith, and perished saying: “What a wasted life!”

While the abdication of Edward VIII placed the monarchy in grave danger, the abdication of Tsar Nicholas, by contrast, saved the autocracy for the future.

206 Solzhenitsyn, *The Red Wheel*, “October, 1916”, uzel 2, Paris: YMCA Press, pp. 401-408.

For in abdicating he resisted the temptation to apply force and start a civil war in a cause that was just from a purely juridical point of view, but which could not be justified from a deeper, eschatological point of view. If the people and the Church did not want him, he would not impose himself on them, because his was truly a government *for* the people. He would not fight a ruinous civil war in order to preserve his power, because his power was not given to him to take up arms *against* the people but *for* the people. Instead, following the word of St. John Chrysostom that it is fitting for a king to die for the truth, he chose to *die*, and in dying he proclaimed the truth of Christ the King. He followed the advice of the Prophet Shemaiah to King Rehoboam and the house of Judah as they prepared to face the house of Israel: "Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel. Return every man to his house..." (I Kings 12.24))

The fall of the Romanov dynasty so soon after Tsar Nicholas' abdication, and the seizing of power by the Bolsheviks only a few months after that, proves the essential rightness of the Tsar's struggle to preserve the autocracy and his refusal to succumb to pressures for a constitutional government. As in 1789, so in 1917, constitutional monarchy, being itself the product of a disobedient, anti-monarchical spirit, proved itself to be a feeble reed in the face of the revolution.

The Tsar clung onto power for as long as he could, not out of personal ambition, but because he knew that he was literally *irreplaceable*. Or rather, he believed that *the dynasty* was irreplaceable, which is why he passed on his power, not to the Duma, but to his brother Michael. But the dynastic family, being itself corrupted by its disobedience and disloyalty to the Tsar (even Michael had disobeyed the Tsar in marrying the divorced Natalia Brassova), was unable to take up the burden that Tsar Nicholas had borne so bravely. They were not fit to bear that burden. And God did not allow them.

And so not only the Tsar and his family perished, but the whole of Russia...

And not only Russia... It is striking how, with the fall of the autocracy in Russia, the structure of European monarchy, being built, not on the rock of the true faith and the Grace of God, but on the porous sand of the "multimutinous will" of the people, began to collapse. For in 1917-18 the dynasties of all the defeated nations: Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria (temporarily) collapsed. And within a decade monarchy had more or less disappeared in several other nations, such as Turkey, Italy and Greece, while the British Empire was shaken by nationalist rebellions in Ireland, Egypt, Iraq and India. Monarchy survived in Serbia until the Second World War – probably thanks to the protection that the Serbs offered to the monarchist Russian Church in Exile.

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The first monarchy to go had to be Russia; for the one true monarchy had to be destroyed violently before the pseudo-monarchies could be peacefully put

out to grass, reigning figuratively but not truly ruling over their subjects. The abortive revolution of 1905 had imposed a kind of constitution on the Tsar. But then he, courageously and subtly but always honourably, managed to keep the Masons at bay and himself effectively in control until 1917. And even then he did not give the liberals their “responsible government”, but abdicated in favour of another member of the dynasty. Thus the Russian autocracy went out with a bang, undefeated in war and defiantly resisting the traitors and oath-breakers who opposed it. The traitors, however, went out with a whimper, ingloriously losing the war, and after only nine months’ rule fleeing in all directions in a distinctly unmanly way (Kerensky fled in women’s clothes to Paris, and the last defenders of his regime was a battalion of women soldiers).

The abdication of Tsar Nicholas in March, 1917 brought to an end the 1600-year period of the Orthodox Christian Empire that began with St. Constantine the Great. “He who restrains” the coming of the Antichrist, the Orthodox Christian Emperor, “was removed from the midst” (II Thessalonians 2.7) – and very soon “the collective Antichrist”, Soviet power, began its savage torture of the Body of Holy Russia. St. John of Kronstadt had said that Russia without the Tsar would no longer even bear the name of Russia, and would be “a stinking corpse” - and so it proved to be...

14. THE CHURCH AND THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

The abdication of Tsar Nicholas II on March 2, 1917 marked the end of the Christian era initiated by the coming to power of St. Constantine the Great in 306. "That which restrains" the coming of the Antichrist, the Orthodox Autocracy, was removed; and now, with all restraint removed, the world entered the era of the collective Antichrist... This enormous change – and enormous loss – was felt immediately by those who lived through it. For, as St. Anatoly of Optina said: "The destiny of the Tsar is the destiny of Russia. If the Tsar will rejoice, Russia also will rejoice. If the Tsar will weep, Russia also will weep... Just as a man with his head cut off is no longer a man, but a stinking corpse, so Russia without the Tsar will be a stinking corpse..."

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The revolution, writes Sergei Firsov, "became the social detonator of anti-religious feelings among people discontented with their lives. In their understanding Church and kingdom were one, and the desacralization of ideas about the kingdom naturally told also on their attitude to the Church. The world war had shaken the moral foundations of the multi-million Russian army, whose core was the peasantry. 'A vulgarization of morals' and a loss of the feeling of lawfulness (including a 'shaking' of the concept of property) created, in the words of contemporaries, 'fruitful soil for the incitement of the lower passions among the masses'. All this directly touched the Church, which did not conceive of itself as existing autonomously from the political power... In the words of General Baron P.N. Wrangel, "with the fall of the tsar, the very idea of political power fell; in the understanding of the Russian people there disappeared all the obligations that bound it together. Moreover, the power and these obligations could not be replaced by anything else..."²⁰⁷

Why did the Church not intervene in this great crisis, as she had intervened on similar occasions in Russian history? After all, on the eve of the revolution, she had canonized St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow in the Time of Troubles, as if to emphasize that, just as St. Hermogen had refused to recognize the false Demetrius as a legitimate political authority, so the time was coming when it would again be necessary to distinguish between true and false political authorities. So surely the Church would stand up against Bolshevism and in defence of the monarchy as St. Hermogen did then? After all, the Seventh Ecumenical Council had declared: "The priest is the sanctification and strengthening of the Imperial power, while the Imperial power is the strength and firmness of the priesthood." Was it not high time for the Church, having sanctified the imperial power, to strengthen it in the day of its need? Or had the symphony of powers atrophied to such a degree that the bishops could not see what was in the best interests both of the faith and of the homeland?

²⁰⁷ Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 487.

The historian M.A. Babkin accuses the Holy Synod of undermining the monarchy, insofar as by its decrees from March 4 onwards, removing the commemoration of the Royal Family from all Divine services, it effectively removed the possibility of a revival of the monarchy, taking the advent of the republic as an irreversible done deed.

Certainly, at this critical moment the Synod showed itself to be at a loss over what to do. At its session of February 26, it refused the request of the assistant over-procurator, Prince N.D. Zhevakhov, to threaten the creators of disturbances with ecclesiastical punishments.²⁰⁸

Then, on February 27, writes Babkin, “when the armies of the capital’s garrison began to go over to the side of the rebels, Over-Procurator N.P. Raev suggested to the Holy Synod that it condemn the revolutionary movement. He drew the attention of the members of the Highest Church Hierarchy to the fact that the leaders of this movement ‘consist of traitors, beginning with the members of the State Duma and ending with the workers’. The Synod declined his suggestion, replying to the over-procurator that it was still not known where the treachery came from – from above or below.”²⁰⁹

This was a feeble excuse. Everybody knew who the traitors were – the men who now formed the Provisional Government, together with aristocrats and army generals at the top of society, and peasants and workers at the bottom – the revolution came from both above and below, combining in an unholy union to overthrow the authority of “the greatest of the Tsars” (Blessed Pasha of Sarov). Even some of the most senior bishops, such as Sergei Stragorodsky, had anti-monarchical views... It was ironic and tragic, therefore, that that much-criticised creation of Peter the Great, the office of Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, proved more faithful to the Anointed of God than the “Holy Governing [Pravitel’svoennij] Synod” itself...

“On March 2,” writes Babkin, “the Synodal hierarchs gathered in the residence of the Metropolitan of Moscow. They listened to a report given by Metropolitan Pitirim of St. Petersburg asking that he be retired (this request was agreed to on March 6 – M.B.). The administration of the capital’s diocese was temporarily laid upon Bishop Benjamin of Gdov. But then the members of the Synod recognized that it was necessary immediately to enter into relations with the Executive committee of the State Duma. On the basis of which we can assert that the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church recognized the Provisional Government even before the abdication of Nicholas II from the

208 A.D. Stepanov, “Mezhdu mirom i monastyrem” (“Between the World and the Monastery”), in *Tajna Bezzakonia* (The Mystery of Iniquity), St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 491.

209 Babkin, *Dukhovenstvo Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi i Sverzhenie Monarkhii (Nachalo XX v. – Konets 1917 g.)* (The Clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Overthrow of the Monarchy (Beginning of the 20th century – the End of 1917)), Moscow, 2007. Cf. Fomin and Fomina, *op.cit.*, vol. II, pp. 135-136.

throne. (The next meeting of the members of the Synod took place on March 3 in the residence of the Metropolitan of Kiev. On that same day the new government was told of the resolutions of the Synod.)

“The first triumphantly official session of the Holy Synod after the coup d’état took place on March 4. Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev presided and the new Synodal over-procurator, V.N. Lvov²¹⁰, who had been appointed by the Provisional government the previous day, was present. Metropolitan Vladimir and the members of the Synod (with the exception of Metropolitan Pitirim, who was absent – M.B.) expressed their sincere joy at the coming of a new era in the life of the Orthodox Church. And then at the initiative of the over-procurator the royal chair... was removed into the archives... One of the Church hierarchs helped him. It was decided to put the chair into a museum.

“The next day, March 5, the Synod ordered that in all the churches of the Petrograd diocese the Many Years to the Royal House ‘should no longer be proclaimed’. In our opinion, these actions of the Synod had a symbolical character and witnessed to the desire of its members ‘to put into a museum’ not only the chair of the Tsar, but also ‘to dispatch to the archives’ of history royal power itself.

“The Synod reacted neutrally to the ‘Act on the abdication of Nicholas II from the Throne of the State of Russia for himself and his son in favour of Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich’ of March 2, 1917 and to the ‘Act on the refusal of Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich to accept supreme power’ of March 3. On March 6 it decreed that the words ‘by order of His Imperial Majesty’ should be removed from all synodal documents, and that in all the churches of the empire molebens should be served with a Many Years ‘to the God-preserved Russian Realm and the Right-believing Provisional Government’.”²¹¹

But was the new government, whose leading members were Masons²¹², really “right-believing”?

210 Lvov was, in the words of Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), “a not completely normal fantasist” ((*Russkaia Tserkov’ pered litsom gosподstviushchego zla* (The Russian Church in the Face of Dominant Evil), Jordanville, 1991, p. 4). Grabbe’s estimate of Lvov is supported by Orlando Figes, who writes: “a nobleman of no particular talent or profession, he was convinced of his calling to greatness, yet ended up in the 1920s as a pauper and a madman living on the streets of Paris” (*A People’s Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 449). (V.M.)

211 Babkin, “Sviatishij Sinod Pravoslavnoj Rossijskoj Tserkvi i Revoliutsionnie Sobytiia Fevralia-Marta 1917 g.” (“The Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Revolutionary Events of February-March, 1917”), <http://www.monarhist-spb.narod.ru/D-ST/Babkin-1>, pp. 2, 3. Archbishop Nathanael of Vienna (+1985), the son of over-procurator Vladimir Lvov, said that his family used to laugh at the incongruity of wishing “Many Years” to a merely “Provisional” Government (“Neobychnij Ierarkh” (An Unusual Hierarchy), *Nasha Strana*, N 2909, February 5, 2011, p. 3).

212 This is also now generally accepted even by western historians. Thus Tsuyoshi Hasegawa writes: “Five members, Kerensky, N.V. Nekrasov, A.I. Konovalov, M.I. Tereshchenko and I.N. Efremov are known to have belonged to the secret political Masonic organization” (“The February Revolution”, in Edward Acton, Vladimir Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.),

Even leaving aside the fact of their membership of Masonic lodges, which is strictly forbidden by the Church, the answer to this question has to be: no. When the Tsar opened the First Duma in 1906, the Masonic deputies sniggered and turned away, openly showing their disrespect both for him and for the Church. And now the new government openly declared that it derived its legitimacy, not from God, but from the revolution. But the revolution cannot be lawful, being the incarnation of lawlessness.

On March 7, with the support of Archbishop Sergei (Stragorodsky) of Finland, Lvov transferred the Synod's official organ, *Tserkovno-Obschestvennij Vestnik* (*Church and Society Messenger*), into the hands of the "All-Russian Union of Democratic Orthodox Clergy and Laity", a left-wing grouping founded in Petrograd on the same day and led by Titlinov, a professor at the Petrograd Academy of which Sergei was the rector.²¹³ Archbishop (later Patriarch) Tikhon protested against this transfer, and the small number of signatures for the transfer made it illegal. However, in his zeal to hand this important Church organ into the hands of the liberals, Lvov completely ignored the illegality of the act and handed the press over to Titlinov, who promptly began to use it to preach his Gospel of "Socialist Christianity", declaring that "Christianity is on the side of labour, not on the side of violence and exploitation".²¹⁴

Also on March 7, the Synod passed a resolution "On the Correction of Service Ranks in view of the Change in State Administration". In accordance with this, a commission headed by Archbishop Sergei (Stragorodsky) was formed that removed all references to the Tsar in the Divine services. This involved changes to, for example, the troparion for the Church New Year, where the word "Emperor" was replaced by "people", and a similar change to the troparion for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Again, on March 7-8 the Synod passed a resolution, "On Changes in Divine Services in Connection with the Cessation of the Commemoration of the Former Ruling House". The phrase "formerly ruling" (*tsarstvovavshego*) implied that there was no hope of a restoration of any Romanov to the throne.

Then, on March 9, the Synod addressed the whole Church: "The will of God has been accomplished. Russia has entered on the path of a new State life. May God bless our great Homeland with happiness and glory on its new path... For the sake of the many sacrifices offered to win civil freedom, for the sake of the

Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution 1914-1921, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 59).

213 As Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) testified, "already in 1917 he [Sergei] was dreaming of combining Orthodox Church life with the subjection of the Russian land to Soviet power..." ("Preemstvennost' Grekha" (The Heritage of Sin), Tsaritsyn, p. 7).

214 See Mikhail V. Shkarovskii, "The Russian Orthodox Church", in Acton, Cherniaev and Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 417; "K 80-letiu Izbrania Sv. Patriarkha Tikhona na Sviashchennom Sobore Rossijskoj Tserkvi 1917-18gg." (Towards the Election of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon at the Sacred Council of the Russian Church, 1917-18), *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), N 2, November, 1997, p. 19.

salvation of your own families, for the sake of the happiness of the Homeland, abandon at this great historical moment all quarrels and disagreements. Unite in brotherly love for the good of Russia. Trust the Provisional Government. All together and everyone individually, apply all your efforts to this end that by your labours, exploits, prayer and obedience you may help it in its great work of introducing new principles of State life..."

But was it true that "the will of God has been accomplished"? How could the replacement of the Christ-loving Autocrat by a Masonic group of apostates be considered the will of God? Was it not rather that God had allowed the will of *Satan* to be accomplished, as a punishment for the sins of the Russian people? And if so, how could the path be called a "great work"? As for the "new principles of State life", everyone knew that these were revolutionary in essence...

Indeed, it could be argued that, instead of blessing the Masonic Provisional Government in its epistle of March 9, the Synod should have announced that it fell under the curse pronounced in 1613 against those who would not obey the Romanov dynasty: "It is hereby decreed and commanded that God's Chosen One, Tsar Michael Fyodorovich Romanov, be the progenitor of the Rulers of Rus' from generation to generation, being answerable in his actions before the Tsar of Heaven alone; and should any dare to go against this decree of the Sobor - whether it be Tsar, or Patriarch, or any other man, - may he be damned in this age and in the age to come, having been sundered from the Holy Trinity..."

Babkin writes that the epistle of March 9 "was characterised by B.V. Titlinov, professor of the Petrograd Theological Academy, as 'an epistle blessing a new and free Russia', and by General A.I. Denikin as 'sanctioning the *coup d'état* that has taken place'. To the epistle were affixed the signatures of the bishops of the 'tsarist' composition of the Synod, even those who had the reputation of being monarchists and 'black hundredists', for example, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and Metropolitan Makary of Moscow. This witnessed to the 'loyal' feelings of the Synodal hierarchs..."²¹⁵

It is difficult to argue with Babkin's conclusion, especially since the Synod as a whole showed no signs of repenting of its stance. Indeed, it later became even more enthusiastically "loyal" to the Masonic Provisional Government. Thus in July, in an epistle to the children of the Church, it proclaimed that "the hour of the social freedom of Rus' has struck", and that "the whole country, from end to end, with one heart and one soul, is rejoicing at the new radiant days of its life".²¹⁶

Why did the hierarchs sanction the coup so quickly?

²¹⁵ Babkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

²¹⁶ Firsov, *op. cit.*, pp. 518-519.

The more conservative and monarchist hierarchs sanctioned it only because the Tsar himself had sanctioned it. Thus on March 5/18, 1917 the first Sunday of Great Lent, which was also the first Sunday Service to take place without commemoration of the Tsar and the Imperial House, Archbishop of Kharkov Anthony (Khrapovitsky) served in the Moscow Dormition Cathedral and said: "When we received the news of the abdication of the Throne of the Pious Emperor Nikolai Alexandrovich, we prepared, according to His order, to commemorate the Pious Emperor Mikhail Alexandrovich. But now he has denied and ordered to obey the Provisional Government, and therefore, and for that reason only, we commemorated the Provisional Government. Otherwise, no forces would force us to stop commemorating the Emperor and the Royal House (...) They ask me why I did not respond to the flock awaiting my word about whom should they obey now in their civil life and why the commemoration the Royal House has been stopped in divine services.

"... We must do this (obey the Provisional Government), firstly, in fulfillment of the oath, we took to his Majesty Nicholas II, who transferred power to Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, who handed over this power to the Provisional Government until the Constituent Assembly. Secondly, we must do this in order to avoid complete anarchy, robbery, massacre and sacrilege over holy objects. Only in one case should we neither now, nor in the past, listen to anyone - not tsars, nor rulers, nor crowds: if they demand that we renounce the faith, or desecrate holy objects, or even do obviously lawless and sinful deeds.

"Now the second question: why not pray for the monarchs? Because we now have no tsar, and we do not have him because both tsars refused to rule Russia themselves, and it is impossible to call them by force by the name (tsar) now that they abdicated of their own will. If our monarch had not give up power and even if he were languishing in prison, then I would admonish people to stand behind him and die for him. But now for the sake of obedience to him and his brother, we can no longer offer up his name as the All-Russian Sovereign. It depends on you, if you wish, to establish a monarchy in Russia again, but legally, through sensible elections of your representatives to the Constituent Assembly. And it will be the Provisional Government and not an ecclesiastical authority that decides what the legal order of the elections will be."²¹⁷

However, there were undoubtedly less worthy motives among some members of the hierarchy. Resentment against the Tsar was undoubtedly one of them; for he had rejected the Synod's plea to remove Rasputin and then allowed him to influence Church appointments. But the hierarchs must have known that, taking his reign as a whole, the Tsar had been an immense benefactor of the Church, whose removal, while promising "freedom", was much more likely to bring about a much worse slavery.

²¹⁷ Khrapovitsky, *Pastyr' i Pastva* 10, 280-281, Kharkov, 1917; *Pis'ma Blazhennishego Mitropolita Antonia*, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY, 1988, p. 57.

Certainly, and not unreasonably, the hierarchs hoped to receive greater internal freedom for the Church. This is hinted at in a declaration of six archbishops to the Holy Synod and Lvov on March 8: "The Provisional Government in the person of its over-procurator V.N. Lvov, on March 4 in the triumphant opening session of the Holy Synod, told us that it was offering to the Holy Orthodox Russian Church full freedom in Her administration, while preserving for itself only the right to halt any decisions of the Holy Synod that did not agree with the law and were undesirable from a political point of view. The Holy Synod did everything to meet these promises, issued a pacific epistle to the Orthodox people and carried out other acts that were necessary, in the opinion of the Government, to calm people's minds..."²¹⁸

Lvov broke his promises and proceeded to act like a tyrant, which included expelling Metropolitans Pitirim of Petrograd and Makary of Moscow from their sees as being supposedly the appointees of Rasputin. It was then that Metropolitan Makary repented, not of his association with Rasputin (which had been insignificant and innocent²¹⁹), but of having signed the March 9 epistle recognizing the Provisional Government. And later, after the fall of the Provisional Government, he said, showing more fire than his gentle appearance led people to expect: "They [the Provisional Government] corrupted the army with their speeches. They have opened the prisons. They have released onto the peaceful population convicts, thieves and robbers. They have abolished the police and administration, placing the life and property of citizens at the disposal of every armed rogue... They have destroyed trade and industry, imposing taxes that swallowed up the profits of enterprises... They have squandered the resources of the exchequer in a crazy manner. They have radically undermined all the sources of life in the country. They have established elections to the Constituent Assembly on bases that were incomprehensible to Russia. They have defiled the Russian language, distorting it for the amusement of half-illiterates and sluggards. They have not even guarded their own honour, violating the promise they gave to the abdicated Tsar to allow him and his family free departure, by which they have prepared for him inevitable death..."

"Who started the persecution on the Orthodox Church and handed her head over to crucifixion? Who demanded the execution of the Patriarch? Was it those whom the Duma decried as 'servants of the dark forces', labelled as enemies of the freedom of the Church?... No, it was not those, but he whom the Duma opposed to them as a true defender of the Church, whom it intended for, and promoted to the rank of, over-procurator of the Most Holy Synod – the member of the Provisional Government, now servant of the Sovnarkom – Vladimir Lvov."²²⁰

218 Babkin, *Dukhovenstvo*, pp. 195-198.

219 Makary had not been an active either in support of, or opposition to, Rasputin. "They say that he is a bad person," he said, "but since he wants my blessing, I will refuse it to nobody" (in Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 474). Douglas Smith calls his support for Rasputin "mythological" (*Rasputin*, London: Pan, 2017, p. 312)

220 Metropolitan Macarius, in Groyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.

Lvov was indeed thoroughly unsuited for the post of over-procurator – he ended up as a renovationist and enemy of Orthodoxy. In appointing him the Provisional Government showed its true, hostile attitude towards the Church. It also showed its inconsistency: having overthrown the Autocracy and proclaimed freedom for all people and all religions, it should have abolished the office of over-procurator as being an outdated relic of the State's dominion over the Church.

But it wanted to make the Church tow the new State's line, and Lvov was to be its instrument in doing this. Hence his removal of all the older, more traditional hierarchs, his introduction of three protopriests into the Synod and his proclamation of the convening of an All-Russian Church Council – a measure which he hoped would seal the Church's descent into Protestant-style renovationism, but which in fact, through God's Providence, turned out to be the beginning of the Church's true regeneration and fight back against the revolution...

Meanwhile, the Council of the Petrograd Religio-Philosophical Society went still further, denying the very concept of Sacred Monarchy. Thus on March 11 and 12, it resolved that the Synod's acceptance of the Tsar's abdication "does not correspond to the enormous religious importance of the act, by which the Church recognized the Tsar in the rite of the coronation of the anointed of God. It is necessary, for the liberation of the people's conscience and to avoid the possibility of a restoration, that a corresponding act be issued in the name of the Church hierarchy *abolishing the power of the Sacrament of Royal Anointing, by analogy with the church acts abolishing the power of the Sacraments of Marriage and the Priesthood.*"²²¹

Fortunately, the Church hierarchy rejected this demand. For not only can the Sacrament of Anointing not be abolished, since it is of God: even the last Tsar still remained the anointed Tsar after his abdication. As Shakespeare put it in *Richard II*, whose plot is closely reminiscent of the tragedy of the Tsar's abdication:

*Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.*

For since the power of the anointed autocrat comes from God, not the people, it cannot be removed by the people. The converse of this fact is that if the people attempt to remove the autocrat for any other reason than his renunciation of Orthodoxy, then they themselves sin against God and deprive themselves of His Grace. That is why St. Anatoly said that if Russia were to be deprived of her tsar, she would become a "stinking corpse".

²²¹ Groyan, *op. cit.*, p. 142. Italics mine (V.M.).

And so it turned out: as a strictly logical and moral consequence, “from the day of his abdication,” as St. John Maximovich wrote, “everything began to collapse. It could not have been otherwise. The one who united everything, who stood guard for the truth, was overthrown...”²²² For, as St. John said in another place: “The Tsar was the embodiment of the Russian people’s... readiness to submit the life of the state to the righteousness of God: therefore do the people submit themselves to the Tsar, because he submits to God. Vladyka Anthony [Khrapovitsky] loved to recall the Tsar’s prostration before God and the Church which he makes during the coronation, while the entire Church, all its members, stand. And then, in response to his submission to Christ, all in the Church make a full prostration to him.”²²³

For “faithfulness to the monarchy is a condition of soul and form of action in which a man unites his will with the will of his Sovereign, his dignity with his dignity, his destiny with his destiny... The fall of the monarchy was the fall of Russia herself. A thousand-year state form fell, but no ‘Russian republic’ was put in its place, as the revolutionary semi-intelligentsia of the leftist parties dreamed, but the pan-Russian disgrace foretold by Dostoyevsky was unfurled, and a failure of spirit. And on this failure of spirit, on this dishonour and disintegration there grew a sick and unnatural tree of evil, prophetically foreseen by Pushkin, that spread its poison on the wind to the destruction of the whole world. In 1917 the Russian people fell into the condition of *the mob*, while the history of mankind shows that the mob is always muzzled by *despots* and *tyrants*...

“The Russian people unwound, dissolved and ceased to serve the great national work – and woke up under the dominion of internationalists. History has as it were proclaimed a certain law: *Either one-man rule or chaos* is possible in Russia; Russia is not capable of a republican order. Or more exactly: the existence of Russia demands *one-man rule* – either a religiously and nationally strengthened one-man rule of honour, fidelity and service, that is, a *monarchy*, or one-man rule that is atheist, conscienceless and dishonourable, and moreover *anti-national and international*, that is, a *tyranny*.”²²⁴

222 St. John Maximovich, “Homily before a Memorial Service for the Tsar-Martyr”, in *Man of God*, p. 133. Cf. Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev): “There is no need to say how terrible a ‘touching’ of the Anointed of God is the overthrow of the tsar by his subjects. Here the transgression of the given command of God reaches the highest degree of criminality, which is why it drags after it the destruction of the state itself” (*Russkaia Ideologia* (The Russian Ideology), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 50-51). And so, insofar as it was the disobedience of the people that compelled the Tsar to abdicate, leading inexorably to his death, “we all,” in the words of Archbishop Averky, “Orthodox Russian people, in one way or another, to a greater or lesser degree, are guilty of allowing this terrible evil to be committed on our Russian land” (*Istinnoe Pravoslavie i Sovremennij Mir* (True Orthodoxy and the Contemporary World), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1971, p. 166).

223 St. John Maximovich, “The Nineteenth Anniversary of the Repose of His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus’*, N 19, 1955, pp. 3-4.

224 I.A. Ilyin, *Sobranie Sochinenij* (Collected Works), Moscow, 1994, volume 4, p. 7; in Valentina D. Sologub, *Kto Gospoden’ – Ko Mne!* (He who is the Lord’s – to me!), Moscow, 2007, p. 53.

However, the democratic wave continued, and the Church was carried along by it. The hierarchs were finding it difficult enough to return to government of the Church by the holy canons alone without any "guidance" by the State. Still more difficult was it to accept democratism in the Church, which was counter both to the pre-revolutionary order and the holy canons. The hierarchy made some protests, but these did not amount to a real "counter-revolution". Thus on April 14, the government decreed that all the hierarchs of the Synod would be forced to step down, and Pitirim of Petrograd and Makary of Moscow retired, at the end of the winter session of the Synod. A stormy meeting took place between Lvov and the Synod during which Lvov's actions were recognized to be "uncanonical and illegal".

At this session Archbishop Sergei apparently changed course and agreed with the other bishops in condemning the unlawful transfer of *Tserkovno-Obshchestvennij Vestnik*. However, Lvov understood that this was only a tactical protest. So he did not include Sergei among the bishops whom he planned to purge from the Synod; he thought – rightly – that Sergei would continue to be his tool in the revolution that he was introducing in the Church. The next day Lvov marched into the Synod at the head of a detachment of soldiers and read an order for the cessation of the winter session of the Synod and the retirement of all its members *with the single exception of Archbishop Sergei (Stragorodsky) of Finland*.²²⁵

Thus in little more than a month since the coup, the Church had been effectively placed in the hands of a lay dictator, who had single-handedly dismissed her most senior bishops in the name of the "freedom of the Church"...

Here we see a striking difference in the way in which the Provisional Government treated secular or political society, on the one hand, and the Church, on the other. While Prince G.E. Lvov, the head of the government, refused to impose his authority on anyone, whether rioting peasants or rampaging soldiers, granting "freedom" – that is, more or less complete licence – to any self-called political or social "authority", Prince V.E. Lvov, the over-procurator, granted quite another kind of "freedom" to the Church – complete subjection to lay control...

225 According to I.M. Andreyev, "the whole of the Synod had decided to go into retirement. Archbishop Sergei had taken part in this resolution. But when all the members of the Synod, together with Archbishop Sergei, actually came to give in their retirement, the Over-Procurator, who had set about organizing a new Synod, drew Archbishop Sergei to this. And he took an active part in the new Synod" (*Kratkij Obzor Istorii Russkoj Tserkvi ot revoliutsii do nashikh dnei* (A Short Review of the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to our Days), Jordanville, 1952, p. 74. Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) wrote: "I can remember the opinions of those who knew him and who considered him to be a careerist and the complaints of hierarchs that he promised to retire with other members of the Synod in protest against Lvov, then he changed his mind and became head of the Synod" (Letter of April 23 / May 6, 1992 to Nicholas Churilov, *Church News*, April, 2003, p. 9).

Meanwhile, the turmoil in both Church and State in Russia gave the opportunity to the Georgian Church to reassert its autocephalous status. On March 12, without the agreement of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church, and in spite of the protests of the exarch of Georgia, Archbishop Platon, a group of Georgian bishops proclaimed the autocephaly of their Church and appointed Bishop Leonid (Okropiridze) of Mingrelia as *locum tenens* of the Catholicos with a Temporary Administration composed of clergy and laity.²²⁶ The Russian Synod sent Bishop Theophylact to look after the non-Georgian parishes in Georgia. But he was removed from Georgia, and the new exarch, Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov), was not allowed into the capital. The result was a break in communion between the two Churches.

In the same month of March the Russian government ceased subsidising the American diocese. The ruling Archbishop Eudocimus (Mescheriakov) went to the All-Russian Council in August, leaving his vicar, Bishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) of Canada, as his deputy. But then Protopriest John Kedrovsky with a group of renovationist priests tried to remove Bishop Alexander and take power into their own hands “without submitting to imperial power or hierarchical decrees”.²²⁷

On April 29, the new Synod headed by Archbishop Sergei proclaimed the principle of the election of the episcopate, the preparation for a Council and the establishment of a Preconciliar Council. This Address triggered a revolution in the Church. The revolution consisted in the fact that all over the country the elective principle with the participation of laymen replaced the system of “episcopal autocracy” which had prevailed thereto. In almost all dioceses Diocesan Congresses elected special “diocesan councils” or committees composed of clergy and laity that restricted the power of the bishops. The application of the elective principle to almost all ecclesiastical posts, from parish offices to episcopal sees, resulted in the removal of several bishops from their sees and the election of new ones in their stead. As a result of these diocesan elections, about 40 of the 150 or so pre-revolutionary bishops were removed from their sees.²²⁸ (Elections of abbots and abbesses also took place in the monasteries.) Thus Archbishops Basil (Bogoyavlensky) of Chernigov, Tikhon (Nikanorov) of Kaluga and Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov were removed. Archbishop Joachim (Levitsky) of Nizhni-Novgorod was even arrested and imprisoned for a time before being shot. The retirement of Archbishop Alexis (Dorodnitsyn) of Vladimir was justified by his earlier closeness to Rasputin. The others were accused of being devoted to the Autocracy.²²⁹

226 V. Egorov, *K istorii provozglashenia gruzinami avtokefalii svoej Tserkvi v 1917 godu* (Towards a History of the Proclamation by the Georgians of the Autocephaly of their Church in 1917), Moscow, 1917, p. 9; in Monk Benjamin (Gomareтели), *Letopis' tserkovnykh sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (Chronicle of Church Events, beginning from 1917), www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm, p. 6.

227 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

228 Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

229 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

Although the spirit behind this revolutionary wave was undoubtedly anti-ecclesiastical in essence, the elective principle went back to the practice of the Early Church²³⁰, and by the Providence of God it resulted in some changes that were beneficial for the Church. Thus the staunchly monarchist Archbishop Anthony, after being forced to retire, was later reinstated at the demand of the people. Again, Archbishop Tikhon (Bellavin) of Lithuania was elected metropolitan of Moscow (the lawful occupant of that see, Metropolitan Makary, who had been retired but who retained his title, was later reconciled with him), and Archbishop Benjamin (Kazansky) was made metropolitan of Petrograd. However, there were also harmful changes, such as the election of Sergei Stragorodsky as Archbishop of Vladimir.

But an anti-ecclesiastical kind of democratism prevailed in the countryside, where "there was a strong anti-clerical movement: village communities took away the church lands, removed priests from the parishes and refused to pay for religious services. Many of the local priests managed to escape this fate by throwing in their lot with the revolution."²³¹ However, several priests were savagely killed – the martyrdom of the Church began, not with the Bolshevik *coup*, but with the liberal democratic revolution.

From June 1 to 10 the All-Russian Congress of clergy and laity took place in Moscow with 800 delegates from all the dioceses. As Shkarovskii writes, it "welcomed the revolution, but expressed the wish that the Church continue to receive the legal and material support of the state, that divinity continue to be an obligatory subject in school, and that the Orthodox Church retain its schools. Consequently, a conflict soon broke out with the government. The Synod protested against the law of 20 June that transferred the [37,000] parish church schools to the Ministry of Education. A similar clash occurred over the intention to exclude divinity from the list of compulsory subjects."²³²

230 As Firsov writes: in the early Church, "the believers and clergy of a bishopric picked a candidate for a vacant see at a preliminary meeting. Then they presented him to the council of the Episcopal province, which, after checking the candidate, consecrated him to the episcopal rank. As years went by, the participation of laymen in the election of a bishop weakened, and at the end of the 6th century it was limited by the participation in the elections only of the clergy and city notables, who, as a rule, elected three candidates to be presented to the metropolitan. The metropolitan himself chose one of the three candidates, whom he consecrated. In the 12th century the election of bishops no longer took place with the participation of the clergy and laity, but only by the council of bishops. Out of three candidates, the metropolitan, as before, chose one. When moving the metropolitan see, the power to decide belonged to the patriarch, and in electing the patriarch – to the emperor. In the Russian Church until the 15th century, the metropolitans were elected in Constantinople. After one-man-rule was established in Russia, all the bishops were elected by the higher ecclesiastical power and confirmed by the higher secular power. From the time of Peter the Great, correspondingly, by the Most Holy Synod and the emperor" (*op. cit.*, pp. 501-502).

231 Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

232 Shkarovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

The transfer of the church schools to the state system was disastrous for the Church because the state's schools were infected with atheism. It would be one of the first decrees that the coming Council of the Russian Orthodox Church

The June 14 decree "On Freedom of Conscience" was welcomed, but the government still retained *de jure* control over the Church. Even when the government allowed the Church to convene its own All-Russian Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in August, it retained the right of veto over any new form of self-administration that Council might come up with. Moreover, the Preconciliar Council convened to prepare for the forthcoming Council was to be chaired by the Church's leading liberal, Archbishop Sergei...

With the Tsar gone, and the Church led by liberals and treated with contempt by the State, it is not surprising that the conservative peasant masses were confused. Thus a telegram sent to the Holy Synod on July 24, 1917 concerned the oath of loyalty that the Provisional Government was trying to impose on them: "We Orthodox Christians ardently beseech you to explain to us in the newspaper *Russkoye Slovo* what constitutes before the Lord God the oath given by us to be faithful to the Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich. People are saying amongst us that if this oath is worth nothing, then the new oath to the new Tsar is also worth nothing.

"Is that so, and how are we to understand all this? Following the advice of someone we know, we want this question decided, not by ourselves, but by the Governing Synod, so that everyone should understand this in the necessary way, without differences of opinion. The *zhids* [Jews] say that the oath is nonsense and a deception, and that one can do without an oath. The popes [priests] are silent. Each layman expresses his own opinion. But this is no good. Again they have begun to say that God does not exist at all, and that the churches will soon be closed because they are not necessary. But we on our part think: why close them? – it's better to live by the church. Now that the Tsar has been overthrown things have got bad, and if they close the churches it'll get worse, but we need things to get better. You, our most holy Fathers, must try to explain to all of us simultaneously: what should we do about the old oath, and with the one they are trying to force us to take now? Which oath must be dearer to God. The first or the second? Because the Tsar is not dead, but is alive in prison. And is it right that all the churches should be closed? Where then can we pray to the Lord God? Surely we should not go in one band to the *zhids* and pray with them? Because now all power is with them, and they're bragging about it..."²³³

The hierarchy had no answers to these questions...

What could it have done? It could and should have rallied round the sacred principle of the Orthodox Autocracy and used its still considerable influence among the people to try and restore monarchical rule. It would not have been

²³³ Groyan, *op. cit.*, pp. CXXII-CXXIII.

easy, but it would not have been impossible. And that was their duty; otherwise, the anathema of 1613 against traitors to the Romanov dynasty would fall on the people committed to their charge. As Bishop Diomedes writes: "It was necessary in the name of the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church to persuade the Ruling House not to leave the Russian State to be destroyed by rebels, and to call all the rebels to repentance by anathematizing them with the 11th anathema of the Sunday of Orthodoxy."²³⁴

A clear precedent existed: in the recently canonized Patriarch Hermogen's call to liberate Russia from foreign Catholic rule and restore a lawful monarchy in 1612. Like Hermogen, the Holy Synod in 1917 could have called the Russian people to arms against those who had in effect *forced* the abdication of both Tsar Nicholas and Tsar Michael, and who were therefore, in effect, rebels against lawful authority and subject to anathema. It could have approached any member of the Romanov dynasty – with the exception of Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovich, who had already declared his allegiance to the revolution – with an invitation that he ascend the throne. But the opportunity was lost. The years of anti-monarchist propaganda had done their work: some hierarchs supported the revolution, others rejected it, but the Synod as a whole legitimized the February – but not, as we shall see, the October – revolution.

There was another alternative, less radical than the one just mentioned, but honourable and more in accordance with the manifestos of the two last Tsars. As Babkin writes, this alternative "was laid out in the actions and sermons of Bishop Andronicus (Nikolsky) of Perm and Kungur. On March 4 he addressed an archpastoral epistle 'to all Russian Orthodox Christians' in which, having expounded the essence of the 'Acts' of March 2 and 3, he characterized the situation in Russia as an 'interregnum'. Calling on everyone to obey the Provisional Government in every way, he said: 'We shall beseech the all-Merciful One [God – M.B.] to establish authority and peace on the earth, that He not leave us long without a Tsar, like children without a mother... May He help us, as three hundred years ago He helped our forefathers, to receive a native Tsar from Him, the All-Good Provider, in a unanimous and inspired manner.' Analogous theses were contained in the sermon that the Perm archpastor gave in his cathedral church on March 5.

"On March 19 Bishop Andronicus and the Perm clergy in his cathedral church and in all the city churches swore an oath of allegiance and service to the Russian state themselves and brought the people to swear it in accordance with the order established by the Provisional Government. But while swearing allegiance to the Provisional Government as a law-abiding citizen, Vladyka Andronicus actively conducted monarchical agitation, pinning his hopes of a 'regeneration' of the only temporarily 'removed' from power tsarist administration on the Constituent Assembly.

234 Bishop Diomedes, Address of November 21 / December 4, 2008, <http://www.russia-talk.com/otkliki/ot-601.htm>.

“The ‘dangerous activity’ of the Perm archpastor (this is precisely how it was evaluated by the local secular authorities and in the office of the Synod) drew the attention of the Committee of social security and the Soviet of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies of the city of Perm, from whom on March 21 a telegram was sent to the over-procurator of the Holy Synod complaining that ‘Bishop Andronicus in a sermon compared Nicholas II to Christ in His Passion, and called on the flock to have pity on him.’ In reply, on March 23, the over-procurator demanded of the rebellious bishop that he give an explanation and account of his activity, which was directed to the defence of the old order and ‘to re-establishing the clergy against the new order’.

“The correspondence elicited between the Bishop of Perm and the over-procurator by his ‘counter-revolutionary’ activity was completed on April 16 when Bishop Andronicus said in a detailed letter of explanation: ‘Michael Alexandrovich’s act of abdication that legalized the Provisional Government declared that after the Constituent Assembly we can have a tsarist administration, like any other, depending on what the Constituent Assembly says about it... I have submitted to the Constituent Assembly, and I will submit to a republic, if that is what the Constituent Assembly declares. But until then not one citizen is deprived of the freedom to express himself on any form of government for Russia; otherwise even the Constituent Assembly would be superfluous if someone has already irreversibly decided the question on Russia’s form of government. As I have already said many times, I have submitted to the Provisional Government, I submit now and I call on everyone to submit... I am perplexed on what basis you find it necessary... to accuse me ‘of stirring up the people not only against the Provisional Government, but also against the spiritual authorities in general’.”

Babkin cites many examples of priests and parishes praying simultaneously for the Tsar and the Provisional Government until the end of April. All these instances were based on the theoretical possibility, pointed out by Bishop Andronicus, that the Constituent Assembly could vote for a restoration of the monarchy. And so, he concludes, since, in March, 1917 “the monarchy in Russia, in accordance with the act of Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, continued to exist as an institution”, the Synod should have acted as if there was an “interregnum” in the country.²³⁵

But an interregnum requires the Church actively to look for candidates for the Tsardom, as she had in the interregnum before the election of the first Romanov tsar in 1613. But this she did not do. On the contrary, she acted as if the monarchical phase of Russian history were over - and that this was a good thing...

The weakness of the Church at this critical moment was the result of a long historical process. Having been deprived of its administrative independence by Peter the Great, the Church hierarchy had to a degree become “paralyzed”,

235 Babkin, *Dukhoventstvo*, p. 210.

dependent on the State as on a crutch. And so it was not ready in 1917 to stand alone, on its own two feet, as it were, against the rebels and in defence of the monarchical principle. Instead, in the early days of March, it hoped that, in exchange for recognizing them and calling on the people to recognize them, it would receive full administrative freedom... But it was deceived: when Lvov came to power, he began to act like a tyrant worse than any tsarist procurator. And then, as we have seen, a wave of democratization began at the diocesan and parish levels... Thus was the prophecy of St. Ignaty (Brianchaninov) fulfilled: "Judging from the spirit of the times and the intellectual ferment, we must suppose that the building of the Church, which has already been wavering for a long time, will collapse quickly and terribly. There will be nobody to stop this and withstand it. The measures undertaken to support [the Church] are borrowed from the elements of the world hostile to the Church, and will rather hasten her fall than stop it..."²³⁶

And so we must conclude that in March, 1917 the Church – *de facto*, if not *de jure* - renounced Tsarism, one of the pillars of Russian identity for nearly 1000 years. With the exception of a very few bishops, such as Metropolitan Makary of Moscow and Archbishop Andronicus of Perm, the hierarchy hastened to support the new democratic order. As Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) writes: "There were few who understood at that moment that, in accepting this *coup*, the Russian people had committed the sin of oath-breaking, had rejected the Tsar, the Anointed of God, and had gone along the path of the prodigal son of the Gospel parable, subjecting themselves to the same destructive consequences as he experienced on abandoning his father."²³⁷

The abdication, and consequently the murder of the Tsar and his family, were not the responsibility of the Masons and the Bolsheviks only, but of all those who, directly or indirectly, connived at it or later approved of it. As St. John Maximovich explained: "The sin against him and against Russia was perpetrated by all who in one way or another acted against him, who did not oppose, or who merely by sympathizing participated in those events which took place forty years ago. That sin lies upon everyone until it is washed away by sincere repentance..."²³⁸

236 Sokolov, L.A. *Episkop Ignatij Brianchaninov* (Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov), Kiev, 1915, vol. 2, p. 250.

237 Grabbe, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

238 St. John, "Homily before a Memorial Service for the Tsar-Martyr", in *Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco*, Richfield Springs, N.Y., 1994, p. 133. Archbishop Averky of Syracuse continues the theme: "It is small consolation for us that the Royal Family was killed directly by non-Russian hands, non-Orthodox hands and non-Russian people. Although that is so, *the whole Russian people* is guilty of this terrible, unprecedented evil deed, insofar as it did not resist or stand against it, but behaved itself in such a way that the evil deed appeared as the natural expression of that mood which by that time had matured in the minds and hearts of the undoubted majority of the unfortunate misguided Russian people, beginning with the 'lowers' and ending with the very 'tops', the upper aristocracy" (*Religiozno-misticheskij smysl ubienia Tsarkoj Sem'i*) (The Religious-Mystical Meaning of the Killing of the Royal Family), http://www.ispovednik.org/fullest.php?id=59&binn_rubrik_pl_news=132.

However, the fact that the Autocracy was renounced only unofficially, *de facto* and not *de jure*, means that Bishop Diomedes' thesis that the whole Church lost grace in 1917 is false. The pusillanimity of individual hierarchs, however senior or numerous, does not amount to heresy or apostasy of the whole Church. Nevertheless, that a very serious sin had been committed by the Church cannot be denied...

But what sin precisely?

It was not the sin of obedience to the Provisional Government; for the Tsar himself had urged that. Nor was it the sin of rejection of the monarchist principle as such; for the Synod made no such declaration. It was the sin of *disloyalty to the person of the Autocrat*, the belief that a Masonic democracy could be more pleasing to God and more worthy of support than the Lord's Anointed.

The only question remaining was: could the Church cleanse herself by repenting of this sin at the Local Council, which, - thanks, paradoxically, to the Provisional Government, - was to be convened in Moscow in August, 1917? If so, then, cleansed and strengthened by the Grace of God, and prepared for whatever expiatory sufferings God might send her, she would be able to lead the people out of the abyss of the revolution.

15. DUAL POWER

On March 3 the Provisional Government issued its declaration, "On the succession of power and right", the first point of which proclaimed a "complete and immediate amnesty for all political and religious matters, including terrorist attacks, military rebellions, agrarian criminals, etc." This astonishing pardon for the most serious of crimes signified, not a succession of lawful power and authority, but its complete absence – in effect, a declaration of *anarchy*.

In any case, the only possible source for the legitimate, ordered succession of power after the abdication of the Tsar was the Tsar's own order, given on the previous day, transferring royal power to his brother, Grand Duke Michael, and appointing – at the request of the Duma representatives Guchkov and Shulgin - Prince G.E. Lvov as President of the Council of Ministers and General L.G. Kornilov as Commander of the Petrograd military district. But the Duma politicians had no intention of accepting Grand Duke Michael as tsar (Miliukov and Guchkov were in favour of a constitutional monarchy, but not a true autocracy), and soon, as we have seen, they compelled him, too, to abdicate (he was shot in Perm in June, 1918). As for Lvov, he was made head of the Provisional Government, but not by virtue of any order of the Tsar, whose authority the Duma politicians rejected.

So there was no *succession* of any kind. The Duma politicians therefore had a real problem of legitimacy. Since the legitimizing power of the Tsar's orders had been rejected, there remained only the authority of a popular election, according to liberal theory. But the Provisional Government had not, of course, been elected. Rather, its purpose was to supervise the election of a Constituent Assembly that alone, according to liberal theory, could bring a legitimate government into power. So when the formation of the Provisional Government was announced by Miliukov on March 2, he resorted to a deliberate paradox. In response to the question "Who elected you?" he replied that they had been "elected" by *the revolution*.²³⁹

The paradox consisted in the fact that revolutions do not "elect" in accordance with established legal procedures. For what does the revolution consist in if not the *violent overthrow* of all existing procedures and legalities, and the *breaking* of any succession from the previous authority?...

239 Many years later Miliukov wrote: "They ask me: 'Who elected you?' Nobody elected us, for if we had begun to wait for the people's election, we would not have been able to tear power out of the hands of the enemy..." Who did he mean as the "enemy" here if not the Tsar?! He continued: "We were not 'elected' by the Duma. Nor were we elected by Lvov in accordance with the tsar's order prepared at Headquarters, of which we could not have been informed. All these sources for the succession of power we ourselves had consciously cast out. There remained only one reply, the clearest and most convincing. I replied: 'The Russian revolution has elected us!' This simple reference to the historical process that brought us to power shut the mouths of the most radical opponents." (G. Katkov, *Fevral'skaia Revoliutsia* (The February Revolution), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, p. 370).

The Provisional Government's legitimacy was further undermined by its treatment of the Duma. Kotkin writes: "After being prorogued [in February, by the Tsar], some members had convened in defiance of the tsar. But a draft protocol of the Provisional Government's first session (March 2) indicates that the group of assembled men contemplated resorting to the infamous Article 87 of the tsarist Fundamental Laws to rule without a parliament, a move for which the constitutionalists had viciously denounced Stolypin. The first meeting protocol also specified that 'the full plenitude of power belonging to the monarch should be considered as transferred not to the State Duma but to the Provisional Government'. In fact, the Provisional Government laid claim to the prerogatives of both legislative and executive: the former Duma (the lower house) as well as the State Council (the upper house, abolished by government decree); the former Council of Ministers (the executive, dismissed by Nicholas II' order of abdication) and, soon, the abdicated tsar..."²⁴⁰

The Provisional Government offered no real opposition to the Bolshevik revolution in October, and was easily swept into "the dustbin of history", in Trotsky's phrase. For it came to power through the revolution – that is, through the violent overthrow of all existing procedures and legalities – it had no *legal* authority to suppress the *continuation* of the revolution (for who can tell when the revolution is complete?) through the violent overthrow of *its own* power. In this fact lies the clue to the extraordinarily weak and passive attitude of the Provisional Government towards all political forces to the left of itself. It could not rule because, according to its own liberal philosophy, it had no right to rule...

So whatever kind of democracy the Provisional Government claimed to rule, it was *not* a parliamentary democracy.

For the radical socialists, of course, might was right and the niceties of liberal political philosophy and procedure irrelevant. Already the previous night the Duma had *begged* Himmer, Nakhamkes and Alexandrovich of the Petrograd Soviet to *allow* them to create a government; which showed that the Soviet, and not the Provisional Government, was the real ruler.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power. 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 179.

²⁴¹ That night the Duma plotters and the Soviet found themselves in different rooms of the same Tauride palace. Rodzyanko, writes Yakobi, "suggested to the socialists of the Soviet that they take power completely themselves. A pitiful recognition of helplessness, a complete capitulation of the bourgeois elements before the fist of the Second International, which was preparing the way for Bolshevism! But the Soviet refused. The 'bourgeoisie had started the revolution, they themselves were obliged to dig the grave in which their hopes would be buried.

"The Soviet used the same methods for exerting pressure on the Duma committee as had been applied by the opposition to terrorize the Tsarist Government – frighten them with the spectre of bloodshed: but Chkeidze and the other agents of Bolshevism played their game more decisively than Rodzyanko. The slightest attempt at resistance was suppressed with the aid of an artificially elicited disturbance of the mob in the street" (*op. cit.*, p. 173). (V.M.)

“The two forces that brought down the monarchy,” writes S.A. Smith, “ – the mass movement of workers and soldiers and the middle-class parliamentary opposition – became institutionalized in the new political set-up, the Petrograd Soviet keeping a watchful eye over the Provisional Government. The government, headed by Prince G.E. Lvov, a landowner with a long record of service to the zemstvos, was broadly representative of professional and business interests. It was liberal, even mildly populist, in its politics; the only organized force within it was the Kadet Party, once a liberal party but now evolving rapidly in the direction of conservative nationalism. In its manifesto of 2 March, the government pledged to implement a far-reaching programme of civil and political rights and to convoke a Constituent Assembly. Significantly, it said nothing about the burning issues of war and land. The government, which had no popular mandate, saw its principal task as being to oversee the election of a Constituent Assembly, which would determine the shape of the future polity. It believed that only such an assembly had the authority to resolve such pressing issues as land redistribution.

“The Petrograd Soviet enjoyed the real attributes of power since it controlled the army, transport, and communications, as well as vital means of information. It also had a popular mandate insofar as 1,200 deputies were elected to it within the first week. A few Bolsheviks, anarchists, and others pressed the Soviet to assume full power, but the moderate socialist intellectuals who controlled its executive committee believed that this was not appropriate to a revolution whose character they defined as ‘bourgeois’, i.e. as destined to bring about democracy and capitalist development in Russia rather than socialism. In addition, they feared that any attempt to assert their authority would provoke ‘counter-revolution’. Consequently, they agreed to support but not to join the ‘bourgeois’ Provisional Government, so long as it did not override the interests of the people. The radical lawyer A.F. Kerensky alone of the Petrograd Soviet representatives determined to join the government, portraying himself as the ‘hostage of the democracy’ within it. Thus was born ‘dual power’. In spite of the prevailing mood of national unity, it reflected a deep division in Russian society between the ‘democracy’ and ‘propertied society’.

“Outside Petrograd dual power was much less in evidence. In most localities a broad alliance of social groups formed committees of public organizations to eject police and tsarist officials, maintain order and food supply, and to oversee the democratization of the town councils and zemstvos. The government endeavoured to enforce its authority by appointing commissars, most of whom were chairs of county zemstvos – which by this stage were undergoing democratic election – and the soviets reflected the deep fragmentation of power in provincial towns and cities. In rural areas peasants expelled land captains, township elders, and village policemen and set up township committees under their control. The government attempted to strengthen its authority by setting up land and food committees at township level, but these too fell under peasant control. At the very lowest level the authority of the village gathering was strengthened by the revolution, although it became ‘democratized’ by the

participation of younger sons, landless labourers, village intelligentsia (scribes, teachers, vets, and doctors), and some women. The February Revolution thus devolved power to the localities and substantially reduced the capacity of the Provisional Government to make its writ run beneath the county level.”²⁴²

An example of how power changed hands was witnessed by the future Metropolitan Benjamin (Fedchenko) in Tver. Immediately after the abdication “some kind of ‘committee of state security [KGB]’ was formed, mainly from members of the Cadet party and the zemstvos... This committee took power into its own hands and suggested to the governor, N.G. von Bünting, to hand over affairs to them, and that he with his family should hide somewhere from the threat of death... The governor duly sent his wife and children to some city, but remained himself, refusing to recognize the committee. But he no longer had the strength to do anything against it. He sent the Tsar a telegram: he carried out his duty to the end... The whole night he did not sleep but put some affairs of his in order... Often, tearing himself away from his affairs, the governor (although he was clearly German, he was still a good Orthodox) went up to the icon of the Mother of God standing in his office and prayed on his knees...” At dawn, he was warned by the police that he was in danger. He phoned the local bishop, Arseny, and did his last confession over the phone, receiving absolution. He was taken away, publicly humiliated and then, after the crowd demanded his death, he was shot and his body trampled on...²⁴³

Thus the immediate result of the abdication of the Tsar was not the emergence of a new power, but a power vacuum – that is, *anarchy*. I.L. Solonevich writes: “I remember the February days of our great and bloodless [revolution] – how great a mindlessness descended on our country! A 100,000-strong flock of completely free citizens knocked about the prospects of Peter’s capital. They were in complete ecstasy, this flock: the accursed bloody autocracy had come to an end! Over the world there was rising a dawn deprived of ‘annexations and contributions’, capitalism, imperialism, autocracy and even Orthodoxy: now we can begin to live! According to my professional duty as a journalist, overcoming every kind of disgust, I also knocked about among these flocks that sometimes circulated along the Nevsky Prospect, sometimes sat in the Tauris palace, and sometimes went to watering holes in the broken-into wine cellars. They were happy, this flock. If someone had then begun to tell them that in the coming third of a century after the drunken days of 1917 they would pay for this in tens of millions of lives, decades of famine and terror, new wars both civil and world, and the complete devastation of half of Russia, - the drunken people would have taken the voice of the sober man for regular madness. But they themselves considered themselves to be completely rational beings...”²⁴⁴

²⁴² Smith, *The Russian Revolution. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 18-20.

²⁴³ Benjamin, in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

²⁴⁴ Solonevich, in “Ot Ipatievskogo Monastyria do Doma Ipatievskogo” (From the Ipatiev Monastery to the Ipatiev House), *Pravoslavníe Monastyri* (Orthodox Monasteries), 29, 2009, p. 10.

The very first act of the Soviet, "Soviet Order Number One", reflected the fact that two thirds of the Soviet consisted of soldiers: "The orders of the military commission of the State Duma are to be obeyed only in such instances when they do not contradict the orders and decrees of the Soviet." In other words, the Provisional Government that officially came into being on March 3, and which was formed from liberal Duma deputies, was to rule only by permission of the Soviet, which had come into being on March 1. So Soviet power was born in March, not October, 1917. But for a few months this fact was masked by the "dual power" arrangement with the Government.

The immediate effect of Order Number One was to destroy discipline in the army. The English nurse Florence Farmborough wrote in her diary for March 4, 1917: "Manifestoes from the new Government have begun to be distributed widely along the Russian Front. Our *Letuchka* [flying squad] is well supplied with them; many are addressed to me by the military staff – a courtesy which I greatly appreciate. The main trend of these proclamations directed especially to the fighting men, is FREEDOM. 'Russia is a free country now,' the Manifestoes announce. 'Russia is free and *you*, Russian soldiers, are free men. If you, before being freed, could fight for your Mother-Country, how much more loyally will you fight now, when, as free men, you will carry on the successful conflict on behalf of your free Country.' So the great *perevorot* [revolution] had come! Russia is a free country! The Russians are a free people! Tremendous excitement reigns on all sides; much vociferous enthusiasm, tinged with not a little awe. What will happen now? Newspapers are seized and treasured as though made of gold, read, and re-read. 'The Dawn of Russian Freedom!' 'The Daybreak of the New Epoch!' rhapsodise the romancer-reporters. A *prekaz* [order] has been sent to the Front Line soldiers describing the *otkaz* [dismissal] of the Emperor. We were told that in some sectors the news had been received with noisy gratification; in others, the men have sat silent and confused..."²⁴⁵

The soldiers had to decide: which of the two powers – the Provisional Government or the Soviets – were they to obey? On March 7 a "Text of Oath for Orthodox and Catholics" and signed by Lvov was published and distributed to the army: "I swear by the honour of an officer (soldier, citizen) and promise before God and my own conscience to be faithful and steadfastly loyal to the Russian Government, as to my Fatherland. I swear to serve it to my last blood... I pledge obedience to the Provisional Government, at present proclaimed the Russian government, until the establishment of the System of Government sanctioned by the will of the People, through instrumentality of the Constituent Assembly..."²⁴⁶

245 Farmborough, *Nurse at the Russian Front. A Diary 1914-1918*, London: Blue Club Associates, 1974, p. 260

246 Farmborough, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

In general, the officers were happy to make this oath. And soldiers of all faiths repeated it word for word and then shouted "Hurrah!" But what of those who did not believe in God, or who thought they were now free of all masters – not only of *Batyushka* Tsar, but also of *Batyushka* God?

The formal head of the Provisional Government was Prince Lvov. But the real leader was the Justice Minister, Alexander Kerensky, a Trudovik lawyer and a brilliant orator who had wanted to be an actor. He would show his acting ability by putting his arm in a sling and periodically putting on a fainting fit at climactic moments. He was known as "'poet of the nation'. as the 'uncrowned king of the hearts and minds of Russia, and as 'the first love of the revolution'"²⁴⁷ As Graham Darby writes, contemporaries saw Kerensky "as the real prime minister from the outset but despite being in both the government and the soviet – thereby embodying the dual power structure – he was in between the two camps, distanced from party politics, a politician of compromise who would fail to reconcile the irreconcilable... For a brief moment Kerensky was the essential man, the peoples' tribune, a fine orator and a man of charisma. A good actor, he could catch the mood of an audience. He wore semi-military costume and attempted to strike a Napoleonic pose. He enjoyed immense popularity, even adulation, in the early months and a personality cult grew up around him fuelled by his own self-promotion, a range of propaganda (articles, medals, badges, poems) and a receptive audience. Many saw him as a saviour, the true successor to the tsar. There was, however, an inherent contradiction between Russia's political culture, with its dependency on powerful leaders, and the democratic ideology of the early stages of the revolution, a contradiction embodied in Kerensky, the undemocratic democrat. The adulation went to his head and he came to overestimate his popularity long after it had evaporated. He moved into the Winter Palace, lived in the tsar's apartments and used the imperial train. He was seemingly powerful but only by virtue of the offices he held and the fickle nature of mass popularity. To sustain the latter he had to fulfil everyone's expectations, but as Lenin pointed out, he 'wanted to harmonise the interests of landowners and peasants, workers and bosses, labour and capital'. It was an impossible task..."²⁴⁸

P. Novgorodtsev writes: "Prince Lvov, Kerensky and Lenin were bound together by an unbroken bond. Prince Lvov was as guilty of Kerensky as Kerensky was of Lenin. If we compare these three actors of the revolution, who each in turn led the revolutionary power,... we can represent this relationship as follows. The system of guileless non-resistance to evil, which was applied by Prince Lvov as a system of ruling the state, with Kerensky was transformed into a system of pandering to evil camouflaged by phrases about 'the revolutionary leap' and the good of the state, while with Lenin it was transformed into a system of openly serving evil clothed in the form of merciless class warfare and the destruction of all those displeasing to the

²⁴⁷ Orlando Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, p. 105.

²⁴⁸ Darby, "Kerensky in Hindsight", *History Today*, July, 2017, p. 51.

authorities. Each of the three mentioned persons had his utopian dreams, and history dealt with all of them in the same way: it turned their dreams into nothing and made of them playthings of the blind elements. The one who most appealed to mass instincts and passions acquired the firmest power over the masses. In conditions of general anarchy the path to power and despotism was most open to the worst demagoguery. Hence it turned out that the legalized anarchy of Prince Lvov and Kerensky naturally and inevitably gave way to the demagogic despotism of Lenin."²⁴⁹

In an article written in 1923 G. Mglinsky explained why the government proved so weak: "Understanding the absence of firm ground under their feet because of the absence of those layers of the population on which it was possible to rely, the new government fell immediately into dependence on the 'Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies' which had been formed even before the abdication of his Majesty the Emperor, and behind which there stood the capital's working masses who had been propagandized by the same Russian intelligentsia. Although it did not really sympathize with the content of Order Number 1, which destroyed the army, and understood all its danger, the Provisional Government nevertheless allowed the carrying out of this order – so criminal in relation to the fatherland – by the hands of its Minister of War Guchkov.

"Fearing a reaction in the Russian people, which, as it well understood, would hardly be likely to be reconciled with the seizure of power by a bunch of intriguers, the Provisional Government from the very beginning of its activity tried hard to destroy the state-administrative apparatus. With a stroke of the pen all administrative power in Russia was destroyed. The governors were replaced by *zemstvo* activists, the city commanders – by city-dwellers, the police – by militia.

"But, as is well known, it is always easy to destroy, but very difficult to create. And so it was here: having destroyed the old state apparatus, the Provisional Government did not think of, or, more likely, was simply not able to create anything in its place. Russia was immediately handed over to itself and nepotism was introduced as a slogan for the whole of the state administration, and this at precisely the moment when a strong power was required as never before.

"When representatives of the old and new administrations came to the head of the Provisional Government, Prince [G.E.] Lvov, and demanded directions, they unfailingly received the same refusal which Prince Lvov gave to the representatives of the press in his interview of 7 March, that is, five days after the coup. 'This is a question of the old psychology. The Provisional Government has removed the old governors and is not going to appoint anybody. They will be elected on the spot. Such questions must be resolved not

249 Novgorodtsev, "Vostanovlenie svyatyn" ("The Restoration of the Holy Things"), *Put'* (The Way), N 4, June-July, 1926, p. 4.

from the centre, but by the population itself... We are all boundlessly happy that we have succeeded in living to this great moment when we can create a new life of the people – not for the people, but together with the people... The future belongs to the people which has manifested its genius in this historical days. What great happiness it is to live in these great days!...'

"These words, which sound now like pure irony, were not invented, they are found in the text of the 67th page of the first volume of *A History of the Second Russian Revolution* written, not by any die-hard or black-hundredist, but by Paul Miliukov 'himself', who later on the pages of his history gives the following evaluation of the activity of the head of the government which he himself joined as Minister of Foreign Affairs:

"'This world-view of the leader of our inner politics,' says Miliukov, 'led in fact to the systematic cessation of activity of his department and to the self-limitation of the central authority to a single task – the sanctioning of the fruits of what in the language of revolutionary democracy is called the revolutionary creation of rights. The population, left to itself and completely deprived of protection from the representatives of the central power, necessarily had to submit to the rule of party organizations, which acquired, in new local committees, a powerful means of influence and propagandizing certain ideas that flattered the interests and instincts of the masses, and for that reason were more acceptable for them.' " ²⁵⁰

There was no real opposition to this wanton destruction of old Russia first, because the Provisional Government, having abolished the Department of Police and the *okhrana*, could replace them only with miserably ineffective "citizen militias"²⁵¹, and secondly, because the forces on the right were in a state of shock and ideological uncertainty that left them incapable of undertaking any effective counter-measures. We search in vain for a leader, in Church or State, who called for the restoration of the Romanov dynasty at this time. Perhaps the deputy over-procurator, Raev, who called on the Synod to support the monarchy (the Synod ignored him), was an exception to this rule, or the only Orthodox general who remained faithful to his oath, Theodore Keller. Or perhaps Archimandrite Vitaly (Maximenko) of Pochaev monastery, the future Archbishop of Eastern America, who, "having found out about the emperor's abdication... travelled to the Tsar's military headquarters in Mogilev in order

250 Mglinsky, "Grekhi russkoj intelligentsii" (The Sins of the Russian Intelligentsia), *Staroe Vremia* (Old Times), 1923; in Prince N.D. Zhevakov, *Vospominania* (Reminiscences), Moscow, 1993. Zhevakhov, who was assistant over-procurator during the February Revolution, comments on these words: "If Milyukov, who took the closest participation in the overthrow of Tsarist Power in Russia, could talk like this, then what was it like in reality! 'Things were no better in other departments. Everywhere complete chaos reigned, for none of the departmental bosses, nor the government as a whole, had any definite, systematically realizable plan. They broke down everything that was old, they broke it down out of a spectral fear of a return to the old. Without thinking of tomorrow, with a kind of mad haste, they broke down everything that the whole Russian people is now beginning to sorrow over...' (*Staroe Vremia*, December 18/31, 1923, N 13)." (op. cit.).

²⁵¹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 180.

to plead with the sovereign to rescind his abdication. He was not allowed a meeting..."²⁵²

Orthodox monarchism, it seemed, was dead... The abdication of the Tsar was greeted with joy by people of all classes – even the peasantry. As Oliver Figes writes, "the news from the capital was joyously greeted by huge assemblies in the village fields. 'Our village,' recalls one peasant, 'burst into life with celebrations. Everyone felt enormous relief, as if a heavy rock had suddenly been lifted from our shoulders.' Another peasant recalled the celebrations in his village on the day it learned of the Tsar's abdication: 'People kissed each other from joy and said that life from now on would be good. Everyone dressed in their best costumes, as they do on a big holiday. The festivities went on for three days.' Many villages held religious processions to thank the Lord for their newly won freedoms, and offered up prayers for the new government. For many peasants, the revolution appeared as a sacred thing, while those who had laid down their lives for the people's freedom were seen by the peasants as modern-day saints. Thus the villagers of Bol'she-Dvorskaya volost in the Tikhvinsk district of Petrograd province held a 'service of thanksgiving for the divine gift of the people's victory and the eternal memory of those holy men who fell in the struggle for freedom'. The villagers of Osvyshi village in Tver province offered, as they put it, 'fervent prayers to thank the Lord for the divine gift of the people's victory... and since this great victory was achieved by sacrifice, we held a requiem for all our fallen brothers'. It was often with the express purpose of reciprocating this sacrifice that many villages sent donations, often amounting to several hundred roubles, to the authorities in Petrograd for the benefit of those who had suffered losses in the February Days."²⁵³

This confusion of the values of Christianity with those of the anti-Christian revolution was also evident in contemporary literature – in, for example, Blok's poem *The Twelve*, in which Christ is portrayed at the head of the Red Guards. The prevalence of this confusion among all classes of society showed how deeply the democratic-revolutionary ideology had penetrated the masses in the pre-revolutionary period. For those with eyes to see it showed that there could be no quick return to normality, but only a very long, tortuous and tormented path of repentance through suffering...

Kerensky "was the busiest man in the Provisional Government. He oversaw a dazzling series of reforms – granting freedoms of assembly, press and speech, lifting legal restrictions on religion, race and gender – which, as Lenin put it, made Russia overnight the 'freest country of the world'..."²⁵⁴

But was this freedom, or was it anarchy, a radical undermining of all those institutions and hierarchical relationships that safeguard true freedom through

²⁵² "Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko", *Orthodox Life*, March-April, 2010, p. 15.

²⁵³ Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, pp. 347-348.

²⁵⁴ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, p. 105.

the exercise of lawful authority? The truth is that “the revolution of 1917 should be understood as a general crisis of authority. There was a rejection of not just the state but all figures of authority – judges, policemen, government officials, army and navy officers, priests, teachers, employers, landowners, village elders, patriarchal fathers and husbands. There were revolutions going on in virtually every sphere of life.

“The Soviet was the only real political authority. Yet even the Soviet had limited control over the revolution in the remote provinces, where towns and villages behaved as if they were independent of the state..”²⁵⁵

The government’s orgy of liberal freedoms – accompanied by an orgy of violence throughout the country – earned it the plaudits, not only of long-established enemies of Russia abroad such as the Jewish banker Jacob Schiff in New York, but also of the western governments, whose democratic prejudices blinded them to the fact that the revolution was turning Russia from their most faithful ally into their deadliest enemy... Anarchy was the order of the day, and the only “justice” was imposed by lynchings. Thus Gorky claimed to have seen 10,000 cases of summary justice in 1917 alone.²⁵⁶ In the countryside the peasant communes assumed power for themselves, leading and legalizing the seizure of the landowners’ houses, lands and property in accordance with their own, specifically peasant understanding of justice... The Church suffered particularly in this period, with the killing of many priests...

As time passed and the chaos spread throughout the country, it became clear that neither the Provisional Government, nor even the Soviets, nor even a coalition between the two on a pro-war platform, would be able to control the revolutionary masses, who wanted peace at any price with the Germans abroad and the most radical social revolution at home. Of all the parties represented in the Soviets, it was only the Bolsheviks (for the soldiers and workers) and the Left Social Revolutionaries (for the peasants) who understood this, who had their fingers on the nation’s revolutionary pulse...

²⁵⁵ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, p. 107.

²⁵⁶ Figes, *A People’s Tragedy*, p. 400.

16. LENIN AT THE FINLAND STATION

The Bolsheviks in fact played only a minor part in the February revolution. Lenin himself was living in Switzerland at the time, and in January, 1917 had admitted in a speech that his generation would probably not live to see the revolution.²⁵⁷ History had evidently not revealed to her acolyte what was evident to many – that Russia was on the verge of revolution.

Lenin had been on the German payroll as an agent of the Reich for some time. Thus on December 29, 1915 the Jewish revolutionary and German agent Alexander Helphand (code-name: Parvus) received a million rubles to support the revolution in Russia from the German envoy in Copenhagen. Still larger sums were given by Jewish bankers in the West. The leading American Jewish banker who bankrolled the Bolsheviks was Jacob Schiff, a member of Bnai Brith, a cabbalistic sect founded in 1843 in America.²⁵⁸ Schiff was related to the German Jewish banker Warburg, who financed the Bolsheviks from Germany. Lilia Shevtsova writes: "Germany provided the Bolsheviks with substantial funds for 'revolutionary purposes': prior to October 1917, the Germans had paid them 11 million German gold marks; in October 1917, the Bolsheviks received another 15 million marks."²⁵⁹

"It has been estimated," writes Niall Ferguson, "that 50 million gold marks (\$12m) were channelled to Lenin and his associates, much of it laundered through a Russian import business run by a woman named Evgeniya Sumenson. Adjusting on the basis of unskilled wage inflation, that is equivalent to £800m today... To an extent that most accounts still underrate, the Bolshevik Revolution was a German-financed operation..."²⁶⁰

However, until 1917 the German and Jewish investment in Lenin did not seem to have paid off. Between September 5 and 8, 1915 a conference took place in Zimmerwald in Switzerland attended by socialists from many European countries, including Lenin and Trotsky. It declared that the war was the result of imperialism (it did not matter which of the imperialists was most to blame) and called on delegates to conduct class warfare in their respective countries in order to force governments to end the international war... The appeals from the Zimmerwald conference that the workers of different countries should not fight each other were not successful. Patriotic feelings turned out to be stronger than class loyalties – for the time being...²⁶¹

257 Nicholas Lowe, *Mastering Twentieth-Century Russian History*, Houndmill: Palgrave, 2002, pp. 83-84.

258 See Anthony C. Sutton, *Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution*, 1974; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwanvYnzCKE&feature=related>.

259 Shevtsova, "Russia's Love Affair with Germany", <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/08/27/russias-love-affair-with-germany/>, *The American Interest*, August 27, 2015.

260 Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 213, note, 214.

261 <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/social-democracy/zimmerwald/manifesto-1915.htm>.

But the revolution changed everything. Arthur Zimmermann – the same man whose famous telegram the month before had caused Germany such damage by pushing America into the war – now made up for his mistake by persuading the Kaiser and the army that Lenin should be smuggled back into Russia.²⁶² On April 2 Count Brockdorff-Rantzau wrote to the German Foreign Office that they should smuggle Lenin into Russia with a lot of money “in order to create... the greatest possible chaos. We should do all we can... to exacerbate the differences between the moderate and extremist parties, because we have the greatest possible interest in the latter gaining the upper hand”.²⁶³

The Germans must have known that if Lenin, a sworn enemy of all governments, were to succeed in Russia, they would have created a scourge for their own backs. But they also knew that the Russian offensive of spring, 1917, if combined with simultaneous attacks from the west, was very likely to be successful. So their only hope lay in the disintegration of Russia from within before Germany was defeated from without...

“The German special services guaranteed [Lenin’s] passage through Germany in the sealed carriage. Among the passengers were: Zinoviev, Radek, Rozenblum, Abramovich, Usievich, and also the majors of the German General Staff, the professional spies Anders and Erich, who had been cast in prison for subversive and diversionary work in Russia in favour of Germany and the organization of a coup d’état. The next day there arrived in Berlin an urgent secret report from an agent of the German General Staff: ‘Lenin’s entrance into Russia achieved. He is working completely according to our desires.’...”²⁶⁴

“The trickiest part was crossing from Sweden to Russia... A British spy who had been posted to the crossing as a passport control officer, tried gamely to delay them. But the authorities in Petrograd... believed that a democratic country should not ban its own citizens from entry. For that mistake, [tens of] millions died.”²⁶⁵

Five days before Lenin’s arrival at the Finland Station an All-Russian Congress of Soviets demanded self-determination, no annexations and no indemnities – a “peace without defeat” policy that was similar to President Wilson’s earlier “peace without victory” programme and elicited support from both the German SPD, the British Labour Party and Liberal MPs.²⁶⁶

262 Strachan, op. cit., p. 256. According to Catherine Merridale (*Lenin on the Train*, London: Allen Lane, 2016), it was an Estonian called Alexander Keskula who first suggested the idea.

263 Brockdorff-Rantzau, in Cohen and Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, p. 726.

264 *Istoki Zla* (The Sources of Evil), pp. 35-36.

265 *The Economist*, October 8-14, 2016, p. 80.

266 “One of the bitterest ironies of 1917,” writes Adam Tooze, “is that the peace programme of the Russian revolution echoed that sponsored by the American president only a few months earlier prior to America’s entry into the war: a peace without victory, without annexation or indemnities and based on self-determination. If Wilson had been able to stay out of the war a few months longer, or the tsar’s regime had fallen a few weeks sooner, the revolutionary regime in Petrograd might have offered the president precisely the wedge that he wanted to

This was radical, but not radical enough for Lenin. On arriving at Beloostrov on Russian soil in the early hours of April 16, he was met by Kamenev, who was the editor of *Pravda* and who had been peddling the orthodox socialist line that it was necessary to cooperate with the bourgeois Provisional Government until full capitalism had been achieved. But Lenin did not believe the Provisionals could achieve anything and wanted to accelerate history. "He shouted at him, 'What's this you have been writing in *Pravda*? We saw some of your articles and roundly abused you.' Late that night he arrived at the Finland Station in Petrograd. He was given a bunch of roses and taken to the Tsar's waiting room. There he launched into the first of a series of speeches, one of them delivered, still clutching the roses, from the top of an armoured car. The last took two hours and 'filled his audience with turmoil and horror'."²⁶⁷

He declared: "I am happy to greet in your persons the victorious Russian revolution, and greet you as the vanguard of the world-wide proletarian army". In other words, he was calling for world revolution, war against all recognized governments. And he went on to call for non-recognition of the Provisional Government, all power to the Soviets and the immediate cessation of the war.

"Addressing – and dressing down – his Bolshevik supporters, Lenin soon formulated his immediate policy. There would be no accommodation with the government. Abroad, hostilities must cease. At home, he came not to bring peace but the sword. The class war must be ruthlessly prosecuted. There could be no compromise with other parties. Land to the peasants. All power to the soviets. For Sukhanov this 'thunderous speech' was another revolution. 'It seemed as if all the elements of universal destruction had arisen from their lairs, knowing neither barriers nor doubts, personal difficulties nor personal considerations, to hover over... the head of the bewitched disciples.'"²⁶⁸

Even his own party found Lenin's position extreme, if not simply mad – but such madness was what the maddened revolutionary masses wanted... For, as Douglas Smith writes, the foot soldiers of the revolution "had no understanding or even interest in Marxist theory, nor were they concerned with what the new Russian society would look like. Rather, they were motivated by one thing: the desire to destroy the old order..."²⁶⁹

In response to Lenin's defeatism, Foreign Minister Pavel Miliukov, in a note to the Allies dated 18 April, renounced the "peace without victory" Declaration of War Aims that the government had published on March 24, ascribing it to "domestic politics". Instead, he "reaffirmed its determination to observe all

drive Britain and France to the negotiating table. Germany's gamble on the U-boats voided that fateful juncture..." ("365 Days that Shook the World", *Prospect*, January, 2017, pp. 26-27.

²⁶⁷ Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, pp. 49-50.

²⁶⁸ Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley. A Panorama of the 1930s*, London: Pimlico, 2001, p. 10.

²⁶⁹ Smith, *Former People: The Last Days of the Russian Aristocracy*, London: Macmillan, 2012, p. 10.

treaty obligations, with the implication that the allies must also honour their promises, especially on Constantinople and the Straits.

“News of this move ignited a new political crisis in Petrograd, with more demonstrations on 23-4 April protesting against the government’s foreign policy. The worker and soldier demonstrators carried banners demanding peace and ‘Down with the Bourgeois Government’, and ‘Down with Miliukov and Guchkov’. The Provisional Government refused to deploy troops and use force to restore order.

“Guchkov and Miliukov resigned, after which the government invited the Petrograd soviet to help form a coalition. The soviet leaders reluctantly agreed, a decision that instantly blurred the lines of dual power and made them culpable for the policies of the Provisional Government. This first coalition, which included six [out of fourteen] socialist ministers, including Viktor Chernov as Minister of Agriculture, avowed a commitment to ‘revolutionary defencism’ in foreign policy, state regulation of the economy, new taxes on the propertied classes, radical land reform, and further democratization of the army.”²⁷⁰

This left the government in the hands of a group of leftist Masons: Kerensky, Nekrasov, Konovalov, Tereshchenko and Efremov. Together with the Soviet, they immediately passed a series of liberal laws: political prisoners and revolutionaries were amnestied, trade unions were recognized, an eight-hour day for workers was introduced, the replacement of the Tsarist police by a “people’s militia”, full civil and religious freedoms, the abolition of the death penalty and the removal of all restrictions on the Jews. “In a breath-taking reversal,” writes Adam Tooze, “Russia, formerly the autocratic bugbear of Europe, was remaking itself as the freest, most democratic country on earth.”²⁷¹ Free for criminals, that is...

“The new government also agreed,” writes Douglas Smith, “to immediately abolish the police, the Okhrana, and the Corps of Gendarmes. This step, together with the dissolution of the tsarist provincial bureaucracy, was to have fatal consequences, for without new institutions to take their place, the Provisional Government was left with no means to effectively govern the country at the very moment it was descending into ever greater disorder...”²⁷²

By the end of April, Lenin had swung the majority of the Bolsheviks behind his radicalism. Stalin, too, after initially siding with Kamenev (for which he apologized in 1924), joined Lenin, only insisting that the land should not be nationalized, but given to the peasants.²⁷³

270 Daniel T. Orlovsky, “Russia in War and Revolution 1914-1921”, in Frazee (ed.). *Russia. A History*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 280.

271 Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 69.

272 Smith, op. cit., p. 73.

273 Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 192.

Meanwhile, Kerensky was visiting the troops. On May 13 he came to Podgaytsy, and Sister Florence witnessed his speech: "He spoke for about twenty minutes, but time seemed to stand still. His main theme was freedom; that great, mystical Freedom which had come to Russia. His words were often interrupted by wild applause, and, when he pointed out that the war must, at all costs, continued to a victorious end, they acclaimed him to the echo. 'You will fight to a victorious end!' he adjured them. 'We will!' the soldiers shouted as one man. 'You will drive the enemy off Russian soil!' 'We will!' they shouted again with boundless enthusiasm. 'You, free men of a Free Country; you will fight for Russia, your Mother-Country. You will go into battle with joy in your hearts!' 'We are free men,' they roared. 'We will follow you into battle. Let us go now! Let us go now!'

"When he left, they carried him on their shoulders to his car. They kissed him, his uniform, his car, the ground on which he walked. Many of them were on their knees praying; others were weeping. Some of them cheering; others singing patriotic songs. To the accompaniment of this hysterical outburst of patriotic fervor, Kerensky drove away..."²⁷⁴

The soldiers had been promised that the Offensive (on a broad front from Galicia to Bukovina, originally planned under Tsar Nicholas) would not long be delayed. But time passed, the order did not come, discipline collapsed, desertions began...

Then came the Bolshevik agitators who harangued the troops with a new message: surrender!

Farmborough describes one such meeting: "It was a most extraordinary meeting! Never, in our wildest dreams did we imagine that we should listen to such an outpouring of treachery. We sat in a group among the trees, surrounded on all sides by soldiers. Some of our hospital Brothers were there and I caught sight of several of our transport drivers.

"The man who had come to speak to the soldiers had an ordinary face and was dressed in ordinary Russian clothes; dark trousers and a dark shirt, buttoned on the left and worn outside his trousers, with a black belt around the waist. His face was serious and pale, but he smiled and nodded once or twice to one or another of the audience, as though he recognized friends. He spoke for a time about Russia, her vast territory, her wealth and the many overlords who, possessing enormous estates and resources, were revered on account of their riches throughout the western world. Then he described the impoverished peasantry who, unschooled, uncared for and half-starved, were eking out a miserable existence by tilling and cultivating the land belonging to those same overlords. War had burst upon Russia and enemies had invaded

²⁷⁴ Farmborough, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-270.

her territory, and who were the men who had sacrificed themselves to fight the ruthless invaders and drive them off Russian soil! Not the wealthy overlords, not the despotic land-owners; no! – they were safely installed in their fortress-homes. It was those downtrodden countrymen who had been roped in in their thousands, in their millions, to stem the tide of invasion; when they had been killed, others had been quickly collected and sent to replace them. There had been no end to the slaughter and sacrifice of the Russian peasant. Enemy guns had devoured them daily, hourly; every minute of the day and night, the heavy guns had feasted on them and every minute new recruits were being seized and thrust like fodder into the voracious jaws of the enemy's cannon. But now a tremendous even had taken place! The Tsar – that arch-potentate, that arch-tyrant – had been dethroned and dismissed. Russia had been pronounced a free country! – the Russian citizens a free people! Freedom had come at last to the downtrodden people of Russia.

“Our doctors were moving restlessly. They were, as always, in officers' uniform. I wondered if they were thinking it was high time to leave, but they stayed. Undoubtedly, it was the wisest thing to do. I glanced around. Most of the soldiers were young and raw, inexperienced and impressionable; all of them drawn from far-off corners of what, until recently, had been known as the Russian Empire. What easy prey they would be for seditious guile! New ideas could so readily take hold of their gullible minds and a cunning speaker would soon be aware that he could sway them this way and that with his oratory.

“The speaker was harping on the theme of freedom. Freedom, he declared, was a possession so great, so precious, one dared not treat it lightly. But war was an enemy of freedom, because it destroyed peace, and without peace there could be no freedom. It was up to the Russian soldier to do all in his power to procure peace. And the best and quickest way to bring about a guaranteed peace was to *refuse to fight*. War could not be fought if there were no soldiers to fight! War was never a one-sided operation! Then, when peace had at last come to Russia, freedom could be enjoyed. The free men of Free Russia would own their own land. The great tracts of privately-owned territory would be split up and divided fairly among the peasantry. There would be common ownership of all properties and possessions. Once the Russian soldier had established peace in his homeland, he would reap benefits undreamt of. Peace above all else! Down with war!

“The soldiers were all astir; they were whispering, coughing, muttering. But there all in full accord with the orator; he held them in his hand! Their stolid faces were animated and jubilant. ‘*Tovarishchi!* You free men of Free Russia! You will demand peace!’ ‘We will!’ they shouted in reply. ‘You will assert your rights as free Russian citizens!’ ‘We will assert our rights,’ they echoed with one voice. ‘You will never allow yourselves to be pushed into the trenches to sacrifice your lives in vain!’ ‘Never!’ they roared in unison...”²⁷⁵

275 Farmborough, op. cit., pp. 309-311.

The success of the Bolsheviks' propaganda against the war deprived the army of the minimum discipline required for a successful offensive. In the event, while General Alexeyev calculated that the losses from the offensive, which began on July 1, would be about 6000, they turned out to be 400,000.²⁷⁶ Russia, having been in a strong position at the beginning of the year, had effectively lost the war six months later...

"The key to Russia's military defeat," writes Niall Ferguson, "was the huge number of surrenders in that year. Overall, more than half of total Russian casualties were accounted for by men who were taken prisoner."²⁷⁷

"The official number of deserters during the offensive was 170,000; but the actual number was very much larger."²⁷⁸

It must be said that desertions increased significantly in all the combatants except the British and the Germans in 1917. There was a serious mutiny in the French army at Chemin des Dames. The number of desertions in the Italian army during their defeat at Caporetto was shocking. Low morale in the Austrian army was aggravated by ethnic tensions. And more than 300,000 deserted from the Ottoman army by November, 1917.²⁷⁹

But the effect of desertions was most disastrous in the Russian army. As a result, the offensive was crushed, the army broken, and on September 3 the Germans entered Riga, their last major victory on the Eastern Front... An offensive that had been designed by Kerensky and the liberals to bolster the state by bringing all classes together on a patriotic wave ended by opening the path to the final destruction of the state.

Nobody was more saddened by the Russian rout than the imprisoned Tsar Nicholas, who had abdicated precisely in order to avert civil strife and thereby guarantee a successful military offensive. "In the words of the children's tutor, Pierre Gilliard, the defeat caused the Emperor 'great grief'. As always, however, Nicholas's optimism struggled against bad news. 'I get a little hope from the fact that in our country people love to exaggerate. I can't believe that the army at the front has become as bad as they say. It couldn't have disintegrated in just two months to such a degree.'"²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, p. 408.

²⁷⁷ Ferguson, *The Pity of War, 1914-1918*, London: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 368. Prisoners of war as a percentage of total casualties in the war were 51.8% for Russia, as opposed to 9.0% for Germany and 6.7% for Britain (*op. cit.*, p. 369).

²⁷⁸ Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

²⁷⁹ Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 70.

²⁸⁰ Lieven, *Nicholas II*, p. 236.

17. AMERICA JOINS THE WAR

The Entente declared that it was fighting for democracy against “Prussian military despotism”. Thomas Mann, by contrast, believed that “Germany was fighting for *Kultur* against England’s dreary, soapy, materialistic *Zivilisation*.”²⁸¹ But in truth the British and French governments became hardly less despotic than the German in the face of military necessity. By the beginning of 1917,” writes Huw Strachan, “the business of making war threatened the liberal values that France and Britain had espoused with such fervor in 1914. The power of the state trumped the rights of the individual. Although this was a matter of natural law, its most immediate and real effect was financial. The normal system of budgetary controls was forfeit as the belligerent governments became the principal purchasers of goods, which they paid for with money they had raised largely through borrowing and taxation, devices they regulated. The moral consequence was a denial of personal responsibility. ‘He signed cheques,’ George Clemenceau said of Lucien Klotz, France’s last wartime finance minister, ‘as though he was signing autographs.’

“In France the Law of Siege, involved on 2 August 1914, gave the army to power to requisition goods, to control the press, and to apply military law to civilians; it even subordinated the police to military control...

“In Britain, the army never achieved that degree of autonomy, but the executive arrogated to itself powers that were contrary to any idea of parliamentary accountability and which affected the independence of the judiciary. The Defence of the Realm Act, passed on 8 August 1914, although primarily designed to safeguard Britain’s ports and railways from sabotage or espionage, permitted the trial of civilians by court martial. Its provisions were progressively extended to cover press censorship, requisitioning, control of the sale of alcohol (Britain’s licensing laws date from 1915), and food regulations. After March 1918 a woman with venereal disease could be arrested for having sex with her husband if he were a serviceman, even if he had first infected her. Piecemeal, the state acquired the right to intervene in the workings of the economy. Traditional Liberals complained that the import duties introduced in 1915 breached the party’s commitment to free trade; capitalists saw the excess-profits duty introduced in the same budge as an affront to the principles of Adam Smith. Nor were the mechanisms designed to soak up the liquidity generated by wartime business confined to the obviously wealthy. In 1914 income tax was a burden on the rich minority; during the war 2.4 million workers became liable to pay income tax for the first time, and by 1918-19 they made up two-thirds of all taxpayers. As significantly, those who did not pay tax avoided it because they were exempted on the grounds of family circumstances: in other words, they were no worse off financially (and probably the reverse) but they had now come under the purview of the state. The most significant step in the extension of state authority in Britain was compulsory military service, adopted by the Asquith coalition in the first half

²⁸¹ Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 19.

of 1916. 'The basis of our British Liberty,' Richard Lambert, a Liberal member of parliament opposed to conscription, averred, 'lies in the free service of a free people... Voluntary service lies at the root of Liberalism just as Conscription is the true weapon of Tyranny.'

"By the mid-point in the war Lambert was a comparatively isolated figure. This is the essential point with regard to the accretion of state power. The press and public grew angry more because not enough was done, than because the state had become the enemy of civil liberties. Asquith's government followed public opinion rather than driving it. When it acted it did so with consent. 'For the time, but it is to be hoped only for the time,' William Scott, Adam Smith Professor of Political Economy at Glasgow University, declared in a series of lectures given in London in early 1917, 'the freedom of the individual must be absorbed in that of the national effort. His true and permanent interest is interwoven with that of his country.' The erosion of the principles of liberalism and of constitutional government was never really interpreted in Lambert's terms: in the short term people were prepared to become more like Prussia to defeat Prussianism. In France the debate on the extension of the state's powers was even less emotive: the legacy of the French Revolution meant that the use of totalitarianism in the name of national defence had a powerful pedigree. In both countries, the popular cry was for more government direction, not less.

"It was on the back of this sentiment – the demand for a small war cabinet to direct the nation's strategy – that Asquith fell from power at the beginning of December 1916. An election should have been held in 1915, and was therefore overdue; the principle of universal military service had been introduced without the adoption of universal male suffrage (indeed Britain had the most restrictive franchise of any European state except Hungary); and the formation of the coalition in 1915 meant that opposition within parliament was effectively silenced. Lloyd George's arrival as prime minister in Asquith's stead might have presaged a return to democratic norms. He came from the radical wing of the party, so popular consent validated his actions, as well as keeping the illusion of liberalism alive. But he made clear to the Liberal members of parliament that 'the predominant task before the Government is the rigorous prosecution of the War to a triumphant conclusion'. As the Conservative and courtier Lord Esher wrote to Haig, 'To achieve that, his only chance of success is to govern for a time as Cromwell governed. Otherwise Parliamentarism (what a word!) will be the net in which every effort will become entangled. It is of no use to make a *coup d'état* unless you are ready with the whiff of grapeshot.'"282

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282 Strachan, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-232.

The killer blow planned by the Allied powers in 1917 had not been delivered. There were three main reasons for this. First, the Kaiser transferred Hindenburg and Ludendorff from the Eastern to the Western front; and they decided on a defensive programme that involved doubling ammunition output – a goal that was achieved, albeit at the cost of great suffering on the home front. Secondly, the promised Russian offensive collapsed ignominiously after the abdication of the Tsar, which had destroyed morale in the Russian army. And thirdly, the Entente was hindered in increasing its ammunition output by an unexpected obstacle: the American President Wilson was campaigning for a second term on the slogan that he was the man to keep America out of the war – and that meant refusing to back the Entente’s American banker, J.P. Morgan, in raising the huge loans that France and Britain so desperately needed in order to restock their reserves.

And so “on 27 November 1916, four days before J.P. Morgan planned to launch the Anglo-French bond issue, the Federal Reserve Board issued instructions to all member banks. In the interest of the stability of the American financial system, the Fed announced that it no longer considered it desirable for American investors to increase their holdings of British and French securities. As Wall Street plunged and sterling was offloaded by speculators, J.P. Morgan and the UK Treasury were forced into emergency purchasing of sterling to prop up the British currency. At the same time the British government was forced to suspend support of French purchasing. The Entente’s entire financing effort was in jeopardy. In Russia in the autumn of 1916 there was mounting resentment at the demand by Britain and France that it should ship its gold reserves to London to secure Allied borrowing. Without American assistance it was not just the patience of the financial markets but the Entente itself that would be at risk. As the year ended, the war committee of the British cabinet concluded grimly that the only possible interpretation was that Wilson meant to force their hand and put an end to the war in a matter of weeks. And this ominous interpretation was reinforced when London received confirmation from its ambassador in Washington that it was indeed the President himself who had insisted on the strong wording of the Fed’s note.

“Given the huge demands made by the Entente on Wall Street in 1916, it is clear that opinion was already shifting against further massive loans to London and Paris ahead of the Fed’s announcement. But what the cabinet could not ignore was the open hostility of the American President. And Wilson was determined to raise the stakes. On 12 December the German Chancellor, Bethmann Hollweg, without stating Germany’s own aims, issued a pre-emptive demand for peace negotiations. Undaunted, on 18 December Wilson followed this with a ‘Peace Note’, calling on both sides to state what war aims could justify the continuation of the terrible slaughter. It was an open bid to delegitimize the war, all the more alarming for its coincidence with the initiative from Berlin. On Wall Street the reaction was immediate. Armaments shares plunged and the German ambassador, Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, and Wilson’s son-in-law, Treasury Secretary William Gibbs McAdoo, found themselves accused of making millions by betting against Entente-connected

armaments stocks. In London and Paris the impact was more serious. King George V is said to have wept. The mood in the British cabinet was furious. The London Times called for restraint but could not hide its dismay at Wilson's refusal to distinguish between the two sides. It was the worst blow that France had received in 29 months of war, roared the patriotic press from Paris. German troops were deep in Entente territory in both East and West. They had to be driven out, before talks could be contemplated. Nor, since the sudden swing in the fortunes of the war in the late summer of 1916, did this seem impossible. Austria was clearly close to the brink. When the Entente met for their war conference in Petrograd at the end of January 1917, the talk was of a new sequence of concentric offensives.

"Wilson's intervention was deeply embarrassing, but to the Entente's relief the Central Powers took the initiative in rejecting the President's offer of mediation. This freed the Entente to issue their own, carefully worded statement of war aims on 10 January. These demanded the evacuation of Belgium and Serbia, and the return of Alsace-Lorraine, but more ambitiously they insisted on self-determination for the oppressed peoples of both the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. It was a manifesto for continued war, not immediate negotiation, and it thus raised the inescapable question: how were these campaigns to be paid for? To cover purchases in the US running at \$75 million per week, in January 1917 Britain could muster no more than \$215 million in assets in New York. Beyond that, it would be forced to draw down on the Bank of England's last remaining gold reserves, which would cover no more than six weeks of procurement. In January, London had no option but to ask J.P. Morgan to start preparing to relaunch the bond issue that had been aborted in November. Once more, however, they had reckoned without the President.

"At 1 p.m. on 22 January 1917 Woodrow Wilson strode towards the rostrum of the US Senate. It was a dramatic occasion. News of the President's intention to speak was only leaked to the senators over lunch. It was the first time that a President had directly addressed that august body since George Washington's day. Nor was it an occasion only on the American political stage. It was clear that Wilson would have to speak about the war and in so doing he would not merely be delivering a commentary. Commonly, Wilson's emergence as a leader of global stature is dated a year later to January 1918 and his enunciation of the so-called '14 points'. But it was in fact in January 1917 that the American President first staked an explicit claim to world leadership. The text of his speech was distributed to the major capitals of Europe at the same time that it was delivered in the Senate. As in the 14 Points speech, on 22 January Wilson would call for a new international order based on a League of Nations, disarmament and the freedom of the seas. But whereas the 14 Points were a wartime manifesto that fit snugly into a mid-century narrative of American global leadership, the speech that Wilson delivered on 22 January is a great deal harder to assimilate.

“As the door to the American century swung wide in January 1917, Wilson stood poised in the frame. He came not to take sides but to make peace. The first dramatic assertion of American leadership in the twentieth century was not directed towards ensuring that the ‘right’ side won, but that no side did. The only kind of peace with any prospect of securing the cooperation of all the major world powers was one that was accepted by all sides. All parties to the Great War must acknowledge the conflict’s deep futility. That meant that the war could have only one outcome: ‘peace without victory’. It was this phrase that encapsulated the standpoint of moral equivalence with which Wilson had consistently staked his distance from the Europeans since the outbreak of the war. It was a stance that he knew would stick in the gullet of many in his audience in January 1917. ‘It is not pleasant to say this... I am seeking only to face realities and to face them without soft concealment.’ In the current slaughter the US must take no side. For America to ride to the assistance of Britain, France and the Entente would certainly ensure their victory. But in so doing America would be perpetuating the old world’s horrible cycle of violence. It would, Wilson insisted in private conversation, be nothing less than a ‘crime against civilization’...

“All this ought to have presented a truly historic opportunity for Germany. The American President had weighed the war in the balance and had refused to take the Entente’s side. When the blockade revealed what Britain’s command of the seaways meant for global trade, Wilson had responded with an unprecedented naval programme of his own. He seemed bent on blocking any further mobilization of the American economy. He had called for peace talks whilst Germany still had the upper hand. He was not deterred by the fact that Bethmann Hollweg had gone first. Now he was speaking quite openly to the population of Britain, France and Italy over the heads of their governments, demanding an end to the war. The German Embassy in Washington fully understood the significance of the President’s words and desperately urged Berlin to respond positively. Already in September 1916, after extended conversations with Colonel House [Wilson’s adviser], Ambassador Bernstorff had cabled Berlin that the American President would seek to mediate as soon as the election was over and that ‘Wilson regards it as in the interest of America that neither of the combatants should gain a decisive victory’. In December the ambassador sought to bring home to Berlin the importance of Wilson’s intervention in the financial markets, which would be a far less dangerous way of throttling the Entente than an all-out U-boat campaign. Above all, Bernstorff understood Wilson’s ambition. If he could bring the war to an end he would claim for the American presidency the ‘glory of being the premier political personage on the world’s stage’. If the Americans were to thwart him, they should beware of his wrath. But such appeals were not enough to halt the logic of escalation that had been set in motion by the Entente’s near break-through in the late summer of 1916...”²⁸³

²⁸³ Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-54, 56-57.

For on 9 January Hindenburg and Ludendorff had overridden the objections of the Chancellor Bethmann and rammed through the decision to conduct unrestricted U-boat warfare against the Entente's supply-lines across the Atlantic. This confirmed the suspicions of many that Germany was now, in effect, a military dictatorship ruled, not by the Kaiser, but by the generals. For as the sociologist Max Weber wrote, "Bethmann Hollweg's willingness to allow the military's technical arguments to override his own better judgement was damning evidence of the lasting damage done to Germany's political culture by Bismarck..."²⁸⁴

On 31 January the German decision was conveyed to the Americans, and on 3 February Congress approved the breaking of diplomatic relations with Germany.

However, even then Wilson maintained his neutral stance, arguing for "peace without victory" and a post-war settlement that would put paid to all imperialist wars. Britain in his eyes was no more deserving of support than Germany. And he had on his side not only many Americans of Germanic descent, but also Jews who hated the Entente's alliance with Russia. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the Grand Lodges of the warring nations generally split along national lines, according to David P. Hullinger, "representatives of German Grand Lodges were received at the annual communications of the Grand Lodges of New Jersey and New York less than a month after the United States entered the War."²⁸⁵

At the same time, the American economy and especially its arms export business were so heavily invested in the Entente already that it was probably only a matter of time before Wilson succumbed to pressure from the banks and the armament business and declared himself on the side of the Entente. But for the time being he held out. "As March began in 1917, America was still not at war. To the frustration of much of his entourage, the President still insisted that it would be a 'crime' for America to allow itself to be sucked into the conflict, since it would 'make it impossible to save Europe afterwards'."²⁸⁶

If Wilson's appeal for peace had been accepted in January or February, 1917, then Russia would not have been defeated and Tsarism would have been saved. At precisely this time the Russian executed their plot against Tsar Nicholas. Also at precisely this time, - "coincidences" abound at this absolutely critical time of world history - the Germans committed the fatal mistake that lost them the war by bringing the United States with their vast resources into it on the Allied side.

²⁸⁴ Tooze, op. cit., p. 58.

²⁸⁵ Hullinger, "Freemasonry and World War I", http://www.skirret.com/papers/freemasonry_and_WWI.html.

²⁸⁶ Tooze, op. cit., p. 65.

For Arthur Zimmermann at the German Foreign Office – the same man who suggested infiltrating Lenin into Russia - sent a telegram to the German embassy in Mexico City authorizing it to propose an alliance with Mexico, as Protopresbyter James Thornton writes, “*if, and only if, the United States entered the war against Germany. In that case, Mexico would be expected to attack the United States and, were Germany and its allies victorious, was promised the return of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, territories she had lost in the 1830s and '40s. The whole idea was a major blunder by the German foreign office and, truth be told, ludicrous given the abysmal condition of Mexico's military, which could never have been a serious threat to the United States. Nevertheless, the telegram was intercepted and decoded by the British and then given to the American ambassador to Britain, Walter Hines Page, who forwarded it to President Wilson. Wilson, in turn, released it to the press. Americans were stunned and infuriated...*”²⁸⁷

“The launching of the U-boat campaign,” writes Tooze, “compounded by the leaking of the Zimmermann telegram [whose authenticity was admitted by the Germans], forced Wilson's hand. He had no politically defensible option but to go to war. On 20th March 1917, the day that the cabinet arrived at that solemn conclusion, the decision was reinforced by other urgent news. Washington instructed its embassy in Petrograd to recognize the Provisional Government in Russia...

“The revolution promised freedom and democracy. What that would mean in a gigantic, desperately poor country, fighting for its life in an immensely costly war, would remain to be seen. But for the advocates for war in Washington, the overthrow of the tsar came as a huge relief. As Robert Lansing, Wilson's Secretary of State, remarked: the Russian revolution had ‘removed the one obstacle to affirming that the European war was a war between democracy and absolutism’.”²⁸⁸

On April 6, just two days after Lenin's “April Theses”, the Americans declared war on Germany - but not on their allies Austria-Hungary and Ottoman Turkey... Although the American build-up of troops was slow and made no major impact until almost the end of the war, its psychological impact was very important in the final crack in the Germans' morale that took place in the autumn of 1918. This, a direct consequence of their mad declaration of unrestricted U-boat warfare, followed by their equally mad Zimmermann telegram, probably cost them the First World War. Nor would this be the only occasion on which German stupidity and American intervention would prove decisive in this, the American century. Similarly, in 1941 Hitler's declaration of war on America probably cost him the Second World War...

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²⁸⁷ Thornton, “Partnering with Putin”, *New American*, November 20, 2015, <http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/history/item/21998-partnering-with-putin>.
²⁸⁸ Tooze, “365 Days that Shook the World”, *Prospect*, January, 2017, pp. 24, 26.

Protopresbyter James Thornton has developed an interesting argument that it was in America's interests to keep out of the war in accordance with her policy of isolationism first proclaimed by George Washington himself. "After the end of hostilities, a backlash developed in America against the idea of American involvement in the affairs of Europe. The peace created by the Treaty of Versailles solved none of Europe's problems and created a host of new ones. The throwing together of peoples who had ancient grievances against one another into new, artificially created countries; the shifting of borders that left ethnic minorities under hostile governments; and the denial by the victors of the rights of the vanquished to be able to defend themselves established a Europe rife with bitter resentments. The U.S. Senate wisely rejected Wilson's League of Nations, which would have compromised American sovereignty, and the Treaty of Versailles, which, in its vindictiveness, violated many of the ideals that Wilson had himself trumpeted so loudly. President Wilson had promised 'a war to make the world safe for democracy,' but created a world in which dictatorships sprang up everywhere. He promised 'a war to end all wars,' but set in motion forces that guaranteed a new and even more terrible war within a generation.

"How catastrophic was American intervention in the First World War? Winston Churchill answered that question in an interview given to William Griffin, publisher of the *New York Enquirer*, in August 1936. (Churchill later denied making these comments, but in October 1939 Griffin insisted in sworn testimony before Congress that he had.) Churchill said, 'America should have minded her own business and stayed out of the World War. If you hadn't entered the war the Allies would have made peace with Germany in the Spring of 1917. Had we made peace then there would have been no collapse in Russia followed by Communism, no breakdown in Italy followed by Fascism, and Germany would not have signed the Versailles Treaty, which has enthroned Nazism in Germany. If America had stayed out of the war, all these 'isms' wouldn't today be sweeping the continent of Europe and breaking down parliamentary government – and if England had made peace early in 1917, it would have saved over one million British, French, American, and other lives.'"²⁸⁹

This is a persuasive argument if we consider only America's national interests considered in isolation and in the relatively short term. But it rests on some false assumptions.

First and most importantly, America's decision to intervene was made only *after* the Tsar abdicated, so it had no influence on the supremely critical event that led to the triumph of Bolshevism. Secondly, whatever Churchill may have said in 1936, there is no evidence that he or any of the Allied leaders wanted to make peace with Germany in the spring of 1917. Far from making peace, Britain, France, Italy and Russia were preparing an offensive for that spring which they fully expected would be successful - especially in view of Russia's

²⁸⁹ Thornton, op. cit.

greatly improved and now well-equipped army. But the Tsar's abdication put paid to those hopes as the morale of the Russian soldiers plummeted almost overnight... Thirdly, while the Versailles peace was indeed a failure in many ways, it is hardly just to lay the blame for that solely on Wilson, or blame it for the rise of fascism and all the other catastrophes of the inter-war years.

If America had stayed out of the war, it is by no means certain that the Allies would have lost. But if they had, what would have been the result? The domination of the continent by a proto-fascistic, imperialist Germany – hardly a recipe for stability. The Bolsheviks would probably have made a deal with the Germans, foreshadowing the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of some twenty years later. After all, Lenin was a German agent. With Bolshevism established in the East with the blessing of Germany, millions of Orthodox would still have fled westwards, only this time, without having any anti-Bolshevik state there to give them refuge – unless they were able to make it across the ocean to America...

The Lord in His mercy brought America into Europe, tentatively in 1917, more decisively in 1944, so that there should be at least some defence and refuge from the most evil regime in the history of the world...

18. THE JULY DAYS AND THE KORNILOV COUP

“State authority,” writes Daniel T. Orlovsky, “continued to disintegrate. The government now operated under the cloud of military catastrophe, even the threat that the Germans would occupy Petrograd itself. And on the domestic front its problems were legion: land seizures and pogroms, strikes and demonstrations by workers, massive breakdowns in supply and transport, and the strident demands of nationalities...”²⁹⁰

“The collapse of the offensive,” writes Figes, “dealt a fatal blow to the authority of the Provisional Government. The coalition fell apart. There was a three-week interregnum while the socialists and Kadets tried to patch together a new coalition, during which there was a vacuum of power. This was the context of the July uprising.

“It began in the First Machine-Gun Regiment, the most menacing bastion of anti-government power in Petrograd, whose barracks on the Vyborg side nestled among the most strike-prone factories in the capital. On 20 June, the regiment was ordered to send 500 machine guns with their crews to the Front. It was the first time a unit of the Petrograd garrison had been ordered to the Front since the February Revolution. Order No. 1 had guaranteed a right for the 250,000 soldiers of the garrison to stay in Petrograd for its defence against counter-revolutionary threats.

“Accusing the Provisional Government of using the offensive to break up the garrison, the First Machine-Gun Regiment resolved to overthrow it if it continued with its counter-revolutionary order. The Bolshevik Military Organization for the garrison encouraged an uprising. But the Party’s Central Committee was more cautious, fearing that its failure would lead to an anti-Bolshevik backlash. It was unclear if Lenin could control his hot-headed followers in the garrison.

“On 3 July a solid mass of soldiers and workers marched through the city in armed ranks. The bulk of the crowd moved towards the Tauride Palace, where the Soviet leaders were debating whether to form a socialist government or another coalition with the Kadets. From the streets there were chants of ‘All power to the Soviets!’ But as night fell the crowds dispersed. With further demonstrations scheduled for the following day, the Bolshevik Central Committee agreed to support them, although it is unclear if it meant to use them for a seizure of power.

“Lenin was uncharacteristically hesitant the next day, 4 July, when 20,000 Kronstadt sailors massed in front of the Bolshevik headquarters in the Kshchinskaya Mansion, the palace of the last Tsar’s favourite ballerina [before his marriage], looking for instructions to start the uprising. Lenin did not want

²⁹⁰ Orlovsky, “Russia in War and Revolution 1914-1921”, in Gregory L. Frazee (ed.). *Russia. A History*, 2009, p. 286.

to speak. When he was finally persuaded to make an appearance, he gave an uncertain speech, lasting barely a minute, in which he expressed his confidence in the coming of Soviet power, but left the sailors without specific orders on how to bring it about. It was a telling moment, one of the few in Lenin's long career when he was faced with the task of leading a revolutionary crowd that was standing before him – and lost his nerve.

“Confused by the lack of a clear call for the insurrection to begin, the Kronstadters set off for the Tauride Palace. On the Nevsky they merged with another vast crowd of workers from the Putilov metal factory. As the column turned into the Liteiny Prospekt, shots were fired by the Cossacks and cadets from the roof-tops and windows of the buildings, causing the marchers to scatter in panic. Some fired back. Others ran for cover, breaking down the doors and windows of the shops. When the shooting ceased, the leaders of the demonstration tried to restore order by re-forming ranks, but the equilibrium of the crowd had been upset, dozens had been killed, and as they marched through the affluent residential streets approaching the Tauride Palace, their columns broke down into a riotous mob, looting shops and houses and attacking well-dressed passers-by.

“With a large crowd of armed and angry men surrounding the Tauride Palace there was nothing to prevent them carrying out a coup d'état. To the Soviet leaders inside the palace debating the question of power, it seemed completely obvious that they were about to be stormed. But an order for attack never came from Lenin, and without one the insurgents were uncertain what to do. The hand of God, in the form of the weather, also played a part in the collapse of the uprising. At 5 p.m. the storm clouds broke and there was a torrential rainstorm. Most of the demonstrators ran for cover and did not bother to come back. But those who remained became impatient in the rain and began to fire in frustration at the palace. Some of the Kronstadt sailors climbed in through the windows, seized Chernov and took him out to an open car, shouting at him angrily: 'Take power, you son of a bitch, when it's handed to you!' The disheveled and terrified SR leader was released when Trotsky appeared from the Soviet assembly and intervened with his famous speech calling on the 'Comrade Kronstadters, pride and glory of the Russian revolution', not to harm their cause by 'petty acts of violence against individuals.'

“One final scene symbolized the powerlessness of the crowd. At around 7 p.m. a crowd of workers from the Putilov plant broke into the palace and, flourishing their rifles, demanded power for the Soviets. But the Soviet chairman, Chkheidze, calmly handed to their hysterical leader a manifesto, printed by the Soviet the evening before, in which it was said that the demonstrators should go home or be condemned as traitors to the revolution. 'Here, please take this,' Chkheidze said to him in an imperious tone. 'It says here what you and your Putilov comrades should do. Please read it carefully and

don't interrupt our business.' The confused workman took the manifesto and left the hall with the rest of the Putilovites..."²⁹¹

The "semi-insurrection", as Trotsky called it, was over. A crackdown on the Bolsheviks began. Lenin fled, disguised as a woman, to Finland, and 800 party members were arrested. It was left to Stalin and Sverdlov, now working underground, to keep the party, with its uncompromising Leninist agenda afloat... The Mensheviks and other socialists to the right of the Bolsheviks also helped at this critical point. Believing that there were "no enemies to the Left", and fearing a counter-revolution, they protected the Bolsheviks from treason charges. A year later, the Bolsheviks showed their gratitude by imprisoning the Mensheviks..."²⁹²

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In spite of this failed coup attempt, support for the Bolsheviks continued to grow, especially after they adopted the SR slogan, "Land to the Peasants!" legalizing the peasants' seizure of the landowners' estates.

As their wars against the peasantry in 1918-22 and 1928-1934 were to show, the Bolsheviks were never a pro-peasant party, and really wanted to nationalize the land rather than give it to the peasants. This was in accordance with Marxist teaching, which saw the industrial proletariat as the vanguard of the revolution, but looked down on the peasants, with their religiosity, old-fashioned ways and rejection of state interference, as being relics of the old order. However, towards the end of his life, in 1881, Marx had entered into correspondence with the *narodnik* Vera Zasulich, and had recognized the possibility that the revolution in Russia could begin with the agrarian socialists.²⁹³ So Lenin had some precedent in making concessions to the SRs at this point – concessions he was soon to take back. It paid off: many Left SRs joined the party, and others voted for the Bolsheviks in the Soviets.

On July 6, Kerensky returned from the front and Prince Lvov resigned as prime minister. Kerensky took his place, forming "a second coalition government on 24 July which, although containing a socialist majority, was still dominated by the four Cadet members. In August he called a state conference of both left- and right-wing representatives in Moscow (12-16 August) to generate national unity in the face of the crisis following the offensive and to shore up his own position. The conference made no decisions but once again Kerensky emerged as the dominant personality. General Kornilov, the new commander-in-chief, became the darling of the middle classes."²⁹⁴

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²⁹¹ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, pp.114-118.

²⁹² Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, p. 436.

²⁹³ Robert Service, *Comrades*, London: Pan Books, 2007, p. 30.

²⁹⁴ Graham Darby, "Kerensky in Hindsight", *History Today*, July, 2007, p. 52.

Major-General Lavr Kornilov, who was half-Cossack and half-Kalmyk, had distinguished himself in the Great War, playing an important part in the Brusilov offensive and escaping from Austro-Hungarian captivity. In spite of the fact that it was he who had arrested the Royal Family in March, Kornilov now put himself forward as the leader of the counter-revolution, declaring on August 11: "It is time to put an end to all this. It is time to hang the German agents and spies, with Lenin at their head, to dispel the Council of Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and scatter them far and wide, so that they should never be able to come together again!"²⁹⁵ Right-wing forces (by comparison with the Bolsheviks) in politics (Rodzianko, Guchkov, Miliukov), in business and in the army (the Officers' Union and the Union of Cossacks) soon rallied around him, hoping to prevent the Russian revolution from following the pattern of the French revolution and passing from a bourgeois, liberal phase to a Jacobin, terrorist one.

"With their backing, [Kornilov] pushed for further reactionary measures, including the restoration of the death penalty for civilians, the militarization of the railways and defence industries, and a ban on workers' organizations. A clear threat to the Soviet, the measures would amount to martial law. Kerensky vacillated but eventually, on 24 August, he agreed, leading Kornilov to expect the establishment of a military dictatorship headed by Kerensky or himself. Heeding rumours of a Bolshevik uprising to prevent this coup, the Commander-in-Chief dispatched a Cossack force to occupy the capital and disarm the garrison [and suppress "democracy run amok"].

"At this point Kerensky turned against Kornilov. His own fortunes had been falling fast and he saw his *volte face* as a way to revive them. Condemning Kornilov as a 'counter-revolutionary' and traitor to the government. Kerensky dismissed him as Commander-in-Chief and called on the people to defend Petrograd. The Soviet established an all-party committee to mobilize an armed force for the defence of the capital. The Bolsheviks were rehabilitated after their suppression in the aftermath of the July Days. Several of their leaders were released, including Trotsky.

"Only the Bolsheviks had the ability to bring out the workers and soldiers. In the northern industrial regions ad hoc revolutionary committees were formed to fight the 'counter-revolution'. Red Guards organized the defence of the factories. The Kronstadt sailors, who had last come to Petrograd during the July Days to overthrow the Provisional Government, arrived once again – this time to defend it against Kornilov. There was no need for fighting in the end. On the way to Petrograd the Cossacks were met by a Soviet delegation from the northern Caucasus, who talked them into laying down their arms. The civil war was put off to another day...

295 Kornilov, in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 727.

"Kornilov was imprisoned with thirty officers in the Bykhov Monastery near Mogilev for having been involved in a 'counter-revolutionary conspiracy'. Viewed by the Right as political martyrs, the 'Kornilovites' were later to become the founding nucleus of the Volunteer Army, the major White (or anti-Bolshevik) force fighting the Red Army in the Civil War..."²⁹⁶

"Much ink has been spilt," writes Orlovsky, "on the Kornilov affair, mostly along predictable political lines, with the left accusing the general of an attempted coup (Kornilov did order the march on Petrograd to destroy the soviet and instal himself as a Napoleonic strongman) and the right and centre (who accuse Kerensky of goading Kornilov to act and then perfidiously betraying him). Both accounts are true: the general did attempt a coup, believing that he had Kerensky's support, and Kerensky did lose his nerve and renege, sacrificing the general in a desperate effort to regain popular support... [After suppressing the coup attempt without much bloodshed] Kerensky dissolved the second coalition and declared himself head of a new government, a five-man 'Directory'.

"The Kornilov affair had enormous repercussions. Kerensky's machinations soon became public, severely damaging his personal authority. It also lent new credibility to the spectre of counter-revolution - a myth that greatly exaggerated the power of conservative forces, but none the less impelled workers, soldiers, and activists to organize militias, Red Guards, and *ad hoc* committees to defend the revolution. Even when the Kornilov threat had passed, these armed forces refused to disband and became a powerful threat to the government itself...."²⁹⁷

Figes writes: "The social polarization of the summer gave the Bolsheviks their first real mass following as a party which based its main appeal on the plebeian rejection of all superordinate authority. The Kornilov crisis was the critical turning point, for it seemed to confirm their message that neither peace nor radical social change could be obtained through the politics of compromise with the bourgeoisie. The larger factories in the major cities, where the workers' sense of class solidarity was most developed, were the first to go over in large numbers to the Bolsheviks. By the end of May, the party had already gained control of the Central Bureau of the Factory Committees and, although the Menshevik trade unionists remained in the ascendancy until 1918, it also began to get its resolutions passed at important trade union assemblies. Bolshevik activists in the factories tended to be younger, more working class and much more militant than their Menshevik or SR rivals. This made them more attractive to those groups of workers - both among the skilled and the unskilled - who were becoming increasingly prepared to engage in violent strikes, not just for better pay and working conditions but also for the control of the factory environment itself. As their network of party cells at the factory level grew, the

²⁹⁶ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, p. 122.

²⁹⁷ Orlovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 288. It should be noted that Kornilov, like Alexeyev, Ruzsky and the generals that betrayed the Tsar, all died within one or two years of their treason.

Bolsheviks began to build up their membership among the working class, and as a result their finances grew through the new members' contributions. By the Sixth Party Conference at the end of July there were probably 200,000 Bolshevik members, rising to perhaps 350,000 on the eve of October, and the vast majority of these were blue-collar workers."²⁹⁸

Similar swings took place in the city Duma elections of August and September, and in the Soviets. "As early as August, the Bolsheviks had won control of the Soviets in Ivanovo-Voznesensk (the 'Russian Manchester'), Kronstadt, Yekaterinburg, Samara and Tsaritsyn. But after the Kornilov crisis many other Soviets followed suit: Riga, Saratov and Moscow itself. Even the Petrograd Soviet fell to the Bolsheviks... [On September 9] Trotsky, appearing for the first time after his release from prison, dealt the decisive rhetorical blow by forcing the Soviet leaders to admit that Kerensky, by this stage widely regarded as a 'counter-revolutionary', was still a member of their executive. On 25 September the leadership of the Petrograd Soviet was completely revamped, with the Bolsheviks occupying four of the seven seats on its executive and Trotsky replacing Chkheidze as its Chairman. This was the beginning of the end. In the words of Sukhanov, the Petrograd Soviet was 'now Trotsky's guard, ready at a sign from him to storm the coalition'."²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, p. 457.

²⁹⁹ Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, p. 459.

19. THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

On September 1, the Provisional Government declared Russia to be a republic. In this way, as Sergei Firsov writes, "it usurped the rights of the Constitutional Assembly, for only it could determine the form of rule in the state."³⁰⁰

By the end of September, writes Norman Lowe, "there had been a polarization of political forces which left Kerensky and his dwindling band of supporters in a kind of void at the centre. Election results for Soviets and city councils demonstrated both the political polarization and the rapidly growing popularity of the Bolsheviks. In the elections for the Moscow city Duma on 24 September the Bolsheviks took 51 per cent of the vote as against only 11 per cent in June; the SR vote collapsed from 56 per cent to 14 per cent and the Menshevik vote from 12 per cent to only 4 per cent. On the other hand the Kadets, now seen as the main party to represent middle class interests, increased their vote from 17 per cent to 31 per cent. The Bolsheviks had already won majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets on 25 September, Trotsky, now established as a Bolshevik leader, was elected chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and four out of seven seats on the Central Committee were filled by Bolsheviks.

"Lenin was still in Finland, but he kept up a constant barrage of letters to the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks party, first of all urging them to take power in the name of the Soviets and form a coalition socialist government along with the Mensheviks and the SRs. Now that the Bolsheviks had majorities in so many elected bodies, that would make the transference of power to the socialist government with a Bolshevik majority perfectly legal. The Bolsheviks would not resort to violence provided the Mensheviks and SRs broke away from their association with the Kadets, so that the socialist government would be totally responsible to the Soviet. However, this golden opportunity was not taken – at a time when the vast majority of soldiers, workers and peasants would surely have supported the assumption of power by a socialist government, incredibly the Menshevik and SR leaders still preferred to cling to Kerensky and the so-called bourgeois stage of government. So Lenin quickly changed his plan of campaign. By the middle of September he was urging the Central Committee to seize power immediately, either in Petrograd or Moscow. 'The Bolsheviks, having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies of both capitals, can and must take state power into their own hands,' he wrote. 'History will not forgive us if we do not seize power now.' But most of its members, especially Kamenev and Zinoviev, felt that it was too early to attempt this, since in the country as a whole the Bolsheviks were still in a minority in most of the Soviets.

"Lenin was becoming increasingly frustrated by their lack of action: although warrants had been issued for his arrest, he slipped back into

300 Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 544.

Petrograd and on 10 October attended a meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee. He argued passionately in favour of armed insurrection and persuaded them to pass, by a vote of 10 to 2, a resolution committing the Central Committee to begin planning an insurrection. At a further meeting on 16 October the vote was again in favour of insurrection, this time by 19 to 2, but very little progress had been made with the planning. Although the party had adopted the principle of insurrection, there was still a strong feeling at this point that there would not be much support outside the big cities for a purely Bolshevik uprising. The majority view was to wait until the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets met on 20 October before a final decision was taken; if power was taken, it would be in the name of the Soviets. But Lenin continued to argue that it was vital to seize power *before* the Congress met in case Kerensky took steps to prevent its meeting. Probably his real reason was that Bolshevik control in the name of the Soviet could be presented as an accomplished fact. If power was transferred by a vote of the Congress, it would almost certainly be to a coalition of all the socialist parties. Two days later Kamenev and Zinoviev published an article in a left-wing newspaper, *Novaia Zhizn* (New Life), explaining that they could not accept the idea of an uprising so soon. They advocated waiting until the Petrograd Soviet was ready to declare itself the new government, and expressed doubts as to whether the Bolsheviks could hold on to power alone, even if their armed *coup* succeeded. This infuriated Lenin: it not only showed that the Bolshevik leadership was divided, worse still it let out the secret that they were planning an armed insurrection.

“This new crisis for the Bolsheviks served to precipitate events in their favour. The non-Bolshevik leaders postponed the opening of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets until 25 October to give their supporters time to get to Petrograd: but in fact it gave the Bolsheviks time to organize their *coup*. Kerensky took no action to restrain them and was reportedly hoping they would make a move so that he could crush them once and for all.”³⁰¹

Kerensky’s indecisiveness was one important factor in the success of the October revolution. The other was the boldness of Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky was a Jew from Odessa, who for a long time had not seen eye-to-eye with Lenin. In January, 1917, after an adventurous life in many countries, Trotsky found himself in the United States (he had been deported there from Spain). He stayed there for three months, securing the financial support of the Jewish American bankers Schiff and Warburg³⁰², and was given an American passport by President Wilson.³⁰³ That enabled him to return to Russia in May. Finding that

³⁰¹ Lowe, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

³⁰² The Jews of New York were notably leftist, if not communist. “Post-First World War socialism had also found its strongest support among New York’s Jews. And Jews accounted for between 20 and 40 percent for the New York vote for the American Labor Party between 1936 and 1941. As in Europe, so in America, it was not so hard for demagogues to equate ‘Reds’ with ‘Jews’. In reality, the real bias in Jewish politics was toward liberalism, broadly defined” (Neil Ferguson, *Kissinger. 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, p. 79).

³⁰³ Anthony C. Sutton, *Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution*, 1974, chapter II.

there were no longer any major differences between himself and the Bolsheviks, he joined them. As late as March, 1917, Lenin had expressed his wariness of Trotsky: "The main thing is not to let ourselves get caught in stupid attempts at 'unity' with social patriots, or still more dangerous... with vacillators like Trotsky & Co."³⁰⁴ However, with Trotsky now officially a Bolshevik agreeing with the Leninist line and chairing the Petrograd Soviet, it was clearly necessary to work with him rather than against him. Besides, his brilliant oratory brought many soldiers and sailors onto the Bolshevik side...

Lowe continues: "Although it was Lenin who was the driving force behind the launching of the *coup*, it was Trotsky who planned and organized the details. They decided to act through the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, a body formed on 12 October to organize the defence of Petrograd in case the Provisional Government decided to abandon the city to the Germans. Activists from the Bolshevik Military Organization went to talk to army units in and around Petrograd to explain the situation. On 21 October Trotsky himself addressed a large gathering of representatives of the Petrograd garrison at the Smolny Institute, and persuaded them to adopt a resolution supporting the Soviet against the forces of counter-revolution, by which he meant the Provisional Government. On 23 October thousands of rifles were distributed to the Bolshevik Red Guards.

"At this point Kerensky decided to take action to secure control of the capital. Troops were brought in to defend strategic points around the city, telephone lines to the Smolny Institute, the Bolshevik and Soviet headquarters, were cut and the Bolshevik press closed down. The Military Revolutionary Committee responded immediately, Kerensky's action enabling them to claim that they were defending democracy against the counter-revolution. During the night of 24-25 October, Soviet forces consisting mainly of Red Guards and workers' militia, supported by some of the garrison troops, took control of the telephone exchange, post offices, railway stations, banks and the two bridges over the river Neva. There was hardly any resistance – the small numbers of government troops guarding these places were persuaded to disobey orders and hand over their arms. Kerensky had underestimated the strength of support for the Bolsheviks and overestimated the reliability of the garrison, which, its commanders had assured him, were very much against a Bolshevik *coup*. In fact the vast majority of the garrison troops stayed neutral, unwilling to defend a government which had just reintroduced the death penalty for them. When Kerensky appealed to the military commanders at Mogilev, none was forthcoming. The members of the Provisional Government waited in vain in the Winter Palace for help to arrive.

"While the action was taking place, Lenin came out of hiding and [disguised in a wig] arrived at the Smolny Institute. At 10 a.m. on 25 October he released a declaration to the press: 'The Provisional Government has been deposed. Government authority has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd

304 Lenin, Letter to Alexandra Kollontai, March 15, 1917; in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 726.

Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the Military-Revolutionary Committee, which stands at the head of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison.' The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets was due to begin in Petrograd later that same day, 25 October. Lenin planned to stage a sensational opening to the Congress, announcing the overthrow of the government and the arrest of the ministers. However, the Winter Palace was the only important building not yet under Soviet control. Here government troops put up more of a fight, and it wasn't until the late evening of 25 October that they eventually withdrew, after the cruiser *Aurora*, which was moored across the river Neva from the Palace, had fired a few shots, causing some slight damage.³⁰⁵ It was not exactly the dramatic and heroic event portrayed in Eisenstein's famous film *October*, made in 1927, but it was enough to achieve what the Bolsheviks wanted – the arrest of the Provisional Government. Only Kerensky escaped – he slipped out through a side entrance and drove off towards Pskov in a car belonging to the American embassy, flying the American flag."³⁰⁶

The Soviet Congress finally convened at 10.40 p.m. on October 25. There were 670 delegates in all, composed of 300 Bolsheviks, 193 SRs and 82 Mensheviks. The Menshevik leader Martov "proposed the formation of a united democratic government based upon all the parties in the Soviet: this, he said, was the only way to avert a civil war. The proposal was met with torrents of applause. Even Lunacharsky was forced to admit that the Bolsheviks had nothing against it – they could not abandon the slogan of Soviet Power – and the proposal was immediately passed by a unanimous vote. But just as it looked as if a socialist coalition was at last about to be formed, a series of Mensheviks and SRs bitterly denounced the [Bolsheviks'] violent assault on the Provisional Government. They declared that their parties, or at least the right-wing sections of them, would have nothing to do with this 'criminal venture', which was bound to throw the country into civil war, and walked out of the Congress hall in protest, while the Bolshevik delegates stamped their feet, whistled and hurled abuse at them.

"Lenin's planned provocation – the pre-emptive seizure of power – had worked. By walking out of the Congress, the Mensheviks and SRs undermined all hopes of reaching a compromise with the Bolshevik moderates and of forming a coalition government of all the Soviet parties. The path was now clear for the Bolshevik dictatorship, based on the Soviet, which Lenin had no doubt intended all along. In the charged political atmosphere of the time, it is easy to see why the Mensheviks and SRs acted as they did. But it is equally

305 "The huge sound of the blast, much louder than a live shot, caused the frightened ministers to drop at once to the floor. The women from the Battalion of Death became hysterical and had to be taken away to a room at the back of the palace, where most of the remaining cadets abandoned their posts." (Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, p. 488) The troops guarding the government ministers – the women's Battalion of Death, together with some Cossacks and cadets – numbered about 3000 in all. By the evening only 300 of these were left. (V.M.)

306 Lowe, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107. A week before his death Kerensky said: "My own children are ashamed of me... Forgive me and forget me. I destroyed Russia..." (V.M.)

difficult not to draw the conclusion that, by their actions, they merely played into Lenin's hands and thus committed political suicide..."³⁰⁷

"The immediate effect was to split the Mensheviks and SRs. Trotsky seized the initiative. Denouncing Martov's resolution for a coalition with the 'wretched groups who have left us', he pronounced this memorable sentence on those Menshevik and SR delegates who remained in the great hall: 'You are miserable bankrupts, your role is played out; go where you ought to go – into the dustbin of history.' In a moment of rage, which he must have agonized over for the rest of his life, Martov shouted: 'Then we'll leave!' and walked out of the hall."

"It was past two o'clock in the morning and it only remained for Trotsky to propose a resolution condemning the 'treacherous attempts' of the Mensheviks and SRs to undermine Soviet power. The mass of the delegates, who probably did not comprehend the significance of what they were doing, raised their hands to support it. The effect of their action was to give a Soviet stamp of approval to the Bolshevik dictatorship. Then he proposed a resolution condemning the 'treacherous' attempts of the Mensheviks and SRs to undermine Soviet power. The mass of the remaining delegates (Bolsheviks and Left SRs) fell into the trap and voted for the motion, thereby legitimizing the Bolshevik coup in the name of the Soviet Congress."³⁰⁸

Meanwhile, the ministers in the Winter Palace were being arrested and taken to the Peter and Paul fortress, into which, only three months before, they had sent hundreds of Bolsheviks. This "storming" of the Winter Palace was led by Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko with about 10,000-15,000 workers. It consisted in entering unopposed through unlocked doors and windows... Later larger crowds joined in the looting of the palace and its wine stores.

"Kamenev [who with Zinoviev had opposed the coup] announced the arrest of the ministers to the Congress at 3 a.m. It was announced that a Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) had been formed composed only of Bolsheviks and with Lenin as chairman. And then Lunacharsky read out Lenin's Manifesto 'To All Workers, Soldiers and Peasants', in which 'Soviet Power' was proclaimed, and its promises on land, bread and peace were announced. The reading of this historic proclamation, which was constantly interrupted by the thunderous cheers of the delegates, played an enormous symbolic role. It provided the illusion that the insurrection was the culmination of a revolution by 'the masses'. When it had been passed, shortly after 5 a.m. on the 26th, the weary but elated delegates emerged from the Tauride Palace. 'The night was yet heavy and chill,' wrote John Reed. 'There was only a faint unearthly pallor stealing over the silent streets, dimming the watch-fires, the shadow of a terrible dawn rising over Russia...'"³⁰⁹

307 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, pp. 489-490.

308 Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 131.

309 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, p. 492.

Lenin did not appear at the Congress before it convened for the second and last time at 9 p.m. on October 25. His first act, the Decree on Land, legalized the seizing of landowners' estates that had been taking place on the initiative of peasant assemblies for some time. This was a clever move, because it removed from the Social Revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks' main rivals, their trump card – the offering of the expropriated landowners' estates to the peasants...

As Carolly Erickson writes, Lenin "declared all private property abolished, virtually inviting the propertyless of Petrograd to confiscate mansions, shops, warehouses, churches, with everything they contained. Robbery was not robbery, under the new Bolshevik decree, but a patriotic appropriation of goods for the benefit of the people; therefore the expropriation went forward with a vengeance.

"And in order to safeguard the newly constituted Bolshevik state, the killings began. All those opposed to the party in power – members of the rival political parties, some union members, the remnant of monarchists, soldiers and cadets loyal to the Provisional Government – came under suspicion. Many hundreds were murdered in the days following the takeover. And Petrograd, suddenly, was awash in liquor. The vast wine cellars of the Winter Palace were plundered, wine barrels in the vaults and warehouses of merchants were seized, tapped and their contents consumed. Wine flowed everywhere. 'The air was saturated with vinous vapours,' a contemporary wrote. 'The whole population came at a run and... gathered into pails the snow saturated with wine, drew with cups the flowing rivulets, or drank lying flat on the ground and pressing their lips to the snow. Everybody was drunk.'³¹⁰

"As the murders and thefts continued, the 'wine riots' went on unchecked, people wandered in a fog of intoxication, brawling, vomiting, lying dead drunk in the snow. Petrograd was the scene of a monumental crime spree and a monumental debauch – the latter a conspicuous symbol of the new government, of the depths to which the revolution had sunk..."³¹¹

Lenin's band of thugs – the most important were Lenin himself, Trotsky, Sverdlov and Stalin – established what they liked to call a government in the Smolny Institute in rooms adjacent to the existent Institute headmistress. They had no money and no administrative experience. When the unemployed Pole Peskowski was appointed director of the State Bank, the employees laughed him away...

³¹⁰ Kotkin writes: "Each new Red Guard detachment sent to prevent a ransacking instead got drunk too. 'We tried flooding the cellars with water,' the leader of the Bolshevik forces on site recalled. 'But the firemen... got drunk instead'." (*Stalin*, p. 219). (V.M.)

³¹¹ Erickson, *Alexandra the Last Tsarina*, London: Constable, 2001, pp. 311-312.

There was an absurdist quality to Bolshevik “government” that Kotkin has compared to “the new performance art known as Dadaism. A perfectly apt nonsense term, Dada had arisen in neutral Switzerland during the Great War, largely among Jewish Romanian exiles, in what they called the Cabaret Voltaire, which, coincidentally, lay on the same street in Zurich (Spiegelgasse, 1) as Lenin’s wartime exile apartment (Spiegelgasse, 14). Tristan Tzara, a Dada poet and provocateur, and Lenin may have played chess against each other. Dada and Bolshevism arose out of the same historical conjuncture. Dada’s originators cleverly ridiculed the infernal Great War and the malevolent interests that drove it, as well as crass commercialism, using collage, montage, found objects, puppetry, sound poetry, noise music, bizarre films, and one-off pranks staged for the new media they mocked. Dada happening were also transnational, and would flourish in Berlin, Cologne, Paris, New York, Tokyo and Tiflis. The Dada artists – or ‘anti-artists’ as many of them preferred to be known – did not conflate, say, a urinal repurposed as a ‘fountain’ with a new and better politics. Tzara composed poems by cutting newspaper articles into pieces, shaking the fragments in a bag, and emptying them across the table. Another Dadaist read a lecture whose every word was purposefully drowned out by the shattering noise of a train whistle. Such tactics were a world away from the pedantic, hyperpolitical Lenin. He and his decrees about a new world order were issued without irony. The Bolshevik decrees were also issued into Dada-esque anarchy...”³¹²

The deadly serious anti-authority of Lenin was the perfect complement to the absurdly unserious anti-art of Dadaism. However, Lenin’s government of the absurd could never have produced the powerful state it eventually did produce on the basis of its own resources. Its bureaucracy had to be recruited – or coerced – from the officials of the former tsarist and Provisional Governments.

Thus Lenin decided, writes Orlovsky, “to retain the ministerial bureaucracy and cabinet executive rather than destroy these creatures of the tsarist regime (as recently envisaged in his *State and Revolution*), he simply relabelled ministries ‘commissariats’ and the cabinet ‘Council of People’s Commissars’. With this legerdemain he rebaptized these bodies as qualitatively different, purportedly because they were now part of a workers’ and peasants’ state and presumably staffed by proletarians.

“This was a masterful illusion: few proletarians were prepared for such service. It created, however, a golden opportunity for the white-collar employees of the tsarist and provisional governments... They found the transition easy...

³¹² Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 230.

“... The key revolutionary institutions of 1917 – soviets, factory committees, trade union, cooperatives, professional associations, and the like – were gradually subsumed into the new bureaucracy or extinguished outright...”³¹³

This is always the case with evil: it has no real creative power of its own, but derives its power from a subversion of the good. Tragically, most of what was good or competent from the old order allowed itself to be subverted by the red beast, to whom the devil, the dragon, “gave his power, his throne, and great authority” (Revelation 13.2)...

313 Orlovsky, op. cit., pp. 293, 294.

20. THE DESTRUCTION OF RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY

“On the day after the coup,” writes Adam Tooze, “Lenin proposed that the Constituent Assembly elections be cancelled altogether. There was no need for such an exercise in ‘bourgeois democracy’. But he was overruled by the Bolshevik Executive Committee, which decided that to flout the democratic hopes of the February revolution so openly would do more harm than good.”³¹⁴

Thus “on 4 November, Sovnarkom [the Council of People’s Commissars, the Bolshevik government’s executive organ] decreed for itself the right to pass legislation without approval from the Soviet – a clear breach of the principle of Soviet power – and from that point it ruled by fiat without consulting it. On 12 November, the Soviet executive met for the first time in a fortnight: during its recess Sovnarkom had begun peace talks with the Central Powers, declared war on Ukraine, and imposed martial law in Moscow and Leningrad.

“From his first days in power Lenin set out to destroy all those ‘counter-revolutionary’ parties opposed to his seizure of power. On 27 October, Sovnarkom banned the opposition press. Kadet, Menshevik and SR leaders were arrested by the MRC. By the end of November the prisons were so full of these new ‘politicals’ that the Bolsheviks began to release criminals to make more room...”³¹⁵

Finally, on November 28 Lenin, supported by the whole Bolshevik central committee except Stalin, decreed that the Kadets were “enemies of the people”. There was now no legitimate political opposition – until the convening of the Constituent Assembly. Only the army remained as a potential centre of opposition...

“On November 8, 1917, Lenin and Trotsky had radioed Russia’s acting supreme commander, forty-one-year-old General Nikolai Dukhonin – Kornilov’s former chief of staff – to enter into separate peace negotiations with the Germans. Dukhonin refused the order to betray Russia’s allies. Lenin had the correspondence distributed to all units to show that the ‘counterrevolution’ wanted to continue the war. He also dismissed Dukhonin in favor of thirty-two-year-old Nikolai Krylenko, who heretofore had held the lowest rank in Russia’s officer corps (ensign). On November 20, 1917, he arrived at Mogiloyov with a trainload of pro-Bolshevik soldiers and sailors. Dukhonin duly surrendered to him. Having chosen not to flee, Dukhonin had nonetheless not prevented the escape of General Kornilov and other top tsarist officers who had been held in the nearby monastery prison since they had surrendered to Kerensky’s people (in September 1917). Upon discovering the escape, furious soldiers and sailors shot and bayoneted Dukhonin while he lay face down on the ground, and then for several days used his naked corpse for target practice. Krylenko [who had announced that he was taking Dukhonin’s place and that

³¹⁴ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

³¹⁵ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 133-134.

Dukhonin was to be sent to Petrograd at the disposal of the Council of People's Commissars] was either unwilling or unable to stop them..."³¹⁶

Meanwhile, as Paul Johnson writes, "Every organization, from factories to the trams, held Soviet-style elections. This was the easiest way to ensure that delegates chosen were broadly acceptable to the regime. Later, Boris Pasternak was to give a vignette of the process: 'Everywhere there were new elections: for the running of housing, trade, industry and municipal services. Commissars were being appointed to each, men in black leather jerkins, with unlimited powers and an iron will, armed with means of intimidation and revolvers, who shaved little and slept less. They knew the shrinking bourgeois creed, the average holder of cheap government stocks and they spoke of them without the slightest pity and with Mephistophelean smiles, as to petty thieves caught in the act. These were the people who reorganized everything in accordance with the plan, and company after company, enterprise after enterprise, became Bolshevised.'"³¹⁷

*

The only hope for a check on Bolshevik power now rested with the Constituent Assembly, elections for which took place on November 12. The turnout was large (60%), and the most votes were won by the SRs (58%). The Bolsheviks polled 25%, the Ukrainian Mensheviks - 12%, and other national parties - 4%. In all, socialist or revolutionary parties received 80% of the vote, while the liberal Cadets received 5%.³¹⁸ Crucially, the Bolsheviks won Petrograd and Moscow, the capital garrisons and the Baltic sailors.³¹⁹

On the face of it, this was an astounding result. The February revolution had been created by the liberal Cadets. What had made the mass of the population turn so quickly from liberalism to socialism, from the rule of some kind of law to the rule of a lawless despotism?

The main answer to this question is simple: the socialist parties promised the electorate what they in their great majority wanted – peace and land, whereas the centrist and rightist parties still clung to outmoded habits of mind such as loyalty to allies in war and property rights. The other reason is that the socialists had won the cultural war; the language and concepts generally used for describing the political changes that were taking place was essentially socialist. As Stephen Kotkin writes: "Well before 1917, ordinary people readily accepted the idea of an irreconcilable conflict between labor and capital, but rather than speak of classes per se, they tended to speak of light versus darkness, honor versus insult. A trajectory of suffering, redemption and salvation were how they made sense of the struggle with their masters, not

³¹⁶ Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 248. It was not until two years later that Dukhonin's wife was able to obtain it for burial...

³¹⁷ Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1999, p. 65.

³¹⁸ Tooze, op. cit., p. 85; Pipes, op. cit., pp. 5, 149.

³¹⁹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 245.

capital accumulation, surplus value, and other Marxist categories. This would change as language of class came to suffuse all printed and spoken discourse in revolutionary Russia, from farms and factories to the army, fleet, and corridors of power. Even the classically liberal Constitutional Democrats, who strove to be above class (or nonclass), fatally accepted the definition of February as a 'bourgeois' revolution. This step conceded implicitly that February was not in itself an end, but a way station to an eventual new revolution, beyond liberal constitutionalism...

"... If the Great War in effect restructured the political landscape, vastly deepening social justice [i.e. socialist] currents that had already made visions of socialism popular before 1917, the Provisional Government proved no match for that challenge. On top of its feeble governing structures, its entire symbolic universe failed miserably, from the use of a tsarist eagle, uncrowned, as state symbol to its new national anthem, 'God save the people', sung to the Glinka melody of 'God save the Tsar'. Caricatures of the Provisional Government were accompanied by popular pamphlets, songs, and gestures that discredited all things bourgeois, attacking the educated, the decently dressed, the literate, as fat cats, swindlers – even Russia's *Stock Market Gazette* poked fun at the bourgeoisie. At the same time, in 1917, far more even than in 1905-06, Russia's constitutional revolution was deluged by a multifaceted leftist revolutionary *culture* enacted by evocative gestures and imagery: the 'Internationale', red flags and red slogans, and a vague yet compelling program of people's power: 'All power to the Soviets'. The hammer and sickle symbol appeared in spring 1917 (well before the Bolshevik coup), and it would soon capture the linkage – or the hoped-for linkage – between the aspirations of urbanites and the aspirations of country folk, joined in possibilities for social justice (socialism). The political mood in 1917, as one contemporary observer rightly noted, was characterized by 'a general aspiration of a huge mass of Russians to declare themselves, no matter what, to be absolute socialists'."³²⁰

The overwhelmingly socialist character of the Russian electorate was demonstrated by the paradoxical fact that, many of those who did not vote for the socialists many were not Russians, but Jews. According to Solzhenitsyn, more than 80% of Jews "voted for Zionist parties. Lenin wrote that 550,000 were for Jewish nationalists. 'The majority of the Jewish parties formed a single national list, in accordance with which seven deputies were elected – six Zionists and Gruzenberg. 'The success of the Zionists' was also aided by the [published not long before the elections] Declaration of the English Foreign Minister Balfour [on the creation of a 'national centre' of the Jews in Palestine], 'which was met by the majority of the Russian Jewish population with enthusiasm' [in Moscow, Petrograd, Odessa, Kiev and many other cities there were festive manifestations, meetings and religious services]".³²¹

³²⁰ Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 175, 176.

³²¹ Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti let vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, p. 73.

The election demonstrated without a doubt that the revolution was not imposed upon the Russians: they voted for it themselves... More of them voted for the Social Revolutionaries than for the Bolsheviks or Mensheviks (with the liberals a very poor fourth). So the result was a victory for the socialists in the broader sense of the word, and a defeat for the Bolsheviks. But the Bolsheviks did not give up power. The only concession they made to the election result was to invite three Left SRs into the Sovnarkom.

"In the face of this rejection by the electorate," write Mark Mazower, "Lenin adjusted his position: according to his *Theses on the Constituent Assembly*, it was true that 'in a bourgeois republic the constituent assembly [is] the highest form of the democratic principle': it now appeared that according to 'revolutionary social-democracy... a republic of Soviets [is] a higher form of the democratic principle'. The Assembly became an anachronistic symbol of 'bourgeois counter-revolution'; its members were written off as 'men from another world'. Lenin did not prevent its meeting in January 1918; but one day after it opened, he closed it down by force. This was bad Marxism, according to more moderate Social Democrats, but Lenin considered 'revolutionary democracy' higher than 'parliamentary democracy'.³²²

"His triumph, like Mussolini's from the Right, was really the consequence of liberalism's failure. Russia's liberals turned out to be the first, but not the last, to assume mistakenly that a deep-rooted social crisis could be solved by offering 'the people' constitutional liberties. Such liberties were not what 'the people' – and especially Russia's fifteen million peasant conscripts – wanted. They were more interested in peace and land, and the liberals offered them neither, just as they had little to offer the country's urban working class either. In the factories, in the countryside and in the ranks, social order was collapsing, and the middle ground in Russian politics disappeared. Kerensky's Provisional Government had become an empty shell well before Trotsky's Red Guards seized power in Petrograd..."³²³

"Petrograd was in a state of siege on 5 January, the opening day of the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks had forbidden public gatherings and flooded the city with troops, who fired on a crowd of 50,000 demonstrators organized by the Union for the Defence of the Constituent Assembly. At least ten were killed and dozens wounded. It was the first time government troops had fired on an unarmed crowd since the February Days.

322 Thus he quoted a speech made in 1903 by Plekhanov, the founder of Russian Social Democracy: "The success of the revolution is the supreme law. And if, for the sake of the revolution, it should become necessary to restrict the action of one or another democratic principle, then it would be criminal not to do so... one must view even the principle of the universal vote as one such fundamental principle of democracy... one can conceive of a situation where we Social Democrats would oppose the universal vote. If in an outburst of revolutionary enthusiasm the people elect a very good parliament, then we should try to prolong it; but if the elections turn out unfavourably, then we should try to disperse the parliament – not in two years, but, if possible, in two weeks" (in Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 127).

323 Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth-Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 9.

"In the Catherine Hall of the Tauride Palace, where the assembly met at 4 p.m., the atmosphere was tense. There were almost as many troops as there were delegates. They stood at the back of the hall and sat up in the galleries, drinking vodka and shouting abuse at the SR deputies. Lenin watched the scene from the old government loge, where the tsarist ministers had sat during the sessions of the Duma. He gave the impression of a general before the start of a decisive battle.

"Under Chernov's chairmanship the SRs started a debate – they wanted to rush through decrees on land and peace to leave behind a legislative legacy – but nobody could hear above the soldiers' heckling. After a while, the Bolsheviks declared the assembly to be in the hands of 'counter-revolutionaries' and walked out, followed later by the Left SRs. Then, at 4 a.m., the Red Guards brought proceedings to a close. One of them, a sailor, climbed up on the tribune and, tapping Chernov on the shoulder, announced that everyone should leave the hall 'because the guard is tired'. Chernov kept the session going for a few more minutes but finally agreed to adjourn it when the guards made threats. The delegates filed out and the Tauride Palace was then locked..."³²⁴

The Assembly never reconvened... So the supreme authority in the Russian republic disappeared because *the guard was tired*... Thus did Russian democracy allowed itself to be abolished, coming to an abrupt and inglorious end that demonstrated conclusively that the Tsar was right in thinking that democracy would not work in Russia and that the liberals who demanded it were capable neither of ruling nor of bringing good to the people...

"There was no popular reaction against the closure of Russia's national parliament. Among the peasantry, the traditional base of support for the SR Party, there was indifference. The SRs had mistakenly believed that the peasants shared their veneration for the Constituent Assembly. To the educated peasants the assembly was perhaps a symbol of 'the revolution'. But to the mass of the peasants, whose political outlook was confined to their own village, it was a distant parliament, dominated by the urban parties and associated with the discredited Duma. They had their own village Soviets, which stood closer to their own ideals, being in effect no more than their own village assemblies in a more revolutionary form. 'What do we need some Constituent Assembly for, when we already have our Soviets, where our own deputies can meet and decide everything,' an SR propagandist heard a group of peasant soldiers say.

"Through their Soviets the peasantry divided the gentry's land and property among themselves. They did so in line with their own egalitarian forms of social justice, and did not need the sanction of the Decree on Land passed at the Soviet Congress on 26 October. No central power could tell them what to

³²⁴ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 136-137.

do. In most areas the commune allocated strips of confiscated land according to the number of 'eaters' in each household. The landowners themselves were usually left a plot if they worked it with their own labour, as the peasants did. The rights of land and labour, which lay at the heart of the village commune, were understood as basic human rights."³²⁵

So already by January, 1918 Lenin had crushed not only the old aristocracy, but also the army leadership, the bourgeoisie, the Kadets, and even the other socialist parties. What he had not conquered was the peasantry; and in spite of the savage suppression of the peasant uprisings of 1920-21, they were not to be conquered definitively in Lenin's lifetime. The final war - a war to the death if ever there was one - between the peasants and the Bolsheviks would be fought by Stalin in his collectivization campaign beginning in 1928...

Why did the Bolsheviks conquer so easily? In his article "Socialism in One Country", published as the preface to the collection, *On the Path to October* (1925), Stalin suggested three reasons, all relating to the Great War: (i) the Anglo-French and Austro-German imperialists blocs had been so occupied in fighting each other that they had not paid enough attention to Russia; (ii) the sufferings of the war had generated a great longing for peace in Russia, which seemed possible only by accepting the Bolsheviks; and (iii) similar longings among the workers of other nations had generated sympathy among them for the actions of the Russian workers. There was much truth in this analysis, but it omitted the central reason: that since the Russians had overthrown their anointed tsar, God had withdrawn His blessing and subjected them to a curse...

³²⁵ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 137-138.

21. THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

After the disaster at Gallipoli in 1915, and the surrender of a British and Indian army at Kut in Mesopotamia the following year, things slowly improved for the British in the Middle East. "An Arab revolt in 1916," writes Tombs, "was given support, involving a young Oxford archaeologist, T.E. Lawrence, the only romantic hero of the war. British, Indian and ANZAC forces eventually took Jerusalem, Damascus and Baghdad in 1917, where they were greeted as liberators from Turkish rule. The British government signed a secret agreement with the French dividing most of the Turkish empire into 'spheres of influence' between them. Also, the Balfour Declaration in November 1917 committed Britain to a 'National Home for the Jewish People in Palestine', though without prejudicing 'the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities' – who, it was assumed, would be grateful for economic development. This had seemed a clever idea, pleasing Jewish opinion thought to be influential in Russia and America. Britain thus blundered insouciantly into what would turn out to be an intractable and damaging problem with long-term ramifications unimaginable at the time."³²⁶

The Balfour Declaration, so called after the British Foreign Secretary (and former Prime Minister) Lord Arthur Balfour, who published it on November 2, 1917, was one of the most portentous documents in world history, whose consequences are still being played out today – and not only in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It ranged one of the great powers of the time – the power, moreover, that was about to conquer Jerusalem in the following month – in alliance with Zionism, thereby laying the foundation for the creation of the modern State of Israel in 1948 and tying in the interests of what is now called "the international community" with the interests of Israel.

But, as we shall see, its significance was still greater than that...

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"Many different individuals," writes Peter Mansfield, "contributed to the genesis of the Balfour Declaration. The British Gentiles among them were guided by a remarkable mixture of imperial *Realpolitik* and romantic/historical feelings. It was a Jewish member of the British government, Herbert Samuel, who in January 1915 first proposed to the cabinet the idea of a Jewish Palestine which would be annexed by the British Empire. But it was not until after David Lloyd George took over the conduct of the war at the end of 1916, as the leader of a National Coalition of Liberals and Conservatives, that the Zionist cause made real headway. The prime minister, a close friend of the Gentile Zionist editor of the *Manchester Guardian* – C.P. Scott – was an easy convert, as were other members of his cabinet – Balfour, the foreign secretary; Lord Milner, the former imperial consul in Africa; and a large group of Foreign Office officials and government advisers which included Sir Mark Sykes. These were non-Jews

³²⁶ Tombs, op. cit.

who saw huge advantages in a Jewish Palestine as part of the empire. But underpinning their imperial convictions was the romantic appeal of the return of the Jews to Zion, which, founded on Old Testament Christianity, was part of their Victorian upbringing. (Zionism also had this twin attraction for Churchill, who was not in the cabinet in 1917 but would return to it.) The British cabinet had already veered away from the commitment in the Sykes-Picot agreement to international control for Palestine. 'Britain could take care of the Holy Places better than anyone else,' the prime minister told C.P. Scott, and a French Palestine was 'not to be thought of'.

"It was ironical, but in the circumstances not surprising, that the only Jew in the cabinet, Mr. Edwin Montagu, secretary of state for India, should also be the most outspoken opponent of the Balfour Declaration. Montague was a member of the highly assimilated Anglo-Jewish aristocracy, many of whom feared the effect of Jewish nationalism on their own position. Montagu had his counterpart in other countries – Henry Morgenthau Sr., a former US ambassador to Turkey, was a pronounced anti-Zionist, for example. Nevertheless the British cabinet was convinced that world Jewry was overwhelmingly in favour of Zionism and gave credit to Britain for supporting the cause. It believed that this had helped to bring the United States into the war in April 1917 and to maintain its enthusiasm thereafter. The British may have had an exaggerated view of the wealth and influence on Washington of American Jews at this period, but it was their belief in these that mattered. Moreover, the Germans were aware of the possibilities to be gained by winning Jewish sympathy, especially among the many American Jews of east-European origin who hated the Russian government. Germany was trying to persuade the Turks to lift their objections to Zionist settlement in Palestine, although so far without success. Finally, it was hoped that Britain's adoption of Zionism would win over the Russian Jewish socialists who were trying to influence the Kerensky government to take Russia out of the war..."³²⁷

The most important Jewish Zionist was the Manchester chemist (born in Tsarist Russia), Chaim Weizmann. Jonathan Schneer describes his path to power as follows: "Conditions created by the war enabled Chaim Weizmann and his colleagues to work wonders. During 1914-17 they gained access to the elite among British Jews and converted some of them to Zionism. They defeated advocates of Jewish assimilation, such as Lucien Wolf of the Conjoint Committee, whose *raison d'être*, lobbying the Foreign Office on behalf of foreign Jews, especially Russian and Romanian, had been swept away by the war. They gained entrance to British governing circles and converted some of their most important members too.

"During this period Weizmann and those who worked with him acted as inspired opportunists. Finally they could argue convincingly that a community of interest linked Zionist aspirations with those of the Entente. Zionists wanted the Ottomans out of Palestine; Britain and France wanted them out of the

³²⁷ Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East*, London: Penguin, 2003, pp. 162-163.

Middle East altogether. Zionists wanted a British protectorate in Palestine; Britain did too (although initially Sir Mark Sykes had bargained it away in negotiations with Georges-Picot of France).

“More generally, Weizmann and his colleagues persuaded powerful men in Britain, France and Italy that support of Zionism would benefit their wartime cause and the peace to follow. ‘International Jewry’ was a powerful if subterranean force, they claimed..., whose goodwill would reap dividends for the Allies. Specifically, they suggested that Jewish finance in America and Jewish influence upon anti-war forces in Russia, could help determine the conflict’s outcome. Weizmann warned the Foreign Office that Germany recognized the potential of Jewish power and had begun to court it already. He advised the Allies to trump their enemy by declaring outright support for Zionism. His arguments worked upon the minds of anti- and philo-Semites alike among the British governing elite, who were desperate for any advantage in the wartime struggle. Eventually, to gain Jewish backing in the war, they promised to support establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine...”³²⁸

“The Balfour Declaration,” wrote the Zionist Jew Samuel Landman in 1936, “originated in the War Office, was consummated in the Foreign Office and is being implemented in the Colonial Office”³²⁹. This sounds as if it were entirely a British governmental idea; and it is true that without the enthusiastic support of certain Gentile Englishmen in the British government, especially Sir Mark Sykes, Under-Secretary at the War Cabinet and co-author of the famous Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Declaration would probably never have come into being. Nevertheless, the real motors behind the coup were two Russian Zionist Jews living in Britain – Chaim Weizmann and Nathan Sokolow.

They had an uphill task ahead of them. For until well into the war the British government was not interested in Zionism – and had in any case semi-officially promised Palestine to *the Arabs* (or so the Arabs were led to believe) in exchange for their support against the Ottomans. Also, the leaders of British Jewry, the “Conjoint Committee” led by Lucien Wolf, who initially had the ear of the government, were fiercely opposed to Zionism since it endangered their goal – secure assimilation within western society. Moreover, the Zionists themselves were divided into the politicals under Weizmann and the practicals or culturals under the Romanian Moses Gaster. The political Zionists were looking to create a Zionist state, while the culturals wanted only to strengthen Jewish culture and the Hebrew language in Palestine and throughout the Diaspora.

In April 1915 an important debate took place between the Zionists and the Assimilationists. “[The Russian Zionist] Tschlenow, in a long introductory speech, pointed out that at the peace conference following the war, even small

328 Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration*, London: Bloomsbury, 2011, pp. 365-366.

329 Landman, Great Britain, *The Jews and Palestine*, London: The Zionist Association, 1936; quoted in Vicomte Léon De Poncins, *State Secrets*, Chulmleigh: Britons Publishing Company, 1975, pp. 9, 11-14.

nationalities such as Finns, Lithuanians and Armenians would 'put forward their demands, their wishes, their aspirations.' He then asked his anti-Zionist friends: 'Shall the Jewish "people", the Jewish "nation", be silent?'

"Note here that Wolf, in his written account of the meeting, placed the words 'people' and 'nation' in quotation marks. Those tiny vertical scratches signalled the profound chasm separating the two camps. Wolf believed that asserting that the Jews constituted a distinct nation would fatally undercut his argument that British Jews really were Jewish Britons. It would deny the possibility of a genuine Jewish assimilation in Britain or anywhere else. It contradicted his liberal assumptions. He refused to make the required assertion...

"... On the crucial issue of Jewish nationality, neither side budged. Consultation and discussions would continue, and memoranda would be written from both sides, but the gulf remained unbridgeable. Henceforth their competition for the ear of the government would grow increasingly fierce. And although Wolf began from the better-established and therefore more advantageous position, Weizmann was an absolute master of the political game..."³³⁰

The triumph of Weizmann and the Zionists was the result of many factors. One, undoubtedly, was the personal charm of Weizmann himself. According to A.N. Wilson, "the importance of personal charm in history is sometimes forgotten. Chaim Weizmann had it in abundance, and this largely explains Arthur Balfour's 1917 Declaration."³³¹ However, no less important was the particular character of Russian, as opposed to Western Jewry – and the peculiar conjunction of political circumstances in 1914-1917.

The Russian Jews, unlike their West European counterparts, lived as a state within a state, a self-created ghetto, enslaved, not so much by the Russian authorities as by its own rabbinic *kahal* and the multiplicity of rules imposed on them by the Talmud, seeking no contact with Gentiles and despising them. The fact of this Jewish isolationism is recognized by Jews and Gentiles alike.³³² As such, the Russian Jews were naturally drawn to Zionism, to emigration to Palestine and the formation of a state within a state there.

330 Schneer, op. cit., pp. 147-151.

331 Wilson, *After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2005, p. 510. See Sir Isaiah Berlin's rather starry-eyed essay, "Chaim Weizmann's Leadership", in *The Power of Ideas*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2000, pp. 186-194.

332 Thus Sir Isaiah Berlin writes: "They had, unlike their Western brothers, grown to be a kind of State with a State, with their own political, social, religious and human ideals... They were surrounded by Russian peasants, against whom they felt no hatred, but whom they regarded as a species of lower being with whom their contacts were restricted" ("The Origin of Israel", in *The Power of Ideas*, p. 14). And M.O. Menshikov wrote: "The real Ghetto of the Jews is Judaism itself, an old creed that congeals its followers in a serfdom heavier than that of ancient Egypt" (*Monthly Review* (London), February, 1904; in David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 535).

However, Zionism would never have succeeded at this time without the endorsement of the British; and the British, as we have seen, endorsed it primarily because they thought that in this way they could buy the financial support of the American Jews, and especially of the leading American Jewish banker, Jacob Schiff, the head of the New York bank of Kuhn, Loeb & Co. Schiff was a Zionist who financed several Zionist projects in Palestine. He also, like most Zionists, had a visceral hatred of Russian tsarism: in 1904 he had given a huge loan of \$200 million to the Japanese in their war with Russia, for which the Japanese gave him several awards, and as a result of which they became among the most fervent believers in the idea that the world was ruled by the Jews... In 1916, in response to Russian requests for a war loan, he made it clear that he would satisfy this request only if the Tsar's government gave the Jews of Russia full equality immediately.³³³ In 1917, as we have seen, Schiff sent Trotsky back to Russia with his pockets overflowing with dollars...

At the beginning of the war, however, it was by no means certain which side the American Jews would back. After all, America did not join the side of the Allies (France, Britain and Russia) until April, 1917; before then she had adopted a posture of strict neutrality. Moreover, there was a powerful minority, the German Americans, whose sympathies were naturally with Germany, and another powerful minority, the Irish Americans, whose feelings (especially after the Dublin Uprising of 1916) were decidedly anti-English. Now Schiff was a *German Jew*. Therefore it was reasonable to expect that not only his Russophobia but also his German cultural roots would incline him towards favouring the Germans. So the Allies needed something extra in order to persuade him to back their side...

Another important factor here was the policy adopted by the Russian generals during their retreat through Poland in 1915 of evacuating the Jewish population from the front line areas towards the East on the grounds of their unreliability. There were some grounds for the Russian decision. Apart from the well-known hostility of the Jews to all things Russian, which had led to the murder of thousands of Russians in pogroms since 1881, the largest Jewish organization in Russia, the Bund, had signed Trotsky's Zimmerwald Manifesto in September, 1915 against the war – an action that contrasted with the strongly patriotic support of almost all Jews in other warring countries for the country in which they lived. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the policy was disastrous. First, it inflicted unjust suffering on many innocent Jews, several hundreds of whom were shot as spies. Secondly, it clogged up the transport system in Western Russia, thereby hindering the war effort at a critical time. And thirdly, it involved the transportation of large numbers of discontented Jews beyond the Pale and into Central and Eastern Russia, thereby raising the revolutionary temperature in the Russian heartland.

333 S.S. Oldenburg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II* (The Reign of Emperor Nicholas II), Belgrade, 1939, vol. II, pp. 196-197.

Reports of this hindered the efforts of the French and the English to raise loans in America. As the French Professor Basch reported from there: "The great point of departure is now religious persecution [in Russia] and it is the two million Jews of America, a million and a half of whom are to be found in New York, and a million and a half of whom are Russian and Polish Jews who have escaped pogroms, who lead the campaign against Russia. The organs of anti-Russian propaganda are the Yiddish-language newspapers...; the popular speakers; the rabbis; and finally the great bankers of Wall Street headed by the greatest financial force of all in America, Jacob H. Schiff...."³³⁴

Even anti-Zionist Jews like Lucien Wolf recognized that the Allies had to do something special to elicit the sympathy of the Jews if they were to offset the Russian factor. "'In any bid for Jewish sympathies today,' he told Lord Robert Cecil [on December 16, 1915], 'very serious account must be taken of the Zionist movement. In America the Zionist organizations have lately captured Jewish opinion, and very shortly a great American Jewish Congress will be held virtually under Zionist auspices.' He wished to make it clear that he himself 'deplored the Jewish National Movement. 'To my mind the Jews are not a nationality. I doubt whether they have ever been one in the true sense of the term.' But he did not doubt that this was 'the moment for the Allies to declare their policy in regard to Palestine' and to do so in a spirit that was acceptable to Zionist ears. The Zionists probably recognized that the Allies could not 'make a Jewish State of a land in which only a comparatively small minority of the inhabitants are Jews'. But Britain and France could say to them 'that they thoroughly understand and sympathize with Jewish aspirations in regard to Palestine, and that when the destiny of the country came to be considered, those aspirations will be taken into account'. He thought too that assurances of 'reasonable facilities for immigration and colonization', for the establishment of a Jewish University, and for the recognition of Hebrew 'as one of the vernaculars of the land' could be given. Were all that done, the Allies, Wolf did not doubt, 'would sweep the whole of American Jewry into enthusiastic alliance to their cause'. It was true that this still left the question of the *political* disposition of the country itself open. The Zionists, he had reason to believe, would look forward to Great Britain becoming 'the mistress of Palestine'. No doubt, as he himself recognized, it might be difficult for the British themselves to touch on the subject in view of the well-established French claims to Syria and the equally well-established French view that Palestine itself was part of 'Syria'. But again, if the assurances about Britain's sympathy for Zionism and its willingness to guarantee rights of immigration and settlement in Palestine to Jews that he proposed were proclaimed, the purpose immediately in view, namely the attachment of American Jewry to the Allied cause, would be achieved."³³⁵

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³³⁴ Basch, in Vital, op. cit., p. 664.

³³⁵ Vital, op. cit., pp. 665-666.

By March, 1916 the Foreign Office was converted to Wolf's "Palestine idea". "The Russians and the French were invited to join Britain in considering 'an arrangement in regard to Palestine completely satisfactory to Jewish aspirations'. The definition of 'Jewish aspirations' Wolf had offered to the Foreign Office, was forwarded to the Allied governments for examination as it stood along with the terms on which the Foreign Office itself proposed that an offer to the Jews be made. Wolf's terms were modest: 'In the event of Palestine coming within the sphere of Great Britain or France at the close of the war, the Governments of those Powers will not fail to take account of the historic interest that country possesses for the Jewish community. The Jewish population will be secured in the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, equal political rights with the rest of the population, reasonable towns and colonies inhabited by them as may be shown to be necessary.'

"The Foreign Office, however, wished the French and the Russians to know that they themselves favoured a substantially stronger formulation: 'We consider... that the scheme might be made far more attractive to the majority of Jews if it held out to them the prospect that when in the course of time Jewish colonies in Palestine grow strong enough to cope with the Arab population they may be allowed to take the management of the internal affairs of Palestine (with the exception of Jerusalem and the Holy Places) into their own hands.'

"The Russian response turned out to be friendly. Sazonov, the foreign minister, told the British ambassador (Buchanan) that Russia welcomed the migration of Jews out of Russia to Palestine or anywhere else. Their only proviso was that the (Christian) Holy Places be placed under an international regime. In contrast, the French response was ferociously negative, first and foremost because it seemed to them that the 'Palestine Idea' touched impermissibly, even if only obliquely (but perhaps not unintentionally), on their own strategic and colonial ambitions in the area..."³³⁶

This Anglo-French rivalry over Palestine recalls the similar struggle at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Napoleon set out to conquer Palestine from Egypt and was foiled by Admiral Nelson's destruction of his fleet at the battle of the Nile. Now it was a British army under General Allenby that would set out from Egypt to conquer Palestine, thereby threatening French colonial designs in the region. For a while, the British put aside the Palestine Idea so as not to endanger relations with France.

Palestine was important for another reason. As Peter Frankopan writes, "Concerns had been growing about the rising levels of Jewish immigration to Britain, with its numbers arriving from Russia alone rising by a factor of five between 1880 and 1920.... The Balfour Declaration... was what Balfour later described to the House of Lords as 'a partial solution to the great and abiding Jewish problem'.

³³⁶ Vital, *op. cit.*, p. 671.

“Although the championing of a homeland for European Jews has understandably attracted attention, Britain also had its eye on Palestine for its position in relation to the oilfields and as a terminus for a pipeline linking to the Mediterranean. This would save a journey of a thousand miles, planners later noted, and would give Britain ‘virtual control over the output of what may well prove to be one of the richest oil fields in the world.’ It was imperative, therefore, that Britain had a strong presence in Palestine, that it had control over Haifa, with its good, deep harbor, which made it the ideal place for loading oil on to British tankers, and that the pipeline ran to the port – rather than to the north, and French-controlled Syria.

“As Britain’s strategic thinking went at the time, Haifa would provide a perfect terminus for oil piped from Mesopotamia. So it proved. By 1940, more than 4 million tons of oil was flowing along the pipeline that was built after the war, enough to supply the entire Mediterranean fleet. It was, as *Time* magazine called it, the ‘carotid artery of the British empire’. The world’s largest empire was receiving massive transfusions of the black blood of oil, pumped directly from the heart of the world.”³³⁷

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At the same time, however, the British were entertaining a quite different idea that was completely incompatible with the Palestine Idea. Since the outbreak of the war, Arab nationalism had been stirring. It was led by King Hussein, Sharif of Mecca, descendant of the prophet and custodian of the Muslim holy places, who, together with his sons Abdullah and Faisal, was proposing a *jihad* against the Turkish Sultan.

The British High Commissioner for Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, entered into correspondence with Hussein, hoping to use this Arab nationalist movement in the interests of the British, who were establishing control of the oil resources all around the Persian Gulf, from Persia to Mesopotamia to Bahrain, and would welcome a friendly adjacent Arabia (which, of course, was soon to discover oil on its own territory). He offered the Arabs independence on the lands they liberated – but not in a very clear manner, because he wanted Palestine in particular to be kept out of the independence agreement. Nevertheless, the publication of two British documents in 1964 makes it clear that Palestine was indeed promised to the Arabs.

Alfred Lilienthal writes: “The third note from Sir Henry expressed pleasure in Hussein’s efforts ‘to gain all Arab tribes to our joint cause and prevent them from giving assistance to our enemies. We leave it to your discretion to choose the most suitable opportunity for the initiation of more decisive measures.’ The last word from the British High Commissioner came on February 12, and the Arab revolt broke out in the Hejaz on June 5, 1916.

³³⁷ Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 343-344.

"Aided by the entrance of Arab forces [assisted by the British officer Lawrence of Arabia] on their side, the British were able to withstand the German effort to take Aden and blockade the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. 'Had the result done nothing else than frustrate that combined march of Turks and Germans to Southern Arabia in 1916, we should owe it more than we have paid to this day,' wrote British archaeologist D.G. Hogarth, of the staff of the Arab Bureau.

"The Arabs drew off considerable Turkish forces that had been aimed against British General Murray in his advance on Palestine. The general noted that 'there were more Turkish troops fighting against the Arabs' than there were fighting against him. The Arab contribution to the British victory in the area was termed by General Allenby an 'invaluable aid'. By repudiating their allegiance with Turkey and throwing in their lot with the Allies in exchange for pledges of independence, the Arabs had redressed the balance in the Middle East.

"In the light of the terror inflicted upon the Arabs by their Turkish overlords in a frenzied effort to suppress the revolution, the contribution must have been considerable. As the countryside rose to aid the Arab forces under Faisal, Arab nationalist leaders were taken from their homes in Damascus, brought to public squares, and hanged. Food was withheld from the people in Palestine and Lebanon, and tens of thousands died of starvation. Everywhere Arab patriots paid with their lives. When Hussein called upon all Muslims to join in the revolt, and Ibn Saud took the lead in the Arabian Peninsula, Jamal Pasha, leader of the Turkish forces, was compelled, to use his own words, 'to send forces against Hussein which should have been defeating the British on the Canal and capturing Cairo.'

"Had the Arabs been aware of secret diplomatic agreements then being negotiated, it is highly unlikely any revolt would have taken place. Secret exchanges between Russia, Britain, and France resulted, on May 16, 1916, in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, named for the negotiators, Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and Charles François Picot of France. The spoils of the Ottoman Empire were divided among the three countries (Russia's share being of no concern here as it fell outside the scope of the Arab world). Under the agreement, France was to receive western Syria with the city of Mosul, while the rest of Mesopotamia (Iraq) from Baghdad to the Persian Gulf went to England. In the desert between there was to be a future Arab state, the northern part under French control and the southern under British domination. Although the French had insisted on all of Greater Syria including Palestine, the British, concerned over Suez and the need for a base near this strategic artery, forced agreement on internationalization of most of the Palestine area while reserving Haifa and Acre in the north for themselves. The ultimate future of areas in which spheres of influence had been demarcated was left undecided..."³³⁸

338 Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection*, New York: Dodd, Mead & co., 1987, pp. 16-18.

In December, 1916, the British acquired a new Prime Minister in Lloyd George and a new Foreign Secretary in Lord Balfour. It was they who resurrected the Palestine Idea, which, as noted above, was incompatible with Arab interests... The decisive factor here was the close friendship between Lloyd George and Weizmann. The two men had in common that neither was English, but both had a passionate belief in the civilizing mission of the British Empire. Together, therefore, they were able to overcome the fear of antagonizing the French that had prevailed heretofore in British government circles. Moreover, Lloyd George was already a Zionist sympathizer. As Simon Sebag Montefiore writes, he "cared greatly about the Jews, and had represented the Zionists as a lawyer ten years earlier. 'I was taught more in school about the history of the Jews, than about my own land,' he said."³³⁹

For, as we have noted, there was much sympathy for Zionism in British Protestantism. "'Britain was a Biblical nation,' wrote Weizmann. 'Those British statesmen of the old school were genuinely religious. They understood as a reality the concept of the Return. It appealed to their tradition and their faith.' Along with America, 'Bible-reading and Bible-thinking England,' noted one of Lloyd George's aides, 'was the only country where the desire of the Jews to return to their ancient homeland' was regarded 'as a natural aspiration not to be denied'."³⁴⁰

Other Zionists helped to persuade the sceptics: Sokolow in Paris, Supreme Court Justice Brandeis in Washington. They in turn were helped by a changing political situation in 1917. First, with the fall of the Tsar in February, it was now necessary to secure the support of the newly-emancipated Jews *inside* Russia, many of whom wanted the Provisional Government to conclude a separate peace with Germany. Secondly, the emancipation of the Jews in Russia removed one of the main obstacles to Schiff wholeheartedly supporting the Allies with his money – and also eased the way for the entry, not only of American money, but also, still more importantly, of American *troops*, into the war on the Allied side.

"During the critical days of 1916 and of the impending defection of Russia," wrote Landman, "Jewry, as a whole was against the Czarist regime and had hopes that Germany, if victorious, would in certain circumstances given them Palestine. Several attempts to bring America into the War on the side of the Allies by influencing influential Jewish opinion were made and had failed. Mr. James A. Malcolm, who was already aware of German pre-war efforts to secure a foothold in Palestine through the Zionist Jews and of the abortive Anglo-French *démarches* at Washington and New York; and knew that Mr. Woodrow Wilson, for good and sufficient reasons, always attached the greatest possible importance to the advice of a very prominent Zionist (Mr. Justice Brandeis, of

³³⁹ Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography*, London: Phoenix, 2011, p. 494.

³⁴⁰ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

the US Supreme Court); and was in close touch with Mr. Greenberg, Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* (London); and knew that several important Zionist Jewish leaders had already gravitated to London from the Continent on the *qui vive* awaiting events; and appreciated and realized the depth and strength of Jewish national aspirations; spontaneously took the initiative, to convince first of all Sir Mark Sykes, Under-Secretary to the War Cabinet, and afterwards M. Georges Picot, of the French Embassy in London, and M. Goût of the Quai d'Orsay (Eastern Section), that the best and perhaps the only way (which proved so to be) to induce the American President to come into the War was to secure the co-operation of Zionist Jews by promising them Palestine, and thus enlist and mobilize the hitherto unsuspectedly powerful forces of Zionist Jews in America and elsewhere in favour of the Allies on a *quid pro quo* contract basis." ³⁴¹

Another important factor, as Vital notes, was that "approval of Zionism accorded neatly... with what was now the accepted western view of the matter of nationalities. By this stage of the war there was no question at all in either of the major Allied capitals that when the time came for a general political settlement it would be necessary, as Balfour put it to the cabinet on one occasion, to set about 'the rearranging of the map of Europe in closer agreement with what we rather vaguely call "the principle of nationality"'." ³⁴²

The British-Zionist deal was indeed instrumental in bringing the Americans into the war. The Germans fully appreciated the value of this bargain to the Allies. As Ludendorff is alleged to have said to Lord Melchett, the Balfour Declaration was the cleverest thing done by the Allies in the way of propaganda, and he wished Germany had thought of it first... ³⁴³

There was still frantic opposition from anti-Zionist British Jews such as Edwin Montagu, Montefiore, Wolf and others. Montagu, as secretary of state for India, "could not but regard with horror the casual manner in which Britain, the ruler in India of the largest Muslim population on earth, was proposing to affront the Ottoman Empire. This was bound to consolidate the ominous alliance between the Muslim League and the Hindu Home Rulers." ³⁴⁴ And among the leading English Gentile sceptics was Lord Curzon.

Thus "the matter of the true seriousness and popularity of Zionism, the known poverty of Palestine itself (as Curzon stated: 'A less propitious seat for the future Jewish race could not be imagined'), and the question of the country's other inhabitants (Curzon asking: What was to happen to them? Were they to be got rid of?) were all brought up as the cabinet moved towards a decision. Balfour, Sykes providing the arguments, assured his colleagues that the Jews would be able to work out their own salvation there and were anxious

341 Landman, op. cit. But Sykes and Picot had already apportioned Palestine to the British!

342 Vital, op. cit., p. 689.

343 Landman, op. cit.

344 Adam Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 295.

to do so. And such anxiety as there was about the fate of the existing Arab population was met by the insertion of a clause affirming that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities'. No one suggested that the *political* rights of the 'existing non-Jewish communities' deserved discussion, let alone assurance..."³⁴⁵

The final draft of the Balfour Declaration was secretly approved by the American president on October 19, 1917, and then approved by the British cabinet on November 2. It read: "His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."³⁴⁶ Nobody would have guessed from this statement that the Jews constituted no more than 7% of the population of Palestine (60,000 people), while the "non-Jewish communities" comprised 93% (670,000).

The precise meaning of "a national home for the Jewish people" was not clear. Balfour and others later denied that it meant a Jewish state – a homeland is not a state – but that is precisely what the Zionists themselves understood by it. Nor was the Homeland defined territorially. In 1919 the American president Woodrow Wilson sent Dr. Henry C. King and industrialist Charles R. Crane to investigate the situation on the ground. The King and Crane Commission – which Wilson allowed to be published in December, 1922 – declared: "A 'national home' is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish state nor can the erection of such a Jewish state be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the civil and religious rights of existing 'non-Jewish communities'."³⁴⁷

"The Declaration," writes A.N. Wilson, "was designed to detach Russian Jews from Bolshevism but the very night before it was published, Lenin seized power in St. Petersburg. Had Lenin moved a few days earlier, the Balfour Declaration may never have been issued. Ironically, Zionism, propelled by the energy of Russian Jews – from Weizmann in Whitehall to Ben-Gurion in Jerusalem – and Christian sympathy for their plight, was now cut off from Russian Jewry until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991..."³⁴⁸

In December, 1917, General Allenby conquered Jerusalem, humbly entering it on foot, in what Lloyd George called "a Christmas present for the British people". The Balfour Declaration could now be put into effect...

345 Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 696-67.

346 The last sentence was inserted by Leo Amery, who became British minister in charge of Palestine before World War Two. However, he later changed his mind about the wisdom of the Declaration...

347 Lilienthal, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

348 Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 498.

The real significance of the Balfour Declaration was not so much political as *eschatological* and apocalyptic. This was revealed in its *timing*. Divine Providence drew the attention of all those with eyes to see to this sign of the times when, in one column of newsprint in the London *Times* for November 9, 1917, there appeared two articles, the one announcing the outbreak of revolution in Petrograd, and the other – the promise of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine (the Balfour declaration). This showed that the two events taking place thousands of miles apart were different aspects – the internationalist-atheist and nationalist-theist aspects respectively, – of a single event, *the Jewish revolution*.

The events of 1917-18 were only the beginning. With the removal of the Orthodox Christian autocrat, “him who restrains” the coming of the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.7), and with anti-Christian Jewish power established in both East and West, in both Russia and America and Israel, there was now no earthly power in existence that could stop the triumph of Jewish power throughout the world – unless the Orthodox autocracy could be restored.

The last times – as perhaps only the Orthodox Christian Russians and the anti-Christian Orthodox Jews understood, albeit from completely opposing viewpoints – had begun...

22. THE JEWS AND THE REVOLUTION

If the root of the Russian revolution was a nihilistic-messianic-chiliastic kind of faith built out of many strands of European and Jewish thought, the actual composition of forces that brought about the revolution was no less varied. We need to distinguish between at least three levels at which the revolution took place. First, there was the level of the out-and-out revolutionaries, usually *intelligenty*, who were supported by many from the industrial proletariat and the revolutionary-minded peasantry, who were aiming to destroy Russian tsarism and Russian Orthodox civilization completely before embarking on a world revolution that would dethrone God and traditional authority from the hearts and minds of all men everywhere. This level was led by Lenin, Trotsky, Dzerzhinsky and Stalin; it was composed mainly of Jews, but also contained Russians, Latvians, Georgians and Poles. They were possessed by the revolutionary faith to the greatest extent, and owed no allegiance to any nation (least of all Russia) or traditional creed or morality.

Secondly, there was the level of the Freemasons, the mainly aristocratic and middle-class Duma parliamentarians and their supporters in the country at large, who were not aiming to destroy Russia, but only to remove the tsar and introduce a constitutional government on the English model. This level was led by Guchkov, Rodzianko and Kerensky; it was composed mainly of Russians, but also contained most of the intelligentsia of the other nations of the empire. They believed in the revolutionary faith, but still had moral scruples derived from their Christian background. They played the critical role in the February revolution that removed the Tsar, but were swept away in October.

Thirdly, there were the lukewarm Orthodox Christians, the great mass of ordinary Russians, who did not necessarily want either world revolution or a constitutional government, but who lacked the courage and the faith to act openly in support of Faith, Tsar and Fatherland. It is certain that if very many Russians had not become lukewarm in their faith, God would not have allowed the revolution to take place. After the revolution, many from this level, as well as individuals from the first two levels, seeing the terrible devastation that their lukewarmness had allowed to take place, bitterly repented and returned to the ranks of the confessing Orthodox Christians.

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The extraordinary prominence of Jews in the revolution is not “anti-semitism” but faithfulness to historical truth. It was caused, at least in part, by the traditionally anti-Russian and anti-Christian attitude of Jewish culture and the Jewish Talmudic religion, which is reflected in both of its major political offspring – Bolshevism and Zionism. The theist Jews who triumphed in Israel in 1917, and especially in 1948 after the foundation of the State of Israel, came from the same region and social background – the Pale of Settlement in Western Russia – as the atheist Jews who triumphed in Moscow in 1917, and sometimes even from the same families. One such family was that of Chaim Weitzmann,

the first president of Israel, who in his *Autobiography* wrote that his own mother was able to witness her sons' triumph both in Bolshevik Moscow and Zionist Jerusalem...³⁴⁹

"A part of the Jewish generation," wrote M. Heifetz, "goes along the path of Herzl and Zhabotinsky. The other part, unable to withstand the temptation, fills up the band of Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin." "The path of Herzl and Bagritsky allowed the Jews to stand tall and immediately become not simply an equal nation with Russia, but a privileged one."³⁵⁰

That the Russian revolution was actually *Jewish*, but at the same time part of an *international* revolution of Jewry against the Christian and Muslim worlds, is indicated by an article by Jacob de Haas entitled "The Jewish Revolution" and published in the London Zionist journal *Maccabee* in November, 1905: "The Revolution in Russia is a Jewish revolution, for it is a turning point in Jewish history. This situation flows from the fact that Russia is the fatherland of approximately half of the general number of Jews inhabiting the world... The overthrow of the despotic government must exert a huge influence on the destinies of millions of Jews (both in Russia and abroad). Besides, the revolution in Russia is a Jewish revolution also because the Jews are the most active revolutionaries in the tsarist Empire."

Winston Churchill wrote: "It would almost seem as if the Gospel of Christ and the gospel of anti-Christ were designed to originate among the same people; and that this mystic and mysterious race had been chosen for the supreme manifestations, both of the Divine and the diabolical... From the days of 'Spartacus' Weishaupt to those of Karl Marx, and down to Trotsky (Russia), Bela Kun (Hungary), Rosa Luxembourg (Germany) and Emma Goldman (United States), this worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence and impossible equality, has been steadily growing. It played, as a modern writer, Mrs. Nesta Webster, has so ably shown, a definitely recognizable part in the tragedy of the French Revolution. It has been the mainspring of every subversive movement during the nineteenth century; and now at last this band of extraordinary personalities from the underworld of the great cities of Europe and America have gripped the Russian people by the hair of their heads and have become practically the undisputed masters of that enormous empire. There is no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and in the bringing about of the Russian Revolution by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews. It is certainly a very great one; it probably outweighs all others."³⁵¹

349 Weitzmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weitzmann*, New York: Harper, 1949.

350 Heifetz, "Nashi Obschie Uroki", 1980; in Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti Let Vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, p. 112.

351 Churchill, *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, February 8, 1920; in Douglas Reed, *The Controversy of Zion*, Durban, S.A.: Dolphin Press, 1978, pp. 272-273. Detailed data on the domination of the Jews over Russia can be found in Winberg, *Krestnij Put'*, Munich, 1920, pp. 359-372.

However, there are many kinds of Jews, and it is important to point out that the Bolshevik Jews were neither religious Jews (Talmudists), nor nationalists (Zionists). As Donald Rayfield writes, "The motivation of those Jews who worked for the Cheka was not Zionist or ethnic. The war between the Cheka and the Russian bourgeoisie was not even purely a war of classes or political factions. It can be seen as being between Jewish internationalism and the remnants of a Russian national culture... What was Jewish except lineage about Bolsheviks like Zinoviev, Trotsky, Kamenev or Sverdlov? Some were second- or even third-generation renegades; few even spoke Yiddish, let alone knew Hebrew. They were by upbringing Russians accustomed to a European way of life and values, Jewish only in the superficial sense that, say, Karl Marx was. Jews in anti-Semitic Tsarist Russia had few ways out of the ghetto except emigration, education or revolution, and the latter two courses meant denying their Judaism by joining often anti-Jewish institutions and groups."³⁵²

Liberals ascribed the revolutionism of the Jews to a reaction against, or revenge for, anti-Semitism, the pogroms and the multitude of restrictions placed on the Jews by the Russian tsars. The reverse is the truth: far fewer Jews died at the hands of Russians in anti-Jewish pogroms than Russian officials at the hands of Jewish and Gentile terrorists in anti-Christian pogroms, and the anti-Jewish pogroms were reactions against the anti-Christian pogroms, not the other way around. This was especially obvious during the 1905 revolution in Kiev.

Moreover, the restrictions were placed on the Jews precisely in order to protect the Russian peasant, who was ruthlessly exploited by them, especially, as Solzhenitsyn demonstrated, through their domination of the liquor trade. It is significant that the massive emigration of Jews in the 1890s began after the Tsar restricted this domination, thereby threatening the main source of livelihood of the Jews living in the Pale. Although fear of pogroms undoubtedly played a part, the Jewish exodus was in the first place an economic emigration...

As the future Hieromartyr John Vostorgov said: "The Jews are restricted in their rights of residence not as a confessional unit, but as a predatory tribe that is dangerous in the midst of the peaceful population because of its exploitative inclinations, which... have found a religious sanction and support in the Talmud... Can such a confession be tolerated in the State, when it allows its followers to practice hatred and all kinds of deceit and harm towards other confessions, and especially Christians? ...

"The establishment of the Pale of Settlement is the softest of all possible measures in relation to such a confession. Moreover, is it possible in this case not to take account of the mood of the masses? But this mood cannot be changed

³⁵² Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 72.

only by issuing a law on the complete equality of rights of the Jews. On the contrary, this can only strengthen the embitterment of the people..."³⁵³

"Let us remember," writes Solzhenitsyn: "the legal restrictions on the Jews in Russia were never racial [as they were in Western Europe]. They were applied neither to the Karaites [who rejected the Talmud], nor to the mountain Jews, nor to the Central Asian Jews."³⁵⁴ In other words, restrictions were placed only on those Jews who practiced the religion of the Talmud, because of its vicious anti-Christianity and double morality.

Moreover, the restrictions were very generously applied. The boundaries of the Pale (a huge area twice the size of France) were extremely porous, allowing large numbers of Jews to acquire higher education and make their fortunes in Great Russia – to such an extent that by the time of the revolution the Jews dominated Russian trade and, most ominously, the Russian press. Stolypin wanted to remove the restrictions on the Jews. But in this case the Tsar resisted him, as his father had resisted Count Witte before him.³⁵⁵

This was not because the Tsar felt no responsibility to protect the Jews; he spoke about "my Jews", as he talked about "my Poles", "my Armenians" and "my Finns". And his freedom from vicious anti-semitism is demonstrated by his reaction to the murder of Stolypin by a Jewish revolutionary, Bogrov, in Kiev on September 1, 1911. As Robert Massie writes: "Because Bogrov was a Jew, the Orthodox population was noisily preparing a retaliatory pogrom. Frantic with fear, the city's Jewish population spent the night packing their belongings. The first light of the following day found the square before the railway station jammed with carts and people trying to squeeze themselves on to departing trains. Even as they waited, the terrified people heard the clatter of hoofs. An endless stream of Cossacks, their long lances dark against the dawn sky, rode past. On his own, Kokovtsev had ordered three full regiments of Cossacks into the city to prevent violence. Asked on what authority he had issued the command, Kokovtsev replied: 'As head of the government.' Later, a local official came up to the Finance Minister to complain, 'Well, Your Excellency, by calling in the troops you have missed a fine chance to answer Bogrov's shot with a nice Jewish pogrom.' Kokovtsev was indignant, but, he added, 'his sally suggested to me that the measures which I had taken at Kiev were not sufficient... therefore I sent an open telegram to all governors of the region demanding that

353 Vostorgov, in Fomin, S. and Fomina, T., *Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. II, p. 624.

354 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 292.

355 As Witte recorded in his Memoirs: "'Are you right to stand up for the Jews?' asked Alexander III. In reply Witte asked permission to answer the question with a question: 'Can we drown all the Russian Jews in the Black Sea? If we can, then I accept that resolution of the Jewish question. If not, the resolution of the Jewish question consists in giving them a chance to live. That is in offering them equal rights and equal laws.'" (Edvard Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar*, London: Arrow, 1993, p. 69). But Witte's reply misses the point, as if the choice lay between killing all the Jews or giving them complete equality. No State can give complete freedom to a section of the population that does not respect the law and endangers the lives or livelihoods of the majority.

they use every possible means – force if necessary – to prevent possible pogroms. When I submitted this telegram to the Tsar, he expressed his approval of it and of the measure I had taken in Kiev.”³⁵⁶

In the end, the Pale of Settlement was destroyed, not by liberal politicians, but by right-wing generals. For in 1915, as the Russian armies were retreating, some Jews were accused of spying for the enemy and were shot, while the Jewish population in general was deemed unreliable. So a mass evacuation of the Jews from the Pale was ordered. But the results were disastrous. Hordes of frightened Jews fleeing eastwards landed up in large cities such as Moscow and Petrograd where there had been no large Jewish population before. These disgruntled new arrivals only fueled the revolutionary fires.

The February revolution benefited the Jews but brought only harm and destruction to the Russian population. As Solzhenitsyn points out, “Jewish society in Russia received in full from the February revolution everything that it had fought for, and the October coup was really not needed by it, except that cut-throat part of the Jewish secular youth that with its Russian brother-internationalists had stacked up a charge of hatred for the Russian state structure and was rearing to ‘deepen’ the revolution.” It was they who through their control of the Executive Committee of the Soviet – over half of its members were Jewish socialists – assumed the real power after February, and propelled it on – contrary to the interests, not only of the Russian, but also of the majority Jewish population, - to the October revolution.³⁵⁷

The unprecedented catastrophe of the Russian revolution required an explanation... For very many this lay in the coming to power of the Jews, and their hatred for the Russian people. However, Archbishop Andrew of Ufa, the future hieromartyr, wrote: “In defence of the Russian people, they try to say that the people have been confused by the Jews, or deceived by their own leaders... A bad excuse! It's a fine people and a fine Christian religious disposition that can be confused by any rogue that comes along!...”

Nevertheless, that the revolution brought power to the Jews, who had been plotting against the Russian state for decades, if not centuries, is undeniable. “In 1917,” writes the pro-Semite David Vital, “five of the twenty-one members of the Communist Party’s Central Committee were Jews, and it has been estimated that at the early post-1917 congresses between 15 and 20% per cent of the legates were Jewish”.³⁵⁸

These percentages remained fairly stable: by 1922 Jews constituted 15% of Bolshevik Party membership (Russians constituted 65%).³⁵⁹ Only when Stalin came to power did the percentages begin to fall.

356 Massie, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, p. 229.

357 Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., pp.41, 43.

358 Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 703.

359 Donald Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 74.

But these are conservative estimates: some give much higher estimates, especially in the higher reaches of the Party and Government apparatus. Thus Douglas Reed writes: "The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, which wielded the supreme power, contained 3 Russians (including Lenin) and 9 Jews. The next body in importance, the Central Committee of the Executive Commission (or secret police) comprised 42 Jews and 19 Russians, Letts, Georgians and others. The Council of People's Commissars consisted of 17 Jews and five others. The Moscow Che-ka (secret police) was formed of 23 Jews and 13 others.³⁶⁰ Among the names of 556 high officials of the Bolshevik state officially published in 1918-1919 were 458 Jews and 108 others. Among the central committees of small, supposedly 'Socialist' or other non-Communist parties... were 55 Jews and 6 others."³⁶¹

The London *Times* correspondent in Russia, Robert Wilton, reported: "Taken according to numbers of population, the Jews represented *one* in ten; among the commissars that rule Bolshevik Russia they are *nine* in ten; if anything the proportion of Jews is still greater."³⁶² And the American scholar Richard Pipes admits: "Jews undeniably played in the Bolshevik Party and the early Soviet apparatus a role disproportionate to their share of the population. The number of Jews active in Communism in Russia and abroad was striking: in Hungary, for example, they furnished 95 percent of the leading figures in Bela Kun's dictatorship. They also were disproportionately represented among Communists in Germany and Austria during the revolutionary upheavals there in 1918-23, and in the apparatus of the Communist International."³⁶³

The Jews were especially dominant in the most feared and bloodthirsty part of the Bolshevik State apparatus, the Cheka. Probably the most rabid Chekist of all, Latsis, was a Latvian Jew. The Cheka, writes Brendon, "consisted of 250,000 officers (including 100,000 border guards), a remarkable adjunct to a State which was supposed to be withering away. In the first 6 years of Bolshevik rule it had executed at least 200,000. Moreover, the Cheka was empowered to act as 'policeman, gaoler, investigator, prosecutor, judge and executioner'. It also employed barbaric forms of torture."³⁶⁴

The Civil War brought even more to prominence the hero of October, Trotsky, who was a Jew. "America's Red Cross chief in Russia called Trotsky 'the greatest Jew since Christ'. White-Guard periodicals roiled with evocations of 'Kike-Bolshevik commissars' and the 'Kike Red Army' led by Trotsky. In 1919 Trotsky received a letter from an ethnic Korean member of the Russian Communist party concerning rumors that 'the motherland has been conquered by Yid commissars'. All the country's disasters are being blamed on the Jews.

³⁶⁰ The proportion was still higher in other cities. Thus "as many as 75 per cent of the Kiev political police (the Cheka) in 1919 were Jewish" (Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 106). (V.M.)

³⁶¹ Reed, *The Controversy of Zion*, Durban, South Africa, 1978, p. 274.

³⁶² Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

³⁶³ Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana, 1995, pp. 112-13.

³⁶⁴ Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley. A Panorama of the 1930s*, London: Pimlico, 2001, p. 11.

They're saying the Communist regime is supported by Jewish brains, Latvian rifles and Russian idiots.' The London *Times* asserted (March 5, 1919) that three-quarters of the leading positions in Soviet Russia were held by Jews. Many Soviet Communists themselves could be heard to say Shmolny for Smolny (Jewish 'sh') or prezhidium (Jew-sidium) for presidium. Trotsky kept a copy of a 1921 German book of drawings of all the Jewish Bolsheviks, with a preface to the text by Alfred Rosenberg, in his files. Peasants, too, knew he was a Jew.... At the top, only the Georgian Jugashvili-Stalin was not partly Jewish. The Jewishness of Lenin's maternal grandmother was then unknown³⁶⁵, but other leaders were well known to be Jews, and it did not inhibit them. Zinoviev had been born Ovset-Gershon Radomylsky and used his mother's surname Apfelbaum; Kamenev, born Lev Rozenfeld, had a Jewish father; both had Jewish wives. Trotsky-Bronstein managed to be a lightning rod not just in his Jewishness but in all ways..."³⁶⁶

The close association between Bolshevism and the Jews (for example, the Hungarian Bolshevik Bela Kun (Kuhn) was a Jew) elicited hatred of the Jews not only in Russia but throughout Central and Eastern Europe...

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But *why* were the Jews the most active revolutionaries? What was it in their upbringing and history that led them to adopt the atheist revolutionary teachings and actions of Russia's "superfluous young men" more ardently than those young men themselves? Hatred of Christ and the Christians was, of course, deeply imbedded in the Talmud and Jewish ritual – but the angry young men that began killing thousands of the Tsar's servants even before the revolution of 1905 had rejected the Talmud as well as the Gospel, and even all religion in general.

Part of the answer lies in Paul Johnson's observation, in his *History of the Jews*, that the young atheist Jews saw in the revolution "liberation from their Jewish burden". That is, it enabled them *to get away from* their own religious upbringing and culture. This is illustrated by the deathbed confession of Yurovsky, the Tsar's murderer: "Our family suffered less from the constant hunger than from my father's religious fanaticism... On holidays and regular days the children were forced to pray, and it is not surprising that my first active protest was against religious and nationalistic traditions. I came to hate God and prayer as I hated poverty and the bosses."³⁶⁷

365 Or was it his grandfather, who was called Israel before his baptism by an Orthodox priest, and his great-grandfather's name was Moishe Blank. See Lina Averina, "Evrejskij koren" (The Jewish Root), *Nasha Strana* (Our Country), January 22, 1997; Michael Brenner, "Lenin i ego yevrejskij praded" (Lenin and his Jewish Great-Grandfather), <http://inosmi.ru/history/20110228/166930202.html> Lenin was of mixed Russian, Kalmyk and Jewish blood. (V.M.)

³⁶⁶ Kotkin, *Stalin*, pp. 340, 341.

³⁶⁷ Yurovsky, in Radzinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

That is why religious and Zionist Jews suffered almost as much as the Gentiles from the Jewish Bolsheviks, the religious fathers from their atheist sons. Thus “in August 1919, all Jewish religious communities were dissolved, their property confiscated and the overwhelming majority of synagogues shut for ever. The study of Hebrew and the publication of secular works in Hebrew were banned. Yiddish printing was permitted, but only in phonetic transcription, and Yiddish culture, though tolerated for a time, was placed under careful supervision. The supervising agency consisted of several Jewish sections, Yevsektisya, set up in Communist Party branches, manned by Non-Jewish Jews, whose specific task was to stamp out any sign of ‘Jewish cultural particularism’. They broke up the Bund, then set about destroying Russian Zionism. In 1917 it had become by far the strongest political feature of Russian Jewry, with 100,000 members and 1,200 branches. It was much stronger, numerically, than the Bolsheviks themselves. From 1919 onwards, the Yevsektisya attacked the Zionists frontally, using Cheka units commanded by Non-Jewish Jews. In Leningrad they took over the Zionist central headquarters, arresting its staff and closing down its paper. Congress was broken up by a Cheka squad led by a Jewish girl, who had seventy-five of the delegates arrested. From 1920 onwards, many thousands of Russian Zionists were in the camps, from which few ever emerged. The Zionist Party, said the regime (26 August 1922), ‘under the mask of democracy, seeks to corrupt the Jewish youth and to throw them into the arms of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in the interests of Anglo-French capitalism. To restore the Palestinian state, these representatives of the Jewish bourgeoisie rely on reactionary forces (including) such rapacious imperialists as Poincaré, Lloyd George and the Pope.’

“Once Stalin, who was deeply anti-Semitic, took power, the pressure on the Jews increased, and by the end of the 1920s all forms of specifically Jewish activity had been destroyed or emasculated. He then dissolved the Yevsektisya, leaving supervision of the Jews to the secret police. By this time, Jews had been eliminated from nearly all senior posts in the regime, and anti-Semitism was once more a powerful force within the party. ‘Is it true,’ wrote Trotsky in rage and astonishment to Bukharin, 4 March 1926, ‘is it possible, that in our party, in Moscow, in *Workers’ Cells*, anti-Semitic agitation should be carried out with impunity?’ Not with impunity, with encouragement: Jews, especially within the Communist Party, were to constitute a wholly disproportionate percentage of Stalin’s victims...”³⁶⁸

At the same time, some Bolshevik Jews do appear to have sympathized with Talmudism. Thus in 1905 the Jewish revolutionaries in Kiev boasted that they would turn St. Sophia cathedral into a synagogue. Again, in 1918 they erected

368 Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 453-454.

a monument to Judas Iscariot in Sviazhsk³⁶⁹, and in 1919 - in Tambov.³⁷⁰ And when the Whites reconquered Perm region in 1918 they found many Jewish religious inscriptions in the former Bolshevik headquarters and on the walls of the basement of the Ipatiev House in Yekaterinburg where the Tsar and his family had been shot. Moreover, while officially rejecting all religion, the revolutionaries did not reject the unconscious emotional energy of Talmudic Judaism, the fierce pride of the nation that had once been the chosen people of God. Having fallen away from that chosen status, and been scattered all over the world by the wrath of God, they resented their replacement by the Christian peoples with an intense resentment. *Roma delenda est* – Christian Rome had to be destroyed, and Russia as “The Third Rome” had to be destroyed first of all. The atheist revolutionaries of the younger generation took over the resentment and hatred of their forefathers while rejecting its religious-nationalist basis...

In his work, *The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of History*, the former revolutionary L.A. Tikhomirov pointed out that the essence of the Talmudic religion consisted, not in dogmas about God, but in commandments – that is in *action*. And he quotes the very authoritative Ilya del Medigo (15th century), who in his notable *Test of Faith* says that “Judaism is founded not on religious dogma, but on religious acts.”

So Talmudism creates a personality that subordinates dogmatic faith to the imperative of *action*. That is, it is the action that is first proclaimed as necessary – the reasons for doing it can be thought up later. And this corresponds exactly both to the philosophy of Marx, for whom “the truth, i.e. the reality and power, of thought must be demonstrated *in action*”³⁷¹, and to the psychological type of the Marxist revolutionary, who first proclaims that Rome (i.e. Russia) must be destroyed, and then looks for an ideology that will justify destruction. Talmudic Law is useful, indeed necessary, not because it proclaims God’s truth, but in order to secure the solidarity of the Jewish people and their subjection to their rabbinic leaders. In the same way, Marxist theory is necessary in order to unite adherents, expel dissidents and in general justify the violent overthrow of the old system.³⁷²

369 The Danish writer Halling Keller was present at the unveiling of the monument to Judas in Sviazhsk. He wrote: “The local Soviet discussed to whom to raise a statue for a long time. It was thought that Lucifer did not completely share the idea of communism. Cain was too much of a legendary personality, so they decided on Judas Iscariot since he was a completely historical personality. They represented him at full height with his fist raised to heaven.” (M. Nazarov, “Presledovania Tserkvi i dukhovnaia su’ bol’shevizma” (The Persecutions of the Church and the spiritual essence of Bolshevism), in *Vozhdiu Tret’ego Rima* (To the Leader of the Third Rome), ch. 3)

370 *Leningradskaia Panorama* (Leningrad Panorama), N 10, 1990, p. 35.

371 Marx, *Eleven Theses on Feuerbach*, 1845.

372 This point has been well developed by Pipes: “Important as ideology was,... its role in the shaping of Communist Russia must not be exaggerated. If any individual or a group profess certain beliefs and refer to them to guide their conduct, they may be said to act under the influence of ideas. When, however, ideas are used not so much to direct one’s personal conduct as to justify one’s domination over others, whether by persuasion or force, the issue becomes confused, because it is not possible to determine whether such persuasion or force serves ideas or, on the contrary, ideas serve to secure or legitimize such domination. In the case of the

So the Russian revolution was Jewish not so much because of the ethnicity of its leaders as because the Satanic hatred of God, Christ and all Christians that is characteristic of the Talmudic religion throughout its history was transferred from the nationalist Talmudic fathers to their internationalist atheist sons, finding expression in the supremely hateful and destructive act of the revolution.

Bolsheviks, there are strong grounds for maintaining the latter to be the case, because they distorted Marxism in every conceivable way, first to gain political power and then to hold on to it. If Marxism means anything it means two propositions: that as capitalist society matures it is doomed to collapse from inner contradictions, and that this collapse ('revolution') is effected by industrial labor ('the proletariat'). A regime motivated by Marxist theory would at a minimum adhere to these two principles. What do we see in Soviet Russia? A 'socialist revolution' carried out in an economically underdeveloped country in which capitalism was still in its infancy, and power taken by a party committed to the view that the working class left to its own devices is unrevolutionary. Subsequently, at every stage of its history, the Communist regime in Russia did whatever it had to do to beat off challengers, without regard to Marxist doctrine, even as it cloaked its actions with Marxist slogans. Lenin succeeded precisely because he was free of the Marxist scruples that inhibited the Mensheviks. In view of these facts, ideology has to be treated as a subsidiary factor: an inspiration and a mode of thinking of the new ruling class, perhaps, but not a set of principles that either determined its actions or explains them to posterity. As a rule, the less one knows about the actual course of the Russian Revolution the more inclined one is to attribute a dominant influence to Marxism..." (*op. cit.*, pp. 501-502)

23. BREST-LITOVSK

On December 15 the Bolsheviks concluded an armistice with the Germans, and on December 20 – the same date as the foundation of the Cheka – negotiations for a peace treaty, the notorious treaty of Brest-Litovsk, began. Both sides wanted to stop the war, but for different reasons: the Germans – in order to move troops from the East to their planned new offensive in the West (after the signing of the armistice they immediately moved six divisions there), and the Russians – because they were losing, and wanted time to consolidate the revolution at home. Of course, the signing of the armistice did not prevent the Bolsheviks from inviting the citizens of the belligerent powers to overthrow their governments...

Trotsky stalled in the negotiations, calling for “neither war nor peace”. The Germans were annoyed, but then a Ukrainian delegation turned up. On February 9, 1918 the Germans and Austro-Hungarians signed a treaty with the Ukrainian Rada, recognizing Ukrainian independence, offering support against the Bolsheviks and handing over to the Ukrainians the eastern half of the province of Austrian Galicia (to the despair of the Polish nationalists). In exchange, as Serhii Plokhy writes, the Germans and Austrians were allowed “to occupy the territory of the formally independent Ukrainian state and exact payment for their nation-building services in the form of agricultural produce. As the Austro-German forces began their eastward march, the Bolsheviks, whose army was unable to resist the well-oiled German military machine, withdrew, leaving Kyiv on March 1.”³⁷³

Meanwhile, on February 18, the Germans, losing patience with Trotsky’s stalling tactics, launched “Operation Thunderbolt”; fifty-two divisions poured into Northern and Western Russia and within a few days had captured Minsk, Mogilev and Narva, encountering very little opposition.

The position of the Bolsheviks was now desperate. On February 18, Stalin, transferring his support from Trotsky to Lenin, told the Central Committee: “The Germans are attacking, we have no forces, the time has come to say that negotiations must be resumed”. “Negotiations” here meant de facto “capitulation”; for the Germans rejected Lenin’s initial overtures, responding with an ultimatum whose savagery shocked the world, but to which Lenin was forced to succumb. On March 3 the Bolsheviks signed a treaty in the German army’s headquarters town of Brest-Litovsk. “According to the treaty, they ceded control of half the Russian Empire’s European possessions, from the Baltics in the north to Ukraine in the south, to the German and Austrian High Command and undertook to pay 6 billion rubles to Berlin and Vienna.”³⁷⁴

³⁷³ Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom. A History of Russian Nationalism from Ivan the Great to Vladimir Putin*, London: Allen Lane, 2019, p. 200.

³⁷⁴ Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom*, p. 200.

What this meant was that the former Russian Empire lost almost all its coal and oil, three-quarters of her iron ore and half of her industry ... The terms of the treaty, as Alan Bullock points out, "were much harsher than those imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, which the Germans denounced as unheard of in their severity...."³⁷⁵ Indeed, the terms were so harsh that many in the West, if they had been tempted to come to a separate peace with Germany, now thought again. Moreover, the Bolsheviks' acceptance of them convinced them that Lenin and Trotsky were simply German agents, with whom it was impossible to do business...

Even many Bolsheviks, including Bukharin, not to mention patriots in other parties, wanted to reject the terms and fight on, but in a desperate debate among the Bolsheviks on the treaty, Lenin claimed that this was just romanticism. The treaty would provide some essential respite for the Bolsheviks while allowing Germany and the Western powers to continue destroying each other. And indeed, with the Germans only a few hours' march from Petrograd, the Bolsheviks had no choice but to kow-tow to the Germans if they were to cling on to power. As Lenin put it: "You must sign this shameful peace in order to save the world revolution, in order to hold fast to...its only foothold, the Soviet republic." And he threatened to resign if his position was not upheld... The threat seems to have worked, Lenin won the Central Committee vote 7:4, and more easily won the ratification debate in the Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. The best chance to remove him from power was missed...

The treaty was immediately denounced by Patriarch Tikhon, representing the majority Christian population of Russia. The Tsar had promised that he would never sign a unilateral truce with Germany – and kept his promise. Lenin promised to take Russia out of the war – and did so on the worst possible terms. His aim was to turn the international war into a civil war fought, not against Germans (of whom Lenin was, after all, a paid agent), but against Russians. That war had already begun in the south of the country, where the White armies, led by Generals Alexeyev and Kornilov, having survived a difficult first winter, were gathering their strength.

In fact, the Civil War had begun, and not only in the south. Anti-Bolshevik White Russians were also forming armies under General Yudenich in the North-West and Admiral Kolchak in Siberia. To cap the Bolsheviks' woes, the Western Allies, fearing that Russia was turning into a colony of Germany, finally decided on intervention on the side of the Whites. The British in particular, fearing that the Germans could use Russian slave-labour and natural resources in order to continue the war at least until the end of 1919³⁷⁶, sent spies to Moscow and troops to Murmansk (this was more of an anti-German than anti-Bolshevik move), and urged the Americans to intervene in Siberia, as the Japanese were intending to do.

³⁷⁵ Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin. Parallel Lives*, London: HarperCollins, 1991, p. 69.

³⁷⁶ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

Then there was Finland... "In line with Lenin's nationalities policy, Petrograd had given its blessing [to the independence of Finland and the Baltics]. But at the same time it directed local Bolsheviks with strong trade union support to seize control of Helsinki. By the last week of January, Finland was plunged into civil war. In early March 1918 as German troops marched into Ukraine, the Kaiser and Ludendorff settled on a plan for a joint German-Finnish force that would first wipe out the Finnish Bolsheviks before continuing the march south towards Petrograd. Icy weather delayed the arrival of General von der Goltz's German expeditionary force until early April. But when they joined up with the Finnish White Guards of General Mannerheim they made up for lost time. By 14 April, after heavy fighting, they had cleared Helsinki of Red Guards. As a token of German appreciation, von der Goltz distributed food aid to the cheering burghers of the city. The civil war ended on 15 May, but the killing did not. Following a reprisal shooting of White prisoners of war by Red Guards, the Finnish-German combat group unleashed a 'White terror' that by early May had claimed the lives of more than 8,000 leftists. At least 11,000 more would die of famine and disease in prison camps. In the spring of 1918 Finland became the stage for the first of a series of savage counter-revolutionary campaigns that were to open a new chapter in twentieth-century political violence.

"In the first week of May 1918, with the terror in full swing, Mannerheim and his German auxiliaries pushed menacingly towards the Russian fortress of Ino guarding the northern gateway to Petrograd. To the Soviets it seemed as though the Kaiser and his entourage had thought better of the compromise they had settled for at Brest. Why after all should Germany allow itself to be constrained by a mere treaty, one furthermore that the Soviets themselves had dismissed as nothing more than a scrap of paper? If Lenin's strategy of balancing between the imperialist powers was to work, he would have to go beyond merely ratifying Brest. After signing the treaty he had tacked away from the Germans, encouraging Trotsky to cultivate close contacts with emissaries of the Entente and the United States in Petrograd and Moscow. Now in early May he embarked on a second desperate gamble. If the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was no longer enough to satisfy German imperialism, Lenin would put more flesh on the bare bones of the peace."³⁷⁷

Meanwhile, the US Secretary of State Lansing had declared himself ready to intervene; he saw Bolshevism "in precisely the terms that Lenin imagined - as a natural ideological enemy of the US that must be stamped out."³⁷⁸ Lansing considered that what was "coming to the surface" in Russia, was "in many ways more to be dreaded than autocracy". And indeed, if the abdication of the Tsar had gladdened the hearts of the liberals, the Bolsheviks' dissolution of the Constituent Assembly must have appalled them. For all those with eyes to see, it was obvious that the Bolsheviks were not only no democrats and no less despotic than the German militarists, but probably much worse.

377 Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151.

378 Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

Unfortunately, Lansing's boss, President Wilson, did not see it in that way... His excuse was that, having joined the war on the Allied side, he could not be seen to be aiding the German imperialists. In any case, the American president in 1918, as later in 1945, was blind to the threat posed by Bolshevism. Wilson was dissuaded from a decisive intervention against the Bolsheviks by one of his advisors, William Bullitt. "'In Russia today,' Bullitt insisted, 'there are the rudiments of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.' The real threat to democracy lay not in Lenin's *Sovnarkom* (Council of People's Commissars), but in the forces of reactionary imperialism that were alive within the Entente as much as in the Central Powers. 'Are we going to make the world safe for this Russian democracy,' Bullitt demanded, 'by allowing the allies to place [the Japanese] Terauchi in Irkutsk, while Ludendorff establishes himself in Petrograd?' On 4 March 1918, Bullitt's arguments prevailed. The President swung firmly against any Allied intervention, on the advice of Bullitt and Colonel House he renewed the attempt to enlist the Russian revolution in a democratic alliance against reactionary Germany. Wilson appealed directly to the Congress of Soviets, which was meeting on 12 March to hear Lenin's arguments for ratification of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Under even more incongruous circumstances than in January, Wilson restated the message of the 14 Points. Ignoring the fact that the Congress of Soviets was standing in for the repressed Constituent Assembly, Wilson expressed 'every sympathy' for Russia's effort to 'weld herself into a democracy'. He demanded that she be left free of 'any sinister or selfish influence, which might interfere with such development'."

The Japanese took the hint, and in April countermanded the order to land troops in Vladivostok. In any case, the Congress of Soviets rejected Wilson's overtures. For Lenin had decided that the only chance of survival for the Bolshevik regime lay in an alliance with – or rather, in humiliating subjection to – the German militarists. For the Germans, fed up with Bolshevik violations of the treaty, continued to strengthen their position.³⁷⁹ They set up a *cordon sanitaire* of German-controlled states around Bolshevik Russia, installing German princes in Finland and Lithuania and a United Baltic Duchy in Estonia and Latvia. Moreover, they continued their advance into Southern Russia and towards the Caucasian oil-fields, proving that Hitler's plan to make this vast area his *Lebensraum* was no pipedream but had already been fulfilled temporarily by the Kaiser and his generals...

Lenin, who had fled from Petrograd to Moscow in March, proposed large-scale economic concessions in order to buy off the Germans. And the German militarists and big businessmen were interested. But the liberals in the Reichstag were not. "On 18 May after an urgent intercession by Chancellor

³⁷⁹ Among other outrageous breaches of faith, "Lenin had authorized Trotsky to conspire with American, British and French representatives in Russia to obtain pledges of Entente support against the German, for which Lenin had promised to sabotage ratification of Brest-Litovsk" (Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 265).

Hertling, Ludendorff agreed to halt the Finno-German march on Petrograd. As in Japan, civilian political control asserted itself as a basic safety catch against the more radical fantasies of the German imperialists..."³⁸⁰

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The Bolsheviks had been very fortunate. At one time the Party had been so thoroughly penetrated by Tsarist agents as to make its success extraordinarily improbable.³⁸¹ But the February revolution, Kornilov's attempted coup, and Kerensky's reaction to it, had played into their hands at a critical time. Now "useful idiots" in the German Reichstag and the American White House, together with Lenin's absolute willingness to sacrifice Russian national interests on the blood-stained altar of the revolution, had saved them again.

That the Bolsheviks clung on to power was probably owing to three factors. First, they quickly decided not to nationalize the land that the peasants had seized from the landowners, thus neutralizing the appeal of their main political opponents, the Social Revolutionaries. Secondly, on December 20, 1917 the "Cheka", an acronym for the Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage founded by the Pole Felix Dzerzhinsky and the Latvian Yakov Peters in order to defend "the fruits of October" by all means possible, including the most extreme cruelties. And thirdly, in spite of strong opposition within the Party and throughout the country, Lenin moved, as we have seen, to neutralize the external threat coming from the Germans by the most humiliating and drastic concessions...

Everybody was now against the Bolsheviks, even the other socialist parties. The Left SRs abandoned them after Brest-Litovsk, urging a resumption of the war against Germany, and in July, led by Maria Spiridonova, they even attempted an anti-Bolshevik coup. First they assassinated the German ambassador Mirbach, hoping this would provoke a resumption of the war. Then they occupied the Cheka headquarters in Moscow and arrested Dzerzhinsky. However, the coup failed (just). And now the Left SRs had shot their bolt: as S.A. Smith writes, "over the three months following the 'uprising' membership collapsed by two-thirds. By October, when the party's fourth congress took place, a bewildering number of splits had appeared in its ranks."³⁸²

Through all these upheavals, the alliance between Lenin and the Germans, bound together by the slender thread of Brest-Litovsk, remained intact. This alliance probably preserved for Lenin his only relatively reliable military force,

³⁸⁰ Tooze, op. cit., p. 155.

³⁸¹ Alan Bullock writes: "One of the most celebrated Okhrana agents, Roman Malinowski, became Lenin's trusted chief agent in Russia and led the Bolshevik deputies in the Fourth Duma. In 1908-10, four out of five members of the Bolsheviks' St. Petersburg Committee were Okhrana agents. Persistent rumours that Stalin was one as well have never been confirmed..." (*Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London: HarperCollins, 1991, p. 435, note)

³⁸² Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 205.

the Latvian riflemen. For “Berlin saw no need to abandon Lenin, who had paralysed Russia and remained loyal to Germany. Still, Riezler [Mirbach’s deputy at the German embassy], hoped to undo the Bolsheviks by obtaining the defection of the Latvian Riflemen, whose units guarded the Kremlin and he found a receptive group eager to return to their homeland, which was under German occupation. If the Latvians were repatriated, Vacletis [the Latvian leader] promised they would remain neutral in any German-Bolshevik showdown. General Ludendorff, however, undercut Riezler’s negotiations, arguing that Latvia would be contaminated by Bolshevik propaganda if the Rifles were repatriated. The Reichswehr helped save Bolshevism, yet again.”³⁸³

Like another Houdini, Lenin had again escaped the coils of his enemies... But he did not escape completely unscathed: on August 30, 1918 he was shot and wounded in the shoulder by the Left SR Fanny Kaplan. It seemed as if the beast “had been mortally wounded” and was about to be killed. But God had not decreed the end of Russia’s punishment yet, so “his deadly wound was healed. And the whole world marvelled and followed the beast...” (Revelation 13.3).

³⁸³ Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 282.

24. THE RESTORATION OF THE PATRIARCHATE

Great good can come even from the times of the greatest evil. For “all things work for the best for those who love God” (Romans 8.20). An example of this great truth is the restoration of the canonical order of the Russian Church in the form of the patriarchate in the revolutionary year of 1917, something that Tsar Nicholas had fervently desired but which, according to God’s Providence, was accomplished only after his abdication.

On August 15, 1917 the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church convened; 564 delegates, including 299 laymen, assembled in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. The mark of the political revolution was already visible on the Church assembly. On the one hand, the delegates included such open Freemasons as Lvov. On the other, it excluded such pious hierarchs as Metropolitan Makary of Moscow because of his monarchist views.

However, in spite of this and other flaws, this was the first Council in the history of the Russian Church since 1690, and was to be a critical point of repose, refreshment and regrouping for the Church before the terrible trials that awaited her. It coincided with the fall of the Provisional Government and the Bolshevik coup, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the beginning of the Civil War. On all these events it made declarations that expressed the opinion of Orthodox Russia. In a real sense, it was the voice of Russia – or, at any rate, of that part of the population that had not yet been engulfed by the revolutionary frenzy. As for the Bolsheviks, whose decrees with regard to the Church were either ignored or outrightly defied by the Council, they made no serious attempt to impede its work before closing it down on September 20, 1918...

At the beginning, however, there was little sign that more than a minority of the delegates understood the full apocalyptic significance of the events they were living through. On August 24, and again on October 20, the Council issued statements condemning the violence, theft and sacrilege against churches, monasteries and priests that had been increasing ever since February. Thus Metropolitan Tikhon, the future Patriarch, said: “Look! Her unfortunate, maddened children are tormenting our dear mother, your native Rus’, they are trying to tear her to pieces, they wish to take away her hallowed treasure – the Orthodox Faith. They defame your Father-Tsar, they destroy His portraits, they disparage his Imperial decrees, and mock him. Can your heart be calm before this, O Russian man? Again ask of your conscience. It will remind you of your truly loyal oath. It will say to you – be a loving son of your native land” ³⁸⁴

But in general revolutionary sentiment was dominant. Thus according to Princess Urusova, the Council even decreed that there should be no discussion of “politics” – that is, no condemnation of the revolution. Instead property

³⁸⁴ Tikhon, in Archimandrite Luke, “Nationalism, Russia, and the Restoration of the Patriarchate”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 51, N 6, November-December, 2001, pp. 30-31.

questions were discussed. But then a professor from Belorussia said: "We should not be discussing these questions now! Russia is perishing, the throne is mocked. Without an Anointed of God, an Orthodox Tsar, she will soon fall under the power of darkness." But he could not continue his speech since he had touched on "politics"...³⁸⁵

Few were those who alluded to the primary cause of the general moral degradation: the nation's – and the Synod's – betrayal of the Tsar and Tsarism. "I have long asked myself," writes N. Kusakov, "why did the council not demand of the Provisional Government the immediate release of the Royal Family from under guard? Why did Metropolitan Pitirim of Petrograd and Metropolitan Makary of Moscow remain in prison under the Provisional Government during the days of the Council? The cold breath of February blew in the corridors of the Council..."³⁸⁶

On October 21, during Vespers in the Dormition cathedral of the Kremlin, two people dressed in soldiers' uniforms went up to the shrine and relics of St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow, threw off the covers and began to remove the vestments. When taken to the commissariat, they told the police that "now there is freedom and everyone can do anything he wants". Three days later a penitential *moleben* was carried out in front of the shrine. The next day, the October revolution took place. St. Hermogen, who been canonized by the Church only a few years before, was notable for his refusal to recognize the government of the False Demetrius, and for his call to the nation to rise up in arms against it. For those with eyes to see, the incident at his shrine just before the Bolshevik coup was a sign that the time had come to act in his spirit, against another false or anti-government.

The Council seemed to understand this, for after the Bolsheviks came to power on October 25, a new spirit of defiance began to prevail in it, especially after the Bolsheviks dispersed the Constituent Assembly in January. Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris described the change thus: "Russian life in those days was like a sea tossed by the storm of revolution. Church life had fallen into a state of disorganization. The external appearance of the Council, because of the diversity of its composition, its irreconcilability and the mutual hostility of its different tendencies and states of mind, was at first matter for anxiety and sadness and even seemed to constitute a cause for apprehension... Some members of the Council had already been carried away by the wave of revolution. The intelligentsia, peasants, workers and professors all tended irresistibly to the left. Among the clergy there were also different elements. Some of them proved to be 'leftist' participants of the previous revolutionary Moscow Diocesan Congress, who stood for a thorough and many-sided reform of church life. Disunion, disorder, dissatisfaction, even mutual distrust... –

385 N.V. Urusova, *Materinskij Plach Sviatoj Rusi* (The Maternal Lament of Holy Russia), Moscow, 2006, p. 109.

386 Kusakov, in *Pravoslavnij Tsar-Muchenik* (The Orthodox Tsar-Martyr), Moscow, 1997, pp. 727-728.

such was the state of the Council at first. But – O miracle of God! – everything began gradually to change... The disorderly assembly, moved by the revolution and in contact with its sombre elements, began to change into something like a harmonious whole, showing external order and internal solidarity. People became peaceable and serious in their tasks and began to feel differently and to look on things in a different way. This process of prayerful regeneration was evident to every observant eye and perceptible to every participant in the Council. A spirit of peace, renewal and unanimity inspired us all..."³⁸⁷

The first important decision of the Council was the restoration of the Patriarchate in November, 1917 through the election of Metropolitan Tikhon of Moscow as Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia. This was a profoundly conservative act, a recreation of one of the major institutions of Muscovite Russia that Peter the Great had destroyed, at a time when open war had just been proclaimed on the whole of the Russian past. Through it the wish of one of the peasant delegates was fulfilled: "We have a tsar no more; no father whom we love. It is impossible to love a synod; and therefore we, the peasants, want a Patriarch." Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky) triumphantly declared: "The eagle of Petrine autocracy, shaped in imitation of the West, tore asunder the Patriarchate, that sacred heart of Russian Orthodoxy. The sacrilegious hand of the impious Peter pulled down the senior hierarch of the Russian Church from his traditional seat in the Dormition Cathedral. The Council, by the authority given it by God, has once more placed the patriarch of Moscow in the chair, which belongs to him by inalienable right."³⁸⁸

Some wondered: what could a patriarch do that the senior member of the Holy Synod could not do? Was he not simply a first among equals? This was true: the patriarchate in Orthodoxy is not a kind of eastern papism, or fourth level of the priesthood. However, this objection failed to take into account the need of the Orthodox people at that time to have a clear leader; and if it could not be the Tsar, it would have to be a patriarch.

As Archimandrite Luke writes: "The idea that a Patriarch would replace the Tsar (especially after his execution) was not absent from the delegates' understanding. 'The proponents for the scheme to re-establish the Patriarchate emphasized the fact that "the state desired to be non-confessional, openly severing its alliance with the church", and consequently the Church "must become militant and have its own spiritual leader"'. 'Somehow the thought of Patriarch became associated with that of Tsar, while those opposed to the reestablishment of the Patriarchate brought forward democratic and republican principles.'"³⁸⁹

387 Nicholas Zernov, "The 1917 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 6, N 1, 1978, p. 21.

388 Hilarion, quoted in John Shelton, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire 1900-1917*, New York: Octagon Books, 1965, p. 260.

389 Archimandrite Luke, "Nationalism, Russia and the Restoration of the Patriarchate", *Orthodox Life*, November-December, 2001, p. 32.

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Metropolitan Tikhon was enthroned on November 21 / December 4 in the Kremlin Dormition cathedral by Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev to the sound of rifle fire from the battle being waged between the Bolsheviks and the SR-dominated Committee of Public Safety, which had occupied the Kremlin. With his enthronement, as Sergei Firsov writes, "an historical event took place – the Orthodox Church received its canonical head, whose voice had not been heard for a whole 217 years. Not only formally, but effectively this was the closing of the last page in the history of the Synodal period."³⁹⁰

According to the new constitution of the Russian Church agreed at the Council, the Church's supreme organ was the Sacred All-Russian Council, composed of bishops, clergy and laity, which was to be periodically convoked by the Patriarch but to which the Patriarch himself was responsible. Between Councils, the Patriarch administered the Church with the aid of two permanent bodies: the Synod of Bishops, and the Higher Church Council, on which parish clergy and laity could sit. Questions relating to theology, religious discipline and ecclesiastical administration were to be the prerogative of the Synod of Bishops, while secular-juridical, charity and other church-related social questions were to be the prerogative of the Higher Church Council. On December 7 the Holy Synod was elected, and on December 8 – the Higher Church Council.

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On January 25, the Russian Church Council, which had reconvened in Moscow, heard that Metropolitan Vladimir had been murdered by the Bolsheviks. This concentrated minds on the danger the Patriarch was in; and on the same day the Council immediately passed a resolution entrusting him with the drawing up of the names of three men who could serve as *locum tenentes* of the Patriarch in the event of his death and before the election of a new Patriarch. These names were to be kept secret - on February 3/16 Prince Trubestkoy said that there had been "a closed session of the Council" to discuss this question, and that "it was decreed that the whole fullness of the rights of the Patriarch should pass to the *locum tenens*", and that "it is not fitting to speak about all the motivation behind the decision taken in an open session".

The Patriarch's will was revised by him towards the end of 1924, and was published only after his death in 1925. It was read out in the presence of sixty hierarchs and declared: "In the event of our death our patriarchal rights and obligations, until the canonical election of a new Patriarch, we grant temporarily to his Eminence Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov). In the event of the impossibility, by reason of whatever circumstances, of his entering upon the

³⁹⁰ Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' nakanune Peremen (konets 1890-x – 1918 gg.)* (The Russian Church on the eve of the Changes (end of the 1890s to 1918), Moscow, 2002, p. 542.

exercise of the indicated rights and obligations, they will pass to his Eminence Metropolitan Agathangel (Preobrazhensky). If this metropolitan, too, does not succeed in accomplishing this, then our patriarchal rights and obligations will pass to his Eminence Peter (Polyansky), Metropolitan of Krutitsa.”

Since both Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangelus were in exile at the time of the Patriarch’s death, Metropolitan Peter became the patriarchal *locum tenens*...

Although Metropolitan Peter was not well known at the time of the Council, Tikhon’s choice of him turned out to be inspired,. As Lev Regelson comments: “That the first-hierarchical authority in the Russian Church after the death of Patriarch Tikhon was able to be preserved was thanks only to the fact that one of the patriarchal *locum tenentes* Patriarch Tikhon chose in 1918 was Metropolitan Peter, who at the moment of the choice was only a servant of the Synod! Many hierarchs were amazed and disturbed by his subsequent swift ‘career’, which changed him in the course of six years into the metropolitan of Krutitsa and Kolomna... But it was precisely thanks to the extraordinary nature of his destiny that he turned out to be the only one chosen by the Patriarch (in actual fact, *chosen by the Council, as entrusted to the Patriarch*) who was left in freedom at the moment of the death of Patriarch Tikhon. It is difficult even to conjecture how complicated and, besides, tragic would have been the destiny of the Russian Church if the wise thought of the Council and the Patriarch had not been realized in life.”³⁹¹

³⁹¹ Regelson, *Tragedia Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1945* (The Tragedy of the Russian Church, 1917-1945), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, p. 67.

25. THE ANATHEMATIZATION OF SOVIET POWER

The second major decision of the Moscow Council after the restoration of the patriarchate was its refusal to recognize the legitimacy of Soviet power. In fact, it was as if the Church had emerged out of a deep sleep to take up arms with unexpected vigour. Thus already on the day after the coup, when Lenin nationalized all land, making the Church's and parish priests' property illegal, the Council addressed a letter to the faithful on November 11, calling the revolution "descended from the Antichrist and possessed by atheism": "Open combat is fought against the Christian Faith, in opposition to all that is sacred, arrogantly abasing all that bears the name of God (II Thessalonians 2.4)... But no earthly kingdom founded on ungodliness can ever survive: it will perish from internal strife and party dissension. Thus, because of its frenzy of atheism, the State of Russia will fall... For those who use the sole foundation of their power in the coercion of the whole people by one class, no motherland or holy place exists. They have become traitors to the motherland and instigated an appalling betrayal of Russia and her true allies. But, to our grief, as yet no government has arisen which is sufficiently one with the people to deserve the blessing of the Orthodox Church. And such will not appear on Russian soil until we turn with agonizing prayer and tears of repentance to Him, without Whom we labour in vain to lay foundations..."³⁹²

This recognition of the real nature of the revolution came none too early. On November 15, a Tver peasant, Michael Yefimovich Nikonov, wrote to the Council: "We think that the Most Holy Synod made an irreparable mistake when the bishops went to meet the revolution. We do not know the reasons for this. Was it for fear of the Jews? In accordance with the prompting of their heart, or for some laudable reasons? Whatever the reason, their act produced a great temptation in the believers, and not only in the Orthodox, but even among the Old Ritualists. Forgive me for touching on this question – it is not our business to judge that: this is a matter for the Council, I am only placing on view the judgement of the people. People are saying that by this act of the Synod many right-thinking people were led into error, and also many among the clergy. We could hardly believe our ears at what we heard at parish and deanery meetings. Spiritual fathers, tempted by the deception of freedom and equality, demanded that hierarchs they dislike be removed together with their sees, and that they should elect those whom they wanted. Readers demanded the same equality, so as not to be subject to their superiors. That is the absurdity we arrived at when we emphasized the satanic idea of the revolution. The Orthodox Russian people is convinced that the Most Holy Council in the interests of our holy mother, the Church, the Fatherland and Batiushka Tsar, should give over to anathema and curse all self-called persons and all traitors who trampled on their oath together with the satanic idea of the revolution. And the Most Holy Council will show to its flock who will take over the helm of administration in

³⁹² Nicholas Zernov, "The 1917 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 6, N 1, 1978. On the same day, however, the Council decreed that those killed on *both* sides in the conflict should be given Christian burials.

the great State. We suppose it must be he who is in prison [the Tsar], but if he does not want to rule over us traitors,... then let it indicate who is to accept the government of the State; that is only common sense. The act of Sacred Coronation and Anointing with holy oil of our tsars in the Dormition Cathedral [of the Moscow Kremlin] was no simple comedy. It was they who received from God the authority to rule the people, giving account to Him alone, and by no means a constitution or some kind of parliament of not quite decent people capable only of revolutionary arts and possessed by the love of power... Everything that I have written here is not my personal composition alone, but the voice of the Russian Orthodox people, the 100-million-strong village Russia in which I live."³⁹³

Many people were indeed disturbed by such questions as: had the Church betrayed the Tsar in March 1917? Were Christians guilty of breaking their oath to the Tsar by accepting the Provisional Government? Should the Church formally absolve the people of their oath to the Tsar? What about the oath of allegiance that the Russian people had made to the Romanov dynasty in 1613? Had the people fallen under the anathema-curse of the 1613 Council against all those who broke that allegiance?

A letter by a group of Orthodox Christians to the president of the Council declared: "Holy Fathers, Most Holy Synod, Apostles, Preachers of the Teaching of Christ. Do your actions correspond to your names? Alas, alas, alas! Have not all of you turned into Judases? He was one man who betrayed Christ and hanged himself, but are you not all in the place of Judas? Are you not all whitewashed sepulchres on the outside, with golden klobuks, but straw inside, in your brains? Are not you all hiding your disgusting pride in your silken mantias, are you not seeking the earthly kingdom of freedom? Your helpers, the sacred servers of the Altar, follow your example, and inspire the Christian people with the ideas of freedom and equality. Alas, crucifiers, because of your freedom the throne of the Autocracy has been destroyed. Because of your unhappy freedom the Anointed of God, his Majesty the Emperor, is suffering: he is slandered, dishonoured, exiled. The innocent heir to the Throne is suffering. The Royal Family and the whole race is suffering.

"O Lord, by Thy Grace stand up for and save the Passion-Bearer of Christ the Lord, the all-innocent Tsar.

"Holy Fathers, the Orthodox people beseeches you: look at the Holy Bible. Come to your senses, take off your golden klobuks, scatter ashes on your heads, weep, repent. It is not you who are calling the Orthodox people to repentance, but the Russian people is beseeching you to seek justice and truth, and not demonic freedom. What were you bound by? The hellish monster, the Beast, has been unbound by freedom and has come out from the abyss. Who is your Kerensky? A zhid [Jew], an Antichrist, and you are his servants, whatever face you put on it. What has your diabolical freedom brought Russia, what joy?

³⁹³ http://www.ispovednik.org/fullst.php?nid=31&binn_rubrik_pl_news=136.

How has the Russian People met 'freedom'? With songs, with dances, with murders. All Orthodox people beseech you: come to your senses, all you Judases. May at least one person be found like the Apostle Peter to weep over his guilt. You have sinned terribly, you have overthrown the innocent batiushka-Tsar..."³⁹⁴

The letter could be accused of being "over the top" insofar as several of the hierarchs it addressed became holy martyrs of Christ. And yet the general direction of the accusation was surely correct. The Church leadership had failed to defend the Tsar or the monarchy, and only the simple people understood, it would seem, what was really happening... The leadership of the Council passed consideration of these questions, together with Nikonov's letter, to a subsection entitled "On Church Discipline". This subsection had several meetings in the course of the next nine months, but came to no definite decisions...³⁹⁵

The Council's decree of December 2, "On the Legal Status of the Russian Orthodox Church", ruled, on the one hand, that the State could issue no law relating to the Church without prior consultation with and approval by her, and on the other hand, that any decree and by-laws issued by the Orthodox Church that did not directly contradict state laws were to be systematically recognized by the State as legally binding. Church holidays were to remain state holidays, blasphemy and attempts to lure members of the Church away from her were to remain illegal, and schools of all levels organized and run by the Church were to be recognised by the State on a par with the secular schools. It is clear from this decree that the Church was determined to go Her own way in complete defiance of the so-called "authorities".

On December 11 Lenin decreed that all Church schools be transferred to the Council of People's Commissars. As a result, the Church was deprived of all its academies, seminaries, schools and all the property linked with them. Then, on December 18, ecclesiastical marriage was deprived of its legal status and civil marriage introduced in its place. The Church responded by declaring that civil marriages were sinful for Orthodox Christians...

As if to test the decree "On the Legal Status of the Russian Orthodox Church", on January 13, Alexandra Kollontai, the People's Commissar of Social Welfare (and Lenin's mistress), sent a detachment of sailors to occupy the Alexander Nevsky monastery and turn it into a sanctuary for war invalids. They were met by an angry crowd of worshippers and in the struggle which followed one priest, Fr. Peter Skipetrov, was shot dead.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ ГА РФ. Ф. 3431. Оп. 1. Д. 522. Л. 444, 446-446 об. Рукопись. Подлинник.

³⁹⁵ M. Babkin, "Pomestnij Sobor 1917-1918 gg.: 'O Prisiage pravitel'stvu voobsche i byvshemu imperatoru Nikolaiu II v chastnosti'" (The Local Council of 1917-1918: On the Oath to the Government in general and to the former Emperor Nicholas II in particular), <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=lib&id=2704>.

³⁹⁶ Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana, 1995, p. 343. According to Regelson (*op. cit.*, p. 226), this took place on January 19.

According to Orlando Figes, Lenin was not yet ready for a confrontation with the Church, but Kollontai's actions forced his hand.³⁹⁷ On January 20 a law on freedom of conscience, later named the "Decree on the Separation of the Church from the State and of the School from the Church", was passed (it was published three days later in *Izvestia*). This was the Bolsheviks' fiercest attack yet on the Church. It forbade religious bodies from owning property (all property of religious organizations was declared to be the heritage of the people), from levying dues, from organizing into hierarchical organizations, and from teaching religion to persons under 18 years of age. Ecclesiastical and religious societies did not have the rights of a juridical person. The registering of marriages was to be done exclusively by the civil authorities. Thus, far from being a blow struck for freedom of conscience, it was, as the Council put it, a decree on freedom from conscience, and an excuse for large-scale pillaging of churches and murders, often in the most bestial manner.³⁹⁸

Fr. Alexander Mazyrin points out that this decree in effect deprived the Church of its rights as a legal person. "This meant that de jure the Church ceased to exist as a single organization. Only local religious communities could exist in legal terms, the authorities signing with them agreements on the use of Church property. The Eighth Department of the People's Commissariat of Justice, which was due to put into practice Lenin's decree, was officially dubbed the 'Liquidation' Department. It was the elimination of the Church, not its legalization as a social institution, that was the aim pursued by the 'people's commissars' government."³⁹⁹

"The ending of financial subventions," writes S.A. Smith, "hit the central and diocesan administrations hard, but made little difference to parish clergy, who depended on parishioners for financial support. During the land redistribution even the pious took an active part in seizing church lands, but villagers provided local priests with an allotment of land and some financial support. The Bolshevik leadership was largely content to leave ecclesiastical institutions and the network of parish churches intact. The major exceptions were the monasteries. By late 1920, 673 monasteries in the RSFSR had been dissolved and their 1.2 million hectares of land confiscated."⁴⁰⁰

According to other sources, more than one thousand monasteries were "nationalized" ...

397 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 528; Archpriest Michael Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia*, new edition, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, pp. 91-92.

398 Professor Ivan Andreyev, "The Catacomb Church in the Soviet Union", *Orthodox Life*, March-April, 1951. For details of the destruction wrought against the Church in these years, see Vladimir Rusak, *Pir Satany* (Satan's Feast), London, Canada: Zarya, 1991.

399 Mazyrin, "Legalizing the Moscow Patriarchate in 1927: The Secret Aims of the Authorities", *Social Sciences: A Quarterly Journal of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, No 1, 2009, p. 28. This article was first published in Russian in *Otechestvennaia Istoria* (Fatherland History), N 4, 2008.

400 Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 242-243.

On January 19 / February 1, Patriarch Tikhon, anticipating the decree on the Separation of Church and State, and even before the Council had reconvened⁴⁰¹, issued his famous anathema against the Bolsheviks: “By the power given to Us by God, we forbid you to approach the Mysteries of Christ, we **anathematize** you, if only you bear Christian names and although by birth you belong to the Orthodox Church. We also adjure all of you, faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ, not to enter into any communion with such outcasts (*izgoi*ami) of the human race: ‘Remove the evil one from among you’ (I Corinthians 5.13).” The decree ended with an appeal to defend the Church, if necessary, to the death. For “the gates of hell shall not prevail against Her” (Matthew 16.18). This anathema against the collective Antichrist was appropriately recorded as Act 66.6...⁴⁰²

The significance of this anathema lies not so much in the casting out of the Bolsheviks themselves, as in the command to the faithful to have no communion with them. In other words, the government were to be regarded, not only as apostates from Christ (that was obvious), but also as having no moral authority, no claim to obedience whatsoever – an attitude taken by the Church to no other government in the whole of Her history.⁴⁰³ Coming so soon after the Bolsheviks’ dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, it indicated that now that constitutionalism had proved its uselessness in the face of demonic barbarism, it was time for the Church to enter the struggle in earnest...⁴⁰⁴

It has been argued that the Patriarch’s decree did not anathematize Soviet power as such, but only those who were committing acts of violence and sacrilege against the Church. However, this argument fails to take into account several facts. First, the patriarch himself, in his declarations of June 16 and July 1, 1923, repented precisely of his “anathematization of Soviet power”.⁴⁰⁵ Secondly, even if the decree did not formally anathematize Soviet power as such, since Soviet power sanctioned and initiated the acts of violence, the

401 “When they asked the holy Patriarch why he had issued his epistle on the eve of the Council’s Sitting, Vladyka replied that he did not want to put the Council under the hammer and preferred to take it on himself alone” (Andreyev, *op. cit.*, p. 9), a characteristic remark of this truly self-sacrificial man of God.

402 Russian text in M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviatishhego Patriarkha Tikhona* (The Acts of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon), Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1994, pp. 82-85; *Deiania Sviashennogo Sobora Pravoslavnoj Rossijskoj Tserkvi* (The Acts of the Sacred Council of the Russian Orthodox Church), 1917-1918, Moscow, 1918, 1996, vol. 6, pp. 4-5.

403 In a letter to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) that was captured by the Bolsheviks, the Patriarch called the Bolsheviks “*oprichniki*” – that is, he compared them to the murderous henchmen of Ivan the Terrible (*Za Khrista Postradavshie* (They Suffered for Christ), Moscow, 1997, vol. 1, p. 426).

404 On January 1, 1970 the Russian Church Abroad under Metropolitan Philaret of New York confirmed this anathema and added one of its own against “Vladimir Lenin and the other persecutors of the Church of Christ, dishonourable apostates who have raised their hands against the Anointed of God, killing clergymen, trampling on holy things, destroying the churches of God, tormenting our brothers and defiling our Fatherland” (http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=1775)

405 Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 280, 296.

faithful were in effect being exhorted to having nothing to do with it. And thirdly, in his Epistle to the Council of People's Commissars on the first anniversary of the revolution, November 7, 1918, the Patriarch obliquely but clearly confirmed his non-recognition of Soviet power, saying: "It is not our business to make judgments about earthly authorities. Every power allowed by God would attract to itself Our blessing if it were truly 'the servant of God', for the good of those subject to it, and were 'terrible not for good works, but for evil' (Romans 13.3,4). But now to you, who have used authority for the persecution of the innocent, We extend this Our word of exhortation..."⁴⁰⁶

It was important that the true significance of the anathema for the Church's relationship with the State be pointed out. This was done immediately after the proclamation of the anathema, when Count D.A. Olsufyev pointed out that at the moleben they had just sung 'many years' to the powers that be – that is, to the Bolsheviks whom they had just anathematized! "I understand that the Apostle called for obedience to all authorities – but hardly that 'many years' should be sung to them. I know that his 'most pious and most autocratic' [majesty] was replaced by 'the right-believing Provisional Government' of Kerensky and company... And I think that the time for unworthy compromises has passed."⁴⁰⁷

On January 22 / February 4 the Patriarch's anathema was discussed in a session of the Council presided over by Metropolitan Arseny of Novgorod, and the following resolution was accepted: "The Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church welcomes with love the epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, which punishes the evil-doers and rebukes the enemies of the Church of Christ. From the height of the patriarchal throne there has thundered the word of excommunication [prishchenia] and a spiritual sword has been raised against those who continually mock the faith and conscience of the people. The Sacred Council witnesses that it remains in the fullest union with the father and intercessor of the Russian Church, pays heed to his appeal and is ready in a sacrificial spirit to confess the Faith of Christ against her blasphemers. The Sacred Council calls on the whole of the Russian Church headed by her archpastors and pastors to unite now around the Patriarch, so as not to allow the mocking of our holy faith." (Act 67.35-37).⁴⁰⁸

Another source quotes the following response of the Council to the patriarch's anathema: "The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia in his epistle to the beloved in the Lord archpastors, pastors and all faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ has drawn the spiritual sword against the outcasts of the human race – the Bolsheviks, and anathematized them. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church adjures all her faithful children not to enter into any communion with these outcasts. For their satanic deeds they are cursed in this

406 Gubonin, op. cit., p. 151.

407 *Deiania*, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 7; quoted in A.G. Yakovitsky, "Sergianstvo: mif ili real'nost? (Sergianism: myth or reality?), *Vernost'*, 100, January, 2008.

408 *Deiania*, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 36.

life and in the life to come. Orthodox! His Holiness the Patriarch has been given the right to bind and to loose according to the word of the Saviour... Do not destroy your souls, cease communion with the servants of Satan – the Bolsheviks. Parents, if your children are Bolsheviks, demand authoritatively that they renounce their errors, that they bring forth repentance for their eternal sin, and if they do not obey you, renounce them. Wives, if your husbands are Bolsheviks and stubbornly continue to serve Satan, leave your husbands, save yourselves and your children from the soul-destroying infection. An Orthodox Christian cannot have communion with the servants of the devil... Repent, and with burning prayer call for help from the Lord of Hosts and thrust away from yourselves 'the hand of strangers' – the age-old enemies of the Christian faith, who have declared themselves in self-appointed fashion 'the people's power'... If you do not obey the Church, you will not be her sons, but participants in the cruel and satanic deeds wrought by the open and secret enemies of Christian truth... Dare! Do not delay! Do not destroy your soul and hand it over to the devil and his stooges."⁴⁰⁹

One member of the Council said: "If the father, mother, brothers and sisters did not receive the returning evil-doer, but expelled him, saying: 'You are a scoundrel, your hands are covered in blood, you are not our son, nor our brother,' the disorders would cease."⁴¹⁰

During the same session A.A. Vasiliev said: "We thank the Lord for giving us what we have been waiting for – that is, finally to hear the true Church voice of our Most Holy Father and Patriarch. For the first time in this year of disorder, a truly ecclesiastical word, a word spoken with regard to the events about which nothing has been said up to now. And a pastoral judgement delivered on all those who are guilty of these events... Our Christian conscience must suggest to each of us what concessions he can and cannot make, and when he must lay down his life for the truth. People are puzzled about precisely who is subject to this ban that his Holiness the Patriarch speaks about in his epistle. After all, it is not just since yesterday, and not since the coming of the Bolsheviks, that we have been experiencing a real satanic attack on the Church of Christ, these fratricides, fights and mutual hatred. At the very beginning of the revolution the authorities carried out an act of apostasy from God (voices: "Right!"). Prayer was banned in the armies, banners with the cross of Christ were replaced by red rags. It is not only the present powers that be that are guilty of this, but also those who have already departed from the scene. We shall continue to hope that the present rulers also, who are now shedding blood, will depart from the scene."⁴¹¹

409 "Iz sobrania Tsentral'nogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Oktiabr'skoj revoliutsii: listovka bez vykhodnykh dannykh, pod N 1011" (From the collection of the Central State Archive of the October Revolution: pamphlet without dates, under N 1011, *Nauka i Religia* (Science and Religion), 1989, N 4; partly translated in Arfed Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960, p. 9.

410 *Deiania*, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 40.

411 *Deiania*, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 40; Yakovitsky, op. cit.

Then Fr. Vladimir Vostokov spoke: "In this hall too much has been said about the terrible things that have been suffered, and if we were to list and describe them all, this huge hall would be filled with books. So I am not going to speak about the horrors. I want to point to the root from which these horrors have been created. I understand this present assembly of ours as a spiritual council of doctors consulting over our dangerously ill mother, our homeland. When doctors come up to treat a sick person, they do not stop at the latest manifestations of the illness, but they look deeper, they investigate the root cause of the illness. So in the given case it is necessary to reveal the root of the illness that the homeland is suffering. From this platform, before the enlightener of Russia, the holy Prince Vladimir, I witness to my priestly conscience that the Russian people is being deceived, and that up to this time no-one has told them the whole truth. The moment has come when the Council, as the only gathering that is lawful and truly elected by the people must tell the people the holy truth, fearing nobody except God Himself...

"The derailing of the train of history took place at the end of February, 1917; it was aided first of all by the Jewish-Masonic global organization, which cast into the masses the slogans of socialism, the slogans of a mythical freedom... So much has been said here about the terrors brought upon the country by Bolshevism. But what is Bolshevism? – the natural and logical development of Socialism. And Socialism is – that antichristian movement which in the final analysis produces Bolshevism as its highest development and which engenders those phenomena completely contrary to the principles of Christian asceticism that we are living through now.

"Unfortunately, many of our professors and writers have arrayed Socialism in beautiful clothes, calling it similar to Christianity, and thereby they together with the agitators of revolution have led the uneducated people into error. Fathers and brothers! What fruits did we expect of Socialism, when we not only did not fight against it, but also defended it at times, or almost always were shyly silent before its contagion? We must serve the Church by faith, and save the country from destructive tendencies, and for that it is necessary to speak the truth to the people without delay, telling them what Socialism consists of and what it leads to.

"The Council must say that in February-March a violent coup took place which for the Orthodox Christian is oath-breaking and which requires purification through repentance. We all, beginning with Your Holiness and ending with myself, the last member of the Council, must bow the knee before God, and beseech Him to forgive us for allowing the growth in the country of evil teachings and violence. Only after sincere repentance by the whole people will the country be pacified and regenerated. And God will bestow upon us His mercy and grace. But if we continue only to anathematize without repenting, without declaring the truth to the people, then they will with just cause say to us: You, too, are guilty that the country has been reduced to this crime, for which the anathema now sounds out; you by your pusillanimity

have allowed the development of evil and have been slow to call the facts and phenomena of state life by their real names!

“Pastors of the Church, search out the soul of the people! If we do not tell the people the whole truth, if we do not call on them now to offer nationwide repentance for definite sins, we will leave this conciliar chamber as turncoats and traitors of the Church and the Homeland. I am so unshakably convinced of what I say now that I would not hesitate to repeat it even if I were on the verge of death. It is necessary to regenerate in the minds of people the idea of a pure central authority – the idea that has been darkened by the pan-Russian deception. We overthrew the Tsar and subjected ourselves to the Jews! [Voices of members of the Council: ‘True, true...’] The only salvation for the Russian people is a wise Russian Orthodox Tsar. Only through the election of a wise, Orthodox, Russian Tsar can Russia be placed on the good, historical path and re-establish good order. As long as we will not have a wise Orthodox tsar, there will be no order among us, and the people’s blood will continue to be shed, and the centrifugal forces will divide the one people into hostile pieces, until the train of history is completely destroyed or until foreign peoples enslave us as a crowd incapable of independent State life...

“We all must unite into one Christian family under the banner of the Holy and Life-Creating Cross and under the leadership of his Holiness the Patriarch, to say that Socialism, which calls people as if to brotherhood, is an openly antichristian and evil phenomenon, that the Russian people has become the plaything of the Jewish-Masonic organizations behind which the Antichrist is already visible in the form of an internationalist tsar, that by playing on false freedom, the people is forging for itself slavery to the Judaeo-Masons. If we say this openly and honestly, then I do not know what will happen to us, but I know that Russia will be alive!”⁴¹²

On March 12, 1918 the Council reaffirmed the patriarch’s anathema, proclaiming: “To those who utter blasphemies and lies against our holy faith and Church, who rise up against the holy churches and monasteries, encroaching on the inheritance of the Church, while abusing and killing the priests of the Lord and zealots of the patristic faith: **Anathema**” (Act 94).

However, in 1918, the rite of the Triumph of Orthodoxy with the anathemas against the atheists, was omitted on the First Sunday in Great Lent. As Valery Shambarov writes: “The Bolsheviks were in power, and such a rite would have constituted an open challenge to on the part of the hierarchs of the Church. Nevertheless, one cannot find any decision on removing the traditional rite of the celebration of the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy in the materials of the Local Council of 1917-1918.”⁴¹³

⁴¹² *Deiania*, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, pp. 41-43.

⁴¹³ Shambarov, “Vosstanovit’ prervannuiu pravoslavnuuiu traditsiu!” (Restoring an interrupted Orthodox tradition), February 28, 1917, http://zavtra.ru/blogs/vosstanovit_prervannuyu_pравoslavnuuyu_traditsiyu.

The Bolshevik decree on the separation of Church and State elicited strong reactions from individual members of the Council. Thus one exclaimed: "We overthrew the tsar and subjected ourselves to the Jews!" And another said: "The sole means of salvation for the Russian nation is a wise Orthodox Russian tsar!" In reply to this remark, Protopriest Elijah Gromoglasov said: "Our only hope is not that we may have an earthly tsar or president... but that there should be a heavenly Tsar, Christ".⁴¹⁴

The section of the Council appointed to report on the decree made the following recommendations: "The individuals wielding the governmental authority audaciously attempt to destroy the very existence of the Orthodox Church. In order to realize this satanic design, the Soviet of People's Commissars published the decree concerning the separation of the Church from the State, which legalized an open persecution not only of the Orthodox Church, but of all other religious communions, Christian or non-Christian. Not despising deceit, the enemies of Christ fraudulently put on the appearance of granting by it religious liberty.

"Welcoming all real extension of liberty of conscience, the Council at the same time points out that by the provisions of the said decree, the freedom of the Orthodox Church, as well as of all other religious organizations and communions in general, is rendered void. Under the pretence of 'the separation of the Church from the State', the Soviet of People's Commissars attempts to render impossible the very existence of the churches, the ecclesiastical institutions, and the clergy.

"Under the guise of taking over the ecclesiastical property, the said decree aims to destroy the very possibility of Divine worship and ministration. It declares that 'no ecclesiastical or religious association has the right to possess property', and 'all property of the existing ecclesiastical and religious associations in Russia is declared to be national wealth.' Thereby the Orthodox churches and monasteries, those resting-places of the relics of the saints revered by all Orthodox people, become the common property of all citizens irrespective of their credal differences – of Christians, Jews, Muslims and pagans, and the holy objects designated for the Divine service, i.e. the holy Cross, the holy Gospel, the sacred vessels, the holy miracle-working icons are at the disposal of the governmental authorities, which may either permit or not (as they wish) their use by the parishes.

"Let the Russian people understand that they (the authorities) wish to deprive them of God's churches with their sacred objects! As soon as all property of the Church is taken away, it is not possible to offer any aid to it, for in accordance with the intention of the decree everything donated shall be taken away. The support of monasteries, churches and the clergy alike becomes impossible.

414 *Deiania*, op. cit., p. 159.

“But that is not all: in consequence of the confiscation of the printing establishments, it is impossible for the Church independently to publish the holy Gospel as well as other sacred and liturgical books in their wonted purity and authenticity.

“In the same manner, the decree affects the pastors of the Church. Declaring that ‘no one may refuse to perform his civil duties on account of his religious views’, it thereby constrains them to fulfil military obligations forbidden them by the 83rd canon of the holy Apostles. At the same time, ministers of the altar are removed from educating the people. The very teaching of the law of God, not only in governmental, but even in private schools, is not permitted; likewise all theological institutions are doomed to be closed. The Church is thus excluded from the possibility of educating her own pastors.

“Declaring that ‘the governmental functions or those of other public-juridical institutions shall not be accompanied by any religious rites or ceremonies,’ the decree thereby sacrilegiously sunders all connections of the government with the sanctities of the faith.

“On the basis of all these considerations, the holy Council decrees:

“1. The decree published by the Soviet of People’s Commissars regarding the separation of the Church from the State represents in itself, under the guise of a law declaring liberty of conscience, an inimical attempt upon the life of the Orthodox Church, and is an act of open persecution.

“2. All participation, either in the publication of the law so injurious to the Church, or in attempts to put it into practice, is not reconcilable with membership of the Orthodox Church, and subjects all transgressors belonging to the Orthodox communion to the heaviest penalties, to the extent of excommunicating them from the Church (in accordance with the 73rd canon of the holy Apostles, and the 13th canon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council).”⁴¹⁵

These recommendations were then adopted by the Council as its official reply to the decree (February 7).

Although, as we have said, it was unprecedented for a Local Church to anathematize a government, there have been occasions in the history of the Church when individual hierarchs have not only refused to obey or pray for a political leader, but have actually prayed *against* him. Thus in the fourth century St. Basil the Great prayed for the defeat of Julian the Apostate, and it was through his prayers that the apostate was killed, as was revealed by God to the holy hermit Julian of Mesopotamia. Neither St. Basil nor his friend, St. Gregory the Theologian, recognized the rule of Julian the Apostate to be

415 Gustavson, *op. cit.*; John Sheldon Curtiss, *The Russian Church and the Soviet State, 1917-1950*, Boston, 1953, pp. 125-127. Curtiss refers to pages 177 to 179 of the *Acts of the Local Council*.

legitimate.⁴¹⁶ Moreover, they considered that Gregory's brother, St. Caesarius, should not remain at the court of Julian, although he thought that, being a doctor, he could help his relatives and friends through his position there.⁴¹⁷ These and other examples show that, while the *principle* of authority *as such* is from God (Romans 13.1), individual authorities or rulers are sometimes not from God, but are only *allowed to exist* by Him, in which case the Church must offer resistance to them out of loyalty to God Himself.⁴¹⁸

As Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), the foremost canonist of the Russian Church Abroad, wrote: "With regard to the question of the commemoration of authorities, we must bear in mind that now we are having dealings not simply with a pagan government like Nero's, but with the apostasy of the last times. Not with a so far unenlightened authority, but with apostasy. The Holy Fathers did not relate to Julian the Apostate in the same way as they did to the other pagan Emperors. And we cannot relate to the antichristian authorities in the same way as to any other, for its nature is purely satanic."⁴¹⁹

There were some who took the anathema very seriously and fulfilled it to the letter. Thus in 1918, the clairvoyant Elder Nicholas (Parthenov), later Hieromartyr Bishop of Aktar, "following the anathema contained in the Epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, and not wishing to enter into relations with 'the outcasts of the human race', went into reclusion..."⁴²⁰

The future Hieromartyr Metropolitan Hermogen of Tobolsk (+1918) presciently said of life under the anathematized Soviet power: "During the time of the antichrist, anyone who obeys the laws of civil society, even if it does not directly clash with faith, will legitimises the domain of the antichrist, because he will submit as a participant of his society and The True Orthodox, in the time of the antichrist, will live in loneliness, away from the world, will not obey any law of civil society, because those who obey and register in society and its standards, even if reluctantly, will be legally registered in the antichrist, and therefore expelled from the heavenly authority and government of God."

In general, however, the Church and the People paid no attention to the anathema – which must be counted as perhaps the major reason why the revolution gained strength and survived for generations to come...

416 V.A. Konovalov, *Otnoshenie khristianstva k sovietskoj vlasti* (The Relationship of Christianity to Soviet Power), Montreal, 1936, p. 35.

417 Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, p. 17.

418 Konovalov, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

419 Grabbe, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Moscow, 1998, p. 85.

420 Alexis Rufimsky, "Biografia sviaschennomuchenika Nikolaia (Parfenova), episkopa Atkarskago, radi Khrista yurodivago 'malenkago batiushki'" (A Biography of Hieromartyr Nicholas (Parthenov), Bishop of Aktar, fool for Christ, 'the little batyushka'), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 17 (1782), September 1/14, 2005, p. 5.

The Council had exhorted the faithful to protect church property, and soon there were reports of people mobbing the officials and soldiers detailed to carry out the decree. Several hundred thousand people marched through Petrograd in protest. As Michael Shkarovskii writes: "Numerous religious processions, some of which were fired upon, took place in the towns; services in defence of the patriarchate were held in public places and petitions were sent to the government. There followed a mass religious upsurge in Russia. From 1918, thousands of new converts, including some prominent intellectuals, joined the now persecuted Orthodox Church. And an 'All-Russian Union of United Orthodox Parishes' was also formed.

"The *Sovnarkom* had expected its decree to be implemented quickly and relatively painlessly, but this was prevented first and foremost by the opposition of millions of peasants, who supported the expropriation of church and monastic property but were against making births, marriages and deaths a purely civil affair, depriving parishes of their property rights, and dropping divinity from the school curriculum. Peasants thus resisted Bolshevik efforts to break the 'unshakable traditions' of 'a life of faith' in the Russian countryside. The implementation of the law was also hindered by the lack of suitable officials to carry it out, and by the inconsistency of the local authorities' understanding of the law."⁴²¹

A Barmenkov wrote: "Some school workers began to interpret [Church-School separation] as a transition to secular education, in which both religious and anti-religious propaganda in school would be excluded. They supposed that the school had to remain neutral in relation to religion and the Church. A.V. Lunacharsky and N.K. Krupskaya spoke against this incorrect interpretation..., emphasizing that in the Soviet state the concept of the people's enlightenment had unfailingly to include 'a striving to cast out of the people's head religious trash and replace it with the light of science.'"⁴²²

In the midst of this chaos, as James Cunningham writes, "the Patriarch was again and again urged to violate his November decision to avoid inciting armed resistance to the Bolsheviks. He was reminded that Patriarch Hermogen had not hesitated, and that traitors and foreigners had been defeated as a result. The Bolshevik Executive Committee watched nervously to see if Tikhon would be another Hermogen. Church leaders cautiously avoided advocating restoring the monarchy..."⁴²³

"On March 14/27," writes Peter Sokolov, "still hoping that the existence of the Church could be preserved under the communist regime and with the aim of establishing direct relations with the higher state authorities, a Church

421 Shkarovskii, "The Russian Orthodox Church", *op. cit.*, pp. 420-421.

422 Barmenkov, in Alexander Mikhailchenkov, "Tserkov' v ogne" (The Church in the Fire), *Pravoslavni Vestnik* (The Orthodox Herald) (Canada), June-July, 1989, p. 9.

423 Cunningham, "Reform Projects of the Russian Orthodox Church at the Beginning of the XXth Century", in J. Breck, J. Meyendorff and E. Silk (eds.), *The Legacy of St Vladimir*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990, p. 134.

deputation set out in the name of the Council to the Council of People's Commissars in Moscow. They wanted to meet Lenin personally, and personally present him with their ideas about the conditions acceptable to the Church for her existence in the state of the new type." This initiative hardly accorded with the anathema against the Bolsheviks, which forbade the faithful from having any relations with them. It was therefore unsuccessful. "The deputation was not received by Lenin. The commissars (of insurance and justice) that conversed with it did not satisfy its requests. A second address to the authorities in the name of the Council that followed soon after the first unsuccessful audience was also unsuccessful..."⁴²⁴

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The Council made two other decisions relating to Soviet power and its institutions. On April 15 it decreed: "Clergymen serving in anti-ecclesiastical institutions, as well as those who put into effect the decrees on freedom of conscience which are inimical to the Church and similar acts, are subject to being banned from serving and, in the case of impenitence, are deprived of their rank."⁴²⁵ On the assumption that "anti-ecclesiastical institutions" included all Soviet institutions, this would seem to have been a clearly anti-Soviet measure.

However, on August 15, 1918, the Council took a step in the opposite direction, declaring invalid all defrockings based on political considerations, applying this particularly to Metropolitan Arseny (Matsevich) of Rostov and Priest Gregory Petrov. Metropolitan Arseny had indeed been unjustly defrocked in the reign of Catherine II for his righteous opposition to her anti-Church measures. However, Petrov had been one of the leaders of the Cadet party in the Duma in 1905 and was an enemy of the monarchical order. How could his defrocking be said to have been unjust in view of the fact that the Church had officially prayed for the Orthodox Autocracy, and Petrov had worked directly against the fulfilment of the Church's prayers?

The problem was: too many people, including several hierarchs, had welcomed the fall of the Tsarist regime. If the Church was not to divide along political lines, a general amnesty was considered necessary. But if true recovery can only begin with repentance, and repentance must begin with the leaders of the Church, this decree amounted to covering the wound without allowing it to heal. And so, as Bishop Dionysius (Alferov) of Novgorod writes, the Council, in spite of its positive achievements, could be criticized for its "weakening of Church discipline, its legitimization of complete freedom of political orientation and activity, and, besides, its rehabilitation of the Church revolutionaries like Gregory Petrov. By all this it doomed the

424 Sokolov, "Put' Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi v Rossii-SSSR (1916-1961)" (The Path of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia and the USSR (1916-1961), in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v SSSR: Sbornik* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the USSR: a Collection), Munich, 1962, p. 15.

425 *Bogoslovskij Vestnik* (The Theological Herald), N 1, 1993, p. 217.

Russian Church to collapse, presenting to her enemies the best conditions for her cutting up and annihilation piece by piece...”

26. THE MURDER OF THE TSAR

The most unexpected combatant in the vast conflict that was now unfolding from the Baltic to the Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean was the Czech legion. They were between 38,000 and 50,000 soldiers of the former Austro-Hungarian empire who had been taken prisoner by the Tsar and then recruited by Kerensky against the Germans. They were now heading for Vladivostok, from where they hoped to take ship to France in order to help liberate their homeland from the Germans. But rather than liberating their homeland, they succeeded rather in liberating – temporarily – several Russian regions from their Bolshevik overlords... Their leader was a Czech professor, Tomas Masaryk, who was in exile in America.

“To advocates of intervention in Britain and France,” writes Tooze, “the Czechs seemed like an army parachuted from heaven. However, with an eye to the post-war peace, Masaryk would not act without approval from President Wilson, whose position on the question of Czech independence was notoriously ambiguous. In the 14 Points, in the hope of keeping open the door to a separate peace with Vienna, Wilson had abstained from any mention of the Czech cause. It was not until the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and the even more draconian peace imposed on Romania in May 1918, that Wilson was willing openly to endorse national autonomy for the Czechs and their South Slav brethren. Even then, this did not translate into any eagerness to see the Czechs in Siberia used against the Bolsheviks. Wilson was seconded in this reluctance by Masaryk, who continued to profess his sympathy for the ‘revolutionary democracy’ in Russia. It was not until early June, with the drastic British strategic appreciations in hand, that Secretary of State Lansing managed to persuade Masaryk that the Czech Army, rather than withdrawing towards Vladivostok, could do a vital service to the Allies by establishing a blocking position along the Trans-Siberian railway. Coached by Lansing, Masaryk demanded as his quid pro quo a Wilsonian death sentence on the Habsburg Empire.

“The stakes of the intervention in Siberia were growing ever higher. Just as Lansing and Masaryk were bartering the end of the Habsburg dynasty against Czech assistance in Siberia, William Bullitt, Wilson’s radical advisor, was making one last effort to stop the intervention. ‘We are about to make one of the most tragic blunders in the history of mankind,’ Bullitt wrote to Colonel House. The advocates of intervention were typical exponents of imperialism. Following a violent counter-revolutionary intervention, ‘how many years and how many American lives’ would it ‘take to re-establish democracy in Russia?’ There was no question that Bullitt was closer to Wilson in spirit than was Lansing. But whereas less than six weeks earlier, with regard to Japanese intervention, Wilson had boasted of his grip over the Japanese, Lenin’s abrupt embrace of Germany had robbed him of his grip. He could not hold back the momentum for intervention if its principal rationale was anti-German rather than anti-Soviet.

“On 30 June 1918 Britain and France publicly proclaimed their support for Czech national aspirations, citing as their justification the ‘sentiments and high ideals expressed by President Wilson’. Once more, Wilson was entangled in the logic of his own ideological programme and the experience drove him to the point of distraction. Speaking to his cabinet in June 1918 he remarked that the Allied war advocacy of intervention in Russia left him lost for words. ‘They propose such impractical things to be done immediately that he often wondered whether he was crazy or whether they were..’ When a US Treasury official reported after a visit to Europe that the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, was openly mocking the idea of a peace based on the League of Nations, the President replied: ‘Yes, I know that Europe is still governed by the same reactionary forces which controlled this country until a few years ago. But I am satisfied that if necessary I can reach the peoples of Europe over the heads of their rulers.’ Once more, Wilson’s reluctance to intervene was bringing to the fore the politics of ‘peace without victory’. But with Germany apparently about to establish control over all of western Russia, Wilson could not uphold his position of moral equivalence that this stance implied. On 6 July he took the initiative. Without prior consultation with either Japan or Britain, Wilson announced that the Allied intervention would be directed through Siberia and would take the form of two contingents of 7,000 men, supplied by the US and Japan. Their mission was neither to take the offensive against Germany nor to overthrow the Bolsheviks, but simply to screen a Czech withdrawal to Vladivostok.”⁴²⁶

The British were furious. Lloyd George said that such an intervention would provoke the Bolsheviks without overthrowing them, while Bruce Lockhart called it a “paralytic half-measure, which in the circumstances amounted to a crime”. In any case, the Czechs did not withdraw but, as S.A. Smith writes, “seized control of a vast area east of the Volga and helped the SRs to set up governments committed to overthrowing the Bolsheviks, restoring the Constituent Assembly, and resuming war with Germany. The revolt threw the Bolsheviks into panic. Secret orders were given by Lenin to execute the imperial family in Ekaterinburg lest they be liberated by the insurgents.”⁴²⁷

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The question of the imperial family was critical both for the Whites and for the Reds. For the Whites the question was: were they going to fight under the banner of Orthodoxy and Tsarism or not? “Some such as General Wrangel of the Volunteer Army were committed monarchists but most favoured some type of military dictatorship, possibly paving the way for a new Constituent Assembly. In an effort to keep political differences at bay, the Whites advanced the principle of ‘non-determination’, i.e. the postponement of all policy-making until the war was over. What kept them united in the meantime was little more

⁴²⁶ Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

⁴²⁷ Smith, *The Russian Revolution. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 49-51.

than detestation of the Bolsheviks and outrage at the 'German-Jewish' conspiracy inflicted on the Russian people."⁴²⁸

Tsarism meant for the Whites, not Tsar Nicholas necessarily, who had, of course, abdicated, but the monarchical principle. And to that they never committed themselves unequivocally... However, as long as the Tsar was alive, the possibility of a just and successful war against Bolshevism under the banner of Orthodoxy and Tsarism still existed. That is why the attempts to rescue the Tsar from captivity were not romantic side-shows, but critically important.

And that is why the Bolsheviks decided to kill the Tsar. As Trotsky wrote: "In essence this decision was inevitable. The execution of the tsar and his family was necessary, not simply to scare, horrify and deprive the enemy of hope, but also to shake up our own ranks, show them that there was no going back. If the White Guardists had thought of unfurling the slogan of the kulaks' Tsar, we would not have lasted for two weeks..."⁴²⁹

And so, on the night of July 17, 1918 Blessed Maria Ivanovna, the fool-for-Christ of Diveyevo, began to shout and scream: "The Tsar's been killed with bayonets! Cursed Jews!" That night the tsar and his family and servants were shot in the Ipatiev House in Yekaterinburg.⁴³⁰ According to Professor Valentin Nikolaevich Speransky (1877-1957), blood continually reappeared in the holes of the wall in the murder room of the Ipatiev House for years after the regicide, based on eyewitness testimonials.⁴³¹

As Edward Radzinsky writes, there is a certain "mysticism of history" in the last dwelling-place of the Royal Family: "the monastery whence the first Romanov was called upon to rule [in 1613], was the Ipatiev; the house where the last ruling Romanov, Nicholas II, parted with his life was the Ipatiev, named after the building's owner, the engineer N.N. Ipatiev."⁴³²

⁴²⁸ Smith, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴²⁹ Trotsky, in Edvard Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar*, London: Arrow Books, 1993, p. 297.

⁴³⁰ It has been claimed that the murders were ritualistic. Strange cabalistic symbols were supposedly found on the walls of the room where the crime took place which have been deciphered to mean: "Here, by order of the secret powers, the Tsar was offered as a sacrifice for the destruction of the state. Let all peoples be informed of this." See Nikolai Kozlov, *Krestnij Put'* (The Way of the Cross), Moscow, 1993; Enel, "Zhertva" (Sacrifice), *Kolokol'* (Bell), Moscow, 1990, N 5, pp. 17-37, and Michael Orlov, "Ekaterinburgskaia Golgota" (The Golgotha of Yekaterinburg), *Kolokol'* (Bell), 1990, N 5, pp. 37-55; Lebedev, op. cit., p. 519; Prince Felix Yusupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 249. However, doubt is cast on the ritual murder hypothesis by the fact that when Sokolov's archive was sold at Sotheby's in 1990, the critical piece of evidence – the symbols on the wall-paper – were missing (Bishop Ambrose of Methone, personal communication, June 4, 2010). Other problems with the ritual murder hypothesis are discussed in Dmitri Lyskov, "U Versii o Ritual'nom ubijstve tsarskoj sem'i est' serieznie problem" (There are Serious Problems with the Hypothesis of the Ritual Murder of the Royal Family", *Vzgliad*, December 8, 2017).

⁴³¹ https://tsarnicholas.org/2021/11/04/blood-reappeared-in-the-ipatiev-house-for-years-after-regicide-claimed-eyewitnesses/?fbclid=IwAR1huZ-w6sNnK0mMSTYskMH6qXr2DSZ0h6oCKSNf4PWCy36_gOmd8WAu-sA

⁴³² Radzinsky, op. cit., p. 2.

The Royal Family had given a wonderful example of truly Christian love, displaying exemplary piety and frugality while doing innumerable acts of mercy, especially during the war. And in their deaths they showed exemplary patience and love for their enemies. Thus Martyr-Great-Princess Olga Nikolayevna wrote from Tobolsk: "Father asks the following message to be given to all those who have remained faithful to him, and to those on whom they may have an influence, that they should not take revenge for him, since he has forgiven everyone and prays for everyone, that they should not take revenge for themselves, and should remember that the evil which is now in the world will be still stronger, but that it is not love that will conquer evil, but only love..."

And in her belongings were found these verses by S. Bekhteyev:

*Now as we stand before the gates of death,
Breathe in the lips of us Thy servants
That more than human, supernatural strength
To meekly pray for those that hurt us.*

The next day, at Alapayevsk, Grand Duchess Elizabeth was killed together with her faithful companion, the Nun Barbara, and several Romanov princes. Tsar Michael had already been shot in June with his English secretary Boris Johnson...

On hearing of the Tsar's murder, Patriarch Tikhon immediately condemned it. He had already angered the government by sending the Tsar his blessing in prison. Now, on July 6/19, immediately after a private meeting to discuss the tragedy, the Council was declared open and voted for a pannikhida (only 28 voted against, while 3 abstained), and the patriarch served a pannikhida. Then, on July 21, he announced in the Kazan cathedral: "We, in obedience to the teaching of the Word of God, must condemn this deed, otherwise the blood of the shot man will fall also on us, and not only on those who committed the crime..."⁴³³

And truly, the murder of the Tsar and his family was the responsibility of all those who, directly or indirectly, connived at it. As the White General M.K. Diterikhs wrote: "We are guilty of the woes that afflicted our Homeland; we are guilty that even before the revolution an abyss opened up between us, the intelligentsia, and the people; we are all guilty that the people turned out to be not with us, but with strangers, non-Christians completely foreign to them; finally, we are all guilty of the tragic destiny that befell the House of the Romanovs, even if we did not participate de facto in the terrible bloody deeds... And we did not know the spiritual and national might of our Tsar..."⁴³⁴

⁴³³ Gubonin, op. cit., p. 143.

⁴³⁴ Diterikhs, *Ubijstvo Tsarskoj Sem'i* (The Murder of the Royal Family).

Again, as St. John Maximovich explained: "The sin against him and against Russia was perpetrated by all who in one way or another acted against him, who did not oppose, or who merely by sympathizing participated in those events which took place forty years ago. That sin lies upon everyone until it is washed away by sincere repentance..."⁴³⁵

Again, Archbishop Averky (Taushev) of Syracuse continues the theme: "It is small consolation for us that the Royal Family was killed directly by non-Russian hands, non-Orthodox hands and non-Russian people. Although that is so, the whole Russian people is guilty of this terrible, unprecedented evil deed, insofar as it did not resist or stand against it, but behaved itself in such a way that the evil deed appeared as the natural expression of that mood which by that time had matured in the minds and hearts of the undoubted majority of the unfortunate misguided Russian people, beginning with the 'lowers' and ending with the very 'tops', the upper aristocracy."⁴³⁶

"Exactly 49 years have passed in the night before us since that terrible night when there took place in Ekaterinburg an historically unprecedented crime – unparalleled in its cruelty, in the unusual force of the malice it displayed, and, especially, in its destructive consequences not only for our Homeland of Russia, but also for the whole world. And it is quite wrong to see in this terrible crime a merely political act, as if in our serving pannikhidas for the slaughtered Royal Family we are inappropriately engaging in politics, as some like to accuse us.

"This was a religious-mystical act having a profound and terrible hidden meaning. And we must always have this religious-mystical significance in mind and remember it in order to correctly evaluate everything that took place in Russia and is now taking place in the world.

"It is beautifully explained for us by our great All-Russian righteous one, St. John of Kronstadt, recently glorified by us, who in his spirit, already many years before, foresaw this terrible crime. Once when some pious pilgrims came to him from Perm province, he unexpectedly said: 'A black cross hangs over Perm' (Ekaterinburg was at that time part of Perm province). Only after the terrible events of 1918 did they understand these prophetic words. Once, after service in the podvorye of the Leushinsky monastery in St. Petersburg, holy righteous John began in his sermon to cry with special force: 'Repent, repent! A terrible time is approaching - so terrible you cannot even imagine it!' And when the 80-year-old Abbess Taisis asked him: 'Batiushka, when will this be?' he replied: 'You and I, Matushka, will not live to see it, but they' – and he pointed with his hand to the younger nuns – 'will.'

435 St. John, "Homily before a Memorial Service for the Tsar-Martyr", in *Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco*, Richfield Springs, N.Y., 1994, p. 133.

436 Taushev, "Religiozno-misticheskij smysl ubienia Tsarkoj Sem'i" (The Religious-Mystical Meaning of the Killing of the Royal Family), <http://www.ispovednik.org/fullest>.

‘In a remarkable sermon of his on the day of the birth of his Majesty Emperor Nicholas II Alexandrovich, holy righteous John expressed himself literally as follows: ‘... Yes, by means of sovereigns the Lord watches over the good of the kingdoms of the earth and, especially, the good of the peace of His Church, not allowing godless teachings, heresies and schism to bestorm her, - and the greatest evildoer in the world, who will appear in the last times, the Antichrist, cannot appear among us by reason of the autocratic tsarist power, which restrains the unruly shaking and absurd teaching of the atheists. The apostle says that the Antichrist will not appear on earth as long as the autocratic tsarist power exists.

“‘For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the midst, and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth’ (II Thessalonians 2.6-7).

“In one of his other sermons (in about 1906) holy righteous John directly said that ‘when he who now restrains (the Orthodox Russia Tsar-Autocrat, according to his oft-repeated interpretation) is removed from the earth, then the Antichrist will come’.

“In a sermon delivered in 1907, holy righteous John foretold: ‘The Russian Kingdom is wavering, is shaking, is close to falling. If that is how things will continue, and the atheists and crazy anarchists are not subject to the righteous punishment of the law, and if Russia is not purified from the multitude of tares, then she will be devastated like the ancient kingdoms and cities, wiped off the face of the earth by the righteous judgement of God for her atheism and her iniquities... Poor fatherland, when will you prosper? Only when you will hold on, with all your heart, to God, the Church and love for the Tsar and the Fatherland and purity of morals. And what would we become, O Russians, without the Tsar? Our enemies would soon try to destroy the very name of Russia, since the Bearer and Preserver of Russia, after God, is his Majesty the Sovereign of Russia - the autocratic Tsar: without him Russia would not be Russia.’ Is it not striking how literally the words of our great righteous one and clairvoyant have been fulfilled? No more Tsar - no more Russia! And lo! Since the time there has been no ‘Restrainer’ - no Orthodox Autocratic Tsar of Russia, and together with him has also disappeared the former Russia, Holy Rus’, we clearly see how throughout the world madly intense work had begun to create the conditions and circumstances that would favour the most speedy appearance of the Antichrist.

“Truly only the spiritually blind can fail to see this!

“How quickly has everything in the world begun to change for the worse: persecution (whether open or concealed, it doesn’t matter) has arisen everywhere against the faith and the Church; all the former religio-moral

foundations of life have cunningly and skilfully begun to be undermined under every possible fair-sounding excuse; in their place cynical freethinking and shameless moral debauchery have begun to take their place everywhere! Especially in the most recent time, after the Second World War, this general, universal apostasy, which in the words of the holy apostle (II Thessalonians 2.2-3), must precede the appearance of the Antichrist, has proceeded in truly gigantic strides. Literally almost every day brings us in this connection news that crushes the soul.

“Can we, after all this, somehow soothe and comfort ourselves, trying to convince ourselves and others that everything is well, that everything in the world is going completely normally towards some sort of positive progress? Would this not signify that we are deceiving ourselves and others?

“To all right-thinking, honourable and healthy-minded people the terrible religiously mystical meaning hidden in this terrible crime of Ekaterinburg, must now be completely clear: it was by no means a simple political assassination, of which there have been not a few in history.

“The Orthodox Russian Tsar, and with him Orthodox Russia, had to be removed and annihilated, so that nothing should hinder or prevent the most speedy enthronement on earth of the enemy of Christ – the Antichrist. And now we all are involuntary witnesses of this intense preparation for his enthronement!

“The times and seasons, it is true, are not clearly revealed. Nevertheless, there are more than enough signs of its approach. And with every day we observe the fulfilment of these signs, which are more and more striking and instructive for those who want and are still capable of being instructed.”⁴³⁷

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Of course, many at the time were shocked and saddened by the murders. Paul Gilbert writes: “Eugenie Fraser, born and raised in Russia writes about her years in Petrograd and news of the tsar’s death: ‘In August, filtered through from Siberia, came the news of the slaughter of the Royal family by the sadistic thugs of the Bolshevik party. Horror and revulsion touched every decent thinking citizen in the town. To execute the Tsar and his wife in this barbaric fashion was bad enough, but to butcher the four young girls and the helpless boy was the work of mindless criminals. In churches people went down on their knees and openly wept as they prayed for the souls of the Tsar and his family.’

“‘Even in all this turmoil and confusion, and even among those with little sympathy for the abdicated tsar, the brief five-line announcement in July 1918

⁴³⁷ Averky, “Strashnaia Noch’” (Terrible Night), Sermon on July 4/17, 1957.

of the execution of Nicholas II and his family in Ekaterinburg caused a terrible shock,' writes Serge Schmemmann. He further notes 'Prince Sergei Golitsyn recalled in his diary how people of all levels of society wept and prayed, and how he himself, as a nine year old boy, cried night after night in his pillow.'"⁴³⁸

However, the people as a whole did not condemn the evil deed. The result was a significant increase in their suffering... For since "he who restrains" the coming of the Antichrist, the Orthodox Autocrat, had been removed, the world now entered the era of the collective Antichrist...

If we compare the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917 with that of the British King Edward VIII in 1936 (who happened to be his godson), then we immediately see the superiority, not only of Tsar Nicholas over King Edward, but also of the system of the Orthodox autocracy over that of the constitutional monarchy.

Constitutionalists – of whom there were very many among the plotters of 1917 – criticized the Orthodox autocracy mainly on the grounds that it presented a system of absolute, uncontrolled power, and therefore of tyranny. They quoted the saying of the historian Lord Acton: "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely". But this was a serious misunderstanding. The Orthodox autocracy is based on the anointing of the Church and on the faith of the people; and if it betrays either – by disobeying the Church, or by trampling on the people's faith, - it loses its legitimacy, as we see in the Time of Troubles, when the people rejected the false Dmitri. It is therefore limited, not absolute, and must not be confused with the system of absolutist monarchy that we see in, for example, the French King Louis XIV, or the English King Henry VIII, who felt limited by nothing and nobody on earth.

Tsar Nicholas perfectly understood the nature of his autocratic power, which is why he never went against the Church or violated Orthodoxy, but rather upheld and championed both the one and the other. Moreover, he demonstrated in his personal life a model of Christian humility and love. If he had been personally ambitious, he would have fought to retain his throne in 1917, but he abdicated, as we have seen, in order to avoid the bloodshed of his subjects. What a contrast with Edward VIII, who lived a life of debauchery, and then abdicated because he could not have both the throne and a continued life of debauchery at the same time. He showed no respect for Church or faith, and perished saying: "What a wasted life!"

Whereas the abdication of Edward VIII only demonstrated his unfitness to rule, the abdication of Tsar Nicholas, by contrast, saved the monarchy for the future. For in abdicating he resisted the temptation to apply force and start a civil war in a cause that was just from a purely juridical point of view, but which could not be justified from a deeper, eschatological point of view. In this

⁴³⁸ Gilbert, *Nicholas II: A Century of Myths and Lies*, 2021.

he followed the example of first canonized saints of Russia, the Princes Boris and Gleb, and the advice of the Prophet Shemaiah to King Rehoboam and the house of Judah as they prepared to face the house of Israel: "Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel. Return every man to his house..." (I Kings 12.24).

The Tsar-Martyr resisted the temptation to act like a Western absolutist ruler, thereby refuting those in both East and West who looked on his rule as just that – a form of absolutism. He showed that the Orthodox Autocracy was not a form of absolutism, but something completely sui generis – the external aspect of the self-government of the people of the One, Holy, Orthodox-Catholic and Apostolic Church on earth. He refused to treat his power as if it were independent of the Church and people, but showed that it was a form of service to the Church and the people from within the Church and the people, in accordance with the word: "I have raised up one chosen out of My people... with My holy oil have I anointed him" (Psalms 88.18, 19). So not "government by the people and for the people" in a democratic sense, but "government by one chosen out of the people of God for the people of God and responsible to God alone" ...

26. THE CHEKA AND THE GULAG

“By their fruits ye shall know them” – and the most evil fruit of Leninism, Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky’s Cheka (later the OGPU-NKVD-MGB-KGB-FSB), was born on December 20, 1917 – but not officially, its existence remained a secret for years. Dzerzhinsky was a Pole who had played leading roles in both the 1905 and the 1917 revolutions. Until his death in 1926, writes Andrew Roberts, “he set up the concentration camps, gagged the press, organized the first show trials, purged the churches, wiped out all internal political opposition, sent tens of thousands of writers, academics and intellectuals to Siberia, and was largely responsible for turning Russia from an efficiently run autocracy into a ruthlessly totalitarian regime.”⁴³⁹

“The Cheka had a committee of eight under Dzerzhinsky and he quickly filled up its ranks, and the corps of senior inspectors and agents, with other fanatics. Many of them were fellow Poles or Latvians, such as the sinister Latsis, or ‘Peters’, brother of Peter the Painter of the Sidney Street Siege, perpetrator of a series of murders in Houndsditch, and Kedrov, a sadist who eventually went mad. The speed with which the force expanded was terrifying...”⁴⁴⁰

The intelligence experts Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin write: “It is clear that the Cheka enormously outstripped the [pre-revolutionary] Okhrana in both the scale and the ferocity of its onslaught on political opposition. In 1901 4,113 Russians were in internal exile for political crimes, of whom only 180 were on hard labour. Executions for political crimes were limited to those involved in actual or attempted assassinations. During the civil war, by contrast, Cheka executions probably numbered as many as 250,000...”⁴⁴¹

Such work required manpower. “By January 1922, the central staff had grown to 2,733, a number it would more or less maintain. As of November 1923, the secret police also commanded 33,000 border troops, 25,000 internal order troops, and 17,000 convoy guards. The number of secret informants on the rolls declined from a reported 60,000 in 1920 to 13,000 by the end of that year.”⁴⁴² Provincial Cheka branches varied in the size of staff with around 40 total people in most cases, only half of them operatives to cover vast swaths of territory with often limited transportation options. The Cheka relied on its fearsome reputation. *Pravda* carried reports of Cheka victims being flayed alive, impaled, scalped, crucified, tied to planks that were pushed slowly into roaring furnaces or into containers of boiling water. In winter, the Cheka was said to pour water over naked prisoners, creating ice statues, while some prisoners were said to have their necks twisted to such a degree their heads fell off...”⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ Roberts, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples from 1900*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 170.

⁴⁴⁰ Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, p. 68.

⁴⁴¹ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin File*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1999.

⁴⁴² “The GPU claimed in the mid-1920s to have more than 2 million Soviet inhabitants under permanent watch” (Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 441).

⁴⁴³ Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 438.

The Cheka operation known as the Red Terror, writes Douglas Smith, was “unleashed in September 1918⁴⁴⁴ after the murder of Moisei Uritsky, head of the Petrograd Cheka, and the failed assassination attempt on the life of Lenin by [the Social Revolutionary Jewess] Fanny Kaplan in late August.⁴⁴⁵ The goal of the Cheka’s terror was to unleash a campaign of class warfare against ‘counter-revolutionaries’ and so-called enemies of the people. In September, the Communist leader Grigory Zinoviev pronounced: ‘To overcome our enemies we must have our own socialist militarism. We must carry along with us 90 million out of the 100 million of Soviet Russia’s population. As for the rest, we have nothing to do with them. They must be annihilated.’ Peters’s Cheka colleague Martin Latsis let there be little doubt where these unfortunate ten million were to be found: ‘Do not look on the file of incriminating evidence to see whether or not the accused rose up against the Soviets with arms or words. Ask him instead to which class he belongs, what is his background, his education, his profession. These are the questions that ill determine the fate of the accused. That is the meaning and essence of the Red Terror. Peters himself had expounded on the role of terror: ‘Anyone daring to agitate against the Soviet government will immediately be arrested and place in a concentration camp.’ The enemies of the working class will meet with ‘mass terror [...] and will be destroyed and crushed by the heavy hammer of the revolutionary proletariat.’”⁴⁴⁶

“More war-like than secret police, more ruthless than most armies, its tools included terror, intimidation and butchery on a gruesome scale. ... The bodies, thousands of them, were often left exactly where they fell. The idea was to teach survivors how to think, and as cultural revolutions go, it was a textbook case. The victims included entrepreneurs and priests, White-guardists, even shopkeepers. In the late summer of 1918, the sunlight glittered every morning over teeming clouds of blowflies...”⁴⁴⁷

The Cheka made no pretence of seeking justice, which, like morality in general, was subordinate to the aims of the revolution. Dzerzhinsky said: “Do not believe that I seek revolutionary forms of justice. We don’t need justice at this point. We are engaged today in hand-to-hand combat, to the death, to the end! I propose, I demand, the organization of revolutionary annihilation against all active counter-revolutionaries.”

⁴⁴⁴ The exact date was September 5, the same day on which the Great Terror of the French revolution had begun. The Bolsheviks always liked to emphasize their spiritual descent from the Jacobins. (V.M.)

⁴⁴⁵ Fanny Kaplan said: “I shot Lenin because I believe him to be a traitor [to socialism]”. But Dzerzhinsky declared that the real organizers of the plot against Lenin had been the Bolsheviks’ enemies in the just-beginning Civil War, the English and the French... (V.M.)

⁴⁴⁶ Smith, *Former People. The Last Days of the Russian Aristocracy*, London: Macmillan, 2012, p. 5.

⁴⁴⁷ Catherine Merridale, *Red Fortress*, New York: Picador, 2013, p. 291.

As the Kiev Cheka newspaper put it: "We reject the old morality and 'humanity' invented by the bourgeoisie in order to oppress and exploit the lower classes. Our morality does not have a precedent, our humanity is absolute because it rests on a new ideal: to destroy any form of oppression and violence. To us, everything is permitted because we are the very first to raise our swords not to oppress and enslave, but to release humanity from its chains... Blood? Let blood be shed! Only blood can dye the black flag of the pirate bourgeoisie, turning it once and for all into a red banner, flag of the Revolution. Only the old world's final demise will free us forever from the return of the jackals."⁴⁴⁸

The other leading Bolsheviks were in complete agreement with this philosophy. As Lenin put it: "The court must not banish terror, but justify and legalize it." And Trotsky wrote in *Communism and Terrorism*: "Without the Red Terror, the Russian bourgeoisie, together with the world bourgeoisie, would throttle us."

Of course, the Bolsheviks had been terrorizing the population of Russia from the beginning. And only three weeks before Lenin was shot he had urged the Bolsheviks in Penza "to organize public executions to make the people 'tremble' 'for hundreds of kilometres around'. While still recovering from his wounds, he instructed, 'It is necessary secretly - and *urgently* - to prepare the terror...'"⁴⁴⁹

"Even at a time when the Soviet regime was fighting for its survival during the civil war, many of its own supporters were sickened by the scale of the Cheka's brutality. A number of Cheka interrogators, some only in their teens, employed tortures of scarcely believable barbarity. In Kharkov the skin was peeled off victims' hands to produce 'gloves' of human skin; in Voronezh naked prisoners were rolled around in barrels studded with nails; in Poltava priests were impaled; in Odessa captured White officers were tied to planks and fed slowly into furnaces; in Kiev cages of rats were fixed to prisoners' bodies and heated until the rats gnawed their way into the victims' intestines."⁴⁵⁰

"The Yekatrinoslav Cheka [was said] to stone or crucify them, and the Kremenchug Cheka to impale them on stakes." In Tsaritsyn, where Stalin took over in May, 1918, "the Cheka was said to cut through human bones with handsaws..."⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁸ *Krasnyi Mech* (the Red Sword), August 18, 1919.

⁴⁴⁹ Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West*, London: Allen Lane, 1999, p. 34.

⁴⁵⁰ Andrew and Mitrokhin, op. cit., pp. 37, 38.

⁴⁵¹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, p. 302.

The terror was supposed to be “preventive”, according to Dzerzhinsky: “We are terrorizing the enemies of the Soviet government so as to suppress crime in embryo...”⁴⁵²

According to one scholar, between October 1917 and February 1922, in this “preventive” terror, “280,000 were killed either by the Cheka or the Internal Security Troops, about half of them in the course of operations to suppress peasant uprisings. This would suggest that perhaps 140,000 were executed directly by the Cheka...”⁴⁵³ Evidently, the Cheka’s motto: “A cool head, clean hands and a warm heart” did not quite correspond to reality...

Only a few of the Bolsheviks had regrets. One was the writer Maxim Gorky: “I feel terrible, like a Christopher Columbus who has finally reached the shores of America but is disgusted by it...”⁴⁵⁴

Another was a Red Army soldier, who on December 25, 1918 wrote to Lenin: “My words to you, you bloodthirsty beast. You intruded into the ranks of the revolution and did not allow the Constituent Assembly to meet. You said: ‘Down with shooting. Down with soldiering. Let wage workers be secure.’ In a word you promised heaps of gold and a heavenly existence. The people felt the revolution, began to breathe easily. We were allowed to meet, to say what we liked, fearing nothing.

“And then you, Bloodsucker, appeared and took away freedom from the people. Instead of turning prisons into schools, they’re full of innocent victims. Instead of forbidding shootings, you’ve organized a terror and thousands of the people are shot mercilessly every day; you’ve brought industry to a halt so that workers are starving, the people are without shoes or clothes...”⁴⁵⁵

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The most famous creation of the Cheka was the notorious “Gulag”, which, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn demonstrated in his famous *Gulag Archipelago*, was created, not by the Stalinist, but by the Leninist regime... The word “Gulag”, writes Anne Applebaum, “is an acronym, meaning *Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei*, or Main Camp Administration”, and refers to “the vast network of labour camps that were once scattered across the length and breadth of the Soviet Union, from the island of the White Sea to the shores of the Black Sea, from the Arctic Circle to the plains of Central Asia, from Murmansk to Vorkuta to Kazakhstan, from central Moscow to the Leningrad suburbs.... More broadly, ‘Gulag’ has come to mean the Soviet repressive system itself, the set of procedures once

452 Dzerzhinsky, in Daniel Goldhagen, *Worse than War. Genocide, Eliminationism and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity*, London: Abacus, 2012, p. 562.

453 S.A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, p. 199.

454 J.G. Nyquist, *Origins of the Fourth World War*, Chula Vista, Co.: Black Forest Press, 1999, p. 67.

455 S.A. Smith, *The Russian Revolution. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 63.

called the 'meat-grinder', the arrests, the interrogations, the transport in unheated cattle cars, the forced labour, the destruction of families, the years spent in exile, the early and unnecessary deaths...

"... Mass terror against real and alleged opponents was a part of the Revolution from the very beginning - and by the summer of 1918, Lenin, the Revolution's leader, had already demanded that 'unreliable elements' be locked up in concentration camps outside major towns. A string of aristocrats, merchants and other people defined as potential 'enemies' were duly imprisoned. By 1921, there were already eighty-four camps in forty-five provinces, mostly designed to 'rehabilitate' these first enemies of the people."⁴⁵⁶

"The gulag's murderous nature and conditions," writes Daniel Goldhagen, "were so grave already in 1926, long before the gulag became its most deadly in the 1930s, that S.A. Malsagoff, in a camp on an island in the Arctic Sea, reported, 'I gathered from the candid statement of the Tchekists that the GPU has now no need to make a regular practice of mass shootings, because more humane ones - slow murder from starvation, work beyond the prisoners' strength, and 'medical help' - are perfectly adequate substitutes.' If you are going to kill those people designated as enemies, as subhuman or demons, why not get them to work in the meantime?"⁴⁵⁷

"The first camp of the Gulag," writes Niall Ferguson, "was the ancient island monastery of Solovki in the White Sea [now known as the Solovetsky Camp of Special Significance (SLON)]. In the 1920s, it held a rich variety of "enemies of the people", including high-ranking bishops, White officers and aristocrats, together with common criminals. It was appropriate that this ancient Christian monastery [known as Solovki] should become the first torture-chamber of the new, anti-Christian Russia. For it showed who were the first targets of the Cheka: the servants of the Church, and what were to be the only paths to salvation in the new era: confession and martyrdom.

"By the end of the 1920s Solovetsky and other 'northern special camps' had become a rapidly growing commercial operation involved in forestry and construction

"In a matter of years, there were camps dotted all over the Soviet Union: camps for mining, camps for road building, camps for aircraft construction, even camps for nuclear physics. Prisoners performed every conceivable kind of work, not only digging canals but also catching fish and manufacturing everything from tanks to toys. At one level, the Gulag was a system of colonization enabling the regime to exploit resources in regions hitherto considered uninhabitable. Precisely because they were expendable, *zeks* could mine coal at Vorkuta in the Komi Republic, an area in the Arctic north-west,

⁴⁵⁶ Applebaum, *Gulag. A History*, London: Penguin, 2004, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁵⁷ Goldhagen, op. cit., p. 418-419.

benighted half the year, swarming with blood-sucking insects the other half. They could dig up gold and platinum at Dalstroï, located in the equally inhospitable east of Siberia. Yet so convenient did the system of slave labour become to the planners that camps were soon established in the Russian homeland too.

“At the height of the Gulag system, there was a total of 476 camp systems scattered all over the Soviet Union, each, like Solovetsky, composed of hundreds of individual camps. All told, around eighteen million men, women and children passed through the system under Stalin’s rule. Taking into account the six or seven million Soviet citizens who were sent into exile, the total percentage of the population who experienced some kind of penal servitude under Stalin approached 15 per cent.

“Many of the camps were located, like Solovetsky, in the remotest, coldest regions of the Soviet Union; the Gulag was at once colonial and penal. Weaker prisoners died in transit since the locked carriages and cattle trucks used were unheated and unsanitary. The camp facilities were primitive in the extreme; *zeki* at new camps had to build their own barracks, which were little more than wooden shacks into which they were packed like sardines. And the practice... of feeding strong prisoners better than weak ones ensured that, literally, only the strong survived. The camps were not primarily intended to kill people (Stalin had firing squads for that) but they were run in such a way that mortality rates were bound to be very high indeed. Food was inadequate, sanitation rudimentary and shelter barely sufficient. In addition, the sadistic punishments meted out by camp guards, often involving exposing naked prisoners to the freezing weather, ensured a high death toll. Punishment was as arbitrary as it was brutal; the guards, whose lot in any case was far from a happy one, were encouraged to treat the prisoners as ‘vermin’, ‘filth’ and ‘poisonous weeds’. The attitudes of the professional criminals – the clannish ‘thieves-in-law’ who were the dominant group among inmates – were not very different...”⁴⁵⁸

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On the first anniversary of the revolution, November 7, 1918, Patriarch Tikhon, now the last free voice in Russia, addressed the Bolsheviks thus: “We address this prophecy of the Savior to you, the current makers of our Fatherland’s fate, who call yourself ‘the people’s’ commissars.

“For an entire year, you have been gripping the power of the government in your hands, and you are already preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the October revolution; but the rivers of the blood of our brothers, pitilessly murdered at your rallying, cry out to heaven and force us to tell you the bitter truth.

⁴⁵⁸ Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 105-106, 107.

"You have traded the Fatherland for soulless internationalism, although you yourselves know perfectly well that when it comes to defending the Fatherland, the proletarians of all countries are those countries' faithful sons, and not their betrayers. Having seized power and called the people to entrust themselves to you, what promises have you given them, and how have you kept these promises?

"Truly you have given them a stone instead of bread, and a serpent instead of a fish (cf. Matthew, 7:9-10). To a people worn out by a bloody war you promised to give peace "without annexation or contribution".

"What victory could you have turned down, you who have led Russia to a shameful truce, with humiliating conditions that even you did not resolve to make fully public? Instead of "annexations and contributions" the great Motherland is conquered, diminished, dismembered; and as pay for the tribute placed on it you secretly transport to Germany gold that you yourself did not amass.

"... the great Motherland is conquered, diminished, dismembered; and as pay for the tribute placed on it you secretly transport to Germany gold that you yourself did not amass.

"You have taken away from the soldiers everything for which they had valorously fought. You have taught them, only recently brave and invincible, to leave off protecting the Motherland and to run from the field of battle.

"You have extinguished in their hearts the inspiring consciousness that there is no greater love than should one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13).

"You have traded the Fatherland for soulless internationalism, although you yourselves know perfectly well that when it comes to defending the Fatherland, the proletarians of all countries are those countries' faithful sons, and not their betrayers... the freedom you have given consists in all manner of indulgence to the lowest crowd instincts, in murder and theft with impunity.

"And although you have refused to protect the Motherland from external enemies, you are ceaselessly gathering armies.

"Against whom will you lead them?

"You have divided the entire nation into warring camps and cast it into a fratricide unprecedented for its cruelty.

"You have openly exchanged love of Christ for hatred, and instead of peace you have artificially fomented enmity between the classes. And there is no end in sight to the war you've generated, since you aim to deliver triumph to the phantom of world revolution with the hands of Russian worker and peasants.

"I will not speak of the collapse of a once great and mighty Russia, of the total fracturing of our railroad, of unprecedented agricultural devastation, of hunger and cold that threatens death in the cities ...

"It was not Russia who needed the disgraceful peace with its external enemy but you yourselves, who have plotted to irreparably destroy Russia's internal peace.

"No one feels safe; everyone lives in constant fear of searches, robbery, eviction, arrest, and execution.

"Hundreds of defenseless people are seized, then languish for whole months in prisons, are often executed without investigation or trial, even without going to the court you have simplified.

"Not only those who are somehow guilty before you, but even those who are in no way guilty, but were taken only as "captives" — these unfortunate people are killed to answer for crimes committed by persons who not only are not of one mind with them, but very often your own followers or those with convictions similar to yours.

"Bishops, priests, monks and nuns who are guilty of nothing are executed simply because of some wild accusations of vague and indeterminate "counterrevolution". This inhuman execution is made even more onerous for the Orthodox because they are deprived of the final consolation before their deaths—the Sacraments—and the bodies of the slain are not given to their families for a Christian burial.

"Isn't this the height of aimless cruelty on the part of those who pretend to be the benefactors of mankind and who themselves supposedly suffered from cruel rulers? But it's not enough for you that you have reddened the hands of the Russian people with their brother's blood; hiding behind various names — contributions, requisitions, and nationalization—you have pushed them into the most barefaced and wanton thievery.

"At your hinting were plundered or seized lands, mansions, factories, houses, farm animals, money, personal things, furniture, clothing.

"First the wealthy, whom you've called "bourgeois", were robbed; then under the epithet of "kulaks" were the more well-off and industrious peasants also plundered, thus increasing the number of paupers — although you cannot but recognize that with the impoverishment of a great multitude of individual citizens the wealth of the nation as a whole is lost, and the country is impoverished.

"Tempting uneducated and ignorant people with the opportunity for easy and unpunished gain, you have fogged their consciences and muffled in them

the awareness of sin; but no matter what names you hide this evil-doing behind, murder, violence, and robbery will ever remain serious sins and crimes that cry out to heaven.

“You promised freedom.

“Freedom is a great good, if it is properly understood — like freedom from evil, not oppressing others, not turning into lawlessness and willfulness.

“But you have not given that freedom; the freedom you have given consists in all manner of indulgence to the lowest crowd instincts, in murder and theft with impunity. All manifestations of both truly the civilian and higher spiritual freedom of mankind have you mercilessly crushed.

“Is it freedom when no one can bring home food or rent an apartment without special permission, when families, and sometimes all the inhabitants of whole buildings are evicted and their possessions are thrown into the street, and when citizens are artificially divided into ranks, certain of which are consigned to hunger and being plundered?

“Is it freedom when no one can speak his opinion openly without fear of being accused of counterrevolution?

“Where is freedom of speech and press, where is freedom for preaching in church?

“Many bold preachers have already paid with their martyrs’ blood; the voice of social and governmental discussion and criticism is being stifled; all press, other than the narrow Bolshevik press, has been completely strangled.

“Especially painful and cruel is the violation of freedom in matters of faith.

“Not a day goes by when the most monstrous slanders against Christ’s Church and her servants are not published in the agencies of your press, along with malicious blasphemy and mockery. You deride the servants of the altar, force bishops to dig trenches, and send priests to do dirty work. You have raised your hand against the Church’s inheritance gathered through many generations of the faithful, and have given no thought to violating their posthumous will.

“You have closed a large number of monasteries and churches without any excuse or reason. You have blocked access to the Moscow Kremlin — that sacred inheritance of the faithful people. You are destroying the ancient form of church community — the parish; you destroy brotherhoods and other charitable and educational Church institutions, close and rout diocesan meetings, and interfere with the Orthodox Church’s internal government.

“By banishing sacred images from schools and forbidding the teaching of faith to children there, you deprive them of the spiritual food necessary for an Orthodox upbringing.

“What else can I say? The time fails me (Hebrews 11:32) to describe all the catastrophes that have stricken our Motherland.

“I will not speak of the collapse of a once great and mighty Russia, of the total fracturing of our railroad, of unprecedented agricultural devastation, of hunger and cold that threatens death in the cities, and of the lack of everything needed for maintaining a household in the villages. This everyone can see.

“Yes, we are experiencing terrible times in our reign, and it will not be erased from the peoples’ soul for a long time, having darkened the image of God in it and stamping in it the image of the beast. The words of the prophet have been fulfilled: “Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths” (Isaiah 59:7).

“We know that our rebukes will evoke only anger and indignation in you and that you will look for an excuse in them for accusing us of opposition to the authorities, but the higher your “column of wrath” rises, the more proven will be the testimony to the truth of our rebukes.

“It is not our business to judge earthly authorities; all authority, allowed by God, would attract our blessing if it were truly “God’s servant” for the good of its subjects, and *not a terror to good works, but to the evil* (Romans 13:3).

“Now to you, who are using your authority to persecute your neighbors and decimate the innocent, we extend our word of instruction: celebrate the anniversary of your coming to power by freeing the prisoners, putting a stop to the bloodshed, violence, devastation, and persecution of faith; turn not to destruction but to the establishment of law and order, give the people their desired and deserved rest from civil war.

“Otherwise all the righteous blood you have spilled will be required of you (cf. Luke 11:50), and you who took sword in hand will yourselves die of the sword (cf. Matthew 26:52).”⁴⁵⁹

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⁴⁵⁹ “Church Leader’s Brilliant 1918 Letter to Lenin Speaks the Truth About the Revolution”, *Russian Faith*, December 4, 2017.

The Red Terror described by the holy patriarch was only the beginning of the greatest persecution of the Christian faith in history. Holy New Hieromartyr Nikon of Optina (+1931), a disciple of St. Varsonouphy of Optina (+1912), expressed the essence of the struggle well in 1922: "During these days I have remembered Father Varсануphy many times. I have remembered his words, the instruction which he gave me once – and perhaps more than once. He told me: 'The Apostle exhorts: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (II Corinthians 13:15), and he continued: 'Look at what the same apostle says: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown" (II Timothy 4:7-8). Yes, it is a great thing to keep, to preserve the faith. Therefore I also tell you: Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. If you keep the faith, you can have a good hope over your lot.'

"When the reposed Elder told me all this (and he spoke well, with enthusiasm; as far as I recall it was in the evening, by the quiet light of an icon-lamp in his dear, cozy elder's cell), I felt that he was saying something wondrous, exalted, spiritual. My mind and heart seized on his words with eagerness. I had heard this utterance of the Apostle before, but it had riot produced in me such a response, such an impression.

"It seemed to me that 'keeping the faith' was something special. I believe, and I believe in the Orthodox way; I have no doubts at all regarding faith. But here I felt that in this utterance there was something great – that indeed it is great, in spite of all temptations, all the experiences of life, all the offending things, to keep in one's heart the fire of holy faith unquenched, and unquenched even until death, for it is said: I have finished my course, that is, the whole of earthly life has already been lived, finished, the path which one had to travel has already been travelled, I am already at the boundary of earthly life, beyond the grave another life already begins, the life which has been prepared for me by my faith which I have kept. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. And my wondrous Elder gave as his testament to me to test myself from time to time in the truths of the Orthodox faith, lest I might, unnoticed by myself, deviate from them. He advised me, among other things, to read the *Orthodox Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret and to become acquainted with the *Confession of the Orthodox Faith* of the Eastern Patriarchs.

"Now, when the foundations of the Orthodox Russian Church have been shaken, I see how precious is this instruction of the Elder. Now, it seems, the time of testing has come, to see whether we are in the faith. Now one must also know that the faith can be kept by one who believes warmly and sincerely, to whom God is dearer than everything, and this latter can be true only in one who preserves himself from every sin, who preserves his moral life. O Lord, keep me in the faith by Thy grace!"

27. THE FALL OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AND GERMANY

An important change took place in German domestic politics in April 1917, when “the Social Democrats split over their stance towards the war. A radical minority, who rejected the war as an imperialist conflict that could only be overcome by socialist revolution, broke away and formed the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (the USPD); the core of which later became Germany’s Communist Party. The larger body of Social Democrats, now calling themselves the Majority Social Democratic Party of Germany (MSPD), also condemned an imperialist war and German annexations, but they rejected revolution in favour of reform through the introduction of representative democracy, of government responsible to parliament, not to the Kaiser. (In Imperial Germany, political parties across the spectrum were represented in the Reichstag. But they did not control decision-making. Power lay in the hands of the Kaiser and his appointed ministers and military leaders.)

“On 19 July 1917 the MSPD was supported by some liberals (the Progressive People’s Party) and the Catholic Centre Party in voting for a peace resolution in the Reichstag. But they faced powerful opponents on the Conservative and Liberal right wing who backed the military leadership and favoured not only the uncompromising prosecution of the war but also the drive for further territorial annexations. Pressure groups, backed by big business finance such as the Pan-German League and, especially, the huge rabidly nationalist and imperialist Fatherland Party (founded in 1917 and rapidly acquiring the backing of a million and a quarter membership), popularized the case for fighting on to victory with extended territorial gains, and at the same time they rejected demands for parliamentary democracy. This political constellation remained in place down to the end of the war, intensifying as material hardship worsened and as defeat loomed. The radical polarization of German politics that followed the defeat in 1918 was already prefigured in the internal developments of the last two war years...”⁴⁶⁰

Towards the end of 1917 the fortunes of war were turning in favour of Germany and Austria. The Entente powers continued to make little progress in large and bloody battles on the Western Front. In the East, the defeat of Russia and Romania had given them access to vast and desperately needed natural resources in the East: the oil of Romania and the wheat of Ukraine – and Ludendorff had plans to seize the oil of Baku. Victory in the East released large numbers of soldiers for redirection to the West in a last desperate bid to reach Paris and win the war. Large parts of the French army had mutinied in 1917, and there had been major strikes among civilian workers in Britain, so the situation for them was serious. At the same time, on the Alpine front, the Italian army had collapsed at the battle of Caporetto in October 1917, losing 700,000 men, many of whom surrendered or went home...

⁴⁶⁰ Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 83-84.

Therefore on November 11 Ludendorff declared that “our general situation requires that we should strike at the earliest moment, if possible at the end of February or the beginning of March, before the Americans can throw strong forces into the scale. We must beat the British...”⁴⁶¹

And yet there were worrying signs also for the Germans. As Tombs writes, “the German army too was showing signs of disintegration – 10 percent of men being transported from the Eastern to the Western Front late in 1917 deserted on the way. Trench warfare, though less deadly than war in the open, was psychologically more stressful because of the feeling of helplessness it created (gas, for example, was terrifying, but rarely fatal). It caused many kinds of breakdown, especially in exhausted men (highly religious teetotalers were thought most fragile).”⁴⁶²

Tony Colvin writes: “Fifty-nine British divisions defended 126 miles of front against eighty-one German divisions, while ninety-nine French and one American division faced seventy-one German divisions on 324 miles of front. Another twenty-five German divisions were in reserve, to bring their total to 177 against 159. Never had the German chance of success been greater than on 21 March, when their Spring Offensive, *Der Kaiserschlacht*, began.”⁴⁶³

General Douglas Haig, commander of the British army in France since late 1915, had been fiercely condemned by Lloyd George, the new British Prime Minister since December, 1916, for unnecessary losses in war. So nothing he said was believed. This, writes Colvin, was “unfortunate, because he correctly forecast the date of the German offensive and its aim of destroying the British. Haig also in May correctly predicted German defeat in 1918, while the government opted for 1920. The disconnect between London and the army, which was repeated in the Second World War, cost many lives...”⁴⁶⁴

Adam Tooze writes: “Through skillful diversionary tactics and by concentrating almost half the German Army on the British sector, on 21 March 1918 Ludendorff managed to raise the odds in his favour at the point of attack to 2.6:1. Beginning at 4.40 a.m., 11,000 guns and mortars delivered a devastating five-hour barrage against the British front line around St. Quentin, followed by a concentrated thrust by 76 divisions across a 50-kilometre front. Winston Churchill, who witnessed the attack, described it as ‘the greatest onslaught in the history of the world’. Never had so much manpower or firepower been concentrated on a single battlefield. By nightfall the leading German assault teams had penetrated to a depth of 10 kilometres. At Amiens it seemed that the Kaiser’s army might split the Western Front in two.

⁴⁶¹ Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

⁴⁶² Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 628.

⁴⁶³ Colvin, “The Final Months of Conflict”, Oxford: *Trinity College Newsletter*, Spring, 2018, p. 16.

⁴⁶⁴ Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

"On 23 March the Emperor declared a day of national celebration and marked the occasion by unleashing the first barrage from the gargantuan Big Bertha guns against Paris. His Imperial Majesty was in a buoyant mood, announcing to his entourage that 'when an English parliamentarian comes pleading for peace, he will first have to bow down before the Imperial standard, because what was at stake was a victory of monarchy over democracy'..."⁴⁶⁵

It was truly a critical moment. As Colvin writes, the cost of the forty-day *Kaiserschlacht* was dreadful, "with a 'butcher's bill of 9,704 British Commonwealth officers and 236,300 other ranks wounded or killed in just forty days, compared with 244,897 casualties over the 105 days of the Passchendaele offensive. Nineteen British divisions were weakened, six more severely weakened, ten completely exhausted and five broken up. Lloyd George then sent 544,000 reinforcements to France from Britain, two divisions from Italy and two from Palestine. The French lost over 90,000 men. German casualties were comparable to the Allied total, and they never fully recovered..."⁴⁶⁶

The British lines buckled and bent, but did not break – a latter-day defensive triumph with no less important consequences for world history than Waterloo. Having withstood the worst that the Germans could throw at them, the Allies surged onto the offensive in July, piercing the Hindenburg line and sending the Germans reeling. August 8 was "the black day of the German Army", according to Hindenburg himself: "A strong English attack had met with immediate success. The tanks, which were faster than hitherto, had surprised Divisional Staffs in their headquarters and torn up the telephone lines which communicated with the battle front... The wildest rumours began to spread in our lines. It was said that masses of English cavalry were already far in the rear of the foremost German infantry lines. Some of the men lost their nerve... I had no illusions about the political effects of our defeat on 8 August." ⁴⁶⁷

On August 10 Ludendorff suffered a breakdown and offered his resignation. He recovered after a month away from the front. But he could see the writing on the wall, and his main concern now was to see that he and the army, which was in the process of snatching defeat in the West from the jaws of Germany's greatest-ever victory in the East, should not carry the responsibility.

On September 28 the Allies won a great victory at Passchendaele. They were nearing the French and Belgian borders. The next day, at army headquarters at Spa in Belgium, Hindenburg and Ludendorff told the Kaiser that they wanted an armistice. On October 1, General Haig said that the German army was "completely breaking". On October 2, the generals declared: "The condition of the army demands an immediate armistice to avoid a catastrophe."

⁴⁶⁵ Tooze, *The Deluge*, p. 140.

⁴⁶⁶ Colvin, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴⁶⁷ Hindenburg, in James Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*, Devon: Old Street Publishing, 2018, p. 14.

This was the real killer blow: although the Germans were still fighting on foreign soil and retreating in relatively good order, they were broken in spirit as much by the generals' defeatism as by defeats on the battlefield. Thus 340,000 surrendered between July 18 and November 11...⁴⁶⁸

Meanwhile, a difference of strategy was emerging between the Americans, on the one hand, and the Franco-British on the other. America joined the war not so much out of any great love for the Entente – on the contrary, one of President Wilson's main war-aims was to destroy the political and economic foundations of the old-style imperialist states of Britain and France – as out of hatred of what was seen as the Prussian and militarist essence of the German regime. Consequently, Wilson was not interested so much in Germany's unconditional surrender and humiliation, as in her liberalization, her transformation into a real democracy; this would be "peace without victory", a peace dictated and largely effected by himself. To this end, he responded to the German liberals' feelers, although he remained sceptical whether Germany could really change from authoritarianism to democracy so quickly. On September 27 he offered Germany peace on the basis of his Fourteen Points (which they had rejected in January, 1918) and "impartial justice". This unilateral approach appalled the British and French as well as the president's political opponents at home, who wanted him to finish the war alongside the Allies and not act as some kind of umpire between them and the Germans.

The German liberals, who supported Wilson's Fourteen Points, and opposed the militaristic and annexationist policies of the generals, had long been exerting pressure on the Kaiser, if not to abdicate, at any rate to allow constitutional reform. And the Kaiser had begun to bend: in his Easter Message of 1917 he had promised constitutional reform after the war. Then, in July the Reichstag had called for a peace without annexations or indemnities that chimed in well with similar calls from both the Provisional Government in Petrograd and President Wilson. The German Army's successes in the East culminating in the brutal, annexationist treaty with Russia at Brest-Litovsk in March, 1918 had put paid to the liberals' hopes of peace – for the time being. But now, in October, 1918, as the army retreated on the Western front, they regained their strength and made advances for an armistice to President Wilson, bypassing Lloyd George and Clemenceau.

Theodore Roosevelt, leader of the American Republicans was as appalled as the British and French: "At this point, if we make an Armistice we have lost the war and we shall leave Germany about where she started. I am sure the American people want a complete victory and an unconditional surrender." "On 24th October," writes Sara Moore, "an irate Theodore Roosevelt declared that he believed that it was unconstitutional for Wilson to give Germany peace on the basis of his Fourteen Points without the support of the Senate and he

⁴⁶⁸ Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

pleaded, 'Let us dictate peace by the hammering of guns and not chat about peace to the accompaniment of the clicking of typewriters.'"⁴⁶⁹

But it was the typewriters that won... On October 4 the new German Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, opened negotiations for an armistice with Wilson on the basis of his Fourteen Points and some more recent statements of his. "Wilson would make no concessions, however, insisting on the introduction of parliamentary democracy (entailing the loss of power for Germany's ruling elites), renunciation of territorial gains and significant disarmament (including the handing over of the fleet). There was heated debate among Germany's leaders about the acceptability of what they saw as harsh terms. Ludendorff vehemently proposed continuing the war rather than yield to such humiliation. But he was no longer in a position to issue commands. And events were galloping beyond his, or anyone else's, control. On 26 October, blaming all but himself, he resigned..."⁴⁷⁰

In any case, at the front, 'There was no going back psychologically,' a Catholic chaplain recalled. 'No power in the world could have induced the average soldier at the front to take part in fighting that was to last still longer.' At home there was resignation, not resistance. 'They are acting almost like criminals who have broken into a neighbour's house, with no thought of defending themselves when caught red-handed... The only fear they have is that peace might slip away at the last minute.'"⁴⁷¹

"At the end of October," continues Strachan, "the navy planned to take the fleet to sea to fight one last climactic battle. Word of the proposed 'death ride' got out. By 3 and 4 November disturbances gripped the fleet in Kiel, with the sailors' demands focusing not on professional grievances but on issues like constitutional reform, peace, and the removal of the royal family. The mutiny spread to Wilhelmshaven, and then merged with spontaneous workers' risings elsewhere. On 9 November a general strike broke out in Berlin. The Reichstag was in danger of forfeiting its authority to the Bolshevik-style sailors', workers' and – increasingly – soldiers' councils that were being set up; the majority Socialists were fearful of losing control of the workers to the Independent Socialists; and the Spartacists [left-wing Social Democrats] wanted to ensure that the councils prepared for the next stage of the revolution that had now begun and which would establish a Soviet system in Germany. The army held the balance, and the Kaiser sought to use it to impose his authority in Berlin. At last it confronted the choice between the nation and the monarchy, which had been implicit in much of its behaviour throughout the war. But the man who had done most to marginalize the Kaiser did not see his actions through to their logical conclusion. Ludendorff had been forced to resign on 26 October.

⁴⁶⁹ Moore, *The Fourth Reich?* Jollies Publishing, 2016, pp. 102, 103. Roosevelt was supported by the American commander, General Pershing, who "suggested that the Allies should insist on an actual German surrender so that there could be no doubt in anyone's mind that the German army had lost the war" (Mark Arnold-Forster, *The World at War*, London: Collins, 1973, p. 3).

⁴⁷⁰ Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁴⁷¹ Strachan, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-319.

He had been replaced by Groener. On 8 November the new first quartermaster-general received thirty-nine reports on feeling in the army, only one of which said that the troops were ready to fight for Wilhelm. 'The army,' Groener told its supreme commander, 'will march home in peace and order under its leaders and commanding generals, but not under the command of Your Majesty; for it no longer stands behind Your Majesty.'"⁴⁷²

Prince Max also wanted the Kaiser to abdicate. He hoped that the revolution could be diverted into moderate channels by appointing Friedrich Ebert, leader of the moderate Social Democrats, as chancellor. "With no decision from Spa, Prince Max runs out of patience and decides to take matters into his own hands. He will announce Wilhelm's abdication himself. Prince Max summons Ebert and asks if he is prepared to govern in accordance with 'the monarchical constitution'. Ebert is an unusually conservative Social Democrat and would have preferred to retain the monarchy; but events had gone too far: 'Yesterday I could have given an unconditional affirmative,' he tells Prince Max. 'Today I must first consult my friends.' Prince Max asks him about considering a regency, someone to serve as placeholder for a future monarch. Ebert replies that it is 'too late'. Behind Ebert, as Max's jaded pen records, the other Social Democrats in the room repeat in unison, 'Too late, too late!'

"Meanwhile, Ebert's colleague Philipp Scheidemann stands on a balcony of the Reichstag and calls out, 'Long live the Republic!' This is taken as a declaration that Germany has in fact become a democratic republic, although Scheidemann will later say he meant it only as a 'confession of faith'.

"At the royal palace, a half mile or so east of the Reichstag, the radical Karl Liebknecht declares Germany a 'socialist republic'. By this time, the Kaiser has finally abdicated [on November 9] as emperor of Germany..."⁴⁷³

The parallel with the abdication of the Tsar is remarkable. "And it was the army," writes Johnson, "having helped to engineer the war, having raised the stakes and ensured that the defeat was calamitous, which then slipped out of its responsibilities and handed back authority to the civilians. They were left with the task and the odium of arranging the armistice and signing the peace, while the generals prepared their stab-in-the-back exculpation.

"Thus, by a curious piece of national myopia, containing elements of self-deception, the Germans exonerated those who had got the country into the fearful mess in which it found itself. The Allies dropped their notion of war-crime tribunals. They even backed down on extraditing German officers known to have broken the Hague Convention. These men were released to appear in German courts where they received ridiculously small sentences, and were then allowed to escape, returning to their homes as heroes.

⁴⁷² Strachan, op. cit., pp. 318-320.

⁴⁷³ Benjamin Carter Hett, *The Death of Democracy. Hitler's Rise to Power*, London: Windmill Books, 2018, pp. 16-17.

"Instead, it was the Socialists and the politicians of the Centre who got the blame for Germany's troubles. The Socialists had been the biggest party in the Reichstag before the war, but they were never admitted to government; and because parliament had inadequate control over finance – the central weakness of pre-war German 'democracy' – they could do nothing effective to stop German imperialism, though they voted against it. They were the only party to oppose Germany's annexations in Russia in early 1918. When the war ended, they briefly held power at last, but merely as the legal receivers of a bankrupt empire... When the Centre politicians took over, as they soon did, they too were tainted with defeat, surrender, of being 'the men of the Allies'."⁴⁷⁴

"In the midst of this revolutionary turmoil," writes Jurgen Tampke, "the Allies finally agreed on a reply to the German request for an armistice. Following three weeks of acrimonious confrontation – at one point, Lloyd George angrily announced that if the Americans wanted to make peace with the Germans, they should do so, but that the British nation would then continue the war itself – the victorious powers drafted the armistice conditions, which they handed to a German delegation on 8 November at Rethondes in the forest of Compiègne. Peace was to be based on president Wilson's Fourteen Points, with the following addendum, drawn up by U.S. secretary of state Robert Lansing on the insistence of Lloyd George, and since referred to as the 'Pre-Armistice Agreement' or the 'Lansing Note': 'Further, in the conditions of peace laid down in his address to the Congress of January 8, 1918, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and freed. The Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea and from the air.'

"The public was not made aware of this addition, and one of the many stratagems used by the subsequent German government to undermine the Versailles Peace Treaty was to claim that they had been made to believe that peace was based on what were to be called Wilson's original points..."⁴⁷⁵

The generals did not want to take part in the armistice negotiations, fearing that they would be blamed for the outcome. So "they were shrewd enough to recruit the Center Party's Matthias Erzberger, the main sponsor of the 1917 Peace Resolution, for this disagreeable task, with an emotional appeal to his patriotic duty. Erzberger, moved to tears, complied and negotiated the Armistice. His reward was to be vilified and libeled by the right. In 1921 he was assassinated..."⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁴ Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 109.

⁴⁷⁵ Tampke, *A Perfidious Distortion of History*, London: Scribe, 2018, pp. 87-88.

⁴⁷⁶ Hett, op. cit., p. 31.

On behalf of the new republican government Erzberger signed the armistice agreement, which came into effect at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month...

According to the terms of the armistice, 25,000 German machine guns and the entire German fleet were surrendered, together with Alsace-Lorraine and a chunk of the Rhineland. Erzberger had managed to obtain only that the Germans kept 5000 machine guns, and reduced the amount of territory handed over in the Rhineland. Then, as he travelled back across no-man's land to tell the German generals the western powers' terms, revolution broke out in Berlin. By the time he reached Spa, Germany was a republic.

The decisive factor in the Entente's victory in 1918 was their technological superiority in tanks, airplanes and artillery. The Germans had outgunned the Entente for most of the war. But the appointment of a new prime minister (Lloyd George) and armaments minister (Churchill) in Britain in December 1916 had raised the tempo of the Allied effort. Moreover, "from July 1918 [the Germans'] monthly output of shells was half that of 1917. In a war in which 70 per cent of all casualties were attributed to artillery it was a fatal weakness."⁴⁷⁷

"Hence the paradox," writes Ferguson, "that the country with the most renowned technical expertise and manufacturing industry before the war failed to win the *Materialschlacht*."⁴⁷⁸

There are striking similarities between the fall of the Russian and German empires: the disappointment caused by an unsuccessful war (which, however, was not lost in either country as long as the monarchs were in power); the food shortages; the leftist political demands; the dual power wielded both by the bourgeois liberals and by the workers' councils; the dissatisfaction with the Royal Family; the refusal of the army generals at a certain point to fight for the king...

Moreover, there was justice in the similarity of the two countries' fates: Germany had destroyed Russia by exporting to her the terrible Bolshevik virus, and Germany now fell to the same virus borne this time by the Spartacists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who, after failing to create a Soviet-style republic in Berlin (to the great disappointment of the Bolsheviks in Moscow), succeeded temporarily in Bavaria. And although Germany recovered under the Weimar republic, the virus reappeared in a mutant form in Nazism...

"In an interview with the London *Daily Chronicle* in July, 1919, [Naval commander-in-chief] Reinhard Scheer asserted that 'the war at sea was the decisive factor, and that the hunger blockade was the cause of the German defeat'. This analysis fitted the widely held belief in Germany, that defeat in the war had essentially occurred on the home front, that Germany's armed

⁴⁷⁷ Strachan, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

⁴⁷⁸ Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

forces had not been beaten in the field (or at sea), that domestic weaknesses had undermined Germany's capacity to fight; and even that brave and resilient German soldiers had suffered a 'Dolchstoß', or 'stab in the back', wielded by craven socialist politicians far from the battle front."⁴⁷⁹

In the final analysis, it was neither tactical nor technological superiority that gave the Entente the victory: it was the loss of morale of the German leaders, beginning with Ludendorff and spreading like a virus to the soldiers at the front. Thus it was not the Jews, nor the German socialists, but Ludendorff, according to Ferguson, who delivered the famous "stab in the back". Except that "it was in the German front, not the back..."⁴⁸⁰

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Meanwhile, in September, 1918 the Allied armies assembled in Salonika began a great offensive against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On September 28 the Bulgarians surrendered. Even earlier, in mid-September, the Austrians openly appealed for peace, thus effectively destroying the alliance with Germany. But the Germans did not react – the "blank cheque" of 1914 had become an albatross around their neck by 1918.

On October 29 Prince Alexander of Serbia entered in triumph into a ruined Belgrade. After the retreat over the mountains of Albania, this was surely one of the greatest military come-backs of history! Then he took possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slovenia and Vojvodina...

In Austria, "as food riots, strikes, protests, nationalist mutinies and lawlessness spread, the situation, in the judgement of the head of the Austrian Food Office, Hans Loewenfeld-Ross, had become 'utterly desperate'. The Habsburg Empire was visibly falling apart...

"After the remnants of the Austro-Hungarian army, with little on their minds but saving their own skins, were routed by Italians at Vittorio Veneto in October 1918, the empire was on its last legs.⁴⁸¹ The army now disintegrated. Emperor Karl [Franz Joseph had died in November, 1916] agreed in late October to troops joining their own national forces. It was no more than a recognition of what was happening on the ground, as Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Croats and others deserted and left for home. By late October, with extraordinary speed, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and what would become Yugoslavia were proclaiming their independence. Austria's armistice with Italy on 3 November marked the end of its war effort. Emperor Karl reluctantly

⁴⁷⁹ Keith Jeffrey, 1916, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 131-132.

⁴⁸⁰ Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

⁴⁸¹ There was a remarkable reversal of fortunes on the Italian front. "Between 26 October and 3 November [1918] the Italians took 500,000 prisoners... [probably] because Austro-Hungarian morale imploded as non-German soldiers ceased to be willing to fight for the moribund Habsburg Empire..." (Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 312) (V.M.)

renounced his powers (though not his claim to the throne) on 11 November and spent the remaining three years of his life exiled in Switzerland and, finally, Madeira. Five centuries of Habsburg rule were over..."⁴⁸²

The Austrians sued for peace on November 3, and the Hungarians - on November 13. Emperor Karl abdicated on November 12.

Perhaps the best commentary on the fall of the Habsburg empire was the French composer Maurice Ravel's *La Valse* (1920). The form of the piece was a homage to Vienna's brilliant pre-war musical culture. But the waltz disintegrates into ugly chaos. In Ravel's words, it was "a sort of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz, mingled with, in my mind, the impression of a fantastic, fatal whirling..."

On December 1, 1918, after national parliaments in Croatia and Slovenia had approved the idea, the old kingdom of Serbia was transformed into the new kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under King Alexander. The politicians meeting at Versailles *de facto* recognized the new state. For Point Ten of Wilson's Fourteen Points, presented before the end of the war, had spoken of the "autonomous development" of the peoples of Austria-Hungary, and Point Eleven stipulated that Romania, Montenegro and Serbia should be restored to independence. Romania and Serbia were given independence, but later Alexander would annex Montenegro, although it had been an independent kingdom for centuries...⁴⁸³

The Romanians, who had been comprehensively defeated by the Germans in 1916, rejoined the Allies on November 10, 1918, one day before the armistice. They then recaptured Transylvania from the Hungarians and went on to conquer Budapest itself, driving out the communist regime of Bela Kun, thereby saving Central Europe from the collective Antichrist - for a few years....

In the end, "Austria-Hungary could not contain the burgeoning desire for self-determination among its myriad people within a centralized monarchical framework. Efforts initially focused on a revised federal structure giving more power to the various nationalities. But the more power the centre conceded, the more power its people demanded. Eventually, the empire endured a flight into war in 1914 as the leadership tried to stamp out the south Slav problem once and for all. Amid the carnage, the Czechs in particular pressed for complete independence, and others did the same. At war's end, the Allied powers granted their wish.

⁴⁸² Kershaw, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

⁴⁸³ Graham, op. cit., pp. 102-103. Montenegro had had an autocephalous metropolia in the twelfth century, and had been politically a independent monarchy, with the support of Russia, since the early nineteenth century.

“In the words of Count Ottakar Czernin, Austria-Hungary’s foreign minister for most of the First World War: ‘We were bound to die. We were at liberty to choose the manner of our death and we chose the most terrible...’”⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸⁴ Brendan Simms and Timothy Less, “A Crisis Without End. The Disintegration of the European Project”, *New Statesman*, 6-12 November, 2015, pp. 23, 27.

II. THE NEW WORLD DISORDER (1918-1925)

28. REPUBLICANISM AND MONARCHISM

“By the time the armistice came,” writes Paul Johnson, “progress in the sense the Victorians had understood it, as something continuous and almost inexorable, was dead...”

“What killed the idea of orderly, as opposed to anarchic, progress, was the sheer enormity of the acts perpetrated by civilized Europe over the past four years. That there had been an unimaginable, unprecedented moral degeneration, no one who looked at the facts could doubt. Sometime while he was Secretary of State for War (1919-21), Winston Churchill jotted down on a sheet of War Office paper the following passage: ‘All the horrors of all the ages were brought together, and not only armies but whole populations were thrust into the midst of them. The mighty educated States involved conceived – not without reason – that their very existence was at stake. Neither peoples nor rulers drew the line at any deed which they thought could help them to win. Germany, having let Hell loose, kept well in the van of terror; but she was followed step by step by the desperate and ultimately avenging nations she had assailed. Every outrage against humanity or international law was repaid by reprisals – often of a greater scale and of longer duration. No truce or parley [after the ‘football truce’ of December 1914] mitigated the strife of the armies. The wounded died between the lines; the dead mouldered into the soil. Merchant ships and neutral ships and hospital ships were sunk on the seas and all on board left to their fate, or killed as they swam. Every effort was made to starve whole nations into submission without regard to age or sex. Cities and monuments were smashed by artillery. Bombs from the air were cast down indiscriminately. Poison gas in many forms stifled or seared the soldiers. Liquid fire was projected against their bodies. Men fell from the air in flames, or were smothered often slowly in the dark recesses of their countries. The fighting strength of armies was limited only by the manhood of their countries. Europe and large parts of Asia and Africa became one vast battlefield on which after years of struggle not armies but nations broke and ran. When all was over, Torture and Cannibalism were the only two expedients that the civilized, scientific, Christian States had been able to deny themselves: and they were of doubtful utility...”⁴⁸⁵

What Churchill did not know was that this was only “the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24.8)...

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“The war that will end war”, in H.G. Wells’ phrase, did not fully end in 1918, but only moved its main theatres eastward, to Russia and Turkey... Before that, from December, 1918 to March, 1919 a civil war was waged in Germany between the new socialist government and communist revolutionaries.

⁴⁸⁵ Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, pp. 13-14.

The Socialists won thanks to a pact between Friedrich Ebert, chairman of the Council of People's Representatives, and the leader of the army, Quartermaster-General Wilhelm Groener. "The Ebert-Groener pact," writes Christopher Clark, "was an ambivalent achievement. It secured for the socialist republican authority the means to enforce order and protect itself against further upheavals. This was a major step forward for an executive structure that had no meaningful armed force of its own and had no constitutional foundation for its authority, save the right of usurpation bestowed by the revolution itself. Seen in this light, the Ebert-Groener pact was shrewd, pragmatic and in any case necessary, since there was no plausible alternative. Yet there was also something ominous in the army's setting of political conditions even for the fulfilment of urgent tasks within its own remit, such as demobilization. What mattered here was not the substance of Groener's demands, which were reasonable enough, but the army's formal arrogation of the right to treat with the civilian authority on an equal footing..."⁴⁸⁶

Meanwhile, the naval blockade of Germany by the Royal Navy continued after the armistice. "The number of deaths caused by the blockade," writes Jonathan Glover, "is hard to calculate. It is also hard to know how the food shortages should be apportioned between the blockade and the economic priority given to the war effort, or how many of the deaths in the influenza epidemic of 1918 should be ascribed in part to severe undernourishment. After the war an official German calculation put the deaths caused by the blockade to 762,000. A British government White Paper put the figure at 800,000. Some later estimates were substantially lower, one putting the figure at 424,000. Nevertheless, in this, the Germans contributed to their own misery. The Allies, writes Jurgen Tampke, "had agreed, as an Armistice condition, that Germany be allowed to bring in food, provided it used its own merchant shipping. But German ship-owners refused, because they feared that their ships, having left their harbours, would be confiscated..."⁴⁸⁷

"After the Armistice, the blockade was extended to the Baltic ports and continued until the Allies were satisfied with German compliance with their demands. The journalist Walter Durranty visited Lubeck in 1919 and found people living on potatoes and black bread. They had no meat, butter, milk or eggs. A doctor told him that 90 per cent of the children were anaemic or below weight, and that more than half of them had rickets or tuberculosis.

"The hostility engendered by the war meant that, outside Germany, there was little public pressure to end the blockade. One who did want to end it was Winston Churchill, but, as he put it, 'Public opinion in the Allied countries was callous.' In March 1919 it was agreed to lift the blockade, but people in Germany went on dying until food started to get through in May.

⁴⁸⁶ Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, London: Penguin, 2008, p. 623.

⁴⁸⁷ Tampke, *A Perfidious Distortion of History*, London: Scribe, 2018, p. 132.

"The importance of the blockade as a human disaster goes far beyond the great suffering it caused. It soured the peace, making a poor climate for reconciliation. Churchill described the understandable German response: 'These bitter experiences stripped their conquerors in their eyes of all credentials except those of force.' The blockade was used to impose the 'war guilt' clauses of the Versailles treaty. The senior German delegate at Versailles, Graf Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau, expressed some of the resentment: 'The hundreds of thousands of noncombatants who have perished since November 11 because of the blockade were destroyed coolly and deliberately, after our opponents had won a certain and assured victory. Think of that, when you speak of guilt and atonement.'"⁴⁸⁸

However, the real killer in the immediate post-war period was Spanish flu. Simon Jenkins writes that "with returning imperial troops spreading the disease to their native lands, the worldwide death toll was reputedly fifty million, making it the greatest human disaster in recorded history, worse even than the Black Death."⁴⁸⁹

The epidemic, writes Ferguson, "shattered the illusion of inexorable medical progress as completely as the war that preceded it (and perhaps caused it) had shattered the illusion of inexorable economic and political progress..."⁴⁹⁰

A profound pessimism and cynicism about politics and politicians, and life in general, descended upon the West, and especially in Germany. The title of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* reflected the general feeling that the old world was dying – and, moreover, that it deserved to die. Spengler's famous remark: "Optimism is cowardice" reflected the deep pessimism of the period. And this was by no means confined to Spengler's fellow-countrymen. The victors' jubilation was short-lived, succeeded by depression; the defeated, as well as being depressed, were angry, and bent on revenge...

Those who had believed that the Great War would "clear the air" of a decadent civilization were proved quite wrong. With so many widows and orphans, there was of course great sadness, perfectly expressed in Elgar's Cello Concerto (1919). But there was also a pervasive feeling of *guilt*, in spite of the fact that Freud had dismissed guilt as just a learned social construct, "as a mere safety-device, collectively created, to protect civilized order from the fearful aggressiveness of human beings. Freudianism was many things, but if it had an essence it was the description of guilt. 'The tension between the harsh super-ego and the ego that is subjected to it,' Freud wrote in 1920, 'is called by us the sense of guilt... Civilization obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an

⁴⁸⁸ Glover, *Humanity. A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1999, p. 66.

⁴⁸⁹ Jenkins, *A Short History of England*, London: Profile, 2011, p. 280.

⁴⁹⁰ Ferguson, *Doom. The Politics of Catastrophe*, London: Allen Lane, 2021, p. 171.

agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city.' Feelings of guilt were thus a sign not of vice, but of virtue. The super-ego or conscience was the drastic price the individual paid for preserving civilization, and its cost in misery would increase inexorably as civilization advanced. 'A threatened external unhappiness... has been exchanged for a permanent internal unhappiness, for the tension if the sense of guilt.'... Personal guilt-feelings were an illusion to be dispelled. None of us was individually guilty, we were all guilty."⁴⁹¹

There was "a belief across Europe that Western civilization was nearing collapse: moral, social, political and above all economic. As Sidney and Beatrice Webb put it with grim relish in their *Decay of Western Civilization* (1923), 'Capitalism need not hope to die quietly in its bed; it will die by violence, and civilization will perish with it.' Their book, wrote the editor of the *New Statesman*, shaped the beliefs of British socialists for twenty years. For some on the left, any form of radicalism was welcome. The prominent playwright George Bernard Shaw, a celebrity socialist gadfly of sometimes surpassing silliness, thought both Communism and Fascism showed the way to the future. 'Who can blame Signor Mussolini,' he asked a BBC audience in 1929, 'for describing [democracy] as a putrefying corpse?' Lenin and Stalin ('a good Fabian') had begun a 'great Communist experiment' which would prevent the 'collapse and failure' of world civilization; while 'the Nazi movement is in many respects one which has my warmest sympathy'."⁴⁹²

The Great War changed the face of politics as no other war before it. Apart from those killed by war or disease, there were huge numbers of bereaved and injured and widowed. Even men who survived unscathed (relatively) from the battlefield returned home to find that they could not simply slip back into their old jobs: they might find themselves unemployed, or physically or mentally handicapped, or their old jobs had been taken by women, whose influence in political and economic life had increased hugely.

Economics now ruled politics as never before in world history... The wartime need to increase and coordinate production on a national scale, directing all the resources of the nation towards a single end, created *the monster state*. Thus in Britain during the war, writes Tombs, "public expenditure was around a quarter of GDP (double that in 1913), and for the first time social services became by far the largest item."⁴⁹³ The increased power of the State was something that united the communist East and the capitalist West. The "only" difference is that in the East it was achieved by force and rapine on a vast scale, while in the West increased taxation was at least introduced by the elected representatives of the people.

⁴⁹¹ Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, p. 13.

⁴⁹² Robert Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, pp. 671-672.

⁴⁹³ Tombs, op. cit., p. 663.

After the loss of lives and the loss of religious faith that all the combatant nations experienced to a greater or lesser degree (although faith recovered quickly in Russia after the persecutions began, as we shall see), the greatest casualty of the war was *monarchism* – not the need for monarchism, or the desire for a strong monarch, but the *belief* in monarchism.

As Mark Mazower writes, “Before the First World War there had been just three republics in Europe; by the end of 1918 there were thirteen. ‘In the eyes of a Wilson, a Lloyd George, a Clemenceau, a Mazaryk, a Beneš, a Venizelos,’ wrote a French commentator, ‘the flight of the Kaiser Wilhelm and the departure of the Emperor Charles completed the flight of Louis XVI... 1918 was a sort of European 1792.

“Following the... collapse of the great autocratic empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary, Hohenzollern Germany and Ottoman Turkey, the Paris peace settlement saw parliamentary democracy enthroned across Europe. A belt of democracies – stretching from the Baltic Sea down through Germany and Poland to the Balkans – was equipped with new constitutions drawn up according to the most up-to-date liberal principles. British scholar James Bryce, in his 1921 classic *Modern Democracies*, talked about the ‘universal acceptance of democracy as the normal and natural form of government.’”⁴⁹⁴

“On the eve of the war,” writes Niall Ferguson, “descendants and other relatives of Queen Victoria had sat on the thrones not only of Great Britain and Ireland, but also of Austria-Hungary, Russia, Germany, Belgium, Rumania, Greece and Bulgaria. In Europe only Switzerland, France and Portugal had been republics...

“[However,] when the strain of the war began to tell, it was the monarchy which was among the first established institutions to lose legitimacy; so that the war led to a triumph of republicanism undreamt of even in the 1790s. In July 1918 Nicholas II and his family were murdered at Ekaterinburg, their bodies thrown down a mineshaft (where they remained for eighty years); the Kaiser stole away to exile in Holland, whose government resisted calls for his extradition as a war criminal; the last Habsburg Emperor, Karl I, went to Switzerland then Madeira; the last Ottoman Sultan was hustled out of Constantinople to a waiting British ship. True, the institution of monarchy survived in Britain, Belgium, Rumania, Bulgaria, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania, as well as in Holland and Scandinavia, which had stayed out of the war; and new monarchies were also established in the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. However, the post-war map of Europe saw the emergence of republics in Russia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the three Baltic States, as well as Belorussia, West Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (which were forcibly absorbed into the Union of Soviet Socialist

⁴⁹⁴ Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999. pp. 1-2.

Republics in 1919-21); and eventually in Southern Ireland. This must rank as one of the least intended consequences of the war..."⁴⁹⁵

The First World War is usually seen as a war between nations rather than ideologies, and this is broadly true. The radical socialists tried to make it into a continent-wide civil war between workers and capitalists; but in spite of the continuing growth in influence of socialist ideas, none of the major powers in 1914 was socialist, and the major socialist leaders either died on the eve of the war (Joffre in France), or were weak (in Britain and America), or were strong but not strong enough (the SDP in Germany) or were outlawed or in exile (Lenin and the other Socialists who assembled at the Zimmerwald Conference in 1915). The German leaders made out that it was a war between Monarchy and Democracy. This cannot be strictly true for the simple reason that, at least until 1917, there were monarchies on both sides. However, after the Russian revolution overthrew the Russian tsardom, which was followed by the defeat of the Russian democracy, it became a straight fight in the west between the German and Austrian monarchies, on the one hand, and the American, British, French and Italian democracies, on the other (although Britain and Italy had constitutional monarchs). We know that democracy (albeit of a somewhat despotic kind) and republicanism (if we discount the ineffectual constitutional monarchies) won, and the Versailles conference after the war consolidated that victory by striving, in President Wilson's words, to "make the world safe for democracy".

But the triumph of republicanism was only partial. In Germany, the Weimar republic was blamed for the misery of post-war conditions, and by the late thirties democracy was in retreat throughout Europe. In fact, the republican democracies of Russia and Germany gave birth to the two most extreme despotisms in history. Many liberal thinkers refuse to blame democracy in any way for this, but instead claim that the inter-war despotisms of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia were a throwback to, even a continuation of, those countries' pre-war monarchies, so that the cause of all the miseries of the period was their adherence to the principle of one-man rule or what they call "autocracy" but is better named "despotism".

Nothing could be further from the truth... Germany and Russia had risen to become the most powerful states of Europe in the nineteenth century under the rule of monarchs. Not only did religion and high culture flourish in both (albeit only Russia had the true religion): neither, contrary to historical cliché, was inordinately cruel or despotic. Liberal measures such as the emancipation of serfs and relative freedom of the press were introduced in both countries – which shows that monarchism and a degree of freedom are by no means incompatible so long as "freedom" here means social liberation and not the introduction of the ballot box.

⁴⁹⁵ Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, London: Penguin, 1999, pp. 435-436.

As the population of both countries rapidly increased, and poverty threatened, the monarchist governments dealt in general effectively with the crisis, especially Prussia, where Bismarck introduced a welfare state that all the countries of Europe imitated. But Tsarist Russia was hardly less successful than the Kaiser's Germany in terms of economic growth and welfarism. The Tsar's labour legislation was praised by the American President Taft, while his "state capitalism" promoted the development of industry and his bold agrarian reforms gave land and hope to many peasant farmers. Indeed, the Germans' fear and envy of Russia's rapid rate of growth (from a lower base than theirs, of course) was probably the main cause of the outbreak of war in 1914.

Thus while there were important differences between German and Russian monarchism, both regimes understood that long-term stability and real alleviation in the condition of workers and peasants was best effected by benevolent one-man-rule, not by bloody revolutions and violent expropriations, on the one hand, or talking-shop parliaments (the German word was "Schwatzbude"), on the other.

The main difference between the two regimes, apart from faith, was the inclination of the Second Reich in the direction of military despotism, especially from January, 1917, when the Kaiser and the civilian politicians more or less surrendered control of the country to its leading generals, Ludendorff and Hindenburg. The generals then successfully blamed the civilian leaders that took back power from them in November, 1918 for the catastrophe of the world war. The result, perversely, was that "to a greater or lesser degree, the stigma of Versailles was attached to all the politicians of the Republic itself, and so to the whole idea of parliamentary democracy..."⁴⁹⁶

After the war, the terrible collapse in living standards and communal security in both Germany and Russia led many in both countries to understand - too late - what they had lost through their disastrous democratic revolutions and to look back nostalgically to the days of Kaiser and Tsar. However, by the early 1920s many Orthodox monarchists, had ceased to understand its true spirit, especially after the slaughter of thousands of monarchists in Russia during the Civil War, and the expulsion of leading monarchist philosophers such as Berdyaev to the former capitals of monarchism further west (Berlin and Prague especially). Only the Russian Church in Exile, centred now in the last truly monarchical state of Europe, Yugoslavia, continued to preach and propagate the ideal of Orthodox monarchism.

Many Germans, especially the Prussian Junker aristocrats, tended to identify monarchism with *strong government* - but government having no living relationship to religious faith. However, the whole of history demonstrates that monarchical government that does feel itself governed by the commandments of God leads to *despotism*. And so Prussian monarchism, deprived both of the monarch and of the true spirit of monarchism, led to - Hitlerism.

⁴⁹⁶ Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 109.

"The extinction of the Prussian monarchy," writes Christopher Clark, "was an existential shock for the East-Elbian nobility – more perhaps than for any other social group. 'I feel as if I can no longer live without our Kaiser and king,' wrote the magnate Dietlof Count Arnim-Boitzenburg, the last president of the Prussian upper house, in January 1919. But the attitude of most nobles to the exiled king – and his family – remained ambivalent. For many representatives of the Prussian nobility, the ignominious circumstances of the monarch's departure, and particularly his failure to preserve the prestige of his crown by sacrificing himself in battle, impeded any general identification with the last occupant of the Prussian throne. Monarchism thus never developed into an ideological formation capable of providing the conservative nobility as a whole with a coherent and stable political standpoint. Noblemen, especially of the younger generation, drifted away from the personal, flesh-and-blood monarchism of their fathers and forbears towards the diffuse idea of a 'leader of the people', whose charisma and natural authority would fill the vacuum created by the departure of the king. We find a characteristic articulation of this longing in the diary jottings of Count Andreas von Bernstorff-Wedendorf, descendant of a line of distinguished servants of the Prussian throne. 'Only a dictator can help us now, one who will sweep an iron broom through this whole international parasitic scum. If only we had, like the Italians, a Mussolini!' In short, within the Prussian nobility, as across the East-Elbian conservative milieu, the Weimar years witnessed a drastic radicalization of political expectations..."⁴⁹⁷

The beginning of a tendency towards National Socialism was also evident in Western Germany. Thus in late 1919, "Spengler published *Prussianism and Socialism* (Preußentum und Sozialismus), an essay based on notes intended for the second volume of *The Decline of the West* in which he argues that German socialism is the correct socialism in contrast to English socialism. In his view, correct socialism has a much more 'national' spirit.

"According to Spengler, mankind will spend the next and last several hundred years of its existence in a state of Caesarian socialism, when all humans will be synergized into a harmonious and happy totality by a dictator, like an orchestra is synergized into a harmonious totality by its conductor."⁴⁹⁸

A beguiling image, pointing to the undeniable fact that many will always prefer "a harmonious and happy totality by a dictator" to the aimless, disorganized and atomized secularism of modern democracy. But the aspect of the metaphor that Spengler ignored, and which turned out to be crucial in the struggle between dictatorship and democracy that unfolded in the next age, was: *what is the music that the conductor is conducting?* Is it a glorious hymn to God and the necessity of Christian struggle? Or is a vulgar, even vicious paean to the pseudo-glory of fallen men and corrupt nations?

⁴⁹⁷ Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 639.

⁴⁹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oswald_Spengler.

For in the last analysis it is *the content, not the form* of a society, the faith and morals of the people, that is most important. Western political thought had concentrated for the last century at least on the form, rather than the content of societies, until the last word of received political wisdom had been reduced to: the ballot box and the formal freedom and equality of all voters, none of whom by his voting activity can alter the course of history to the slightest extent. As if a ruler elected through the ballot box was legitimate and good, no matter what his ideology or religion – or personal ambitions.

The folly of this reasoning was demonstrated in both Germany and Russia in the period 1918-33. In Russia, Kerensky had come to power through the ballot box in 1917, and in 1918 the majority of the Russian people voted through the ballot box for rulers whose religion was atheist and even anti-theist. And in 1933 the German people voted through the ballot box and on impeccably democratic principles, for a man whose religion was a modern, updated version of the Dionysian orgies and the mass-murders of Moloch...

This only went to show that the apostle was right when he prophesied that when “that which restraineth” the coming of the Antichrist – the Orthodox autocracy, or monarchical power in general – would be “taken out of the way” (II Thessalonians 2.7), the gap would be filled by – the Antichrist...

29. THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES: (1) WILSONIAN DEMOCRACY

In January 1919 the world's leaders assembled in Paris with twenty-seven national delegations in order to solve the most serious and difficult problems that had ever faced a diplomatic gathering.

Paris in the decade after the war was again the cultural capital of the world, with Kiki and Coco Chanel, Josephine Baker and Maurice Chevalier, Sidney Bechet and Igor Stravinsky, Chaplin and Valentino, Picasso and Salvador Dali, Proust and Joyce and Hemingway. France was the only country in the world where homosexuality was not illegal (the famous art critic Gertrude Stein openly flaunted her lesbianism there), while Paris was the world capital of pornographic film and cocaine use. It was hardly surprising that against the background of this frenetic decadence and pleasure-seeking, when not only serious moral purpose but Divine guidance and inspiration was required, the diplomacy turned out to be an abject failure...

The first decision of the Supreme Council of the conference was to appoint a Commission consisting of the five great powers – the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan – with delegations from China, Brazil, Serbia, Portugal and Belgium. Notable by their absence were the “bad boys” of international politics, Germany and Russia. This was inevitable in the case of Russia, but doomed the whole enterprise to ultimate failure...

According to Stephen Kotkin, “Contrary to received wisdom, Europe’s postwar security system did not disintegrate because of spinelessness or blundering. Only the dual collapse of Russian and German power had made possible Versailles, which could have succeeded only if German and Russian power never rose again...”⁴⁹⁹

The present book adopts a somewhat different position. The vital element that made Versailles unworkable and made possible the rise of Hitler was the defeat of tsarist Russia in the world war – for which the western allies and the Russian elites had only themselves to blame insofar as they betrayed the tsar when he was on the point of launching a powerful offensive against Germany which military experts believed would be successful. But the “stab-in-the-back” – of Russia, not Germany – and the triumph of Bolshevism introduced a spirit of atheist anarchism that infected most of Europe – but especially Germany. And it was Germany’s intransigence that made Versailles unworkable. If Russia had defeated Germany, it is difficult to know how different the map of Europe would have looked and what would have been the spirit that ruled it. But one thing is certain: with both Russian Bolshevism and German Nietzscheanism destroyed, the prospects for a stable peace would have been much greater...

⁴⁹⁹ Kotkin, *Stalin, vol. II: Waiting for Hitler*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. xiii.

The exclusion of Germany from Versailles was understandable, even inevitable, insofar as one of the main purposes of the conference was for the victorious powers to decide among themselves what to do with Germany. But it could have been done differently... "At the beginning," writes Paul Johnson, "everyone had vaguely assumed that preliminary terms would be drawn up by the Allies among themselves, after which the Germans and their partners would appear and the actual peace treaty be negotiated. That is what happened [with France] at the Congress of Vienna. A conference programme on these lines was actually drawn up by the logical French, and handed to Wilson by the French ambassador in Washington as early as 29 November 1918. This document had the further merit of stipulating the immediate cancellation of all the secret treaties. But its wording irritated Wilson and nothing more was heard of it..."⁵⁰⁰ So all the negotiations were conducted among the victorious powers, and at the end the finished treaty was simply presented to the Germans on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. They were furious...

The refusal to invite Russia was more understandable, since Russia was now ruled by the Bolsheviks, who had vowed to overthrow all governments, and helped to set up short-lived communist states in Hungary and Bavaria in April, 1919, together with the Third Communist International, at the very time that the "Democrat International" of Versailles was being held. For, as Alistair Horne writes: "There was a spectre at the feast, called Communism. On the very day of the signature of the Peace Treaty, a Communist-led Metro and bus strike had paralysed the city."⁵⁰¹

There was a profound and tragic irony in the absence of Russia from the conference table. The French delegate Léon Bourgeois "suggested that the League of Nations should invoke the legacy of the pre-war Hague Peace Arbitration Treaties."⁵⁰² But who had founded the Hague Conference if not Tsar Nicholas II, who had been the faithful ally of the Western powers until overthrown by the Germans and Lenin with the connivance of those same Western powers, as a result of which the Bolshevik regime had come into being? And who, before that, had been the arbiter of the only international conference of comparable importance, the Vienna Congress of 1815, if not Tsar Alexander I? By rejecting Russia, - not only Bolshevik Russia but also the representatives of any other kind of Russia, and not only as a participant but even as a subject of serious discussion, - the Versailles conference doomed itself to failure. At the head of the corner of the talks was placed, instead of Russia - America, and instead of a peace-maker Tsar - an American president, Woodrow Wilson, who, in spite of his sincerely pacific intentions, was ruled by ideas that would lead, not to peace, but, twenty years later, to the greatest war in history. At the root of the failure lay an ill-thought-out philosophy of democratism and international relations.

⁵⁰⁰ Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁵⁰¹ Horne, *Seven Ages of Paris*, London: Pan Books, 2002, p. 372.

⁵⁰² Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 267.

Let us look more closely at Wilson's ideology... His vision of the new international order was firmly anti-imperialist. Therefore from the beginning he was not in sympathy with the aims of imperialist Britain and France. At most, he could sympathize with their desire for some reparations and France's overriding desire to keep Germany down, to guarantee that no power would invade her from across the Rhine as Germany had done in 1870 and 1914. However, the Versailles Conference would end in a compromise between America's internationalist and anti-imperialist vision and the demands of France's nationalist, imperialist and balance-of-power politics...

Although he often clashed with the British, Wilson was an Anglophile, very English in his basic political views, and a determined opponent of the French, Rousseauist view of democracy and revolution. "As a conservative Southern liberal," writes Adam Tooze, "Wilson's view of history was shaped by two great events: the disaster of the Civil War, and the drama of the eighteenth-century revolutions as interpreted by the writings of the Anglo-Irish conservative, Edmund Burke. In 1896 Wilson contributed a glowing preface to one of Burke's most famous speeches on 'Conciliation with the Colonies'. Originally delivered in 1775, Burke's oration became for Wilson a statement of a fundamental distinction. Whereas Burke showered praise on the freedom-loving American colonist, he 'hated the French revolutionary philosophy and deemed it unfit for free men.' Wilson heartily agreed. Looking back over a century of revolution, he denounced the legacy of that philosophy as 'radically evil and corrupting'. No state can ever be conducted on its principles. For it holds that government is a matter of contract and deliberate arrangement, whereas in fact it is an institute of habit, bound together by innumerable threads of association, scarcely one of which has been deliberately placed...' Contrary to the delusional idea that self-determination could be realized in a single revolutionary spasm, Wilson insisted that 'governments have never been successfully and permanently changed, except by slow modification operating from generation to generation.' With the French experiences of 1789, 1830, 1848 and 1870 in mind, Wilson in an earlier essay had opined that 'democracy in Europe had acted always in rebellion, as a destructive force... It has built such temporary governments as it has had opportunity to erect... out of the discredited materials of centralized rule, elevating the people's representatives for a seasons... but securing almost as little as ever of the everyday local self-government which lies so near to the heart of liberty.' Even in 1900 he saw in the French Third Republic a dangerously unsteady descendant of absolute monarchy, the 'eccentric influence' of which had brought the entire project of democracy in the modern world into disrepute.'

"True freedom was for Wilson indelibly rooted in the deep-seated qualities of a particular national and racial way of life. Failure to recognize this was the source of profound confusion about American identity itself. Americans of the gilded age, Wilson remarked, were apt to think of themselves as having lost the revolutionary ardour which they imagined to have propelled the founding

fathers. They thought of themselves as inoculated by 'experience... against the infections of hopeful revolution'. But this sense was based on an 'old self-deception'. 'If we are suffering disappointment, it is the disappointment of an awakening.' Those who romanticized America's eighteenth-century revolution 'were dreaming'. In truth, 'The government which we founded one hundred years ago was no type of an experiment in advanced democracy...' Americans 'never had any business hearkening to Rousseau or consorting with Europe in revolutionary sentiment'. The strength of democratic self-determination, American-style, was precisely that it was not revolutionary. It had inherited all its strength from its forebears. 'It had not to overthrow other polities; it had only to organize itself. It had not to create, but only to expand self-government... It needed nothing but to methodize its way of living.' In words that were to echo through his views about World War I, Wilson insisted: 'there is almost nothing in common between popular outbreaks such as took place in France at her great Revolution and the establishment of a government like our own... We manifested over one hundred years ago what Europe lost... self-command, self-possession.' He thus gave his peculiar personal inflection to the general sense of alienation with which many Americans regarded the 'old world'. What Wilson was determined to demonstrate amidst the crisis of the world war was that America had not lost the 'self-possession' he prized above all else."⁵⁰³

Much of this was admirable and true. But why, then, did he not recognize as the first of the new Europe's tasks – the urgent necessity of defending her and her peoples against Lenin, who modelled his regime directly on that of the Jacobins? Again, why, if he considered French revolutionism to be delusional, did he lose all "self-possession" and make the French revolution's nation-worship the chief guiding principle of the conference's re-writing of the map of Europe? To a large extent, of course, he had no choice: many of the smaller nations determined themselves without asking the permission of the Great Powers; and in 1918, unlike 1945, America did not have the will to interfere militarily on the continent. But like his successor Franklin Roosevelt, Wilson was "soft" on communism, and did not understand how the communists, from the very beginning of the October revolution, had been exploiting the principle of self-determination in order to divide their opponents and annex them one by one... For self-determination may help to create empires as well as destroy them. Wilson failed to see that the creation of a whole series of small but weak nations in central and eastern Europe on the principle of self-determination made it easier not only for Lenin, but also, later, for Hitler to expand the boundaries of their own totalitarian empires...

The fact is: Wilson's democratic ideology was becoming more radical, messianic and Rousseauist over time. "In taking America into the war," writes Johnson, "he had said in his address to Congress of 2 April 1917: 'The world must be made safe for democracy.' His popular *History of the American People* presented democracy as a quasi-religious force, *vox populi vox dei*. The old

⁵⁰³ Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

world, he now told Congress, was suffering from a 'wanton rejection' of democracy, of its 'purity and spiritual power'. That was where America came in. 'It is surely the manifest destiny of the United States to lead in the attempt to make this spirit prevail.' In that work, the League was the instrument, and he himself the agent, an embodiment of the General Will.

"It is not clear how Wilson, the ultra-democrat [and, previously, anti-Rousseauist], came to consider himself the beneficiary of Rousseau's *volonte generale*, a concept soon to be voraciously exploited by a new generation of dictators. Perhaps it was his physical condition. In April 1919 he suffered his first stroke in Paris. The fact was concealed. Indeed, failing health seems to have strengthened Wilson's belief in the righteousness of his course and his determination not to compromise with his Republican critics..."⁵⁰⁴

The course he now espoused especially – and which his Republican critics were most critical of – was the launching of the League of Nations, which he saw as the last and best hope that mankind had to resolve its disputes in the spirit of Holy Democracy...

⁵⁰⁴ Johnson, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

30. THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES: (2) SELF-DETERMINATION

Let us now look more closely at Wilson's 14 Points, which constituted the framework of the negotiations. Five of them, writes Alan Tooze, "restated the liberal vision of a new system of international politics to which Wilson had been committed since May 1916. There must be an end to secret diplomacy.⁵⁰⁵ Instead, there must be 'open covenants of peace openly arrived at' (Point 1), freedom of the seas (Point 2)⁵⁰⁶, the removal of barriers to the free and equal movement of trade (Point 3), disarmament (Point 4). The fourteenth point called for what would soon be known as the League of Nations, 'a general association of nations... under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike' (Point 14). But this international framework did not promise or require from its members any particular type of domestic constitution. Nowhere in the 14 Points does Wilson mention democracy as a norm. Rather he stressed the freedom of nations to choose their own form of government. This, however, was not stated in terms of an emphatic act of self-determination. The phrase 'self-determination' appears nowhere either in the 14 Points or in the speech with which Wilson delivered them to Congress on 8 January 1918. In January of that year it was the Bolsheviks and Lloyd George who tossed this explosive concept into the international arena. Wilson would not adopt it until later in the spring.

"With regard to the colonial question, what concerned Wilson were not the rights of the oppressed people so much as the violence of inter-imperialist competition. Point 5 called for the claims of the rival powers to be settled not by war, but by 'a free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment'. As far as the subordinate populations themselves were concerned, Wilson called simply for the 'observance of the principle that in determining all questions of sovereignty... the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined'. Quite apart from the fact that the claims of the colonial powers were thereby given no less weight than those of the subordinate populations, it was significant that Wilson spoke here of the interests, not the voice, of those populations. This was entirely compatible with a deeply paternalistic view of colonial government.

"The significance of this choice of words becomes clear when it is contrasted with what Wilson had to say about the territorial question at issue in the European war. Here too he invoked not an absolute right to self-determination but the gradated view of the capacity for self-government that was typical of conservative nineteenth-century liberalism. At one end of the scale he called

⁵⁰⁵ Early in 1918 the Bolsheviks had published the secret treaty signed by Britain and France with Italy in order to tempt the Italians to join the Entente. (V.M.)

⁵⁰⁶ The aim of this was to allow neutral shipping to cross the British blockade of Germany. The British therefore opposed it. (V.M.)

for Belgium to be evacuated and restored (Point 7), 'without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations'. Alsace-Lorraine was to be returned and any occupied French territory to be 'freed' from German domination (Point 8). Italy's boundaries were to be adjusted 'along clearly recognizable lines of nationality' (Point 9). But with regard to the peoples of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires (Point 2), the Balkans (Point 11) and Poland (Point 13), the tone was more paternalistic. They would need 'friendly counsel' and 'international guarantees'. What this foreign oversight would guarantee was not 'self-determination' but 'security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development'. This is the muted socio-biological vocabulary typical of Wilson's world view. There was no 'French' radicalism in the 14 Points.

"It was near the halfway stage of this manifesto (Point 6) that Wilson addressed the situation in Russia. Given the events since November 1917 [and his championship of democracy], one might have expected him to be at pains to draw a sharp distinction between the Russian people and the Bolshevik regime that had violently usurped the right to represent them. Secretary of State Lansing in private memoranda to Wilson was demanding that America should denounce Lenin's regime 'as a despotic oligarchy as menacing to liberty as any absolute monarchy on earth'. But no such distinction was made in the 14 Points. On the contrary, Wilson extended to the Bolsheviks praise of a kind he had never offered to the Provisional Government. Whereas in May 1917 Wilson had lined up with the Entente in lecturing Alexander Kerensky and Irakli Tsereteli on the need to continue the war, he now characterized the Bolshevik delegation, who were about to agree a separate peace, as 'sincere and in earnest'. The spokesmen of the Russian people, the Bolsheviks, were speaking, Wilson opined, in the 'true spirit of modern democracy', stating Russia's 'conception of what is right, of what is humane and honourable for them to accept... with frankness, a largeness of view, a generosity of spirit, and a universal human sympathy, which must challenge the admiration of every friend of mankind... whether their present leaders believe it or not, it is our heartfelt desire and hope that some way may be opened whereby we may be privileged to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace. Echoing the Bolshevik negotiating position at Brest, Wilson called for the peace to begin with the withdrawal of all foreign forces, so as to allow Russia the 'unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy'. What is striking about this formulation was precisely Wilson's unproblematic use of the term 'Russia' and 'national policy' with regard to an empire that was in the process of violent decomposition. At the moment when the 14 Points began to circulate around the world, nationalist movements in Ukraine, the Baltic and Finland were dissociating themselves from the Soviet regime to which Wilson was giving such fulsome praise..."⁵⁰⁷

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507 Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 120-122.

Breaking up the old continental empire into smaller self-determined states was only the first aim of the American president. The second was to make sure that these new states were democratic and did not repress their own minorities... The Vienna Congress of 1815 had imposed monarchism as the one "respectable" form of government, albeit with some concessions to democratism. The Versailles Conference of 1919 imposed, or tried to impose, democracy, albeit with some monarchical relics. But this might necessitate regime change...

"Regime change," writes Tooze, "had become a precondition for armistice negotiations. Versailles assigned war guilt and criminalized the Kaiser. Woodrow Wilson and the Entente had pronounced a death sentence on the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. By the end of the 1920s,... 'aggressive' war had been outlawed. But, appealing as these liberal precepts might have been, they begged fundamental questions. What gave the victorious powers the right to lay down the law in this way? Did might make right? What wager were they placing on history to bear them out? Could such claims form a durable foundation of an international order?..."⁵⁰⁸

The main problem with regime change then, as now, is that those who change the regime must replace it with another, but insofar as the new regime must be imposed by the regime-changers, the process will look like the replacement of one despotism or imperialism by another. The Versailles regime-changers were spared this embarrassment by the fact that the constituent peoples of the Romanov, Habsburg, Hohenzollern and Ottoman empires in many, if not all cases, did the regime-changing themselves. This process was then modified by the Great Powers without being rejected, and was then dignified and justified by the term *self-determination*.

Self-determination is to nations what democracy is to the individual state: the recognition that the individual nation, like the individual voter, has the right to a certain autonomous freedom in the choice of his national government (in the case of the individual voter) or in his membership of "the international community" (in the case of the individual nation). The idea of self-determination had grown up symbiotically with the idea of democracy, the two being the slogans of the liberal and nationalist revolutions of the nineteenth century. The Versailles Conference marked the peak of these ideas' popularity as the last of the continental multi-national empires came to an end.

Sensing which way the wind was blowing, the new regimes that determined themselves after the Great War were quick to assert their democratic credentials. Thus, writes Mark Mazower, "article 1 of the 1920 Austrian constitution asserted that 'Austria is a democratic republic: Sovereignty is vested in the people.' The Lithuanian constitution opened: 'The state of Lithuania is an independent democratic republic.' Sovereignty was usually

508 Tooze, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

stated to reside in 'the people': in some, however, such as Poland, the Irish Free State (in the 1922 constitution) and Greece, it emanated from 'the nation'. The 1921 constitution of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes insisted hopefully that 'there is only one nationality for all the subjects of the Kingdom'; the Czechoslovak wording was almost identical. The Weimar constitution declared similarly its belief in 'the national self-consciousness of a self-organizing people'..."⁵⁰⁹

So far so nineteenth-century. But under the influence especially of the Russian revolution there was a new, social element. "Where the new constitutions departed sharply and most controversially from nineteenth-century liberal values was in their extension of rights from political and civil liberties to areas of health, welfare, the family and social security. The goals of social policy – new in their ambition and promise – were set out in constitutional provisions, not only in countries like Germany and Austria where the Social Democrats held power at the end of the war, but even in Romania, which talked about 'the social rights of man' and in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which mentioned land reform and the need for social and economic legislation. The Spanish constitution declared the country 'a democratic republic of workers of all classes' and laid down that property might be expropriated 'for social uses'.

"In these as in other respects, the new constitutions reflected the very diverse political preoccupations of their makers. On the one hand, they were expressions of classic nineteenth-century liberalism; on the other, they attempted to meet popular demands reinforced by the impact of the First World War for a 'genuine social democracy'. This social democratic agenda was clearly a response to events in Russia, and reflected a desire to win the masses away from Bolshevism and over to parliamentarism. 'Either Wilson or Lenin', wrote Hugo Preuss, who drafted the Weimar constitution and saw it as a bulwark against the Bolshevization of Germany. Thus the new constitutions tried to reconcile old-fashioned parliamentarism with the contemporary pressures of modern mass society emerging from the devastation of war. A mixture of forward-looking optimism and a new anxiety, they mirrored the ambiguous post-war situation of democracy's defenders – the European bourgeoisie."⁵¹⁰

The implementation of the revolutionary programme of self-determination faced huge problems. Ferguson writes: "All over Europe, there were... collisions between the ideal of the nation state and the reality of multi-ethnic societies. Previously diversity had been accommodated by the loose structures of the old dynastic empires. Those days were now gone. The only way to proceed, if the peace was to produce visible political units, was to accept that most of the new nation states would have sizeable ethnic minorities...

509 Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 6.

510 Mazower, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

“... The single most important reason for the fragility of peace in Europe was the fundamental contradiction between self-determination and the existence of these minorities. It was, of course, theoretically possible that all the different ethnic groups in a new state would agree to sublimate their differences in a new collective identity. But more often than not what happened was that a majority group claimed to be the sole proprietor of the nation state and its assets. In theory, there was supposed to be protection of the rights of minorities. But in practice the new governments could not resist discrimination against them...”⁵¹¹

During the nineteenth century the principle had been applied only in the direction of the *synthesis* of nations, that is, the reunification of large nations such as Germany and Italy out of the many small principalities into which they had been divided since the Middle Ages. National self-determination through *analysis*, or break-up, had not been practised; and the continued existence of the great multi-ethnic empires of the Romanovs and the Habsburgs had prevented people from understanding what self-determination practised thoroughly and on a large scale really meant. Indeed, before 1914 “none of the European states conceived the goal of the war as achieving statehood for all national peoples, and some, like Russia and Austria, may have greatly feared this.”⁵¹² But now, after the Great War, there was a largely American-induced craze for breaking down even relatively small nation-states and giving independence to their constituent sub-nations.

The big problem here was that the new nation-states, while happy to break free from the multi-national empires of the Romanovs and Habsburgs, refused to admit that any of *their* national minorities had the right to self-determination. This applied especially to the Jews, who had no homeland in Europe anyway, and to the Germans, who did. The new states then tended to repress their potential rebel nationalities more fiercely than their former Romanov and Habsburg suzerains had oppressed them...

Thus throughout Central and Eastern Europe, from Poland to Romania, and from the Baltic States to Yugoslavia, powerful passions surged as the newly liberated nations fought for *Lebensraum*, not so much with their former imperial rulers, who had disappeared, as with their former fellows in captivity. The Great Powers cannot be blamed unequivocally for this chaos; for the task they were presented with, of combining historical justice and self-determination with international peace and toleration for minorities, was almost insoluble. Nor, with the best will in the world, could the League of Nations solve the problem, especially since the Americans did not join, the Soviets were not allowed to join, and the Germans, after being first excluded and then admitted, later withdrew under Hitler...

⁵¹¹ Ferguson, *War of the World*, pp. 159-163, 164, 166.

⁵¹² Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 391.

The fact is: it was impossible for the delegations assembled at Versailles, on the one hand to restore historical nations such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, and on the other hand not to violate the principle of self-determination for the Germans, who had large minorities in both nations. And how were the Jews to achieve self-determination?...

Let us take the example of *Poland*, whose two leading politicians were Roman Dmowski and Josef Pilsudski, both ardent Polish nationalists who had fought the Russians both before and during the First World War, but who had differing ideas on what kind of state the newly independent Poland should be. Pilsudski wanted something like the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of earlier centuries, which involved taking large territories out of the contemporary states of Russia, Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine. But Dmowski wanted a much more homogeneous nation-state. Thus in Dmowski's view, as Mazower describes it, "there was 'no place for a small and weak state' if Poland was to serve as a bulwark against Germany. Other ethnic groups would have to be assimilated in a tightly centralized nation-state; federation was a recipe for disintegration. 'I have never been a herald of liberal humanitarian ideas, and did not belong to any international organization [like the League of Nations] founded to bring happiness to humanity,' he wrote later, writing off the whole idea of minority protection.

"Opposing him, however, was Josef Pilsudski, as well as Ukrainian and Jewish lobby groups in London and Washington. Jewish groups, in particular, played an important role in these early signs of the development of a doctrine of minority rights by alerting British and American policy-makers to the scheme of 'half-crazed nationalities'. The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 – when Ottoman Europe was carved up between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria – had already revealed to them the dangers nation-states posed to minority groups. Now they pressed for some form of immunity to be granted minorities in any eventual Polish state. The pogroms carried out by Polish troops in the winter of 1918 only helped their case.

"At the Paris Peace Conference, the struggle between these different conceptions of an independent Polish state was eventually to coalesce into a new international policy towards minority rights. The French – pro-Polish, fervently anti-German *and* anti-Bolshevik – were the minorities' stiffest opponents. Their view was that 'the business of the Conference is to create a sovereign state for Poland, not for the Jews.' But the British were less dismissive. Balfour worried that the existence of an independent Poland, 'so far from promoting the cause of European peace, would be a perpetual occasion of European strife'. Lloyd George feared an 'imperialist Poland'. Poland's land-grab in Eastern Galicia and Western Ukraine increased these concerns. By mid-1919, Poland was only two thirds Polish from the ethnic point of view – its population now included four million Ukrainians, three million Jews and one million Germans – and looked very much like the 'reactionary Imperialist military state', the 'ramshackle Empire', foreseen by the British journalist H.N. Brailsford.

"It was already clear to the peacemakers in Paris that the minorities question would not be solved by maps alone: the ethnographic distribution of the population in eastern Europe was so complex that it defied the most expertly drawn of borders. In the British Foreign Office, E.H. Carr suggested offering minorities inducements to migrate to their own nation-state. But what of those who preferred to remain? And what of those, like the Jews, or gypsies, who lacked a national homeland? This was precisely the difficulty raised by the minorities problem in Poland..."⁵¹³

Poland did a great service to the whole of Europe when Pilsudski's army defeated the Soviets on the Vistula in 1920, which put an end to Soviet expansion – for the time being. However, their opportunistic grab of territories in the East, and their terrible treatment of Jews and Orthodox Christians, was storing up for them retribution. That came, from both east and west, in 1939...

Fatefully, the largest unliberated minority in Europe was the Germans... German self-determination would have led to a significantly enlarged German Reich, "an outcome," as Ferguson says, "unlikely to be congenial to those powers that had fought Germany for three years."⁵¹⁴ Instead, large German minorities were placed beyond the borders of the Reich in Poland (Silesia) and Czechoslovakia (the Sudetenland), and anomalies were created such as the Danzig corridor and the separation of East Prussia from the rest of Germany.

"The Weimar Republic," writes Tooze, "was never reconciled to the new boundaries with Poland. But the resentment of the defeated Germans is by itself no proof of injustice. If the Poles and the Czechs were to have effective self-determination, what was the alternative? As Lord Balfour put it, the extinction of Poland had been 'the great crime' of *ancient regime* politics. When he heard the Germans complaining of the abuse of their rights in the East, Clemenceau recalled the Polish exiles he had known and the stories they told of Prussian schoolmasters beating Polish children for reciting the Lord's Prayer in their Slav tongue. There was a clear and justified sense that Versailles was not merely creating a strategic *cordon sanitaire* in the East, but righting historic wrongs. When the Germans claimed that the Entente was bent on the destruction of their nation, Balfour rejected the accusation. What the Entente was challenging was the 'rather artificial creation of the modern Prussia, which includes many Slav elements which never belonged to Germany until about 140 years ago, and ought, really, not to belong to Germany at this moment.' It was regrettable, but 'inevitable', Wilson acknowledged, that as tens of millions of Poles, Czechs and Slovaks asserted independence, those Germans who chose to remain in areas of historic colonization would find themselves in the unenviable position of being ruled by Slavs..."⁵¹⁵

513 Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, pp. 32-33.

514 Ferguson, *Colossus*, p. 64.

515 Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

The principle of national self-determination was perhaps most blatantly violated with regard to the nations that had been under Ottoman rule, especially the Egyptians and the Arabs. Instead of being given self-rule, they were transferred to the control of victor nations – France and Britain – under so-called “Mandates”.

Although Versailles decided to ignore Russia, its pursuit of the principle of self-determination was very relevant to the former Russian Empire. For on November 2, 1917, as if echoing Wilson, Lenin and Stalin proclaimed their Declaration of the Rights of the People of Russia, which granted the right to self-determination to the peoples of the former Russian empire. The same principle was proclaimed both at the first session of the talks leading to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March, 1918 and at the Versailles Conference in 1919. Of course, the Bolsheviks’ use of the principle was entirely opportunistic, and was subordinate to the higher ideal of the revolution. As Stalin put it: “When the right of self-determination conflicts with another, a higher right – the right of the working class that has come to power to consolidate that power, – then ‘the right of self-determination cannot and must not serve as an obstacle to the working class in exercising its right to dictatorship.’”⁵¹⁶ The Bolsheviks appealed to self-determination when they wanted to place obstacles in the path of the invading German armies, or stir up rebellion in the rear of the White armies, but renounced it when they returned to take the place of the Germans or Whites as despotic conquerors and occupiers...

There was a lot of creative manipulation of words in this process. Thus “just as, to Lenin, a parliament, which he could not control, was ‘bourgeois democracy’, whereas a Soviet, which he could, was ‘proletarian democracy’, so self-determination took on class distinctions. Finland, the Baltic states, Poland, were lost to Russia. These countries were, accordingly, termed ‘bourgeois republics’, the reservation being that, at some convenient future time, when Soviet power was greater, they could be transformed into ‘proletarian republics’ and brought into a closer relationship with the Soviet Union. The Ukraine, whose grain supplies were essential to the regime’s survival, were not permitted to opt for ‘bourgeois self-determination’ and in 1921-2, after fearful struggles, was obliged to accept ‘proletarian self-determination’, that is, membership of the Soviet Union...”⁵¹⁷

There was a tragic and ineluctable paradox in the Americans’ pursuit of their “twin-track” strategy of anti-imperialism and national self-determination as the basis of a new international political system that avoided the errors of the nineteenth-century system. For had not the spark that ignited the Great War in 1914 been precisely the irredentism and fanatical desire for self-determination of the Serbs? And while the old empires of the Habsburgs, Hohenzollerns, Romanovs and Ottomans had all sinned, to a greater or lesser degree, in relation to their subject peoples, did not all those formerly subject peoples

⁵¹⁶ Stalin, in Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 116.

⁵¹⁷ Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, pp. 76-77.

suffer much more once the old empires had been destroyed? Even those, like the Serbs, the Poles and the Czechs, who prospered most in the inter-war period, did not escape retribution in the Second World War...

One of the main lessons to be learned from the Great War and its aftermath was surely that large, multi-national empires have their good purpose in God's Providence, and that the apostolic maxim: "There is no authority that is not of God" (Romans 13.1) was not to be ignored without great cost. President Wilson, as a preacher of the Gospel, should have known that. He should also have known that when all lawful authority is removed, the result will not be an Arcadian idyll of free, happy peoples, but the abomination of desolation...

31. THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES: (3) THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The two principles that constituted the core of President Wilson's vision of a reformed system of international relations were the centrifugal idea of national self-determination and – his pet idea – the centripetal idea of the League of Nations. The other Great Powers could hardly refuse to discuss self-determination insofar as it was the violation of the rights of small nations such as Serbia and Belgium that had sparked off the Great War. However, as Wilson became more aware of the problems linked with self-determination, and the resolve of the other Great Powers (especially Italy) not to implement it, he put all his hope and enthusiasm into the League of Nations project.

The other Great Powers could also not reject this project out of hand insofar as a peace-making mechanism to end this, supposedly the last of all wars, was manifestly in the best interests of everyone. Indeed, they could not afford to demur, for they were in debt to the Americans financially and hoped (vainly before 1941) that American soldiers would continue to bolster their own security. But they did not agree with them on the nature of the League, on its membership criteria, and in particular on how it was to enforce security.

The most intractable problem in this respect faced by the Conference, as Robert Tombs writes, “was that Germany remained potentially the strongest state on the Continent and, with Russia gripped by revolution, relatively more powerful than before the war. When the armistice came, it was not clear – certainly not to the Germans – that they had really been defeated, rather than tricked into surrender and ‘stabbed in the back’ by revolutionaries. German troops were still on foreign soil. Only small border areas were occupied. The Allies’ strength was melting away – Britain’s citizen-soldiers, convinced the job was finished, were clamouring to go home. With the eclipse of Russia and Austria, Germany towered over central and eastern Europe. Britain’s particular fears had been removed, however. The German navy had sailed to Scapa Flow to surrender and had scuttled itself. Its colonies had been seized. Belgium was liberated. So early on differences emerged between British (and similar Dominion and American) views and those of France and other Continental states, who remained worried about a resurgence of Germany. The British Cabinet decided that it should throw in its lot with the Americans, and Woodrow Wilson’s new world order, rather than relying on a close alliance with France to maintain European security. Lord Robert Cecil, the former Minister of Blockade, drew up plans for a League of Nations, for the time being excluding Germany.

“The French wanted more concrete guarantees of security, focusing on the Rhine barrier. They wanted the west bank turned into an independent buffer state to block further aggression and, by making Germany vulnerable to invasion, to act as a ring through its nose. Wilson and Lloyd George, hopeful of reconciliation with Germany, refused. Deadlock was broken when Britain

and America offered France an indefinite security guarantee. Lloyd George even suggested a Channel tunnel to facilitate military aid. Clemenceau gave in and settled for permanent demilitarization of the Rhineland frontier zone by Germany and a fifteen-year Allied occupation. Germany was to be allowed an army of only 100,000 men, with no tanks and no air force, and a small navy with no submarines, monitored by an Allied control commission. A hostage to fortune was given by a declaration that this was a step towards 'a general limitation of the armaments of all countries.' ..."⁵¹⁸

With regard to the question of criteria of membership of the League, the French were again at odds with the Americans. "When the French," writes Tooze, "proposed taking up Cecil's idea of tailoring the [membership] requirements to specific applicants, Wilson responded with an even more disconcerting admission. It would be unwise, he interjected, to insist too firmly on very exclusive membership criteria, because that might involve setting up 'standards that we have not always lived up to ourselves.' 'Even all the states now here associated were once not regarded by all other states as having good characters.' This only served to heighten French alarm. For a republican of Clemenceau's stripe, it was perverse to turn the impossibility of achieving international consensus into a reason for retreating into minimalist relativism. Precisely because the world was likely to be riven with conflict, democrats must distinguish their friends from their enemies and learn to stand together. This was why the League should be equipped with clear membership criteria and effective enforcement mechanisms. But the British and Americans resisted any move in the French direction. In the end the Commission settled for a compromise that satisfied no one. Any talk of democracy or constitutionalism or responsible government was abandoned in favour of an amendment that simply required candidates for admission to be 'fully self-governing'. This clearly ruled out colonies but left open the question of members' internal constitutions."⁵¹⁹

It was fitting that it was the French, the creators of history's first successful democratic revolution in 1789, who should have called for a shared democratic ideology among member-states as a condition of membership. That alone, they argued, could be effective in suppressing despotism and averting war. But they failed to convince the others. What they did agree about was that Germany (by now a fully democratic nation) should be excluded from the League of Nations until 1926, and should pay full reparations. Unfortunately, the outcome they feared above all – the resurgence of an aggressive Germany under Hitler – was precisely what happened.

The French also insisted on the League having an international army and a tough regime of enforcement. However, the Anglo-Saxons rejected this; Cecil pointed out that the Americans had nothing to gain from it and threatened that if negotiations failed the British and Americans would form a separate alliance.

⁵¹⁸ Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, pp. 653-654.

⁵¹⁹ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

This threat terrified the French, who were obsessed with the thought that the Germans would invade across the Rhine again, as they had in 1870 and 1914, and knew that if the Anglo-Saxons did not support them, they (the French) would be overwhelmed.

In the end, "The security regime provided by the Covenant centred on Article 10, which required the High Contracting Parties to 'respect and preserve as against aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all states'. But contrary to the claims later made by Wilson's Republican opponents, the Covenant provided no automatic enforcement mechanism. It was up to the discretion of the Council to 'advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled'. The true substance of the Covenant lay in the procedural mechanism it specified for delaying and mediating conflict. No party was to go to war before submitting the case to arbitration (Article 12). A ruling was to be delivered within six months. The warring parties were to respect a further three months' waiting period before engaging in conflict. If a ruling the terms to be published, providing for a basis for an emerging body of international law (Article 15). Only a unanimous report by the members of the Council other than the parties to the conflict would have binding force. No member of the League was permitted to declare war on a party to a conflict that was complying with a unanimous Council recommendation. A failure to comply with this arbitration procedure should be considered an act of aggression against all other members of the League and would license sanctions under Article 16. These included a complete and immediate economic blockade and the interdiction of all communications between citizens of the Covenant-breaking state and the rest of the world. The Executive Council was placed under a duty to consider joint military and naval action, but it was not required to take action. In the event that the Council was not unanimous, it was required merely to publish the opinions of both the majority and the minority. The attempt by the Belgians to give binding force to a mere majority vote of the Council was warded off by the British with Wilson's backing. A no-vote in the Council could not be overridden. No great power could be forced to take action by the League."⁵²⁰

The first draft of the League's Covenant, writes Andrew Roberts, "sparked intense debate across the world but especially in the United States where opinion was deeply divided about the extent to which a burgeoning world power like theirs should have its hands tied by a powerful supranational body. One of the most considered responses came from Elihu Root, a man of tremendous distinction whose voice carried enormous weight...

"On 29 March 1919 Root published his comments on the League's proposed Covenant in an open letter to the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, saying that the scheme had great value but correspondingly 'very serious faults', which needed to be addressed. These were that arbitration before conflict was not made obligatory on all signatories; although an

⁵²⁰ Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-266.

international court was mentioned, no details were given about how it would operate; the United States must preserve the Monroe Doctrine separately from the League, and in undertaking to preserve the territorial integrity of all League members everywhere, the world's borders would be effectively set in aspic for evermore. To Root, 'it would not only be futile, it would be mischievous. Change and growth are the law of life, and no generation can impose its will in regard to the growth of nations and the distribution of power upon succeeding generations. Root had led a thirty-three-man diplomatic mission to Russia after the March 1917 revolution and was well aware of the danger of anarchy sweeping through Russia, Germany and Eastern Europe. He wanted a League of Nations, but not one that proved counter-productive to peace in the long run. There were other issues concerning arms limitation and immigration that he considered also needed amendment, even so he concluded, 'I think it will be the clear duty of the United States to enter into the agreement.' Yet it was not to be.

"In an article published in *Metropolitan* in March 1919, Theodore Roosevelt – whose untimely death at the age of sixty-one had taken place on 6 January – seemed to strike an ultra-isolationist note, one that was certainly made great use of by organizations that were sprouting up around this time, such as the League for the Preservation of American Independence. 'We have finished the great war with Germany,' Roosevelt wrote. 'I do not believe in keeping our men on the other side to patrol the Rhine, or police Russia, or interfere in Central Europe or the Balkan peninsula... Mexico is our Balkan peninsula.' Sadly, America listened to Roosevelt's posthumous advice and turned in upon herself in 1919, but it is worth considering a world in which for the next two decades after March 1919 the United States had indeed kept her men 'on the other side' of the Atlantic, as she had to do for the half-century after 1945.

"Those troops could have 'patrolled the Rhine' and thereby prevented Adolf Hitler from remilitarizing the land adjacent to it in 1936, and they could have 'interfered in Central Europe' to stop the Nazis marching into Prague, which happened twenty years to the week after Roosevelt's article. They did both after 1945, for considerably longer than twenty years. In short they could have saved the world – and themselves – untold misery and bloodshed..."⁵²¹

But Divine Providence willed otherwise...The League came into existence in January, 1920 and at its peak had 58 members. However, the United States never joined because the American Congress rejected it, to the intense frustration of Wilson, who destroyed his health in lobbying for it in vain across the States. Germany was not allowed to join until 1926, before Hitler took her out again; while Italy, Spain, Japan and other countries withdrew from it at different times. This paralyzed the League's ability to enforce its decisions in the face of Italian or German or Japanese aggression.

⁵²¹ Roberts, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples since 1900*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 146-147.

The League presupposed the idea that conventional balance of power politics was outdated in the modern world, and had to be replaced by some supra-national authority that would avert the unprecedented horrors of contemporary warfare. It failed; World War Two ensued in spite of the League of Nations. Indeed, insofar as the “security” provided by the League of Nations encouraged France and Britain not to defend themselves adequately against Germany’s obviously hostile intentions, the League can be said to have been a cause of the war... But since the horrors of contemporary warfare were shown to be even more horrific in that war, the need for some kind of League continued to be felt; and in 1945 the United Nations was formed in its stead.

From an Orthodox Christian perspective, the idea of any kind of supranational authority that would have the power to impose its will on member states, including Orthodox states, sounds extremely ominous as prefiguring the coming of a collective world government ruled by the Antichrist. That spectre has not gone away in the century since the founding of the League of Nations, but rather has increased in vividness. The central problem remains the fact that any League or Union of Nations has to come to its decisions on the basis of some shared ideology that cannot be Orthodox Christianity after the fall of Orthodox Russia. But no Orthodox state that cherishes its own faith and values can accept to have decisions imposed on it that do not accord with that faith.

32. THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES: (4) WAR-GUILT AND REPARATIONS

Wilson, for all his misguided idealism, was right about one thing: only American leadership could hope to create order out of the chaos created by years of war and revolution; only America could to some degree take the place of Tsarist Russia as the gendarme of Europe. For none of the other powers was in a position to lead (while plenty were in a position to obstruct). The victory of the Allies in the First World War was a pyrrhic one. France, Britain and Italy increased their territories at the expense of their defeated enemies, and Britain and France were given mandates in the Middle East. But none had the power, economic, financial or psychological, to really absorb or profit from them. One fact tells it all: "Before 1914 the British Empire, with its investments all over the world, had been the biggest creditor nation and the United States the biggest debtor nation. Now, it would emerge after the war, the positions had been reversed."⁵²² The world order now was truly new: old-style imperialism was on its last legs, and would disappear completely by the 1960s. Serbia and Romania, while massively increasing their territories and population, thereby also increased their problems in the shape of large ethnic minorities, and found that they had bitten off more than they could chew. The Greeks would bitterly regret their attempt to take advantage of the defeated Ottomans. The only real beneficiary from the war was a latecomer, America; her president, the one explicit anti-imperialist among the world leaders, would now attempt to dictate the peace at the Peace Conference in Versailles...

"Dictate" was the word, because while Wilson had to negotiate with the other victorious nation states, France, Britain and Italy, neither he nor any of the other western leaders had any intention of negotiating with Germany. The Germans were asked to sign the Versailles treaty – on June 28, 1918, the fourth anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination – only after all the negotiations had been conducted without them. The resulting peace was therefore not so much a treaty *with* Germany as a *diktat* to her. For Wilson's Fourteen Points, which the Germans chose to interpret as something already agreed by all parties, was in fact no more than a *framework for discussion* at Versailles. So Versailles in 1919 was a very different animal from Vienna in 1815, which did not exclude defeated France, but strove to re-include her into the international system as soon as possible...

As we have seen, the Germans deceived themselves into believing that the armistice had been signed on the basis of Wilson's famous "14 Points", and kept quiet about the "Pre-Armistice Agreement's" demand for compensation and reparation. They conveniently forgot that the 14 Points were only a framework for negotiation between the victor nations, which negotiation did not include the Germans, who had in effect capitulated, surrendering their

⁵²² Rebecca Fraser, *A People's History of Britain*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2003, p. 669.

whole navy and most of their army. They forgot that the vast majority of the troops who defeated them in 1918 were not commanded by the American president but by the British and French leaders, who had said nothing about the 14 points and whose aim was definitive defeat of the enemy.

Although President Wilson had been negotiating unilaterally with the Germans, this did not mean that he was sympathetic to them. In his view, writes Bernard Simms, "Imperial Germany represented a profound ideological challenge to American political values. 'The world must be made safe for democracy,' he told Congress in his speech in support of war with Germany. 'Its peace must be planted on the tested foundation of political liberty.' German aggression, he explained, was the product of Wilhelmine despotism: 'German rulers have been able to upset the peace of the world only because the German people... were allowed to have no opinion of their own.' It was the opinion of the American government that the defence of US democracy at home required its defence abroad. Wilson's aim was not so much to make the 'world safe for democracy', as to make America safer in the world through the promotion of democracy..."⁵²³

In fact, this was not quite fair to the Germans: by the end of the war they had made rapid and large strides on the path to democratization. They had got rid of the Kaiser already on November 9, and installed a parliamentary government dominated by the two socialist parties. Then, on January 19 they had suppressed the Spartacist communist uprising in Berlin with admirable restraint⁵²⁴, and a week later they cast their votes for the Constituent Assembly in "by far the most impressive democratic display anywhere in the Western world in the aftermath of World War I" in which "three million more Germans voted than in the US presidential election of 1920".⁵²⁵ Moreover, German democracy, it could be argued, was less hypocritical than America's in that it had no equivalent to the diminution of free speech inherent in America's Espionage Act of 1917.⁵²⁶

523 Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, pp. 310-311.

524 Although the leaders, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were killed, fifty members of the revolutionary committee were freed from prison in the summer.

525 Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

526 Thus "the Espionage Act of 1917... gave the government far more powers than merely the ability to take foreign agents out of circulation. It gave the government the discretion to determine whether criticism of the war could be treated as high treason. Together with a later amendment, the Espionage Act of 1917 was a comprehensive attack on freedom of speech.

"And Wilson, who had always supported liberal causes in domestic policy, took a ruthless approach to dissidents. Some 1,500 Americans were convicted of holding views that diverged from the government's war policy, including Eugene Debs, the presidential candidate of the Socialist Party. Wilson, the son of a minister, was extremely adept at hating. As David Lloyd George, Britain's wartime prime minister, would later say: 'Wilson loved mankind but didn't like people.'" (Hans Hoyng, "'We Saved the World': WWI and America's Rise as a Superpower", *Spiegel Online International*, January 24, 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/how-world-war-i-helped-america-rise-to-superpower-status-a-944703.html#ref=nl-international>)

"Everyone over twenty, male and female, had the vote. Elections to all public bodies were henceforth equal, secret, direct and according to proportional representation. The censorship was abolished. Rights of assembly were guaranteed. Trade unions were recognized by employers. The eight-hour day was made mandatory. When the first elections were held in January 1919, three quarters of those who took part in the 80 per cent poll favoured a republic.

"The new Weimar constitution was drawn up under the guidance of the great sociologist Max Weber. It gave parliament full financial sovereignty for the first time. It was supposed to embody all the best features of the American constitution."⁵²⁷

Germany's problem was not a lack of democratization, but *the fallen passions of the people*, which, contrary to the claims of apologists for democracy, cannot be controlled in a more than very partial and superficial manner by the mechanisms of parliamentary democracy. This problem was not created by Hitler's assumption of power in 1933, but was already present in 1918. Hitler simply used and exploited it.

Of course, there were passions on the Allied side, too. "The fury of a just war," writes Tooze, "generated punitive impulses that over time were always likely to become distasteful, setting up a no less unstable backlash, this time in the spirit of appeasement..."⁵²⁸ Both the punitive impulses and the spirit of appeasement emerged in the context of the controversy aroused by Articles 231 and 235 of the Treaty...

Clause 231, writes Tombs, the so-called War Guilt Clause or *Kriegschuldfrage*, "in English specified 'responsibility', not guilt, though the German word *Schuld* means both 'debt' and 'guilt'. Allied governments insisted that Germany and Austria-Hungary were indeed mainly responsible for the war – a view broadly endorsed by most modern historians. This was bitterly contested by the new German government in a propaganda campaign (orchestrated by a special section of the Foreign Ministry) which tried to shift the blame onto the Russians and the French. Nearly a century later, the terms of the debate have changed little; and, while infinitely less impassioned, it still has political implications."⁵²⁹

Article 235 concerned *reparations*, which were eventually fixed at 132 billion marks (£6.6 billion), in spite of the fact that Wilson had declared that "there shall be no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages... Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere

⁵²⁷ Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 109-110.

⁵²⁸ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

⁵²⁹ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 655. However, many German historians still reject the idea that the Germans were mainly responsible for the war. See Jurgen Tampke, *A Perfidious Distortion of History*, London: Scribe, 2018, chapter 6.

adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival states.”⁵³⁰ But this begged the question: how could the populations concerned – for example, that of north-eastern France – be benefited if the states they belonged to received no reparations?

Bernard Simms writes; “Defeat, territorial losses and the prospect of a huge reparations bill put unbearable pressure on the Weimar Republic. [The Treaty of Versailles] was henceforth indelibly associated in the public mind with national humiliation comparable to that experienced during the Thirty Years War or at the hands of Napoleon. The Social Democrat president, Friedrich Ebert, lamented that ‘Versailles conditions with their economic and political impossibilities are the greatest enemy of German democracy and the strongest impetus for communism and nationalism.’ Quartermaster-General William Groener warned that the League [of Nations, from which Germany was excluded] was designed for ‘the maintenance of the political encirclement of Germany’. Max Weber counseled repudiation of the treaty, even at the price of an Allied occupation of the whole country, on the grounds that the young republic would be crippled at birth by the stigma of Versailles. The German military leadership, however, ruled out a resumption of the war, which would have risked total defeat, followed by an Allied invasion and possibly partition. Their first priority, and that of the Social Democrat-led government, was to keep the *Reich* intact. This meant dealing with regional movements which threatened its integrity, and revolutionary eruptions which might give the Allies an excuse to intervene. A left-wing Spartacist uprising under Rosa Luxemburg and the younger Karl Liebknecht was put down with severity; the Bavarian [Soviet] Republic of Kurt Eisner met a similar fate. Gritting their teeth, the Germans signed the Treaty of Versailles...”⁵³¹

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Had the Germans been unjustly treated in Article 235?

⁵³⁰ Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

⁵³¹ Simms, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-323. Simms goes on to describe some positive effects of the Treaty from the German point of view: “Yet if defeat and revolution were mortal threats to the Reich, they also represented an opportunity to break with the federal traditions which had prevented Germany from realizing her true fiscal and military potential for so long. At the top of the agenda was the permanent unification of the Prussian, Bavarian, Württembergian and Saxon armies, which had hitherto been under unitary command only in time of war. In October 1919 the new Reichswehrministerium not only amalgamated the war ministries in Stuttgart, Munich and Dresden with that in Berlin, but took on the functions of the Prussian general staff. Likewise, in the debates preceding the Weimar constitution, the constitutional lawyer Hugo Preuss, who drafted most of it, argued that ‘The outward strengthening of the Empire so that the outside world is faced only by a single Empire rather than individual tribes is necessary for the [continued] existence of Germany.’ The resulting constitution created a much more centralized Germany, in which the regions lost many of the federal powers, especially in the fiscal sphere, they had retained in 1871. Taken together with the creation of a single German army, the centralization of fiscal powers would inevitably transform the European balance. The German Republic of 1919 was therefore potentially much more powerful than the Empire of 1871 had ever been...”

An enormously influential point of view on this question was expressed by the Cambridge economist John Maynard Keynes, a member of the British delegation to Versailles. He described the Peace of Versailles as “Carthaginian”, a phrase suggested to him by the South African delegate, General Jan Smut. It referred, writes Antony Lentin, “to the peace concluded in 201 BC after the Second Punic War, when Rome stripped Carthage of its army, navy and overseas possessions and imposed a 50-year indemnity. Otherwise Carthage was left independent and able to recover economically, which eventually it did. Keynes actually seems to have been thinking of the ‘peace’ of 146 BC, when, after the Third Punic War, the Romans slaughtered the inhabitants of Carthage or sold them into slavery, annexing what remained of Carthaginian territory. Keynes quoted and endorsed the German view that the Treaty of Versailles signalled ‘the death sentence of many millions of German men, women and children’.”⁵³²

There *is* a parallel between the Second and Third Punic Wars, on the one hand, and the First and Second World Wars, on the other. As with Carthage, it took two great wars to subdue Germany; and in both cases the reparations were greater after the second war than after the first. *But the Germans suffered significantly less proportionately than the Carthaginians.* After the First War Germany was still allowed an army of 100,000 men and was still an independent state that had lost, apart from Alsace-Lorraine, less than four percent of her territory, and had not been ravaged at all in the way France, Belgium and Russia had been.⁵³³

In fact, according to Stephen Schuker, Germany “emerged from World War I despite military defeat less damaged in terms of human and economic resources than the other European combatants.”⁵³⁴

For, as Tombs points out, during the war “the Germans had proved harsh occupiers, exploiting forced labour, pillaging conquered territories (for example, removing most of the northern French textile industry to Germany lock, stock and barrel), and systematically wrecking everything as they retreated.”⁵³⁵ In the words of the Allies’ blunt official statement: ‘Somebody must suffer the consequences of the war. Is it to be Germany or only the peoples she has wronged?’ They hoped that financial liability might deter future aggressors. They were also determined to recoup some of their own losses, obtain security, and satisfy their electorates... Germany had suffered negligible damage; but in France alone 15,000 square kilometres of territory had been devastated. It seemed just that Germany should help to ‘repair’ the damage, for without reparations the European victors would have been economically weaker than the vanquished.”⁵³⁶

⁵³² Lentin, “Germany: A New Carthage?” *History Today*, January, 2012, p. 20.

⁵³³ Bobbitt, op. cit., p. 409.

⁵³⁴ Schuker, in Tampke, op. cit., p. 181.

⁵³⁵ For example, they flooded the coal mines in the Saar region. (V.M.)

⁵³⁶ Tombs, op. cit., p. 655.

“Keynes’s main thrust was the impossibility as well as the iniquity of the sums imposed through ‘revenge’ and ‘greed’. This was a travesty of the truth. Modern economic historians mostly agree that the reparations were reasonable, and within Germany’s capacities. Keynes made himself the invaluable accomplice of a calculated propaganda effort by the new German republic to undermine the treaty. His personal motives were guilt as a liberal intellectual involved in running a war sharpened by his crush on an ‘exquisitely clean’ Hamburg banker named Karl Melchior...”⁵³⁷

“In reality,” writes Niall Ferguson, “the peace terms were not unprecedented in their harshness and the German hyperinflation was mainly due to the irresponsible fiscal and monetary policies adopted by the Germans themselves. They thought they could win the peace by economic means. In British minds they did. The Germans were also more successful than any other country in defaulting on their debts, including the reparations demanded from them by the Allies... Between 1919 and 1932 Germany paid altogether 19.1 billion goldmarks in reparations; in the same period she received 22 billion goldmarks in net capital inflows, mainly from private investors, which were never repaid as a result of her defaults in 1923 and 1932...”⁵³⁸

The German-Australian historian Jurgen Tempke confirms this judgement: “Article 232 of the treaty assured Germany that, Article 231 notwithstanding, the amount to be paid would be within the limits of the country’s capacity to pay. The amount was to be estimated by an Inter-Allied Reparation Committee (Article 233)”, whose requirements, taken together, “were within Germany’s capacity to pay, and did not effectively cripple the immediate post-war economy”⁵³⁹ “The gross burden on the German economy for [the 13 years of the Weimar Republic] was 2.32 per cent. This was scarcely an insurmountable economic strain on the Weimar economy.”⁵⁴⁰

The French were criticised for insisting on greater reparations than the Anglo-Saxons. But the fact is: no victor nation in history has ever refrained from exacting reparations from a defeated enemy. And the losses incurred by the French (and Belgians) were huge... Moreover, however vengeful the French may or may not have been, they were more far-sighted than their Allies, being more accurate than Keynes in their prediction of the economic consequences.⁵⁴¹ For “the final German payments were never more than five billion pounds,

⁵³⁷ Robert Tombs and Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy*, London: Pimlico, 2007, p. 512. However, as A.N. Wilson points out, Keynes “surprised all his friends by falling in love and making a very happy marriage to Lydia Lopokova, a Russian ballet dancer” (*After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2005, p. 287).

⁵³⁸ Ferguson, *The Pity of War. 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 1999, pp. 397, 417.

⁵³⁹ Tempke, op. cit., pp. 164 165.

⁵⁴⁰ Tempke, op. cit., p. 173.

⁵⁴¹ But, as Lentin writes (op. cit., p. 21), “Neither the acute and prophetic analysis published soon after, Jacques Bainville’s *Les consequences de la paix* (1920), which has never been translated into English, nor the detailed refutation of Keynes by Etienne Mantoux, *The Carthaginian Peace or The Economic Consequences of Mr Keynes* (1944), succeeded in stemming [Keynes’] influence, though while none of Keynes’ predictions were realised almost every one of Bainville’s were.”

largely financed [and in the end written off] by the Allies. The political and human catastrophe that followed Versailles had, in fact, little to do with the actual economic impact of the Treaty.”⁵⁴²

As for political and military consequences, Marshal Foch predicted them with uncanny accuracy: “This is not peace. It is an armistice for twenty years... The next time, remember, the Germans will make no mistake. They will break through into northern France and seize the Channel ports as a base of operations against England...”⁵⁴³

Tony Judt makes the point well: “Germany (contrary to widespread belief at the time) was not crushed in the war or the post-war settlement: in that case its rise to near-total domination of Europe a mere twenty-five years later would be hard to explain. Indeed, because Germany didn’t pay its First World War debts the cost of victory to the Allies exceeded the cost of defeat to Germany, which thus emerged relatively *stronger* than in 1913. The ‘German problem’ that had surfaced in Europe with the rise of Prussia a generation before remained unsolved.”⁵⁴⁴

Paradoxically, it might have been easier if Germany had still been a military dictatorship; for a democracy has great difficulty in enforcing painful decisions on its citizens, however necessary or beneficial they may be in the long run. As Ferguson writes, “the difficulty facing Weimar politicians – even those few who sincerely believed that Germany must fulfill the peace terms – was simple: they had to reconcile competing claims on the Reich budget from on the one hand, their own electors, and on the other, Germany’s former enemies. To put it simply, the Allies might want reparations for the damage done to them by the war; but German voters also felt entitled to ‘reparations’ for the hardship they had endured since 1914.”⁵⁴⁵

Tombs writes: “More than any other work, Keynes’s book discredited the Versailles settlement and highlighted – and exaggerated – differences between the former allies. His assertions shaped opinion for generations. Many still believe them. Rejection of the treaty became one of the fundamental principles of the Labour Party, but it extended far beyond the left. German economic revival was regarded as in Britain’s economic interests, and its political revival desirable to balance French ambitions. As the Foreign Office put it, ‘From the earliest years following the war, it was our policy to eliminate those parts of the Peace Settlement which, as practical people, we knew to be untenable and indefensible.’ Thus was born ‘appeasement’, which dominated interwar British policy, made enforcement of the Treaty of Versailles impossible, and encouraged British and American disengagement from Europe.

542 Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

543 Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 802.

544 Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, London: Pimlico, 2007, p. 4.

545 Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, p. 420.

"The League of Nations was formally established by the Treaty of Versailles, with its headquarters and secretariat in Geneva, run by Sir Edward Grey's former private secretary, Sir Eric Drummond. It provided hope of a better world, and sometimes a way of avoiding difficult decisions. A League of Nations Union spread nationwide in Britain and attracted cross-party support, including former conscientious objectors and former war heroes, Tory grandees and TUC leaders. By 1927 it had 654,000 members and many affiliated organizations. Stanley Baldwin, the Tory leader, was a vice-chairman, and the chairman, Lord Robert Cecil, son of the former Prime Minister Lord Salisbury and a former Tory minister, became one of the most active peace campaigners, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1937. The Labour Party called in 1928 for 'whole-hearted support of the League of Nations as the arbiter of international peace and order, in preference to the basing of peace upon separate pacts, ententes and alliances'. Disarmament became the league's chief preoccupation.

"The problems of postwar Europe were many and profound. Germany was largely surrounded by new, relatively weak states whose very existence many Germans resented. Many of its politicians and people were unreconciled to defeat: resentment of the Treaty of Versailles was the one tie that bound the deeply divided nation together. The victors were disunited: America and then Britain reneged on their promise to guarantee France's security after the American Senate (in a debate in which Keynes was repeatedly cited) refused to ratify the Versailles treaty or join the League of Nations, despite Woodrow Wilson having been one of its moving spirits. The best chance of lasting peace would have been continuing Allied solidarity, a British alliance with France, and compromise over reparations and debt. This sounds simple; it proved impossible. The fundamental flaw of the treaty was not (as a leading British newspaper stated recently) that its 'harsh terms would ensure a second war', but rather that (as a contemporary French critic put it) it 'was too gentle for what is in it that is harsh'. The victor powers would not, perhaps could not, either fully conciliate Germany or fully dominate it."⁵⁴⁶

The problem was that the Allies were pursuing mutually incompatible aims. On the one hand, they wanted just compensation for the enormous losses inflicted by the Germans (the human losses, of course, could never be repaid), and a guarantee that they would not become strong enough to rearm. This required heavy reparations – heavier than the ones they actually imposed. On the other hand, they wanted a quick revival of the world economy, including that of the power-house of Europe, Germany. This required minimal reparations... If millions of Germans died between the two wars, this was not caused primarily by the reparations, but by the Spanish flu and self-inflicted wounds such as the hyper-inflation of 1923. Moreover, if the Allies had been strong enough to occupy the whole of Germany after the war as the Romans had occupied Carthage, they might well have prevented the civil war between communists and fascists that brought Hitler to power...

546 Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 657-658.

In any case, German reparations were only part of a larger problem that Keynes knew a lot about but which he chose not to speak about much: the mutual indebtedness of most of the nations as a result of the war.

While the British owed most in absolute terms, the most indebted nations in relation to resources were France and Italy.

“Early in 1919,” writes Tooze, “the Italians, who in relation to their modest national income were carrying the most unbearable level of foreign debt, suggested that as a prelude to the peace Washington might consider a general reapportionment of the costs of the war. The logic was simple. If the United States, by far the richest and least indebted of any of the combatants, were to grant substantial, well-publicized concessions to its European allies, they could afford both financially and politically to moderate their claims on Germany. Clemenceau’s government promptly associated itself with this call. America’s reaction was no less swift. On 8 March 1919, Treasury Under-Secretary Carter Glass cabled Paris that any such proposal would be treated as a veiled threat of default. Under such circumstances Washington could not be expected to consider any new credits. Washington insisted that Clemenceau should make a public commitment to refrain from any further demands for debt relief. When, in April 1919, faced with the impasse in the Versailles negotiations, the French resumed their calls for concessions, they were reminded that Clemenceau’s promise had been read into the congressional record. Paris was instructed in humiliating terms to put its financial household in order.

“To the British, these clashes between America and France were far from unwelcome. As Lloyd George wrote to London, the Americans were forming the view that ‘the French have been extraordinarily greedy... and... in proportion to their increasing suspicion of the French is their trust of the British.’ Yet the British could not fault the logic of the French and Italian proposals. It was Keynes’s task at the Treasury to prepare the British response, which was presented to the Americans at the end of March. As Keynes acknowledged, a complete cancellation of inter-Allied claims would impose a loss of £1.668 billion on the US. But Britain as a large net creditor to the Entente would also bear a substantial loss, running to £651 million. The chief beneficiaries would be Italy, which would be relieved of £700 million in debt, and France, which would be granted £510 million in debt relief. Among the great powers there was absolutely no precedent for such enormous transfers of monies, but in light of the relative strength of the Allied economies and the damage they had suffered in the war, this did not seem unreasonable. All the arguments that Keynes would later deploy with such dramatic effect against reparations were first put to use in March 1919 in an effort to persuade Washington of the disastrous consequences of upholding the entangling network of inter-Allied war debts. Keynes was quite frank about the desperate situation in which France found itself. If Britain and America were to insist on full repayment, ‘victorious France must pay her friends and allies more than

four times the indemnity which in the defeat of 1870 she paid Germany. The hand of Bismarck was light compared with that of an ally or of an associate.' How were the populations of Europe to be brought to accept an infuriatingly inadequate reparations settlement, if not by means of generous concessions from those who could afford to make them?"⁵⁴⁷

Thus the problems thrown up by the peace proved almost as intractable as those created during "the war to end all wars". The economic recovery of Europe depended on low reparations from Germany and the revival of the German economy, which would be impossible if the neighbouring economies of France and Italy remained mired in impossible levels of international debt. What was required was the Biblical remedy of a jubilee remittance of all, or at any rate the major part, of inter-governmental debts – in other words, the Christian virtue of *generosity* from creditors to debtors – a virtue rarely seen in world history between nations. But the only nation that could take the lead in this good work, America, fell at this hurdle – with catastrophic consequences for the world economy, including the Americans' own economy.

In the late 1940s, after another still more catastrophic world war, the Americans would correct this mistake through their exceptionally generous Marshall Plan, leading to the most prosperous period in world history...

The tragic irony was that the American president had presented his vision as in sharp Christian contrast with the egoistic politics of the past. "Wilson the Just", as he was called, "was hailed as the saviour of Europe. In France peasant families knelt to pray as his train passed; in Italy wounded soldiers tried to kiss the hem of his garments..."

"No doubt Wilson was something of a Presbyterian minister manqué, as J.M. Keynes charged. Clemenceau said that talking to Wilson was 'something like talking to Jesus Christ'."⁵⁴⁸

Certainly, Wilson had a kind of Divine Right theory of American power. Thus the clergyman president "declared that America's role in the war was a product of divine agency: 'It was of this that we dreamed at our birth. America shall in truth show the way.' ... He said the world turned 'to American for those moral inspirations which lie at the base of all freedom... [A]ll shall know that she puts human rights above all other right, and that her flag is the flag not only of America, but of humanity.' He thanked God that Americans were not like other people..."⁵⁴⁹

"As his biographer, [Lord] Devlin noted, 'It was almost, but not quite, as if he were trying to bring Christianity into public life.' Wilson seems to have

⁵⁴⁷ Tooze, op. cit., pp. 298-299.

⁵⁴⁸ Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, London: Pimlico, 2001, p. 13. And he quipped that "the good Lord" had been content with 10 Commandments rather than Wilson's 14.

⁵⁴⁹ Pffaf, "The Question of Hegemony", *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2001, p. 226.

believed, with [his adviser, Colonel] House, that truly democratic institutions that actually reflected the will of the people and made commensurate demands on their attention and contributions would yield just such a spiritual change in mankind.”⁵⁵⁰

This was truly *hubris* on a grand scale – the idea that one man could come to a foreign continent whose ways and exceedingly complicated history he hardly knew, and, armed only with good intentions, recreate its system of inter-state relations on the model of the American Constitution, thereby creating Eternal Peace. Only Christ could have attained such a goal (and He would have attained it without reference to the American Constitution).

In 1815 Tsar Alexander had tried to create a new system based on the Christian faith, and had failed – but managed to attain peace for most of the next one hundred years. In 1919 President Wilson, who was not a true Christian but pretended to be one, failed to attain peace even for twenty years...

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The Anglo-Saxons wanted an economic revival in Germany for another reason: to counteract the power of Bolshevism and the threat of revolution in the West. The decade 1910-20 had seen unprecedented industrial unrest and strikes throughout the industrialized nations, not least in America herself. And for workers who had seen inflation drastically reduce their pay packets in real terms, the propaganda of Bolshevism was proving attractive. The Soviets’ early successes, though short-lived, were striking. Niall Ferguson writes: “Soviet-style governments were also proclaimed in Budapest, Munich and Hamburg. The red flag was even raised above Glasgow City Chambers. Exhilarated, Lenin dreamed of a ‘Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Europe and Asia’. Trotsky extravagantly declared that ‘the road to Paris and London lies via the towns of Afghanistan, the Punjab and Bengal’. Even distant Seattle and Buenos Aires were rocked by strikes. This was a proletarian pandemic.”⁵⁵¹ Other European countries with active Communist movements included Serbia, Romania, Greece and Austria.

Some western leaders (but not including Wilson) were well aware of the threat. “Bolshevism, the US Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, warned in October 1918 even before the war had ended, ‘must not be allowed to master the people of Central Europe, where it would become a greater menace to the world than Prussianism’. For this reason Churchill called for ‘the building up of a strong yet peaceful Germany which will not attack our French Allies, but will at the same time act as a moral bulwark against Bolshevism’, and thus ‘build a dyke of peaceful, lawful, patient strength and virtue against the flood of Red barbarism flowing from the east’.”⁵⁵²

⁵⁵⁰ Bobbitt, op. cit., p. 396.

⁵⁵¹ Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 216.

⁵⁵² Simms, op. cit., pp. 319-320.

Churchill and the Americans would be saying the same thing over thirty years later, when “the flood of Red barbarism” had overflowed the German dyke... But that was because the “dyke of virtue” had not been built in Germany by the Germans themselves. For they refused to repent of their responsibility for the First World War, thereby calling God’s wrath upon them in the Second War...

In the end, the Allies fell between the two stools of their mutually contradictory aims. And, to make matters still worse, they were not powerful enough to act on the principles they proclaimed, or carry out the decisions they actually made. For whatever the merits and faults of the treaty, it was necessary for all the signatories to display determination in carrying out its provisions, not excluding those on reparations and rearmament. But the American Senate refused to ratify it, while the British did not want to commit themselves. This left the French, who, of course, had the strongest stake in the provisions. But they were worried about losing the support of their allies and being left alone against the Germans; so they, too, made compromises. Thus it could be argued that it was not the reparation clauses themselves, but the feebleness displayed by the Allies in enforcing them, that caused the real long-term damage by *encouraging* German truculence and nationalism.

And so appeasement began, not in the 1930s, but immediately after the war. And if its justification was a desire not simply to stimulate the revival of the German economy, but also to dampen German nationalism, then it failed in that respect too.

For, as David Stevenson writes, “by the early 1930s... Allied concessions over the Versailles terms seemed to have done nothing to check the progress of the German extremists. Although reparations were ended in all but name at the Lausanne conference of 1932, and the former Allies accepted the principle of parity of armaments at the Geneva conference of 1931-3, support for the Nazis continued to expand, driving the last Weimar government into authoritarianism at home and assertiveness abroad. The army leaders had secretly resumed strategic planning after 1924, and in 1932 Brüning’s successor, Franz von Papen, adopted a big rearmament programme. The growth of nationalism not only among the public but also among the country’s leadership is essential to an explanation of why Hitler was appointed chancellor, at Hindenburg’s invitation and with the army’s approval, in January, 1933.

“In short, the war was essential to the Nazi takeover not only through its contribution to the economic crisis but also through its role in reawakening German nationalism as the memory of 1914-18 was re-evaluated.”⁵⁵³

More precisely, it was the *hatred* that the war generated, and which did not dissipate at war’s end, that played into the Nazis’ hands.

⁵⁵³ Stevenson, *1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 2004, p. 570.

"The war isn't over," D.H. Lawrence told David Garnett on Armistice night. "The hate and evil is greater now than ever. Very soon war will break out again and overwhelm you... Even if the fighting should stop, the evil will be worse because the hate will be dammed up in men's hearts and will show itself in all sorts of ways which will be worse than war. Whatever happens there can be no Peace on Earth."

33. THE GREEKS, THE TURKS AND THE ENTENTE POWERS

The fourth great monarchical power to be destroyed by the Great War was the Ottoman empire, although its death was slow and messy, extending well beyond the Ottomans' surrender to the British in November, 1918, when the Turkish leaders fled to Berlin...

In March, 1917, recovering from their defeat at Kut in 1916, and taking advantage of the Russian victories in the Transcaucasus, the British recovered the initiative in Mesopotamia and conquered Baghdad.

"This was no side-show for the Germans: Ludendorff had begun prodding Enver about measures for Baghdad's defence long before the Ottoman minister of war woke up to the threat. They immediately agreed to release a German commander for the theatre, none other than the former chief of the general staff, Falkenhayn, as well as 18,000 German and Austrian troops.

"Falkenhayn planned an offensive campaign, codenamed 'Yilderim' (lightning) to recapture Baghdad. But when he arrived in the Middle East in May, it became clear that the British in Egypt were pushing into the Sinai desert, and might well advance into Palestine in the autumn. In that event the Turks, conscious of the strengths and weaknesses of their own army, and of the limits imposed by logistical considerations, favoured fighting a defensive battle on the line between Gaza and Beersheba. Falkenhayn feared that the Central Powers' forces would therefore be divided over two fronts and that a British breakthrough into Palestine would threaten his lines of communication in Iraq. He demanded that all the forces in the two theatres be combined under his command, creating what was essentially a German headquarters which not only marginalised the Turks but also was too far to the rear, in Aleppo. He proposed to strike first at the British in Sinai before turning back to Mesopotamia. His high-handed manner offended the Turks, and it also antagonised Germans, who had been in the region much longer than he. Falkenhayn saw them as 'Turkified'; they saw him as 'commanding the Turkish army in the desert as one would lead a German army in civilised Europe'.

"Falkenhayn was not the only new commander in the Middle East with ideas derived from the war in Europe. Edmund Allenby, fresh from leading the British 3rd Army in the battle of Arras and the capture of Vimy Ridge, arrived to take over the British command in Egypt in June 1917. A cavalryman, 'he looks the sort of man whose hopes rapidly crystallise into a determination to carry all before it'. In London Robertson supported the idea of an attack on the Gaza-Beersheba line, realising that it would take pressure off Baghdad. Here was no purblind westerner: Mesopotamia, Robertson declared on 1 August 1917, was not a 'side-show because as long as we keep up a good show there India and Persia will be more or less all right'. Climatic considerations meant that the Palestine front would open up as that in France and Flanders closed down. When the battle of Gaza began on 27 October, the British mounted the war's heaviest artillery attack outside Europe, with as many heavy guns per

yard of front as in the battle of the Somme. Furthermore, aerial supremacy meant that their fire was better directed and coordinated.”⁵⁵⁴

Beersheba with its water supply was conquered on October 31, and Falkenhayn was forced to retreat north of Jerusalem with his right flank on Jaffa. “In February he was recalled to Germany, but not before he had intervened to prevent the resettlement of the Jews; they were reckoned to be spying, but neither the Germans nor Talât, elevated to become Ottoman Grand Vizier in February 1917, wanted a repeat of the Armenian massacres...”⁵⁵⁵

Allenby, meanwhile, anxious to retain the support of his Arab allies across the Jordan under Prince Faisal, son of Sherif Hussain of Mecca, suppressed news of the Balfour Declaration.⁵⁵⁶ But he allowed a Jewish legion under Zhabotinsky to force the passage of the Jordan...⁵⁵⁷ It was as if the story of Exodus was being repeated – but the victorious Jews of 1917 were no longer God’s people...

The last Turk left Jerusalem on December 7, the first day of the Jewish feast of Hannukah, which celebrated the Maccabean liberation of Jerusalem in the second century BC. On December 11 Allenby, accompanied by Lawrence of Arabia, entered the city (on foot, as a sign of respect). “We thought we were witnessing the triumph of the last Crusade,” said the American Colonist Bertha Spafford. “A Christian nation had conquered Palestine!”⁵⁵⁸

Shortly after Allenby’s conquest of Palestine, Weizmann arrived in Jerusalem as head of a Zionist Commission, determined to put the Balfour Declaration into effect. He was surprised, writes Mansfield, “by how ‘non-Jewish’ Jerusalem and Palestine had become”...⁵⁵⁹

On September 19, 1918 Allenby defeated the Turks at the Battle of Megiddo (the first Armageddon), and on October 1 the British and Arabs conquered Damascus. By the end of the month the Ottoman Empire had surrendered to the British on a Dreadnought on the Aegean island of Lesbos, and on November 13, 1918 an Allied fleet headed by HMS *Agamemnon* steamed into Constantinople to take control of the capital ...

At this point the British planned to hand Hagia Sophia back to the Greek for use as a cathedral again. But they changed their minds, fearing a bad reaction from the Muslims of India, and planned instead to make it into a museum. Ataturk realized this plan when he took the City in 1924.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁴ Strachan, *op. cit.* pp. 275-276.

⁵⁵⁵ Strachan, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

⁵⁵⁶ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁵⁵⁷ “Jewish Legion”, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Legion.

⁵⁵⁸ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 504.

⁵⁵⁹ Mansfield, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁵⁶⁰ Nikos Chiladakis, “The British Intended for Hagia Sophia to be a Church again in 1918”, <https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2020/07/the-british-intended-for-hagia->

At the Versailles peace conference in 1919, Palestine was made a British mandate territory (Syria was given to the French), and in 1920 a Franco-British Convention amended the Sykes-Picot Agreement to make the Jewish National Home comprise the whole of Palestine.

“In the Turkish heartlands, meanwhile, the problems were mounting alarmingly. Losses at the front were massive. Estimates put Turkish deaths as high as 2.5 million, three times higher than those of Britain. The scale of such losses, accompanied at home by a collapsing currency, soaring prices, and some shortages of food and other commodities undermined the already tottering foundations of the Ottoman Empire. The Armistice brought no end to the suffering and violence in Turkey, which was soon plunged into a war of independence that lasted until 1923, when a wrecked country eventually emerged from the ruins as an independent sovereign state. And the takeover of Ottoman possessions in the Middle East by the western colonial powers, Britain and France, was accompanied by huge anti-colonial unrest, waves of protest and endemic violence that equally saw no abrupt break with the end of the war. The consequences for the indefinite future were enormous...”⁵⁶¹

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At the same time as the revolution in Russia, the Greeks had been undergoing their own revolution, both political and ecclesiastical. Though less bloody, its results were hardly less disastrous for the Greek people. For in the space of a few years they lost their monarchy, their army and all of their ancestral lands in Asia Minor.

In March, 1913, King George of Greece was assassinated. He had favoured the Entente, whereas his son, Constantine, favoured the Central Powers. This schism was followed by a revolution, which began, with a military coup engineered by the Cretan Freemason Eleutherios Venizelos, who as Prime Minister fell out with King Constantine over the direction Greece should take in the Great War, preferring the Entente to the Central Powers.

“Greece had entered the Great War,” writes Misha Glenny, “flushed with its successes in the Balkan Wars, which had been won at relatively little cost to itself. The country was united and optimistic. Yet just over two years after the outbreak of the war, the country had been torn down the middle both geographically and politically. In the north, Venizelos had established the so-called Government of National Defence with its capital in Salonika and under the patronage of the Entente’s Army of the Orient. Venizelos had fled there to join rebel army commanders when it became clear that Athens could not accommodate two men intent on running the country’s foreign affairs –

sophia.html?fbclid=IwAR2UpVReWO6LSELR4hAmj6b2SuHOQYdihqJlh-2zZsEwhjB3f5ibVTv684g

⁵⁶¹ Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 90.

especially since the Prime Minister wanted at all costs to join the Entente and his chief rival, King Constantine (1913-17, 1920-2), did not...

"In Athens, the Germanophile monarch had built up considerable public support for his policy of neutrality. But his most important power base was the officer corps of the army. Constantine's resistance to the Entente's perpetual interference in Greece's affairs, notably to the Allies' attempt to seize control of the country's postal and transport systems during the war, won him support. There is only circumstantial evidence that Constantine ever considered actually joining the Central Powers. He may have been influenced to a degree by his wife, Sophie, Kaiser Wilhelm's sister, but the Greek King was no fool. He could see perfectly well that the Entente controlled the Mediterranean and had 300,000 troops in Salonika backing Venizelos's insurrection (although the same troops also prevented the hotter heads in the Venizelist military leadership from attacking the areas loyal to the King). To declare for the Central Powers would have provoked a massive assault from the Entente and plunged the country into a violent civil conflict.

"Yet the French diplomatic mission in Athens bombarded the Quai d'Orsay and the Prime Minister, Aristide Briand, with fanciful reports of conspiracies directed by German agents in Athens. The French government trusted neither Constantine nor Venizelos. Throughout 1916, a powerful lobby comprising General Sarraill and the senior Embassy officials in Athens urged on Paris the policy of establishing a protectorate over Greece, humiliating Constantine with ultimatums whose conditions he could not possibly fulfil without provoking his own army. This diplomatic pressure culminated in the event of 1 December, 1916, when French and British troops under the command of the French Admiral Dartige du Fournet landed at Piraeus and marched on Athens. The army resisted the Allied assault. Dartige had assumed that his display of superior force would be a stroll. He was wrong. Within hours of entering Athens, fifty-seven French and five British soldiers had been killed and many more were wounded. The Allies beat a hasty retreat. The monarchist soldiers were enraged at this violation of Greek sovereignty. [However, in the spring of 1917] the French finally succeeded in forcing Constantine's abdication and exile. Venizelos returned to Athens in triumph to govern the reunited country. He began by purging the armed forces and civil service of known monarchists..."⁵⁶²

The Greeks were now firmly on the side of the Allies, and took part in the victorious campaign that began from Salonika against Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria in the autumn of 1918... Meanwhile, within the Ottoman empire, tension between Turks and non-Turks had been building up since the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. "The embittered Turks," writes Alexis Alexandris, "were steadily transformed from Ottoman patriots into ardent Turkish nationalists. Greek fortunes in the Ottoman empire deteriorated rapidly during World War I when the Istanbul government joined the Central Powers. Not only did the

⁵⁶² Glenney, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London; Granta Books, 2000, pp. 349-351.

Unionists [liberals who had tacitly allied with most Greek deputies in the Ottoman parliament] refuse to negotiate with such groups as the Political League or the Organisation of Constantinople, but, suspecting, them of being instruments of the Hellenic government, took steps to drive them out of Istanbul. Young Turk suspicions were intensified when Greece, under the leadership of the irredentist Cretan Eleftherios Venizelos, threw in its lot with the Entente Powers (1917). Regarding the Ottoman Greeks as being sympathetic to the Entente Powers, the Istanbul government took draconian measures against them. Large-scale deportations of Greeks from strategically sensitive areas, such as Thrace, western Anatolia and the Black Sea coast, took place, while the privileges of the Patriarchate were once again severely curtailed (1914-18). By the end of the First Balkan War the Ottoman Greek administrative and diplomatic appointments were also terminated and in October 1912 the ambassador to Vienna, Alexander Mavroyenis, was recalled to Istanbul. Similarly, from January 1913 no Greek served in the cabinet. The practice of appointing a Greek to the cabinet was established when the Young Turks took power in 1908 and a Greek usually occupied such posts as public works, forests, mines and agriculture or posts and telegrams.

“But probably the greatest resentment was aroused by the Unionist economic policies. From the very beginning the Unionists demonstrated a determination to bring their own social class, the Turkish petty bourgeoisie, at the helm of economic affairs. They resented the Greek and Armenian refusal to participate in Ottoman regeneration and, therefore, sought to destroy the virtual monopoly of commerce, industry and urban professions exercised by these elements. The traditional ‘ethnic division of labour’ had, according to the Unionists, undermined Ottoman sovereignty and to remedy this the formation of a ‘national economy’ and a Turkish bourgeoisie was essential. These Unionist traditions, however, were not fulfilled before the outbreak of World War I. It was after they sided with the Germans [that] the Young Turks were at liberty to take measures against the established Ottoman Christian bourgeoisie which was closely associated with Anglo-French capital. The four war years exhibit a frantic pace of economic activity by Turkish – and Jewish – capital, which gained new advantages through the encouragement of the government, and government-sponsored banks. At the same time Unionists assisted Turkish entrepreneurs by adopting measures such as the anti-Greek economic boycotts and expulsions directed against the Greek and Armenian elements. It appears that the basis of antagonism was rooted primarily in class conflict in so far as the Unionist scheme to transform Ottoman society undermined the position of the privileged classes. Thus the elevation of the petty bourgeoisie to the centre of political and economic affairs engendered as much hostility among the upper class Muslims as among the Greeks.

“Despite the hostile climate after 1913, the Ottoman Greek community was too powerful to be disrupted by Unionist pressures. Far from being demoralized by the general state of affairs, Ottoman Hellenism received a new impetus with the successful issue of the Greek-Ottoman hostilities in 1912. While between 1908-1912 the advocates of Greek-Turkish rapprochement, who

at best hoped for a long-term prevalence of the Greek element in the empire, commanded considerable support, by 1913 sympathy with Venizelos and his irredentist policies at the expense of Turkey began to gain ground. As relations between the Istanbul government and the Ottoman Greeks deteriorated beyond repair, dissatisfied middle class Greeks espoused the vision of a Greater Greece (*Megali Ellada*) embracing all the Greek populations of Thrace, Anatolia and Northern Epirus. Thus the national idea (or *megali idea*) of the Greeks came to be identified with the aspiration to unite the entire Greek race under a single Hellenic government. Adherents of the *megali idea* soon gained influence at the Phanar and began to challenge the authority of Patriarch Germanos V Kavakopoulos. An aged and sick man, the patriarch had failed to exhibit effective resistance when the traditional *millet* privileges came under serious threat in 1913-1918. Nor did the Phanar protest against the Istanbul government when Anatolian and Thracian Greeks were deported in great numbers during World War I. Finally in October 1918, revolting against the traditional subservience of the Phanar *gerondes*, a dynamic and predominantly lay faction engineered the fall of patriarch Germanos. Encouraged by the victory of the Entente Powers, these mainly middle-class Constantinopolitan Greeks assisted Venizelos in his diplomatic efforts to achieve the vision of *megali idea* in the years 1918-20..."⁵⁶³

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As the president of a victor nation, Venizelos took his seat at the Versailles round-table in 1919. This gave him the opportunity to put his nationalist expansionist plans into effect. The French Prime Minister Briand had been right to suspect, some years before, that "Venizelos may have very long teeth when peace negotiations open. He has not renounced his dream to recreate the Byzantine Empire... Now, a large-scale expansion of Greece would be a threat to the peace of the world. I have for a long time desired the cooperation of the Greeks but not under these conditions..."⁵⁶⁴

Venizelos' plans were indeed grandiose: he boasted that he would sit on two continents washed by five seas...

Margaret Macmillan writes: "He had been working hard from the start of the Peace Conference to press Greek claims, with mixed success. Although he tried to argue that the coast of Asia Minor was indisputably Greek in character, and the Turks in a minority, his statistics were highly dubious. For the inland territory he was claiming, where even he had to admit that the Turks were in a majority, Venizelos called in economic arguments. The whole area (the Turkish provinces of Aidin and Brusa and the areas around the Dardanelles and Izmir) was a geographic unit that belonged to the Mediterranean; it was warm, well watered, fertile, opening out to the world, unlike the dry and Asiatic plateau of

⁵⁶³ Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-1974*, Athens: Center for Asia Minor Studies, 1983, pp. 42-44.

⁵⁶⁴ Briand, in Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-349.

the hinterland. The Turks were good workers, honest in their relations, and a good people as subjects, he told the Supreme Council at his first appearance in February. 'But as rulers they were insupportable and a disgrace to civilisation, as was proved by their having exterminated over a million Armenians and 300,000 Greeks during the last four years.' To show how reasonable he was being, he renounced any claims to the ancient Greek settlements at Pontus on the eastern end of the Black Sea. He would not listen to petitions from the Pontine Greeks, he assured [the American official] House's assistant, Bonsal: 'I have told them that I cannot claim the south shore of the Black Sea, as my hands are quite full with Thrace and Anatolia.' There was a slight conflict with Italian claims, but he was confident the two countries could come to a friendly agreement. They had, in fact, already tried and it had been clear that neither was prepared to back down, especially on Smyrna.

"The thriving port of Smyrna lay at the heart of Greek claims. It had been Greek in the great Hellenic past and in the nineteenth century had become predominantly Greek again as immigrants from the Greek mainland had flocked there to take advantage of the new railways which stretched into the hinterland and opportunities for trade and investment. The population was at least a quarter of a million before the war and more Greeks lived there than in Athens itself. They dominated the exports – from figs to opium to carpets – which coursed down from the Anatolian plateau in Asia Minor. Smyrna was a Greek city, a centre of Greek learning and nationalism – but it was also a crucial part of the Turkish economy.

"When Venizelos reached out for Smyrna and its hinterland, he was going well beyond what could be justified in terms of self-determination. He was also putting Greece into a dangerous position. Taking the fertile valleys of western Asia Minor was perhaps necessary, as he argued, to protect the Greek colonies along the coast. From another perspective, though, it created a Greek province with a huge number of non-Greeks as well as a long line to defend against anyone who chose to attack from central Anatolia. His great rival General Metaxas, later dictator of Greece, warned of this repeatedly. 'The Greek state is not today ready for the government and exploitation of so extensive a territory.' Metaxas was right."⁵⁶⁵

The Italians and the Americans rejected the Greek claims on Smyrna; but the British and the French were sympathetic. Then the Italians walked out of the Peace Conference and in May landed troops occupied Antalya in the south and Marmaris in the west. The other Great Powers were alarmed. This gave Lloyd George his chance to intervene on behalf of Venizelos. The Americans were won over, and the Greeks were told that they could land in Smyrna and "wherever there is a threat of trouble or massacre".

565 Macmillan, *Peacemakers*, London: John Murray, 2003, pp. 440-441.

"The whole thing," wrote Henry Wilson, the British military expert, "is mad and bad" ...⁵⁶⁶ Lord Curzon, the soon-to-be British Foreign Minister, was also worried, though he was far from being a Turkophile. As he said: "The presence of the Turks in Europe has been a source of unmitigated evil to everybody concerned. I am not aware of a single interest, Turkish or otherwise, that during nearly 500 years has benefited from that presence."⁵⁶⁷ "That the Turks should be deprived of Constantinople is, in my opinion, inevitable and desirable as the crowning evidence of their defeat in war, and I believe that it will be accepted with whatever wrathful reluctance by the Eastern world." "But," he went on, "when it is realized that the fugitives are to be kicked from pillar to post and that there is to be practically no Turkish Empire and probably no Caliphate at all, I believe that we shall be giving a most dangerous and most unnecessary stimulus to Moslem passions throughout the Eastern world and that sullen resentment may easily burst into savage frenzy". And he called the landing in Smyrna "the greatest mistake that had been made in Paris".⁵⁶⁸

The landing took place on May 15, 1919. Unfortunately, it was handled badly, and some hundreds of Turkish civilians were killed. Although the Greeks arrested those responsible and did all they could to make amends, international opinion, stirred up by Turkish propaganda and the American representative in Constantinople, Admiral Bristol, began to turn against them, ignoring the mass slaughter of Greeks in Western Asia Minor, Pontus and the Caucasus.

Indeed, as Alexandris points out, "the Greek landing in Anatolia provided all the necessary impetus for the emergence of a vigorous and cohesive Turkish nationalist movement. With the famous congresses of Erzurum (7 August 1919) and Sivas (9 September 1919), the Turkish nationalists laid the foundations of a well-organized resistance movement. In the Ottoman capital, too, reaction to the Greek landing was vigorous. Mass meetings and demonstrations took place in Istanbul. The Constantinopolitan Christians were terrified..."⁵⁶⁹

The leader of the Turkish nationalists was the young officer and hero of Gallipoli Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk. On the day after the landing in Smyrna, he slipped out of Constantinople on an Italian pass, and arrived in Samsun to organize the nationalist movement that eventually defeated the Greeks and created the modern state of Turkey. By the end of the year he had created a new Turkish capital in Ankara. Although, on May 20, the Allies had recognized the Sultan (who had been taken under Franco-British supervision in the same month), and not Atatürk, as Turkey's legitimate ruler, the Italians were already secretly negotiating with Atatürk, and the French were not slow to follow suit. Only the British – more precisely, Lloyd George – continued to support Venizelos.

⁵⁶⁶ Macmillan, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

⁵⁶⁷ Curzon, in Matthew Stewart, "Catastrophe at Smyrna", *History Today*, vol. 54 (7), July, 2004, pp. 28-29.

⁵⁶⁸ Macmillan, *op. cit.*, p. 451.

⁵⁶⁹ Aristides, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

On June 14, Venizelos asked the Supreme Council to allow the Greeks to extend their occupation zone. However, the western powers refused. They were exhausted from more than four years of war, had already been demobilizing their armies around the globe, and with the defeat of the Whites in Russia, this process accelerated. The last thing they wanted was another full-scale war with the Turks. Besides, the Americans were concerned that their Standard Oil Company should have large concessions in Mesopotamia, which they believed Ataturk could give them, and the French wanted an intact Turkey in order to pay back her pre-war loans. The British toyed with the idea of supporting an independent Kurdistan in Ataturk's rear, but by the spring of 1920 this plan had been dropped. Soon they also abandoned their protectorates in Georgia and Baku.

34. A CHARTER FOR ECUMENISM

The political revolution in Greece was accompanied by a revolution in the Church: when Venizelos came to power during the war, he began to purge, not only the military and the civil service, but also the Orthodox Church. Thus when Metropolitan Theocletos of Athens anathematized him in 1916, he had him defrocked. Then he recalled his friend and fellow Cretan and Freemason⁵⁷⁰, Meletios Metaxakis, from America and enthroned him as Archbishop of Athens in November, 1918.⁵⁷¹ Meletios immediately started commemorating Venizelos at the Liturgy instead of the King. This led to an ideological schism within the Synod between the Venizelists and the Royalists. The latter included St. Nektarios of Pentapolis and Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias, the future leader of the True Orthodox Church.

However, the heart of Greek Orthodoxy was not Athens, but Constantinople. It was necessary for Venizelos to get his own man on the Ecumenical throne. That man would eventually be Metaxakis. The two Cretans between them prepared to destroy Greek Orthodoxy (did not the Apostle Paul say: "The Cretans are always liars" (Titus 1.12)?) And yet it was not their consanguinity as Cretans that compelled the two to lie so destructively. It was their brotherhood in Masonry...

On October 30, 1918 an armistice was signed at Mudros in Lemnos, bringing the First World War to an end in the Middle East. Immediately after, "the patriarchal authorities decided to elect a more energetic and politicized leadership. The ageing incumbent of the patriarchal throne, Germanos V (Kavakopoulos) was accused of having compromised with the Young Turks on such matters as education and marriage. In addition a number of scandals concerning financial laxity were ventilated to discredit the ailing patriarch. This campaign resulted in the resignation of Patriarch Germanos and his entire patriarchal mixed council on 25 October 1918. The fall of the fundamentalist Germanos put an end to the *gerondismos* tradition and to the Phanar tradition of voluntary submission to the Turkish masters."⁵⁷²

"After agreeing to the postponement of a new patriarchal election until a definite peace settlement was concluded, the Phanar elected the archbishop of Brussa Dorotheos Mammelis, locum tenens (τοποτηρητής) of the Patriarchate on 28 October 1918. A very able and dynamic man, the acting patriarch was determined to play a vigorous role and so were the new members of the patriarchal mixed council.

570 See Monk Seraphim (Zissis), "The Influence of Freemasonry on Early Greek Ecumenism", *geopolitika.ru*, August 15, 2017 (V.M.)

571 "To imerologiakon skhisma apo istorikes kai kanonikes apopseos exetazomenon" (The Calendar Schism from an Historical and Canonical Point of View), *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites* (St. Agathangelos of Esphigmenou), N 130, March-April, 1992, p. 16.

572 Monk Benjamin, *Letopis'*, p. 29.

"Immediately after its election the patriarchal council espoused wholeheartedly the cause of Greek irredentism, providing leadership to an umbrella organization, the national committee (Εθνική Επιτροπή). This committee sought primarily to articulate and promote the aspirations of the nationalist Ottoman Greeks. At first it succeeded in making a considerable impact and on 2 December 1918, a delegation of the national committee met with the British high commissioner, admiral Arthur Calthorpe. During this interview the British admiral expressed his personal sympathy with Ottoman Christian aspirations.

"Soon, the national committee established official branches in most of the major European centres and in the cities of the Ottoman empire. A prominent Anglo-Greek banker, Sir John Stavridi, headed the London branch, while in Paris the irredentist movement was represented by a number of eminent Constantinopolitan and Smyrniot Greeks. It has already been shown that the central committee of the unredeemed Greeks was under the control of the Greek Foreign Office, even though Athens endeavoured to belittle its direct links with the whole movement.

"Meanwhile, the Patriarchate, arguing that the Sublime Porte was not able to administer the country satisfactorily, refused to communicate directly with the Ottoman government. While under the physical protection of a Greek-Cretan regiment since November 1918, the Phanar proceeded to abolish the teaching of Turkish in Greek schools on 21 January 1919. But the activities of the patriarchal council culminated on Sunday 16 March 1919, when the resolution for 'Union with Greece' was taken in Constantinopolitan Greek churches. The official declaration stated: 'The Greeks of Constantinople and the neighbourhood assembled today in their churches... and proclaimed their unshakeable wish to obtain complete national re-establishment. They regard Union with the mother-country Greece as the only firm basis for natural development in the future... and entrust the Ecumenical Patriarchate, their supreme national authority, with the task of transmitting the present resolution to the representatives of England, France, the United States, Italy and Greece at the Peace Conference...' Thus the Ottoman Greeks released from their civic responsibilities as Ottoman citizens and the Patriarchate unilaterally complete sovereignty over the community. From March 1919 onwards the Phanar refused to communicate directly with the Sublime Porte and the Greeks were urged to abstain from municipal or general elections."⁵⁷³

Constantinople was seething with pro-Venizelos and anti-Ottoman demonstrations. In March, Dorotheos headed a Constantinopolitan delegation to the Paris Conference which protested against Ottoman oppression of the Greeks in their empire. In February, 1920 he suggested in a letter to Lloyd George "that Greece should receive a mandate to govern the state of Constantinople."⁵⁷⁴

573 Alexandris, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-57.

574 Alexandris, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

In Greece, meanwhile, the government wanted to introduce the western, Gregorian calendar into Greece. And so Meletios promptly, in January, 1919, raised this question in the Church. The only obstacle to the introduction of the new calendar, he declared, was the Apostolic Canon forbidding the celebration of Pascha at the same time as the Jewish Passover or before the spring equinox. But since, he went on, "the government feels the necessity of changing to the Gregorian calendar, let it do so without touching the ecclesiastical calendar." And he set up a Commission to investigate the question.⁵⁷⁵

The Commission was set up with Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias as the representative of the hierarchy. In May 20, 1919, on the initiative of Meletios Metaxakis, the Synod raised the question of changing to the new calendar. Meletios told the Synod: "The situation in Russia has changed, and the possibility of becoming closer to the West has become more real. We consider it necessary to introduce a rapid calendar reform."

However, the Commission headed by Metropolitan Germanos was more cautious: "In the opinion of the Commission, the change of the Julian calendar provided it does not contradict canonical and dogmatic bases, could be realised on condition that all the other Orthodox Autocephalous Churches agree, and first of all, the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate, to which it would be necessary to present the initiative in any action in this sphere, so long as we do not change to the Gregorian calendar, but compose a new, more scientifically exact Gregorian calendar, which would be free from the inadequacies of both of the calendars – the Julian and the Gregorian – at present in use."

"One of the committee members who voted in favour of this position," writes Fr. Basile Sakkas, "was Chrysostom Papadopoulos, then an Archimandrite and Professor of Theology at the University of Athens."⁵⁷⁶ In 1919 he had declared that if the Church changed the calendar it would become schismatic. But later, as Archbishop of Athens, he introduced the new calendar into the Greek Church...

When the conclusions of the commission had been read out, Meletios changed his tune somewhat: "We must not change to the Gregorian calendar at a time when a new and scientifically perfect calendar is being prepared. If the State feels that it cannot remain in the present calendar status quo, it is free to accept the Gregorian as the European calendar, while the Church keeps the Julian calendar until the new scientific calendar is ready."⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ Eleutherios Goutzidis, *Ekklesiologika Themata* (Ecclesiological Themes), Athens, 1980, pp. 67-68.

⁵⁷⁶ Sakkas, *The Calendar Question*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, p. 23.

⁵⁷⁷ Goutzidis, op. cit., p. 68.

Two things are clear from these events of 1919. First, Meletios was very anxious to accommodate the government if he could. And yet he must have realized that blessing the adoption of the new calendar by the State would inevitably generate pressure for its introduction into the Church as well. Secondly, while he did not feel strong enough to introduce the new calendar into the Church at that time, he was not in principle against it, because he either did not understand, or did not want to understand, the reasons for the Church's devotion to the Julian calendar, which have nothing to do with scientific accuracy, and all to do with faithfulness to the Tradition and Canons of the Church and the maintenance of Her Unity.

The new calendar was not the only innovation Meletios wanted to introduce: what he wanted, writes Bishop Ephraim, "was an Anglican Church with an eastern tint, and the faithful people in Greece knew it and distrusted everything he did. While in Athens, he even forbade the chanting of vigil services (!) because he considered them out of date and a source of embarrassment when heterodox – especially Anglicans – visited Athens. The people simply ignored him and continued to have vigils secretly."⁵⁷⁸

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Returning to Constantinople: by early 1919 the Ottoman Greeks, led by the Ecumenical patriarchate, had in effect carried out a political *coup d'état* against the Ottoman Empire, thereby reversing a centuries-old tradition of submission to the Muslims the political sphere. Since such a daring *coup* required political and military support from outside (for the Turks were still in a majority in Constantinople), the patriarchate set about making friends with those to whom, from a religious point of view, it had always been inimical.

Thus in January, 1919, a Greek-Armenian conference was held to coordinate the activities of the two groups in the city.⁵⁷⁹ Then, in the summer, Metropolitan Nicholas of Caesarea in the name of the patriarchate accepted the invitation of the Joint Commission of the World Conference on Faith and Order, a forerunner of the World Council of Churches, to participate in its preliminary conference in Geneva the following year. He said that the patriarchate was "thereby stretching out a hand of help to those working in the same field and in the same vineyard of the Lord".

This statement, which in effect recognized that the western heretics belonged to the True Church, was probably the first statement from the Ecumenical Patriarchate explicitly endorsing the great heresy of *ecumenism*.

⁵⁷⁸ Monk (now Metropolitan of Boston) Ephraim, *Letter on the Calendar Issue*, Brookline, Mass.: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1968, second edition 1979, St. Nectarios Educational Series, N 2.

⁵⁷⁹ Alexandris, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

Then, in January, 1920, Metropolitan Dorotheos and his Synod issued what was in effect *a charter for Ecumenism*. Coming in the same month as the foundation of the League of Nations, it may be seen as the latter's complement in the religious world: the first step towards a League of Religions. This encyclical was the product of a conference of professor-hierarchs of the Theological School at Khalki, led by Metropolitan Germanos of Seleucia (later of Thyateira and Great Britain).

It was addressed "to all the Churches of Christ everywhere", and declared that "the first essential is to revive and strengthen the love between the Churches, not considering each other as strangers and foreigners, but as kith and kin in Christ and united co-heirs of the promise of God in Christ."

It went on: "This love and benevolent disposition towards each other can be expressed and proven especially, in our opinion, through:

"(a) the reception of a single calendar for the simultaneous celebration of the great Christian feasts by all the Churches;

"(b) the exchange of brotherly epistles on the great feasts of the single calendar..;

"(c) close inter-relations between the representatives of the different Churches;

"(d) intercourse between the Theological Schools and the representatives of Theological Science and the exchange of theological and ecclesiastical periodicals and writings published in each Church;

"(e) the sending of young people to study from the schools of one to another Church;

"(f) the convening of Pan-Christian conferences to examine questions of common interest to all the Churches;

"(g) the objective and historical study of dogmatic differences..;

"(h) mutual respect for the habits and customs prevailing in the different Churches;

"(i) the mutual provision of prayer houses and cemeteries for the funeral and burial of members of other confessions dying abroad;

"(j) the regulation of the question of mixed marriages between the different confessions;

“(k) mutual support in the strengthening of religion and philanthropy.”⁵⁸⁰

The unprecedented nature of the encyclical consists in the facts: (1) that it was addressed not, as was Patriarch Joachim’s encyclical of 1903, to the Orthodox Churches only, but to the Orthodox and heretics together, as if they were all equally “co-heirs of God in Christ”; (2) that the proposed *rapprochement* was seen as coming, not through the rejection of their heresies by the heretics and their acceptance of the Truth of Orthodoxy, but through doctrinal compromise; and (3) that the proposal of the Grigorian calendar as the single universal calendar for concelebration between the Orthodox and the western heretics was in contravention of the canonical law of the Orthodox Church.

There is no mention here of the only possible justification of Ecumenism from an Orthodox point of view – the opportunity it provides of conducting missionary work among the heretics. On the contrary, one of the first aims of the ecumenical movement was and is to *prevent* proselytism. Hence the declaration that the Catholics and Protestants are already “co-heirs of God in Christ”.

From this time the Ecumenical Patriarchate began sending representatives to ecumenical conferences in Geneva in 1920, in Lausanne in 1927 and in Edinburgh in 1937.⁵⁸¹ The World Conference on Faith and Order was organized on the initiative of the American Episcopal Church; and the purpose of the Joint Commission’s approaches to the Churches was that “all Christian Communion throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior” should be asked “to unite with us in arranging for and conducting such a conference”.⁵⁸²

The real purpose of the 1920 encyclical was political, to gain the support of the western heretics, and especially the Anglicans, in persuading their governments to endorse Dorotheos’ and Venizelos’ plans for Greek control of Constantinople and Smyrna and its hinterland. Thus on February 24, 1920, Dorotheos wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury: “We beseech you energetically to fortify the British government... in its attempts to drive out the Turks [from Constantinople]. By this complete and final expulsion, and by no other means, the resurrection of Christianity in the Near East and the restoration of the church of Hagia Sophia can be secured.”⁵⁸³

580 Vasilios Stavrides, *Istoria tou Oikoumenikou Patriarkheiou (1453 – simeron)* (A History of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (1453 to the present day)), Thessalonica, 1987, pp. 248-249.

581 Stavrides, op. cit., pp. 260, 247.

582 Fr. George Macris, *The Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, 1986, pp. 4-5.

583 Alexandris, op. cit., p. 62.

35. THE ASIA MINOR CATASTROPHE

In March, 1920 a general election for the Ottoman parliament returned a crushing Turkish nationalist majority. The British responded by occupying Istanbul and declaring martial law. However, Turkish nationalism was not so easily squashed. The nationalists withdrew to Ankara and Ataturk.

In May, the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres were announced. Although the Sultan remained nominal head of state, Smyrna was ceded to the Greeks, and a free Armenia and a free Kurdistan were created. The eastern part of Asia Minor was divided up into French, Italian and British occupation zones; Mesopotamia and the Straits were ceded to Britain, and Syria to France. Constantinople was kept as an international city, and the Turkish army was reduced to a token force. But none of this was going to become reality...

The Treaty also ignored the territorial concessions to Russia that had been agreed during the Great War. This incensed the Soviets, who began to support Ataturk...

On August 10, the Sultan was forced to sign the Treaty. However, writes Tooze, "by putting his signature to the treaty, the Sultan also released the Turks from any loyalty to his dynasty. For the nationalist leader Ataturk it meant 'the passing of government... into the hands of the people'."⁵⁸⁴

The tragedy of the Greek position in Asia Minor was that, in spite of the support of the Anglican Church for Dorotheos, and of Lloyd George for Venizelos, the Allies never committed themselves to the expansion of Greek power there. They were prepared to consider defending the rights of minorities, but not Greek irredentism. The reason was obvious: supporting Venizelos' plans would have meant full-scale war with Turkey – an unattractive prospect so soon after the terrible losses of the Great War, and when British troops were still fighting in Soviet Russia and other places. From the Allied Powers' point of view, their troops were stationed in Constantinople, not as a permanent occupation force, but only in order to protect the Christian minority. In fact, the Greeks, by their fiercely nationalist attitude, antagonized the Turks and led to the creation of a powerful Turkish nationalist movement, which eventually destroyed the centuries-old Greek civilization in Asia Minor. The Greeks forgot that one nationalism inevitably elicits another, equal and opposite nationalism...

As the Turkish nationalist forces advanced westwards, they encountered British troops about one hundred miles from Constantinople. The British drove them off, but called for reinforcements. There were no British reinforcements, so it had to be Greek ones (the French refused to help). In June, Lloyd George and the Supreme Council agreed to Venizelos' plans to move inland from Smyrna to relieve the pressure exerted by Kemal on the British at Chanak.

⁵⁸⁴ Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 381-382.

"The British high commissioner in Constantinople wrote angrily to Curzon: 'The Supreme Council, thus, are prepared for a resumption of general warfare; they are prepared to do violence to their own declared principles; they are prepared to perpetuate bloodshed indefinitely in the Near East, and for what? To maintain M. Venizelos in power in Greece for what cannot in the nature of things be more than a few years at the outside.' Curzon agreed completely: 'Venizelos thinks his men will sweep the Turks into the mountains. I doubt it will be so.'"⁵⁸⁵

At first, however, the Greeks did well. They defeated the Turks at Chanak and seized Eastern Thrace. By August, 1920, 100,000 soldiers had penetrated 250 miles inland into Anatolia. The alarmed Allies then sent token forces of their own to separate the Greeks from the Turks. Harold Nicolson wrote: "By turning their guns against the Greeks – their own allies – the Great Powers saved Kemal's panic-stricken newly-conscripted army at the eleventh hour from final destruction."⁵⁸⁶

In October, the French signed a treaty with Atatürk, which enabled them to withdraw their troops from Cilicia, freeing more Turkish troops for the Greek front. The Turks were now receiving supplies from the Italians, the French and the Soviets (with whom they concluded a treaty in January, 1921), and began to regroup in the centre of the country...

On November 1, 1920 Venizelos suffered a stunning and quite unexpected defeat in the Greek elections. At about the same time King Constantine, who had abdicated in 1917, returned to power after the death of his son Alexander from a monkey bite. "It is perhaps no exaggeration to remark," said Churchill, "that a quarter of a million persons died of this monkey's bite". But in fact it made no difference to the war because the king felt honour-bound to try and finish what Venizelos had begun. Or rather, it made things worse, because the king then conducted a purge of pro-Venizelos officers which weakened the army at a critical time. "In Athens' newspapers," writes Bettany Hughes, "the new King Constantine was now shown together with the dead Emperor Constantine XI – finally risen from his resting-place beneath the Golden Gate and marching in to reclaim Constantinople, slaying the Turkish dragon."⁵⁸⁷

Political events cannot be separated from ecclesiastical ones at this time... With the fall of Venizelos, his brother Mason and Cretan Metaxakis also fell - temporarily. In February, 1921, he returned to America, campaigning on behalf of Venizelos, and presenting the novel argument that all the Orthodox in America should be under the Patriarchate of Constantinople because of Canon

⁵⁸⁵ Macmillan, op. cit., p. 459.

⁵⁸⁶ Nicolson, *History, 1919-1925*, 1934, p. 250; quoted in Jean de Murat, *The Great Extirpation of Hellenism & Christianity in Asia Minor*, Miami, 1999, p. 95.

⁵⁸⁷ Hughes, *Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities*, London, 2017, p. 579.

28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council.⁵⁸⁸ He immediately returned into communion with the Anglicans. Thus the Greek ambassador in Washington reported to the prefect in Thessalonica that on December 17, 1921, “vested, he took part in a service in an Anglican church, knelt in prayer with the Anglicans before the holy table, which he venerated, gave a sermon, and blessed those present in the church” of the heretics.⁵⁸⁹

Meletios won over the *epitropos* of the Greek Archdiocese, Rodostolos Alexandros, and the two of them first broke relations with the Church of Greece. Then, at a clergy-laity conference in the church of the Holy Trinity, New York, he declared the autonomy of the Greek Archdiocese from the Church of Greece, changing its name to the grandiloquent: “Greek Archbishopric of North and South America”. This was more than ironical, since it had been Metaxakis himself who had created the archdiocese as a diocese of the Church of Greece when he had been Archbishop of Athens in 1918! Metaxakis’ new diocese broke Church unity in another way, in that it was done without the blessing of the Russian Church, which until then had included all the Orthodox of all nationalities in America under its own jurisdiction. And once the Greeks had formed their own diocese, other nationalities followed suit. Thus on August 14, 1921 Patriarch Gregory of Antioch asked Patriarch Tikhon’s blessing to found a Syrian diocese in North America. Tikhon replied on January 17, 1922 that the Antiochian Patriarch would first have to get the agreement of the Russian bishops in America...

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Meanwhile, the Patriarchate in Constantinople was still beating the nationalist and anti-monarchist drum. In December, 1920, it called for the resignation of the king for the sake of the Hellenic nation, and even considered excommunicating him! Then, in March, a patriarchal delegation headed by Metropolitan Dorotheos travelled to London, where they met Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary, King George V and the archbishop of Canterbury – the first such trip to the West by the senior prelate of Orthodoxy since Patriarch Joseph’s fateful participation in the council of Florence in 1438. And there, like Joseph, Dorotheos had a heart attack and died, just as he was to receive the honorary vice-presidency of the World Congress for the friendship of the World through the Churches.⁵⁹⁰

588 This was reported in June, 1921 to the Serbian Orthodox Church by Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovich), who had been sent to America to investigate the needs of the Serbs there. Canon 28 talks about the “barbarian” lands in Thrace and other places being placed under Constantinople. Nobody before Metaxakis had interpreted it to mean jurisdiction over the whole world outside the traditional patriarchates...

589 Archimandrite Theokletos A. Strangas, *Ekklesias Ellados Istoria* (A History of the Church of Greece), Athens, 1970, vol. II, p. 1118; quoted in “Oecumenical Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakis)”, *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XVII, NN 2 & 3, 2000, p. 11.

590 Monk Paul, *Neoimerologitismos-Oikoumenismos* (Newcalendarism-Ecumenism), Athens, 1982, p. 35.

Now was Meletius' chance, and with the help of some financial bribery he achieved his end... Bishop Photius of Triaditsa writes: "Political circles around Venizelos and the Anglican Church had been involved in Meletius' election as Patriarch. Metropolitan Germanus (Karavangelis) of the Holy Synod of Constantinople wrote of these events, 'My election in 1921 to the Ecumenical Throne was unquestioned. Of the seventeen votes cast, sixteen were in my favour. Then one of my lay friends offered me 10,000 lira if I would forfeit my election in favour of Meletius Metaxakis. Naturally I refused his offer, displeased and disgusted. At the same time, one night a delegation of three men unexpectedly visited me from the "National Defence League" and began to earnestly entreat me to forfeit my candidacy in favour of Meletius Metaxakis. The delegates said that Meletius could bring in \$100,000 for the Patriarchate and, since he had very friendly relations with Protestant bishops in England and America, could be useful in international causes. Therefore, international interests demanded that Meletius Metaxakis be elected Patriarch. Such was also the will of Eleutherios Venizelos. I thought over this proposal all night. Economic chaos reigned at the Patriarchate. The government in Athens had stopped sending subsidies, and there were no other sources of income. Regular salaries had not been paid for nine months. The charitable organizations of the Patriarchate were in a critical economic state. For these reasons and for the good of the people [or so thought the deceived hierarchy] I accepted the offer...' Thus, to everyone's amazement, the next day, November 25 [December 8 new style], 1921, Meletius Metaxakis became the Patriarch of Constantinople.

"The uncanonical nature of his election became evident when, two days before the election, November 23 [December 6], there was a proposal made by the Synod of Constantinople to postpone the election on canonical grounds. The majority of the members voted to accept this proposal. At the same time, on the very day of the election, the bishops who had voted to postpone the election were replaced by other bishops. This move allowed the election of Meletius as Patriarch. Consequently, the majority of bishops of the Patriarchate of Constantinople who had been circumvented met in Thessalonica. [This Council included seven out of the twelve members of the Constantinopolitan Holy Synod and about 60 patriarchal bishops from the New Regions of Greece under the presidency of Metropolitan Constantine of Cyzicus.] They announced that, 'the election of Meletius Metaxakis was done in open violation of the holy canons,' and proposed to undertake 'a valid and canonical election for Patriarch of Constantinople.' In spite of this, Meletius was confirmed on the Patriarchal Throne."⁵⁹¹

Two members of the Synod then went to Athens to report to the council of ministers. On December 12, 1921 they declared the election null and void. One of the prominent hierarchs who refused to accept this election was Metropolitan Chrysostom (Kavourides) of Florina, the future leader of the True

⁵⁹¹ Bishop Photius, "The 70th Anniversary of the Pan-Orthodox Congress in Constantinople", *Orthodox Life*, N 1, 1994, pp. 41-42.

Orthodox Church. The Sublime Porte also refused to recognize the election, first because Meletius was not an Ottoman citizen and therefore not eligible for the patriarchate according to the Ottoman charter of 1856, and secondly because Meletius declared that he did not consider any such charters as binding insofar as they had been imposed by the Muslim conquerors.⁵⁹²

On December 29, 1921, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece under the presidency of Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias, another future leader of the True Orthodox Church, deposed Metaxakis for a series of canonical transgressions and for creating a schism, declared both Metaxakis and Rodostolos Alexandros to be schismatics and threatened to declare all those who followed them to be similarly schismatic. However, in spite of this second condemnation, Meletius sailed into Constantinople under the Byzantine flag and was enthroned as patriarch on January 22, 1922. And as a result of intense political pressure his deposition was uncanonically lifted on September 24, 1922!⁵⁹³ Thus there arrived at the peak of power one of the men whom Metropolitan Chrysostom (Kavourides) called "these two Luthers of the Orthodox Church". The other one, Archbishop Chrysostom (Papadopoulos) of Athens, would come to power very shortly...

The insecurity of Meletius' position did not prevent him from trumpeting his ecumenist plans in his enthronement speech: "I give myself to the service of the Church, so as from her first throne to assist in the development, as far as this is possible, of closer friendly relations with the heterodox Christian Churches of the East and West, to push forward the work of unification between them and others."

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On March 25, 1921, on the one-hundredth anniversary of the Greek revolution, meetings took place in 500 Cypriot churches, and petitions were addressed to the English authorities that Cyprus should be reunited with Greece.

At the same time the Greek army in Asia Minor began its advance on Ankara. Soon they had won control of the whole of the western escarpment of the Anatolian plateau.

However, on March 31 the Turks conducted a successful counter-attack. Massacres of Turks were took place in the Greek-controlled region, and of Greeks in the Turk-controlled region. Passions were too high for either side to contemplate peace.

⁵⁹² Alexandris, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

⁵⁹³ "To imerologiakon skhism apo istorikis kai kanonikis apopseos exetazomenon" (The Calendar Schism from an historical and canonical point of view), *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites* (St. Agathangelos of Esphigmenou), N 131, May-June, 1992, p. 17; Bishop Photius, op. cit., p. 41.

In the summer King Constantine arrived in Smyrna, and it was agreed to resume the advance. In August the Greeks arrived at the summit of Mount Tchal, overlooking Ankara. However, they were in a poor state, hungry, diseased and in danger of having their lines of communication cut by Turkish irregulars. The Turks counter-attacked, and September 11 the Greeks retreated to the west bank of the Sakarya River. "For approximately nine months," wrote Sir Winston Churchill, "the Turks waited comfortably in the warmth while the Greeks suffered throughout the icy-cold of the severe winter".⁵⁹⁴

Finally, on August 26, 1922, the Turks began a general offensive. The Greek army was routed. Early in September the Turkish army entered Smyrna, the Greek Metropolitan Chrysostom was murdered and the city deliberately set on fire.

At this moment Lord Beaverbrook arrived in Constantinople on a special mission for the British. On learning the facts, he told the American Admiral Bristol: "Our behaviour to the Greeks was rotten! We have behaved to them with dirty duplicity! They were prompted and supported by us in beginning their campaign. But we abandoned them without support at their most critical moment so that the Turks could exterminate them and destroy them forever! Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, supported them and prompted them himself to make the landing at Smyrna. He supported them with every means except for giving them money that his Treasury did not have to give. And now we are leaving them exposed to disaster!" Then he turned to Admiral Bristol: "And what are you doing in this matter?"⁵⁹⁵

The Allies did nothing: allied ships in Smyrna were ordered to observe strict "neutrality", and the Greek government failed to send any of its own. It took the heroic efforts of a Methodist minister from New York, Asa Jennings, to galvanize the Greeks and the Allies into action, and a massive evacuation began. Then the Greek government fell, the king resigned, Prime Minister Gounaris was executed together with six army leaders⁵⁹⁶, and Colonels Nicholas Plastiras and Stylianos Gonatas took control.

The evacuation from Smyrna continued. Hundreds of thousands were rescued from certain death either through fire or at the hands of the Turks. Nevertheless, it is calculated that 100,000 Greeks died in Smyrna, with many thousands of other nationalities, while 160,000 were deported into the interior in terrible conditions.

Meanwhile, writes Tooze, "on 23 September 1922, a battalion-strength detachment of Turkish troops entered the neutralized buffer zone within full view of the British forces. London ordered an ultimatum to be delivered

⁵⁹⁴ Churchill, *Memoirs*; in Murat, op. cit., p. 108.

⁵⁹⁵ Murat, op. cit., p. 128.

⁵⁹⁶ Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, vol. 2, pp. 131-132, 173-174; "1922-1982", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, October 4/17, 1982.

demanding their immediate withdrawal. Britain and nationalist Turkey were on the point of full-scale war. The prospect was daunting, not only because the Turks outgunned the British on the spot, but because behind Atatürk, as behind Germany at Rapallo, stood the Soviet Union. The Soviets were believed to have offered submarines with which to break the Royal Navy's stranglehold of the eastern Mediterranean. On 18 September British naval forces were ordered to sink any Soviet vessels that approached them. To make matters worse, a week earlier the Greek Army rebelled against the 'pro-German' king they blamed for the disaster in Anatolia. This was no fascist takeover *avant la lettre*. The aim of the coup was to restore Lloyd George's great ally, the pro-Western Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos...

"At no point, until the confrontation with Hitler over the Sudetenland, was Britain closer to entering a major war. And Lloyd George's position was based on bluff. If fighting had broken out, the British would almost certainly have been overwhelmed. Perhaps not surprisingly the British commander on the spot chose not to deliver the aggressive ultimatum. On 11 October 1922 an armistice was negotiated. War was averted..."⁵⁹⁷

"In November 1922 when the Government of the Grand National Assembly [in Ankara] declared that the Sultanate was to be abolished, the British kidnapped an acquiescent Sultan Mehmed VI... Istanbul's last Sultan, Mehmed Vahideddin, died in San Remo in 1926. General Charles Harington was left with the responsibility of looking after the Sultan's five wives. The Yıldız Palace meanwhile was turned into a casino by an Italian businessman. "On 2 October 1923, British troops finally left Kostantiniyye [Constantinople], their ships slipping from the quays outside the Dolmabahçe Palace. The Turkish armed forces, who, up until now, had been predominantly loyal to the Sultan – turned their faces east, the army was Mustafa Kemal's."⁵⁹⁸

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At the Treaty of Lausanne in July, 1923 Turkey's victory in the Greco-Turkish War was recognized, together with the Turkish nation state. In December, in accordance with article 142 of the Treaty, 500,000 Muslims were moved from Greece to Turkey, and 1.3 Greeks from Anatolia to Greece. The Treaty "established a dread precedent, the first of its kind in history to be sanctioned by international law, that of 'Collective Population Transfer'"⁵⁹⁹ – in other words, ethnic cleansing. This may have prevented a further mass slaughter of Greeks by the Turks, but it still caused great suffering.

"In the city itself," continues Hughes, "although a special dispensation allowed the Greek patriarchate to remain, and a substantial number of families did stay on in the Greek district around and in Pera, the isolation of the

⁵⁹⁷ Tooze, op. cit., pp. 437-438.

⁵⁹⁸ Hughes, op. cit., pp. 580-581.

⁵⁹⁹ Hughes, op. cit., pp. 582-583.

Orthodox Christians in the city quickly became unbearable. Around 150,000 concluded that they had no choice but to leave... In 1932 Greek Christians were banned from participating in thirty professions from that of tailor to doctor. A decade on and their businesses were subject to a new tax. In 1955 during the 'Istanbul Pogrom' angry young Turkish men attacked Orthodox churches, businesses, schools and even cemeteries, burning and smashing property. Over a dozen people were killed, many were abused, and more just packed their bags and ran. While 240,000 Greeks had been left in the city following the Greco-Turkish War and a subsequent population exchange, today there are fewer than a thousand..."⁶⁰⁰

The "Great Idea" of Greek nationalism was dead, drowned in a sea of blood...

Also destroyed as a result of the Asia Minor catastrophe was that unique civilization of Pontian and Cappadocian Greeks who had preserved their faith and nationality during the long centuries of the Ottoman yoke. Eschewing the political intrigues of their more secularist brethren in Athens (and, later, in Constantinople), they lived in considerable poverty, but also abundant piety, preserving the spiritual essence of Byzantine civilization. The exchange of populations in 1922-23 brought most of these truly and not nominally Orthodox Christians to Greece, where saints such as Arsenius of Cappadocia (+1924)⁶⁰¹ and Jerome of Aegina (+1966) revived the flagging piety of the European Greeks.⁶⁰²

In this period, the Russian and Ottoman Greek peoples succumbed to a similarly fatal temptation: to rebel against the powers that be. The fall of the Russians was greater than that of the Greeks in that the Tsarist autocracy, was truly Orthodox, whereas the Ottoman sultanate was, of course, Muslim. And the punishment of the Russians was correspondingly great. However, the Greeks' sin was only a little less heavy: over 460 years earlier they had sworn allegiance to the Ottoman sultan, and now for the second time (the first was in 1821) they had rebelled against him.

If their rebellion had been for the sake of the faith, the result might have been different. But the motivation, even at the level of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, was political and nationalist. And, as we have seen, it was accompanied by heretical innovations... So the wrath of God fell upon the Greeks, who suffered the same result – defeat and slaughter – as in 1821, only worse...

Thus Fr. Raphael Moore calculates that the following numbers of Greeks were killed in the Asia Minor catastrophe: in 1914 – 400,000 in forced labour brigades; 1922 – 100,000 in Smyrna; 1916-22 – 350,000 Pontians during forced

⁶⁰⁰ Hughes, op. cit., pp. 584-585.

⁶⁰¹ Monk of the Holy Mountain, *Saint Arsenios of Cappadocia*, Thessaloniki: Convent of the Evangelist John the Theologian, 1989.

⁶⁰² Peter Botsis, *Elder Jerome, Hesychast of Aegina*, Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery.

deportations; 1914-22 – 900,000 from maltreatment, starvation in all other areas.⁶⁰³

⁶⁰³ Moore, ORTHODOX@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU, January 17, 1999.

36. THE RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR

The origins of the Russian Civil War go back to the very first days after the abdication of the Tsar, to those generals who refused to accept it. "In those days only one person loudly proclaimed his allegiance to his Sovereign – Count Theodore Keller. He broke his sabre, refused to swear to the Provisional Government and tried to come to the aid of his Majesty. But his actions were neutralized by General Mannerheim. In a telegram to his Majesty dated March 6 Count Keller wrote that the soldiers 'listened to the manifesto of your Majesty on your abdication from the All-Russian throne with horror and despair, and were angry and disgusted at the traitors who had forgotten their duty before the Tsar, had forgotten the oath they had given to God.'"⁶⁰⁴

In his telegram, General Keller said: "The Third Cavalry Corps does not believe that you, Your Majesty, have voluntarily renounced the throne. Give the word, O Tsar, and we shall come and defend you!" When the text of the oath to the Provisional Government was received, Keller refused to bring his Corps to the oath. "I am a Christian, and I think that it is sinful to change the oath!" On April 5 he was suspended "for monarchism" and left for Kharkov. There in the summer of 1918 General B.I. Kazanovich vainly tried to convince Theodore Arturovich to go to the Don and the Volunteer Army – its democratic leaders and politics were not to the liking of the faithful Tsarist general. In his opinion, the Volunteer Army was obliged to wage war under a monarchist flag, for Bolshevik materialism could be successfully resisted only by its inspired opposite – Orthodox monarchism. Keller accepted the suggestion of leading the formation of a northern army with the holy Patriarch Tikhon blessing it with a neck cross of the Reigning icon of the Mother of God and a prosphora. (This fact was publicized decades later by E.N. Bezak, the wife of F.N. Bezak, who was at that time appointed by Keller as president of the Council of Defence attached to the commander-in-chief.) The patriarchal gifts were brought to Kieve by Vladyka Nestor of Kamchatka. In his address to his military co-warriors, Theodore Keller said: "The time has come when I again call you to follow me. Remember and read the prayer before battle - that prayer which we read before our glorious victories. Sign yourselves with the sign of the Cross, and with God's help go forward for the Faith, the Tsar and for our undivided Homeland of Russia." He took as the symbol of the northern army the white eight-pointed Orthodox cross sewn onto the sleeve.⁶⁰⁵

General Keller was not able to fulfil his good intention, being captured and killed by Petlyura's men in Kiev on December 8, 1918...

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⁶⁰⁴ Chechanichev, "Tajna Molchania Gosudaria" (The Mystery of the Tsar's Silence), *Russkaia Narodnaia Linia*, May 19, 2020.

⁶⁰⁵ <https://youtu.be/JUcsrnz2m9o>.

“Civil war,” writes Stephen Kotkin, “was not something that deformed the Bolsheviks; it formed them, indeed it saved them from the... near-oblivion of 1918. To be sure, even before the onset of full-fledged civil war, the Bolsheviks had not been shy about expropriation and terror. But the civil war provided the opportunity to develop and validate the struggle against ‘exploiting classes’ and ‘enemies’ (domestic and international), thereby imparting a sense of seeming legitimacy, urgency and moral fervor to predatory methods.”⁶⁰⁶

The civil war began, writes Orlando Figes, “on the Don River, in southern Russia, where Kornilov and his White Guards, having fled from Bykhov monastery, had formed a Volunteer Army of 4,000 men, mostly officers, who briefly captured Rostov from the Reds before retreating south across the ice-bound steppe to the Kuban in February. Kornilov was killed in an attack on Ekaterinodar on 13 April. Taking over the command, General Danilov led the Whites back to the Don, where they found the Cossack farmers in revolt against the Bolsheviks, who were seizing food at gunpoint and wreaking havoc in the Cossack settlements. By June [1918], 40,000 Cossacks had joined General Krasnov’s Don Army. With the Whites they were in a strong position to strike north towards the Volga and link up with the Czechs to attack Moscow...”⁶⁰⁷

The goal of the Volunteer Army, writes Daniel T. Orlovsky, “was to cast off the German-Bolshevik yoke and reconvene the Constituent Assembly. Throughout its existence, this army operated within the territory of the Don and Kuban Cossacks – a serious handicap, since the Cossacks had their own agenda independent of saving the Great Russian state. The Don Cossack ataman, General A.M. Kaledin, did offer his services to the White generals, but he was unceremoniously abandoned by the Cossacks when a Red force invaded and elicited popular support. After Kornilov himself fell in battle at Ekaterinodar, command passed to General Anton Denikin – an uncharismatic, but intelligent commander of great personal integrity.

“Other White forces gathered along the Volga and in Siberia. Perhaps most significant was the Czech legion, tsarist POWs scheduled for repatriation; ordered to disarm, they resisted and soon found themselves at war with the Bolsheviks. In Siberia (with its strong tradition of autonomous regionalism and great ethnic diversity), moderate SRs and Kadets created the ‘Siberian Regional Council’ at Omsk. On the Volga, radical SRs under Chernov established the ‘Committee to Save the Constituent Assembly’ (*Komuch*). These SRs evoked little popular support and deemed White generals a greater menace than the Bolsheviks – a sentiment reciprocated by the military. In September 1918 they met at Ufa in a lame attempt to re-establish the Provisional Government as a ‘Directory’), but it lacked even a programme, much less an apparatus to implement it. In November 1918 the military ousted the radicals (in a coup marked by executions and brutality that were becoming the norm) and installed Admiral A. Kolchak as military dictator and ‘Supreme Ruler’. Kolchak

⁶⁰⁶ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I. *Paradoxes of Power*. 1878-1928, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 290.

⁶⁰⁷ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, 1891-1991, London: Pelican, 2013, p. 148.

was emblematic of White leadership: a man of deep personal integrity, courage, and patriotism, but a taciturn and erratic personality completely lost in the world of politics. His forces never mounted a sustained threat; he even failed to obtain diplomatic recognition from the allies (at the instigation of Woodrow Wilson, who heeded Kerensky's advice). He was finally captured and executed by the Cheka in early 1920.

"The previous year had already marked the high point of the White assault, mounted from the south by A.I. Denikin's Volunteer Army. He launched an offensive in the spring of 1919, but made the fatal blunder of splitting his army into two units; a smaller force under Baron P.N. Wrangel (which captured Tsaritsyn on 30 June), a larger formation advancing into the Donbass. In the 'Moscow Directive' of 3 July Denikin ordered an assault on the capital along a very broad front stretching from Samara to Kursk. It was an all-or-nothing gamble, for Denikin realized that the Red Army was growing more powerful by the hour, and that further Allied support was dubious. He counted on enthusiasm from the momentary flash of victory, as his armies rapidly captured Kursk, Voronezh, Chernigov, and (on 13-14 October) Orel – a town just 300 kilometres from Moscow. Simultaneously White forces under N.N. Iudenich advanced on Petrograd. But White fortunes soon changed: on 18-19 October Semen Budennyi's Red Cavalry counter-attacked and smashed the White army advancing on Tula; it was only a matter of time before victory followed in the north, the Crimea, and Ukraine. The final denouement came in 1920, as the remaining White forces, under General Wrangel, were evacuated to Constantinople..."⁶⁰⁸

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Although the civil war took place in Russia, it had international ramifications, not least because the Bolsheviks, while fighting for survival at home, were always stirring the pot of revolution abroad, believing that their revolution was becoming a *world* revolution. In fact, they believed that if it did not succeed throughout the world it would ultimately be defeated. As Lenin said: "Our cause is an international cause, and so long as a revolution does not take place in all countries... our victory is only half a victory, or perhaps less." For this reason the foundation of the Comintern, in March, 1919 – Moscow's counterblast to Versailles – was not a byproduct of the revolution, but in a sense its beginning on a global scale. "The 'delegates' approved Lenin's theses denouncing 'bourgeois democracy' and upholding 'proletarian dictatorship' – precisely the point of dispute with the German Social Democrats. That rift on the left, now institutionalized globally, would never be healed..."⁶⁰⁹

Orlando Figes writes that the Bolsheviks were keen to control the new leftist parties "by organizing them through the Comintern (Communist

⁶⁰⁸ Orlovsky, "Russia in War and Revolution 1914-1921", in Gregory L. Frazee, *Russia. A History*, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 296-298.

⁶⁰⁹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 318.

International) and keeping them apart from the Social Democrats of the Second International (1889-1916). They were scornful of the European socialists who had backed their national governments in the First World War. It was to set themselves apart from them that the Bolsheviks had in 1918 decided to describe themselves as Communists rather than as Social Democrats.

“The Comintern was an international organization of Communist parties united by their common aim to overthrow the capitalist system and establish Soviet republics modeled on the October Revolution. Moscow’s control of the Comintern was set firmly from the start. At its founding congress in the Kremlin, in March 1919, the Bolsheviks insisted on structuring the Comintern as a centralized bureaucracy in their own image. At the second congress, in July-August 1920, all the parties of the Comintern were made to sign the ‘21 Conditions’, which meant breaking off relations with the socialists in their countries and accepting the decisions of its Russian dominated Executive Committee.

“The Russocentrism of the Comintern was rooted in the messianic mission of the Russian Revolution to liberate the world. Soviet Russia was the only socialist country, the prime duty of the Comintern was to follow its example and protect it from attack by the capitalist powers. It was the height of the Russian Civil War and the Allied Intervention in Russia. For the embattled Bolsheviks, the Comintern provided them with their best means of military defence: to go on the offensive against the Western states...”⁶¹⁰

The Comintern “set itself ‘the goal of fighting, even by force of arms, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and the creation of an international Soviet republic’. For the next year or more, Comintern’s Chairman, Grigori Yevseyevich Zinoviev, lived in a revolutionary dream-world in which Bolshevism was about to conquer Europe and sweep across the planet. On the second anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, he declared his hope that, within a year, ‘the Communist International will triumph in the entire world’. At the Congress of the Peoples of the East, convened at Baku in 1920 to promote colonial revolution, delegates excitedly waved swords, daggers and revolvers in the air when Zinoviev called on them to wage a *jihad* against imperialism and capitalism. Except in Mongolia, however, where the Bolsheviks installed a puppet regime, all attempts to spread their revolution beyond Soviet borders foundered either because of lack of popular support or because of successful resistance by counter-revolutionary governments...”⁶¹¹

Since Lenin’s “proletarian dictatorship” threatened the existence of all states, it was only natural that other states should think of intervening against it. The resulting war was therefore an international war between states no less than it was a civil war between Russians. However, the western states’

⁶¹⁰ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, pp. 287-288.

⁶¹¹ Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin, *The KGB and the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 1-2.

intervention was not as powerful as it might have been, for several reasons. First, they were occupied with Versailles. Secondly, the war in the west was now over, the war-weary troops wanted to go home and the war leaders wanted to return to urgent domestic considerations. Thirdly, from November 1918 Russia was no longer in alliance with Germany (Versailles had nullified Brest-Litovsk), and therefore seemed less of a threat. Moreover, the Bolsheviks had spent much of 1918 playing the Central Powers off against Entente. And fourthly, though the Soviets did not yet have a powerful army, it would now need a much larger force to defeat them than the West was able to assemble.

But the most important factor, as Paul Johnson writes, was that “with one exception none of the Allied statesmen involved even began to grasp the enormous significance of the establishment of this new type of totalitarian dictatorship, or the long-term effect of its implantation in the heart of the greatest land power on earth. The exception was Winston Churchill. With his strong sense of history, he realized some kind of fatal watershed was being reached. What seems to have brought the truth home to him was not only the murder of the entire Russian royal family on 16 July 1918, without any kind of trial or justification, but Lenin’s audacity, on 31 August, in getting his men to break into the British embassy and murder the naval attache, Captain Crombie. To Churchill it seemed that a new kind of barbarism had arisen, indifferent to the standards of law, custom, diplomacy or honour which had hitherto been observed by civilized states. He told the cabinet that Lenin and Trotsky should be captured and hanged, ‘as the object upon whom justice will be executed, however long it takes, and to make them feel that their punishment will become an important object of British policy.’ He told his Dundee electors on 26 November 1918 that the Bolsheviks were reducing Russia ‘to an animal form of barbarism’, maintaining themselves by ‘bloody and wholesale butcheries and murders, carried out to a large extent by Chinese executions and armoured cars... Civilization is being completely extinguished over gigantic areas, while Bolsheviks hop and caper like troops of ferocious baboons amid the ruins of cities and corpses of their victims.’ ‘Of all the tyrannies in history,’ he remarked on 11 April 1919, ‘the Bolshevik tyranny is the worst, the most destructive, the most degrading.’ Lenin’s atrocities were ‘incomparably more hideous, on a larger scale and more numerous than any for which the Kaiser is responsible.’ His private remarks to colleagues were equally vehement. Thus, to Lloyd George: ‘You might as well legalize sodomy as recognize the Bolsheviks.’ To H.A.L. Fisher: ‘After conquering all the Huns – the tigers of the world – I will not submit to be beaten by the baboons.’ Once the regime consolidated itself it would become far more expansionist than Tsarist Russia and, he warned Field Marshal Wilson, ‘highly militaristic.’ Churchill never wavered in his view that it ought to be a prime object of the policy of the peaceful, democratic great powers to crush this new kind of menace while they still could.

“But even Churchill was confused about means. He resented suggestions his colleagues fed the press that he had some kind of master plan to suppress Bolshevism throughout the world. He wrote to Lloyd George (21 February 1919): ‘I have no Russian policy. I know of no Russian policy. I went to Paris to

look for a Russian policy! I deplore the lack of a Russian policy.' He admitted it was not the job of the West to overthrow Lenin: 'Russia must be saved by Russian exertions.' All the other Western leaders, in varying degrees, were lukewarm about the business. On 14 February 1919 Wilson said he was for withdrawal: 'Our troops were doing no sort of good in Russia. They did not know for whom or for what they were fighting.' The French were more interested in building up their new ally, Poland, into a big state. Lloyd George was thinking in terms of public opinion at home. 'The one thing to spread Bolshevism was to attempt to suppress it. To send our soldiers to shoot down the Bolsheviks would be to create Bolshevism here.' Sir David Shackleton, head official of the Ministry of Labour, warned the cabinet in 1919 that British intervention was the main cause of industrial unrest. The War Office warned of 'revolutionary talk in the Brigade of Guards' and General Ironside, in charge at Archangel, cabled home of 'very persistent and obstinate' mutinies among his own troops.

"None of this might have mattered if Lloyd George, in particular, had regarded Leninism, as the ultimate evil. He did not. Leninism subscribed to self-determination. It was prepared to let go, had indeed already let go, all the small nations on its fringes..."⁶¹²

Orlovsky writes that "intervention by the allies, however much they might have loathed Bolshevism, had little military effect. It could hardly be otherwise: a momentous revolution in the vast Russian spaces could not be channeled, let alone halted or reversed, by the tactical forces of the allied power. Exhausted by four years of total war, fearful of domestic unrest, the allies provided some men and equipment, but lacked the clear purpose and persistence necessary to stay the course. Nor did they even share common goals. Under Winston Churchill's [more exactly: Lloyd George's] leadership, Britain supplied the most money and equipment; its primary aim was to contain German power (and avert a German-Russian alliance) and to prevent Russian advances in Asia and the Near East. For its part, Japan landed troops for the simple purpose of acquiring territory in the eastern maritime provinces. Wilson dispatched American soldiers but eagerly seized on Soviet peace feelers, first at an elective conference in Prinkipo in late 1918, later in a mission by William Bullitt and the writer Lincoln Steffens to Moscow in early 1919. In the end the allies, having denied unconditional support to the Whites, gradually withdrew from the conflict, having done little more than to reify the myth of hostile 'imperialist aggression' against the young socialist state."⁶¹³

The Russian Civil War was one of the bloodiest conflicts in history. According to Niall Ferguson, "almost as many people died during the Civil War period as people of all nations during the First World War; one estimate for total demographic losses in the Civil War period is as high as 8 million; around 40 per cent of these deaths can be attributed to the Bolshevik

⁶¹² Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, pp. 73-74.

⁶¹³ Orlovsky, op. cit., pp. 299-300.

policies.”⁶¹⁴ Simon Sebag Montefiore calculates between 10 and 20 million.⁶¹⁵ However, even this may be a considerable underestimate: by August, 1920, 29 percent of the age group 16-49 had been eliminated⁶¹⁶, and Pipes estimates the human casualties of the revolution – whose essence, as Lenin admitted, was civil strife – was 23 million by 1922.

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Lenin introduced what was called War Communism, which involved nationalization of industry, grain requisitioning and, by the end of 1918, 3000 collective farms. (More on that in a later chapter.) It was not, writes Norman Lowe, “a complete success – it failed to end the food shortages in the cities. But it did enable the government to feed and equip the Red Army.”⁶¹⁷ “War Communism,” writes Figes “was essentially the Bolsheviks’ response to the urban food crisis and the exodus of workers from the hungry cities where they had their power base. During the first six months of the Bolshevik regime around 1 million workers left the big industrial cities and moved to the countryside to live closer to food supplies. The metal industries of Petrograd were the worst hit – their workforce falling from a quarter of a million to barely 50,000 during these six months. The Bolsheviks’ once mighty strongholds, the New Lessner and Erickson plants, each of which had more than 7,000 workers in October, had fewer than 200 between them by April. The Bolshevik Party, in the words of Shliapnikov, was becoming the vanguard of a non-existent class.

“The root of the crisis was the peasants’ reluctance to sell foodstuffs for paper money when there was nothing they could buy with it. The peasants reduced production, stored their surpluses, used their grain to fatten up their cattle, or sold it to black market traders from the towns. Townspeople travelled to the countryside to trade with the peasants. They left with bags of clothes and household goods to sell or exchange in the rural markets and returned with bags of food. Workers traded tools they had stolen from their factories, or manufactured simple items, such as axes, ploughs, primus stoves or cigarette lighters to barter with the peasants. The railways were paralysed by these armies of ‘bagmen’. The Orel Station, a major junction between Moscow and the agricultural south, had 3,000 bagmen pass through it every day. Many of them travelled in armed brigades which hijacked trains.

“The Bolsheviks announced their grain monopoly on 9 May. All the peasants’ surplus harvest became state property. Armed brigades went into the villages to requisition grain. Where they found none (because there were no surpluses) they assumed that it was being hidden by the ‘kulaks’ – the phantom class of ‘capitalist’ peasants invented by the Bolsheviks – and a ‘war for grain’ began.

614 Ferguson, *The Pity of War*. 1914-1918, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 392.

615 Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 441.

616 Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime*, 1919-1924, London: Fontana, 1995, p. 509.

617 Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

"The battle cry was given by Lenin in a speech of shocking violence: 'the kulaks are the rabid foes of the Soviet government... These blood suckers have grown rich on the hunger of the people... Ruthless war on the kulaks! Death to all of them!' The brigades beat and tortured villagers until the required amount of grain was given up – often at the expense of vital seed stocks for the next harvest. The peasants tried to hide their precious grain from the brigades. There were hundreds of peasant uprisings against the requisitioning.

"The Bolsheviks reacted by tightening their policies. In January 1919 they replaced the grain monopoly with a general Food Levy (*prodrazverstka*) which extended the monopoly to all foodstuffs and took away the powers of the local food committees to set the levies in accordance with the harvest estimates: henceforth Moscow would take what it needed from the peasants without any calculation as to whether it was taking their last stocks of food and seed.

"The purpose of the Food Levy was not just to meet the pressing needs of the Red Army. By stamping out the bag trade, it also helped to keep the workers at their factories. The control of labour was the essence of War Communism – 'the right of the dictatorship', as Trotsky put it, 'to send every worker to the place where he is needed in accordance with the state plan.' One step towards this planned economy was the nationalization of large-scale industry on 28 June 1918. State-appointed managers replaced the authority of the factories by the Decree on Workers' Control in November 1917, which had brought chaos to industrial relations and encouraged the workers' protest movement against the Bolsheviks in the spring of 1918. The Decree on Nationalization was passed three days before a planned general strike in Petrograd, allowing the new factory bosses to threaten workers with dismissal if they went ahead with the action.

"The rationing system was the final element of War Communism. Left-wing Bolsheviks saw the ration coupon as the founding deed of the Communist order – an alternative to money, whose disappearance they mistakenly believed would mean the end of the capitalist system. Through the rationing system the Bolshevik dictatorship tightened its grip on society. The class of one's ration defined one's place in the new social hierarchy. Red Army soldiers and bureaucrats got the first-class ration (which was meager but adequate); most workers received the second-class ration (which was rather less than adequate); while the *burzhooi*, at the bottom of the pile, had to make do with the third-class ration (which, in Zinoviev's memorable phrase, was 'just enough bread so as not to forget the smell of it').

"The totalitarian state had its origins in War Communism, which attempted to control every aspect of the economy and society..."⁶¹⁸

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⁶¹⁸ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 152-155.

The White Army of 1918-20 was very different from the Tsarist army of 1914-16. "Entering the Great War in 1914, the Russian officer corps had been dominated by General Staff Academy graduates (like Alexeyev, Kornilov, Denikin), as well as by the elite Imperial Guards, and 87.5 percent of the generals and 71.5 percent of the staff officers had been descendants of noble families. (Never mind that most owned no property.) But Russia lost more than 60,000 officers during the first two years of the Great War. At the same time, the officer ranks of Imperial Russia, and then the Provisional Government, swelled to a quarter million. Both the replacements and the new recruits came overwhelmingly from the peasants and urban lower orders. (Jews excluded, just about any male of military age in Russia who had the slightest bit of formal education could become an officer.) Many of these tsarist officers of humble origin morphed into petty tyrants who abused the common soldier worse than had upper-class military men. But their social background meant they were not preternaturally inclined to an antisocialist orientation. In other words, the Great War catastrophe had not only made possible the far-fetched Bolshevik coup, it had also rendered conservative armed opposition to Bolshevism more difficult. At the same time, the Whites greatly complicated their difficult task by refusing to acknowledge peasant land seizures, thereby alienating their potential mass base..."⁶¹⁹

Another weakness of the Whites was their slogan, "Russia, One and Indivisible". "Though fighting amidst non-Russian peoples on the periphery", they "loudly proclaimed their goal of resurrecting 'Great Russia', with all the minority territories. Such nationalistic views, while typical of the officer corps (and indeed the centre and moderate parties in the Duma and Provisional Government), were naturally opprobrious to aspiring groups like the Cossacks"⁶²⁰ – not to mention the Balts, the Poles and the Muslims of Central Asia, among whom movements of national self-determination were beginning to stir. One exception was "the Mountain-Muslim Cavalry Brigade, commanded by Colonel Andrei (born Shir-Khan) Berlandik-Pukovsky, which advertised for men among the Caucasian Muslims, using local languages and Arabic as well as Russian to get their message across with some success."⁶²¹

None of the White leaders would recognize the independence of Finland and the Baltic states, nor would they negotiate with Josef Pilsudski, the 'First Marshal of Poland'.⁶²² Thus "when the Finnish general Mannerheim offered [Admiral Kolchak] support by taking Petrograd in July 1919, in return for recognition of an independent Finland, Kolchak spurned the offer... The minister of foreign affairs of the All-Russian government of Kolchak and Denikin was Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov (1860-1927), who had also been the Tsar's foreign minister. In July, 1919, in Paris, he refused to receive

⁶¹⁹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 296.

⁶²⁰ Orlovsky, op. cit., p. 299.

⁶²¹ Susan Reed and Katya Rogatchevskaia, "Russia's Grassroots Revolution", *History Today*, June, 2017, p. 45.

⁶²² S.A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 173.

Mannerheim, who wanted to receive guarantees from Sazonov that Finland would be independent in a future Russia in exchange for his actively helping the White Army. He offered to attack Petrograd with 200,000 Finnish troops. Such a blow, coming together with Yudenich's assault from Estonia, would almost certainly have destroyed the Bolshevik regime.⁶²³

"Another problem for the Whites was harassment from armies of anarchist irregulars known as Greens, who opposed all authority. They were specialists in guerrilla warfare and attacked both Reds and Whites. The most influential Green army was probably that led by the Ukrainian anarchist, Nestor Makhno, which at one point was thought to have numbered around 30,000 men. According to W.R. Lincoln, Makhno had a deep belief in an egalitarian revolutionary order. He was fighting for 'a stateless communist society in which slavery will vanish and state authority will have no place, where the land belongs to nobody and it can be used only by those who care about it and cultivate it.' Makhno viewed Denikin as the greatest enemy; operating in the south – in the Ukraine, the Crimea and the Kuban – he and his partisan army did everything in their power to harass Denikin. They raided his ammunition dumps and destroyed vital reserves of shells just as he was about to launch his attack on Orel. They continued to attack his supply lines so successfully that Denikin was forced to detach troops to deal with them. An American pilot helping the Whites reported that 'Makhno was looting trains and depots with impunity, and White officialdom was losing what little control over the civilian population it had.' In the end Makhno probably contributed as much to the defeat of Denikin as the Reds did."⁶²⁴

Another major problem was anti-semitism. The Whites also failed to curb anti-semitic excesses in their ranks, especially among the Cossacks. However, as Pipes writes, "while the Cossack detachments of the Southern Army committed numerous atrocities (none can be attributed to the Volunteer army), a careful reckoning of the pogroms by Jewish organizations indicates that the worst crimes were the work of independent gangs of Ukrainians."⁶²⁵

Hatred of Jews was common to all classes of society, of all ideological persuasions. A 1920 estimate put the numbers of Jews killed by Whites and Reds together at 150,000.⁶²⁶

Now historians have paid more attention to atrocities committed by the Whites than to those committed by the Reds. Nevertheless, the fact remains that shameful acts of plunder, torture and rape were committed by the Whites. And while, as Pipes goes on to say, "it is incorrect to lay wholesale blame for

⁶²³ From an interview given on "Radio Liberty" in 1966 by Rodionov, who served with Mannerheim in the Akhtyrka Hussars regiment in 1915-17.

⁶²⁴ Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

⁶²⁵ Pipes, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110. Cossack anti-semitism was evident not only in the southern army, but also in the "Mongol-Buriats Republic" of Ataman Semenov. See Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

⁶²⁶ Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, p. 392.

the massacres of the Jews on the White Army, it is true that Denikin remained passive in the face of these atrocities, which not only stained the reputation of his army but also demoralized it...

"Personally, Denikin was not a typical anti-Semite of the time: at any rate, in his five-volume chronicle of the Civil War he does not blame the Jews either for Communism or for his defeat. On the contrary, he expresses shame at their treatment in his army as well as the pogroms and shows awareness of the debilitating effect these had on the army's morale. But he was a weak, politically inexperienced man who had little control over the behaviour of his troops. He yielded to the pressures of anti-Semites in his officer corps from fear of appearing pro-Jewish and from a sense of the futility of fighting against prevailing passions. In June 1919 he told a Jewish delegation that urged him to issue a declaration condemning the pogroms, that 'words here were powerless, that any unnecessary clamor in regard to this question will only make the situation of Jews harder, irritating the masses and bringing out the customary accusations of "selling out to the Yids".' Whatever the justice of such excuses for passivity in the face of civilian massacres, they must have impressed the army as well as the population at large that the White Army command viewed Jews with suspicion and if it did not actively encourage pogroms, neither was it exercised about them...

"The only prominent public figure to condemn the pogroms openly and unequivocally was the head of the Orthodox Church, Patriarch Tikhon. In an Epistle issued on July 21, 1919, he called violence against Jews 'dishonour for the perpetrators, dishonour for the Holy Church'."⁶²⁷

However, probably the greatest weakness of the Whites was that they had no positive programme, no clear, spiritually coherent and powerful, idea of what they were fighting *for* rather than *against*.

For insofar as we can talk of positive aims, many of the White leaders were aiming, not at the restoration of Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Autocracy, but at the reconvening of the Constituent Assembly and/or the restoration of the landowners' lands. Or simply the expulsion of the Bolsheviks. Thus General Nikolai Nikolayevich Yudenich said: "The Russian white guard has one goal - to expel the Bolsheviks from Russia. The Guard has no political program. She is neither monarchical nor republican. As a military organization, it is not interested in political party issues. Her only program is: down with the Bolsheviks!"

Of course, as noted above, if the White armies approaching Yekaterinburg from the East in July, 1918 had managed to rescue the Tsar alive, the task of the Whites would have been easier - which is precisely why the Reds killed them.

⁶²⁷ Pipes, op. cit., pp. 110, 111.

For as Trotsky said: "If the White Guardists had thought of unfurling the slogan of the kulaks' Tsar, we would not have lasted for two weeks..."

But even a living Tsar would probably have availed little in view of the fact that in the main neither the White soldiers nor the populations whose interests they sought to represent were monarchists. Thus in 1919, when the Romanov Great Princes who were in the Crimea approached General Denikin with a request to enter the ranks of the White Army, they were refused. "The reasons," writes Prince Felix Yusupov, "were political: the presence of relatives of the imperial family in the ranks of the White Army was not desirable. The refusal greatly upset us..."⁶²⁸

Only Wrangel, among the leading White generals, could be described as consciously monarchist – and he was the only one to escape to freedom in Yugoslavia.⁶²⁹ Denikin, who commanded the Volunteer Army, said: "You think that I'm going to Moscow to restore the throne of the Romanovs? Never!" And after the war he wrote: "It is not given us to know what state structure Russia would have accepted in the event of the victory of the White armies in 1919-20. I am sure, however, that after an inevitable, but short-lived struggle of various political tendencies, a normal structure would have been established in Russia based on the principles of law, freedom and private property. And in any case – no less democratic than that which the reposed Marshal [Pisludski] introduced in Poland..."⁶³⁰

Not having firmly Orthodox and monarchical convictions, or any coherent political programme, the Whites were disunited and weak in opposing Red propaganda in their rear. This was especially evident on the northern, Archangel front, where Red propaganda was effective amongst both the White Russians and the British.⁶³¹

As Michael Nazarov points out, "there sat in the White governments at that time activists like, for example, the head of the Archangel government Tchaikovsky, who gave to the West as an explanation of the Bolshevik savageries the idea that 'we put up with the destructive autocratic regime for too long... our people were less educated politically than the other allied peoples'..."⁶³²

⁶²⁸ Yusupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 250.

⁶²⁹ Thus Protodeacon German Ivanov-Trinadtsaty writes: "Even if the White Army officially supported the principle of 'non-pre-determination' in relation to the future political order of Russia, according to the witness of General P.N. Wrangel, 90% of his Russian Army was composed of monarchists, and set itself only one task – the overthrow of the Bolshevik yoke." ("90 let Velikogo Rossijskogo Iskhoda" (90 Years of the Great Russian Exodus), *Nasha Strana*, N 2905, December 4, 2010, p. 2).

⁶³⁰ Denikin, *Kto spas Sovetskuiu vlast' ot gibeli?* (Who Saved Soviet Power from Destruction?), Paris, 1937, in A.I. Denikin and A.A. von Lampe, *Tragedia Beloj Armii* (The Tragedy of the White Army), Moscow, 1991, p. 8.

⁶³¹ Anthony Lockley, "Propaganda and the First Cold War in North Russia, 1918-1919", *History Today*, vol. 53 (9), September, 2003, pp. 46-53.

⁶³² Nazarov, *Tajna Rossii* (The Mystery of Russia), Moscow: "Russkaia Idea", 1999, pp. 85-86.

"Unfortunately," wrote Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), "the most noble and pious leader of this [White] army listened to those unfitting counsellors who were foreign to Russia and sat in his Special council and destroyed the undertaking. The Russian people, the real people, the believing and struggling people, did not need the bare formula: 'a united and undivided Russia'. They needed neither 'Christian Russia', nor 'Faithless Russia', nor 'Tsarist Russia', nor 'the Landowners' Russia' (by which they will always understand a republic). They needed the combination of the three dear words - 'for the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland'. Most of all, they needed the first word, since faith rules the whole of the state's life; the second word was necessary since the tsar guards and protects the first; and the third was needed since the people is the bearer of the first words."⁶³³

St. John Maximovich summed up the situation: "If the higher military leaders, instead of beseeching his Majesty 'on their knees' to abdicate, had carried out what they were bound to do in accordance with their oath, the artificially incited rebellion would have been suppressed and Russia would have been saved... A terrible sin before God and a state crime was carried out. God only knows the extent to which any of them expiated their sin. But there was hardly any open repentance. After the fall of the Provisional Government, and the loss of the power it had seized, there was a call to struggle for Russia. But although it elicited noble feelings among many and a corresponding movement, there was no expression of repentance on the part of the main criminals, who continued to think of themselves as heroes and saviours of Russia. Meanwhile, Trotsky in his *Memoirs* admitted that they (the Soviets) feared above all the proclamation of a Tsar, since then the fall of Soviet power would have been inevitable. However, this did not happen, the 'leaders' were also afraid. They inspired many to struggle, but their call was belated and their courage did not save Russia. Some of them laid down their lives and shed their blood in this struggle, but far more innocent blood was shed. It continues to be poured out throughout Russia, crying out to heaven."⁶³⁴

St. John was once asked: "Is it necessary to pray for the White generals?" He said: "Of course, it is necessary to pray for them. But it is also necessary to remember that they were all traitors to their oath..."

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Turning now to the Red Army, it was difficult for the Reds to build up an effective new army. By the spring of 1920 80% of the officer corps was staffed by former tsarist officers, whose services were retained only through blackmail - the threat that their families would be massacred if they did not comply. Even

633 Metropolitan Anthony, in Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (A Life of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. VI, p. 4.

634 St. John Maximovich, in Fomin, op. cit., p. 286.

so, there were very many desertions to the Whites – 1.76 million in 1919 alone, the Whites’ most successful year.⁶³⁵ There were furious debates among the Bolsheviks whether to use former Tsarist officers. Trotsky, the Commissar for War, insisted on using them, and Lenin backed him. But Stalin and Voroshilov were against. “Stalin was hardly the sole intriguer badmouthing Trotsky by pointing out that former tsarist officers were deserting the Red Army and taking their troops along. Denunciations of the war commissar flowed to Moscow, incited by his personal haughtiness and strident defense of old-regime officers’ supremacy in military decision-making, which seemed to betray the absence of a class outlook. Trotsky even managed to anger the very tsarist officers he was accused of championing in his disdain for their proceduralism and narrow intellectual horizons, compared with his. Summer 1919’s battlefield crisis had enabled Trotsky’s opponents to claw back from their defeat only four months before at the 8th Party Congress, thanks to Lenin; belatedly, he got the Central Committee, if not to subordinate the military to the party, at least to affirm the party-military dual command [with party commissars in every military unit] as a special achievement of the revolution. But if Lenin sensed that his war commissar had gotten too big for his britches, the Bolshevik leader continued to give every indication that Trotsky remained indispensable.... Had Lenin allowed Stalin and his band’s complete victory over Trotsky in July 1919, the outcome of the other battle – the civil war against the Whites – might have turned out differently...”⁶³⁶

As it turned out, the lack of communication between the different White fronts allowed the Red Army to defeat them separately, one after the other. Thus Kolchak’s offensive from the East in the spring of 1919 was stopped by Frunze. Then Denikin’s Volunteer Army attacked from the South in the summer. He was stopped by Budyenny. Finally, Yudenich, having refused the help of the Finns, attacked from the North-West in the autumn and was defeated.

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The Whites failed for many reasons – the Reds’ occupation of the centre, the Whites’ difficulties of communication, the fitful intervention of the western powers, the quarrels between the White leaders, the betrayal of the Whites by the Poles... But the most important reason was spiritual, the fact that, as Elder Aristocles of Moscow (+1918) said, “The spirit is not right.”⁶³⁷

It cannot be said that the Reds won because they were more popular than the Whites. Paradoxically, the population was probably more anti-Bolshevik in the Red-occupied areas than elsewhere – because they had had direct experience of Bolshevik cruelty. As General A.A. von Lampe writes, “the

⁶³⁵ Pipes, op. cit., p. 60.

⁶³⁶ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 329.

⁶³⁷ *Udivitel’nij Moskovskij Podvizhnik i Tselitel’ Starets Aristoklij* (The Wonderful Moscow Ascetic and Healer, Elder Aristocles), Moscow, 1997.

border regions, which naturally attracted to themselves the attention of those Russians who did not want to submit to the dictatorship established in the centre, *did not know Bolshevism*, that is, they probably did not know the results of its practical application on the skin of the natives. They had not experienced the delights of the Soviet paradise and were not able to exert themselves fully to avoid the trials and torments that were coming upon them.

“The population of these provinces, of course, knew the war that was exhausting the whole of Russia. The population also knew the revolution, which gave them the so-called ‘freedoms’!... The population, with the complicity of the soldiers, who had known on the front only the declaration of *rights*, but not the *obligations* of the soldier, knew only about their rights and did not at all represent to themselves that all these rights were bound up with certain obligations.

“On the territory of this population a real war was being waged, a civil war with its gunfights that did not always hit only those who were fighting in the direct line of fire; with its repressions, not only in relation to people and their property, but also to the settlements themselves, which sometimes, in the course of a battle, were mercilessly and inexorably razed to the ground... The population had to sacrifice their rights and their comforts. The White army was not that equipped and organized army that we are accustomed to imagine when we pronounce that word; immediately on coming into contact with the population it was forced to take from it fodder, horses, reserves of food and, finally, the people themselves!

“War on a given territory always brings with it many deprivations and sufferings. War, and in particular civil war, *feeds itself and supplements itself!* And, of course, the population could not welcome this; it, as I have already said, thought not about its responsibilities, but only about its rights, and it expected from the Whites only the immediate restoration of order and normal conditions of life, not thinking on its side to offer it any help at all.

“The whole sum of *unpleasantnesses* brought by the drawn-out war was very sharply experienced by the population; and at the same time it was being forcibly corrupted by the Red and socialist propaganda promising them deliverance from all these woes, promises of complete prosperity and complete dominion, promises which, as we know, have seduced not only Russia, but are disturbing no small part of the population of the whole world to this day...

“All this came down to the fact that the inconveniences caused by the Whites *ranged the population against them...*

“The Reds threatened and threatened very unambiguously to take *everything* and in fact took *a part* – the population was deceived and... relieved. The Whites promised legality, and took only a little – and the population was embittered...

"The Reds promised *everything*, the Whites only that which was fitting according to the law...

"The Reds had terror and machine-guns as arguments and measures of persuasion; the Whites threatened – *with the law*...

"The Reds decisively rejected everything and raised arbitrariness into a law; the Whites, in rejecting the Reds, of course could not also reject the methods of arbitrariness and violence employed by the Reds...

"The population demanded nothing from the Reds since the only thing they could wish for once they had fallen into their hands was peace, and they did not, of course, demand that! But from the Whites the population demanded... a miracle, they demanded that the Whites, with one wave of their white hands, should remove all the blood from Russia..."⁶³⁸

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Part of the programme of the Whites in the Civil War was that most of the lands stolen by the peasants should be returned to their rightful owners. And so, in 1919, "As the Whites advanced towards Moscow," writes Figes, "the peasants rallied behind the Red Flag. Between June and September a quarter of a million deserters returned to the Red Army from the two military districts of Orel and Moscow alone. These were regions where the local peasantry had gained substantial amounts of land during 1917. However much the peasants might have detested the Bolshevik regime, with its violent requisitionings and commissars, they would side with the Reds against the Whites to defend their revolution on the land.

"With 200,000 troops the Reds launched a counter-offensive, forcing the Whites, who had half as many men, to retreat south, losing discipline as they did so. The remnants of Denikin's army landed up in Novorossisk, the main Allied port on the Black Sea, from which 50,000 troops were hurriedly evacuated to the Crimea in March 1920. There were desperate scenes as soldiers and civilians struggled to get on board the Allied ships. Priority was given to the troops, but not all of these could be rescued and 60,000 soldiers were left at the mercy of the Bolsheviks (most of them were later shot or sent to labour camps). For Denikin's critics, the botched evacuation was the final straw. A generals' revolt forced his resignation in favour of Baron Wrangel, a critic of the Moscow Directive, who led one last stand against the Bolsheviks in the Crimea during 1920. But this was only to delay for a few months the inevitable defeat of the Whites..."⁶³⁹

638 Von Lampe, "Prichiny neudachi vooruzhennogo vystuplenia belykh" (The Reasons for the Failure of the Whites' Armed Intervention), Berlin, 1929, in Denikin and von Lampe, op. cit., pp. 28-30.

639 Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 164.

For the Red Army, “without waiting for spring, transferred large formations from the Polish front southward, to go up against Wrangel. On November 7, 1920, the third anniversary of the revolution, 135,000 troops overseen by Mikhail Frunze attacked the Crimean peninsula in a complex maneuver. ‘Today we can celebrate our victory,’ Lenin said at the anniversary celebrations in the Bolshoi. Soon enough, indeed, Wrangel ordered a total evacuation toward the Turkish Straits and Constantinople. Between November 13 and 16, from Sevastopol, Yalta, and other Crimean ports, 126 ships carrying almost 150,000 soldiers, family members, and other civilians departed Russia; Wrangel left aboard the *General Kornilov*. The Cheka rampaged among those who stayed behind, executing thousands, including women...”⁶⁴⁰

And so by November, 1920, after the last White army had been evacuated from the Crimea to Constantinople, the Russian Civil War effectively came to an end. There was still a pocket of White power in the Far East, around Vladivostok; but the armed conflict was over. However, if the *Russian* Civil War was over, the *Soviet* Civil War - that is, the war of the Commissars against the workers and the peasants - was only just beginning...

⁶⁴⁰ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 379.

37. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN THE CIVIL WAR

But no miracle was forthcoming, for the majority of the people were probably not capable of profiting from such a miracle at that time. It is probably for this reason that in mid-1918, in spite of the pleas of his close advisor, Prince G.I. Trubetskoy, the Patriarch refused to bless a White general in the south, saying that he was not engaging in politics. "I can't bless civil war," Patriarch Tikhon said, refusing to condemn either the communists or the counter-revolutionaries. "Red or White... all are children of the Church: sometimes faithful, sometimes straying. The only thing that I can do is to pray for reconciliation among our people."

But he did bless the one Orthodox general who had not betrayed his oath to the Tsar, General Theodore Keller. Moreover, he secretly blessed the White armies in Siberia under Admiral A.V. Kolchak, the most monarchist of the White leaders and their formal head, who was close to the Church. Thus already in November, 1918, in view of the lack of communication with the Patriarch, an autonomous Temporary Higher Church Authority (THCA) was formed in Siberia under the leadership of Archbishop Sylvester of Omsk.

At the request of Kolchak, the THCA moved to Omsk, and sent 2000 out of the 3500 clergy living on the territories occupied by Kolchak's armies to serve in the armies as military chaplains. In April, 1919 a Council of the THCA took place in Omsk which anathematised the leaders of the Bolshevik party and ordered the commemoration of Kolchak during Divine services as the Supreme Ruler of Russia. In an address to the clergy the Council declared: "The pastors of the Church have the moral right to struggle against Bolshevism, and nobody must look on this struggle as unfitting to the Church, as the Church's interference into political and social affairs of the State."⁶⁴¹

Kolchak believed that the Orthodox Church combined with an authoritarian system of power based on theocratic principles would help him stabilize the situation in Siberia. "The spiritual power of the soldiers has weakened," he said. "Political slogans and the ideas of the Constituent Assembly and of an undivided Russia no longer have any effect. Much more comprehensible is the struggle for the faith, and this only religion can do."⁶⁴²

Perhaps for this reason, in January, 1919 the Patriarch appeared to reverse his apolitical stance, at any rate in relation to the Siberian armies. For to Admiral Kolchak he sent a disguised priest with a tiny photograph of an icon of St. Nicholas and the following message: "As is well known to all Russians and, of course, to your Excellency, before this Icon, revered by the whole of Russia, every day on December 6, the day of the Winter Nicholas feast, there was a prayer service, which ended with the whole people chanting: 'Save, O Lord, Thy people...' with all the worshippers on their knees. And then on

⁶⁴¹ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

⁶⁴² Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

December 6, 1917, after the October revolution, the people of Moscow, faithful to the faith and tradition, at the end of the prayer service, chanted on their knees: 'Save, O Lord...' Soldiers and police came up and drove away the worshippers, and fired at the Icon from rifles and weapons. The holy hierarch on this icon on the wall of the Kremlin was depicted with a cross in his left hand and a sword in his right. The bullets of the fanatics flew around the holy hierarch without touching the God-pleaser anywhere. However, fragments of shells from the explosions tore off the plaster on the left side of the Wonderworker, which destroyed almost the whole of the left side of the holy hierarch on the Icon with the hand in which was the cross. On the same day, on the orders of the powers of the antichrist this Holy Icon was draped with a big red flag with a satanic emblem. It was firmly attached to the lower and side edges. On the wall of the Kremlin the inscription was made: 'Death to the Faith - the Opium of the People'. On December 6 in the next year, many people gathered for the prayer service, which was coming to its end undisturbed by anyone! But when the people fell on their knees and began to chant: 'Save, O Lord...' the flag fell from the Icon of the Wonderworker. The atmosphere of prayerful ecstasy cannot be described! One had to see it, and he who saw it remembers it and feels it to this day. There was chanting, sobbing, cries and hands raised on high, rifle fire, many were wounded, many were killed... and... the place was cleared. The next day, early in the morning, with My Blessing, it was declared in front of the whole people what the Lord had shown through His God-pleaser to the Russian people in Moscow on December 6, 1918.

"I am sending you a photographic copy of the Wonderworking Icon as my blessing to you, Your Excellency, in your struggle with the temporary atheist power over the suffering people of Russia... I ask you, honoured Alexander Vasilyevich, look how the Bolsheviks succeeded in striking out the left hand of the God-pleaser with the cross, which demonstrates as it were the temporary trampling of the Orthodox faith... But the punishing sword of the God-pleaser has remained as a help and blessing to your Excellency in your Christian struggle for the salvation of the Orthodox Church in Russia."⁶⁴³

However, this anti-Soviet stance was not maintained. On October 8, 1919, much to the sorrow of the Whites, the Patriarch issued a decree entitled "On the non-interference of the clergy in the civil war", in which he called on the clergy to "refrain from participation in political parties and demonstrations", and to submit to the "orders" of the Soviet authorities. "People point out that with a change in authority the Church servers sometimes welcome this change

643 Kniazev, V.V. *Zhizn' za vsekh i smert' za vsekh* (Life for all and death for all), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1971, pp. 20-23; S. Volkov, *Admiral Aleksandr Vasilievich Kolchak*, Moscow, 1991, pp. 70-81; Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky, "Otvét apologetu kommunisticheskoy ideologii" (Reply to an Apologist of the Communist Ideology), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 1553, February 15/28, 1996, p. 15. According to another source, the Patriarch sent Bishop Nestor with the icon of St. Nicholas to Kolchak in Omsk with the instruction: "Tell the people that if they do not unite and take Moscow again by armed force, then we will perish and Holy Rus' will perish with us" (Gubanov, op. cit., p. 131).

with the ringing of bells and the organization of triumphant services and various ecclesiastical festivities. But if this happens in some places, it takes place either at the demand of the new authorities themselves, or in accordance with the desire of the masses of the people, but not at all at the initiative of the Church servers, who in accordance with their rank must stand higher and beyond all political interests. They must remember the canonical rules of the Holy Church, by which She forbids Her servers from interfering in the political life of the country, and from belonging to any parties, and still more from making service rites and sacred actions into an instrument of political demonstrations.”

This statement marked the beginning of a significant shift in the Church’s attitude from one of open enmity towards the Bolsheviks to qualified neutrality and civil obedience.

Izvestia commented on it as follows: “The Patriarch and the circles around him have evidently become convinced of the solidity of Soviet power and become more cautious. [Soviet power], of course, is not expecting that the Patriarch should invite the clergy subject to him to express sympathy for Soviet power. The most that these circles are capable of is neutrality. Such tactics are recommended by the Patriarch’s appeal... In any case, the epistle of the Patriarch is characteristic in this respect, that it involuntarily confirms the strength of Soviet power, and that the Orthodox clergy are now too frightened to quarrel with it openly.”⁶⁴⁴

This shift in attitude took place when Denikin’s Volunteer Army looked on the point of breaking through to Moscow. So we cannot excuse it on the grounds that the Patriarch thought that the Reds were going to win the war. More probably, the Patriarch realized that the Whites, though better than the Reds, were motivated, as we have seen, not so much by the positive ideal of Orthodoxy as by the negative ideal of anti-Bolshevism – and only that which is truly positive and spiritual can merit the blessing of God and His Church in order to conquer the enemies of God and the Church.

The failure of the Church to issue an unequivocal condemnation of Bolshevism was a weakness that her enemies, both political and ecclesiastical, were quick to exploit. The Patriarch’s anti-Soviet statements were construed as dabbling in politics; while his refusal to bless the White armies was construed as the equivalent of a blessing on the Soviet State... However, even if the Church did not expose the evil of Bolshevism with complete clarity, the Bolsheviks were providing their own proofs of their antichristianity.

Thus Shkarovskii writes: “The spread of civil war was accompanied by a hardening of Bolshevik anti-religious policies. The RKP(b) anticipated that religious faith and the Church would soon die away completely, and that with a ‘purposeful education system’ and ‘revolutionary action’, including the use

⁶⁴⁴ *Izvestia*, October 22, 1919.

of force, they could be overcome fairly quickly. At a later stage Soviet atheist literature referred to this period as '*Sturm und Drang*'. In the programme adopted at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress in March 1919, the party proposed a total assault on religion, and talked of the coming 'complete disappearance of religious prejudice'.

"In order to attain this goal the authorities brought in ever-increasing restrictions. On 3 April 1919 the Commissariat of Justice decreed that voluntary monetary collections among the faithful were permissible 'only for the needs of a particular church building'. At the beginning of 1919 a complete ban was introduced on religious instruction for anybody under the age of 18. Existing monasteries were only permitted to function if they turned themselves into labour communes or workshops. The closure of cloisters began at the end of 1918. By 1921, 722 monasteries had been nationalized, over half of those existing in Russia. From the summer of 1918 the authorities waged a campaign to destroy 'holy relics'. This offended the faithful and was a crude intervention in the affairs of the Church, an attempt to regulate its way of life and worship. In the spring of 1919 these actions became widespread, and became a means of conducting anti-religious propaganda by deeds. On 14 March the Commissariat of Justice decreed that they should be welcomed. The authorities also looked upon the Church as a ready source of additional state funds. In 1919 they began a speculative trade in valuable artefacts, including items which they had seized from churches....

"... Despite all the obstacles placed in its way, the Orthodox Church was able to conserve its structure during the civil war. Thousands of small churches which were supposed to have been closed down, even in the capitals, continued to function, as did religious schools. Charitable works continued, and religious processions took place, until the autumn of 1921 in Petrograd.

"A very small number of priests served in the Red Army. The right-wing section of the clergy was active in its support of the White cause... Military chaplains served with the White armies – Kolchak had around 2,000, Denikin had more than 1,000, and Wrangel had over 500. All this provided further ammunition for the Bolsheviks' anti-clerical campaign. During 1920 state bodies continued the tactic of excluding religion from all aspects of life. A circular issued by the People's Commissariat of Justice on 18 May resulted in almost all the diocesan councils being liquidated in Russia. A further 58 holy relics were uncovered by the summer.⁶⁴⁵ On 29 July the *Sovnarkom* approved a proposal from the justice commissariat 'On the Countrywide Liquidation of

⁶⁴⁵ The campaign was counter-productive from the Bolsheviks' point of view because the relics of the saints were often found to be incorrupt. Thus "St. Sergius of Radonezh was said to have been found perfectly preserved, to the rapturous joy of the onlookers and the consternation of the monastery's communist custodian, who was subsequently beaten up by the crowd." (Richard Overy, *The Dictators*, London: Penguin, 2005, p. 274). The relics of St. Theodosius of Chernigov were also found to be incorrupt (see photograph opposite page 182 in I.M. Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982. (V.M.)

Relics'. However, the authority of the Church prevented this proposal from being carried out in full. Eight months later, on 1 April 1921, a secret circular issued by the commissariat admitted defeat on this score. By the autumn of 1920 the nationalization of church property had been completed. A report produced by the Eighth Department of the Commissariat of Justice stated that 7,150 million roubles, 828,000 *desiatiny* of church lands, and 1,112 buildings for rent had been expropriated by the state."⁶⁴⁶

Still more staggering than the material losses were the losses in lives. Thus in 1918-19, 28 bishops and 1,414 priests were killed⁶⁴⁷; estimates of numbers of clergy killed between 1918 and 1921 range from 1434 to 9000⁶⁴⁸; while by the end of 1922 2233 clergy of all ranks and two million laymen had been executed.⁶⁴⁹

These figures prove the truth of Vladimir Rusak's assertion: "The Bolsheviks' relationship to the Church was realized independently of legislation. Violence, bayonets and bullets – these were the instruments of the Bolsheviks' 'ideological' struggle against the Church."⁶⁵⁰

However, as Shkarovskii writes, "the first wave of attacks on religion had not brought the results which had been expected by such Bolshevik theorists as N.I. Bukharin. The majority of the population of Russia remained religious, for all the barbaric methods which had been tried to tear people away from the Church. The patriarchate also emerged from the civil war undefeated."⁶⁵¹

Moreover, with the suppression of all military and political opposition to the Bolsheviks, the Church remained the only significant anti-communist force in the country.⁶⁵² So the Bolsheviks were compelled to resort to a kind of warfare that had a far more sophisticated ideological content...

646 Shkarovskii, "The Russian Orthodox Church", op. cit., pp. 422, 423.

647 Ermhardt, *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' i kommunisticheskoe gosudarstvo, 1917-1941* (The Russian Orthodox Church and the Communist State, 1917-1941), Moscow: Terra, 1996, p. 69.

648 Edward E. Roslof, *Red Priests*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 27.

649 Shumilin, in Arfed Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960, p. 34. In Petrograd alone 550 clergy and monks of all ranks were shot in the period 1917-1922 (Anatoly Latyshev, "Provesti besposhadnij Massovij Terror Protiv Popov" (The Conducting of Ruthless Mass Terror against the Priests), *Argumenty i Fakty* (Arguments and Facts), N 26, 1996).

650 Rusak, *Pir Satany*, op. cit.

651 Shkarovskii, op. cit., pp. 423-424.

652 It should be remembered that at this stage this was exclusively an anti-Orthodox rather than an anti-religious struggle; for Lenin viewed Islam as an ally in spreading world revolution to the countries of the East, and he did not persecute the Catholics or Protestants in the same way or with the same intensity.

38. BOLSHEVISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

As we have seen, as a result of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine either declared themselves independent or were given independence by the Bolsheviks or the Germans.

“The Cossacks, too, aspired to statehood, electing their own *Krug* (assembly) and *Ataman* (chieftain). There seemed every likelihood that the old Russian Empire would fragment along ethnic lines into a hundred pieces. At first the Bolsheviks simply swam with the tide, proclaiming ‘the right of all peoples to self-determination through to complete secession from Russia. Anxious to learn from the pre-war problems of Austria-Hungary, they offered virtually every ethnic minority a measure of political autonomy. Ukrainians got their own Soviet Socialist Republic; so did Armenians, Byelorussians and Georgians. Tatars and Bashkirs were given autonomous republics within a new Russian federation; there was also a confusingly named Kirghiz (Kazakh) Republic. All told, there were around a hundred different nationalities recognized by the regime and granted, in proportion to their number and concentrations, their own national republics, regions or townships. Jews were later given their own autonomous region in Birobidzhan, as well as seventeen Jewish townships in Crimea and South Ukraine. Koreans were allowed a Korean National District around Posyet. The policy of Russification joined the rest of the old regime in Trotsky’s rubbish bin of history; henceforth non-Russians would be schooled in their own language and encouraged to identify their ethnic identity with the Bolshevik regime.”⁶⁵³ For, as Lenin said (deceitfully, as always) to the Uzbeks: “Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia, are protected by the full power of the revolution and its agencies.”

However, the attainment of sovereignty by several smaller nations exacerbated rather than resolved the national question in several regions. Self-determination opened a Pandora’s box of conflicts between different nationalities that greatly facilitated the ultimate triumph of Soviet power, which divided only in order that the central government should rule. For the Bolsheviks first encouraged nationalist separatism, and then, when each newly formed nation was particularly small and vulnerable, clamped down on all manifestations of real independence.

Thus in May 1918, when Stalin addressed a conference on the creation of the Tatar-Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Republic, he emphasized that there would be no let-up in control from the centre: “Autonomy is a form. The whole question is what control is contained in that form. The Soviet Government is for autonomy, but only for an autonomy where all power rests in the bands of workers and peasants, where the bourgeoisie of all nationalities is not only deprived of power, but also of participation in the elections of the governing organs.”

⁶⁵³ Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 154-155.

The Bolsheviks' "expert" on the national question was Stalin, and the importance of the national question was one of the factors that increased his profile and power within the party. As a young man he had dallied with the cause of Georgian nationalism against "Great Russian chauvinism". However, he became increasingly Great Russian and centralist in his thinking, and saw the importance of the central Russian Bolshevik state – in July 1918 Soviet Russia became the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic – in mentoring and lifting the smaller nations out of their backwardness.

"Stalin was the one who developed the Bolshevik rationale for federation, which, in his description, entailed a way to bind the many peoples into a single integrated state. 'Soviet power has not yet succeeded in becoming a people's power to the same extent in the border regions inhabited by culturally backward elements,' he wrote in *Pravda* (April 9, 1918). He saw the Bolshevik task as splitting the masses from 'bourgeois' nationalism by promoting 'schools, courts, administrations, organs of power and social, political and cultural [but not religious] institutions in which the laboring masses... use their own language.' In other words, Stalin's understanding went beyond membership: even if Great Russia as a higher culture extended a helping hand to the various peoples, the latter still needed education and propaganda in their native tongues and participation in managing their own affairs. Here was the Communist version of a discovery that had been made by Russian Orthodox missionaries in remote areas of the empire: namely, that the Bible had to be taught in the empire's vernacular languages, in order to get non-Christians to read it and convert. So it would be with Communism. This was not a question of a direct Orthodox missionary influence on Bolshevism, but of structurally similar circumstances leading to similar approaches. Stalin showed himself to be a missionary *de facto*.

"The first major party discussion of the national question occurred at the 8th Party Congress in March 1919. This was also the congress that reaffirmed the use of tsarist officers, whose presence necessitated political commissars, which solidified the basic structure of a dualist party-state. On the national question, Bukharin, Pyatakov, and other leftist Communists at the Congress demanded a hard-line Luxemburgist position (an end to the slogan of self-determination for nations). After all, federalism was the stance of the Mensheviks, the Jewish Bund, the Armenian Dashnaks, and non-socialist Ukrainian nationalists. Lenin responded that nations existed 'objectively' and that 'not to recognize something that it out there is impossible'. He prevailed in the vote, which acknowledged nationalism as a 'necessary evil'. The congress even wrote the principle of self-determination into the Communist party program, albeit only after rejecting Stalin's formulation ('self-determination for the working classes') in favor of what was called self-determination from the 'historical class viewpoint'. In fact, Stalin could live with this formulation, which meant that if a nation was moving from bourgeois democracy to soviet democracy, then the proletariat was the class deserving of self-determination, but if from feudalism to bourgeois democracy, then 'bourgeois' nationalists could be engaged in political coalition. But what was most consequential about the 8th Congress was

a resolution establishing the strictly non-federal nature of the party: 'All decisions of the Russian Communist Party are unconditionally binding on all branches of the party, regardless of their national composition', the resolution stated. 'The Central Committee of the Ukrainian, Latvian, Lithuanian Communist Parties enjoy the rights of regional committees of the party and are wholly subordinated to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party'. Thus, the 8th Congress, while retaining a federal state, confirmed a non-federal party. Federalism, in other words, had to be kept subordinate 'the proletariat'."⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵⁴ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, pp. 350-351.

39. THE REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONS: (1) UKRAINE

The Russian revolution was not only an *anti-monarchist* and *class* revolution, but also, as Serhii Plokhy writes, “a revolution of nations, of which the Russians were only one. Thus, historians have spoken for decades about the Ukrainian and other non-Russian revolutions as part of or coinciding with the revolutionary events in Russia proper. Whatever meaning one ascribes to ‘Russian Revolution’, it fundamentally changed not only the economic, social, and cultural life of the former subjects of the Romanovs, but also relations among the nationalities. Nowhere were those revolutionary changes more dramatic than in the triangle of imperial Russian national identity – its ‘Great’, ‘Little’, and ‘White’ components. Thus the ‘Russian Revolution’ was indeed ‘Russian’ in more than one way.

“As the Provisional Government that came to power in March, 1917 did its best to maintain the façade of one all-Russian nationality, one political party in Russia seemingly had no problem with recognizing Ukrainians and Belorussians as distinct peoples and acknowledging their autonomy or even independence. That party was Vladimir Lenin’s Bolsheviks... Like most Marxists of that day, the Bolsheviks denounced capitalism, rejected private property, and believed that the future belonged to the proletariat – the industrial working class, whose vanguard they aspired to be. But unlike their European counterparts, the Bolsheviks, who established themselves as a separate political force in 1903, believed not in an evolutionary but in a revolutionary ascension of the proletariat to political power. They needed state power to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and lead the world to socialism. They knew that proletarian revolution was all but doomed to failure in the largely Russian Empire unless they ignited the fire of world revolution in Central and Western Europe, which had a well-developed proletariat and was thus supposedly ready for the advent of socialism.

“Lenin and his cohort were internationalist in composition and outlook and in their conception of the forthcoming revolution. Russian imperial nationalism was anathema to them, and they declared themselves prepared to recognize the separate identity of the Ukrainians and Belarussians. What Lenin and the Bolsheviks thought about the nationality question in general and the Russian question in particular took on unexpected importance after the night of November 7 (October 25 by the Julian calendar), 1917, when they deposed the Provisional Government in largely bloodless coup and declared themselves the new government of the Russian republic. The extent of their republic’s borders was as yet unspecified.

“For Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who insisted on the political primacy of social classes, the nationality question was of secondary importance, and for a long time they had all but ignored it. Only the rise of national movements in the Russian Empire and Austria-Hungary on the eve of World War I forced Lenin and his allies to articulate their view of the nationality question. In 1912, Lenin commissioned the Georgian Bolshevik Joseph Stalin, who read no

languages other than Russian and Georgian and was largely unknown outside the Caucasus, to formulate the party's position on the matter. That position was to be defined in debate with the views of the Austrian Marxists, whose works Stalin could not read in the original. Relying on Lenin's support and advice, he fully incorporated his leader's views on the subject of nationalities into a long article published in 1913 that subsequently appeared as a separate pamphlet under the title *Marxism and the National Question*.

"The ideas first presented by Lenin and then spelled out in Stalin's pamphlet were further developed in Lenin's own articles published during the first months of the war. Lenin declared the right of all nations of the Russian Empire to self-determination, up to and including secession, but there was one caveat. In the final analysis, it was up to the working class of every nation – or, more prosaically, up to the Bolshevik Party – to determine whether 'self-determination' meant secession or not. If secession was in the interest of the proletariat, as understood by the party, then the nation could leave the empire; otherwise, it would have to stay in order to ensure the victory of the working class over its enemies.

"The principles looked quite clear on paper, but could they be implemented in practice? The first test came immediately after the Bolsheviks took power in Petrograd. In reaction to the coup, the Kyivan politicians declared Ukrainian statehood, claiming not only the provinces of central Ukraine, but also the traditionally Ukrainian-settled territories of Kharkiv, Odesa, and the Donets River Basin in eastern Ukraine that many in Petrograd considered part of Russia. More importantly, the Ukrainians refused to cooperate with the new government in Petrograd, which Lenin and the Bolsheviks considered evidence of counterrevolution.

"The Ukrainian activists had organized themselves on March 4/17, 1917, into a Central Council, or, in Ukrainian, a Central Rada under the presidency of M.S. Hrushevsky. Its mandate was to coordinate the activities of all Ukrainian organizations, political and otherwise. In political terms, its composition resembled that of the Provisional Government in Petrograd – the Rada consisted of activists close to the Constitutional Democrats as well as increasingly more influential socialists of various stripes. Its initial demands were quite moderate and compatible with the Constitutional Democrats' program on the nationality question. The Reds wanted finally to achieve something that the Ukrainian activists had demanded for decades – to bring the Ukrainian language into the school system. But Mykhailo Hrushevsky, the newly elected leader of the Rada, who had returned to Kyiv in mid-March after years of exile in Russia, had his eyes on a higher prize – the territorial autonomy of Ukraine.

"In late March 1917, Hrushevsky wrote a programmatic article entitled 'No Turning Back', in which he threatened the Provisional Government with the prospect of complete independence if it did not agree to grant Ukraine territorial autonomy...

Hrushevsky's program soon became that of the Central Rada and was supported by numerous congresses of peasants' and soldiers' deputies – the true source of... power in the months following the February Revolution. Whereas in the Russian provinces of the empire the revolution brought about peasant revolts against the local nobility, and in the Caucasus and Central Asia it took the form of an insurgency of autochthonous populations against Russian colonists, in Ukraine the peasants were mobilized by Ukrainian activists in support of territorial autonomy. Having played his role in the abdication of Nicholas II, Vasili Shulgin returned to his native Kyiv, complaining that Ukrainian activists were stirring up the peasants by telling them that they would assure themselves of the right to obtain land of their own and prevent foreigners, especially Russian peasants, from claiming the rich Ukrainian soil. The soldiers who had been allowed to form Ukrainian units since June 1917 also supported the Rada, seeing it as the only institution that could end the war and send them back home in time for the redistribution of the land.

“Encouraged by such popular support, Hrushevsky and the Rada unilaterally declared the territorial autonomy of Ukraine in June 1917. The genie of the federal restructuring of the Russian Empire and the concomitant partitioning of the big Russian nation was out of the bottle. The Provisional Government tried to put it back by sending its ministers to Kyiv, hoping to convince the Rada to withdraw its declaration of autonomy. Faced with the Rada's refusal, which was backed by Ukraine's minorities, including Jewish and Polish socialists, the ministers negotiated a deal in which they recognized the Rada and its government, the General Secretariat, as representatives of the Provisional Government in Ukraine. Thus Ukrainian autonomy, in curtailed form, survived its first encounter with the central government in Petrograd.”⁶⁵⁵

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“On 1 March 1918 Kiev fell and Ludendorff occupied the Ukraine, set up a ‘Landowners’ Republic’ under German supervision, and laid the foundations of a satellite-colony of the Reich... Ludendorff put troops in the Crimea, which was earmarked for a German settlement, and in September he had penetrated as far as the Baku oilfields...”⁶⁵⁶

“The German High Command,” writes Plokhy, “initially tolerated the socialist Central Rada, but in April 1918, frustrated by the Rada's inability to supply agricultural products to the German army, the High Command engineered a coup, replacing the socialists with conservatives led by a Russian aristocrat of Ukrainian origin, [the former tsarist cavalry officer] General Pavlo (Pavel) Skoropadsky [on April 28]...”⁶⁵⁷ Skoropadsky represented a growing

⁶⁵⁵ Plokhy, op. cit., pp. 192-195.

⁶⁵⁶ Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, p. 105.

⁶⁵⁷ “Only six weeks after the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, under the pressure of economic necessity the German military had unilaterally abandoned any residual claim to be acting as the protector of the legitimate cause of self-determination. Skoropadskyi spoke

group of Russian-speaking Ukrainians who combined allegiance to Russian culture with loyalty to the Ukrainian state and nation. Upon taking power, Skoropadsky proclaimed himself hetman of the Ukrainian state and declared everyone living in Ukraine a Ukrainian citizen. This inclusive approach to Ukrainian citizenship met with a formal protest filed by Vasilii Shulgin and two of his like-minded associates.

“Not all proponents of Russian unity were as stringent as Shulgin and Savenko. Skoropadsky’s Ukraine became a safe haven for former imperial government officials, politicians, and officers of the imperial army – anyone trying to escape the Bolshevik regime, which had established itself in central Russia. Many members of the Constitutional Democratic Party supported the hetman’s regime or even joined his government. Since Russia had been taken over by the Bolsheviks, they saw the Ukrainian state led by a former Russian aristocrat as a base from which the traditional Russia might be restored. Independent Ukraine was supposed to save Russia and then trade its independence for a form of federative relationship with Russia. ‘If Ukraine remains indifferent to the struggle with the Bolsheviks, it will never be forgiven by its neighbour. If, on the other hand, it helps Russia defeat the Bolsheviks, it can be assured of free development in alliance with Russia’, read a statement issued by Constitutional Democrats in the hetman’s government in October 1918.

“In November 1918, faced with the imminent withdrawal of German troops from Ukraine at the end of World War I, Skoropadsky indeed opted for federation with a future anti-Bolshevik Russia. ‘The former vigor and strength of the all-Russian state must be restored on the basis of the federal principle,’ read Skoropadsky’s decree surrendering Ukrainian independence. ‘Ukraine deserves a leading role in the federation because it was from Ukraine that law and order spread throughout the country and it was within its borders that for the first time the citizens of the former Russia, humiliated and oppressed, found refuge.’ Now Russian nationalists in Ukraine, initially skeptical about Skoropadsky’s aspirations, joined his army. Among them was Vasilii Shulgin’s own son, Vasilko, who was killed on the outskirts of Kyiv, defending Skoropadsky’s dying regime against the advancing forces of the Ukrainian People’s Republic...”⁶⁵⁸

Skoropadsky’s regime had indeed been potentially a great threat to the Bolsheviks, and if their German supporters had not begun to falter at precisely that moment on the western front, it might well have succeeded in overthrowing the Bolsheviks. However, it failed for the same reason that the White movement failed a little later: that, dominated as it was by Constitutional Democrats, it made no mention of a restoration of Tsarism, still less of any

virtually no Ukrainian and filled his cabinet with conservative Russian nationalists. The real power-holders in Germany seemed to have lost interest in the project of creating a viable Ukrainian nation state. Instead, they appeared to be readying Kiev as the launching pad for a conservative conquest of all of Russia...” (Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 145) (V.M.)

658 Plokhy, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-202.

repentance for the sin of overthrowing the Tsar. And without that it did not have the blessing of God...

And so, in the same month that Germany surrendered to the Alliance powers, Skoropadsky's regime fell to the "Directorate of Ukraine", which from 11 February, 1919, was led by Ukrainian nationalist Semyon Petliura, who had been arrested and imprisoned by Skoropadsky. "In his capacity as head of the Army and State, Petliura continued to fight both Bolshevik and White forces in Ukraine for the next ten months"⁶⁵⁹, before the Red Army finally conquered Ukraine in the autumn of 1919.

With the final fall of Ukraine to the Bolsheviks, Bolshevism was assured of taking control of all the European provinces of the former tsarist empire with the exception of Poland...

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What part did the Church take in these events?

In December, 1917, Metropolitan Vladimir returned from the Local Council in Moscow to his flock in Kiev, his heart heavy with forebodings about the future. Already in March, he had had to hold back the waves of incipient revolution. For an "Executive Committee of clergy and laymen" was organized in Kiev at this time, and a "Commissar for ecclesiastical affairs" was appointed. The Orthodox city of Kiev, which had witnessed in the many centuries of its history all manner of hideous events and changes, was shocked at the spectacle of an Orthodox parish priest in the role of a revolutionary commissar, "a policeman in a riassa" as he was called.⁶⁶⁰

In a dialogue with representatives of the executive committee, Metropolitan Vladimir stated candidly that "the Executive Committee of clergy and laymen is an illegitimate institution which is trying gradually to expand its power and to usurp prerogatives which do not belong to it." However, in spite of this his opinion of the new organ of the Kievan Church which had been formed as a result of the revolution, Metropolitan Vladimir did not refuse in principle to work with its members to lead the Church in a new direction. He gave his blessing for "the Executive Committee of clergy and laymen" to convene, in Kiev on April 12, 1917, a "Congress of the clergy and laymen of the Kievan diocese", which was for reasons that remain unclear transformed into "the Ukrainian congress of the clergy and laymen of the Kievan diocese", declaring that "the autonomous Ukraine must have a Ukrainian church which is

⁶⁵⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symon_Petliura.

⁶⁶⁰ According to the brochure *A True Account of the Church Advisory Council to the Metropolitan of Kiev* (Kiev, 1917), he is described as "at all times of the day and even sometimes at night, always with his briefcase in his hand or under his arm, racing about in an automobile with representatives of the executive committee, either to oversee the searching of monasteries in order to discover counter-revolutionary or pogromist literature, or seizing confidential documents at the Church Consistory..." (p. 30).

independent of the Synod [of the Russian Orthodox Church]”.

In August, on the eve of an extraordinary congress of the Kievan diocese, the metropolitan wrote: “Our local and rapidly growing sorrows add to the misfortune experienced by the whole of the Russian land. I am speaking about a tendency which has surfaced in southern Russia and which threatens to destroy the peace and unity of the Church. It is terrible for us even to hear people talk about separating the churches of southern Russia from the one Orthodox Church of Russia. After their long cooperation, can there be any grounds for such aims? What is their origin? Did not the preachers who spread Orthodoxy throughout Russia come from Kiev? Among the God-pleasing brethren of the Kiev-Caves Lavra do we not see men who came from all corners of Holy Russia? Is it not true that the Orthodox of southern Russia have laboured in all parts of Russia, serving the Church and as scholars in various fields? And conversely, is it not true that the Orthodox of northern Russia have laboured for salvation in various professions in southern Russia? Did they not erect the one great Russian Orthodox Church together? Could the Orthodox of southern Russia possibly reproach the Orthodox of northern Russia for falling away from the faith in some way or for distorting the teachings of faith and morality? Certainly not. Based on my personal experience I can testify that in all the dioceses where God has allowed me to serve, the Orthodox teachings of faith and morality are kept pure and unchanged, and there is everywhere unity in the Church's teachings and liturgical practices. Why should there be any separation? Where will it lead? Indeed, only the enemies both without and within will have cause to rejoice. Our love for our native soil should not suppress and stifle our love for the whole of Russia and for the one Russian Orthodox Church.”

The metropolitan concluded by appealing to the clergy and laymen to “take every possible measure to promote unity among themselves and with the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church,” and to “devote serious thought and proper preparation to the upcoming congress, thoroughly to discuss the issues presented there, and pass resolutions which are correct, legal, beneficial and which merit implementation.”

However, the congress took an entirely different direction. On August 9, the metropolitan was so offended by the proceedings of the congress that he fell seriously ill and had to leave the meeting immediately. In a defiant public statement, the delegates interpreted the metropolitan's departure as escapism and an expression of his lack of respect for the meeting.

In October, the Provisional Government fell. The Ukrainian government wished to use the change to turn their autonomous status into one of full independence. And Lenin had already shown himself sympathetic to their aims. “In June 1917, he went out of his way to manifest his support for the Rada, not only recognizing the Ukrainians as a distinct nation but also endorsing their right to autonomy, or even independence. The Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks tolerated the fact that the Provisional Government of the

Constitutional Democrats, that is, of the counterrevolutionary bourgeois, did not fulfil its elementary democratic duty by failing to announce that it was for the autonomy of Ukraine and its complete freedom to separate,' wrote Lenin.

"Lenin saw the Rada as a potential ally in his assault on the Provisional Government, and in November 1917 the Bolsheviks and the Rada did indeed cooperate to expel the government's supporters from the city..."⁶⁶¹

The same tendencies were strongly present in the Church. A special committee in charge of convening a Council of the Orthodox clergy and lay people of the Ukraine was organized in Kiev in mid-November of 1917 according to a resolution passed at the third Cossack military assembly. Archbishop Alexis Dorodnitsyn (formerly of Vladimir), who was in retirement in the Kiev Caves Lavra, stood at the head of this committee. This committee was joined by representatives from among the clergy of Kiev (Fathers Lipkovsky, Tarnavsky, Filipenko and others), who played active roles in the above-mentioned organizations, such as the Executive Committee, Church Advisory Council to the Metropolitan of Kiev, etc.

At a meeting on November 23, this committee "discussed the present position of the Orthodox Church in the Ukraine now that the Ukrainian government is being separated from the government of Russia, and took into account the pronouncement of the Russian Patriarch, who might extend his authority to include the Ukrainian Church as well". They passed a whole series of resolutions, which amounted to sweeping changes in the status and administration of the Church in the Ukraine. The organizational committee was renamed "the provisional Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council", and an executive committee established to convene a provisional Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council was proclaimed "the provisional government of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church". It was also decided that this new ecclesiastical government should appoint commissars to all the dioceses of the Ukraine. On November 24, a general meeting of the Orthodox parish councils of Kiev was convened at which these moves towards Ukrainian ecclesiastical autocephaly were condemned and the fear was expressed that an autocephalous Church might join the uniates and come under the Pope.

A few days later the metropolitan arrived in Kiev. On December 4 a meeting convened by the Union of Orthodox Parish Councils was held under the presidency of the metropolitan and attended by Metropolitan Platon of Georgia. In the days that followed several attempts were made by the autocephalists to remove Metropolitan Vladimir and his vicar bishops from Kiev. At the end of the month another delegation came to the metropolitan and demanded that he leave Kiev. He replied with emotion: "I am not afraid of anyone or anything. I am at all times prepared to give my life for Christ's Church and for the Orthodox faith, to prevent its enemies from mocking it. I will suffer to the very end in order to preserve Orthodoxy in the very place

⁶⁶¹ Plokhyy, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

where it first took root in Russia." And then, going up to one member of the delegation and pointing at his heart, he said: "Do you know that the first revolutionary was the devil, and you are making a revolution in the Church of Christ?" Then he wept bitterly...

Meanwhile, "the Kyiv Bolsheviks tried to gain a majority in the Ukrainian Congress of Soviets convened in Kyiv in December 1917 in order to repeat the Petrograd scenario and seize power in Ukraine in the name of the Soviets, but they found themselves in the minority. The Rada was no longer an ally but an enemy. The Kyiv Bolsheviks moved to Kharkiv, an industrial center close to the border with Russia, and declared the creation of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. It claimed the same territory as the Ukrainian People's Republic, whose formation was declared by the Rada after the Bolshevik coup.

"The Rada, as the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic, refused to recognize the Bolshevik clone or to support Lenin in his struggle against anti-Bolshevik forces, which was more than Lenin and his party comrades could take. As far as they were concerned, the Rada had abused the right of the Ukrainian people to self-determination. In the 'Manifesto to the Ukrainian People with an Ultimatum to the Central Rada', drafted by Lenin along with Leon Trotsky, the second most powerful party and government official, and Joseph Stalin, the commissar for nationalities, the Bolshevik leaders made a contradictory argument, simultaneously recognizing the right of the Ukrainian people to self-determination and denying it in the name of the revolution. They began by asserting their recognition of 'the Ukrainian People's Republic and its right to separate completely from Russia or enter into an agreement with the Russian Republic on federative or similar mutual relations between them.' They then revoked their recognition of the Ukrainian government, claiming that it had an 'ambiguous policy, which makes it impossible for us to recognize the Rada as a plenipotentiary representative of the workers and exploited masses of the Ukrainian Republic.'

"At stake was the Central Rada's neutrality with regard to the conflict between the Bolshevik government in Petrograd and commanders of the former Russian imperial army who had remained loyal to the Provisional Government and established their base of operations in the Don region of southern Russia. Lenin wanted the Rada to stop disarming Bolshevik formations in Ukraine, block the access of the anti-Bolshevik forces to the Don region, and join his government in a war against the opponents of the Bolshevik regime in Ukraine. That was the extent of his 'self-determination' permitted by Lenin, who was no longer in opposition to the Provisional Government but in power. The Rada refused. Lacking strength in Ukraine itself, Lenin sent Russian military units to Kyiv led by the former security chief of the Provisional Government and commander of the Petrograd garrison, Lieutenant Colonel Mikhail Muraviev.

"In January 1918, Muraviev's troops began their advance on Kyiv. In early February, he took the Ukrainian capital after firing 15,000 artillery shells at the

city. Among other targets, the gunners bombarded the house of Mykhailo Hrushevsky setting it on fire and causing the death of the elderly mother of the head of the Ukrainian movement. Hrushevsky and the Central Rada left the city, but not before proclaiming Ukraine's complete independence from Bolshevik Russia...

"The entire population of Kyiv was subjected to weeks of arbitrary arrests and executions, the kind of 'Red terror' that served as a template for subsequent Bolshevik atrocities..."⁶⁶²

As for the metropolitan, in view of the Bolshevik seizure of power, he considered the convening of an All-Ukrainian Council untimely. Nevertheless, he was forced to prepare for the opening of a new Council, and opened its first session on January 7, 1918 with a moleben on Sophia square and a welcoming speech to the delegates. He was unanimously elected to the chairmanship of the Council, and attended every meeting until the civil war broke out in Kiev. Artillery shells fired by the Bolsheviks began to fall on the Lavra on January 15. However, the metropolitan continued with his religious duties, displaying great calm. On January 23, he celebrated his last Divine Liturgy with the brotherhood of the Lavra. That evening, after occupying Kiev, the Bolsheviks took control of the Lavra, and violence began. Metropolitan Vladimir was killed [On January 25]...⁶⁶³

After the Germans' defeat in the world war in November, as we have seen, the Ukrainian nationalist Simeon Petlyura overthrew the Skoropadsky regime and captured Kiev. In August, 1919, Kiev was liberated by the Whites. But then in the autumn the Red Army regained the upper hand. Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev set off for the Kuban, where he became honorary president of the Higher Church Authority that had been formed there.

Fr. Nicholas Denysenko writes: "The Ukrainian autocephalists requested independence from Moscow over and over again, to no avail. In early 1919, when Ukraine was ruled by the Directory (under Symon Petliura), the state issued a law decreeing the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, and commissioned Oleksander Lototsky, who had served as minister of confessions under the Hetmanate, to receive recognition from Constantinople. The 1919 state law on autocephaly was the only official act of the Ukrainian state attempting to assist the Church in securing autocephaly until the recent appeal by Ukraine's Parliament.

"The collapse of the Directory and the failure of the autocephalists to reach an agreement with the Russian bishops led to the convocation of two councils in Kyiv: a local council in May 1921 proclaiming autocephaly, and then an All-

⁶⁶² Plokyh, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-198.

⁶⁶³ Archpriest Theodore Titov, *A Wreath on the Grave of the Most Reverend Metropolitan Vladimir*, 1918, translated into English, Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1987

Ukrainian council which created an episcopate in October 1921 through the employment of an innovative conciliar rite of consecration.”⁶⁶⁴

The “innovative conciliar rite” came about as follows. First, Metropolitan Michael (Ermakov) appeared at the Sophia cathedral and called on those present not to introduce a scandal into Church life, and pointed out that Patriarch Tikhon had “blessed Divine services in the Ukrainian language when that was desired by a majority of parishioners, including women, whom the Patriarch blessed to take part in Church work with full rights”. The metropolitan hoped that the delegates “will not transgress the Church canons or the will of his Holiness the Patriarch”. He did not give his blessing to the assembly, pointing out its anticanonicity, and suggested that the participants disperse to their homes.

When the metropolitan had departed, on October 23 the participants proceeded to a so-called “conciliar consecration”. That is, since no bishops had joined them, they were forced to create bishops for themselves in a manner that no other Orthodox Church recognized as canonical, earning for themselves the title of the “Lypkovsky *samosvyaty*” after the first “bishop” to be thus consecrated, Basil Lypkovsky.

As Lypkovsky himself wrote: “30 priests and all the laymen – as many as could fit into the walls of the Sophia cathedral – took part in the consecration. At the moment of consecration a wave of enthusiasm ran through the crowd. The members of the council and all those present put their hands on each other’s shoulders until a chain of hands went up to the priests who surrounded me.” Then they took Lypkovsky to the relics of Great Martyr Mercurius (according to other sources – St. Clement of Rome) and placed on his head the dead head of the saint.

That is how Lypkovsky became a “bishop”. On October 24 and 30 several other bishops were consecrated. The Council also introduced a married episcopate and second marriages for priests.⁶⁶⁵

Although the Ukrainian autocephalists were a clearly schismatic movement, they did not share the modernist ideology of the Muscovite renovationists, and entered into union with them only in the autumn of 1924, evidently with the aim of securing the recognition of their own autocephaly from Constantinople, with whom the renovationists were in communion. That is why it was not until

664 Denysenko, “The Appeal of the Ukrainian Parliament and the Ecumenical Patriarchate”, *Public Orthodoxy*, June 20, 2016.

665 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 58; M.V. Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ pri Staline i Khrushcheve* (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev), Moscow, 2005, p. 175, footnote 2; Archbishop Leontius (Filippovich), “Tserkovnij shovinizm i samosviatstvo na Ukraine. K Istorii vozniknovenia UAPTs v 20-e gody XX st.” (Church Chauvinism and self-consecration in Ukraine. Towards a history of the appearance of the UAOC in the 20s of the 20th century”), http://catacomb.org.ua/php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=821.

January 5, 1924 that the patriarch extended his anti-renovationist anathema of 1923 to the autocephalists, who soon came under the control of Soviet agents.

A further complication was introduced by the Polish church's illegal declaration of autocephaly from the Russian Church (with the blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarchate) in 1924. As Denysenko writes, "the Church in Poland... had a majority of Ukrainian people because of the large Volhynian eparchy. The Ukrainian autocephalists coming from the Church in Poland viewed the 1924 Tomos of autocephaly as superseding the 1918 All-Ukrainian council..."⁶⁶⁶

In January, 1930 the authorities convened a council which dissolved the whole of the Ukrainian autocephalists' Church organization...

⁶⁶⁶ Denysenko, op. cit.

40. THE REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONS: (2) MOLDAVIA

One of the consequences of the revolution was that Moldavia, 60% of whose population was Romanian, was united to the Romanian State. Before the revolution, writes Jelavich, "Romanians as such did not face prejudice, and there were Romanian as well as Russian large landowners. The widespread discontent was economic and social more than national. The position of the peasants was regulated by the Russian emancipation laws of the 1860s and subsequent reform measures, but, as in other parts of Russia, these had not solved the basic agrarian problems. Since conditions were roughly the same in the Regat, independent Romania did not hold a great attraction for the peasant majority. The main demand of all peasants was a breakup of the large estates and a distribution of their lands..."

"Because of these conditions, the Russian revolutions in March and November 1917 were bound to have a great effect. They influenced not only the disaffected peasants, but also the many soldiers in the province who had deserted the rapidly disintegrating Russian army... As early as July 1917 the peasants began to seize the land; by the end of the year they had appropriated about two-thirds.

"In October 1917 a provisional government for Bessarabia was organized, with its center at Kishinev... This government remained in control of the province from November 1917 to November 1918. In December 1917 it declared itself the Democratic Moldavian Republic and expressed the desire to join a Soviet federative republic..."⁶⁶⁷

However, in view of the discussions that had begun between the Soviet and German governments, this decision disturbed the Allied Powers, and with the approval of France the Romanian army invaded the province. On March 27, the Moldavian parliament, surrounded by Romanian soldiers, voted for the union of Bessarabia with Romania, and the Kishinev diocese was handed over to the Romanian Church. It was suggested to Archbishop Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of Kishinev that he join the Romanian Church; but he refused. In May he left the province, and the Kishinev archiepiscopate fell under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Church. On June 14, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Church appointed Bishop Nikodem (Muntianu) of Khush as deputy *locum tenens* of the see (he later became Patriarch of Romania). He began to "Romanize" the Bessarabian Church, introduced the Romanian language into the Kishinev seminary and in some monasteries replaced Russian and Ukrainian superiors with Romanian ones.

In October, 1918 Patriarch Tikhon wrote to Metropolitan Pimen of Moldavia and Suceava, the president of the Romanian Synod, protesting strongly at the anticanonical seizure of the Kishinev diocese by the Romanian Church. The Romanians paid no attention to this admonition, and in 1919 placed in the see

⁶⁶⁷ B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, volume 2, pp. 158-159.

of Kishinev Archimandrite Gurias (Grossu), a Russian priest of Moldavian extraction, and a graduate of the Kiev Academy...

According to K.V. Glazkov, "while with one hand the Romanian authorities mercilessly destroyed the communist opposition (for example, mass punitive operations were undertaken against Bolsheviks in the army, and Romanian units took part in the suppression of the red revolution in 1918 in Hungary), with the other hand they suppressed every kind of dissidence. A number of deputies of the Popular Assembly who were opponents of the union of Bessarabia and Romania were shot, after which the National Assembly itself was dissolved, while on the same day the pro-Romanian deputies triumphantly overthrew the monuments to Tsars Alexander I and Alexander II in the capital. In January, 1920, the White armies of General Bredov..., in whose carts were fugitives, women and children, were shot from Romanian machine-guns as they approached the Dniester. In this way the new authorities in Bessarabia spoiled for good their relations with the Russians.

"We should note that from the very beginning the Russian hierarchy and clergy, as if foreseeing the possibility of church-political disturbances, adopted quite a cold attitude to the inclusion of Bessarabia into Romania. This act was even condemned by Archbishop Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of Kishinev and Khotyn (latter first-hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad). Hoping for the speedy victory of the White movement, the representatives of the Bessarabian Church together with the zemstvos took part in the creation of a Committee for the liberation of Bessarabia. Therefore the Romanian Synod began the canonical submission of the Bessarabian diocese by demanding that Vladykas Anastasy, Gabriel and Dionysius separate from the Russian Orthodox Church in spite of the protests of Patriarch Tikhon. When the hierarchs refused to do this, the Romanian military units arrested them and exiled them from the country. But the believers were told that the hierarchs had left their diocese voluntarily. In the place of Metropolitan Anastasy there arrived from Bucharest the Romanian Archbishop Nicodemus; he was met by the clergy and laity by no means in a friendly manner. The ecclesiastical authorities [of the Russian Church] Abroad did not recognize the lawfulness of the union of the Kishinev diocese to the Romanian Church. It was violence, deceit and transgression of the Church canons, and not at all the commandments of God, that were laid at the foundation of their actions on the territory of Bessarabia by the Romanian civil and ecclesiastical authorities. How could the coming events unfold except in conditions of further imposition of terror?

"In the Kishinev spiritual seminary and spiritual schools the Romanian authorities removed the teaching of Russian and Church Slavonic languages, clearly intending to create a situation in which in Bessarabia as a whole there would remain no priests able to serve in Church Slavonic. Also, Church Slavonic service books were removed from the churches, and the priests were banned from delivering sermons in Russian. Direct physical persecution began against the zealots for the language of Saints Cyril and Methodius. In the

village of Rechul the nuns of the local monastery were beaten with birch-rods by Romanian gendarmes for taking part in services in Church Slavonic, while an old priest of the village of Goreshte who was suspected of sympathizing with the opposition was tortured with wet lashes until he lost consciousness, after which he went mad. It may be that the whole guilt of the priest consisted in the fact that he, like many true patriots, did not want to commemorate the Romanian king, his family and the Synod at the liturgy.

“The majority of the zealots for Church Slavonic as the liturgical language were Russians, but many Moldavian priests and laypeople fought steadfastly against forcible Romanianization. ‘The Moldavians,’ reported the Romanian counter-intelligence of Beltsky *uyezd*, ‘are hostile to the Romanian administration, they avoid the Romanian clergy..., they threaten the priests when they commemorate the name of the king in church.’...

“In July, 1922 there was formed in Kishinev a multi-national ‘Union of Orthodox Christians’. Soon Bessarabian patriots came to lead the Union. They were closely linked with the Russian communion in Kishinev. According to certain information, Russian monarchists led by General E. Leontovich took part in the organisation of the Union. In 1924 the re-registration of another organisation took place – the Orthodox Brotherhood of Alexander Nevsky, which was led by activists of Moldavian, Gagauz and Russian nationalities – Protopriest Michael Chakir, Priest Nicholas Lashku and K.K. Malanetsky, etc. All these were branded by the secret police as ‘ardent pan-Russists’, while the brotherhood was called the centre for the preservation and propaganda of Russian monarchist ideas...”⁶⁶⁸

668 Glazkov, “Istoricheskie prichiny niekotorykh sobitij v istorii Rumynskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi do II Mirovoj vojny” (The Historical Reasons for some Events in the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church before the Second World War), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’* (Church Life), NN 3-4, May-August, 2000, pp. 46-48.

41. THE REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONS: (3)

TRANSCAUCASIA

Dov Kontorer writes: "In November, 1917 in Tbilisi a Transcaucasian commissariat was established representing a combined government of Georgian socialists, Armenian Dashnaks and Azerbaijani Musavatists. The power of this organ extended – theoretically, at least – over the whole territory of Transcaucasia, except for the region of Baku, where the Bolsheviks were in power. The Transcaucasian commissariat refused to recognize the results of the Brest peace, according to which Soviet Russia conceded to Turkey not only the territories conquered in the First World War, but also the districts of Kars, Ardagan and Batum. This led to the destruction of peaceful negotiations at a conference in Trabzon in March-April, 1918... In the spring of 1918 the Turks were in quite a difficult situation. Nevertheless, at the cost of some short military actions, they succeeded in seizing Batumi, Ozurgeti, Akhaltsikhe and a series of other territories.

"It was against this background that an 'independent federal democratic republic' was proclaimed in Transcaucasia. It lasted for about a month. On May 26, 1918 the Georgian Mensheviks headed by N.S. Chkheidze, I.G. Tsereteli and N.N. Jordania, declared Georgia to be an independent republic [while Armenia and Azerbaijan also declared their independence]. But the reality of Georgian 'independence' was such that the new government immediately had to summon German forces onto its territory 'for defence against the Turks', and at the same time to sign a peace agreement with Turkey according to which Georgia lost even more than it had according to the conditions of the Brest peace which it had rejected."⁶⁶⁹

Georgian ecclesiastical independence had been proclaimed even earlier than Georgian political independence. On March 12, 1917, an Assembly of the bishops, clergy and laity of Georgia proclaimed the re-establishment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, which led to a break in communion with the Russian Church.

In the summer, "the Georgian Church sent a special deputation to the Most Holy Russian Synod to inform the Most Holy Synod about the re-establishment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and greet it. The Russian Synod through the mouth of Archbishop Sergei of Finland confirmed 'that Russian Church consciousness has never been foreign to the thought of the necessity of returning to the Georgian Church her former constitution... If this thought has not been realised up to now, for this there were special reasons' not depending on Church actors, but 'now, in the days of the general liberating spring, Russian Church consciousness is ready to welcome the fulfilment ... of the long-time dream' of the Orthodox Georgians, and the Russian hierarchs hope 'that God will order all for the good, and that certain roughnesses in this matter will be

669 Kontorer, "Ultima Thule", <http://mamlal.livejournal.com/121209.html?view=4676729#t4676729>.

[http://yaqir-](http://yaqir-mamlal.livejournal.com/121209.html?view=4676729#t4676729)

smoothed over' and that at the forthcoming Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church a fraternal meeting of representatives of the two Churches is bound to take place in order to find a path to mutual understanding'."670

In September, a General Council of the Georgian Church confirmed the Acts of the March Council. On October 1 Bishop Kirion Sadzaguelachvili was enthroned as Catholicos-Patriarch in Tbilisi by three vicar bishops over the protests of three Georgian hierarchs: Demetrius (Abashidze) of Simferopol, Antony of Gori and Nazarius (Lezhavy). On December 29 / January 11, 1918, Patriarch Tikhon also protested against the re-establishment of Georgian autocephaly, pointedly addressing Kirion as only a bishop.⁶⁷¹

However, the Russian and Georgian governments confirmed this election.⁶⁷² Kirion immediately seized the exarchal house and ordered the portraits of the Tsar and the previous exarchs removed. After his first and last liturgy as Catholicos, he fell ill. According to one version, he had been poisoned; according to another, he had poisoned himself. On June, 27, 1918, after retreating to a monastery, he was found murdered. Some said that he had shot himself, but this was strongly denied by others.⁶⁷³

670 Catholicos Leonid to Patriarch Tikhon, August 5, 1919; Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' tserkovnykh sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (Chronicle of Church Events, beginning from 1917), www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm, p. 9. Archpriest Zakaria Machitadze writes that he "was martyred at Martqopi Monastery" (*Lives of the Georgian Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, 2006, p. 125).

671 Georgia, he wrote, had united with Russia more than a century before, and from that time the highest ecclesiastical authority in Georgia had belonged to the Holy Synod. However, when, in 1905, an attempt was made to restore the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, the Holy Synod in 1906 decreed that this question should be handed over for discussion at the All-Russian Council, the decisions of which the Georgian hierarchs were obliged to wait for. "According to canon law, the agreement and permission of the Mother [kiriarkhal'noj] Church to the autocephaly of the other Local Church which before was subject to her jurisdiction is required. Usually the Church which is seeking independence addresses the Mother Church with her request, and, on the basis of data of a political and ecclesiastical character, seeks her agreement to the reception of autocephaly. The request is directed in the name of both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of the country, and also of the people; it must be a clearly expressed declaration concerning the general and unanimous desire to receive ecclesiastical independence. That is how it was in Greece, in Serbia and in Romania, but it was not like that in Bulgaria, where the well-known schism arose. And it was also not like that, unfortunately, in the Transcaucasus in 1917... In pointing out your errors and mistakes, we suggest to you, Most Reverend Bishops, that you submit to the demand of the ecclesiastical canons and, following the canonical order, appear at the All-Russian Sacred Council, and, recognizing your errors, convey your desire concerning the autocephaly of the Georgian Church to the court of the whole All-Russian Council, so that you may not be subjected to the judgement of the canons and not fall into the great and terrible sin of alienation from the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church..." (Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 71-75; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 14)

672 K.D. Kafafov, "Vospominania o vnutrennykh delakh Rossijskoj imperii" (Reminiscences of the Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire), *Voprosy Istorii* (Historical Questions), N 7, 2005, p. 93.

673 See Archimandrite Seraphim, "Russkie sviashchennomucheniki i mucheniki v Gruzii", *Pravoslavnij Put'*, 1965, pp. 23-32), and, for the opposite view, John Sandopoulos, "Holy Hieromartyr Kirion II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia (+1918)", *Mystagogy*, March 12, 2020, <https://www.johnsandopoulos.com/2020/03/holy-hieromartyr-kirion-ii-catholicos.ht>

After the defeat of Germany in the world war in November, 1918, British soldiers took their place. They were mainly concerned in keeping the oil industry and the Batumi-Baku railway functioning. On their withdrawal via Batumi in July, 1920, the Mensheviks under Jordania came to power in Georgia.

Meanwhile, on April 27, 1920, "without a fight, the Bolshevik Red Army captured Baku, capital of the Musavet in nationalist Azerbaijan government, whose flag combined blue for Turkic civilization, green for Islam, and red for European socialism. The Georgian Bolshevik Grigol 'Sergo' Orjonikidze (the main political commissar) and none other than Tukhachevsky (the military commander) had found an opportune moment to attack when the Azerbaijanis decided to send 20,000 units of their 30,000-troop army to respond to communal clashes between Armenian and Azeris in the disputed mountain region known as Karabakh. Additionally, Baku – unusually in Muslim-populated areas – had a substantial population of industrial workers, some of whom belonged to the Bolshevik party and welcomed a Red invasion..."⁶⁷⁴

The Armenian-Azerbaijani war, writes Kontorer, "was accompanied on both sides by the massive slaughter of the peaceful population (in contemporary terminology: 'ethnic cleansing'). In the autumn of 1920 there entered into the conflict, with the agreement of Georgia, the young Kemalist state of Turkey. Having attained a rapid and complete victory on the field of battle, it imposed significant territorial concessions on Armenia in negotiations in Alexandropol..."

"But it was not only the major Transcaucasian nations who warred against each other at this time. The assertion of national identity in conditions of the collapse of the previous imperial statehood was accompanied almost everywhere by blood civil conflict. Thus in Georgia the Menshevik government of Noe Jordania conducted in relation to a whole series of national minorities a politics that would be described today as an attempt at genocide. In particular, at that time Georgia exterminated about 18,000 Osetians, which helped greatly to make the population of Northern Osetia cling desperately to the possibility of remaining within Soviet Russia, while that part of the Osetian population which lived compactly to the south of the Great Caucasian Ridge was extremely grateful to Moscow for the creation within Georgia of the South Osetian autonomous republic."⁶⁷⁵

"On November 28, Orjonikidze and Stalin conspired to send troops across Russia's frontier with Armenia, stage an 'uprising', and declare an Armenian Soviet Republic ('by the will of the toiling masses of Armenia'). The Dashvats, like the Musavat in Azerbaijan, surrendered. The Soviet conquest of Armenia would nearly provoke war with Turkey..."⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷⁴ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 366.

⁶⁷⁵ Kontorer, op. cit.

⁶⁷⁶ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 366.

The third Transcaucasian republic, Georgia, still remained free of Soviet domination, although, in a secret agreement on May 7, 1920, Jordania, in exchange for a (worthless) promise of nonintervention, agreed to allow Bolshevik activity on Georgian territory. In February, 1921 the Bolsheviks, at the initiative of the Georgians Stalin and Ordzhonikidze, and with the agreement of Trotsky, invaded Georgia, and after a short war of three weeks took control of the country. Soon the Church was deprived of juridical status, and churches and monasteries began to be closed... "The Bolsheviks razed twelve hundred churches, destroyed much of the Church's wealth, and persecuted spiritual leaders".⁶⁷⁷

"Orjonikidze had done to his naïve Georgia what Frunze had done in his native Turkestan. 'Long live Soviet Georgia!' Orjonikidze exulted in a telegram to Moscow. Stalin, too, was triumphant at the destruction of the handmaidens of the Entente. But Lenin – who had threatened to resign over allowing other socialists in Russia into the revolutionary government in 1917 – now instructed Orjonikidze to form a *coalition* with the defeated Georgian Mensheviks. Lenin appears to have been motivated by a sense that the political base for Bolshevism in 'petit-bourgeois' Georgia was weak. Also, he seemed sensitive to the fact that the Red Army invasion had cast a pall on the Soviets' international reputation: Georgia emerged a cause celebre among Social Democrats in Europe. A baffled Orjonikidze, on March 3, 1921, telegrammed Lenin: 'Everything possible is being done to promote contact and understanding with the Georgian intelligentsia.' But Orjonikidze felt that walking on eggshells was a losing policy. In any case, the Georgian Mensheviks refused Lenin's offer of a coalition"⁶⁷⁸ – and the government went into exile in Paris...

The Mensheviks who remained behind were also very uncooperative. At a mass meeting at Tiflis opera house on July 3, 1921, Stalin was jeered as a 'traitor' and 'murderer'. "Alexander Dgebuadze, a leader of the Tiflis workers, said of Stalin, 'Who asked you to come here? What happened to our Treaty? At the orders of the Kremlin, blood is shed here and you talk about friendship! Soso, you give us both a laugh!' The audience sang Georgian freedom songs..."⁶⁷⁹

"On February 7, 1922," writes Fr. Elijah Melia, "Catholicos Ambrose sent to the Inter-Allied Conference at Genoa (the highest degree of international jurisdiction at that time) a letter of protest in which, recalling the moral obligations towards the nation of his charge, he protested in the name of the people of Georgia, deprived of their rights, against the foreign occupation and demanded the intervention of civilized humanity to oppose the iniquity committed against Georgia. He was arrested in February 1923 with Archbishop

⁶⁷⁷ Machitadze, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

⁶⁷⁸ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 397.

⁶⁷⁹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 399.

Nasaire and all the members of his Council. Their trial, which took place under conditions of semi-liberty, greatly stirred up the country.

“There were three accusations: 1) the 1922 letter to the Genoa Conference, 2) the concealment of the historic treasures of the Church in order to preserve them from passing into the hands of the State and 3) the prohibition imposed [by the] Governmental Commission for Religion against the redemption of precious objects in favour of the starving. Archbishop Nasaire was assassinated during the trial [on September 1, 1924], most probably in order to impress the others accused. All the members of his Council showed their solidarity with the Catholicos Ambrose, who conducted himself heroically, assuming the entire responsibility for his acts, which he declared to have been in conformity with his obligations and with the tradition of the Church of Georgia in similar cases. He was condemned to eight years imprisonment. Two members of his Council were given five and two years respectively. The Catholicos was liberated before the term of his imprisonment was over. He died on March 29, 1927.

“In August 1924, a general insurrection broke out, organized by all the active forces of the nation – the higher ranks of the army, the political parties, the university, the ecclesiastics, the population as a whole. But the uprising was doomed to fail, for the plot had been betrayed. The repression created thousands of victims. Groups of partisans still operated for some time...”⁶⁸⁰

In August, 1924 Metropolitan Nazar of Kutaisi and five priests were shot...⁶⁸¹

“The 1924 events,” writes Donald Rayfield, “caused famine and anarchy: the OGPU reported citizens of Alkhalkalazi eating grass, sleeping on earth floors. The orphanages were filled, and in 1926 the Commissariat for Education dispersed orphans among peasant families ‘to prepare them for agricultural labour’. The year 1925 was gentler: nearly a thousand prisoners were released, the peasants’ taxes were lighter, banditry decreased. Despite a partial reversion to a market economy (the New Economic Plan) and the distribution of land to the peasantry, Georgia could not feed its population: OGPU reported starvation in December 1927 around Tbilisi and Zugdidi; train crews were too hungry to work. In spring 1928 bread riots broke out in Tbilisi. The peasantry also resented religious oppression: Christians trekked a hundred miles for baptism or burial...”⁶⁸²

680 Melia, "The Orthodox Church of Georgia", *A Sign of God: Orthodoxy 1964*, Athens: Zoe, 1964, pp. 112-113. According to Slava Katamidze, the number of victims was “enormous”, but “the real figure has never been published” (*Loyal Comrades, Ruthless Killers*, Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003, p. 39).

681 Machitadze, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

682 Rayfield, *Edge of Empires*, London: Reaktion, 2012, p. 348.

42. THE REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONS: (4) CENTRAL ASIA AND MONGOLIA

A local Soviet Congress of Soviets seized power in Tashkent on October 23, 1917, two days before Lenin came to power in Petrograd. However, writes Kotkin, "the Tashkent Congress of Soviets voted 97 to 17 to deny Muslims governmental posts. Muslim scholars who composed the ulama and who took it for granted that they spoke for the mass, were gathering simultaneously in their own congress, in another part of Tashkent, and, being accustomed to petitioning the colonial authorities, voted overwhelmingly to petition the Tashkent Soviet to form a more representative local political body, given that 'the Muslims of Turkestan ... comprise 98 percent of the population.' At the same time a different group of Muslims, self-styled modernists known as the Jadid, saw an opportunity to outflank the traditional ulama and, in early December, 1917, assembled in Qoqand [Kokand, the capital of the ancient capital of the Kokand Khanate], a walled city that had been captured by the Russians [in 1876] only thirty-four years earlier. With nearly 200 representatives, including 150 from the nearby populous Ferghana valley, this congress resolved on December 11 to declare 'Turkestan territorially autonomous in union with the Federal Democratic Russian Republic,' while vowing to protect local national minorities (Slavs) 'in every possible way'. They constituted a Provisional Government and elected a delegation to the Constituent Assembly, reserving one-third of the seats for non-Muslims. The congress also debated whether to seek an alliance with the anti-Bolshevik steppe Cossacks, a proposition that divided the delegates but seemed incompatible with the only path to continuing to import grain: local farmers had almost all been switched by the tsarist regime to growing cotton.

"Qoqand Autonomy representatives went to Tashkent on December 13 to announce their existence on the Soviet's territory. It was a Friday (the Muslim holy day) and, as it happened, Muhammed's birthday. Tens of thousands of men, many wearing white turbans and carrying green or light blue flags, marched toward the Russian quarter of the city. Even many ulama joined, as did some moderate Russians. The marchers demanded an end to household searches and requisitions, and stormed the prison, freeing the inmates incarcerated by the Tashkent Soviet. Russian troops fired at the crowd, killing several; more died in a resulting stampede. The prisoners were recaptured and executed.

"Dominated by Muslim intellectuals educated in Imperial Russia, the Qoqand Autonomy's leaders petitioned the Bolshevik authorities in the Russian capital 'to recognize the Provisional Government of autonomous Turkestan as the only government of Turkestan' and to authorize the immediate dissolution of the Tashkent Soviet, 'which relies on foreign elements hostile to the native population of the country, contrary to the principles of self-determination of peoples'. Stalin, as nationalities commissar, issued the reply: 'The soviets are autonomous in their internal affairs and discharge their duties

by relying on their actual forces', he wrote. 'Therefore, it will not behoove the native proletarians of Turkestan to appeal to the central Soviet authorities with petitions to dissolve the Turkestan Council of People's Commissars'. He added that if the Qoqand Autonomy felt that the Tashkent Soviet had to go, 'they should themselves dissolve it by force, if such force is available to the native proletarians and peasants.' Here was naked admission both of the central Bolsheviks' powerlessness and of the role of force in determining revolutionary outcomes. But, of course, the Tashkent Soviet commanded the arms inherited from the tsarist-era colonial garrisons. The Qoqand Autonomy tried but failed to form a people's militia (it managed three more volunteers). It lacked the wherewithal to levy taxes and its diplomatic mission to the steppe Qazaks [Kazakhs] and the emirate of Bukhara yielded nothing. After the Bolsheviks' dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, Qoqand tried to coax the Tashkent Soviet into convening a Turkestan Constituent Assembly – which, of course, would have returned an overwhelming Muslim majority. On February 14, the Tashkent Soviet mobilized local garrison troops, other soldiers from the Orenburg steppes, Armenian Dashnaks, and armed Slavic workers to crush the 'counterfeit autonomy', setting siege to Qoqand's old city. An estimated 14,000 Muslims were slaughtered, many of them machine gunned; the city was looted, then burned. The Tashkent Soviet used the moment to step up requisitions of food stocks, unleashing a famine, in which perhaps 900,000 would perish..."⁶⁸³

The rest of what was to become Soviet Central Asia was seized by Red Army troops from Siberia in the course of 1919 and 1920: Merv and Ashkhabad in July, Kizil Arvat in October, 1919 and Krasnovodsk in February 1920. Khiva was seized by Frunze in June, 1920 and Bukhara in September, 1920.

*

The most remote of the Russian borderlands was Mongolia, which was "restored" by the notorious psychopath, Baron Ungern von Sternberg, aka The Mad Baron, "a White Russian general, monarchist and restorer of the Khanate of Mongolia. He was born in Austria but grew up in Estonia as part of the Baltic-German aristocracy of the Russian Empire. He joined the Russian army in the war with Japan and was enthralled with the Far East. He served with great distinction in World War I and rose to the rank of major general. He fought with the White Russian forces in the civil war, particularly with General Grigory Semyonov, before going rogue with his Asiatic Cavalry Division of Trans-Baikal Cossacks, Buriats, various Mongols, Manchus and some Japanese gunners. He fought in Siberia with some support from Japan until 1920 and gained an increasing hatred of communist, revolutionary and republican factions and believed that their victory would mean the end of the world as he knew it. Monarchy was the answer and he dreamed of building a monarchist bulwark in the Far East by restoring the Mongol Khanate as well as the Qing dynasty in China from which he could strike out and destroy the Communist regimes and restore traditional monarchies.

⁶⁸³ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I: *Paradoxes in Power. 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 253-255.

"In early 1921 the Baron invaded Mongolia and drove out the Chinese republican forces, liberating the Bogd Khan from captivity and restoring him to the throne. He then set his troops to work cleaning up Urga, installing modern lights, telephones, sanitation and so on. He sent letters to the exiled Emperor of China and to the Emperor of Japan asking for their support in his pan-monarchist coalition. He defeated several republican and communist incursions into Mongolia but was hampered by a lack of an industrial base and a steady reserve of manpower. By the summer he took his forces to attack Kiatkha which Soviet-backed Mongol communists had seized that spring. Unlike his earlier victory in Urga his forces were soundly defeated and barely managed to escape. His plan had been to rally traditionalists to his banner in Siberia, overthrow the Marxists and place the Grand Duke Michael on the throne as Tsar of Russia (he did not know the Grand Duke was already dead). That plan was dashed and while on his way to take refuge in Tibet a group of his soldiers mutinied but did not kill him. He was captured by the Soviets whose propaganda had portrayed him as the most vile criminal imaginable and after a show-trial he was executed on September 15, 1921..."⁶⁸⁴

The Sovietization of the vassal state now began... Revel wrote (in 1985): "While Georgia was the first country forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union, Outer Mongolia had the honor, also in 1921, of becoming the first Soviet *satellite*, again thanks to a method so well designed from the start that it has been used unchanged many times since, most recently in Nicaragua. In 1921, according to the 1931 Soviet Encyclopedia, there were 164 Communists in Outer Mongolia and 99 members of the Young Communist League. Not very many, in truth. Enough, however, to allow the Communist Party to propose to other parties, representing the peasantry, the formation of a national-front government (here we go!) to oppose 'Chinese domination'. As soon as the front was formed and became a provisional government, the Communists grasped the levers of power, as they would later in Hungary and, more recently, in Nicaragua. Their allies, unmasked as counterrevolutionaries and bedecked with the exquisitely Mongolian epithet of 'feudal-theocratic elements' – an ingenious phrase, and one to bear in mind – were eliminated. All that remained after that was for an improvised 'national liberation' army to appeal for 'fraternal assistance' from the Red Army, which never needs coaxing to do its fraternal duty. On June 13, 1924, a Mongolian People's Republic was proclaimed and rapidly attached to the Soviet Union by a web of 'friendship' treaties, mutual assistance treaties, cultural, economic and military treaties and heaven knows how many others..."⁶⁸⁵

The signal for the coup was the death of the Bogd Gegen, the quasi-monarchical head of state and reincarnation of Buddha]. "No traditional determination of his reincarnation was allowed. Instead, the Soviets oversaw proclamation of a 'Mongolian People's Republic'. Soviet 'advisers' were

⁶⁸⁴ "The Mad Monarchist", <http://madmonarchist.blogspot.com/.../monarchist-profile...>

⁶⁸⁵ Revel, *How Democracies Perish*, 1985, pp. 61-62.

already pulling the strings behind nominal Mongol leaders. Following the establishment of a Mongol version of the OGPU, membership to the Mongol party shrank by half from purges; many mysterious deaths ensued, including those of several of the original Mongol revolutionaries who had sought Soviet aid. A German foreign ministry official, on a visit, found Mongolia to be 'practically on the way to becoming a Russian province.' Although Soviet-led attempts to create a single centralized trade cooperative failed and a mere 400 Mongol children were enrolled in schools, instruments of political indoctrination were being created: on November 10, 1924, the first issue of a Mongol-language newspaper, the organ of the Mongolian People's Party, was published in Irkutsk, Siberia. Building a socialist order in a nation of shepherds and monks presented profound problems for Communist ideology as well as practice. Most immediately, though, the Mongolian satellite was meant to serve Soviet security interests as a forward base of national liberation in Asia..."⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁶ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, pp. 553-554.

43. THE REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONS: (5) POLAND

At a critical point in the Civil War, on 11 October, 1919, when the Whites were surging towards Moscow from the south, "Warsaw entered into furtive negotiations with the Soviets. In exchange for Polish neutrality, the Bolsheviks ceded much of Belorussia and Lithuania. This arrangement allowed the Bolsheviks to redeploy over 40,000 troops against Yudenich, who was approaching Petrograd along the Baltic. Combined with Trotsky's radical mobilization, which dragooned 2.5 million men into the Red Army, this was enough to tilt the balance. By mid-November the tide of the battle had turned. The Reds triumphed. Denikin and Kolchak were driven to flight. On 17 November 1919, Lloyd George announced to the House of Commons that London, after having spent almost half a billion dollars, was abandoning the attempt to break the Bolshevik regime by military force. The cost was too great... Lloyd George reminded the House that a 'great, gigantic, colossal, growing Russia rolling onwards like a glacier towards Persia and the borders of Afghanistan and India' was the 'greatest menace the British Empire could be confronted with'. With the threat of revolution on the wane in eastern Europe, the better policy was to quarantine the Soviet regime behind a 'barbed wire-fence.'"⁶⁸⁷

So the western policy of "containment" proclaimed by the Americans in 1946 was actually initiated by the British in 1919. The problem was: the "containment" or "quarantine" was not effective: the virus escaped.

The withdrawal of the Poles, according to General Denikin, was the decisive event that guaranteed the defeat of the Whites. Certainly, the combined effect of the withdrawal of the Poles and the British had a devastating effect on morale. However, continues Tooze, "it did not mean the end of the threats to the Soviet regime. Over the winter of 1919-20 the Polish Ministry of War began preparing for the definitive settlement of the Russian question. The largest nationalist party in Poland, the National Democrats, were opposed to an offensive, preferring to defend a more compact, ethnically homogeneous territory. But Marshal Joseph Pilsudski, the dominant figure in the fragile Polish state, did not share their limited vision. Pilsudski dreamed of resurrecting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which until the ravages of the Thirty Years War had blocked Muscovite expansion to the west. In alliance with an autonomous Ukraine, a new Polish super-state would anchor a cordon stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Pilsudski assumed this would appeal to London. But Lloyd George's government declined to give its backing to Polish aggression. The Poles had to make do with the anaemic support from the French [De Gaulle, released from prison camp in Germany, was sent to Poland as an adviser] and an alliance with the Ukrainian nationalists, who, following the German retreat from the Brest-Litovsk lines, had taken shelter in Galicia. In exchange for the promise of eastern Galicia for Poland, Pilsudski threw Poland's weight behind Simon Petlyura's bid to establish an

⁶⁸⁷ Tooze, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

independent Ukraine as a permanent part of the new order. It was a high-risk strategy, but Warsaw was convinced that the Red Army was preparing for a push west. Pilsudski would beat them to the punch.

“On 25 April 1920 the Polish-Ukrainian army attacked. On 7 May they took Kiev, enabling the surviving White Russian forces under General Pyotr Wrangel to stabilize a new base in the Crimea. Once more the Bolshevik regime seemed to confront an existential threat from the south. But the past three years had taken their toll on Ukraine. The arrival of Petlura and Pilsudski heralded the fifteenth change of regime in Kiev since January 1917. Hundreds of thousands of people had died at the hands of Germans, Austrians, White and Red Russian occupiers, amongst them 90,000 Jews who had been slaughtered in a series of pogroms since the Cossack uprising of the seventeenth century. The survivors were in no mood to raise a popular insurrection. In Russia, by contrast, the idea of Polish Lancers cantering through Kiev unleashed a storm of patriotic fury. With war hero Aleksei Brusilov in the lead, former Tsarist officers flooded into Trotsky’s Red Army.

“The result was one of the climactic moments in modern European history. On 5 June 1920 the massed horde of General Semen Budenny’s Red Cavalry, 18,000-strong, smashed through the Polish lines, forcing a precipitate evacuation of Kiev. Only a month later, on 2 July, the brilliant Bolshevik commander and military theoretician Mikhail Tukhachevsky issued the order for a general advance. ‘Over the corpse of White Poland lies the path to world conflagration... On to Vilno, Minsk, Warsaw! Forward!’ Egged on by their front commanders, Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership now believed that they ‘stood at the turning point of the entire policy of the Soviet government. It was time to ‘test with bayonets whether the socialist revolution of the proletariat had not ripened in Poland...’ The fact that the French were scrambling to prop up the Polish defences and that Britain was trying to mediate revealed that ‘somewhere near Warsaw’ lay ‘the center of the whole contemporary system of international imperialism...’ Through the conquest of Poland they would ‘shake’ the entire structure to its foundations. The Red Army would bring to life a ‘completely new zone of proletarian revolution against global imperialism’...

“As the Red Army advanced towards the West, Tukhachevsky threw an encircling right-hook along the Baltic coastline. By the second week of August his advance guard was within 150 miles of Berlin. With the Weimar Republic looking to resume diplomatic relations with the advancing Soviets, many East Prussian communities welcomed the Russian forces as a harbinger of the end of the hated Polish rule. Cut off from resupply in the first weeks of August on the Vistula River line, Pilsudski made his stand. Exploiting the gaps that opened up between the northernmost pincer of the encirclement and the Soviet forces driving towards the outskirts of Warsaw, on 16 August 1920 he counterattacked, driving north and then eastwards, deep into the rear of the Red Army. The result was a staggering reversal. By 21 August Tukhachevsky’s entire front was disintegrating. To the south, after a futile siege of Lvov on 31

August, the Red Army under the supervision of Political Commissar Stalin were defeated at Zamosc. In what was to be the last great cavalry battle of European history, General Budenny's 1st Red Cavalry Army was driven to flight by a brigade of Polish Uhlans, the descendants of the men who had ridden with Napoleon Bonaparte in 1812.

"On 12 October 1920 Moscow agreed to an armistice and on 18 March 1921 it concluded the Treaty of Riga. The Baltic boundary with Russia drawn by the Germans in 1918 remained in place. The White Russian and Ukrainian states envisioned by Brest-Litovsk were partitioned between the Soviet regime and a hugely expanded Poland. It was, Lenin admitted, a crushing setback to the expansive hopes of the revolution..."⁶⁸⁸

And Lenin had been largely to blame. It was he who insisted on the fatal advance, asserting, on no good evidence, that the Polish workers were about to rise up against the nationalist regime. Stalin, too, was blamed, for insubordination in refusing to send the soldiers of the south-western front north towards Warsaw to support Tukhachevsky – he promptly resigned from all his military posts.

"Defeat in Poland," writes Figes, "was the first of several setbacks that made Lenin think again about exporting revolution to Europe. In March a large strike action planned by the German Communists in the Halle and Mansfeld industrial regions of Saxony failed to develop into a revolt, as the Comintern and its agents in Germany had hoped. After the defeat, the Third Congress of the Comintern steered a course away from revolutionary adventurism towards more patient propaganda and trade union work. 'Only now do we see and feel that we are not immediately close to our final aim, to the conquest of power on the world scale,' Trotsky told the delegates in June 1921. 'We told ourselves back in 1919 that it was a question of months, but now we say that it is perhaps a question of several years.'

"Conceding that the export of the revolution was no longer an immediate option, the Bolsheviks divided their foreign policy into two parallel strategies: the long-term preparation of revolutionary initiatives by the Comintern and short-term practical diplomacy by the Commissar of Foreign Affairs. It was not just a dual policy; it was duplicitous – the Commissariat seeking to improve relations and develop trade with the capitalist countries, while the Comintern continued to subvert these states by fostering the Communist movements through the Profitintern (the Red International for Trade Unions), it developed links to the labour movement in the West. In the British General Strike of 1926 Moscow sent financial aid to the strikers, resulting in a worsening of Anglo-Soviet relations and the 'war scare' of 1927 which Stalin used to justify his crash programme of industrialization."⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁸ Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 411-413, 417.

⁶⁸⁹ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 289-290.

The Bolsheviks' defeat, as Adam Zamoyski writes, "gave rise to a siege mentality, isolationism and the doctrine of 'communism in one country', expressed to the outside world in a sulky, defensive aggressiveness. Hurt pride is in evidence in the attitude of most of Russia's leaders to the rest of the world, beginning with Lenin.

"The isolation in which Russia spent the 1920s and 1930s undoubtedly assisted Stalin in his seizure of power and his reign of terror, and it ultimately pushed her into the arms of the other regime born of humiliation and fired by a determination to overthrow the Versailles settlement – Nazi Germany. And when his troops marched into Poland in support of the Germans in 1939, Stalin showed that he had learned the lessons of 1919-20. There would be no attempt to win the Poles over to communism; his previous experience had taught him that they were not amenable. So he set about extirpating not only nobles, priests and landowners, but also doctors, nurses and veterinary surgeons, and in general anyone who might show the slightest sign of independent thought or even curiosity – the scores of charges which entailed immediate arrest and deportation included possessing a stamp collection. Over 1,500,000 people were caught up in this fine net. Army officers, for whom Stalin felt a particular hatred, were murdered in the forest of Katyn and elsewhere, other ranks and civilians were dispatched to the Gulag, where a majority died. After 1945 he would do his best to extend the same principles to the rest of Poland.

"How differently things might have turned out in Russia had some kind of peace been negotiated back at the beginning of 1919, and the whole war avoided, it would be idle to speculate. It would be equally pointless, if fascinating, to try to extrapolate the consequences of a Russian victory at Warsaw in 1920: Poland and the Baltic states would have been turned into Soviet republics, followed almost certainly by Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, and very probably Germany, and the rest of Europe would have been profoundly affected; whether this would have led to world revolution or an international crusade leading to the destruction of Soviet Russia is anybody's guess...."⁶⁹⁰

Abandoning world revolution went right against one of the central tenets of Leninism. Lenin had thought that revolution in Russia would fail if it were not transformed – soon – into world-wide revolution. Nor was it a totally unfeasible prospect in the early years after the Great War, when disillusion with western civilization was at its height. For here, as Brendon writes, "was the promise of an end to the capitalist system, which institutionalised greed and exploitation, whose by-products were unjust empires and cruel wars. Instead each would give according to his ability and receive according to his need. The Communist creed tapped the idealism of the generation which mourned the lost generation. Old Socialists like George Lansbury said that the Bolsheviks were 'doing what

⁶⁹⁰ Zamoyski, *Warsaw 1920*, London: Harper Press, 2008, pp. 133-134.

Christians call the Lord's work' and that Lenin's devotion to the cause of humanity made his whole life like 'that of one of the saints of old' [!!!]. Communism also appealed to those who craved power. Soon Communist parties were springing up everywhere, encouraged by money and propaganda from Russia (in Britain, for example, the Soviet trade delegation sold tsarist diamonds to subsidise the *Daily Herald*). In 1919 Red revolution broke out in Germany and Hungary. In 1920 some 35 countries sent delegates to the second Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) at Petrograd. It predictably resolved that 'The International Proletariat will not sheathe its sword until Soviet Russia becomes a link in the federation of Soviet republics of the whole world.'"⁶⁹¹

But the Soviet defeat in Poland put an end to those hopes. And those hopes were further dashed by the Comintern's foolish refusal to allow alliances with any moderate socialist party. "The world rejected the revolutionary gospel of the Bolsheviks just as it had rejected that of the Jacobins and for much the same reasons... The German and Hungarian uprisings were suppressed. In America, where Secretary of State Lansing warned that Bolshevik forces 'are menacing the present social order in nearly every European country and... may have to be reckoned with even in this country', there was a Red Scare. In England the Labour party repudiated Communism, which was not surprising in view of Lenin's offer to support their leaders as a rope supports a hanged man. In Japan the authorities passed a law against 'thought crime' and the 'thought police' (by no means a figment of George Orwell's imagination) devised new methods of reminding offenders of their loyalty to the Emperor. In France the Right branded Communism as a German aberration and the Left split over whether to embrace it. In Italy fear of Communism helped to bring Mussolini's Fascists to power..."⁶⁹²

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However, freedom from the Soviets alone was not able to guarantee peace and prosperity for Poland... "The hero of Polish independence, Marshal Pilsudski, out of patience with the inadequacy of successive administrations to bring stability to a country facing daunting problems, launched a coup d'état on 12-14 May 1926 and over the following years took Poland increasingly towards authoritarianism. Integration within a short time of a country that had had six currencies, three legal codes, two railway gauges, a plethora of political parties and sizeable ethnic minorities (each facing heavy discrimination⁶⁹³), was as good as impossible. The economy was recovering after the hyperinflation of 1922-23 - the introduction of a single currency, the zloty, in 1924 was a major step forward - but the country was still having serious problems (exacerbated by a tariff war with Germany), made all the harder to

⁶⁹¹ Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁹² Brendon, op. cit., p. 12.

⁶⁹³ The Orthodox Church was forced to break its submission to the Russian Church and proclaim autocephaly through the "grace" of Constantinople. It suffered severe persecution from the Polish authorities throughout the inter-war period. (V.M.)

surmount by a permanent political crisis. Land redistribution was, more than any other issue, politically divisive. Governments had come and gone in short succession..."⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹⁴ Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 185.

44. THE PEASANTS' AND WORKERS' REBELLIONS

"The peasants supported the Reds against the Whites only for as long as the Revolution was threatened. Once the Whites had been defeated the peasants turned against the Bolsheviks, whose requisitioning had brought much of rural Russia to the brink of starvation. By the autumn of 1920 the whole of the country was inflamed by peasant wars. Angry peasants were taking up arms and chasing the Bolsheviks out of the villages, they were forcing bands to fight the requisitioning brigades; and joining larger peasant armies, such as Makhno's in Ukraine, or Antonov's rebel force in the central Russian province of Tambov, to destroy the Soviet infrastructure in the countryside. Everywhere their aims were basically the same: to restore the peasant self-rule of 1917-18...."⁶⁹⁵

Richard Pipes calculates that "in 1920 and 1921, the Russian countryside from the Black Sea to the Pacific was the scene of uprisings that in numbers involved and territory affected greatly eclipsed the famous peasant rebellions of Stenka Razin and Pugachev under tsarism. Its true dimensions cannot even now be established, because the relevant materials have not yet been properly studied. The Communist authorities have assiduously minimized its scope: thus, according to the Cheka, in February, 1921, there occurred 118 peasant risings. In fact, there were hundreds of such uprisings, involving hundreds of thousands of partisans. Lenin was in receipt of regular reports from this front of the Civil War, which included detailed maps covering the entire country, indicating that vast territories were in rebellion. Occasionally, Communist historians give us a glimpse of the dimensions of this other Civil War, conceding that some 'bands' of 'kulaks' numbered 50,000 and more rebels. An idea of the extent and savagery of the fighting can be obtained from official figures of the losses suffered by the Red Army units engaged against the rebels. According to recent information, the number of Red Army casualties in the campaign of 1921-22, which were waged almost exclusively against peasants and other domestic rebels, came to 237,908. The losses among the rebels were almost certainly as high and probably much higher."⁶⁹⁶

The dire situation in the countryside was made even worse by the fact that, as Norman Lowe writes, the peasants "felt that they had no incentive to produce as much grain as possible; they were quite content to grow enough for their own needs, and so production fell sharply. In 1921 the peasants sowed only about half the area sowed in 1913 and the harvest was less than half the 1913 total. In 1921-22 Russia experienced the worst famine ever in its history – probably about five million people died from starvation and disease, and there were reports of cannibalism and body-snatching. The government was forced to appeal to the outside world for help, and many organizations responded, including the International Quakers and Herbert Hoover's American aid project... By March 1921 the government had virtually lost control of rural

⁶⁹⁵ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 164.

⁶⁹⁶ Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana, 1995, pp. 371-373.

Russia; large armies of rebel peasants led mainly by Left SRs roamed the countryside raising grain-collecting stations and carrying the requisitioned grain back to the villages. Almost all the new collective farms were destroyed and their livestock shared out among local peasants. Some of the rebel leaders had been Bolshevik supporters during the Civil War but had now enough of the Bolshevik dictatorship. Terrible revenge was taken against government officials, commissars and members of the grain brigades – thousands of Bolsheviks were tortured and murdered: the classic symbolic torture was to slice open stomachs and stuff them with wheat. The growing disaffection with the regime was reflected in the increasing number of Mensheviks and SRs elected to rural Soviets.”⁶⁹⁷

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War Communism, writes Pipes, “left Russia’s economy in shambles. In 1920-21, compared to 1913, large-scale industrial production fell by 82 percent, worker productivity by 74 percent, and the production of cereals by 40 percent. The cities became empty as their inhabitants fled to the countryside in search of food: Petrograd lost 70 percent of its population, Moscow over 50 percent; the other urban and industrial centers also suffered depletions. The non-agricultural labor force dropped to less than a half of what it had been when the Bolsheviks took power: from 3.6 to 1.5 million. Workers’ real wages declined to one-third of the level of 1913-14. A hydra-like black market, ineradicable because indispensable, supplied the population with the bulk of consumer goods. Communist policies had succeeded in ruining the world’s fifth-largest economy and depleting the wealth accumulated over centuries of ‘feudalism’ and ‘capitalism’. A contemporary Communist economist called the economic collapse a calamity ‘unparalleled in the history of mankind’.

“The Civil War ended, for all practical purposes, in the winter of 1919-20, and if war needs had been the driving force behind these policies, now would have been the time to give them up. Instead, the year that followed the crushing of the White armies saw the wildest economic experiments, such as the ‘militarization’ of labor and the elimination of money. The government persevered with forcible confiscations of peasant food ‘surplus’. The peasants responded by hoarding, reducing the sown acreage, and selling produce on the black market in defiance of government prohibitions. Since the weather in 1920 happened to be unfavourable, the meagre supply of bread dwindled still further. It was now that the Russian countryside, until then relatively well off compared to the cities in terms of food supplies, began to experience the first symptoms of famine.

“The repercussions of such mismanagement were not only economic but also social: they eroded still further the thin base of Bolshevik support, turning followers into enemies and enemies into rebels. The ‘masses’, whom Bolshevik propaganda had been telling that the hardships they had endured in 1918-19

⁶⁹⁷ Lowe, *Mastering Twentieth-Century Russian History*, Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2002, p. 155.

were the fault of the 'White Guards' and their foreign backers, expected the end of hostilities to bring back normal conditions. The Civil War had to some extent shielded the Communists from the unpopularity of their policies by making it possible to justify them as militarily necessary. This explanation could no longer be invoked once the Civil War was over...

"It now began to dawn even on those willing to give the Bolsheviks the benefit of the doubt, that they had been had, that the true objective of the new regime was not improving their lot but holding on to power, and that to this end it was prepared to sacrifice their well-being and even their very lives. This realization produced a national rebellion unprecedented in its dimensions and ferocity. The end of one Civil War led immediately to the outbreak of another: having defeated the White armies, the Red Army now had to battle partisan bands, popularly known as 'Greens' but labelled by the authorities 'bandits', made up of peasants, deserters, and demobilized soldiers.

"The government was unpopular in the cities too. Food was in short supply and extremely expensive. Unusually heavy snow disrupted transport throughout January 1921 and hundreds of factories were forced to close through lack of fuel. In February 1921 the appalling conditions brought the workers of Moscow to breaking point, and thousands came out on strike. There were massive demonstrations calling for free trade and the recall of the Constituent Assembly. The strikes soon spread to Petrograd where similar demands were made – freedom of speech and the press, an end to police terror, and free elections for factory committees, trade unions and soviets. Martial law was declared in both cities and the Cheka arrested hundreds of strikers as well as many Mensheviks and SRs who were said to be playing a leading role in the demonstrations. This only inflamed the situation further and the government was not confident that it could rely on the army to restore order if called upon..."⁶⁹⁸

It is significant that the greatest threat to the regime came from the striking workers of Petrograd and the soldiers and sailors of Kronstadt - precisely the most revolutionary sectors of the population that had gained Lenin his victory in October.

"As the news of the strikes in Petrograd reached the island naval base, the garrison of around 15,000 soldiers and sailors became increasingly nervous. They were mainly peasants from rural village backgrounds and they were well-informed about the hardships suffered in their families – the continuation of grain requisitioning even though the Civil War was over, the brutality of the grain detachments and the complete insensitivity of many of the commissars. Already they had complained about the corruption and special privileges of the Bolshevik elite and they bitterly resented the dictatorial attitude of the party. In 1917 the Kronstadt garrison had been the most dedicated Bolshevik supporters, but by the end of January party membership on the island had

⁶⁹⁸ Lowe, *op. cit.* p. 155.

fallen by half and the party itself was being denounced as 'an enemy of the people'.

"On 28 February a meeting on board the battleship *Petropavlovsk* passed a resolution calling for free elections for the Soviets by secret ballot, freedom of speech and the press for peasants, workers, soldiers and the left wing parties (but not for 'the bourgeois and the landlords'), freedom of meetings for peasant associations and trade unions, abolition of grain requisitioning and the right of peasants to cultivate their land as they saw fit, provided they did not employ hired labour. The resolutions were almost unanimously approved at a huge open-air meeting the following day attended by around 16,000 people, which included soldiers, sailors and a fair proportion of the 30,000 civilian inhabitants of Kronstadt. There was no hint of counter-revolution in their demands – they had simply had enough of the communist one-party dictatorship. They did not want the Constituent Assembly; what they wanted was genuine Soviet democracy of all the working class parties, a return to democratically elected soldiers', sailors' and factor committees and the release of all workers from the Cheka prisons. They took no aggressive action and waited, apparently hoping that the rest of the country and the army would rally to their support; perhaps too they were hoping that the government would negotiate.

"However, to make any major political concessions would be the beginning of the end of the one-party dictatorship. The leadership saw the Kronstadt programme simply as an attack on Bolshevik power, and had no hesitation in deciding that the mutineers must be crushed, before they were joined by the Petrograd strikers and the rest of the country. Lenin and Trotsky announced that the rising was being organized by 'White Guards' and claimed that the sailors were not the same as the staunch Bolshevik supporters of 1917 – they were young recruits who were bringing 'anarchist' and 'petty bourgeois' attitudes with them from their villages. Both claims were untrue. Efforts were now made to appease the workers of Petrograd. Zinoviev, the communist leader in the city, increased the daily food ration (though this depleted the rapidly dwindling reserves) and dropped hints that the government was preparing to abandon the hated grain requisitioning. On 1 March he ordered the removal of the road blocks set up around Petrograd to prevent private trade, and these gestures did something to defuse the situation in Petrograd itself.

"Pressure could now be brought on Kronstadt. Trotsky was sent to Petrograd to take charge of operations and on 5 March he ordered the mutineers to surrender immediately or they would be 'shot like partridges'. The mutineers rejected this ultimatum..."⁶⁹⁹

The next day the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Kronstadt published a statement that condemned the revolution in no uncertain terms: "In carrying out the October Revolution, the working class hoped to achieve its

⁶⁹⁹ Lowe, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-157.

liberation. The outcome has been even greater enslavement of human beings. Power has passed from a monarchy based on the police and gendarmerie into the hands of usurpers – Communists – who have given the toilers not freedom but the daily dread of ending up in the torture chambers of the Cheka, the horrors of which exceed many times the rule of tsarism's gendarmerie. The bayonets, the bullets, the coarse shouts of the *oprichniki* from the Cheka – this is the fruit of the long struggles and sufferings of Soviet Russia's toilers. The glorious emblem of the toilers' state – the hammer and sickle – Communist authority has in truth been replaced with the bayonet and the iron bar, created to protect the tranquil and careless life of the new bureaucracy, the Communist commissars and functionaries. But basest and most criminal of all is the moral slavery introduced by the Communists: they have also laid their hands on the inner world of the working people, compelling them to think only as they do. By means of state-run trade unions, the workers have been chained to their machines, so that labor is not a source of joy but a new serfdom. To the protests of peasants, expressed in spontaneous uprisings, and those of the workers, whom the very conditions of life compel to strike, they have responded with mass executions and an appetite for blood that by far exceeds that of tsarist generals. Toiling Russia, the first to raise the red banner of the liberation of labor, is thoroughly drenched with the blood of the victims of Communist rule. In this sea of blood, the Communists drown all the great and bright pledges and slogans of the toilers' revolution. It has become ever more clear, and by now is self-evident, that the Russian Communist Party is not the protector of the working people that it claims to be, that the interests of the working people are foreign to it, and that, having gained power, its only fear is of losing it, and hence that all means [to that end] are permissible: slander, violence, deception, murder, revenge on the families of those who have revolted... The current revolt finally offers the toilers a chance to have their freely elected, functioning soviets, free of violent party pressures, to refashion the state-run trade unions into free associations of workers, peasants, and the working intelligentsia. At last, the police baton of Communist autocracy is smashed..."⁷⁰⁰

On March 7, Trotsky ordered Tukhachevsky, the commander of the defeated Red Army in Poland, to attack Kronstadt. But the Red Army's peasant soldiers were not at first willing to attack their fellow peasants. However, the Tenth Party Congress had just started, and Lenin used it to bolster his authority. As Alan Bullock writes: "Following the same principle which had led him to accept the Brest-Litovsk treaty, Lenin showed his readiness to sacrifice everything else to the retention of power, not from personal ambition but for the ultimate achievement of his objective. The decisive concession ('the peasant Brest-Litovsk, the independent-minded Ryazanov called it) was the immediate abolition of the forced requisitioning of grain and food, to be replaced by ordinary taxation, first in kind, then in money, leaving the peasants free to sell any surplus. No sooner was this passed by the congress than over two hundred delegates set off to harangue the reluctant Red Army soldiers, who were being driven across the ice, at pistol point, to attack the Kronstadt garrison.

700 Pipes, op. cit., pp. 383-384.

According to one experienced political commissar, the announcement that the requisitioning was to be abolished produced 'a radical change of mood among the peasant soldiers'.⁷⁰¹

"On 8 March, after a long artillery bombardment, the troops set out on the five-mile march across the ice. They soon came under heavy machine-gun fire; many ran away, about a thousand joined the mutineers, two thousand were killed and the attack ended in fiasco. A week later General Tukhachevsky had assembled a larger and more reliable force of 50,000 men consisting of Cheka troops and elite communist regiments known as Units of Special Designation. A second assault was launched on Kronstadt using different tactics – the troops crossed the ice at night and succeeded in getting close to the island before they were spotted. By the morning of 18 March, after vicious house-to-house fighting which brought heavy losses on both sides (about 10,000 of the communist troops were killed), the communists had regained control of Kronstadt. About 8000 of the rebel garrison troops escaped across the ice to Finland, but those who were taken prisoner could expect no mercy. Zinoviev ordered the immediate execution of 500 leading mutineers, and almost 2000 more were executed later, most of them without trial. Lenin ordered hundreds of other prisoners to be sent to [Solovki]; here conditions were so bad that very few of the returned. The American anarchist Alexander Berkman, who was in Petrograd at the time, wrote in his diary: 'My heart is numb with despair; something had died within me... the last thread of faith in the Bolsheviks has been broken' The ruthless suppression of the Kronstadt mutiny stunned socialists the world over. It was now clear beyond all shadow of doubt that Soviet power would make the whole of Russia into one large Soviet democracy like their Kronstadt. Now it was they who found themselves in brutal confrontation with a Bolshevik power which had snuffed out their dream of egalitarian democracy. Before long the same brute force had successfully crushed the peasant revolts in Tambov, where 15,000 rebels were shot, and in Siberia, the Don and the Kuban. The Mensheviks and SRs were suppressed and as many as 5000 Mensheviks were arrested in the course of 1921."⁷⁰²

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The year that climaxed in the crushing of the peasants' and Kronstadt sailors' rebellions had revealed that the popularity of the Communist Party was at an all-time low. Characteristically, Lenin reacted, not by brightening up the party's image, but by crushing dissent within it. In the same fateful month of March, 1921, the Tenth Party Congress tightened the screws on political dissent, thereby destroying the last bastion of free speech in the country.

It did so by crushing a movement called "the Workers' Opposition" that was led by Alexander Shliapnikov and his mistress, Alexandra Kollontai. For "the emergence of the Workers' Opposition," writes Pipes, "brought into the open

⁷⁰¹ Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London: HarperCollins, 1991, pp. 119-120.

⁷⁰² Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

a smouldering antagonism that went back to the late nineteenth century, between a minority of politically active workers and the intellectuals who claimed to represent them and speak in their behalf. Radical workers, usually more inclined to syndicalism than Marxism, cooperated with the socialist intelligentsia and allowed themselves to be guided by them because they knew they were short of political experience. But they never ceased to be aware of a gulf between themselves and their partners: and once a 'workers' state' had come into being, they saw no reason for submitting to the authority of the 'white hands'.

"The concerns expressed by the Workers' Opposition stood at the center of the deliberations of the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921. Shortly before it convened, Kollontai released for internal party use a brochure in which she assailed the regime's bureaucratization. (Party rules prohibited venting party disputes in public.) The Workers' Opposition, she argued, made up exclusively of labouring men and women, felt that the Party's leadership had lost touch with labor: the higher up the ladder of authority one ascended, the less support there was for the Workers' Opposition. This happened because the Soviet apparatus had been taken over by class enemies who despised Communism: the petty bourgeoisie had seized control of the bureaucracy, while the 'grand bourgeoisie', in the guise of 'specialists', had taken over industrial management and the military command.

"The Workers' Opposition submitted to the Tenth Congress two resolutions, one dealing with party organization, the other with the role of trade unions. It was the last time that independent resolutions – that is, resolutions not originating with the Central Committee – would be discussed at a party congress. The first document spoke of a crisis in the party caused by the perpetuation of habits of military command acquired during the Civil War, and the alienation of the leadership from the labouring masses. Party affairs were conducted without either *glasnost* or democracy, in a bureaucratic style, by elements mistrustful of workers, causing them to lose confidence in the party and to leave it in droves. To remedy this situation, the party should carry out a thorough purge to rid itself of opportunistic elements and increase worker involvement. Every Communist should be required to spend at least three months a year doing physical labor. All functionaries should be elected by and accountable to their members: appointments from the Center should be made only in exceptional cases. The personnel of the central organs should be regularly turned over: the majority of the posts should be reserved for workers. The focus of party work should shift from the Center to the cells.

"The resolution on trade unions was no less radical. It protested the degradation of unions, to the point where their status was reduced to 'virtual zero'. The rehabilitation of the country's economy required the maximum involvement of the masses: 'The systems and methods of construction based on a cumbersome bureaucratic machine stifle all creative initiative and independence' of the producers. The party must demonstrate trust in the workers and their organizations. The national economy ought to be

reorganized from the bottom up by the producers themselves. In time, transferred to a new body, an All-Russian Congress of Producers, not appointed by the Communist Party, but elected by the trade unions and 'productive' associations. (In the discussion of this resolution, Shliapnikov denied that the terms 'producers' included peasants.) Under this arrangement, the Party would confine itself to politics, leaving the direction of the economy to labor.

"These proposals by veteran Communists from labor ranks revealed a remarkable ignorance of Bolshevik theory and practice. Lenin, in his opening address, minced no words in denouncing them as representing a 'clear syndicalist deviation'. Such a deviation, he went on, would not be dangerous were it not for the economic crisis and the prevalence in the country of armed banditry (by which he meant peasant rebellions). The perils of 'petty bourgeois spontaneity' exceeded even those posed by the Whites: they required greater party unity than ever. As for Kollontai, he dismissed her personal relations with the leader of the Workers' Opposition ('Thank God, we know well that Comrade Kollontai and Comrade Shliapnikov are "bound by class ties [and] class consciousness"').

"Worker defections confronted Lenin and his associates with a problem: how to govern in the name of the 'proletariat' when the 'proletariat' turned its back on them. One solution was to denigrate Russia's working class. It was now often heard that the 'true' workers had given their lives in the Civil War and that their place had been taken by social dregs. Bukharin claimed that Soviet Russia's working class had been 'peasantified' and that, 'objectively speaking', the Workers' Opposition was a Peasant Opposition, while a Chekist told the Menshevik Dan that the Petrograd workers were 'scum' (*svoloch*) left over after all the true proletarians had gone to the front. Lenin, at the Eleventh Party Congress, denied that Soviet Russia even had a 'proletariat' in Marx's sense, since the ranks of industrial labor had been filled with malingerers and 'all kinds of casual elements'. Rebutting such charges, Shliapnikov noted that 16 of the 41 delegates of the Tenth Congress supportive of the Workers' Opposition had joined the Bolshevik party before 1905 and all had done so before 1914...

"... Trotsky criticized Shliapnikov for making a 'fetish of democracy': 'The principle of elections within the labor movement is, as it were, placed above the Party, as if the Party did not have the right to assert its dictatorship even in the event that this dictatorship temporarily clashed with the transient mood within the worker democracy.' It was not possible to entrust the management of the economy to workers, if only because there were hardly any Communists among them: in this connection, Trotsky cited Zinoviev to the effect that in Petrograd, the country's largest industrial center, 99 percent of the workers either had no party preference, or, to the extent that they did, sympathized with the Mensheviks or even the Black Hundreds. In other words, one could have either Communism ('the dictatorship of the proletariat') or worker rule, but not both: democracy spelled the doom of Communism...

"The Workers' Opposition suffered a decisive defeat and was ordered to dissolve. It was doomed from the outset not only because it challenged powerful vested interests of the central apparatus, but because it accepted the undemocratic premises of Communism, including the idea of a one-party state. It championed democratic procedures in a party that was by its ideology and, increasingly, by its structure committed to ignoring the popular will...

"To make impossible further dissent in the party, Lenin had the Tenth Congress adopt a new and fateful rule that outlawed the formation of 'factions': these were defined as organized groupings with their own platforms. The key, concluding article of the resolution 'On the unity of the party', kept secret at the time, provided severe penalties for violators: 'In order to maintain strict discipline within the party and in all soviet activities, [in order] to attain the greatest unity by eliminating all factionalism, the Congress authorizes the Central Committee in instances of violations of discipline, or the revival or tolerance of factionalism, to apply all measures of party accounting up to exclusion from the party.'

"... his resolution... was destined to have the gravest consequences: Leonard Schapiro regards it as the decisive event in the history of the Communist Party. Simply put, in Trotsky's words, the ruling transferred 'the political regime prevailing in the state to the inner life of the ruling party'. Henceforth, the party, too, was to be run as a dictatorship..."⁷⁰³

In his speech on March 9, 1921, taking advantage of the fear generated by the Kronstadt rebellion, Lenin made it quite clear what the anti-factionalism ruling meant: "We do not need any opposition now, comrades. Now is not the time. Either on this side or on that - with a rifle, not with an opposition! No more opposition now, comrades! The time has come to put an end to opposition, to put a lid on it. We have had enough opposition."

Lenin had *never* endured opposition. Was there any time when the party had *not* been a dictatorship? Ever since Lenin divided the Social Democratic Party at its first Congress in London in 1903, the only issue for him had been: *Kto kogo? Who rules whom?* And the answer was always the same: *Lenin rules.*

Once in power, according to Kotkin, Lenin elevated political violence - that is opposition to opposition - "to a principle. Moderate socialists, in his mind, were even more dangerous than open counterrevolutionaries, whom the moderates abetted with their 'ornate Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik phraseology about a people's government, a constituent assembly, liberties, and the like...He who has not learned this from the whole history of the 19th century is a hopeless idiot.' Behind mundane disagreement he saw not legitimate opinion but malevolent forces. His conception of politics did not even allow for politics."⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰³ Pipes, op. cit., pp. 451-453, 454, 455.

⁷⁰⁴ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, pp. 409-410.

The absolute rule of the leader was the essence of Leninism. The party had no other purpose than to make its own rule absolute - or rather: the rule of the ruler of the party. That is why the anti-oppositional decree pushed through the 10th Congress in 1921 is so characteristic of Lenin, so expressive of him.

Trotsky had understood this as early as 1904. "The party organization," he said, "is substituted for the party, the Central Committee is substituted for the party organization, and finally a 'dictator' is substituted for the Central Committee".⁷⁰⁵ That is why he did not join the Party until 1917. But now, though a dictatorial character himself, he submitted - to Lenin. Later he would refuse to submit to Lenin's reincarnation as the absolute ruler - Stalin.

So the bloody civil war of 1921, and the Tenth Party Congress, which voted itself out of power in favour of the unique power of the Leader, actually revealed nothing new. And yet every succeeding generation, it seems, has had to learn this lesson anew: that the ruling party of post-Tsarist Russia, whether it is called Bolshevik, or Communist, or "One Russia", is in essence a dictatorship, the absolute rule of one man - Lenin, Stalin or Putin. Moreover, every generation seems to forget that absolute rule not only corrupts, but corrupts absolutely...

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"In Petrograd and Moscow the strikes lost momentum after the arrest of their leaders and the restoration of free trade. But the peasant uprisings were harder to suppress, despite the introduction of the tax in kind. In the Volga region, where the requisitionings had resulted in a famine crisis, the peasants fought with more determination because they were now fighting for their lives. Ruthless terror was used against the rebel areas in Tambov and other provinces. Villages were burned, tens of thousands of hostages were taken, and thousands more were shot before the resistance was subdued..."⁷⁰⁶

The peasants finally failed in their war against the regime because their forces were scattered and disunited, and the Reds were able to destroy each rising separately. Moreover, with the exception of Antonov's rebellion in the Tambov region, they did not go for the jugular - Moscow...

One indication of the scale of the suffering is the fact that in Western Siberia, the scene of one of the largest peasant rebellions, although persecution of the Church was continuous after the revolution, more priests were killed in 1921 than in any other year. Nearly one hundred priests were shot in the Tobolsk area alone. And this in spite of the fact that the priests, in accordance with the rules of their calling, did not take up arms...

⁷⁰⁵ Trotsky, *Our Political Tasks* (1904); in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 679.

⁷⁰⁶ Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 167.

Kirill Alexandrov sums up the losses: "I. The general losses through those who died during the years of the Civil War (1917–1920), in the first place as a result of a worsening of the general conditions of life under the influence of the Leninist experiments, constituted not less than 7.5 million people. Included in this figure are the victims of the terror, the armed struggle and banditism. Some specialists have given higher figures, proceeding from the difference in the numbers of the population between 1917 and 1920–22...

"II. The famine of 1921–22 was not only the result of the climatic drought in the Volga region, but also a direct consequence of the destruction of the village economy by the politics of 'war communism'. The ban on 'bourgeois' trade in accordance with Marxist theory, the robbery of the countryside through Leninist food battalions, the annihilation of free entrepreneurship led to a reduction in the area seeded and the destruction of the food reserves of Russia. There were famines also in Tsarist Russia, but the indices of death by famine in the Leninist state look anomalous. Under Alexander III, in 1891–92, about 375,000 people died from famine and the cholera that accompanied it. In 1921–22, according to the estimates of the specialist demographers of the Russian Academy of Sciences more than 4.5 million died.

"Moreover, even during the introduction of the New Economic Policy, which assisted the reanimation of the tortured country, Lenin had no intention of condemning the practice of 'war communism'. Speaking at the 9th Congress of the Soviets in December, 1921, the leader of the communists declared that the experience acquired by the party in 1918–20 'was majestic, lofty and great, and had a universal significance' ..."⁷⁰⁷

707 Alexandrov, "Stalin i sovremennaiia Rossia: vybor istoricheskikh otsenok ili vybor buduschego?" (Stalin and contemporary Russia: a choice of historical estimates or a choice of the future?), report read at the Russian Centre, San Francisco, February 3, 2017.

45. THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

The economy had undergone a catastrophic hollowing-out since 1917. "The whole object of Lenin's 'vanguard elite' revolution was to speed up the industrialization of the country and thus the victory of the proletariat. Yet once Lenin took over the reverse happened. Before the war, Russian industrial production was increasing very fast: 82 per cent between 1900 and 1913. Until the end of 1916 at any rate it continued to expand in some directions. But since the peasants refused to hand over the 1917 harvest (to Lenin's delight and profit) and food ceased to flow into the towns, the industrial workers, many of them born peasants, began to drift back to their native villages. Lenin's revolution turned the drift into a stampede. Beginning in the winter of 1917-18, the population of Petrograd fell from 2.4 to 1.5 million; by 1920 it was a ghost town, having lost 71.5 per cent of its population; Moscow lost 44.5 per cent. [In 1919]..., the Russian industrial labour force had fallen to 76 per cent of its 1917 total, and the wastage was greatest among skilled workers. Production of iron ore and cast iron fell to only 1.6 and 2.4 per cent of their 1913 totals, and total output of manufactured goods, by 1920, was a mere 12.9 per cent of pre-war...

"About the only thing in plentiful supply was the paper rouble, which the printing presses poured out ceaselessly, and which had now fallen to little over 1 per cent of its November 1917 value..."⁷⁰⁸

The Kronstadt rebellion of 1921, coinciding with the crushing of the peasant rebellion in Western Siberia that interrupted vital food shipments for two weeks, marked a critical turning-point. The dual pressure of the rebellion and an intensification of the famine forced Lenin to make an important concession. "On March 15, as the Red Army stood poised to launch the final assault on the naval base, Lenin announced what was to become the linchpin of the New Economic Policy, the abandonment of arbitrary food confiscation known as *prodrazverstka* in favor of a tax in kind. *Prodrazverstka* had been the most universally despised feature of 'War Communism' – despised by peasants, whom it robbed of their produce, but also by the urban population, whom it deprived of food.

"Requisitioning had been enforced in an appallingly arbitrary manner. The Commissariat of Supply determined the quantity of foodstuffs it required – a quantity determined by what was needed to feed the consumers in the cities and the armed forces, without regard to what the producers could provide. This figure it broke down, on the basis of inadequate and often outdated information, into quotas for each province, district, and village. The system was as inefficient as it was brutal: in 1920, for example, Moscow set the *prodrazverstka* at 583 million puds (9.5 million tons) but managed to collect only half that amount.

⁷⁰⁸ Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 88, 93.

“Collectors acted on the premise that peasants lied when they claimed that the grain they were forced to surrender was not surplus but essential to provide food for their families and seed, and that they could compensate for the loss by digging up their hoard. This the peasants may have been able to do in 1918 and 1919. But by 1920 they had little if anything left to hoard: as a result,... in the case of Tambov province, *prodrazverstka*, even if incompletely realized, left them with next to nothing. Nor was this all. Zealous collectors impounded not only ‘surplus’ and food needed for sustenance, but grain set aside for the next season’s sowing: one high Communist official admitted that in many areas the authorities appropriated one hundred percent of the harvest. Refusal to pay resulted in the confiscation of livestock and beatings. In addition, collecting agents and local officials, empowered to label resistance to their demands as ‘kulak’-inspired, or ‘counterrevolutionary’, felt at liberty to appropriate food, cattle, even clothing for their personal use. The peasants resisted fiercely: in the Ukraine alone, they were reported to have killed 1,700 requisition officials.

“A more self-defeating policy would be hard to conceive. The system operated on the absurd principle that the more the peasant produced the more would be taken from him; from which it followed with inexorable logic that he would produce little if anything beyond his own needs. The richer a region, the more it was subjected to government plunder, and the more prone it was to curtail production: between 1916-17 and 1920-21, the decline in the sown acreage in the center of the country, an area of grain deficits, was 18 percent, whereas in the main region of grain surpluses it was 33 percent. And since yields per acre declined from shortage of fertilizer and draft animals as well, grain production, which in 1913 had been 80.1 million tons, dropped in 1920 to 46.1 million tons. If in 1918 and 1919 it has still been possible to extract a ‘surplus’, by 1920 the peasant had learned his lesson and made sure there was nothing to surrender. It apparently never occurred to him that the regime would take what it wanted even if it meant that he went breadless and seedless.

“*Prodrazverstka* had to be abandoned for both economic and political reasons. There was nothing left to take from the peasant, who faced starvation; and it fuelled nationwide rebellions. The Politburo finally decided to drop *prodrazverstka* on March 15. The new policy was made public on March 23. Henceforth, the peasants were required to turn over to government agencies a fixed amount of grain; arbitrary confiscations of ‘surplus’ were terminated...

“While the economic benefits of the new agrarian policy were not immediately apparent, the political rewards were reaped at once. The abandonment of food requisitioning took the wind out of the sails of rebellion. The following year, Lenin could boast that peasant uprisings, which previously had ‘determined the general picture of Russia’, had virtually ceased...”⁷⁰⁹

The American Communist Emma Goldman reported (somewhat disapprovingly): “Shops and stores sprang up overnight, mysteriously stacked

709 Pipes, op. cit., pp. 389-391, 392.

with delicacies Russia had not seen for years. Large quantities of butter, cheese and meat were displayed for sale... Men, women and children with pinched faces and hungry eyes stood about gazing into the windows and discussing the great miracle: what was but yesterday considered a heinous offence was not flaunted before them in an open and legal manner."⁷¹⁰

The "New Economic Policy" (NEP) was a humiliating retreat from Communist ideals, allowing the return of some small-scale private trade. It was not able to prevent a terrible famine that began in the Volga region in August, 1921, which affected, according to Kalinin, about 27 million people, killing three million in the winter of 1921-2.⁷¹¹ But thereafter it worked...

However, Lenin saw it as a temporary retreat that would eventually be reversed. As he confessed in November, 1922: "We still do not know where and how we must restructure ourselves, reorganize ourselves, so that after the retreat we may begin a stubborn move forward." But he did not live to lead the "stubborn move forward". That would be the task of his successor, Stalin...

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"The benefits [of the NEP] appeared first and foremost in agriculture. In 1922, thanks to donations and purchases of seed grain abroad as well as favourable weather, Russia enjoyed a bumper crop. Encouraged by the new tax policy to increase the cultivated acreage, peasants expanded production: the acreage sown in 1925 equalled that of 1913. Yields, however, remained lower than before the Revolution, and the harvest proportionately smaller: as late as 1928, on the eve of collectivization, it was 10 percent below the 1913 figure..."⁷¹²

As Eric Hobsbawm writes, "NEP was indeed brilliantly successful in restoring the Soviet economy from the ruin of 1920. By 1926 Soviet industrial production had more or less recovered its pre-war level, though this did not mean much. The USSR remained as overwhelmingly rural as in 1913 (82 per cent of the population in both cases), and indeed only 7.5 per cent were employed outside agriculture. What the mass of peasants wanted to sell to the cities; what it wanted to buy from them; how much of its income it wanted to save; and how many of the many millions who chose to feed themselves in the village rather than face city poverty wanted to leave the farms: this determined Russia's economic future, for, apart from the state's tax income, the country had no other available source of investment and labour. Leaving aside all political considerations, a continuation of NEP, modified or not, would at best produce a modest rate of industrialisation. Moreover, until there was a great deal more industrial development, there was little that the peasants could buy in the city to tempt them to see their surplus rather than to eat and drink it in the villages. This (known as the 'scissors crisis') was to be the noose that

⁷¹⁰ Goldman, in Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 443.

⁷¹¹ Johnson, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷¹² Pipes, op. cit., p. 395.

eventually strangled NEP. Sixty years later a similar but proletarian 'scissors' undermined Gorbachev's *perestroika*. Why, Soviet workers were to argue, should they raise their productivity to earn higher wages unless the economy produced the consumer goods to buy with these higher wages? But how were these goods to be produced unless Soviet workers raised their productivity?

"It was therefore never very likely that NEP – i.e. balanced economic growth based on a peasant market economy steered by the state which controlled its commanding heights – would prove a lasting strategy. For a regime committed to socialism the political arguments against it were in any case overwhelming. Would it not put the small forces committed to this new society at the mercy of petty commodity production and petty enterprise which would regenerate the capitalism just overthrown? And yet, what made the Bolshevik Party hesitate was the prospective cost of the alternative. It meant industrialisation by force: a second revolution, but this time not rising from below but imposed by state power from above."⁷¹³

In their desperation to get the economy moving, the Bolsheviks began employing bourgeois specialists, few of whom became party members. "But they were becoming part of the new elite, and an ideological truce was taking shape between them and the party on the basis of a modified Russian imperial patriotism. More and more this was to become the working (as distinct from theoretical) ideology of the Soviet Union.

"International development strengthened the tendency to superimpose Russian patriotism on Communism. By 1923, with the failure of a Communist rising in Hamburg, it was becoming clear that international revolution was not imminent, at least not in the advanced countries of Europe, and that for the foreseeable future socialism would have to be built, if at all, in Russia alone, without the help of more mature economies. At the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1923 Stalin gained acceptance for the idea that it was possible to build 'socialism in one country' though he was roundly criticised by Trotsky for downgrading world revolution. The failure of Communist insurrections in Shanghai and Canton in 1927 seemed, though, to confirm Stalin's diagnosis..."⁷¹⁴

713 Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, London: Abacus, 1994, pp. 379-380.

714 Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, pp. 445-446.

46. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN EXILE

Out of the chaos of the Russian Civil War there was formed the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, later known as the Russian Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). A.F. Traskovsky writes⁷¹⁵: "The part of the Russian Orthodox Church which was abroad already had quite a long history before the formation of ROCOR. In Western Europe Russian Orthodox churches had been built beginning from the eighteenth century at Russian embassies and holy places that were often visited by Russians on trips abroad. In the East, thanks to the missionary activities of the Russian Orthodox Church missions were founded in China and Japan that later became dioceses, as well as a mission in Jerusalem. The spread of Orthodoxy in Alaska and North America also led to the creation of a diocese. In the "Statute concerning the convening of an Emigration Assembly of the Russian Churches", mention was made that in 1921 there were 15 emigration regions which had Russian bishops and 14 districts where there were Russian Orthodox parishes but no bishops. The regions included: North America, Japan, China, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, France, Italy, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey and the Far East. The districts included: Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, England, Switzerland, Czechia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Palestine, Greece and the city of Bizert in Tunisia. All the emigration missions, parishes and dioceses were in canonical submission to the higher ecclesiastical authorities in Russia – the Holy Ruling Synod until the restoration of the patriarchate in 1917, and his Holiness the Patriarch after 1917. But then after the revolution there began the Civil War and anarchy. The Bolsheviks began to persecute the Church. The majority of emigration missions and dioceses found themselves either deprived of the possibility of normal relations with the higher ecclesiastical authorities of Russia, or such relations were exceptionally difficult. Moreover, in Russia itself many dioceses were cut off by the front from his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon (Bellavin)'s leadership. After the defeat of the White army, a huge flood of émigrés flooded abroad, amongst whom were not a few representatives of the clergy, including bishops and metropolitans. On the shoulders of the clerics who were abroad and the clergy who had emigrated lay the burden of care for the spiritual nourishment of the huge Russian diaspora. That was the situation in which the part of the Russian Church that was abroad found itself on the eve of the formation of the Church Abroad.

"What was the prehistory of the Russian Church Abroad? Her beginnings went back to 1919, in Russia. In Stavropol in May, 1919 there took place the South Russian Church Council headed by the oldest hierarch in the South of Russia, Archbishop Agathodorus of Stavropol. There took part in the Council all the bishops who were on the territory of the Voluntary army, the members of the All-Russian Ecclesiastical Council and four people from each diocesan council. At the Council there was formed the Higher Church Administration of

⁷¹⁵ Traskovsky, "Istoria Russkoj Zarubezhnoj Tserkvi, 1921-1939 gg." (A History of the Russian Church Abroad, 1921-1939), *Pravoslavnij Put'* (The Orthodox Way), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1995, pp. 20-24.

the South of Russia (HCA of the South of Russia), which consisted of: President – Archbishop Metrophanes of Novocherkassk, Assistant to the President – Archbishop Demetrius of Tauris, Protopresbyter G. Shavelsky, Protopriest A.P. Rozhdestvensky, Count V.V. Musin-Pushkin and Professor of theology P.V. Verkhovsky. In November, 1919 the Higher Church Administration was headed by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and Galich, who had arrived from Kiev.⁷¹⁶

“The aim of the creation of the HCA was the organization of the leadership of church life on the territory of the Volunteer army in view of the difficulties Patriarch Tikhon was experiencing in administering the dioceses on the other side of the front line. A little earlier, in November, 1918, an analogous Temporary Higher Church Administration had been created in Siberia headed by Archbishop Sylvester of Omsk. Later, a part of the clergy that submitted to this HCA emigrated after the defeat of Kolchak’s army and entered the composition of the Chinese dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church. The HCA of the South of Russia, like the Siberian HCA, was, in spite of its self-government, nevertheless in canonical submission to his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, and in this way Church unity was maintained.

“After the defeat of the armies of Denikin, in the spring of 1920 the head of the HCA of the South of Russia, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), was evacuated from Novorossiysk to Constantinople⁷¹⁷, and was then for a time in a monastery on Mount Athos. However, in September, 1920, at the invitation of General Wrangel, he returned to Russia, to the Crimea, where he continued his work. The final evacuation of the HCA of the South of Russia took place in November, 1920, together with the remains of Wrangel’s army.⁷¹⁸ On the steamer ‘Alexander Mikhailovich’ there set out from the Crimea to Constantinople the leaders of the HCA and a large number of simple priests.

716 For more details on this Council, see Andrej Alexandrovich Kostriukov, “Stavropol’skij Sobor 1919 g. i nachalo nezavisimoj tserkovnoj organizatsii na iuge Rossii” (The Stavropol Council of 1919 and the beginning of independent church organization in the south of Russia), *Ural’skij istoricheskij Vestnik*, 2008, N 4 (21), pp. 71-75; *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn’*, N 5 (685), May, 2009, pp. 1-11. (V.M.)

717 Before being evacuated, while still in Yekaterinodar, Metropolitan Anthony came out of the cathedral, accompanied by all the clergy, and addressed the thousands of faithful, asking them – for one knows, he said, that “the voice of the people is the voice of God” – whether they should leave with the White Army or stay in Russia and suffer for the faith. The crowd replied that they should leave (Monk Anthony (Chernov), *Archvêque Theophane de Poltava* (Archbishop Theophan of Poltava), Lavardac: Monastère de St. Michael, 1988, p. 73) (V.M.).

718 About 200,000 military and civilian personnel in a fleet of 126 vessels were evacuated from Sevastopol to Constantinople (Schemanun Seraphima, *Saint Seraphim of Sophia*, Etna, Ca., 2008, p. 53, note). According to Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov, more than 125 ships arrived with about 150,000 people on board (*Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, p. 67). At the beginning of the 1920s about 85,000 Russian emigres had settled in Serbia. They built four churches and chapels and formed more than ten Russian parishes and spiritual brotherhoods (M. Skarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Church Emigration). St. Petersburg, 2009, p. 26).

“On arriving in Constantinople, as Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky) indicates in his *Biography of Metropolitan Anthony*, Metropolitan Anthony ‘first considered that from now on all the activities of the Russian Higher Church Administration should be brought to an end and all the care for the spiritual welfare of the Russian Orthodox people should be taken upon herself by the Church of Constantinople and the Local Orthodox Churches in whose bounds the Russian Orthodox people found themselves.’ However, as soon became clear, the realization of this variant became extremely problematic in view of the fact that huge masses of Russian refugees did not know the language and customs of those countries to which they had come, and the nourishment of such a large flock by priests speaking other languages (for example Greeks) presented very many problems. Moreover, the numerous émigré Russian clergy, who were fully able to deal with these problems, would not be involved. Therefore it was decided to continue the activities of the Higher Church Administration.

“In order to work out a plan of further action, the first session of the HCA outside the borders of Russia took place on November 19, 1920...⁷¹⁹ Metropolitan Dorotheus [the *locum tenens* of the patriarchal throne of Constantinople] gave his agreement [to the HCA’s decisions] and the HCA of the South of Russia was transformed into the Higher Church Administration Abroad.

“Literally the day after the above-mentioned session, on November 20, 1920, an event took place in Moscow that had an exceptional significance for the Russian Church Abroad – his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon passed decree N 362 concerning the self-governance of church dioceses in the case of a break of communications between this or that diocese and his Holiness the Patriarch for external reasons over which they had no control (what they had in mind was war or repression by the authorities). This is the decree’s main content:

“‘1. With the blessing of his Holiness the Patriarch, the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, in a joint session, judged concerning the necessity of... giving the diocesan Hierarch... instructions in case of a disconnection with the higher church administration or the cessation of the activity of the latter...

“‘2. If dioceses, as a result of the movement of the front, changes of state boundaries, etc., find themselves unable to communicate with the higher church administration or the higher church administration itself together with his Holiness the Patriarch for some reason ceases its activity, the diocesan

719 The session of the HCA took place on board the steamer *Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich*. In it took part Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev, Metropolitan Plato of Odessa, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Bishop Benjamin of Sebastopol. It was decided to continue the prerogatives of the members of the HCA, discussing all aspects of the Church life of the refugees and soldiers in all states having relations with the Ecumenical Patriarch (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 47-48).

At the second session, on November 22, it was decided to include Archbishop Anastasy of Kishinev, who was already living in Constantinople, in the HCA. (V.M.)

hierarchy will immediately enter into relations with the hierarchs of neighbouring dioceses in order to organize a higher instance of church authority for several dioceses in the same conditions (in the form of a temporary higher church government or metropolitan region, or something similar).

“‘3. The care for the organization of the higher church authority for the whole group who are in the situation indicated in point 2 is the obligatory duty of the eldest ranked hierarch in the indicated group...’

“This wise decree of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, which was passed in conditions of anti-church terror, was given to the foreign bishops a year after its passing with the help of Bishop Meletius of Nerchensk. It served as the canonical basis for the formation of the Russian Church Abroad, since the émigré clergy were in the situation indicated in points 2 and 3.

“Meanwhile the HCA in Constantinople continued to work out a plan for further action. At the sessions of April 19-21, 1921, it was decided to convene a ‘Congress of the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to unite, regulate and revive church activity abroad’, which was later renamed the ‘Russian Church Council Abroad’, also known in the literature as the Karlovtsy Council. Soon, at the invitation of Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia, the HCA led by Metropolitan Anthony moved to Sremskie Karlovtsy in Serbia – a fraternal country which in the course of many years proved to be a safe haven for the leadership of the Church Abroad.”

Sremskie Karlovtsy was a significant centre for the Russian Church in Exile for historical reasons. In 1691 37,000 Serbian families had fled there from Turkish-ruled Serbia with the blessing of Patriarch Arsenius III, forming an autonomous metropolitanate in 1712. Just as the Serbs fled there from the Turks, so the Russians now fled there from the Bolsheviks.

ROCOP found greater sympathy among the Serbs than among the Greeks. “Serbia repaid mercy [Tsar Nicholas II’s decision to declare war in 1914 in defence of Serbia] with mercy. Alexander I never identified Russia with her new communist government. Being a deeply believing Orthodox man, King Alexander could not contemplate the destiny of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church without pain... During the Civil war, by command of the Monarch of Yugoslavia, a Serbian corps of volunteers was formed in the South of Russia to fight against the Bolsheviks. When the civil war was lost and the remains of the Volunteer Army, thanks to the efforts of General Wrangel, were saved and left their homeland, Alexander I magnanimously stretched out his hand of help and received those who were without a homeland, the Russian refugees who were needed by nobody, and gave them the opportunity to set themselves up, work and live in this country. The young Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes needed cultural and intellectual forces. It well understood this, but it did not give refuge to Russian people out of avaricious motives – it

strove to repay good with good, to repay the joyful hospitality it received from Russia when it was a political émigré, and for help in the war.”⁷²⁰

Meanwhile, at the end of 1920, 200,000 Russian refugees with the retreating remnants of the White armies in Siberia crossed from Siberia into China. Among them were six bishops and many priests. This large colony of Russian clergy recognized the authority of the HCA in Serbia.

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The canonical status of ROCOR (the successor of the HCA) was unique in the history of the Orthodox Church. She always called herself a part of the Local Russian Church - that part which was situated outside Russia and had jurisdiction exclusively outside Russia (point 1 of the *Polozhenie* or Statute of ROCOR). And yet she had dioceses and parishes on all six continents of Europe, North and South America, Asia, Africa and Australia, and was in canonical submission to none of the Local Orthodox Churches already existing in those places. Moreover, at the beginning of the 1990s, when she returned to Russia, she claimed jurisdiction in Russia as well! And so ROCOR was, in effect, a world-wide jurisdiction claiming to have jurisdiction in every part of the globe, but which claimed to be only a part of one Local Church, the Russian!

This clearly anomalous situation was justified on a temporary basis, - until the fall of communism in Russia, according to the *Polozhenie*. It was supported also by what came to be called the Catacomb Church in Russia and, at least for a time, such established Local Churches as Serbia and Jerusalem. The situation was seen as justified on the grounds, first, of the extraordinarily difficult situation of the three million or so Russian Orthodox scattered around the world, whose spiritual and physical needs had to be met by Russian-speaking pastors; and secondly, of the critical situation in the Orthodox Church as a whole, when even the leaders of Orthodoxy were falling into heresy.

The First All-Emigration Council opened in Sremskie Karlovtsy on November 21, 1921. Eleven Russian and two Serbian bishops took part; twenty-four Russian bishops who could not attend the Council sent telegrams recognizing its authority. Clergy, monastics and laity also took part in the Council - 163 people in all. Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) was the president of the Council, and Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia its honorary president. However, when the Bulgarian Metropolitan Stefan of Sophia arrived, bringing a greeting from the Bulgarian Holy Synod, this upset the Patriarch of Serbia, whose relations with the Bulgarians were not good. So he did not come, while Metropolitan Stefan immediately returned to Bulgaria.

720 Victor Salni and Svetlana Avlasovich, “Net bol’she toj liubvi, kak esli kto polozhit dushu svoiu za drugi svoia” (There is no greater love than that a man should lay down his life for his friend), http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page*pid=966.

Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev) of Boguchar, who was in charge of the Russian communities in Bulgaria, reported to the Council about the great difficulty of their position in Bulgaria because of the Bulgarian schism from the Greek Church (dating back to 1872) and the impossibility of concelebrating with the Bulgarian clergy. The hierarchs discussed this matter from all sides and declared that they would like to restore communion with the Bulgarian Church, but could not exceed their canonical prerogatives without the participation of the other Local Churches, and in particular of the Church of Constantinople. In spite of that, continuing the practice of the Russian Church and basing themselves on the canons (71, 81, 88 and 122 of Carthage), the delegates allowed the Russian priests and deacons to serve all kinds of Divine services and sacraments with the bishops and clergy of the Bulgarian Church, and they also allowed the Russian bishops to serve with the Bulgarian clergy. Between bishops only joint serving of *molebens*, *pannikhidas*, etc. was allowed, but “in no way the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other holy sacraments of the Orthodox Church”.⁷²¹

The Council called on the Genoa conference to refuse recognition to the Bolshevik regime and help the Russian people to overthrow it. And on socialism it declared in its session on November 18 / December 1:

“I. The Council of the Russian Church Abroad considers it necessary to condemn the false teaching of socialism, and its most consistent form – Bolshevism or Communism, as being basically an antichristian teaching that is destructive in its consequences. First of all, from the religious-moral point of view, because:

A.

II.

- a) Socialism destroys every kind of religion, and in particular, Christianity;
- b) Socialism annihilates the foundations of morality and leads to complete lawlessness;
- c) There is a complete contradiction between socialism and Christianity in spite of a superficial apparent similarity. All this is explained by the fact that in the psychology of the preachers of socialism, and in its philosophical foundation, there lies overt materialism.

III.

And in state life socialism brings destruction, for:

- a) in denying the primarily religious significance of the person, it undermines the legislative order of life, which is based on this principle;

721 Ivan Snegarov, *Otnosheniata mezhdur B'lgarskata ts'rkva i drugite pravoslavni ts'rkvi sled prov'zglasiavaneto na skhizmata* (Relations between the Bulgarian Church and other Orthodox Churches following the declaration of the schism) (in Bulgarian); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 61.

- b) in teaching a false principle of the equality of all in the collective, it denies authority and engenders universal strife;
- c) in denying love for one's homeland which is blessed by God, it preaches an unattainable internationalism;
- d) it leads to the annihilation of the family and the corruption of children.

IV. Socialism also destroys economic life, since, proceeding from the idea of collectivization:

- a) In denying the person and private property, Socialism undermines personal initiative as the source of activity and creativity;
- b) In undermining the spiritual bases of the economy and introducing only avaricious egoism, it wages a destructive war also into economics.

B.

- a) The materialistic life of the contemporary world and the egoistic extremes and strivings of capitalism give some basis and reason for the spread of Socialism;
- b) But the lowering of the level of the Christian's personal striving for perfection and the vain belief in the all-healing means of a change in the form of life have prepared and supported faith in the reform of life by Socialism;
- c) However, the destructive fruits of the experience of applying Socialism, especially in Russia, which annihilates not only spiritual but also material values, which is in general hostile to the whole of God's creation, rebuke the whole disastrous global deception created by the enemy of God, the devil, under the form of good.

C.

Measures against the socialist false teaching:

- a) A return to a living life in the Church of Christ, especially in the Holy Orthodox Church, as the religion of the highest spiritual development of the personality;
- b) The patient bearing of the cross of sorrows send down by God, as being the natural results of the false, destructive ideas of socialism;
- c) Participation in the struggle against socialism by all the Christian confessions and other religions;
- d) Struggle against socialism by means of just state-legislative measures;
- e) Participation in the rebuking of the lie of socialism in public science and thought – especially so as to eradicate the poison in Russia, into which it has been poured in the course of the last 4 years."

The Council was particularly noted for its monarchism "May [God] return to the All-Russian throne his Anointed One, strong in the love of the people, a lawful tsar from the House of the Romanovs". However, Archbishop Evlogy of Paris and Bishop Benjamin of Sebastopol voted against the Epistle, considering it to be an inadmissible invasion of politics into church life. Ironically, both later joined the Moscow Patriarchate, which allowed an unprecedented domination

of Bolshevik politics over church life...⁷²² Archbishop Anastasy of Kishinev also voted against, but for different reasons: he was not anti-monarchist, but did not want the Romanovs to be designated as the only possible monarchs. The hierarchs were split in two, two-thirds of the clergy abstained, and the Epistle was issued only thanks to the votes of the laity.

The strongly monarchist tone of the Karlovtsy Council marks an important step in the spiritual recovery of the Russian Church. As we have seen, the Holy Synod in February, 1917 had done little, if anything, to protect the monarchy, and the Councils that took place during the Civil War shied clear of any commitment to monarchism. But monarchism became part of the credo of the Russian Church Abroad as it had been, of course, of the pre-revolutionary Church.

This was in contrast to earlier councils. As A.A. Kostriukov writes: “Both the Stavropol Council and the HTCA created by it tried to adopt a restrained political position. While speaking out against the Bolshevik dictatorship, the leadership of the Church in the south of Russia distanced itself from the monarchy and tried to stand on democratic principles. So as not to destroy the fragile peace between the representatives of various parties represented in the White armies. Recalling this period, Protopriest Vladimir Vostokov wrote in 1922: ‘In May, 1919 the South Russian Council in Stavropol under the presidency of Archbishop Metrophanes, and through the exceptional participation of Protopriest [George] Shavelsky, who at that time was working in agreement with the chief of staff General Romanovsky, did not allow those members to speak who tried to express themselves definitively in relation to ‘socialism’ and ‘the internationalist executioners’. And the word ‘Tsar’ was feared at the Council like fire.’

“According to the witness of Protopriest Vladimir Vostokov, even the open condemnation of regicide and the appeal to the people to repent of this sin dates to the period when the HTCA of the South-East of Russia was already in the Crimea. However, ‘not even the Crimean Church administration resolved on appealing’ for the reestablishment of the monarchy’...”⁷²³

However, final defeat in the Civil War and the experience of exile gave the Karlovtsy Council the spiritual freedom to speak openly for the restoration of the monarchy. And the Russian Church in Exile continued to preserve the traditions of monarchism. Thus Metropolitan Anthony wrote to the whole flock in the diaspora: “The punishing hand of the Lord is stretched out above us. Russia is suffering immeasurably for our grave sins. Russian people have been scattered through the whole world. There is no measure and no limit to the crimes of those who have polluted the land of Russia. Churches have been

722 Protodeacon German Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, “Aktual’nost’ Pervogo Vsezarubezhnogo Sobora” (The Contemporary Relevance of the First All-Abroad Council), *Nasha Strana* (Our Country), N 2929, December 3, 2011.

723 Kostriukov, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

defiled, holy objects profaned, a battle is being fought against God, blood is being shed.

“Even the blood of the Lord’s Anointed has been spilt, and he has ended his life as a martyr.

“The land is impoverished, people perish, power is in the hands of the godless, the Church is under persecution. The land of Russia is in darkness and human reason seeks in vain for the means of salvation.

“ To the Russian people on the threshold of despair, the divine mercy has left an unfailing light – the Orthodox Church. Providence has raised up the Patriarch as the head of the Russian Church, so that in the unity of the Church there lives on the unity of the nation.

“In sorrow and torment the Russian people seek the succour of the Church. The churches are packed, and in them rises the unceasing, sorrowful cry of repentance, together with prayers for mercy and for protection. The limits to God’s wrath have not yet been reached, the suffering is not yet complete.

“The duty of those abroad in the diaspora, those who have preserved their lives and who do not share in the grief which is destroying our people, is to keep the unity of the Christian spirit beneath the banner of the Holy Cross and under the protection of the Orthodox faith, according to the tradition of the Russian Church.

“Let this be our persistent prayer to God in his mercy: May the Lord forgive us and our land our great sins and transgressions, may he enlighten our minds with the light of the truth, our hearts with the flame of love, and may he strengthen our will for the way of righteousness.

“From the beginning, our Russian land was saved and formed by the faith and prayers of the saints and the ascetics, by the labours of our anointed princes and tsars.

“And now may our prayer flame up unsleepingly and may the Lord show us the path of salvation and of the restoration of our native land. May he defend the faith and the Church and all Russia. May he protect the people’s hearts from evil and may he restore to the Russian throne the Lord’s Anointed, strong in the love of his people – the legitimate Orthodox Tsar of the House of Romanov.

“Praying for the forgiveness of our sins and asking for light in the future, let each one of us take upon himself the burden of his brother, so that, united in faith and love, we may all re-enter our home, when the Lord opens the doors to us, as one flock of the One Shepherd, with a sacrificial readiness to serve our native land and the good of the people.

“May God bless every endeavour made for the sake of the Orthodox Church and the building up of the Russian state that it has sanctified.”⁷²⁴

This position was, however, intensely feared by the Bolsheviks, for whom the threat of the restoration of the monarchy remained real. And so they put pressure on Patriarch Tikhon, who resolved: ‘To close the Council, and to recognize the resolutions of the Karlovtsy Council as having no canonical significance in view of its invasion into the political sphere which does not belong to it. To demand the materials of the Council abroad, so as to judge on the degree of guilt of the participants in the Council.’ The Holy Synod added: ‘To enter into discussion of the activity of those responsible for the Council, and to give them over to ecclesiastical trial after the establishment of the normal life of the Russian Synod.’⁷²⁵

In defence of the Karlovtsy Council’s position, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) said: “If by politics one understands all that touches upon the life of the people, beginning with the rightful position of the Church within the realm, then the ecclesiastical authorities and Church councils must participate in political life, and from this point of view definite demands are made upon it. Thus, the holy hierarch Hermogen laid his life on the line by first demanding that the people be loyal to Tsar Vasily Shuisky, and when the Poles imprisoned him he demanded the election of Tsar Michael Romanov. At the present time, the paths of the political life of the people are diverging in various directions in a far more definite way: some, in a positive sense, for the Faith and the Church, others in an inimical sense; some in support of the army and against socialism and communism, others exactly the opposite. Thus the Karlovtsy Council not only had the right, but was *obliged to bless the army* for the struggle against the Bolsheviks, and also, following the Great Council of Moscow of 1917-1918, to condemn socialism and communism.”⁷²⁶

The position of the Karlovtsy Council was supported by the *Zemsky Sobor* which took place in Vladivostok from July 23 to August 10, 1922, which, as Anton Ter-Grigorian writes, “recognized the cause of the revolution to be the sins of the Russian people and called for repentance, proclaiming the only path of salvation for Russia to be the restoration of a lawful Orthodox monarchy. The Council resolved that ‘the right to establish Supreme power in Russia belongs to the dynasty of the House of Romanov’. That is, the Council recognized the Romanov Dynasty to be still reigning in spite of the troubles, and for a short time re-established the Fundamental laws of the Russian empire in the Amur district (until the final conquest of the region by the Reds).

“Accordingly it was decided that the Amur State formation free from the Bolsheviks should be headed by a representative of the Dynasty. For the

724 *Eastern Churches Review* 7.1 (1975).

725 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

726 Metropolitan Anthony, in Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (A Life of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. VI, p. 36.

transitional period General Michael Konstantinovich Diterichs was elected as Ruler. Patriarch Tikhon, who was in Moscow, was unanimously elected as the honourable president of the Council. The widowed Empress Maria Fyodorovna wrote a welcoming telegram to the Sobor in reply.

“In order no. 1 dated August 8, 1922 Lieutenant-General Diterichs wrote: ‘For our sins against the Anointed of God, Emperor Nicholas II, who was martyred with the whole of his Family by Soviet power, a terrible time of troubles has struck the Russian people and Holy Rus’ has been subjected to the greatest destruction, pillaging, torment and slavery by atheist Russians and thieves and robbers of other races, led by infidels of Jewish race who have even renounced their own Jewish faith...

“‘Here, at the edge of the Russian land, in the Amur region, the Lord has placed a single thought and faith into the hearts and minds of everyone gathered at the *Zemsky Sobor*: there can be no Great Russia without a Sovereign, without an Anointed of God of inherited succession. And here in the Amur region, as we, the last people of the Russian land, are gathered in a small body, but one strong in faith and national spirit, we are set the task and the duty and the good intention of directing all our service to preparing the way for him – our future God-seer.’

“And here are the words of the last order of General Diterichs of October 17, 1922 before his departure from Russia under the pressure of the Reds: ‘I believe that Russia will return to the Russia of Christ, the Russia of the Anointed of God, but I believe that we were unworthy of this mercy from the Supreme Creator...’”⁷²⁷

727 Ter-Grigorian, “Priamurskij zemskij sobor (kontsa 1922-ogo goda)”, <http://anton-tg.livejournal.com/307585.html>, July 24, 2006. See also Demetrius Anakshin, “Poslednij zemskij sobor”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus’*, N 21 (1594), November 1/14, 1997, pp. 10-11, 15, and Danilushkin, op. cit., chapter 6.

47. THE CHURCH IN TRANSCARPATHIAN RUSSIA

Jurij Danilets writes: "At the end of World War I, the issue of the ecclesiastical affiliation of the Transcarpathian Orthodox once again came to the fore. At the second session of the All-Ukrainian Orthodox Council in Kiev, from June 20 to July 11, 1918, Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitskii) of Kiev and Galicia motioned to petition for government assistance for his trip to Austria-Hungary. On September 5, 1918, Antony sent a letter to this effect to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The document clearly named not only the Galician lands, but also "Ugro-Ruthenia" (Hungary), as places where the bishop sought "to visit Orthodox communities [...] and set up Orthodox churches, parishes and monasteries, both in person and through authorized, ordained persons." According to Starodub, after he was denied permission, the issue was raised again at the next (third) session of the Council in October-November of the same year. On November 25, in response to Metropolitan Antony's repeated appeals, Serhii Herbel', chairman of the Council of Ministers, instructed the Ministry of Religion to come up with draft solutions to the problem. Finally, on December 5, in the final days of the Hetmanate, the relevant documents were sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Subsequent political events were not conducive to resolving the issue.

"According to the June 16, 1918 issue of the Brno newspaper *Rovnost*, Hieromonk Alexis (Kabaliuk) was released from prison and summoned before a military commission after serving his sentence from the Máramaros-Sihoť Trial. The commission deemed him fit for military service and assigned him to a military unit. In July 1918, Kabaliuk managed to board a Russia-bound train for prisoners-of-war at Miskolc railway station. The subsequent fate of the leader of the Orthodox movement in Transcarpathia can be traced in the memoirs of Archbishop Evlogii Georgievskii and in those of Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitskii's cell-attendant Archimandrite Feodosii (Mel'nik). Vladyka Evlogii recalled that Kabaliuk came to his house in Zhitomir "exhausted, worn out, with a festering wound across his chest..." The Archbishop was convinced that he had been released from prison by the revolutionaries, had made it to the Ukraine, and had been sent for treatment to "the hospital of the Kiev Caves Lavra." In the four-volume work *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishego Antoniiia, mitropolita Kievskogo i Galitskogo* [*The Life of His Beatitude Antony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia*], we find a recollection of a visit the Metropolitan paid to Hieromonk Alexis in the hospital of the Lavra in Kiev. It is also known that Metropolitan Antony was approached for help by the leaders of the Orthodox movement from Subcarpathian Ruthenia during his visit to Mount Athos in 1920. On June 5, 1920, he issued an "Encyclical to the People of Carpathian Ruthenia," stating his desire to come to Czechoslovakia. In the same letter, he recommended that the Subcarpathian Orthodox appeal to the Serbs for assistance. 'If I do not come to you, go to the Orthodox Metropolis of Karlovci. to Serbia. The Orthodox hierarchs there will instruct you in what to do.'

“Metropolitan Antony did not cease to take an interest in the affairs of Subcarpathian Ruthenia after returning to the Crimea in October 1920 at the invitation of General Peter Wrangel. Under his chairmanship, shortly before it was evacuated to Constantinople, the Temporary Supreme Church Administration in the South of Russia considered the situation of the religious movement in Czechoslovakia. Preliminary documents of the ‘Assembly of the Russian Church Abroad’ note that the Temporary Supreme Church Administration in South-eastern Russia planned to take action on this issue. However, the Bolshevik invasion of the Crimea prevented any effective action from being taken. Thus, for political reasons, Metropolitan Antony did not succeed in securing canonical authority for himself in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Having found himself in Sremski Karlovci at the invitation of the Serbian Patriarch and as head of the ROCOR, the Metropolitan continued to maintain contacts with the Orthodox clergy in Subcarpathian Ruthenia.

“In this paper, we shall focus on contacts between the ROCOR and Orthodox clergy under Serbian jurisdiction. We shall deliberately pass over Metropolitan Antony’s support for Archbishop Savvatii (Vrabeti).

“Hieromonk Sergii Ts’oka wrote that as early as December 19, 1921, Georgy Keniz had tried to hold a meeting of delegates of Orthodox communities from Iza village in Huszt District in order to elect Hegumen Alexis (Kabaliuk) as bishop. Given the unfavorable situation in Iza, where the monastic community of St. Nicholas Monastery and villagers were opposed to the meeting, it was decided to move the meeting to Tereblia village, Tyachiv District, and then to the village of Bushtyno. Miloš Červinka, the chairman of the Czech Orthodox community in Prague, reported in a letter to the office of the President of Czechoslovakia, dated January 22, 1922, that there had been attempts by certain circles to elect a bishop from among the local clergy. Červinka considered such a move harmful and dangerous for the State, suggesting that such candidates might be ‘susceptible to deleterious foreign influence’. This was obviously an allusion to Russian émigré influence. The meeting took place on March 1, 1922. The delegates criticized Bishop Dositej and the members of the Central Orthodox Committee (hereafter: COC) for their inertia in setting up diocesan institutions. One of the COC members, Ivan Mondich, wrote that the Czechoslovak government had refused to approve the charter of the Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church in response to the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in Sremski Karlovci, which, in his words, ‘gave the Czech government cause to declare that all Russian Orthodox priests [were] monarchists’. The attendees at the gathering sent an appeal to the Serbian Patriarch asking him to consecrate a Vicar Bishop for Transcarpathia.

“Bishop Dositej Vasić considered the meeting a consequence of Metropolitan Antony’s efforts to gain control over church life in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. In a report to the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) on August 11, 1922, Bishop Dositej mentioned that Hegumen Alexis Kabaliuk had visited Sremski Karlovci. The monk reported that he had visited Patriarch Dimitrije Pavlović and Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitskii and noted that the

Transcarpathian faithful wanted a permanently resident bishop. 'It would be good,' said Hegumen Alexis, 'to appoint one of the Russian bishops, of whom there are many residing in the Kingdom [of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes – *trans.*].' Next, Bishop Dositej reported that he had written a short 'missive' to reassure the faithful and clergy, and asked Hegumen Alexis to circulate it among the population of Subcarpathian Ruthenia. However, according to Dositej, Kabaliuk withheld the document after returning to Iza. Instead, he 'summoned his and Metropolitan Antony's supporters' to a meeting. According to the Serbian bishop, the Hegumen had had Georgy Keniz join in the anti-Serbian agitation and set many people in Uzhhorod against the COC. It is clear from the text of the document that Keniz's main objective was to induce believers to think that a bishop and clergy should be ordained from the local population. Dositej did not overlook the differences of opinion between Fr. Alexis and the brethren of the monastery in the village of Iza. According to Dositej, in early 1922, the monks persuaded the hegumen that he was doing the wrong thing, 'that he could not be a bishop because he had no education,' and that he would be regarded as acting against the Serbian Church. 'But to all of this, Fr. Alexis replied that he was acting with "the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony."' The report gives a brief account of the meeting in Bushtyno and the contents of the resolution. 'All that the minutes show is a first step: that they wanted to have a local clergyman as a vicar bishop,' Dositej noted. From Bishop Dositej's report, we can tell that all of Hegumen Alexis and Keniz's steps were being coordinated directly by Metropolitan Antony, the head of the 'Karlovci Synod.'

"Following the Serbian Synod's apathetic reaction to the Bushtyno resolution, the issue of electing a bishop did not go away. In one report, Bishop Dositej mentioned that Keniz had visited him in Sremski Karlovci and demanded a reply to the March 1, 1922 petition. The bishop did not want to talk to him at all, stating that he, a mere peasant, had no right to speak on behalf of the Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia without authorization from the COC. At Keniz's request, the bishop had signed a document confirming he had visited Serbia and allowing him to reclaim travel expenses. He wrote a letter to reassure the faithful and promised to visit them soon. Dositej speculated that Keniz might have received additional instructions from Metropolitan Antony in Sremski Karlovci, for he became active upon returning home. Dositej wrote: 'He was authorized by Metropolitan Antony himself, followed by His Holiness Patriarch Dimitrije, to instruct the Orthodox people of Subcarpathian Ruthenia to assemble and elect a bishop. It was promised their chosen candidate chosen would immediately be consecrated as a bishop in Karlovci.' Bishop Dositej drew the attention of the SOC Synod to Kabaliuk's activities: 'Fr. Alexis Kabaliuk's behavior on this count was interesting. He pretended not to know anything [about] the plans that were underway. When asked by the monastery brotherhood as to why he would not speak out against Keniz, who was acting without his permission, he replied: 'One must respect the will of the people.' On July 3, another assembly was held in Bushtyno to elect a bishop for the Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church. On the eve of the vote, a rival to Kabaliuk appeared in the person of Hieromonk Bogolep (Tserkovnik), at the

time rector of a parish in Bedevlia Village. In Bishop Dositej's words, Bogolep tried to enlist the support of the peasants by promising to ordain them as priests after he was consecrated. In the end, the majority of votes was received by Hegumen Alexis (52 votes), followed by Hieromonk Bogolep (23) and Hieromonk Amfilokhii (Kemin') (3). A letter of petition to Patriarch Dimitrije noting the election of Alexis Kabaliuk as bishop has been found in the SOC Archives in Belgrade.

"Studying the collections of the aforementioned Archive allows us to conclude that two versions of the petition were signed at the meeting in Bushtyno. The first, as already noted, was addressed to Patriarch Dimitrije Pavlović, and the second to Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitskii. Unfortunately, the original of the second document has been lost, but a copy typewritten by the Secretary of the Provisional Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia has been found. At the end of the page, it states that the original bore 31 stamps "from churches and congregations, and 64 signatures". The signatories tried to convince the Metropolitan that for three years since the revival of Orthodoxy in Transcarpathia, '[...] we have been languishing almost without pastors, and most importantly, without an Archpastor, a Bishop, as an intercessor [...]'. In view of this, the letter asks Metropolitan Antony '[...] to look upon us orphaned children of the Holy Orthodox Mother Church, and become the Archpastor and Bishop of the Carpatho-Ruthenian Church that we so desire [...]'. This document thus does not match the minutes of the meeting in the slightest, and effectively calls for the Carpatho-Ruthenians to leave the SOC.

"On July 19, 1922, the COC met in Uzhhorod. Seven of the 12 members took part in the meeting: Hegumen Alexis Kabaliuk, V. Gomichkov, I. Mondich, Fr. I. Ilechko, Fr. M. Meygesh, Hieromonk Matfei Vakarov, and I. Zbigley. After discussing the results of the second Bushtyno meeting, which some speakers called 'a meeting not of the Carpatho-Ruthenian Church, but of a few dozen people from Máramaros *jupa*,' they adopted a unanimous resolution against the 'illegal Bushtyno assembly and episcopal elections,' which had taken place in violation of the church statutes and without the consent and knowledge of the SOC and COC. At Hegumen Alexis' request, a note was added to the resolution reading: 'I acknowledge this decision of the COC to be correct, but I do not wish to go against the will of the people and leave the matter to the discretion of the Serbian Synod'. Hegumen Alexis was thus the only person who defended the decisions of the Bushtyno assembly. The COC members asked Bishop Dositej to come to Subcarpathian Ruthenia at once and finish organizing church life there.

"According to Archbishop Dositej, even though the COC meeting minutes note that it was planned to send the text of the resolution to Serbia by mail, Hegumen Alexis (Kabaliuk) took the papers himself. He personally undertook to deliver the documents to the bishop in Sremski Karlovci. The Serbian envoy tried to convince them of the fact that, that after corresponding with Metropolitan Antony's office, Kabaliuk clearly knew that Dositej had left Serbia

and was on his way to to Prague. Despite this, Hegumen Alexis, accompanied by Hieromonk Bogolep and Georgy Keniz, set out for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.

“On the eve of the trip, July 18, 1922, another petition was sent to Patriarch Dimitrije, signed by the aforementioned persons as “commissioners of the Orthodox people of Carpathian Ruthenia”. It criticized the activity of Bishop Dositej, who had allegedly ‘again disappointed our expectations by not coming either at Easter or in past days’, and asked him to be ‘relieved of his duties among our people’. On behalf of 32 parishes, the signatories petitioned him to appoint ‘Hegumen Alexis Kabaliuk as a vicar bishop for us’, and to entrust supreme ecclesiastical administration of ‘the former Orthodox dioceses of Ugro-Ruthenia – Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Marmorosz, Prešov, and Šariš—in accordance with the Church canons, to the Metropolitan of Kiev as Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch, who may ordain [*sic!*] Father Alexis as his assistant in accordance with our petition.’

“Hieromonk Sergii Ts’oka has claimed that Kabaliuk and the other delegates traveled to Sremski Karlovci separately, while Hieromonk Bogolep allegedly sought ‘to be consecrated as bishop’. In his report to the Synod, Bishop Dositej said that the Transcarpathians had gone to Metropolitan Antony together. After arriving in Sremski Karlovci, they split up, for reasons unknown to the bishop. Dositej explained this as ‘peasant cunning’. ‘The delegates themselves went to Metropolitan Antony,’ he wrote. “When he was told what had been decided and how the election had been held in Bushtyno, Metropolitan Antony was very cross, because nothing had been said about his own canonical privileges, although there was talk at this ‘important meeting’ of elevating Bishop Dositej to the rank of Archbishop of Carpatho-Ruthenia. The delegates asked for forgiveness and promised to rectify the matter, as they had received permission from the assembly in Bushtyno’. Metropolitan Antony thus did not accept the original minutes, forcing the delegates to make revisions to them. ‘We then went to Metropolitan Antony again. He accepted the document and included it in the minutes. He was most glad: he immediately prepared an official document taking the Diocese of Carpatho-Ruthenia under his wing, as well as an episcopal encyclical to his new spiritual children.’ In addition, Metropolitan Antony drafted a letter to Bishop Sergii (Korolev) in Prague, in which he ordered that George Keniz ‘be ordained [...] immediately as a priest and appoint him to one of the vacant parishes in Carpatho-Ruthenia’ with ‘His blessing and the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Dimitrije of Serbia’.

“In his summary, Bishop Dositej noted that Keniz had received ‘the reward he deserved for his work. He did not require anything more.’ Regarding Hieromonk Bogolep and his activities, the report contains the following assessment: ‘It is true that he lost the first election. But it was a great moral reward for him that, in [the] letter he presented along with the encyclical, Metropolitan Antony said nothing about Fr. Alexis’ election as bishop and much less about whether he would be consecrated, only stating that he would be taking the Carpatho-Ruthenian diocese under his care.’ From this quote, we

can conclude that Hieromonk Bogolep did not ask to be ordained by Metropolitan Antony despite attempting to have himself consecrated as bishop.

“On the same day (July 24, 1922), after the departure of the Transcarpathian delegates, Metropolitan Antony wrote a letter to the Serbian Patriarch. He reported the visit of Keniz and Hieromonk Bogolep, who had allegedly told him ‘that Your Holiness has consented to their request that Archpastoral authority in Carpathian Ruthenia be transferred to me, in accordance with the Ecumenical Canon...’ The Metropolitan noted that, ‘of course, I agreed to their request and would be glad to move there, if the Czech Government gives permission’. In Antony’s words, he initially resolved to go to the Patriarch for personal instructions, but because the latter was on vacation in a sanatorium, he postponed this visit until the Patriarch’s return to Belgrade. At the end of his letter, the Metropolitan expressed his gratitude for ‘having brought this affair full circle, which is so dear to me and which I have been pursuing for no less than twenty years...’ Vladyka Antony’s letter suggests two possible conclusions: 1) Keniz and Fr. Bogolep supplied Metropolitan Antony with false information that the Serbian Orthodox Church had given permission for the Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church to transfer to the Karlovci jurisdiction; 2) a conscious manipulative effort was underway on the part of the head of the ROCOR to force Patriarch Dimitrije to abandon his claims to the Orthodox Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia.

“On July 25, 1922, the delegates met with Hegumen Alexis and told him about their visit to Metropolitan Antony. According to Bishop Dositej, ‘Fr. Alexis then became angry, and seeing that he had been deceived, tore both important documents to shreds and threw them on the ground.’ However, this was not enough for Fr. Alexis; he summoned the delegates and went with them to Metropolitan Antony to explain the main idea of the Bushtyno resolution to him. Metropolitan Antony received the delegates and expressed the opinion that it was enough for now that he had received their diocese into his jurisdiction. ‘And then we shall see...’ For his part, Kabaliuk tried to convince the Metropolitan that this decision would not satisfy the people, because the faithful wanted him - Fr. Alexis - to be their bishop. Hegumen Alexis’ resistance angered the Metropolitan and he demanded that he hand the letter and encyclical back to him at once, stressing that he was not accustomed to be advised by ordinary peasants. Upon hearing that Kabaliuk had torn up the documents, Antony became angry and threw all three out of his office. ‘Behind our backs,’ Bishop Dositej wrote, ‘we could hear him uttering words of disparagement: “Bolsheviks”, “rebels”, “villains”...’ The attempt to change jurisdiction thus ended in failure and conflict with the head of the ROCOR.

“In a report to the SOC Synod dated August 11, 1922, the Archbishop of Niš proposed requesting that Metropolitan Antony cease his interventions in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. The Serbian Synod and the Patriarch evidently held talks to this effect with the Metropolitan, for he then gave up his explicit claim to authority over the Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church. However, only a

year later, the Metropolitan came out in support of the consecration of Archbishop Savvatii (Vrabets). This shows that the Russian hierarch's stance, which some scholars and the SOC itself have regarded as hostile, was inconsistent.

"In early August 1922, Bishop Dositej arrived in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. After a liturgy on the feast of the Prophet Elias in Iza, the bishop met with clergy and some members of the COC. In a report to the SOC Synod, he wrote: 'They were all glad that I was among the delegates, because they had been told that the SOC did not want to have anything more to do with them; that I was pursuing some Czech policy to the detriment of the Russian [*sic!*] people; that I was more of a politician than a bishop; that their only salvation was in Metropolitan Antony, who had connections with Serbian bishops [...] who shared his views; that Russian Orthodoxy was the sole correct form of Orthodoxy; that Metropolitan Antony was the legitimate exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch for the Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church; that our interference in this region was against the interests of the Russian people, and, what is more, against the holy canons of the true Orthodox Church.'

"In 1924, when the issue of electing a bishop from the local monks was again raised, Archimandrite Vitalii (Maksimenko) spoke out strongly against this idea. In a letter to Fr. Vsevolod Kolomatskii dated June 10, 1924, he wrote: 'The local candidates are hopeless.' Maksimenko considered inviting 'Metropolitan Antony there, at least for some time', to be the only way out of the difficult crisis in the Orthodox Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, yet, as Archimandrite Vitalii wrote, Metropolitan Antony had by then already agreed to come to Czechoslovakia and 'that [thr] ship had long since sailed.' Archimandrite Vitalii was not the only one who regretted that it would be impossible for Metropolitan Antony to relocate to Subcarpathian Ruthenia. About nine months after this letter, Gerovskii's brother Georgii, writing to Bishop Gorazd, called it a great mistake for the authorities to have banned Metropolitan Antony from entering Transcarpathia.

"In February–March 1923, there was an idea among the Orthodox clergy in Carpathian Ruthenia to invite Vladyka Sergii Korolev as an administrator. On March 31, 1923, delegates from the Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church were received by the SOC Synod members Bishops Dositej Vasić, Nikolai Velimirović, and Joseph Zvijović. The Serbian bishops supported the petition to appoint Bishop Sergii as administrator and asked the Patriarch to make a final decision. In a separate letter to the Synod, A. Gerovskii, the head of the delegation, stressed that the Orthodox parishes represented by him recognized Dositej as their bishop, but because he was otherwise engaged as a member of the Synod, asked that an assistant administrator be appointed. In this letter, Gerovskii proposed Bishop Sergii as a candidate for this position and reported on his long-standing contacts with the Orthodox Transcarpathians. 'We know Rt. Revd. Sergii well, as he was the long-time superior of Jableczna Monastery (in Chelm Region), where all our hieromonks were trained before the War. He has always been close to us. We all loved and love him for his kindness and for

his goodwill toward our Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church, and we are certain that His Eminence is the most suitable candidate for the post of Administrator. A. Gerovskii noted that Bishop Sergii had been expelled from Chełm Diocese by the Poles and was in Prague, where [he] was serving as a parish priest of the Russian Orthodox community. The letter expressed confidence that 'His Eminence Metropolitan Evlogii, to whom His Grace Sergii is subordinate as a plenipotentiary representative of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon of All Russia, would give his consent for His Grace Sergii to accept the post of Administrator of the Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church.' In the event that the SOC Synod agreed to his candidacy, the delegates would take it upon themselves to negotiate with Metropolitan Evlogii and Bishop Sergii in this matter.

"At an assembly of clergy in Iza on June 5, 1923, the question of inviting Bishop Sergii to be a vicar-administrator was again raised. As Gerovskii reported to them, Bishop Sergii had agreed to come to Subcarpathian Ruthenia and even to join the Serbian jurisdiction. The matter of Bishop Sergii's appointment to the See of Carpatho-Ruthenia was discussed again one final time at a clergy council in Huszt on October 2, 1924. We have no surviving documents that explain why the Synod refused to appoint Vladyka Sergii as Administrator. We can advance the hypothesis that the Czechoslovak government blocked Gerovskii's and Bishop Dositej's initiative, fearing the mounting influence of the ROCOR within its borders. One finds no further mention of this issue after October 1924."⁷²⁸

An already unclear and complicated situation was further complicated in March 1923 by the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletius' illegal consecration of a certain Archimandrite Sabbatius, a priest of the Serbian Church in Prague, as "Archbishop of Prague and all Czechoslovakia", which included Carpatho-Russia. Then, on April 15, 1924, the Ecumenical Patriarch appointed a Metropolitan of "Hungary and Exarch of Central Europe in Budapest", with its see in Budapest, although there was already a Serbian bishop there. (This new schism will be discussed further in chapter 50.)

Danilets continues: "In 1925, the SOC planned to appoint Bishop Mitrofan (Abramov) as vicar for Subcarpathian Ruthenia. However, the Czechoslovak authorities opposed his candidacy on the belief that he had previously had close ties with Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitskii). Bishop Gorazd Pavlík had to persuade Václav Müller, the adviser on church affairs to the Ministry of Schools and Public Education (MSPE), that Bishop Mitrofan, the abbot of St. Stephen's Monastery, had nothing to do with the ROCOR. It should be noted that Bishop Mitrophan had been received into the clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1922 and remained a part of it until his death in 1945.

⁷²⁸ Danilets, "The ROCOR and Orthodoxy in Subcarpathian Russia in the 1920s", *ROCOR Studies*, November, 2021.

“In May 1926, Czechoslovak officials again mentioned Metropolitan Antony in the context of the Orthodox Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. At a joint meeting of the Foreign Ministry and MSPE on May 5, 1926, Deputy Foreign Minister Václav Girsá stated that the unsettled state of the Orthodox Church was conducive to interference in its affairs by external actors. Metropolitan Antony, whom they alleged had tried to extend the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate to Subcarpathian Ruthenia with the approval of Archbishop Evlogii, was named as the first among these forces. In addition, the Foreign Ministry suspected Archbishop Savvatii of having secret ties with Metropolitan Antony. The second external force to which Girsá recommended paying special attention was the influence of the Living Church and Communist doctrine.

“Gerovskii also mentioned Metropolitan Antony in a letter to the SOC Synod of Bishops on May 26, 1926. He believed that the Church in Subcarpathian Ruthenia was experiencing internal strife caused by the ‘illegal interference of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the false Archbishop Savvatii, Bishop Veniamin, and Metropolitan Antony, who are inciting people against the Serbian Church [...], which [...] undermined the prestige of the Church in general and that of the Serbian Church in particular’.

“The groundwork for contacts between ROCOR figures and Orthodox clergy in Subcarpathian Ruthenia was thus laid in the period before World War I. In the 1920s, the ROCOR leadership attempted to extend its authority over the Transcarpathian Orthodox parishes, based on the status of Exarch granted to Metropolitan Antony by the Ecumenical Patriarch. These attempts ran counter to the position of the SOC, which had established an autonomous Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church in the region in 1921 and considered these territories as canonical parts of itself as the successor to the Metropolis of Karlovci. One point of interest is the cooperation of the SOC with individual Russian bishops and attempts to appoint them as administrators of the Carpatho-Ruthenian Orthodox Church. The subjects raised in this talk demand further study with reference to a broader range of sources...”⁷²⁹

⁷²⁹ Danilets, “The ROCOR and Orthodoxy in Subcarpathian Russia in the 1920s”, *ROCOR Studies*, November, 2021.

48. SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE BALKANS

The problems of self-determination interacted with age-old Orthodox-Catholic conflicts in the inter-war period – between Catholic Poles and Orthodox Ukrainians and Belorussians in Poland, between Orthodox Romanians and Catholic Hungarians in Romania, and between Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats and Slovenes in Yugoslavia.

The Romanians had been defeated by the Germans in the war, but had rejoined the Allies just before the armistice. “On the basis of this action,” writes Barbara Jelavich, “the Romanian representatives claimed the territories promised in the agreement of 1916 with the Allies, despite the fact that the government had subsequently made a separate peace with Germany. The Romanian army was in occupation of most of the lands in question, including Bessarabia. In April 1919 the Romanian forces penetrated into Hungarian territory and launched a drive against the Communist regime of Bela Kun.”⁷³⁰ They were soon in occupation of Budapest.

“In the final agreement, the Treaty of Trianon of June 1920, Romania received Transylvania, Bessarabia, Crişana, and Bukovina. The Banat was divided, with part going to Romania and part to the new Yugoslav state. The drawing of the frontier with Hungary caused a major conflict at the peace conference. Brătianu wished the boundary to be at the Tisza River, which would have meant the annexation of solidly Hungarian territory. Although the maximum Romanian demands were not met, the treaty did incorporate 1.7 million Hungarians into Romania. The war thus gave the Romanian nationalists just about everything they could desire – Transylvania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, and a part of the Banat. The disadvantage of this settlement was that minorities now comprised 28 percent of the total Romanian population, a condition that was to complicate domestic politics in the future...”⁷³¹

The Serbs had lost more men proportionately in the war than any other combatant - half of their male population between 18 and 55. But they now had larger domains - and troublesome minorities.

“The national question,” as Jelavich writes, “was complicated by the extremely harsh attitude that each Balkan government was to adopt toward its non-national citizens or, particularly in the case of Yugoslavia, toward those parties that did not agree with the central regime. They were regularly regarded as a source of weakness and disloyalty, which indeed they were often forced to become. As we have seen, the nineteenth century witnessed the organization of successful national movements among the Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians, Romanians and South Slavic people of the Habsburg Empire. During the period of national revival, the Balkan leaders had constantly

⁷³⁰ This was quite an achievement, for Kun’s party had 40,000 members, including many soldiers (Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 287). (V.M.)

⁷³¹ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, vol. 2, pp. 122-124.

attacked the Habsburg and Ottoman empires for their alleged oppression of national minorities. Yet, in fact, both empires, neither of which was organized on the national principle, gave all of their people a part in state life. The millet system and the community governments allowed most Balkan people under Ottoman rule to run their own affairs on the personal and local level; if an individual wished to convert to Islam he could rise to the highest offices. Within the Habsburg Empire status was often determined more by class than by nationality. The small Croatian nobility stood on an equal footing with the Hungarian or German, or any other. Even among the Romanian and Serbian populations, which, because they consisted predominantly of peasants, were in a definitely weaker position, national religious institutions were available, and education in the national language could be acquired. Needless to say, the general treatment of all minorities was anything but ideal, but the picture was not completely bleak.

“The new national regimes were to adopt a much more unconciliatory view. The position of a member of a minority could be much worse under their rule than under the old empires. In general, any action against the central regime or in support of a change of status could be regarded as treason... Members of the Croatian Peasant Party were sent to jail for favouring a program that called for the revision of the centralist Yugoslav constitution, not for seeking a breakup of the state. Strong police repression was applied against any sign of Albanian or Macedonian sentiment. The national leaderships throughout the peninsula acquired the habit of applying the word *foreign* to minority citizens, even when the families might have lived in the region for centuries. Hungarian, Turkish, German, Albanian, and Italian nationals in Yugoslavia were often regarded in this light; Hungarians, Germans, Ukrainians, and Jews shared the same fate in Romania.

“The postwar period was also to witness what was perhaps the worst solution to this problem short of outright expulsion or the extermination of national groups. The mandatory exchange of populations, first inaugurated between Greece and Turkey and then extended on a voluntary basis to the Bulgarian-Greek problem, was an action with possibly disastrous consequences for the future...”⁷³²

Immediately after the formation of the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in December, 1918, there was chaos... “In parts of it,” writes Paul Johnson, “there had been continuous fighting since 1912, and the frontiers were not settled (if that is the word) until 1926. The Orthodox Serbs ran the army and the administration; but the Catholics Croats and Slovenes... talked of their duty to ‘Europeanize the Balkans’ (i.e., the Serbs) and their fears that they themselves would be ‘Balkanized’. R.W. Seton-Watson, who had been instrumental in creating the new country, was soon disillusioned by the way the Serbs ran it: ‘The situation in Yugoslavia,’ he wrote in 1921, ‘reduces me to despair... I have no confidence in the new constitution, with its absurd centralism.’ The Serb

⁷³² Jelavich, op. cit., pp. 135-136.

officials were worse than the Habsburgs, he complained, and Serb oppression more savage than the German. 'My own inclination,' he wrote in 1928, '... is to leave the Serbs and Croats to stew in their own juice!'"⁷³³

As Serbian police imposed iron discipline in Croatia and Slovenia, Italian troops poured into Istria and Dalmatia. Moreover, the chaos extended further south: "according to one report", writes Niall Ferguson, "as many as a thousand Muslim men were killed [by the Serbs] and 270 villages pillaged in Bosnia in 1919."⁷³⁴

Many non-Serbs in these former Habsburg lands now wondered whether their voluntary union with Serbia had not been a huge mistake. Whether or not it was a mistake, it was certainly an unprecedented and extremely risky political experiment involving the merging of a well-established, highly centralized and militarized monarchy with two other South Slavic nations of a different religion that had already created *de facto* independent democratic states on the territory of the former Habsburg empire.

Mistakes were also made in the formation of the new state. The first was in the title: "the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" implied that these three nations entered on equal terms, while the others that found themselves, voluntarily or involuntarily, parts of it – Bosnian Muslims, Kosovan Albanians, Montenegrins (whose monarchy was abolished, King Nikola being forced to flee to France), Macedonians, Germans, Hungarians and Jews – were not even worth a mention.

Secondly, no constitution had been agreed. So for the first two and a half years, until the passing of the so-called Vidovdan constitution in 1921, the question of the rights of minorities could not be resolved, and was "solved" only by the army and police force of the old Serbian kingdom. No wonder that so many thought that this *was* no more or less than the old Serbian kingdom upgraded to the status of an "empire", and that the Croatian and Slovene lands had simply been annexed to it – albeit not by force, but by cunning diplomacy...

Thirdly, as a result of Italian aggression and the indifference of the other Great Powers, the new state did not have internationally agreed frontiers. "In March 1922," writes Glenny, "a fascist coup overthrew [the Italian] government in a dress rehearsal for Mussolini's seizure of power later that year. Italy then exerted immense pressure on Yugoslavia to concede Italian sovereignty over Fiume, and in January 1924, old Nikola Pašić, in his last spell as Prime Minister, travelled to Rome to sign away the city. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had been mutilated at birth. As Rijeka, Zadar, most of Istria and the islands of Lošinj, Cres and Lastovo slipped from Yugoslavia's grasp into the bosom of revolutionary Italy, tensions between Serbs and Croats deepened.

⁷³³ Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: HarperPerennial, 1991, p.40.

⁷³⁴ Ferguson, *The Pity of War, 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 390.

The 'Vidovdan' (St. Vitus' Day) constitution, promulgated in 1921 on the sacred Serbian date of 28 June, which commemorated Kosovo Polje and, more recently, Sarajevo, was regarded by all Yugoslavs as a victory for the centralizing aims of the Serbs. In Croatia, it greatly compounded the profound sense of loss and alienation that Croats, and especially Dalmatians, had felt at Italy's irredentist programme..."⁷³⁵

Fourthly, while the smaller nations grumbled, the leaders of the largest parties of the two largest nations, Pašić for the Serbs and Radić for the Croats, were not present at the formation of the new state. And so as Pašić tacitly withdrew from the obligations he had undertaken in the Corfu Declaration, Radić rejected the legitimacy of the state and resorted to gross obstructionism – while King Alexander desperately tried to keep the peace between them.

"Notwithstanding his impetuous behaviour, Stjepan Radić made a serious attempt to repair the damage in 1925, when after half a decade in the wilderness he announced a *volte-face* that left other Yugoslav politicians quite stupefied. Radić himself was in jail as his nephew announced to a disbelieving Skupština (parliament) that, 'the Vidovdan Constitution exists here today *de facto*, this is a political fact of life, with the Karadjordjević dynasty as the head of state. This is a fact which we accept unconditionally and with which we agree... Although it may look as though we have made concessions to our brothers, those brothers are the Serbian people and represent our join future together (*stormy applause from the opposition and from the other side Janjić and several other Serb Radicals applaud*).'

"This sudden transformation of the Croat Peasant Party from proud republican outsiders to loyal monarchists was the result of the King's intervention. Through an intermediary, Alexander had approached Radić in prison, offering the Croat exploratory talks with Pašić and the Radicals. The King calculated that agreement between the biggest parties in Serbia and Croatia might overcome the political instability of the past few years. By July the Cabinet was formed and immediately dubbed the R-R, Radical-Radić, government. The following day, Stjepan Radić was released from prison and travelled to Belgrade to negotiate with Pašić. Radić himself accepted the Ministry of Education and, in a magnanimous gesture, dropped the word 'Republican' from his Party's name.

"The creation of a Radical/Peasant Party government caused a political sensation. A number of senior Croat politicians who until now had maintained a cautious dialogue with Belgrade were unable to accept what almost smacked of betrayal. As always, Radić could rely on the support of the peasantry. But he also now convinced urban Croats, shrewdly observing that people were concerned about interminable debates over Yugoslavia's constitution. Political stability would enable them to enjoy the cultural influences filtering into Croatia from Austria and Germany and from across the Atlantic...

⁷³⁵ Glenney, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta, 2000, p. 377.

"This gentle renaissance reached a climax in the middle of August 1925 when the royal couple, King Aleksandar and Queen Mignon, visited Zagreb to join in the celebrations marking 1,000 years since the establishment of a Croatian medieval monarchy..."⁷³⁶

Radić was also able to be reconciled with the leader of the Serbs in Croatia, Svetozar Pribičević, "who, as one of the Kingdom's earliest Interior and Education ministers, had earned the reputation of a spiteful centralizer.... In 1927, after a decade of mutual antipathy, Radić and Pribičević joined forces to curb, as they saw it, the unlimited pretensions of Belgrade. In fact, the effect of their alliance was not so much to curb such power as to obstruct meaningful government. As parliamentarians, the two men specialized in carping, in irony, in insults and in demagoguery. They were both splendid performers, especially Radić, but in the toxic atmosphere of the Skupština such behaviour carried serious risks..."⁷³⁷

⁷³⁶ Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-406.

⁷³⁷ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

49. THE RENOVATIONIST SCHISM

"By the end of 1922," writes Niall Ferguson, "a new Russian Socialist Federal Republic extended from the Baltic to the Bering Straits. It, along with the far smaller Byelorussian, Transcaucasian and Far Eastern republics, made up the new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Apart from a westward strip running from Helsinki down to Kishinev, remarkably little of the old Tsarist edifice had been lost – an astonishing outcome given the weakness of the Bolshevik position in the initial phase of the Revolution, and testament to the effectiveness of their ruthless tactics in the civil war... The 1926 census revealed that slightly less than 53 per cent of the citizens of the Soviet Union regarded themselves as of Russian nationality, though nearly 58 per cent gave Russian as the language they knew best or most often used.

"Some cynics added that the political system had not changed much either; for what was Lenin if not a Red Tsar, wielding absolute power through the Politburo of the Russian Communist Party (which, crucially, maintained direct control over the parties in the other republics)? Yet that was to miss the vast change of ethos that separated the new empire from the old. Though there had been 'terrible' Tsars in Russia's past, the empire established by Lenin and his confederates was the first to be based on terror itself since the short-lived tyranny of the Jacobins in revolutionary France. At the same time, for all the Bolsheviks' obsession with Western revolutionary models, theirs was a revolution that looked east more than it looked west. Asked to characterize the Russian empire as it re-emerged under Lenin, most Western commentators would not have hesitated to use the word 'Asiatic'. That was also Trotsky's view: 'Our Red Army,' he argued, 'constitutes an incomparably more powerful force in the Asiatic terrain of world politics than in European terrain.' Significantly, 'Asiatic' was precisely the word Lenin had used to describe Stalin..."⁷³⁸

By 1922, the Bolsheviks had tamed most of their opponents: the politicians had been suppressed, the philosophers – expelled. The only group that remained untamed was *the Orthodox Church*. She had suffered terribly, but the anti-religious organizer S. Krasikov felt that she had been let off lightly: "In October we beat up and destroyed the old state machine. We destroyed the old army, the old law-courts, the schools, the administrative and other institutions. And we created and our creating our own, new ones. This process is difficult... we are making mistakes. However, it turns out that, having overthrown all this landowners' gendarmerie, etc., we have not destroyed the Church, which constitutes a part of this old state exploitative machine. We have only deprived it of its state content...we have not deprived it of its state power. But still this chunk of the old state landowner-capitalist machine has been preserved, tens of thousands of priests, as well as monks, metropolitans and bishops still exist.

⁷³⁸ Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 158-159.

Why has Soviet power acted with such undeserved caution to this chunk of the old machine?"⁷³⁹

The problem for the Bolsheviks was: the Church had grown stronger under persecution; physical force had failed. So a more subtle approach was required.

The Bolsheviks believed that the roots of religion lay in poverty and ignorance, so that the elimination of these evils would naturally lead to the withering away of religion. This being the case, they could not believe that religious belief had any deeper roots in the nature of things. Therefore, writes Edward E. Roslof, "the party explicitly rejected 'God-building', an attempt by its own members to develop a 'socialist religion of humanity'. Led by A.V. Lunacharskii, Leonid Krasin, and Bogdanov (A.A. Malinovskii), Bolshevik God-builders maintained that the proletariat would create a non-transcendent, earth-centered religion to complement its formation of the ultimate human society. Only this group within the party 'recognized that religion's power lay in its response to people's psychic needs and argued that a revolutionary movement could not afford to ignore these'."⁷⁴⁰

In May, 1921 Lenin supported a resolution calling for the replacement of the religious world-view by "a harmonious communist scientific system embracing and answering the questions to which the peasants' and workers' masses have hitherto sought answers in religion." At the same time he said that the Bolsheviks must "definitely avoid offending religious sensibilities". The result was the suspension of the "dilettantist" anti-religious commissions (Lenin's phrase) that had existed thereto, and their replacement by a Commission on the Separation of Church and State attached to the Politburo which lasted until 1929 under the Jew Emelian Yaroslavsky and whose aim was clearly the extirpation of all religion. The importance of this Commission in the Bolsheviks' eyes was clearly indicated by the extreme secrecy in which its protocols were shrouded and by the active participation in it, at one time or another, of all the top party leaders. The strategy of the Commission was directly defined, at the beginning by Lenin, and later – by Stalin.⁷⁴¹

An important aspect of the Commission's strategy was "divide and rule". For while physical methods continued to be applied, the Bolsheviks recognized that the Church could not be defeated by physical assault alone. They needed subtler methods including the recruitment of agents among the clergy and the creation of schisms among them. Thus already in December, 1920, T. Samsonov, head of a secret department of the Cheka, the forerunner of the KGB, wrote to Dzerzhinsky that "communism and religion are mutually exclusive... No machinery can destroy religion except that of the [Cheka]. In its plans to demoralize the church the Cheka has recently focused its attention

⁷³⁹ Krasikov, in *Tserkov' i Revoliutsia* (The Church and Revolution), 1919, N 1, p. 3.

⁷⁴⁰ Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 28.

⁷⁴¹ S. Savelev, "Bog i komissary" (God and the Commissars), in Bessmertny A.R. and Filatov, S.B., *Religia i Demokratia* (Religion and Democracy), Moscow: Progress, 1993, pp. 164-216.

on the rank and file of the priesthood. Only through them, by long, intensive, and painstaking work, shall we succeed in destroying and dismantling the church completely."⁷⁴²

Samsonov was supported by Lunacharsky, who since the early 1900s had been instrumental in developing a more subtle, less physically confrontational approach to the problem of eradicating religion.⁷⁴³

And at the beginning of the 1920s Trotsky said: "Let those popes who are ready to cooperate with us become leaders in the Church and carry out all our instructions, calling on the believers to serve Soviet power".⁷⁴⁴ In a protocol of the secret section of the Cheka Trotsky discussed recruiting clergy with money to report on themselves and others in the Church and to prevent anti-Bolshevik agitation...⁷⁴⁵

The Bolsheviks were counting on a modernist or "renovationist" faction in the Russian Church to provide them with their "loyal" clergy. Already in the revolutionary years of 1905 and 1917, the renovationists-to-be had reared their heads with a long list of demands for modernist reform of the Church. And in March, 1918, Professor Titlinov, who was later to become one of the main ideologists of renovationism, founded a newspaper in Petrograd which criticized the Patriarch's anathematization of Soviet power.⁷⁴⁶

Philip Walters writes: "In pre-revolutionary Russia, many groups of intellectuals, philosophers and churchmen began voicing their concern over the plight of the Orthodox Church in its enforced alliance with a reactionary State. It is possible to discover many lines of continuity between the democratic and socialist aims of these men and the aims of the men of the Living Church (also known as Renovationists). There is also a certain amount of personal continuity: for example, the so-called 'Group of Thirty-Two' reformist priests, who were active between 1905 and 1907, reappeared after the February Revolution of 1917 as the 'League of Democratic Orthodox Clergy and Laymen', a group which stood against the increasing conservatism of the Orthodox Church, and which included among its members one or two men who later became prominent in the Living Church.

"B.V. Titlinov's book, *Novaia Tserkov'* (*The New Church*), written in 1922, contains an apology for Renovationist ideology. Titlinov declares that the new movement is not a revolution or a reformation, which would imply a definite break with the historical Church, but a reform which remains true to the original spirit of Orthodoxy. The basic task of the Living Church is to 'do away

742 Quoted in Edward Radzinsky, *Stalin*, New York: Doubleday, 1996.p. 244.

743 Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolsheviks*, p. 338.

744 Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, p. 33, footnote 19.

745 Bishop Gregory Grabbe, *Russkaia Tserkov' pered litsom gosподstvuiushchego zla* (The Russian Church in the Face of Dominant Evil), Jordanville, 1991, p. 42.

746 Grabbe, op. cit., p. 32.

with those accretions which have been introduced into Orthodox worship during the period of union between the Church and the [Tsarist] State'. Titlinov calls for 'priestly creativity' in the liturgy and for its celebration as in the early Church amidst the congregation. There must be ethical and moral reform in society, involving opposition to capitalism. Bishops should be elected from the lower clergy and should be allowed to marry. The Living Church, he claims, accepts the October Revolution as consonant with the aims of Christian truth.

"There are three basic ideological strands in Renovationism: a political strand, concerned with promoting loyalty to the Soviet regime; an organizational strand, concerned with the rights of the lower clergy and with the administration of the Church; and an ethical strand, concerned with making Church services more accessible to the masses and with moral and social reform. The first strand was characteristic of the Living Church movement as a whole...When the Living Church movement split into various factions, the second ideological strand was taken up chiefly by the followers of V.D. Krasnitsky, and the third by the groups which followed Bishop Antonin Granovsky and A.I. Vvedensky."⁷⁴⁷

As the future hieromartyr and Archbishop of Riga John (Pommer) said of the Bolsheviks: "They have put Marx in the dust-jacket of the Gospel and think that the people will accept it instead of the Gospel. They have dressed commissars in sacred vestments and think the Orthodox will accept them as their pastors and follow them. They have substituted the portrait of Lenin for the icon of Christ in the icon-cases and expect the people to come up to kiss it. Ilyich is not at all like Christ. It is impossible to put Marxism in the place of Christianity, whatever vestments the preachers of Marxism put on. The blasphemous utterance of the name of Marx from the church kathedra only emphasizes more vividly the irreconcilable contradiction between Christ and Marx. Here is love incarnate, pouring out its blood for its guilty brethren. There - satanic malice pouring out the blood of brothers guilty of nothing like water."

All three of the major political ideologies of the inter-war years - liberalism, fascism and communism - undermined traditional Christianity in their different ways. However, it was communism that showed the most obsessive hatred of it. Nor was this manifested only in the slaughter of millions of Orthodox Christians and the destruction of thousands of churches. The worst aspect of Soviet rule, as Archimandrite Cyril (Zaitsev) pointed out, was its creation of a Soviet church, a parody and inner corruption of "the one thing necessary" for man's salvation...

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⁷⁴⁷ Walters, "The Living Church 1922-1946", *Religion in Communion Lands*, vol. 6, N 4, Winter, 1978, pp. 235-236.

It was the Volga famine of 1921-23, in which 35 million suffered intense hunger and between five and seven million died⁷⁴⁸ – the American Red Cross under Herbert Hoover saved many millions more,⁷⁴⁹ – that provided the Bolsheviks with their first opportunity to create a major schism in the Church.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes: “At the end of the civil war, and as its natural consequence, an unprecedented famine developed in the Volga area... V.G. Korolenko, in his *Letters to Lunacharsky* explains to us Russia’s total, epidemic descent into famine and destitution. It was the result of productivity having become reduced to zero (the working hands were all carrying guns) and the result, also, of the peasants’ utter lack of trust and hope that even the smallest part of the harvest might be left to them...

“There was a direct, immediate chain of cause and effect. The Volga peasants had to eat their children because we were so impatient about putting up with the Constituent Assembly.

“But political genius lies in extracting success even from the people’s ruin. A brilliant idea was born: after all, three billiard balls can be pocketed with one shot. *So now let the priests feed the Volga region!* They are Christians. They are generous!

“1. If they refuse, we will blame the whole famine on them and destroy the Church.

“2. If they agree, we will clean out the churches.

“In either case, we will replenish our stocks of foreign exchange and precious metals.

“Yes, and the action was probably inspired by the actions of the Church itself. As Patriarch Tikhon himself had testified, back in August, 1921, at the beginning of the famine, the Church had created diocesan and all-Russian committees for aid to the starving and had begun to collect funds. But to have permitted any *direct* help to go straight from the Church into the mouths of those who were starving would have undermined the dictatorship of the proletariat. The committees were banned, and the funds they had collected were confiscated and turned over to the state and to the treasury. The Patriarch had also appealed to the Pope in Rome and the Archbishop of Canterbury for assistance – but he was rebuked for this, too, on the grounds that only the Soviet authorities had the right to enter into discussions with foreigners. Yes, indeed. And what was there to be alarmed about? The newspapers wrote that the government itself had all the necessary means to cope with the famine.

⁷⁴⁸ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 447.

⁷⁴⁹ N.N. Pokrovsky, S.G. Petrov, *Arkhivny Kremlia: Politburo i Tserkov' 1922-1925gg.* (The Kremlin Archives: the Politburo and the Church, 1922-1925), Moscow: Rosspen, 1997, vol. 1, p. 7.

“Meanwhile, in the Volga region they were eating grass, the soles of shoes and gnawing at door jambs. And, finally, in December [27], 1921, *Pomgol* – the State Commission for Famine Relief – proposed that the churches help the starving by donating church valuables – not all, but those not required for liturgical rites. The Patriarch agreed. *Pomgol* issued a directive: all gifts must be strictly voluntary! On February 19, 1922, the Patriarch issued a pastoral letter permitting the parish councils to make gifts of objects that did not have liturgical and ritual significance.

“And in this way matter could again have simply degenerated into a compromise that would have frustrated the will of the proletariat, just as it once had been by the Constituent Assembly, and still was in all the chatterbox European parliaments.

“The thought came in a stroke of lightning! The thought came – and a decree followed! A decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on February 26: *all* valuables were to be requisitioned from the churches – for the starving!”⁷⁵⁰

This decree annihilated the voluntary character of the offerings, and put the clergy in the position of accessories to sacrilege. And so on February 28, in order to resolve the perplexities of the faithful, the Patriarch decreed: “... In view of the exceptionally difficult circumstances, we have admitted the possibility of offering church objects that have not been consecrated and are not used in Divine services. Now again we call on the faithful children of the Church to make such offerings, desiring only that these offerings should be the response of a loving heart to the needs of his neighbour, if only they can provide some real help to our suffering brothers. But we cannot approve of the requisitioning from the churches, even as a voluntary offering, of consecrated objects, whose use for purposes other than Divine services is forbidden by the canons of the Ecumenical Church and is punished by Her as sacrilege – laymen by excommunication from Her, and clergy by defrocking (Apostolic Canon 73; Canon 10 of the First-Second Council).”⁷⁵¹

This compromise decree represented the first major concession made by the Church to Soviet power. Thus no less an authority than the holy Elder Nektary of Optina said: “You see now, the patriarch gave the order to give up all valuables from the churches, but they belonged to the Church!”⁷⁵²

On March 13, the Politburo (Lenin, Molotov, Kamenev and Stalin) accepted Trotsky’s suggestion to form a “completely secret” commission to mastermind the requisitioning. “Moreover,” writes Gregory Ravich, “the commission was ordered ‘to act with maximal cruelty, not stopping at anything, including

750 Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, London: Fontana, vol. 1, pp. 342-344.

751 M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, p. 190.

752 Matushka Evgenia Grigorievna Rymarenko, “Remembrances of Optina Staretz Hieroschemamonk Nektary”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 36, N 3, May-June, 1986, p. 39.

executions on the spot (that is, without trial and investigation), in cases of necessity summoning special (for which read: punitive) units of the Red Army, dispersing and firing on demonstrations, interrogations with the use of torture' and so on. The commission's members were, besides Trotsky, Sapronov, Unschlicht, Medved and Samoilov-Zemliachka. It literally rushed like a hurricane through Russia, sweeping away... everything in its path."⁷⁵³

The response of the believers was hostile. "Even in Moscow," writes Catherine Merridale, "where the preparatory agitation and propaganda had been thorough to the point of saturation, the requisitions sparked heart-rending protests. It was not clear to anyone why treasured objects should be snatched away, especially as there was still no bread. 'The starving need food, not gold', the workers in one factory resolved, and some dared to suggest that the famine was the fault of the 'bourgeois' in the Kremlin. If Lenin and his crew resigned, they whispered, we might get a government that could feed us all. This kind of talk put Bolshevik nerves on edge: it was the breath of civil war, the poison of White guards and priests. *Izvestiya* urged workers and peasants to 'burn out' the priestly counter-revolution 'with a hot iron'."⁷⁵⁴

Soon clashes with believers who resisted the confiscation of church valuables took place. 1414 such clashes were reported in the official press. The first took place in the town of Shuye on March 15. Five Christians were killed and fifteen wounded, as a result of which two priests and a layman were condemned and executed. In 1921-23, 2,691 married priests, 1,962 monks, 3,447 nuns and an unknown number of laymen were killed on the pretext of resistance to the seizure of church valuables in the country as a whole.⁷⁵⁵

On March 19, Lenin sent a long letter to the Politburo marked "Top Secret. No Copies to be Made": "It is precisely now and only now, when there is cannibalism in the famine-stricken areas and hundreds if not thousands of corpses are lying along the roads, that we can (and therefore must) carry out the confiscation of valuables with fanatical and merciless energy and not hesitate to suppress any form of resistance... It is precisely now and only now that the vast majority of the peasant masses will either support us or at least will be unable to give any decisive support to those... who might and would want to try to resist the Soviet decree. We must confiscate in the shortest possible time as much as possible to create for ourselves a fund of several hundred million roubles... Without this fund, government work.. and the defence of our positions in Genoa are absolutely unthinkable... Now our victory over the reactionary clergy is guaranteed... It is precisely now that we

⁷⁵³ Ravich, "Ograblennij Khristos, ili brilliandy dlia diktatury proletariata" (Christ Robbed, or Diamonds for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat), *Chas-Pik* (Rush Hour), N 18, pp. 24-25.

⁷⁵⁴ Merridale, *Red Fortress*, pp. 296-297.

⁷⁵⁵ Ravich, op. cit., p. 26. According to another estimate, up to 10,000 believers were killed (V. Petrenko, "Sv. Patriarkh Vserossijskij Tikhon" (His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon of All Russia), *Vestnik I.P.Ts.* (Herald of the True Orthodox Church), Odessa, N 1 (11), 1998, p. 27). Donald Rayfield writes that in the parishes some 2,700 priests and 5,000 monks and nuns perished (*Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 122).

must wage a decisive and merciless war with the black-hundreds clergy and crush their opposition with such cruelty that they will not forget it for many decades... The more members of the reactionary bourgeoisie we manage to shoot the better."⁷⁵⁶

Concerning the Patriarch, however, Lenin said: "I think it is expedient for us not to touch Patriarch Tikhon himself, although he is undoubtedly heading this entire rebellion of slave-owners." As leader of the campaign, Lenin wanted Trotsky - "but he should at no time and under no circumstances speak out [on this matter] in the press or before the public in any other manner". This was probably, as Richard Pipes suggests, "in order not to feed rumors that the campaign was a Jewish plot against Christianity."⁷⁵⁷ For Trotsky was a Jew, and the very high percentage of Jews in the Bolshevik party had aroused the people's wrath against them.

At a Politburo session the next day Trotsky himself insisted: "The agitation must not be linked with the struggle against religion and the Church, but must be wholly directed towards helping the starving" (point 5); "we must take a decisive initiative in creating a schism among the clergy", taking the priests who speak in support of the measures undertaken by Soviet power "under the protection of state power" (point 6); "our agitation and the agitation of priests loyal to us must in no case be mixed up", but the communists must refer to "the significant part of the clergy" which is speaking against the inhumanity and greed "of the princes of the Church" (point 7); spying is necessary "to guarantee complete knowledge of everything that is happening in various groups of clergy, believers, etc." (point 8); the question must be formulated correctly: "it is best to begin with some church led by a loyal priest, and if such a church does not exist, then with the most significant church after careful preparation" (point 9); "representatives of the loyal clergy must be allowed to be registered in the provinces and in the centre, after the population is well informed that they will have every opportunity to check that not one article of the church heritage goes anywhere else than to help the starving" (point 13).

In actual fact, according to a secret instruction all church valuables taken from "the enemies of Soviet power" were to be handed over, not to *Pomgol* or the starving, but to the Economic administration of the OGPU.⁷⁵⁸

In addition to being the head of the requisitioning commission, Trotsky also headed the commission for their monetary realization. And in a submission to this commission he wrote on March 23: "For us it is more important to obtain

⁷⁵⁶ Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), vol. 45, p. 666, cited in *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (The Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 94, pp. 54-60; Richard Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 134.

⁷⁵⁷ Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, p. 155; Rayfield, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

⁷⁵⁸ N.A., "Ne bo vragom Tvoim tajnu poviem..." (I will not give Thy Mystery to Thine enemies), *Vestnik Germanской Eparkhii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi za Granitsej* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), 1992, N 1, p. 17.

50 million in 1922-23 for a certain mass of valuables than to hope for 75 million in 1923-24. The advance of the proletarian revolution in just one of the large countries of Europe will put a stop to the market in valuables... Conclusion: we must proceed as fast as possible..."⁷⁵⁹

However, the Bolsheviks failed to get the money they wanted – the sale of church valuables fetched only about \$1.5 million, or between \$4 and \$10 million according to another estimate.⁷⁶⁰ "The whole campaign against religious art ran counter to the Soviets' economic interests. A better-informed government might have taken the time to assess the value of artistic treasures, of relics, of unique icons and even minor works of sacred art... But Bolshevik bull-headedness prevailed; this was the liquidation of the church, the death of God, not just an exercise in fund-raising..."⁷⁶¹

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If the Bolsheviks' primary motive in the requisitioning campaign was in fact to destroy the Church, then they failed – the Church emerged even stronger spiritually from her fiery ordeal. The blood of the martyrs was already starting to bring forth fruit as thousands of previously lukewarm Christians returned to the Church. However, the struggle between the patriarchate and the Bolsheviks over church valuables gave the renovationists their chance to seize power. It began in Petrograd, a stronghold of renovationism as it had been of Bolshevism. The initiative here came from the Petrograd party chief, Zinoviev, who suggested to Archpriest Alexander Vvedensky that his group would be the appropriate one for an eventual concordat between the State and the Church. Vvedensky then joined Archpriest Vladimir Krasnitsky and Bishop Antonin Granovsky in plotting to overthrow the Patriarch.

The leader of the Patriarchal Church in Petrograd was Metropolitan Benjamin, who had actually come to an agreement with the local authorities concerning the voluntary handing over of church valuables. These authorities evidently did not yet understand that the real purpose of the Soviet decree was not to help the starving but to destroy the Church. Having conferred with the central authorities in Moscow, however, they reneged on their agreement. Then, on March 24, a letter signed by the future renovationist leaders Krasnitsky, Vvedensky, Belkov, Boyarsky and others, appeared in *Petrogradskaia Pravda*. It defended the measures undertaken by the Soviet

759 "Mucheniki Shuiskiye", *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 170, III-1994, p. 190.

760 Pipes, op. cit., p. 355. According to Rayfield, "barely four million gold roubles were realized of which one million was spent on famine relief" (op. cit., pp. 120-121). For another estimate, see Volkogonov, op. cit., p. 381. *Rukh* (N 34, November 4, 1996) reports that the Bolsheviks received a "profit" of 2.5 million gold rubles. At the same time, Bukharin admitted to having spent nearly \$14 million on propaganda during the famine (Richard Joseph Cooke, *Religion in Russia and the Soviets*, p. 149). But the Bolsheviks already had the Russian crown jewels, worth one billion gold roubles, and jewels from the Kremlin museum, worth 300 million gold roubles – far more than the market price of the church valuables (Pipes, op. cit., p. 355).

761 Merridale, *Red Fortress*, p. 298.

government and distanced the authors from the rest of the clergy. The latter reacted strongly against this letter at a clergy meeting, during which Vvedensky gave a brazen and threatening speech. However, the metropolitan succeeded in calming passions sufficiently so that it was decided to enter into fresh negotiations with the authorities, the conduct of these negotiations being entrusted to Vvedensky and Boyarsky. They proceeded to win an agreement according to which other articles or money were allowed to be substituted for the church valuables...

On March 22-23 Trotsky wrote: "The arrest of the Synod and the Patriarch is necessary, but not now, but in about 10-15 days... In the course of this week we must arrange a trial of priests for stealing church valuables (there are quite a few facts)... The press must adopt a frenzied tone, giving [evidence of] a heap of priestly attempts in Smolensk, Petrograd, etc."⁷⁶²

On April 1 the Patriarch was placed under house arrest. Then he was called as a witness for the defence in the trial of 54 Moscow Christians, which began on April 26. In an effort to save the accused, he took the whole responsibility upon himself. And in one of the exchanges the essence of the relationship between the Church and the State was expressed.

The Presiding Judge: "Do you consider the state's laws obligatory or not?"

The Patriarch: "Yes, I recognize them, *to the extent that they do not contradict the rules of piety.*"

Solzhenitsyn comments: "Oh, if only everyone had answered just that way! Our whole history would have been different."⁷⁶³

And yet the Patriarch's words constituted a distinct weakening of his position vis-à-vis Soviet power when compared with the absolutely irreconcilable position he and the Council had adopted in 1917-18; for they implied that Soviet power was legitimate, the power of Caesar rather than that of the Antichrist... The first instinct of the Russian Church in the face of Soviet power, as manifested in the 1917-18 Council, has never been extinguished among Russian Christians. It continued to manifest itself both at home and abroad (for example, in the First All-Emigration Council of the Russian Church Abroad in 1921), both in the early and the later decades of Soviet power (for example, among the "passportless" Christians of the Catacomb Church). However, it was very soon tempered by the realization that such outright rejection of Soviet power on a large scale could be sustained only by *war* - and after the defeat of the White Armies in the Civil War there were no armies left to carry on the fight against the Bolsheviks.

⁷⁶² Monk Benjamin (Gomareteli), *Letopis'*, p. 67.

⁷⁶³ Gubonin, op. cit., p. 198; Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 348.

Therefore from the early 1920s a new attitude towards Soviet power began to evolve among the Tikhonite Christians: loyalty towards it as a political institution ("for all power is from God"), and acceptance of such of its laws as could be interpreted in favour of the Church (for example, the law on the separation of Church and State), combined with rejection of its atheistic world-view (large parts of which the renovationists, by contrast, accepted). In essence, this new attitude involved accepting that the Soviet State was not Antichrist, as the Local Council of 1917-18 and the Russian Church Abroad had in effect declared, but Caesar, no worse in principle than the Caesars of Ancient Rome, to whom the things belonging to Caesar were due. This attitude presupposed that it was possible, in the Soviet Union as in Ancient Rome, to draw a clear line between politics and religion.

But in practice, even more than in theory, this line proved very hard to draw. For to the early Bolsheviks there was no such dividing line; for them, *everything* was ideological, everything had to be in accord with their ideology, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state did not pry. Bolshevism demanded the *totality* of human life; they were true totalitarians. Thus unlike most of the Roman emperors, who allowed the Christians to order their own lives so long as they showed loyalty to the state (which the Christians were eager to do), the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere: in family life (civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents), in education (compulsory Marxism), in economics (dekulakization, collectivization), in military service (the oath of allegiance to Lenin), in science (Lysenkoism), in art (socialist realism), and in religion (the requisitioning of valuables, registration, commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, reporting of confessions by the priests). Resistance to any one of these demands was counted as "anti-Soviet behaviour", i.e. *political* disloyalty. Therefore it was no use protesting one's political loyalty to the regime if one refused to accept just one of these demands. According to the Soviet interpretation of the word: "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one has become guilty of all of it" (James 2.10), such a person was an *enemy of the people*.

In view of this, it is not surprising that many Christians came to the conclusion that there was no gain, and from a moral point of view much to be lost, in accepting a regime that made such impossible demands, since the penalty would be the same whether one asserted one's loyalty to it or not. And if this meant living as an outlaw, so be it... Nevertheless, the path of total rejection of the Soviet state required enormous courage, strength and self-sacrifice, not only for oneself but also (which was more difficult) for one's family or flock. It is therefore not surprising that, already during the Civil War, the Church began to soften her anti-Soviet rhetoric and try once more to draw the line between politics and religion. This is what Patriarch Tikhon tried to do in the later years of his patriarchate - with, it must be said, only mixed results. Thus his decision to allow some, but not all of the Church's valuables to be requisitioned by the Bolsheviks in 1922 not only did not bring help to the

starving of the Volga, as was the intention, but led to many clashes between believers and the authorities and many deaths of believers.

The decision to negotiate and compromise with the Bolsheviks only brought confusion and division to the Church. Thus on the right wing of the Church there were those, like Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk, who thought that the patriarch had already gone too far; while on the left wing there were those, like Archbishop Hilarion of Verey, who wanted to go further. The basic problem was that the compromises were always one-sided; the Bolsheviks always took and never gave; their aim was not peaceful co-existence, but the complete conquest of the Church. And so, as a "Letter from Russia" put it many years later: "It's no use our manoeuvring: there's nothing for us to preserve except the things that are God's. For the things that are Caesar's (if one should really consider it to be Caesar and not Pharaoh) are always associated with the quenching of the Spirit..."⁷⁶⁴

However, the Patriarchal Church remained Orthodox under Patriarch Tikhon and his successor, Metropolitan Peter, for two major reasons: first, because the leaders of the Church did not sacrifice the lives of their fellow Christians for the sake of their own security or the security of the Church organization; and secondly, because, while the Soviet regime was recognized to be, in effect, Caesar rather than Pharaoh, no further concessions were made with regard to the communist *ideology*.

Early in May, the Patriarch was placed under house arrest. According to his will, the temporary administration of the Church should now have passed to Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan. But since he was in prison, the next hierarchy according to the will, Metropolitan Agathangel of Yaroslavl, should have taken over.

On May 12, accompanied by two chekists, the renovationist priests Vvedensky, Belkov and Kalinovsky (who, as the Patriarch pointed out, had but a short time before renounced holy orders), visited the Patriarch at the Troitsky *podvorye*, where he was confined, and told him that they had obtained permission for the convening of a Council, but on condition that he resigned from the patriarchal throne.

The Patriarch replied that the patriarchy weighed on him like a cross. "I would joyfully accept it if the coming Council removed the patriarchy from me, but now I am handing power to one of the oldest hierarchs and will renounce the administration of the Church." The Patriarch rejected the candidacies of some modernist bishops and appointed Metropolitan Agathangel as his deputy.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁴ *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), N 3143, March 17, 1977.

⁷⁶⁵ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 74.

"However," writes Krivova, "the authorities did not allow Metropolitan Agathangel to leave for Moscow. Already on May 5, 1922 V.D. Krasnitsky had arrived at the Tolga monastery where the metropolitan was living, and demanded that he sign the appeal of the so-called 'Initiative Group of Clergy'. The metropolitan refused to sign the appeal. Then, two days later, his signature declaring that he would not leave was taken from him, and a guard was placed outside his cell and a search was carried out.

"After Agathangel there remained in Moscow only three of the members of the Holy Synod and HCA, but they were not empowered to take any kind of decision that would be obligatory for the whole Church. Thus the path to the seizure of Church power by the renovationists was open. Using Tikhon's temporary concession and the impossibility of Metropolitan Agathangel's taking the place of the Patriarch, the renovationists declared that Tikhon had been removed and in an arbitrary manner seized power. Arriving on May 15, 1922 at a reception with M.I. Kalinin, they understood that Metropolitan Agathangel's departure to Moscow was hardly possible. The next day the renovationists sent a letter to M.I. Kalinin, in which they declared that 'in view of Patriarch Tikhon's removal of himself from power, a Higher Church Administration is formed, which from May 2 (15) has taken upon itself the conducting of Church affairs in Russia.'"766

On May 18 the renovationists again presented the Patriarch with a written statement complaining that in consequence of the existing circumstances, Church business remained unattended to. They demanded that he entrust his chancery to them until Metropolitan Agathangel's arrival in Moscow, in order that they might properly classify the correspondence received. The Patriarch yielded, and inscribed their petition with the following resolution: "The undersigned persons are ordered to take over and transmit to the Right Reverend Metropolitan Agathangel, upon his arrival in Moscow, all the Synodical business with the assistance of secretary Numerov."767

The next day, the Patriarch was transferred to the Donskoj monastery, and the renovationists took over his residence in the Troitsky *podvorye*.

However, the renovationists and communists still had to neutralize the threat posed by Metropolitan Agathangel. So Krasnitsky was sent to Yaroslavl and placed a number of conditions before the Patriarch's lawful deputy that amounted to his placing himself in complete dependence on the renovationists. When the metropolitan rejected these conditions, the renovationists spread the rumour that he "was not hurrying" to fulfil the Patriarch's command.

766 N.A. Krivova, *Vlast' i Tserkov' v 1922-1925gg.* (The Authorities and the Church in 1922-1925), Moscow, 1997.

767 J.S. Curtiss, *The Russian Church and the Soviet State*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1953, pp. 159-160; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 290.

On June 5/18, "Metropolitan Agathangel unexpectedly addressed the Russian Church with an appeal, which was printed by some underground printing-press and very quickly distributed in Moscow and the other cities...

"E.A. Tuckov was taken completely by surprise. The HCA was also shocked. Metropolitan Agathangel was immediately arrested and sent into exile, to the Narymsk region. However, the appearance of this appeal showed that the unprincipled line of V.D. Krasnitsky was meeting with a sharp rejection in ecclesiastical circles..."⁷⁶⁸

Agathangel was arrested for writing that the renovationists had "declared their intention to revise the dogmas and moral teaching of our Orthodox Faith, the sacred canons of the Holy Ecumenical Councils and the Orthodox Typicon of Divine services given by the great ascetics of Christian piety", and gave the bishops the right to administer their dioceses independently until the restoration of a canonical Higher Church Authority.⁷⁶⁹

The metropolitan's reference to the renovationists' revising the dogmas and moral teachings of the Faith, as well as the canons and services, was correct. Thus in its "Reform Programme", the renovationists called for "the re-establishment of the evangelical teaching of the first Christians, with a deliberate development of the teaching concerning the human nature of Christ the Saviour and a struggle with the scholastic corruption of Christianity." And one of the subsections of the programme bore the title: "The terrible judgement, paradise and hell as moral concepts".⁷⁷⁰

Fr. Basil Redechkin writes that the renovationists "united the leaders of various rationalist tendencies. Therefore various voices were heard: some denied the Holy Icons, others – the sign of the Cross, others – the Holy Relics, others denied all the sacraments except baptism, while yet others tried to overthrow the veneration of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and even the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said about the All-holy Virgin Mary: 'She is a simple woman, just like all women, and her son was, of course, only a man, and not God!' And the 'livers' created a completely atheist 'symbol of faith' to please the God-fighting, antichristian authorities. It was published in the journal *Zhivaia Tserkov'* in 1925, and was composed of thirty articles. This 'symbol' began with the words: '1. I believe in one power that created the world, the heavens and the earth, the visible and invisible worlds. 2. In one catholic humanity and in it (in the man) Jesus Christ.'

"And it is completely understandable that after this they should declare that the Canonical rules by which the Holy Church has been guided for two thousand years: the rules of the Holy Apostles, of the Ecumenical and Local Councils and of the Holy Fathers – 'have become infinitely outdated' and

⁷⁶⁸ Levitin, A. and Shavrov, V. in Gubonin, op. cit., p. 813.

⁷⁶⁹ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 219-221.

⁷⁷⁰ *Zhivaia Tserkov'*, N 10, October 1, 1922; Zhukov, op. cit., p. 30.

have 'repealed' themselves... So the 'liver-renovationists', wanting to walk 'in step with the times',... introduced a married episcopate, allowed widowed priests to marry a second and even a third time, and took other liberties."⁷⁷¹

The focus now shifts back to Petrograd. On May 25 Vvedensky appeared before Metropolitan Benjamin with a document signed by the renovationist Bishop Leonid, which said that he, "in accordance with the resolution of Patriarch Tikhon, is a member of the HCA and is sent to Petrograd and other cities on Church business". The metropolitan, not seeing the signature of the Patriarch, refused to accept it.

The next day, at the Sunday Liturgy, an Epistle from the metropolitan was read in all the churches of Petrograd, in which he anathematized the rebellious priest Alexander Vvedensky and Eugene Belkov and also those with them. "According to the teaching of the Church," it said in the Epistle, "a diocese that is for some reason deprived of the possibility of receiving instructions from its Patriarch, is ruled by its bishops, who remains in spiritual union with the Patriarch... The bishop of Petrograd is the Metropolitan of Petrograd. By obeying him, you will be in union with him and will be in the Church."

The next day chekists arrived at the residence of the metropolitan and arrested him. Meanwhile, Vvedensky took over the chancellery. Without turning a hair, he went up to the hierarch for a blessing. "Fr. Alexander," said the metropolitan peacefully, "you and I are not in the Garden of Gethsemane". And without blessing the schismatic, he calmly listened to the statement about his arrest.⁷⁷²

On May 29, the administration of the diocese passed to his vicar, Bishop Alexis (Simansky) of Yamburg, the future false-patriarch.

On the same day, Metropolitan Benjamin was brought to trial together with 86 others. They were accused of entering into negotiations with Soviet power with the aim of annulling or softening the decree on the requisitioning of church valuables, and that they were "in a plot with the worldwide bourgeoisie and the Russian emigration". He was given many chances to save himself in a dishonourable manner. Thus even before the trial Vvedensky and the Petrograd commandant Bakaiev had come to him and given him the choice: either revoke the anathema against Vvedensky or face trial. But the metropolitan refused to revoke the anathema. (His deputy, Bishop Alexis, having recognized the HCA to be lawful, did revoke the anathema, on June 4. According to A. Levitin and V. Shavrov, he did this because the chekists threatened him that if he disobeyed Metropolitan Benjamin would be shot.⁷⁷³)

771 Redechkin, "Pojmi vremia: Iskazhenie Pravoslavnogo Uchenia Moskovskoj Patriarkhii" (Understand the Time: The Distortion of Orthodox Teaching by the Moscow Patriarchate), Moscow, 1992, samizdat, p. 5.

772 Protopriest Vladislav Tsypin, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1918*, chapter 2; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 76.

773 Levitin and Shavrov, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 77.

Again, during the trial, the judges hinted that he save himself by naming “the authors” of the proposition he had sent to *Pomgol*. The metropolitan again refused, saying: “I alone did it – I thought everything over; I formulated, wrote and sent the proposition myself. I did not allow anybody else to participate in deciding matters entrusted to me as archpastor.”

The renovationists Krasnitsky and Vvedensky testified against Metropolitan Benjamin during the trial, which was staged in what had been the Club of the Nobility. Three witnesses came forward to defend the metropolitan. They were immediately arrested, so no-one else came forward. On July 5, the metropolitan was convicted of “organizing a counter-revolutionary group having set himself the aim of struggling with Soviet power”. Ten people were condemned to be shot; the others were given prison sentences of varying lengths. The metropolitan himself was shot on the night of August 12 to 13, 1922.

In a letter written from prison, the metropolitan expressed the essence of what was to become the position of the Catacomb Church a few years later: “The reasonings of some, perhaps outstanding pastors are strange... – ‘we must preserve the living forces’, that is, for their sake, we must abandon everything! Then what is Christ for? It is not the Platonovs, the Chuprins, the Benjamins and their like who save the Church, but Christ. That point on which they are trying to stand is destruction for the Church; it is not right to sacrifice the Church for oneself...”

The renovationist schismatics continued to gain ground throughout 1922. On June 16, three important hierarchs joined them, declaring: “We, Metropolitan Sergius [Stragorodsky] of Vladimir and Shuya, Archbishop Eudocimus of Nizhegorod and Arzamas and Archbishop Seraphim of Kostroma and Galich, having studied the platform of the Temporary Church Administration and the canonical lawfulness of its administration, consider it the only lawful, canonical, higher church authority, and all the instructions issuing from it we consider to be completely lawful and obligatory. We call on all true pastors and believing sons of the Church, both those entrusted to us and those belonging to other dioceses, to follow our example.”⁷⁷⁴

Metropolitan John (Snychev) wrote: “We do not have the right to hide from history those sad and staggering apostasies from the unity of the Russian Church which took place on a mass scale after the publication in the journal ‘Living Church’ of the epistle-appeals of the three well-known hierarchs. Many of the hierarchs and clergy reasoned naively. Thus: ‘If the wise Sergius has recognized the possibility of submitting to the Higher Church Administration, then it is clear that we, too, must follow his example.’”⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷⁴ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

⁷⁷⁵ Snychev, “Mitropolit Sergij i Obnovlenneskij Raskol” (Metropolitan Sergius and the Renovationist Schism), in M.B. Danilushkin, *Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Russian Orthodox Church), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 182.

The GPU gave valuable aid to the renovationists, arresting and sending into exile all the clergy who remained faithful to the Patriarch. Also, they handed over to them nearly two-thirds of the functioning churches in the Russian republic and Central Asia, as well as many thousands in the Ukraine, Belorussia and Siberia. However, these figures exaggerated the true strength of the renovationists, in that their churches were almost empty while the patriarchal churches were filled to overflowing.

In April, the government announced that the Patriarch was about to go on trial on charges arising from the trials of the 54 in Moscow and of Metropolitan Benjamin in Petrograd the previous year. At about this time, international opinion began to make itself felt in support of Patriarch Tikhon. On April 10, 1923 G.V. Chicherin reported to Stalin that the Anglo-Saxons were as interested in Orthodoxy as they were in Catholicism, and that the execution of the Patriarch would be disadvantageous in all respects.⁷⁷⁶ On April 21, Dzerzhinsky proposed to the Politburo that the Tikhon's trial be postponed. The Politburo agreed and backed down.⁷⁷⁷ The trial was postponed to June 17. On May 8, the British foreign minister Lord Curzon issued an ultimatum to the Soviets, demanding, among other things, a cessation of religious persecution and the liberation of Patriarch Tikhon, otherwise there would be a new intervention against the USSR. This was supported by an outcry in the British and American press. The conflict was resolved by the end of June, when the Patriarch was released from prison.⁷⁷⁸

One of the reasons why the Soviets postponed the trial of the Patriarch was their desire that the renovationists condemn him first. They were not disappointed... At their second All-Russian council, which met in Moscow on April 29, 1923, the renovationists first heaped praises on the revolution, which they called a "Christian creation", on the Soviet government, which they said was the first government in the world that strove to realize "the ideal of the Kingdom of God". And they were no less generous to Lenin: "First of all, we must turn with words of deep gratitude to the government of our state, which, in spite of the slanders of foreign informers, does not persecute the Church... The word of gratitude and welcome must be expressed by us to the only state in the world which performs, without believing, that work of love which we, believers, do not fulfil, and also to the leader of Soviet Russia, V.I. Lenin, who must be dear also to church people..."

Patriarch Tikhon was tried in his absence, and deprived both of his orders and of his monasticism, being called thenceforth "layman Basil Bellavin". Then the restoration of the patriarchate was called a counter-revolutionary act; so it was abolished and replaced by a synod. The council proceeded to decree: "Church people must not see in Soviet power the power of the Antichrist. On

776 "G. Chicherin and L. Trotsky told the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets: 'Do nothing and say nothing that could close the path to a peaceful resolution of the conflict with England'" (S. Bychkov, *Moskovskij Komsomolets* (Muscovite Komsomolian), May 16, 1990).

777 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 94.

778 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 96.

the contrary, the Council draws their attention to the fact that Soviet power, alone in the whole world, is able by state methods to realize the ideals of the Kingdom of God. Therefore every believing churchman must not only be an honourable citizen, but also must struggle in every way, together with Soviet power, for the realization on earth of the ideals of the Kingdom of God."⁷⁷⁹

Some further resolutions were adopted allowing white clergy to become bishops and priests to remarry, and introducing the Gregorian calendar.

When the decisions of the council were taken to the Patriarch for his signature, he calmly wrote: "Read. The council did not summon me, I do not know its competence and for that reason cannot consider its decision lawful."⁷⁸⁰ Forty-six "bishops" (out of the seventy-three who attended the council) signed the decree condemning the Patriarch. One of them, Joasaph (Shishkovsky), told Fr. Basil Vinogradov how this happened. "The leaders of the council Krasnitsky and Vvedensky gathered all those present at the 'council' of bishops for this meeting. When several direct and indirect objections to these leaders' proposal to defrock the Patriarch began to be expressed, Krasnitsky quite openly declared to all present: 'He who does not immediately sign this resolution will only leave this room straight for the prison.' The terrorized bishops (including Joasaph himself) did not find the courage to resist in the face of the threat of a new prison sentence and forced labour in a concentration camp and... signed, although almost all were against the resolution. None of the church people had any doubt that the 'council's' sentence was the direct work of Soviet power and that now a criminal trial and bloody reprisal against the Patriarch was to be expected at any time."⁷⁸¹

However, already at this 1923 council the renovationist movement was beginning to fall apart. The 560 deputies were divided into four groups: the supporters of Krasnitsky (the Living Church), of Vvedensky (the Ancient-Apostolic Church), of Antonin (Church Regeneration) and of Patriarch Tikhon. When Krasnitsky tried to take control of the council and reject any coalition between his group and the other renovationists, a schism amidst the schismatics was avoided only by strong behind-the-scenes pressure on his supporters from the communists, who succeeded in regrouping them under a "Holy Synod" led by Metropolitan Evdokim.⁷⁸²

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⁷⁷⁹ Zhukov, op. cit., p. 34.

⁷⁸⁰ Gubonin, op. cit., p. 224.

⁷⁸¹ Cited in Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Antonia, mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskogo*, vol. VI, p. 114. The council also consecrated the married Protopriest John (Kedrovsky) as Metropolitan of the Aleutian Islands and North America. On returning to America, he conducted a stubborn struggle against Metropolitan Plato, drawing 115 churches to his side (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 96).

⁷⁸² Savelev, op. cit., p. 195.

At the beginning of June, the Patriarch fell ill, and was transferred from the Donskoy monastery to the Taganka prison. There he was able to receive only official Soviet newspaper accounts of the Church struggle, which greatly exaggerated the successes of the renovationists. But the newspapers said otherwise – and the Patriarch was deceived. As he said: “Reading the newspapers in prison, with each passing day I was more and more horrified that the renovationists were taking the Church into their hands. If I had known that their successes were so meagre and that the people was not following them, I would never have come out of prison.”

Feeling that his presence at the helm of the Church was absolutely necessary, and that of his two enemies, the renovationists and the communists, the former were the more dangerous, the Patriarch decided to make concessions to the government in order to be released. Thus on June 16 and again on July 1 he issued his famous “confession”, in which he repented of all his anti-Soviet acts (including the anathema against the Bolsheviks), and “finally and decisively” set himself apart “from both the foreign and the internal monarchist White-guard counter-revolutionaries”.⁷⁸³

The Patriarch’s position was extremely difficult. Nevertheless, his “repentance” was undoubtedly a blow to the Church. Thus in a report dated December 12, 1923 to his superior, T.D. Deribas, Tuchkov wrote: “The second significant moment in the work of the Section was the accomplishment of the ‘repentance of Tikhon’, which as you are probably aware, made an extremely unfavourable impression on the Russian monarchists and the right-leaning elements in general, who had seen in Tikhon, up to this time, an adamant anti-Soviet figure.”⁷⁸⁴

783 Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 280, 286. There is some evidence that Patriarch Tikhon's release from prison was linked with the fact that in June, 1923 the Bolsheviks finally accepted that Lenin was too ill to return to politics. A. Rykov took over from Lenin as president of the Sovnarkom, and on entering office immediately received the Patriarch and promised to reduce the pressure on religious organizations, reduce the taxes on the clergy and churches and release some hierarchs from prison – a promise that he kept. See Latyshev, op. cit.

784 Protopriest Alexander Lebedev, “[paradosis] Who is Really Behind the Schisms?” orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com, March 2, 2006. The second achievement Tuchkov claimed for himself as director of the 6th Section of the Secret Department of the OGPU was the splitting up of the Church and a decline in faith among the young. Here he exaggerates, failing to take into account the strengthening of the patriarchate’s position vis-à-vis the other groups since July: “The goal which had been placed before the Section at the end of 1922 to move the Orthodox Church from its moribund and anti-Soviet position and to deprive it of that strength which it had held prior to that time, has been completely accomplished by the Section. The Orthodox Church as a single apparatus does not exist any more at the present time; it has been broken into several separate groups which have their separate hierarchies, and which are found in constant enmity to one another and which are disposed to be completely irreconcilable to one another.

“At the present time there are four such groups that are fully formed and which have their own ecclesiastical apparatus, namely the Tikhonites, the Renovationists, the Renascenists, and the Working Church. All of these groups have been placed in such a state, that willingly or unwillingly they are bound to constantly be at war with one another and to curry favour from the organs of civil authority. The enmity between these groups deepens from time to time and more and more, and concurrently the authority of the servers of the cult is being lost, and from

We see a striking parallel between the destinies and decisions of Patriarch Tikhon and Tsar Nicholas here. Both were peacemakers, ready to lay down their own lives for the sake of their flock. Both, in the interests of saving lives, made fateful decisions which they came bitterly to regret – the Tsar his decision to abdicate the throne, and the Patriarch his decision to “repent” of his anti-Soviet behaviour. But in spite of these mistakes, both were granted the crown of life from the Lord, Who looks on the heart and intentions of men, forgiving them their unintended consequences...

Some have seen a less flattering parallel between Patriarch Tikhon and his successor, Metropolitan Sergei. But whatever compromises Patriarch Tikhon made, he never made them to spare himself, but only others, and he never betrayed his colleagues to death by calling them “counter-revolutionaries”...

Moreover, the Patriarch managed to write to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), as it were replying to the perplexities elicited by his words on “walling himself off” from the “counter-revolution” of the Church Abroad: “I wrote this for the authorities, but you sit and work”.⁷⁸⁵ In other words, the Church was not to take his words seriously...

In defence of the patriarch’s “confession, Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky) pointed out: “1) it did not annul the anathema in the name of the Russian Orthodox Church on Soviet power, 2) he did not declare himself a friend of Soviet power and its co-worker, 3) it did not invoke God’s blessing on it, 4) it did not call on the Russian people to obey this power as God-established, 5) it did not condemn the movement for the re-establishment of the monarchy in Russia, and 6) it did not condemn the Whites’ struggle to overthrow Soviet power. By his declaration Patriarch Tikhon only pointed to the way of acting which he had chosen for the further defence and preservation of the Russian Orthodox Church. How expedient this way of acting was is another question,... but in any case Patriarch Tikhon did not cross that boundary which had to separate him, as head of the Russian Orthodox Church, from the godless power.”⁷⁸⁶

this, among the faithful, and especially among the youth, is created an extremely passive, and at time inimical attitude even to the Church itself, on the grounds of which there begins to develop the growth of atheism.

“The splitting up of the Orthodox Church into the above-indicated groups is the fulfilment of only one part of the work which was completed regarding the Orthodox churchmen in 1923.”

⁷⁸⁵ *Izvestia*, June 12, 1924; Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, p. 577.

⁷⁸⁶ Rklitsky, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

50. GREEK ECCLESIASTICAL IMPERIALISM

Meletius Metaxakis became Patriarch of Constantinople in 1921, expressing the victory of the Venizelists over the royalists in the “National Schism” (Εθνικός Διχασμός) that was tearing apart the Greek people. In becoming patriarch, as we have seen, Meletius was violating the 1856 Ottoman charter which specified that the patriarch had to be an Ottoman subject: Meletius was a citizen of Free Greece. But he did not mind provoking the Turks. Nor was he afraid of violating canon law and the territorial rights of other Orthodox Churches. Like so many political revolutionaries, his internal seizure of power was followed by external expansion...

Meletius initiated his ecumenist-Masonic programme on August 3, 1922, when his Synod recognized the validity of Anglican orders. In 1923 Cyprus and Jerusalem followed suit, showing how quickly Ecumenism could spread once it had taken hold in Constantinople.⁷⁸⁷

Within the next few years, Meletius and his successor, Gregory VII, undertook the wholesale annexation of vast territories belonging to the jurisdiction of the Serbian and Russian Patriarchates. Basing his actions on a false interpretation of the 28th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which supposedly gives all the “barbarian lands” into the jurisdiction of Constantinople, he and his successor created the following uncanonical autonomous and autocephalous Churches:-

1. Western Europe. On April 5, 1922, Meletius named an exarch for the whole of Western and Central Europe, Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira and Great Britain. In 1923 he suggested to Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgievsky) of Paris and his flock that he submit to Metropolitan Germanus. In a letter dated March 28, 1923, Metropolitan Evlogy declined.⁷⁸⁸ By the time of Gregory VII's death in November, 1924, there was an exarchate of Central Europe under Metropolitan Germanus of Berlin, an exarchate of Great Britain and Western Europe under Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira, and a diocese of Bishop Gregory of Paris. In the late 1920s the Ecumenical Patriarch received into his jurisdiction Metropolitan Evlogy, who had just created a schism in the Russian Church Abroad, and who sheltered a number of influential heretics, such as Nicholas Berdiaev and Fr. Sergei Bulgakov, in the theological institute of St. Sergius in Paris.⁷⁸⁹ On March 22, 1939 Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) wrote to the Ecumenical Patriarch Photius protesting against his acceptance of Metropolitan Evlogy: “Deeply honoring the Ecumenical Throne and having sincere respect for the bearer of the title of the Ecumenical Patriarchs, I must make known that the holy canons do not give the Ecumenical Patriarch the right of authority over other Autocephalous Churches, but is only the first among equals, giving him primacy of honor. The papist theory of special rights

⁷⁸⁷ Stavrides, op. cit., p. 45.

⁷⁸⁸ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷⁸⁹ *A History of the Russian Church Abroad*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, 1972, p. 51.

of the Ecumenical Patriarch over the entire diaspora, supposedly based on the 8th canon of the Third Ecumenical Council and the 28th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, has been disproved many times; and the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches have always unanimously protested against these attempts by the Ecumenical Throne to put in force these false rights."

2. Hungary and Czechoslovakia. According to the old Hungarian law of 1868, and confirmed by the government of the new Czechoslovak republic in 1918 and 1920, all Orthodox Christians living in the territory of the former Hungarian kingdom came within the jurisdiction of the Serbian Patriarchate. That meant that they were served by Bishops Gorazd of Moravia and Dositheus of Carpatho-Russia (Gorazd was consecrated on September 25, 1921 in Belgrade by Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and two Serbian bishops).⁷⁹⁰

However, on September 3, 1921, the Orthodox parish in Prague elected Archimandrite Sabbatius to be their bishop. When the Serbian Synod refused to consecrate Sabbatius, he, without the knowledge of his community, set off for Constantinople, where on March 4, 1923, he was consecrated "Archbishop of Prague and all Czechoslovakia", which included Carpatho-Russia. Then, on April 15, 1924, the Ecumenical Patriarch appointed a Metropolitan of "Hungary and Exarch of Central Europe in Budapest", with its see in Budapest (although there was already a Serbian bishop there).

"The scandal caused by this confusion," writes Z.G. Ashkenazy, "is easy to imagine. Bishop Sabbatius insisted on his rights in Carpatho-Russia, enthusiastically recruiting sympathizers from the Carpatho-Russian clergy and ordaining candidates indiscriminately. His followers requested that the authorities take administrative measures against priests not agreeing to submit to him. Bishop Dositheus placed a rebellious monk under ban – Bishop Sabbatius elevated him to igumen; Bishop Dositheus gathered the clergy in Husta and organized an Ecclesiastical Consistory – Bishop Sabbatius enticed priests to Bushtin and formed an Episcopal Council. Chaos reigned in church affairs. Malice and hatred spread among the clergy, who organized into 'Sabbatiites' and 'Dositheites'.

"A wonderful spiritual flowering which gave birth to so many martyrs for Orthodoxy degenerated into a shameful struggle for power, for a more lucrative parish and extra income. The Uniate press was gleeful, while bitterness settled in among the Orthodox people against their clergy, who were not able to maintain that high standard of Orthodoxy which had been initiated by inspired simple folk."⁷⁹¹

790 Meanwhile, on August 9, Archimandrite Alexis (Kabaliuk) convened a Council of the Carpatho-Russian Church to which 400 delegates came. Because of the persecution of the faith in Russia, the Council decided to remain within the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 57).

791 Monk Gorazd, op. cit.

3. Finland. In February, 1921 Patriarch Tikhon granted the Finnish Church, led by Archbishop Seraphim (Lukyanov), autonomy within the Russian Church. In 1922, Meletius offered to Seraphim to ordain the renovationist priest Herman (Aava) as his vicar-bishop, and receive autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The excuse given here was that Patriarch Tikhon was no longer free, “therefore he could do as he pleased” (Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)).

Seraphim refused, declaring his loyalty to Patriarch Tikhon and the Russian Church Abroad. In spite of this, and under the strong pressure of the Finnish authorities, Herman was consecrated Bishop of Sortavala in Constantinople. This undermined the efforts of the Orthodox to maintain their position vis-à-vis the Lutherans. Then, for refusing to learn the Finnish language in three months, Archbishop Seraphim was imprisoned on the island of Konevets by the Finnish government, while Patriarch Gregory VII raised Bishop Herman to the rank of metropolitan. Despite the protests of Patriarch Tikhon, the new metropolitan, under pressure from the government, annulled the right of the monasteries to celebrate Pascha according to the Julian calendar. Then began the persecution of the confessors of the Old Calendar in the monastery of Valaam (see below).

“Even more iniquitous and cruel,” writes Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), “was the relationship of the late Patriarch Gregory and his synod towards the diocese and the person of the Archbishop of Finland. The Ecumenical Patriarch consecrated a vicar bishop for Finland, the priest Aava, who was not only not tonsured, but not even a rasophore. Moreover, this was done not only without the agreement of the Archbishop of Finland, but in spite of his protest. By these actions the late Patriarch of Constantinople violated a fundamental canon of the Church – the sixth canon of the First Ecumenical Council [and many others], which states, ‘If anyone is consecrated bishop without the consent of his metropolitan, the Great Council declares him not to be a bishop.’ According to the twenty-eighth canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, the patriarch cannot even place a bishop in his diocese without the approval of the local metropolitan. Based on precisely this same canon, the predecessors of Gregory vainly attempted to realize his pretensions and legalize their claims to control. This uncanonical ‘bishop’ Aava, once consecrated as bishop, placed a monastic klobuk on his own head, and thus costumed, he appeared in the foreign diocese of Finland. There he instigated the Lutheran government to persecute the canonical Archbishop of Finland, Seraphim, who was respected by the people. The Finnish government previously had requested the Ecumenical Patriarch to confirm the most illegal of laws, namely that the secular government of Finland would have the right to retire the Archbishop. The government in fact followed through with the retirement, falsely claiming that Archbishop Seraphim had not learned enough Finnish in the allotted time. Heaven and earth were horrified at this illegal, tyrannical act of a non-Orthodox government. Even more horrifying was that an Orthodox patriarch had consented to such chicanery. To the scandal of the Orthodox and the evil delight of the heterodox, the highly dubious Bishop

Germanus (the former Fr. Aava) strolled the streets of Finland in secular clothes, clean-shaven and hair cut short, while the most worthy of bishops, Seraphim, crudely betrayed by his false brother, languished in exile for the remainder of his life in a tiny hut of a monastery on a stormy isle on Lake Ladoga."⁷⁹²

On November 14/27, 1923, Patriarch Tikhon and the Russian Holy Synod, after listening to a report by Archbishop Seraphim decreed that "since his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon has entered upon the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church, the reason for which the Patriarch of Constantinople considered it necessary temporarily to submit the Finnish Church to his jurisdiction has now fallen away, and the Finnish eparchy must return under the rule of the All-Russian Patriarch."⁷⁹³

However, the Finns did not return to the Russian Church, and the Finnish Church remains to this day the most modernist of all the Orthodox Churches, being the only Church that has adopted the Western *paschalion*.

4. Estonia and Latvia. In February, 1919, after the martyrdom of Bishop Plato of Revel, Bishop Alexander (Paulus) of Porkhov was transferred to his see. Patriarch Tikhon then granted a broad measure of autonomy to the parts of the former Pskov and Revel dioceses that entered into the boundaries of the newly formed Estonian state. On September 23, 1922, the Estonian Church under Archbishop Alexander petitioned to be received under the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to be granted autocephaly. On March 10, 1940, in a letter to Metropolitan Sergei (Stragorodsky), Metropolitan Alexander wrote that this decision was taken under strong political pressure from the State authorities at a time when news was constantly coming from Soviet Russia about the very difficult position of Patriarch Tikhon and the Russian Church, *and in reply to an appeal from Patriarch Meletius IV*.⁷⁹⁴

In June, 1921 Patriarch Tikhon granted the Latvian Church autonomy under Archbishop John of Riga, who was burned to death by the communists in 1934. In March, 1936, the Ecumenical Patriarch accepted the Church of Latvia within his own jurisdiction. On March 29 Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira and Great Britain headed the consecration of the garrison priest Augustine (Peterson) as Metropolitan of Riga and All Latvia.⁷⁹⁵

5. Poland. The Orthodox Church in Poland numbered about three million, mainly Ukrainians and Belorussians. They were persecuted by the Poles, who, already on October 22, 1919 had ordered 497 Orthodox churches and chapels, which had supposedly been seized from the Catholics in the past, to be

⁷⁹²Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), in Monk Gorazd, "Quo Vadis, Konstantinopol'skaia Patriarkhia?" (Where are you going, Constantinopolitan Patriarchate?), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 2 (1455), January 15/28, 1992, p. 9.

⁷⁹³Gubonin, op. cit., p. 304.

⁷⁹⁴Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 87.

⁷⁹⁵Monk Benjamin, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm>, p. 56.

returned to the Catholic Church.⁷⁹⁶ In 1921 Patriarch Tikhon appointed Archbishop Seraphim (Chichagov) to the see of Warsaw, but the Poles, whose armies had defeated the Red Army in 1920, did not grant him entry into the country. So on September 27 the Patriarch was forced to accept the Poles' candidate, Archbishop George (Yaroshevsky) of Minsk. However, he appointed him his exarch in Poland, not metropolitan of Warsaw (that title remained with Archbishop Seraphim). Moreover, he refused Archbishop George's request for autocephaly on the grounds that very few members of the Polish Church were Poles and the Polish dioceses were historically indivisible parts of the Russian Church. Instead, he granted the Polish Church autonomy within the Russian Church.

On January 24, 1922 Archbishop George convened a Council in Warsaw which included Archbishops Dionysius (Valedinsky) and Panteleimon (Rozhnovsky). Under pressure from the authorities, Bishop Vladimir also joined them. Pekarsky, an official of the ministry of religious confessions, tried to make the Russian hierarchs sign the so-called "Temporary Rules", which had been drawn up in the ministry and which envisaged far-reaching government control over the life of the Orthodox Church in Poland. On January 30 the "Temporary Rules" were signed by Archbishops George and Dionysius, but not by Archbishop Panteleimon and Bishop Vladimir. On the same day Patriarch Tikhon issued a decree transferring Archbishop George to the see of Warsaw and raising him to the rank of metropolitan, insofar as it had become evident that it would be impossible to obtain the Polish authorities' permission for the entrance into Warsaw of Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov), who had the reputation of being an extreme rightist. However, the titular promotion of Archbishop George by no means signified that the patriarch supported his intentions, for in the decrees there is no mention of ecclesiastical autocephaly, nor of exarchal rights. Consequently, as was confirmed by the patriarch in 1925, he was simply one of the diocesan bishops in Poland, and not metropolitan "of all Poland".⁷⁹⁷

Liudmilla Koeller writes: "In 1922 a council was convoked in Pochaev which was to have declared autocephaly, but as the result of a protest by Bishop Eleutherios [Bogoyavlensky] and Bishop Vladimir (Tikhonitsky), this decision was not made. But at the next council of bishops, which gathered in Warsaw in June, 1922, the majority voted for autocephaly, with only Bishops Eleutherios and Vladimir voting against. A council convoked in September of the same year 'deprived Bishops Eleutherios and Vladimir of their sees. In December, 1922, Bishop Eleutherios was arrested and imprisoned'."⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁶ See Danilushkin, op. cit., p. 586.

⁷⁹⁷ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

⁷⁹⁸ Koeller, "Kommentarii k pis'mu Arkhiepiskopa Rizhskago i Latvijskago Ioanna Arkhiepiskopu Vilyenskomu i Litovskomu Elevferiu ot 2 noiabria 1927 g." (Commentary on the Letter of Archbishop John of Riga and Latvia to Archbishop Eleutherios of Vilnius and Lithuania), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), NN 3-4, May-June-July-August, 1992, pp. 56-57; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 87.

Bishop Eleutherios was exiled to Lithuania. Two other Russian bishops, Panteleimon (Rozhnovsky) and Sergei (Korolev), were also deprived of their sees. The three dissident bishops were then expelled from Poland.

In November, 1923, Metropolitan George was killed by an opponent of his church politics, Archimandrite Smaragd (Laytshenko), and was succeeded by Metropolitan Dionysius “with the agreement of the Polish government and the confirmation and blessing of his Holiness Meletius IV [Metaxakis]”. Patriarch Tikhon rejected this act as uncanonical.⁷⁹⁹ On November 13, 1924 Patriarch Gregory VII signed a *Tomos* “on the recognition of the Orthodox Church in Poland as autocephalous”. The *Tomos* significantly declared: “The first separation from our see of the Kievan Metropolia and from the Orthodox Metropolias of Latvia and Poland, which depended on it, and also their union to the holy Moscow Church, took place by no means in accordance with the prescription of the holy canons, nor was everything observed that had been established with regard to the complete ecclesiastical autonomy of the Kievan metropolitan who bears the title of exarch of the Ecumenical Throne”. Hereby the patriarch indirectly laid claim to Ukraine as his canonical territory, in spite of the fact that it had been under Russian rule for two-and-a-half centuries. And yet, in contradiction with that, he affirmed as the basis of his grant of autocephaly to the Polish Church the fact that “the order of ecclesiastical affairs must follow political and social forms”, basing this affirmation on the 17th Canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and the 38th canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.⁸⁰⁰

In 1925 the Primate of the Polish Church was given the title of “Beatitude”, and in 1929 the Bishop of Tracheia (under Constantinople proper) was sent there as a supervisor with a broad range of privileges.

6. The United States. In 1922 Metaxakis created four dioceses in America and invited the Russians in America to come under his omophorion, but they refused. However in 1928 the bishop of the Russian Church of America, Adam (Philippovsky), was made subordinate to Constantinople.

7. Africa. Metaxakis’ successor, Gregory VII, laid claim to all sub-Saharan Africa, defying the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in African church affairs that had obtained since the time of St. Athanasius the Great.

The future Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria wrote in 1925: “Just as the intrusions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate into Russian ecclesiastical territories were anti-canonical– and the Patriarchate of Russia has started to denounce

⁷⁹⁹ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 320-321.

⁸⁰⁰ K. Svitich, *Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v Pol'she i ee avtokefalia* (The Orthodox Church in Poland and its autocephaly); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 133. For a more detailed account of the Polish autocephaly, see M. Zyzykin, “Avtokefalia i printsipy eia primeneniia” (Autocephaly and the principles of its application), *Pravoslavniy Put'* (The Orthodox Way), 2004, pp. 101-133. For a translation of the whole *Tomos* see: http://www.ukrainianorthodoxchurchinexile.org/1924_tomos_of_autocephaly.html.

them to the universal Church– so too, and for the same reasons, was its intrusion into the communities of Eastern and Southern Africa anti-canonical. And, in effect, even if we set aside the fact that these territories neighbour the Patriarchate of Alexandria, a proximity that would render absurd any spiritual dependence coming from the outside, even if we pass over in silence this other fact that under the title ‘of Ethiopia’ that the Patriarch of Alexandria bears, the entire land of Ethiopia must be understood, that which is found in Africa and not only within the territory of the Kingdom of Abyssinia– territory that today is smaller, tomorrow greater, and one day perhaps non-existent– the fact that from the first days of his accession to the patriarchal throne, the current Patriarch of Alexandria, at the very moment when Orthodox were settling in South Africa, sent a priest there for the spiritual needs of the Christians and, subsequently and repeatedly, other priests were sent to eastern and southern Africa to visit and console the Christians there– is not this fact, we say, evident proof that the Orthodox communities of Africa spiritually depend on the Patriarchate of Alexandria? If, later, it is true, the Church of Greece sent her priests at the request of the Christians of free Greece settled there and if the Patriarchate of Alexandria, either because of a lack of priests or for other reasons, neglected to protest and recover her rights to these countries, this certainly does not mean for any reasonable person who thinks according to the basis of the Church’s canons that these rights have expired.”⁸⁰¹

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In 1938 Bishop John (Maximovich) of Shanghai reported to ROCOR’s All-Diaspora Council in Belgrade: “Increasing without limit their desires to submit to themselves parts of Russia, the Patriarchs of Constantinople have even begun to declare the uncanonicity of the annexation of Kiev to the Moscow Patriarchate, and to declare that the previously existing southern Russian Metropolia of Kiev should be subject to the Throne of Constantinople. Such a point of view is not only clearly expressed in the *Tomos* of November 13, 1924, in connection with the separation of the Polish Church, but is also quite thoroughly promoted by the Patriarchs. Thus, the Vicar of Metropolitan Evlogy in Paris, who was consecrated with the permission of the Ecumenical Patriarch, has assumed the title of Chersonese; that is to say, Chersonese, which is now in the territory of Russia, is subject to the Ecumenical Patriarch. The next logical step for the Ecumenical Patriarchate would be to declare the whole of Russia as being under the jurisdiction of Constantinople...

“In sum, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in theory embracing almost the whole universe, and in fact extending its authority only over several dioceses, and in other places having only a superficial supervision and receiving certain revenues for this; persecuted by the government at home and not supported by any governmental authority abroad; having lost its significance as a pillar of

⁸⁰¹ Christopher, *Échos d’Orient*, 1925; translated by Matthew Namee, “The Position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Orthodox Church (1924)”, *Orthodox History*, August 26, 2020.

truth and having itself become a source of division, and at the same time being possessed by an exorbitant love of power – represents a pitiful spectacle which recalls the worst periods in the history of the See of Constantinople.”⁸⁰²

⁸⁰² Archbishop John, "The Decline of the Patriarchate of Constantinople", *The Orthodox Word*, vol. 8, N 4 (45), July-August, 1972, p. 175.

51. THE NEW CALENDAR SCHISM: (1) GREECE AND CONSTANTINOPLE

The issue of the new calendar had arisen already in the nineteenth century in Romania, where it had been rejected by St. Callinicus of Cernica. In Greece, meanwhile, the introduction of the new calendar was prophesied, and clearly rejected, by one of the greatest of the Greek saints, Nektarios of Aegina (+1920). Thus when the holy hierarch was speaking with two men, and the question arose whether it was possible and permissible to change the calendar, he replied: "My children, we should not change the calendar because all the feasts of our Church have been established, and especially the eternal Paschalion."

The two men: "But if the Church accepts the reform what are we to do?"

St. Nektarios: "You remain as you are, you will not follow the reformers because the Gregorian calendar has been condemned by three Pan-Orthodox sessions under Patriarch Jeremiah (Tranus) in 1592-1593 and Anthimus in 1848. It is impossible for Orthodox Christians to accept change. I do not accept or follow anyone, even if I stay alone."

The two men: "But if we do not have priests what will we do?... And if we do not have a church and have everyone with the Gregorian there, how do we deal with it?"

St. Nektarios: "So why are you worried? There is no problem, your homes become Churches...If you read the History of our Church, you will see and know that in times of rebellion and clutter in the Church many houses have become places of common prayer."⁸⁰³

As Pavel Kuzenkov writes, the architect of the new calendar innovation, Meletius Metaxakis, "became the patriarch at an inopportune moment: Scarcely had he entered Constantinople on an English warship when the Kemalists occupied the city. The Asia Minor Catastrophe broke out, with the deportation of all Greeks who had lived in the peninsula. Negotiations were held for months in Lausanne to determine the fate of the Greeks in Constantinople. Meanwhile the Turks demanded the expulsion of all Greeks, including the patriarch. With great difficulty the French and English managed to persuade the Turks to allow Meletius to remain in Constantinople with the provision that he be debarred from all political, cultural and other activities, have no more ties with Greece, become a citizen of Turkey, etc. It can be concluded that Patriarch Metaxakis's calendar reform was a feverish attempt to establish the status of Constantinople as the center of world Orthodoxy."⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰³ https://gocwiki.com/index.php/Nektarios_of_Pentapolis

⁸⁰⁴ Kuzenkov and Pushchaev, "The Rudiments of an Ultra-Ecumenical Project, or Why Constantinople Needed to Introduce the New Calendar", *Pravoslavie.ru*, February 20, 2019.

After the new government took power in Greece, the hierarchs who had condemned the election of Metaxakis to the patriarchate changed their minds, and, as Stavros Karamitsos writes, “quickly hastened, one after the other, to recognize Meletius, except for two bishops, Sophronius of Eleutheropolis and our famous Chrysostom,... [who wrote]: ‘I was then summoned, through the bishop of Kavala Chrysostom, to appear before the Minister, who urged me with threats to recognize Meletius. I took no account of his threats and refused to knuckle under. Then, to avoid a second exile to the Holy Mountain, I departed to Alexandria to see my relatives and to recover from my distress. ‘While in Alexandria, I received a summons from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to appear before the Holy Synod and explain why I did not recognize the election of Meletius as Ecumenical Patriarch. But..., being unable to appear in person before the Synod, I sent a letter justifying my refusal to recognize Meletius as the canonical Patriarch on the basis of the divine and sacred Canons. And while he was preparing to condemn and defrock me in my absence, he was driven from his throne by the Turks for scandalously mixing his spiritual mission with anti-Turkish politics...’”⁸⁰⁵

However, the mood in Constantinople had begun to turn against Meletius during August-September, 1922, when the terrified Greeks began to leave at the rate of 3000 a day. One of those who left at this time was Hierodeacon Basil Apostolides. As Fr. Jerome of Aegina, he was to become one of the great figures of the True Orthodox Church. He gave as reason for his departure his fear that the Turks would force the clergy to take off their cassocks – a prophecy that was fulfilled twelve years later.⁸⁰⁶

“The second fall of Constantinople” took place for the same reason as the first in 1453 – pressure from the Turks from without and from within - the attempt of the Church to achieve union with the western heretics. The first concrete step towards that union was to be the adoption of the new, papist calendar... Already at the beginning of 1923, a Commission had been set up on the initiative of the government to see whether the Greek Church could accept the new calendar. The Commission reported: “Although the Church of Greece, like the other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, is inherently independent, they are firmly united and bound to each other through the principle of the spiritual unity of the Church, composing one and one only Church, the Orthodox Church. Consequently none of them can separate itself from the others and accept the new calendar without becoming schismatic in relation to them.” On the basis of this report a royal mandate was issued decreeing, among other things, that “the Julian Calendar is to remain in force as regards the Church and religious feasts in general”, and that “the national festival of the 25th of March and all the holidays laid down by the laws are to be regulated according to the Julian Calendar.”⁸⁰⁷

805 Karamitsos, *O Synkhronos Omologitis tis Orthodoxias* (The Contemporary Confessor of Orthodoxy), Athens, 1990, p. 25.

806 Peter Botsis, *Gerontas Ieronymos o Isykhastes tis Aiginas* (Elder Jerome the Hesychast of Aegina), Athens, 1991, p. 76.

807 Goutzidis, *Ekklesiologika Themata* (Ecclesiological Themes), Athens, 1980, pp. 68-70.

On February 3, Meletius Metaxakis wrote to the Church of Greece, arguing for the change of calendar at his forthcoming Pan-Orthodox Council "so as to further the cause, in this part of the Pan-Christian unity, of the celebration of the Nativity and Resurrection of Christ on the same day by all those who are called by the name of the Lord."⁸⁰⁸ The revolutionary government of Greece under Colonel Plastiras then removed Metropolitan Theocletus I of Athens from office. Shortly afterwards, on February 25, Archimandrite Chrysostom Papadopoulos, was elected Metropolitan of Athens by three out of a specially chosen Synod of only five hierarchs – another ecclesiastical *coup*. During his enthronement speech, Chrysostom said that for collaboration with the heterodox "it is not necessary to have common ground or dogmatic union, for the union of Christian love is sufficient".⁸⁰⁹

As one of the members of the commission that had rejected the new calendar, Chrysostom might have been expected to resist Meletius' call. But the two men had more in common than the fact that they had both been expelled from the Church of Jerusalem in their youth; and on March 6 Chrysostom and his Synod accepted Meletius' proposal and agreed to send a representative to the forthcoming Council. Then, on April 16, he proposed to the Hierarchy that 13 days should be added to the calendar, "for reasons not only of convenience, but also of ecclesiastical, scientifically ratified accuracy" - in spite of the fact that only three months before he had signed the Commission's report, which said that any Church that accepted the new calendar would become schismatic!... Five out of the thirty-two hierarchs voted against the innovation. Two days later, however, at the second meeting of the Hierarchy, it was announced that Chrysostom's proposal had been "unanimously" approved, but "with absolutely no change to the Paschalion and Calendar of the Orthodox Church". Moreover, it was decided that the Greek Church would approve of any decision regarding the celebration of Pascha made by the forthcoming Pan-Orthodox Council, provided it was in accordance with the Canons...⁸¹⁰

Knowing that the Greek Church would support his reforms, Meletius convened a "Pan-Orthodox Council" in Constantinople in May, 1923. The resolutions included the "correction" of the Julian calendar, a fixed date for Pascha, the second marriage of clergy, and various relaxations with regard to the clothing of clergy, the keeping of monastic vows, impediments to marriage, and fasting. However, hardly more than ten people, and no official representatives of the Patriarchates, turned up for the council, so discredited was its convener.⁸¹¹

808 Goutzidis, op. cit., p. 76.

809 Cited in Bishop Photius, op. cit., p. 40. At about this time the Churches of Cyprus, Jerusalem and Sinai all issued declarations recognizing Anglican orders (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 91, 92).

810 Goutzidis, op. cit., pp. 74-78.

811 However, an Anglican hierarch, Charles Gore of Oxford, was allowed to attend one of the sessions, sitting at the right hand of Meletius and taking part in the work of the Congress. He declared: "For us in the West, it would be spiritual satisfaction to find ourselves in the position

Even Archbishop Chrysostom (Papadopoulos) had to admit: "Unfortunately, the Eastern Patriarchs who refused to take part in the Congress *rejected all of its resolutions in toto from the very outset*. If the Congress had restricted itself only to the issue of the calendar, perhaps it would not have encountered the kind of reaction that it did."⁸¹²

What made the changing of the calendar still less acceptable was its *raison d'être*, viz., that it "would make a great moral impression on the whole civilized world by bringing the two Christian worlds of the East and West closer..."⁸¹³

"To be sure," wrote Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, "rapprochement between the two Christian worlds of the East and the West in the celebration of Christian Feasts is desired by all and is a matter of great moral value and significance. However, it must be pursued and attained in the service of Christian truth and for the glory of the God-Man Jesus Christ. Were such to be the case, the moral interests of the entire Christian world would truly be served in the right Faith. But when this rapprochement springs from materialistic and worldly interests and motives and is undertaken at the expense of Orthodoxy and to the diminution of the glory of Christ, then personal interests, and especially ecclesiastical ambitions and desires, are served, to the detriment of the idea of the Church and of the prestige of Orthodoxy in general. Her soul consists of the traditions and the God-inspired and unerring documents of the Apostolic Constitutions and the decisions of the Seven Holy and Œcumenical Synods, the distortion of which diminishes the Divinely wrought and inviolable authority of the Divine essence of the Church of Christ. Thus, all harm done to Orthodoxy and every diminution thereof becomes the harm and diminution of the Divinity of Christ, from Whom there shines the sublime and Divine character and the deeper and Divine meaning of the Christian religion."⁸¹⁴

The Russian renovationists immediately accepted the innovation, but Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev called it "this senseless and pointless concession to Masonry and Papism".⁸¹⁵ And his biographer Archbishop Nikon wrote: "The most important decrees of the Congress were the decisions to change to the new style [calendar] and to allow the clergy to

to celebrate together the great Christian feasts of the Nativity, Resurrection, and Pentecost...the second step would be completed by the CALENDAR MATTER which would bring us simultaneous celebration of the feasts."

812 "Œcumenical Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakis)", *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XVII, NN 2 & 3, 2000, p. 9.

813 Dionysius Battistatos, *Praktika-Apophaseis tou en Kon/polei Panorthodoxou Synedriou 1923* (The Acts and Decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Conference in Constantinople in 1923), 1982, p. 57.

814 - St. Chrysostom the New Confessor, "Ἀντίρρσις τοῦ «Ἐλέγχου» τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν Χρυσόστομου Παπαδοπούλου" [Refutation of the "Censure" of Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos].

815 See Monk Gorazd, "Quo Vadis, Konstantinopol'skaia Patriarkhia?" (Where are you going, Constantinopolitan Patriarchate?), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 2 (1455), January 15/28, 1992.

marry a second time. The Alexandrian, Antiochian and Jerusalem Churches did not participate in the Congress, considering its convening untimely [and Meletius an uncanonical usurper]. But its decrees were rejected by them as being, according to the Alexandrian Patriarch, 'contrary to the practice, tradition and teaching of our most Holy Mother Church and presented under the pretext of being slight modifications, which are probably elicited by the demands of the new dogma of "Modernism"' (epistle to the Antiochian Patriarch, 23 June, 1923). The representatives of the Russian Church Abroad [Archbishops Anastasy and Alexander], and after them the Council of Bishops, reacted completely negatively to these reforms."⁸¹⁶

The council caused rioting in the streets, and the Orthodox population sacked the patriarchal apartments and beat up Meletius.... "It was then," says Kuzenkov, "that the Phanar began this political game which continues to this day. It found itself 'between three fires'. On the one hand, in the eyes of the worldwide Orthodox community the Phanar was still its leader, whose main obligation was to keep Orthodox tradition in good faith. On the other hand, there was the Western world which was dividing Turkish territory. The Ottoman Empire no longer existed, Turkey was becoming pro-Western, and the Western powers demanded certain policies from Constantinople, promising some kind of protection in return. And, lastly, there was the East, which displayed hostility towards Constantinople in all its manifestations, whether Muslim or Kemalist. For the East, Constantinople was a double foe. Firstly, it was a cultural and religious enemy. It was believed that Turkey's defeat in the First World War was caused by the betrayal of the Orthodox and other Christian peoples who were living in the Ottoman Empire, namely the Armenians and Greeks. This most probably accounts for the genocide of Armenians [and Greeks]. It was also the Ottoman Empire's internal complex, since Muslims made up less than half of its population. On top of that, their demographic statistics were catastrophic. Christian families had twice as many children as Muslim families. It was in the context of this psychosis that the terrible phenomenon of genocide developed.

"Secondly, for the Turks Constantinople was a geopolitical enemy. It was supported by the West, which humiliated them, introducing its own traditions, ways and so on. Among other things, the calendar reform was meant to mark the unity between Constantinople and the Western world—a unity that guaranteed its inviolability [from the Kemalist Turks]."⁸¹⁷

In fact, the position of the patriarchate was already so vulnerable, that during the Lausanne conference (1922-23), which decided on the massive exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, the Turkish delegation officially demanded the removal of the patriarchate from Constantinople in view of its disloyalty to the Turkish government in the course of the past war. And the Italian president of the exchange of populations subcommission, G.M.

⁸¹⁶ Nikon (Rklitsky), op. cit., vol. 10, p. 38. See also *A History*, op. cit., pp. 53-55.

⁸¹⁷ Kuzenkov, op. cit.

Mantagna, even suggested that “the removal of the Patriarchate [from Constantinople] would not be too high a price to pay for the conclusion of an agreement.” However, the French delegation, supported by the Greeks, suggested that the patriarchate remain in Constantinople but without its former political power. And on January 10, 1923 the British Foreign Minister Lord Curzon said that the removal of the patriarchate from Constantinople would be a shock to the whole civilised world.

The British, whose troops were still occupying Constantinople (and thereby probably prevented a pogrom still greater than that which had taken place in Smyrna), suspected the hand of the Vatican in this proposal to remove the patriarchate. For, as the advisor to the Archbishop of Canterbury on Near Eastern questions, J.A. Douglas, said: “No one with the slightest knowledge of the Near East can doubt that Rome is bitterly hostile to the Phanar, and reckons a disaster to it as an institution to be a great thing.”⁸¹⁸

Venizelos then came up with a compromise proposal that the patriarchate remain in Constantinople but that he would do all he could to remove his nephew Metaxakis from it, a proposal that the Turks reluctantly agreed to.⁸¹⁹ Meletius agreed to his resignation, but suggested its postponement until the conclusion of the peace negotiations, in June, 1923. On July 10, harassed by both Venizelos and the Turkish government, Meletius withdrew to Mount Athos. On September 20, he resigned officially.

Another problem for Meletius was the new “Turkish Orthodox Church” of the “Turkish Orthodox” priest Papa Euthymius (Euthymius Karahissaridis). Papa Euthymios was a karamanli Greek Orthodox priest who, during the Anatolian war, and relying on his Kemalist connections, “managed to coerce three Greek Orthodox prelates, who were stranded in the nationalist-held zone, into convening a congress at the monastery of St. John at Zincirdere, Kayseri (Caesarea). This congress proclaimed the foundation of a Turkish Orthodox church in Anatolia on 15 September 1922. While declaring its hostility to the Phanar, the Turkish Orthodox church proposed working for the establishment of harmonious relations between the Muslim and the Christians of Anatolia. It was also tolerated by the Turkish nationalists for it was compatible with the Kemalist desire to turkify the Anatolian Christians.”⁸²⁰ Since the new Church was strongly supported by the government of Ataturk, Meletius considered it inappropriate to ban it. Instead, he suggested the creation of an autonomous Turkish Church subject to the patriarchate, and he promised to introduce the Turkish language into the Divine services. At that time there lived about 50,000 Turkish-speaking Orthodox in Anatolia. This movement lost all support after the great exodus of the Orthodox from Turkey in 1922-1923.⁸²¹

818 Alexandris, *op. cit.*, pp. 90, 91.

819 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

820 Alexandris, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152.

821 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

On October 2, an hour after the Allied forces left the City, Euthymius and his supporters burst into the Phanar, and declared that they would not leave until a “lawful” patriarch was elected. The terrified Holy Synod deposed Meletius. Euthymius “then expelled six members of the holy synod, including the *locum tenens* Nicholas, who was replaced by Kallinikos Delikanis, the archbishop of Cyzicus (Erdek).”⁸²² Eventually the Turks, embarrassed by Euthymius’ violent methods, renounced him, and on December 6 a new patriarch, Gregory VII, was elected with the Turks’ blessing.⁸²³ The next day Papa Euthymius again invaded the Phanar, injuring two bishops. And again the Turks intervened to prevent his seizure of the patriarchate.⁸²⁴

The irony was that, only a few years earlier, the patriarchate had broken with the Turkish authorities on the grounds of Greek nationalism. Now the patriarchate owed its rescue from the hands of Turkish ecclesiastical nationalists to – the Turkish authorities. We need look no further for the reason why the present patriarch, Bartholomew, is a colonel in the Turkish secret service...

Lausanne and the exchange of populations that followed spelled the end of Greek nationalist dreams, and the beginning of the end of Constantinople as a Greek city... “Almost all the Turkish objectives were attained and as a result a sovereign, republican, secular and homogeneous Turkish state was acknowledged by the international community. The Turkish determination to preserve absolute sovereignty over domestic matters was amply demonstrated during the debate on the minorities. At Lausanne Turkey agreed to grant equal treatment for all religions and racial minorities mainly because it regarded such an undertaking to be in accordance with its political philosophy. As a result the minority clauses concerning the future position of non-Muslims in Turkey and Muslims in Western Thrace were inserted in the final text of the Lausanne treaty. These clauses, together with article 16 of the exchange of populations convention, constituted the ‘Magna Carta’ of non-Muslims in Turkey. By virtue of these clauses the inherent right of the indigenous Greeks to exist in Istanbul, separate from strictly political considerations and arrangements, was recognized. Although the Ecumenical Patriarchate was allowed to remain in Turkey, the Greek minority had to seek a separate rationale from the Orthodox church for its continued existence. For the political status and duties of the members of this community as Turkish citizens placed them under a different set of imperatives than the internationally based Ecumenical Patriarchate. The latter was stripped of all its non-religious attributes while its exact position vis-à-vis the state was never defined at Lausanne. Yet, with the exchange of populations and the disestablishment of the Patriarchate, the Turkish government succeeded in putting an end to the *millet* system.

822 Alexandris, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

823 *Oriente Moderno* (The Contemporary East), January 15, 1924, p. 30; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

824 Alexandris, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

“On 2 October 1923, as it was agreed in the Mudanya convention and confirmed during the Lausanne negotiations, the Allied forces left Istanbul and the rest of the neutral zone. This caused the exodus of yet another substantial group of Constantinopolitan Christians who decided to leave with the Allies...”⁸²⁵

Metaxakis’s notorious career was not over yet. Platonov writes that after “hiding with his Masonic protectors in England” for a few years, in 1926, on the death of Patriarch Photius of Alexandria, “with the financial and organisational support of the secret world powers-that-be, Meletius was put forward as second candidate for the throne of Alexandria. The first claimant was Metropolitan Nicholas of Nubia. According to established practice, the first candidate should have been proclaimed patriarch. However, the Egyptian authorities under pressure from the English confirmed the ‘election’ of Meletius. Using his power, the new Alexandrian patriarch-mason introduced the Gregorian calendar [in 1926], causing a serious schism in the Alexandrian Church.”⁸²⁶

This had major repercussions on the relationship between Constantinople and ROCOR. On March 30, 1924 the Ecumenical Patriarch appointed a commission composed of three metropolitans which told Archbishop Anastasy that in carrying out ordinations and divorces he was exceeding his prerogatives. Nevertheless, no specific ordinations were discussed, but instead it was demanded of Anastasy that (a) he should not speak out against Soviet power, (b) cease commemorating Patriarch Tikhon, and (c) recognize Soviet power. So the Ecumenical Patriarch by 1924 was what we should now call renovationist-sergianist as well as ecumenist!

“On 30 April 1924,” writes Andrei Psarev, having tried to detain Metropolitan Anthony on Mount Athos, “the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople decided to suspend Russian Archbishops Anastasy and Alexander, who were in Constantinople, and directed that all Russian clerics serving in Turkey were to consider themselves directly subordinate to the Patriarchate of Constantinople; and they informed the Serbian Patriarch that the Russian bishops located within Serbian canonical territory did not have the right to minister to Russian exiles.

“The Serbian Orthodox Church, however, had a different outlook on the plight of Russian bishops. In the reply from the Council of Bishops of the Serbian Church to the Patriarchate of Constantinople dated 9 December 1924 they stated: ‘The Holy Council of Bishops, as the supreme authority of the autocephalous united Serbian Church, gave its assent to a request from His Eminence Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich, during a council session

825 Alexandris, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

826 Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii* (Russia’s Crown of Thorns), Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, p. 478. Moreover, he again tried to push many of the Greek Orthodox in America into schism. See Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, *A Reply to Archbishop Athenagoras*, Montreal, 1979, p. 19; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

held on 18/31 August 1921... which authorized the creation of a higher church authority of [Russian] bishops to manage church affairs for the Russian colony and exiles living on the territory of our [Serbian] jurisdiction. In doing so, the Serbian Council carried out its responsibilities in a spiritual manner that leaves us satisfied that we have fulfilled our apostolic responsibilities. Thus, we have accepted the Russian exiles, who because of circumstances have ended up in our spiritual realm, under our patronage, with the permission of state authorities. We have also willed that they be ministered to by their own priests and bishops who know best their spiritual needs and blessed church traditions. Thus, on the basis of canon law, they have the right to organize an autocephalous [autonomous?] church authority by their own free will."⁸²⁷

It was the Freemason Archbishop Chrysostom Papadopoulos of Athens (like Metaxakis, a Cretan) who took the lead in introducing the new calendar in Greece. Or rather, it was the revolutionary Greek government that took the lead, and Chrysostom immediately followed. Thus on December 14, 1923 the government decided to suspend the old Constitutional Law in accordance with which the Greek Church had been administered for the previous 70 years. According to the new Law, the Hierarchy would meet only once a year, and between sessions would be represented by the Archbishop of Athens alone. Metropolitans would have to retire at 65, which conveniently neutralized the influence of the older and more conservative hierarchs. Invested now with almost dictatorial powers, Archbishop Chrysostom convened a meeting of the Hierarchy, which, on December 24, voted to thank the government for emancipating it from the previous administrative system (!), and, on December 27, decided to introduce the new calendar with the agreement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (but no other Orthodox Church).

It is striking how similar were the programs of the renovationists in Greece and Russia at this time. Both proposed a complete reformation of the Church with a very similar agenda. And both were pushed from behind by the political revolution... Thus the decision to change the calendar in Greece was imposed on the Church by the revolutionary government. At a meeting on December 24, Nicholas Plastiras, the President of the government, said to the hierarchs: "The Revolution requests you, then, my respected Hierarchs, to leave all personal preference to one side and proceed to purge the Church...

"The Revolution hopes that a useful work for the new generation will result from your labours, and that it will reckon itself happy to see the rebirth of the Church being set in motion... Consequently, it wishes you not to limit yourselves to the ancestral Canons, but to proceed to radical measures."⁸²⁸

827 Psarev, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

828 Archimandrite Theocletus A. Strangas, *Ekklesias Hellados Historia, ek pegon apseudon, 1817-1967* (A History of the Church of Greece from Unlying Sources, 1817-1967), vol. 2, Athens, 1970, p. 1181; translated by Kitsikis, op. cit., p. 18.

On January 4, 1924, Chrysostom wrote to the Ecumenical Patriarch asking for his agreement to the calendar change. He said that it was “sad” that the other Orthodox Churches had not agreed to this, but did not suggest that this might be an impediment. The Patriarch replied on February 14 in a much more sycophantic tone, suggesting that the change should take place on March 10 (henceforth March 23), but asking that he be informed of the agreement of the other Orthodox Churches. Chrysostom immediately telegraphed his agreement to this date, and asked the Patriarch to inform his metropolitans in the New Territories about it.

His haste was probably elicited by the Alexandrian Patriarch Photius’ message to the Ecumenical Patriarch on January 15: “Your announcement that, without any real cause or dogmatic or canonical reasons, the brotherly advice and entreaties of the four Apostolic Thrones has been rejected, and the ‘reform of the calendar’ has taken place, caused us great grief and surprise. You are in danger of alienating all the Orthodox peoples of the Church. Therefore I suggest the convening of a council to examine the question. Taking into consideration the letters from the Churches of Romania and Serbia, we abide in these things which have been dogmatized in former Synodal Congresses, and we reject every addition or any change of the calendar before the convocation of an Ecumenical Council, which alone is capable of discussing this question, concerning which Ecumenical Council we propose a speedy convocation.”

On February 16 Chrysostom telegraphed Photius, saying that an Ecumenical Council could not be convened immediately, and that the calendar change was an urgent necessity “for the sake of millions of Orthodox people”. After asking him to change the calendar on March 10, he added, rather craftily, that there would be no change in the Paschalion, for such a change would have to be referred to an Ecumenical Council (as if the addition of 13 days to the calendar was a much less important change that did not require a conciliar decision). But Photius was not persuaded...

The other patriarchs spoke out strongly against the reforms. Thus Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem and his Synod wrote: “The most holy Mother of the Churches is unable to accept the change at present because of the disadvantageous position in which, as is well known, she finds herself in relation to the Latins in the holy places, and because of the dangers of proselytism.” And Patriarch Gregory of Antioch and his Synod wrote: “Political factors produced the change of the calendar even though the whole of the Eastern Church keeps to the Julian calendar. The tendency to change the canons represents a great danger in our eyes.” And Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia wrote: “We have indicated the necessity of postponing for the time being the council that has been convened in order that the question be examined before an Ecumenical Council so as to decide on a single calendar for all the Orthodox Churches.”⁸²⁹

829 Abraham Tsimirikas, *Eis Ipakoin Pisteos* (In Obedience to the Faith), 1977, pp. 28-30.

On March 3, Chrysostom told all the Hierarchs of the Church of Greece that “in accordance with the decision of the Holy Synod the Church of Greece has accepted the correction of the Julian calendar defined by the Ecumenical Patriarch, according to which March 10 is to be considered and called March 23...” On March 4, he asked the Foreign Ministry to “send urgent telegrams to the Blessed Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Serbia, and the Archbishops of Romania and Cyprus, informing them that the Church of Greece has accepted the decision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate concerning the convergence of the ecclesiastical and political calendar, calling March 10 March 23, and to inform the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople that the Church of Greece had put his decision into effect.”⁸³⁰

*

As we have seen, the Ecumenical Patriarch accepted the change, albeit with the proviso that it be agreed by all the Orthodox Churches. This acquiescence is explained by the very weak position of the patriarchate in the wake of the Asia Minor catastrophe, being economically dependent on the Greek Church. In fact, Patriarch Gregory VII was personally opposed to the change. But he accepted it because, as he told the Holy Synod: “Unfortunately, the change in the calendar was imposed by the Greek government.”⁸³¹ For as the *tomos* of November 13, 1924 declared: “The conduct of Church affairs must be compatible with the political and social forms”!...

On Sunday, March 10, 1924 (March 23, according to the new calendar) the State Church of Greece and the Patriarchate of Constantinople adopted the new calendar. On that day, the future hierarch-confessor of the True Orthodox Church, Archimandrite Germanus (Varykopoulos) was serving the Divine Liturgy in his church of St. Alexander in Palaion Faliron. Having come to the end of the Liturgy, he commemorated “the holy 13 days whose memory we celebrate!”⁸³²

On March 25, 1924 (new calendar), two important events took place simultaneously in Athens. The great feast of the Annunciation was celebrated according to the new calendar by Archbishop Chrysostom (Papadopoulos). And the Greek monarchy was abrogated (without a vote) by the revolutionary government. As Nicholas Kraniotakis wrote: “Under strict orders, and to the sound of trumpets, the soldiers detached the Crown from the Cross and threw it to the ground! And Greek democracy was born!...”⁸³³

⁸³⁰ Tsimirakis, op. cit., pp. 85-98.

⁸³¹ Demetrius Mavropoulos, *Patriarkhikai selides: To Oikoumenikon Patriarkheion apo 1878-1949* (Patriarchal Pages: The Ecumenical Patriarchate from 1878 to 1949), Athens, 1960; translated by Kitsikis, op. cit., p. 19.

⁸³² Metropolitan Calliopius of Pentapolis, *Deinopathimata G.O.X.* (The Sufferings of the True Orthodox Christians), vol. 1, Piraeus, 1990, p. 30.

⁸³³ Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., p. 15.

This is another indication of the close spiritual link between events in Greece and in Russia. In both, political anti-monarchism was joined to religious renovationism. In Greece since 1917 the anti-monarchists and renovationists had been led by Venizelos in the State and Metaxakis in the Church, leading to serious disturbances in the streets between the royalists and the Venizelists.⁸³⁴ Moreover, Meletius had been helped by the fact that in Russia the so-called "Living Church" had come to power in 1922 with a very similar programme of modernistic reforms to his own. And on the occasion of his election as Patriarch of Alexandria, the synod of the "Living Church" wrote to him: "The Holy Synod recalls with sincere best wishes the moral support which Your Beatitude showed us while you were yet Patriarch of Constantinople by entering into communion with us as the only rightfully ruling organ of the Russian Orthodox Church."⁸³⁵

On April 6, 1924, a vast crowd gathered in the courtyard outside the Annunciation cathedral. The next day the newspaper *Vradini* (*Evening News*) reported: "The priests have been forbidden, under pain of defrocking, to liturgise or chant the troparia of the Annunciation today. Also forbidden is the ringing of the bells of the Russian cathedral (in Phillelinon Street), and today's celebration of the Liturgy at the metochion of the Holy Sepulchre, although the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has not accepted the new calendar.

"In spite of all the measures taken, multitudes of the faithful inundated the metropolitan cathedral from afternoon to late at night, and at their persistent entreaty one priest was found who chanted a paraklesis, being 'obedient,' as he said, 'to the threats of the people'. The wardens wanted to close the church, but in view of the fanaticism of the worshippers the cathedral remained open into the night. Three miracles took place at the metropolitan cathedral... Seven-year-old Stasinopoulos, a deaf-mute and paralytic since birth, was brought by his mother to the icon of the Mother of God, convulsed by spasms. A little while later he arose amidst general compunction, pronounced the words "mama-granny-papa" and began to walk.

"A little later a seventeen-year-old paralytic was healed, and... a hard-working deaf-mute. The latter spoke yesterday for the first time in thirty years, declaring that he would not go to work today. Although the cathedral wardens know the names of these two, they refuse to publish them, affirming that no

834 From *The New York Times*, June 7, 1917, p. 22: "A miniature civil war between Venizelists and the supporters of King Constantine of Greece was fought in the basement of the St. Constantine's Greek Orthodox Church at 64 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, last night when the Constantine faction sought to expel the pastor of the church for omitting the usual custom of saying 'long live the King' in every Sunday prayer.

"Police were called in to untangle the difficulties, and while the king's men were at the Adams Street police station making complaints about the religious, political and military zeal of the Venizelists, the supporters of the pro-Allies ex-Premier elected a Board of Trustees and informed the pastor of the church, the Rev. Stephano Papamacaronis, that he could omit to pray for the King."

835 Cited in Bishop Photius, op. cit., p. 42.

miracle has taken place, although the contrary is confessed by the whole congregation.”

Another newspaper, *Skrip*, reported on the same day: “Movement inside the cathedral was impossible. The faithful listened to the vespers, and after the dismissal anxiously discussed the change in the worshipping calendar and the transfer of the feast of the Annunciation. “Two thousand pious Christians, together with women and children, unanimously proclaimed their adherence to the holy dogmas of religion, which the democrats have come to change, and one voice was heard: ‘We will not become Franks! We are Orthodox Christians, and we will remain Orthodox Christians!’”

Similar scenes, and similar miracles, took place in other regional centres, such as Nauplion, Tripolis, Thessalonica and Corinth. The secular authorities everywhere supported the new ecclesiastical regime. But the faithful Christians, obeying the teachings of the holy Fathers and imitating the Christians of old who in similar situations broke communion with the innovators, themselves broke off all ecclesiastical communion with the innovating Church of Greece. They prayed at home or in country chapels, served by a very small number of priests, including some from Mount Athos, who were continually persecuted by the police at the instigation of Chrysostom Papadopoulos.

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In the beginning, after the calendar change, writes Abbot Panteleimon, “all the monasteries and sketes of the Holy Mountain resisted the change. They all refused to follow the directive of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Not only did they not adopt the Papal Calendar, but they all ceased commemorating the name of the Patriarch, pointing out to all that the three former Pan-Orthodox Councils and many local councils had condemned the Papal Calendar as an innovation attempting to overturn the liturgical unity of the Church. Following the anathema of the Seventh Ecumenical Council against all innovations that should ever be enacted against Holy Tradition, all these councils put under anathema any Orthodox who should attempt to adopt the Papal Gregorian Calendar either in its Paschalion or Menologion. Thus at the time of the change, all the monks of the Holy Mountain became zealots, i.e., non-commemorators.

“The Patriarchate as well as the Church of Greece, which adopted the innovation, were very embarrassed by this stand of the Holy Mountain, as also by the refusal of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to adopt the calendar innovation, and knew only too well that the pious would look to the example of both the Holy Mountain and Jerusalem in not accepting the innovation, which is what actually did happen. Therefore, both the Patriarchate and the innovating Church of Greece, through the civil authorities, tried every means to intimidate the Fathers of the Holy Mountain, by threats and coercion, to obey the encyclical of the Patriarchate of Constantinople which had ordered the calendar change.

“When I arrived on the Holy Mountain in the mid-fifties, some thirty years after the innovation, the older Fathers who had been witnesses to the events of 1924 told me that many of the leaders among the monastics (i.e., the abbots and the most erudite of the monks) were threatened with physical expulsion and exile from the Holy Mountain. I was told that a battleship of the Greek navy had anchored opposite the Monastery of Gregoriou, which was the most vocal in resisting the innovation, and threatened to bombard the monastery. The outcome was that, one after the other, all twenty monasteries began to commemorate the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But all, except Vatopedi, refused to change to the Papal Calendar.

“In 1922 there had occurred the catastrophe of Asia Minor, and a great influx of refugees, fleeing the massacres of the Turks, had come to Greece for safety. In 1924, the year of the calendar change, the Exchange of Populations (Christian Greek and Moslem Turk) took place by agreement between Greece and Turkey. Thus, the fate of all the refugees, both of 1922 and those that arrived in 1924, was sealed, with no hope of their ever returning to their homes in Asia Minor. Over one million Orthodox Christians perished in the massacres of the times enacted by the Turks, and over one- million-and-a-half Orthodox Christians were found as homeless refugees in Greece. This meant that the refugees had to be settled throughout Greece. Using, therefore, the Asia Minor tragedy as a pretext, the Greek government confiscated all the land holdings of the monasteries of the Holy Mountain, ostensibly to settle refugees. (In the years that followed, negotiations took place between the monasteries and the government, with the outcome that a yearly stipend was to be paid to the monasteries for the properties that had been confiscated.) The real purpose at the time (1924) for confiscating the properties was to punish and further intimidate the Holy Mountain for its refusal to comply with the calendar innovation. Not only the properties outside the Holy Mountain belonging to the monasteries were taken, but inroads into the Holy Mountain itself were made. Since the monasteries had not been built at the beginning of the peninsula but rather somewhat further out, the area right up to the Russian Skete of Kormitsa was confiscated and the small island of Amoliani and an old Byzantine defense tower which belonged to the Monastery of Great Lavra were populated with refugees. A whole town was created where the tower is, called Prosfiori today, as also Nea Rhoda, etc. The reason why the government did not proceed to confiscate even more of the Holy Mountain itself is that, providentially, the Russian Monastery of Saint Panteleimon had the Skete of Kormitsa in the locale, and if this had been taken, it would have created an international affair. That the confiscation of the properties of the monasteries was a punishment is evident from the fact that the large Monastery of Vatopedi, which changed to the Papal Calendar, was rewarded, and none of its properties were confiscated. (Vatopedi, after having been with the Papal Calendar for some fifty years, has finally returned to the Church Calendar.)

“Thus, today, all the Holy Mountain abides by the Church Calendar, but all the monasteries, except Esphigmenou, commemorate the name of the

Patriarch. Those who do not commemorate are called zealots. Until the new brotherhoods arrived at the end of the seventies, the monasteries were sympathetic to the zealots and aided them in whatever manner they could. The monasteries commemorated by necessity, but they attested that the calendar change had been made uncanonically and thus refused to adopt the Papal Calendar themselves. They believed and hoped that one day a Pan-Orthodox Council would rectify the situation and return all the innovators to the Church Calendar.

“The zealots were concentrated mostly in the desert part of the Holy Mountain— the Sketes of Kavsokalivia, Saint Anne’s, Little Saint Anne’s, Katounakia, Karoulia, Kerasia, Saint Basil’s, etc. All these sketes belong to the Great Lavra. The zealots were usually good monastics and upkept their cells well. Thus, when Constantinople and the State Church of Greece would complain and tell the Monastery of Great Lavra to take action against the zealots, Lavra would answer that the zealots would never compromise, and if any pressure were brought against them, they would abandon their cells, as the Kollyvades had done two centuries before, and they would settle throughout the Greek mainland and the islands and found monastic communities. Thus, it was to the profit of all that they be contained on the Holy Mountain. Besides, Lavra argued, if all the zealots left the Holy Mountain, their cells would fall into ruins. It was to the profit of all, therefore, that they be tolerated.”⁸³⁶

The adoption of the new calendar by the Churches of Greece and Romania in 1924 came at a very vulnerable time for the Orthodox Church as a whole. The outward position of the Church had changed radically in the previous ten years. The Russian empire was gone, and the Ecumenical and the Moscow patriarchates, to which the vast majority of Orthodox Christians belonged, were fighting both external foes (the Bolsheviks and the Turks) and internal schism (“the Living Church” and “the Turkish Orthodox Church”). No other Church could take the place occupied by the Russian empire and the Ecumenical patriarchate in the preceding centuries. It followed that if, as was (temporarily) the case, none of the hierarchs of the Greek Church would reject the calendar change and break communion with the Archbishop of Athens, there was only one force remaining that could take up the banner of truth – the people.

The position of the laity in the Orthodox Church has often been misunderstood. In Orthodoxy, the laypeople are neither the inert, impotent, blindly obedient mass of the Roman Catholics, nor the all-powerful, revolutionary horde of the Protestants. There are two vital functions which can only be performed by canonically consecrated clergy: the administration of the sacraments, including the ordination of bishops and priests, and the definition of the faith, including the position of the Church in relation to heretics and

⁸³⁶ Abbot Panteleimon of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA, “Guidance of Elder Joseph Regarding the Calendar Issue”, *Orthodox Christian Witness*, December 2001, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4 (1511).

schismatics. But while the laity cannot take the leading role in these two functions, they do have an important confirmatory role in them. Thus strictly speaking a bishop or priest cannot celebrate the Divine Liturgy without the presence of at least one layman. Likewise a bishop cannot ordain a priest without the consent of the people (expressed by shouting “axios!” or “he is worthy!”). And a definition of the faith that is rejected by the people will remain a dead letter.

Thus we read in the *Apostolic Constitutions*: “I shall judge the bishop and the layperson. The sheep are rational and not irrational, so that no layman may ever say: ‘I am a sheep, and not a shepherd, and I give no account of myself, but the shepherd shall see to it, and he alone shall pay the penalty for me.’ For even as the sheep that follows not the good shepherd shall fall to the wolves unto its own destruction, so too it is evident that the sheep that follows the evil shepherd shall acquire death; for he shall utterly devour it. Therefore it is required that we flee from destructive shepherds.”⁸³⁷

When the new calendar was introduced by the Pope in 1582, it was synodically condemned in 1583, 1587, 1593, 1722, 1827, 1848, 1895 and 1904. And already in their encyclical of 1848, the Eastern Patriarchs had indicated the people’s role: “With us neither Patriarchs nor Councils could ever introduce anything new, because the defender of religion is the very body of the Church, or the people itself, who wanted their religion to remain forever unchanged and in accord with the religion of their Fathers.”

The question that arose in 1924, therefore, was: did the people (and a handful of clergy) have the right to separate from all the innovating bishops and, in the absence of any Orthodox hierarchs, declare themselves to be the truly Orthodox Church? The answer supplied by the Holy Tradition of the Church was a clear: yes. While certain functions that can only be performed by bishops, such as the ordination of priests, are temporarily suspended in such a situation, the Church does not cease to exist, and remains there, and only there, where the True Faith is confessed. For “where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”, said the Bishop of bishops, the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 18.20).

Moreover, the 15th canon of the First-and-Second Council of Constantinople praises those who break with a heretical bishop even before his synodical condemnation. Indeed, there are several cases in the Church’s history of holy men either breaking immediately with heretical bishops – St. Hypatius in the fifth century, for example; or dying out of communion with all the bishops of the Church and yet being praised and glorified by succeeding generations – St. Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century, for example, and St. Arsenius of Paros in the nineteenth. Since the Churches of Constantinople, Greece, Romania, Finland, the Baltic States and Poland adopted the new calendar in

837 *Apostolic Constitutions*, 10:19, P.G. 1, 633.

1924⁸³⁸, there was no way the laity in these Churches could remain in communion with the other Churches keeping the old calendar unless they broke communion with their innovating hierarchs.

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"But why such a fuss," say the new calendarists, "over a mere 'thirteen days' difference?" Because the Apostle Paul said: "Hold the traditions" (II Thessalonians 2.15). And the tradition of the "old" Orthodox calendar was sealed by the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council and sanctified by many centuries of usage. To change the calendar, therefore, would be to break communion, not only with our brethren who keep the old calendar on earth, but also with all the saints who worship together with us in heaven.

It is in this rupture of communion that the major crime consists; for, as St. John Chrysostom says, "exactness in the keeping of times is not as important as the crime of division and schism".⁸³⁹ "To tear asunder the Church means nothing less than to fall into heresy. The Church is the house of the Heavenly Father, One Body and One Spirit".⁸⁴⁰

The supreme aim of our life in Christ is unity in heaven and on earth, in time and in eternity - "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17.21); and anything which disrupts that unity is anathema to us. According to the Holy Fathers, schism is no less abhorrent and deadly a sin than heresy. Even martyrdom, writes St. Cyprian of Carthage, followed by St. John Chrysostom⁸⁴¹, cannot wipe out the sin of him who divides the Body of Christ. For as Christ is one, so is His Church one; indeed, the one Christ cannot be separated from the one Church in that "the full and perfect Christ", in St. Augustine's phrase, "is Head and Body" together.⁸⁴²

"Since the Church," writes Fr. Justin Popovich, "is catholically one and a unique theanthropic organism for all worlds, she cannot be divided. Any division would signify her death... According to the united position of the Fathers and the Councils, the Church is not only one but unique, because the one unique God-man, her Head, cannot have many bodies. The Church is one and unique because she is the body of the one unique Christ. A division in the

838 In Poland, the Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian press was full of protests against the innovation. However, the government strongly supported it, and there were some bloody confrontations with the police (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 121). The Church of Alexandria did not immediately accept the new calendar, but only in 1928 when Meletius Metaxakis became patriarch. Antioch followed after the war, and in 1968 - Bulgaria. The other Slavic Churches and Jerusalem continue to follow the Julian calendar to this day.

839 Quoted by Liudmila Perepelkina, "Iulianskij kalendar' - 1000-letnaia ikona vremeni na Rusi" (The Julian Calendar - a thousand-year icon of time in Russia), *Pravoslavnij Put'* (The Orthodox Way), 1988, p. 122.

840 St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*.

841 St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*, 4.4.

842 St. Augustine, *Discourse on Psalm 37*, 4.

Church is ontologically impossible, for which reason there has never been a division in the Church, only a division from the Church. According to the word of the Lord, the Vine is not divided; but only those branches which voluntarily refuse to bring forth fruit fall away from the ever-living Vine and are dried up (John 15.1-6). At various times heretics and schismatics have been separated and cut off from the one undivided Church of Christ; they have subsequently ceased to be members of the Church and united with her theanthropic body. Such were, first of all, the Gnostics, then the Arians and Spirit-fighters, then the Monophysites and Iconoclasts, and finally the Roman Catholics and Protestants and Uniates and all the rest of the heretical and schismatic legion."⁸⁴³

The Athonite Elder Augustine writes: "It is a dogma of the Faith that the Church is not only Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, but also One, so that even though the Churches are seen to be many, one and one only is the Church composed of the many that are seen in different places. This is the teaching of the Holy Creed, this is the message of the Divine Scriptures, the Apostolic Tradition, the Sacred councils and the God-bearing Fathers. From this we conclude that the union of the Church is a most important dogma of the Faith.

"We have seen... that St. Constantine and the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council re-established both the inner and the outer unity of the Church, which is why the joyful autocrat cried out: 'I have reaped a double victory, I have both re-established inner peace through the common confession of the Faith and brought the separation which existed before into the unity of the Church through the common celebration of Pascha.'

"This, then, is unity, as we are assured by the Acts of the First Council, an inner unity and an outer unity, and neither can the first be a true unity without the second, nor can the second exist without the first. The relationship between them is like that of faith to works and works to faith. The one without the other is dead. Thus inner unity without outer unity is dead, and outer unity without inner unity is dead. And the first is defined by the common confession of the Faith, and the second by the visible harmony in accordance with the laws and institutions of the Church, both constituting the one and only true unity, the essential unity of the Church."⁸⁴⁴

In 1968 Abbot Philotheus Zervakos of Paros wrote to the new calendar bishop Augustine of Florina: "Since the old calendar is a written tradition, and since the new one is an innovation of papist and masonic origin, whoever despises the old calendar and follows the new is subject to anathema. Every excuse and justification is unjustified and 'excuses in sins'...

⁸⁴³ Popovich, *Orthodoxos Ekklesia kai Oikoumenismos* (The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism), Thessaloniki, 1974, pp. 80-82.

⁸⁴⁴ *Phoni ex Agiou Orous* (A Voice from the Holy Mountain), op. cit., pp. 57-58. St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain writes, in his commentary on the 31st Apostolic Canon: "Even as the ecclesiastical traditions have need of the Faith, so also is the Faith in need of the ecclesiastical traditions; and these two cannot be separated one from another".

“Last Sunday I had to go to the peak of All Saints and the Prophet Elijah... and as I was kneeling in front of their venerable icon I tearfully besought them to reveal to me which calendar I the wretched one should follow together with my brethren, my spiritual children and all the Orthodox Christians. Before I had finished my humble and pitiful petition, I heard a voice inside me saying: ‘you must follow the old calendar which the God-bearing Fathers who brought together the seven holy Ecumenical Councils and supported the Orthodox Faith handed down to you, and not the new calendar of the popes of the West, who have divided the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and despised the Apostolic and patristic traditions’!!! At that moment I felt such emotion, such joy, such hope, such courage and greatness of soul as I have hardly ever felt in the hour of prayer in the whole of my life...

“Do not suppose that following the papist calendar is a small thing. It [The Orthodox Julian calendar] is a tradition and as such we must guard it or we shall be subject to anathema. ‘If anyone violates any tradition, written or unwritten, let him be anathema’, declares the Seventh Ecumenical Council... This is not the time to continue to be silent... don’t delay, hurry.”⁸⁴⁵

And he added that Chrysostom Papadopoulos had told him during a meeting: “If only I hadn’t gone through with it, if only I hadn’t gone through with it. This perverse Metaxakis has got me by the throat”!⁸⁴⁶

On August 7, 1930 Metaxakis headed a delegation from the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Greece, Cyprus and Poland to the Lambeth conference of Anglican bishops. There they officially, on the basis of a report by the Anglicans recognizing the priesthood to be a sacrament, declared that the Anglicans had Apostolic Succession.⁸⁴⁷

But Metaxakis did not escape retribution. In 1935, on the death of Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem, he tried to acquire that see, too, but failed. It is said that he then went out of his mind, and six days later, grinding his teeth and wringing his hands, he died, groaning: “Alas, I have divided the Church, I have destroyed Orthodoxy.”⁸⁴⁸

He lied to the end; for he destroyed only himself, while the True Church will prevail over the gates of hell...

845 Hieromonk Theodoreitos (Mavros), *Palaion kai Neon: i Orthodoxia kai Airesis?* (Old and New: Orthodoxy and Heresy?), Athens, 1991, pp. 24-25.

846 Hieromonk Theodoreitos, op. cit., p. 25.

847 *The Christian East*, Autumn, 1930. In 1934 two Ugandan Anglicans applied to Metaxakis to receive them into Orthodoxy. He replied that the union of the Churches was not far off, so it would be better for them to stay where they were! (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 45)

848 Monk Paul, op. cit. p. 82.

52. THE NEW CALENDAR SCHISM: (2) ROMANIA

The Romanian Church had already been tempted by the new calendar in 1864, when Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza “convoked a Church Synod at which he recommended that the Romanian Orthodox Church change from the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar. Also present at this Synod was Saint Calinic of Cernica (1787-1868), one of the most dauntless strugglers for the triumph of the truth and for the preservation of the True Faith. He was categorically opposed to the calendar innovation and exclaimed as he was leaving the hall in which the Synod was meeting: ‘I will not be reckoned with transgressors!’ Thus, the Prince did not succeed in implementing this recommendation, which had been imposed on him by Freemasons.”⁸⁴⁹

However, Cuza succeeded in getting some leading hierarchs sent to foreign heterodox institutions for training. Among them was Metropolitan Miron (Cristea), a former uniate, who on December 17, 1923, as head of the Romanian Orthodox Church, wrote to the Patriarch of Constantinople that the Romanian Church accepted the decision of the “Pan-Orthodox Council” on the change of calendar, and that it would be applied in 1924.⁸⁵⁰ And so in Romania, the new calendar was introduced in the same year as in Greece, October 1, 1924 becoming October 14.

In reward for this, on February 4, 1925, the Romanian Church was proclaimed a patriarchate by Constantinople, and on November 1 Metropolitan Miron was enthroned as patriarch of Romania. Then, in 1926 and again in 1929, he changed the date of Pascha to bring it into conformity with the western Paschalion.

The new calendar innovation was pushed through by Alexandru Lapedatu, the Minister of Cults. Nicolae Iorga, the future President of the Council of Ministers writes that it “did not bring about the expected results. People were beaten even in front of altars, and on the following day, after these desperate measures, the congregations were mostly empty, and the few people who were present – mainly clergy – were content to listen to proceedings of the driest imperial tradition.”⁸⁵¹

“These,” as Constantin Bujor writes, “were reports written in advance, in which the Faithful ‘begged’ for the use of the Gregorian Calendar in the Church, just as the peasants of Romania later ‘begged’ to enter *en masse* the collective agricultural cooperatives patterned after Soviet collective farms, according to the Congress of the Romanian Workers’ Party of February 18-20/March 3-5, 1949. Iorga continues: ‘Nevertheless, this decision to adopt the

849 Metropolitan Vlasie, preface to Constantin Bujor, *Resisting unto Blood: Sixty-Five Years of Persecution of the True (Old Calendar) Orthodox Church of Romania (October 1924 – December 1989)*, Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2003, p. 10.

850 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 118.

851 Iorga, *The History of the Romanian Church*; cited in Bujor, op. cit., p. 26.

Western Calendar was taken too lightly and without recognition of the complex, conservative, and mystical psychology of the people, and it provoked a schism that still continues not only in Basarabia but also in the mountainous regions of old Moldavia.' The population living in the extensive mountain regions remained steadfast in the ancestral Orthodox Tradition, from one generation to the next, from great-grandparents to grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren, and so on, by recounting stories about the sacrifices made in the past, in the hope that such sufferings would leave memories and kindle the flame of the traditional Orthodox Faith everywhere. The press of this period mentions an eloquent declaration in this regard from some of the Faithful living in the vicinity of Cluj: 'We, the whole village, will not abandon the Tradition and Faith into which we were born. It is up to the Priests to decide which religion they wish to join; we will have no part in this. But if we find that any of them want to introduce innovations here, such a one will no longer be our Priest.'"⁸⁵²

In fact, only one hierarch rejected the calendar innovation - Metropolitan Visarion (Puiu) of Bucovina, who went into exile and died in Paris in 1964.⁸⁵³

Resistance to the reform was particularly strong in Bessarabia, where, as we have seen, there had already been strong resistance to the union with Romania and the removal of Church Slavonic from the churches.

"The patriotically minded Bessarabian population," writes Glazkov, "who took a very cautious attitude to any attempt by the Bessarabian authorities to liquidate the national particularities of the Moldavian people, met the reform with protests. 'The Union of Orthodox Christians' immediately condemned Metropolitan Gurias, who carried out the decision of the Synod, and began an active campaign against the new calendar style by publishing apologetic literature and conducting popular meetings and processions. Some of the Bessarabian priests who considered the reform of the calendar to be uncanonical supported the protests of the laity and rejected the Gregorian calendar. Around the churches where the Church Slavonic language and the Julian calendar were preserved (for example, the church of the Alexander Nevsky brotherhood), there gathered priests and laity. Thus in April, 1926 thousands of believers gathered at the church of St. Panteleimon in Kishinev for a pannikhida for Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II. Some priests openly celebrated all the feasts according to the old style in front of a large number of believers, which was defined by the authorities as rebellion, for many lay Old Calendarists were subjected to direct humiliations by the new style clergy. There was an attempt to build, in Kishinev, a church in direct submission to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had remained faithful to the old style. According to the police, the majority of the population resisted the ecclesiastical reform, only individual parishes passed over to the Gregorian calendar. It is noteworthy that if, at the beginning, the civil authorities were quite conciliatory

⁸⁵² Bujor, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

⁸⁵³ Bujor, op. cit., p. 11.

towards the Old Calendarists, allowing them to celebrate Pascha and other Church feasts according to the old and new styles, the official Romanian Church authorities took upon themselves police-fiscal functions in exposing and repressing them..."⁸⁵⁴

In Bessarabia, the leadership of the movement against the new style had been taken up by the white clergy and the city intelligentsia. In other parts of Romania, however, the leaders were the monks; out of the 14,000 parish priests, almost none stood up against the calendar reform. The only exception to this, as Metropolitan Blaise writes, was "Archimandrite Galaction (Cordun), who at that time was serving as parish priest in the metropolitan cathedral in Bucharest and who used to preach there when there was no bishop.

"... Fr. Galaction, who later became our first metropolitan, fought against the reform, but was unable to do anything, since he was only an archimandrite. He was very capable, and had studied in Petersburg with the future Patriarchs Alexis of Moscow and Cyril of Bulgaria, graduating with the degree of doctor of theology. Later, in 1935, he was consecrated to the episcopate – they thought he had changed his views. Three bishops who had been consecrated before the change of calendar participated in the consecration, so [apostolic] succession was not broken...

"This is what happened, for example, in Neamț monastery, where St. Paisius Velichkovsky was once the abbot. When the reform took place there were about 200 monks in the monastery, 80 of whom were clergy. This was the biggest monastery in Romania. It was here that the strongest movement against the new style arose. Two months before the reform the abbot warned the brotherhood: be careful, reforms are coming, do not accept them. This was as it were a prophecy. But out of the 80 hieromonks only 30 (not counting the monks) were against the reform; and of these 30 only 6 stood out openly in opposition – the rest did not separate for material reasons. By a decree of the metropolitan of Moldavia all the clergy who did not accept the new style were threatened with deposition, exile from the monastery and confiscation of their property – the man would be outlawed. Then a small group of monks with the most devoted and zealous priests left the monastery, and it is from this group that our Church begins its history. Neamț monastery as a whole accepted the new style, later they also renounced St. Paisius' rule, for the keeping of which the monastery was renowned. Our monastery of Slatioara, which is not far from Neamț, inherited this rule and tradition.

854 K.V. Glazkov, "Istoricheskie prichiny nekotorykh sobytij v istorii Rumynskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi do II mirovoj vojny" (Historical Reasons for Certain Events in the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church up to the Second World War), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), NN 3-4, May-August, 2000, pp. 48-49).

"Here are the names of the (clerical) inhabitants of the monastery who resisted all their lives: Hieromonk Fr. Glycherie (later metropolitan)⁸⁵⁵, Hierodeacon David (the first abbot of the monastery at Slatioara), Hieromonk Pambo, Fr. Baruch, Fr. Gimnasius, Fr. Zosima, Fr. Gamaliel, Fr. Damascene, who died in the woods near the monastery. We also know the names of other monks of Neamț who resisted the new style. There were also nuns: Mother Macaria, who was the helper of the abbess of the biggest women's monastery in the country, Agapia, which became new calendarist (it now has 450 nuns), and who with her nuns founded the first women's monastery in our Church.

"The small groups of clergy and monastics of these men's and women's monasteries – the purest, who had God in their hearts and not their property – rejected the reforms and were driven out of the monasteries, being forced to live in the world. The pious laity who supported them became like bees constructing hives, the churches, while these clerics were like queen-bees. That was how our Church came into being."⁸⁵⁶

"Two months before the calendar change," writes Metropolitan Blaise, "something very momentous happened in the great Church of the Neamț Monastery. It was on the Eve of the Dormition of the Mother of God. The Ecclesiarch went to the Church to prepare all that was needed and to light the candles and *kandelia* for the Midnight Service. The weather was calm, with clear skies and numerous stars; no cloud was in sight. Suddenly, a great bolt of lightning came down from the heavens and, passing through a window in the dome of the Church, struck in front of the Miracle-working Icon of the Mother of God. It hit the stone floor, and a section of stone collapsed; from the impact, the candlestand that was affixed to this slab in front of the Icon was knocked over. [Cf. the words of the Lord in Revelation (2.5): "Repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place"]. When the Fathers and Brothers came to Church, the Priest who was serving told them what had happened; seeing the damage done by the lightning strike, they all concluded that it was a Divine sign.

"Here is another incident. When Father Glycherie reached the Coroi Ravine, a spiritual uneasiness overcame him. One night, after lengthy prayer, he was beset by heavy thoughts. 'How is it possible,' he said, 'that in our country many Priests with advanced theological training, together with a large number of intellectuals, are leaving the Old Calendar, as it was bequeathed to the people by the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church, who have honoured it from times of old? Should I not abandon the Old Calendar and be one of these? Am I making a mistake before God by not changing?' Late in the night, he had a beautiful vision: from the West, a dark cloud appeared; it tried to cover the whole world and was moving furiously towards the East, howling like a

855 Fr. Glycherie (Tanas) was superior of the Protection skete. When the abbot of Neamts monastery offered to put him in charge of another skete if he changed calendar, Fr. Glycherie refused, and with Deacon David (Bidascu) left the skete. (V.M.)

856 Metropolitan Blaise, in *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 2 (1479), 15/28 January, 1993, pp. 6-7.

monster. In front of the cloud, a powerful storm formed, adorned with a chain as black as tar, on which black Crosses appeared. Everyone was frightened. But looking towards the East, he saw a snow-white cloud, glittering like gold; before it was a chain of gold, from which there were hanging Crosses of gold.

“A choir of Hierarchs also appeared – all with golden vestments, - walking towards the black cloud. In a designated place, the two clouds collided and the dark cloud fell; and in its place, a sea of water appeared, engulfing the earth...”⁸⁵⁷

In 1926, two shepherds, Ioan and Mihail Urzică found Hieromonk Pamvu and Monks Galaction and Veniamin hiding in the Coroi Ravine. They then led them to Fr. Glycherie and Fr. David. The Old Calendarist monks were received with rejoicing by the faithful of Vânători, and it was decided to build a church. When it was built, Fr. Glycherie appointed Hieromonk Pamvu and his Monks Galaction and Veniamin to look after it.⁸⁵⁸ In this way a beginning was made to the Old Calendarist movement in Romania. In spite of continual persecution by the police and the new calendarists, it flourished. By 1936 Fr. Glycherie had built about forty large churches, most of them in Moldavia.

Metropolitan Cyprian writes: “The Romanian Patriarchate, both in 1926 and 1929, celebrated Pascha with the Latins, constituting an infringement of the Orthodox tradition of centuries. Indeed, on the second occasion that this was done, Patriarch Miron, having the undivided support of the Uniate (Greek-Catholic) prime minister, Julius Maniu, and several others among the clergy, compelled all of the Romanian Metropolises to proceed with the common celebration of Pascha with the Papists, a fact which evoked great commotion in the ranks of the Romanian Church. Metropolitan Gurias of Bessarabia openly criticized Miron and, ignoring the Patriarchal decree, ordered his churches to celebrate with the other autocephalous Orthodox Churches (i.e. with the entire Orthodox world, with the exception of the innovative Church of Finland). Patriarch Miron’s action also scandalized these other Orthodox Churches, many of which reacted in protest. As well, the White Russian clergy of Bucharest took a particularly strong position during those trying days, ignoring the Patriarchal order and celebrating Pascha in accordance with the traditional canonical decrees.”⁸⁵⁹

The Romanian monks on Mount Athos fully supported their co-religionists in the homeland. Two hieromonks returned from the Holy Mountain to support their co-religionists in the homeland. However, the new calendarists prepared counter-measures. Thus in 1930, “there arrived in the Moldavian skete [of the Forerunner] from Romania one of the skete’s hieromonks, Simeon, a fifty-year-old who had been sent by Patriarch Miron to propagandize the new

857 Metropolitan Blaise, *The Life of the Holy Hierarch and Confessor Glicherie of Romania*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1999, pp. 24-25.

858 Buzor, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

859 Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos, “The True Orthodox Christians of Romania”, *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1982, vol. 18, N 1 (102), pp. 6-7.

style on Athos. He brought with him a lot of money... from Romania. He also brought with him from Romania a lawyer, who was armed with an agreement obtained in Athens to conduct negotiations over the return of the metochion on the island of Thasos. The skete-dwellers received him with honour. They promised to gather the brotherhood and speak to them in the church about accepting the new style. But they prepared a trap for him. They summoned him to the hall, cut off his beard and pigtail, took the money sent for propaganda, put a jacket and hat on him and drove him out... He appealed to the police in Karyes for help, but they replied that this did not come within the compass of their responsibilities. This was the end of the propaganda for the new style on Athos. This was already the Romanians' second piece of trickery. The first time they had received a letter from the patriarch suggesting that they change to the new style. The skete-dwellers, on receiving this letter, served a triumphant all-night vigil, and, on the next day, a liturgy with a *moleben*, after which they pronounced an anathema on the patriarch, composing an official document which they sent on to him."⁸⁶⁰

In the 1920s and 1930s many Romanians fled from the new calendarists in Romania and Bessarabia. They constituted the majority of the new postulants in the Russian monasteries of the Holy Land.⁸⁶¹ Among these was the famous priest-hermit Fr. John the Romanian (+1960), who never concelebrated with the new calendarists and whose relics are still incorrupt...

⁸⁶⁰ Letter to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), in Glazkov, op. cit., p. 54.

⁸⁶¹ "The Convent of the Ascension on the Holy Mount of Olives, 1906-2006", *Orthodox Life*, September-October, 2006, p. 21.

53. THE NEW CALENDAR SCHISM: (3) RUSSIA

Although the new calendar was a more long-term problem for the Greek-speaking and Romanian Churches, attempts were also made to introduce it into the Slavic-speaking Churches. As Pavel Kuzenkov notes, “Bulgaria participated in this war on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and the allies issued an ultimatum demanding the immediate acceptance of the European calendar for the coordination of military operations, troop transportation, and so on. Thus the Bulgarians were the first to adopt the new calendar as early as April 1916...

“In Russia, the Provisional Government put this question on the agenda in 1917 and would surely have resolved it in favor of the reform, but it so happened that Lenin was to resolve it in January 1918, and he decided upon the reform without hesitation. It was formulated in a very interesting way: the ‘Decree of the Soviet of the People’s Commissars on the Imposition of the Western European Calendar in the Russian Republic’ read that it was necessary ‘to establish in Russia the same time calculation as in the majority of the civilized countries.’ The phrase ‘the majority of the civilized countries’ perfectly characterizes Bolshevism: Bolshevism was by no means an anti-Western movement, as some mistakenly believe; rather, it was a radical, extreme form of Westernism.

“Besides, the adoption of the new calendar was one of the plans of the Bolsheviks because the October Revolution had been orchestrated as part of a ‘world revolution’. The Russian Orthodox Church became the only keeper of tradition. It was a split on the level of civilizations and worldviews, and not only of the calendar. Thus the Julian calendar became a symbol of old Russia and the resistance to Bolshevism. That is why the Voluntary Army and the anti-Bolshevist governments clung to the old calendar so persistently, while allies from the Entente suggested that they carry out the calendar reform.

“When the Bolsheviks seized power and it became clear that the changes were serious and long lasting, for the Russians – people of traditional values – the old calendar became the surviving symbol of old culture together with the restored patriarchate. It is a symbol that must be cherished.

“The twentieth century saw the dismantling of world history. This collapse was caused by Europe’s radical invasion of other civilizations towards and after the end of the First World War. Thus, the Ottoman Empire had adopted the new calendar a little earlier than Soviet Russia – in March 1917, shortly before its own disintegration. It is important that the Patriarchate of Constantinople existed in this very state. In 1919, Yugoslavia and Romania switched to the Gregorian calendar, while the Serbian and Romanian Orthodox Churches continued to adhere to the Julian calendar.”⁸⁶²

⁸⁶² Kuzenkov and Pushchaev, “The Rudiments of an Ultra-Ecumenical Project, or Why Constantinople Needed to Introduce the New Calendar”, *Pravoslavie.ru*, February 20, 2019.

Thinking “to change times and laws” (Daniel 7.25), a Decree of the Council of People’s Commissars dated January 24, 1918 ordered that the day after January 31, 1918 would be February 14 – not February 1. How did the Russian Church react to this order? By a remarkable coincidence, at the same time that the Soviet State introduced the new calendar, Patriarch Tikhon anathematized the State, calling on the faithful Orthodox to have no communion with “these outcasts of humanity” in any way whatsoever. A few days later the Patriarch’s anathema was confirmed by the Church Council then in session in Moscow. In view of this rejection of the legitimacy of the State, it is not surprising that the Church also rejected the State’s change of calendar.

Protopriest Alexander Lebedev writes: “The Sobor [Council] addressed the issue three days after the Decree was signed, at its 71st Session on January 27, 1918. The need for a prompt decision by the Church on how to relate to the civil calendar change was clear – the change was to take place four days later.

“It was decided to send the issue to a Joint Session of two separate Sections of the Sobor – the Section on Divine Services and the Section on the Relationship of the Church to the State.

“This Joint Session of the two Sections met two days later, on January 29, 1918 and heard two major reports, one by Professor S.S. Glagolev, entitled ‘A Comparative Evaluation of the Julian and Gregorian Styles’, and one by Prof. I.I. Sokolov, entitled, ‘The Attitude of the Orthodox East to the Question of the Reform of the Calendar’.

“Neither of these presentations in any way supported the introduction into Church life of the Gregorian Calendar – quite the contrary. Prof. Glagolev concluded, ‘The Gregorian Calendar, in addition to being historically harmful, is astronomically useless’... Professor Sokolov concluded: ‘Therefore, the controlling voice of the Orthodox East, both Greek and Slavic, is expressed as being not only against the Gregorian calendar, as a creature of the inimical to it [the Orthodox East] Catholic West, but also against a neutral or corrected calendar, because such a reform would deleteriously affect the ecclesiastical life of the Orthodox peoples.’

“Finally, the Joint Session of the two Sections prepared a Resolution on the issue of calendar reform.

“It decreed that the Church must stay with the Julian calendar, basing its decision on the following:

“1) There is no reason for the Church not to have a separate ecclesiastical calendar different from the civil calendar.

“2) The Church not only is able to preserve the Old Calendar, - at the present time it would be impossible for it to move to the new calendar.

"3) The introduction of the new calendar by the Russian Church would cause it to break unity with all of the other Orthodox Churches. Any change in the calendar can only be done by mutual agreement of all the Orthodox Churches.

"4) It is impossible to correlate the Orthodox Paschalion with the Gregorian Calendar without causing grave disruption to the Typicon.

"5) It is recognized that the Julian Calendar is astronomically inaccurate. This was noted already at the Council of Constantinople in 1583. However, it is incorrect to believe that the Gregorian Calendar is better suited for ecclesiastical use.

"In conclusion, the Joint Session resolved to maintain the Julian Calendar.

"The Council, in full session, approved this Resolution of the Joint Session."⁸⁶³

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But the pressure from the Bolsheviks continued, and on January 21, 1919 Patriarch Tikhon wrote to the patriarch of Constantinople suggesting various options with regard to the calendar.⁸⁶⁴

When the renovationists adopted the new calendar, the pressure was increased. Thus on June 11, 1923, Yaroslavsky wrote to the Politburo and Stalin: "Tikhon must be informed that the penalty meted out to him may be commuted if... *he expresses his agreement with some reforms in the ecclesiastical sphere (for example, the new style [i.e. the introduction of the new calendar]).*" On September 18 the Antireligious Commission decreed: "To recognize as appropriate that Tikhon and co. should in the first instance bring forward the new style into the church, disband the parish councils and introduce the second marriages of the clergy..."⁸⁶⁵

On September 24, 1923 Patriarch Tikhon convened a Council of bishops which took the decision to introduce the new calendar on October 2/15. The Patriarch explained his decision as follows: "This demand was repeated many times, and was reinforced by the promise of a more benevolent attitude on the part of the Government towards the Orthodox Church and Her institutions in the case of our agreement and the threat of a deterioration in these relations in the case of our refusal".⁸⁶⁶ He also pointed to considerations of unity with the other Orthodox Churches; for he had been falsely informed by Tuchkov that all

⁸⁶³ Lebedev, "St. Patriarch Tikhon and the Calendar Question Part 1", orthodox@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU, 10 July, 2002.

⁸⁶⁴ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 332-338.

⁸⁶⁵ Pokrovsky and Petrov, op. cit., p. 531; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 113.

⁸⁶⁶ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 299-300, 335.

the other Churches had adopted the new style, whereas in fact all the Churches except Constantinople, Greece and Romania had objected to the change.⁸⁶⁷

The decree on the introduction of the new style was read out in the Moscow Pokrov monastery on October 1/14. But it was sent out only to the deans of Moscow, while the diocesan bishops did not receive it, since Archbishop Hilarion had obtained permission from Tuchkov not to send it to the provinces as long as the patriarchal epistle explaining the change had not been printed. So the new style was only introduced in Moscow and in Valaam, where it was rejected by many of the monks.

However, on November 8, when the Patriarch learned from Archbishop Anastasy in Constantinople that the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Serbia, as well as ROCOR, were against the change, and when he saw that the Russian people were also strongly opposed to his decree, he reversed his decision “temporarily”, making use of the fact that his epistle on the calendar change had not been published.⁸⁶⁸ In spite of this, agents of the government posted up notices of the now annulled decree. But the people saw in this the clear interference of the State.⁸⁶⁹ The Patriarch corrected his mistake, and the Russian Church set itself firmly against the new calendar...

In 1922 the Bolsheviks succeeded in creating a schism within the Russian Church – the so-called “Living Church” or renovationist schism. Since the renovationists had been persuaded to introduce the new calendar, the Bolsheviks decided that it was a good moment to try and introduce it also into the True Church led by Patriarch Tikhon, especially since they now had Tikhon in prison pending trial.

The pressure on the Patriarch was indeed enormous. Every day he was visited by the GPU agent Tuchkov (Tikhon called him “an angel of Satan”), who made blackmail threats to force him to make concessions to the State. Being cut off from other true Christians, and able to glean information only from the Soviet newspapers, he came to the conclusion that the renovationist schism was increasing in strength. And then he heard that the “Pan-Orthodox Council” meeting in Constantinople under the presidency of the Freemason Patriarch Meletius Metaxakis had approved the introduction of the new calendar. He did not know until later that not only the Russian representatives, Archbishops Alexander and Anastasy, had rejected the Council, but also the other Eastern Patriarchs and Serbia.

The Council ended on June 10, 1923. On the next day, June 11, the Jew Yaroslavsky, president of the Antireligious Commission, wrote to the Politburo and Stalin: “It is necessary immediately to pass the following resolution on the

⁸⁶⁷ Also, in a letter to Abbot Paulinus of Valaam dated October 6 he justified the introduction of the new style on the grounds that it introduced no innovation in faith, and the Orthodox Paschalion remained in force (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 114).

⁸⁶⁸ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 300, 335; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 118.

⁸⁶⁹ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 332-338; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 115-117, 130-131.

case of Tikhon:... Tikhon must be informed that the penalty meted out to him may be commuted if: (a) he makes a special declaration that he repents of the crimes he has committed against Soviet power and the working and peasant masses and that he now has a loyal attitude to Soviet power; (b) he admits the justice of his being made to answer in court for these crimes; (c) he walls himself openly and firmly from all counter-revolutionary organizations, especially White Guard and Monarchist organizations, both civil and religious; (d) he expresses his sharply negative attitude to the new Karlovtsy Synod and its participants; (e) he expresses his negative attitude to the attacks by Catholic clergy (in the person of the Pope, also the Bishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Constantinople Meletius); (f) *he expresses his agreement with some reforms in the ecclesiastical sphere (for example, the new style).*"

The new calendar and other ecclesiastical reforms were important to the Bolsheviks because, as Yaroslavsky explained, "his agreement with even one of these reforms (he has agreed to recognize the new, Gregorian calendar) will make him a 'heretic' – an innovator in the eyes of the True Orthodox."⁸⁷⁰

Tikhon explained his decision to adopt the new calendar as follows: "This demand was repeated many times, and was reinforced by the promise of a more benevolent attitude on the part of the Government towards the Orthodox Church and Her institutions in the case of our agreement and the threat of a deterioration in these relations in the case of our refusal".⁸⁷¹

This is confirmed by the *life* of the future hieromartyr, Fr. Sergei Mechev. On hearing that Patriarch Tikhon had accepted the new calendar. Fr. Sergei was upset and came to him:

"Your Holiness Vladyka!" he said. "Don't consider me a rebel, but my church conscience does not allow me to accept the new style!"

"What kind of a rebel are you, Seriozha!", replied his Holiness in a fatherly way. "I know you. But they are demanding that I introduce the new style."

On the whole the people of the Church did not accept the new style; but some considered that if the new style were adopted, believers would have greater opportunities to go to festal services, since at that time the Nativity and Baptism of Christ according to the new style were still holidays.

"I assure you," said Fr. Sergei, "soon they will not keep the feast by any calendar."

And soon the five-day-week became the six-day-week, then the seven-day-week or six days with a variable day of rest.

⁸⁷⁰ N.N. Pokrovsky, S.G. Petrov, *Arkhivny Kremlia: Politburo i Tserkov' 1922-1925gg.*, Moscow: Rosspen, 1997, vol. 1, pp. 282-284.

⁸⁷¹ M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 299-300, 335.

In July, 1923, the Patriarch was released from prison. On October 2/15, 1923 a "Little Council" of bishops decreed the introduction of the new style. However, when the Patriarch learned that the patriarchates of Alexandria and Jerusalem, as well as the Russian Church in Exile (ROCOR), were against the change, and when he saw that the Russian people were also strongly opposed to his decree, as they had been to the renovationists' similar decree some months earlier, he reversed his decision.⁸⁷² In spite of this, agents of the government posted up notices of the now annulled decree on the introduction of the new calendar. But the people saw in this the clear interference of the State in the matter, and so no attention was paid to the decree.⁸⁷³

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Only in one part of the Russian Church was the new calendar introduced – in Finland. In order to understand how this took place, we need to go back in time. In February, 1921, since Finland was now no longer part of the Russian State, Patriarch Tikhon granted the Finnish Church administrative autonomy within the Russian Church. However, on June 9, 1922, Patriarch Meletius of Constantinople uncanonically received this autonomous Finnish Church into his jurisdiction. The excuse given here was that Patriarch Tikhon was no longer free, and therefore, as Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) put it, Meletius "could do as he pleased". But in July, 1923 Patriarch Tikhon was released from prison. And so, on November 14/27, Patriarch Tikhon and the Russian Holy Synod, after listening to a report by Archbishop Seraphim of Finland, decreed that "since his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon has entered upon the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church, the reason for which the Patriarch of Constantinople considered it necessary temporarily to submit the Finnish Church to his jurisdiction has now fallen away, and the Finnish eparchy must return under the rule of the All-Russian Patriarch."⁸⁷⁴

However, Meletius was determined to keep the territory he had seized from the Russian Church (both in Finland and in Poland and the Baltic States). And already on September 3 he had moved to force the great Russian monastery of Valaam, which was now within the bounds of the Finnish State, to accept the new calendar. At a general assembly of the 600 brothers, as Nun Angelina (Zhavoronkova) writes, "Abbot Paulinus read out an epistle from Bishop Seraphim in which he said that both Patriarchs Meletius of Constantinople and Tikhon of Moscow blessed Valaam to change to the new style from October 4. Two days later Vladyka Seraphim arrived. He was met by the objections of the brotherhood and the request that they remain with the old style. This was refused to them, and less than two weeks later five of the protesting brothers were forcibly expelled from Valaam and deprived of the mantia.

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 300, 335

⁸⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 335-38.

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

“... On June 25, 1924 the new Bishop of Karelia visited Valaam. In November the Valaam monks presented him with a petition asking him to allow them to keep the celebration at any rate of Pascha according to the old style, but this, too, was refused them, and those who refused to obey the decrees of the Finnish Church were threatened with exile from Valaam.

“Fr. Michael [Popov] was the spiritual father of the brotherhood at this exceptionally difficult time for Valaam. He encouraged everyone to remain faithful to the traditions of the Holy Orthodox Church. He often served in distant sketes and deserts and encouraged other Fathers to follow him. His nearest disciple and follower, Elder Michael the Younger, at that time Fr. Timon, was one of the most zealous defenders of the Orthodox calendar right until 1939, when the Valaam brotherhood was forced to leave their beloved monastery.

“Secret resistance increased especially in 1925. Fr. Michael sent his spiritual children by night with prosphoras to Gethsemane skete for Fr. Timon and they unflinching fulfilled their obedience, covering six kilometres every night. From the first days of the resistance the Gethsemane skete had become the place where people gathered for services according to the Old Church Calendar.

“On the question of the calendar, the Valaam monks entered into correspondence with the Athonite zealots of Holy Orthodoxy, the elders of Karoulia, especially the learned monk Theodosius, who even wrote a whole composition about the importance of the calendar question. On Valaam Hieromonk Justinian, the main correspondent in this correspondence, was a disciple of Elder Michael. While Elder Theodosius was the last spiritual disciple by correspondence with Elder Theophanes the Recluse.

“In the evening on the eve of the monastery’s feast day of SS. Sergei and Herman of Valaam, September 10, 1925, Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira, the representative of the Patriarch of Constantinople, arrived [from London]. Having gathered together the brethren, he declared that the new calendar was being introduced from now. On September 16 the brotherhood sent to Sortavala their own representatives in the persons of Fr. Michael, Fr. Joasaph the deputy, Fr. Jerome and the other older priests of the monastery to talk with Metropolitan Germanus. With tears they besought him to keep the old style in the monastery. In reply the metropolitan irritably shouted at them. On September 20 Metropolitan Germanus accompanied by Bishop Germanus arrived on the island to celebrate the all-night vigil. Half of the brotherhood did not come to the service. He called the brotherhood to peace and love.

“Immediately after this, repressions began. The antimins were taken from all the skete churches. Fr. Timon was transferred from the Gethsemane skete to the main monastery. A little later Hieromonk Polycarp was exiled to Russia to

almost certain death in the concentration camps for his published articles against the leadership of the monastery."⁸⁷⁵

"On September 25, 1925," writes Schema-Monk Nicholas of Valaam, "there was a division of people in Valaam as to the 'old' and 'new' style. Many of the brothers remained true to the old style. Legal proceedings began. The church administration arrived; there was a court with Abbot Paulinus in charge. They began to summon the brothers one by one, and many were expelled from the monastery. Then my turn also came. I went into the room, and there sat Abbot Paulinus with others from the church administration. Father Abbot said, 'Here is a slave of God; ask him.' One of them said that he would speak and that everything should be recorded. They asked, 'Do you accept Fr. Paulinus as Abbot?' 'Will you go to church services according to the new calendar?' I could not answer this question; it was as if my tongue had become paralyzed. They hesitated and said, 'Well, why aren't you answering?' I couldn't say anything. Then they said: 'Well, go on, slave of God, and think this over.'

"I began to pray to the Mother of God, my 'Surety', in my heart. 'Tell me and indicate my life's path: Which side should I go to, the new or old style? Should I go to the cathedral or somewhere else?' And I, the sinful one, prayed to the Mother of God during my obedience in the kitchen. When I finished my evening obedience, I went to my cell and thought in the simplicity of my heart, 'Why don't you answer me, Mother of God?' But the grace of God did not abandon me, a sinner. He wants salvation for all. Suddenly the cathedral appeared before me, the same as it is: the same height, length and width. I was amazed at this miraculous apparition – how could it enter my small cell? But my inner voice said to me: 'Everything is possible with God. There is nothing impossible for Him.' 'Well,' I thought, 'one must go to church in the cathedral according to the new style.' Then, as I was thinking thus, a blue curtain came down from above, in the middle of which was a golden cross. The cathedral became invisible to me, and the inner voice said to me: 'Go to the old style and hold to it.' And I heard a woman's voice coming from above the corner: 'If you want to be saved, hold fast to the traditions of the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers.' And then the same thing was repeated a second time, and the third time the voice said: 'If you want to be saved, keep fast to the tradition of the Holy Apostles and Holy Fathers, but not these "wise" men.' After this miracle, everything disappeared and I remained alone in my cell. My heart began to rejoice that the Lord had indicated the path of salvation to me, according to the prayers of the Mother of God."⁸⁷⁶

"On September 12, 1926," continues Nun Angelina, "the former cathedral elders of Valaam, who had remained faithful to patristic Orthodoxy, were summoned to a new trial in Serdobol. The trial was pro forma, and 35 monks

⁸⁷⁵ Nun Angelina, "Starets Mikhail Starshij, ispovednik strazhduschego pravoslavia", *Russkij Palomnik*, N 17, 1998, p. 64.

⁸⁷⁶ *The Orthodox Word*, nos. 160-161, September-December, 1991, pp. 268-270.

were condemned to exile, while the abbot was to deal with the rest, dispersing them among all the sketes.

“On October 9 the sentence was carried out. One of those exiled from Valaam, Hieromonk Nicander, the former spiritual father of the famed Lesna monastery, remembers:

“‘We shall never forget that... sad day... Our own Abbot Paulinus and our own monastic brothers handed us over to the police... For the sake of temporary comfort, out of fear of men, they drowned out the voice of their conscience and transgressed the holy canons of the Church... The day of our exile that autumn was exceptionally quiet, Lake Ladoga was calm and the first powdery snow covered Valaam... By eight o’clock in the morning we had all gathered on the ferry... the Old Calendarist monks who remained, together with some unwilling new calendarists, came to say goodbye to us; not a few tears were shed on both sides. (Even the gendarme wept, remembered Fr. Philemon.)... How bitter it was for us to leave our native nest, but our souls were at peace, for we felt that we were suffering for the sake of righteousness and that God was with us.’

“On November 15 an Investigative Commission arrived at the monastery, and in the course of four days interrogated each of the brothers on their own, asking whether they recognized Bishop Germanus and whether they would serve with him. Fr. Michael was defrocked by a church court, removed from his obedience as Spiritual Father and exiled on December 15 to the distant St. Herman skete. (According to the words of Fr. Athanasius, who left memoirs of his elder, Fr. Michael was first exiled to Tikhvin island.) Thence he was transferred to the Skete of St. John the Forerunner in 1926, where he spent the following eight years [until his death on May 8, 1934], suffering from a weakness of the heart in the severe conditions of the strictest skete on Valaam. In that year 44 of the brothers were exiled and 48 left Valaam...”⁸⁷⁷

In 1939, when the Soviets captured Old Valaam, and many of the monks fled to New Valamo in Finland, the spiritual life of the great monastery came to an end. However, in the early 1980s a True Orthodox Christian visiting New Valamo came back with the news that there were still two Old Calendar monks there – an Igumen Symphorian, who died shortly after, and another monk over 100 years old. They had their own quarters and refused any contact with the new calendarists or visiting Soviet hierarchs.

Something should be said about this Bishop Germanus who introduced the new calendar into Valaam. He had been consecrated as a vicar bishop for Finland by the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory IV, although he, the priest Aava, “was not only not tonsured”, as Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) writes, “but not even a rasophore. Moreover, this was done not only without the agreement of the Archbishop of Finland, but in spite of his protest. By these

⁸⁷⁷ Nun Angelina, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-66.

actions the late Patriarch of Constantinople violated a fundamental canon of the Church – the sixth canon of the First Ecumenical Council [and many others], which states, 'If anyone is consecrated bishop without the consent of his metropolitan, the Great Council declares him not to be a bishop.' According to the twenty-eighth canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, the patriarch cannot even place a bishop in his diocese without the approval of the local metropolitan. Based on precisely this same canon, the predecessors of Gregory vainly attempted to realize his pretensions and legalize their claims to control. This uncanonical 'bishop' Aava, once consecrated as bishop, placed a monastic klobuk on his own head, and thus costumed, he appeared in the foreign diocese of Finland. There he instigated the Lutheran government to persecute the canonical Archbishop of Finland, Seraphim, who was respected by the people. The Finnish government previously had requested the Ecumenical Patriarch to confirm the most illegal of laws, namely that the secular government of Finland would have the right to retire the Archbishop. The government in fact followed through with the retirement, falsely claiming that Archbishop Seraphim had not learned enough Finnish in the allotted time. Heaven and earth were horrified at this illegal, tyrannical act of a non-Orthodox government. Even more horrifying was that an Orthodox patriarch had consented to such chicanery. To the scandal of the Orthodox and the evil delight of the heterodox, the highly dubious Bishop Germanus (the former Fr. Aava) strolled the streets of Finland in secular clothes, clean-shaven and hair cut short, while the most worthy of bishops, Seraphim, crudely betrayed by his false brother, languished in exile for the remainder of his life in a tiny hut of a monastery on a stormy isle on Lake Ladoga."⁸⁷⁸

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After Patriarch Tikhon had recovered from his mistake, he and the Russian Church as a whole set themselves firmly against the new calendar. In 1924 Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, the second hierarch in rank after the Patriarch and President of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR), set off on a seven-month trip to the East to muster support against the renovationist reforms among his friends from before the revolution – Patriarchs Photius of Alexandria, Gregory of Antioch and Damian of Jerusalem. He also visited Mount Athos in spite of the opposition of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The three Eastern patriarchs, together with Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia, spoke out strongly against the new calendar and the other reforms introduced by Constantinople, and Metropolitan Anthony entertained hopes that even the patriarch of Constantinople would reverse course. Thus in a letter to Gregory's successor, Constantine VI, dated February 4/17, 1925, he both defended Patriarch Tikhon and compared Meletius and Gregory to the heretical patriarchs of Constantinople condemned by the Seven Ecumenical Councils:

⁸⁷⁸ See Monk Gorazd, "Quo Vadis, Konstantinopol'skaia Patriarkhia?", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, no. 2 (1455), January 15/28, 1992, p. 9.

“It is on this same path of disobedience to the Holy Church and the canons that the two last predecessors of your Holiness descended.”⁸⁷⁹

Unfortunately, however, Metropolitan Anthony did not take the decisive and canonically correct course adopted by the Greek and Romanian Old Calendarists of breaking communion with the renovationists. In 1925 he even took part, with the patriarch of Constantinople, in the enthronement of the new calendarist Freemason Miron as patriarch of Romania. So it is not surprising that his actions were ultimately unsuccessful: the patriarch of Constantinople never abandoned the new calendar, and the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch both in time accepted it.

What was the attitude of ROCOR to the Greek Old Calendarists? As we have seen, the Russian Church in all its jurisdictions retained the Old Calendar, and in outlying parts of the former Russian empire which came under the power of new calendarists, such as Valaam and Bessarabia, Russians offered strong resistance to the innovation. ROCOR condemned it, and in 1930 Metropolitan Anastasy concelebrated with the leading Romanian Old Calendarist, Hieromonk Glycerius.

However, the first-hierarchy of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), adopted a more ambiguous position. In 1926, writing to the Russian Athonite Hieroschemamonk Theodosius of Karoulia⁸⁸⁰, he refused to break communion with the new calendarists of the Constantinopolitan and Greek Churches: “You know the 13th, 14th and 15th canons of the First-and-Second Council, which speaks about separating oneself from a Bishop or Patriarch after his conciliar condemnation. And then there is the canon (the 15th), which says that that clergyman is worthy, not of condemnation, but of praise, who breaks with links with him [the heretic] for the sake of a heresy condemned by the holy councils or fathers..., and besides ‘when he (that is, the first-hierarchy) preaches heresy publicly and teaches it openly in the Church’. But this, glory to God, neither P[at]riarch Basil [III of Constantinople] nor [Archbishop] Chrysostom [of Athens] have done yet. On the contrary, they insist on keeping the former Paschalion, for only it, and not the Julian calendar itself was covered by the curse of the councils. True, P[at]riarch Jeremiah in the 15th [correct: 16th] century and his successor in the 18th anathematized the calendar itself, but this curse: 1) touches only his contemporaries and 2) does not extend to those who are frightened to break communion with him, to which are subjected only those who transgress the canonical Paschalion. Moreover (this needs to be noted in any case), the main idea behind the day of Pascha is that it should be celebrated by all the Christians (that is, the Orthodox) on one and the same day throughout the inhabited world. True, I myself and my brothers do not at all sympathise with the new calendar and modernism, but we beseech the Athonite fathers not to be hasty in composing letters (Romans

⁸⁷⁹ Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Mitropolita Antonia*, 1960, vol. VI, p. 164.

⁸⁸⁰ See “Starets Feodosij Karul’skij Svyatogorets”, *Russkij Palomnik*, 23, 2001, pp. 15-43.

14). – Do not grieve about our readiness to go to the C[onstantinople] Council. Of course, there will be no council, but if there is, and if we go, as St. Flavian went to the robber cou[ncil], then, of course, we will keep the faith and deliver the apostates to anathema. But as long as the last word has not been spoken, as long as the whole Church has not repeated the curses of Patriarch Jeremiah at an ecumenical council, we must retain communion, so that we ourselves should not be deprived of salvation, and, in aiming at a gnat, swallow a camel...”⁸⁸¹

In another letter he admitted that *akriveia* was on Fr. Theodosius’ side, but argued in favour of *oikonomia*: “It is in vain that you torment your conscience with doubts about continuing to be in communion with the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate. Present this matter to the judgement of the hierarchs, and until it has taken place remain in communion...”⁸⁸²

However, the wording of the 16th century Councils that anathematised the new calendar does not support the metropolitan’s interpretation that it applied only to the new paschalion: “Whoever does not follow the customs of the Church,... but wishes to follow the Gregorian Paschalion and Menaion [calendar],... let him be anathema.”

In the same year of 1926, a different opinion to that of Metropolitan Anthony, and one closer to the conciliar consciousness of the Orthodox Church, was expressed by the second member of the ROCOR Synod, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Pereyaslav:

“Question. Have the pastors of the Orthodox Church not made special judgements concerning the calendar?”

“Answer. They have, many times – with regard to the introduction of the new Roman calendar – both in private assemblies and in councils.

“A proof of this is the following. First of all, the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II, who lived at the same time as the Roman calendar reform, immediately, in 1582, together with his Synod condemned the new Roman system of chronology as being not in agreement with the Tradition of the Church. In the next year (1583), with the participation of Patriarchs Sylvester of Alexandria and Sophronius VI of Jerusalem, he convened a Church Council. This Council recognized the Gregorian calendar to be not in agreement with the canons of the Universal Church and with the decree of the First Ecumenical Council on the method of calculating the day of Holy Pascha...”

⁸⁸¹ *Pis'ma Blazhennejshago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskago)*, Jordanville, 1988, p. 195.

⁸⁸² *Pis'ma Blazhennejshago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskago)*, op. cit., p. 197. But Fr. Theodosius, rightly, remained in communion with the Athonite zealots and not with the new calendarist innovators...

“In the course of the following three centuries: the 17th, 18th and 19th, a whole series of Ecumenical Patriarchs decisively expressed themselves against the Gregorian calendar and, evaluating it in the spirit of the conciliar decree of Patriarch Jeremiah II, counseled the Orthodox to avoid it...

“Question. Is the introduction of the new calendar important or of little importance?

“Answer. Very important, especially in connection with the Paschalion, and it is an extreme disorder and ecclesiastical schism, which draws people away from communion and unity with the whole Church of Christ, deprives them of the grace of the Holy Spirit, shakes the dogma of the unity of the Church, and, like Arius, tears the seamless robe of Christ, that is, everywhere divides the Orthodox, depriving them of oneness of mind; breaks the bond with Ecclesiastical Holy Tradition and makes them fall under conciliar condemnation for despising Tradition...

“Question. How must the Orthodox relate to the new calendarist schismatics, according to the canons?

“Answer. They must have no communion in prayer with them, even before their conciliar condemnation...

“Question. What punishment is fitting, according to the Church canons, for those who pray with the new calendarist schismatics?

“Answer. The same condemnation with them...”⁸⁸³

⁸⁸³ Archbishop Theophan, *Kratkie kanonicheskie suzhdenia o letoschislenii*, in V.K., *Russkaia Zarubezhnaia Tserkov' na Steziakh Otstupnichestva*, St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 29-30.

54. THE FALL OF RENOVATIONISM

Patriarch Tikhon was released on June 27, 1923, and his appearance in public – he had aged terribly in prison – was enough to send the Living Church into a sharp and irreversible decline.⁸⁸⁴ They remained dangerous as long as they retained the favour of the authorities; but by 1926 the authorities were already turning to others (the Gregorians, then Metropolitan Sergei) as better suited for the task of destroying the Church. And by the end of the Second World War the last remaining renovationists had been absorbed into the neo-renovationist Soviet Moscow Patriarchate.

The decline of the renovationists after the Patriarch's coming out of prison has led some to suppose that the price of that release, his "repentance" for his anti-Sovietism, was a price worth paying. However, the Patriarch bitterly repented of his "repentance"; he said that if he had known how weak the Living Church really was, he would not have signed the "confession" and would have stayed in prison.⁸⁸⁵ And when he was asked why he had said that he was no longer an enemy of the Soviet government, he replied: "But I did not say that I was its friend..."⁸⁸⁶

On the next day the Patriarch wrote: "I am, of course, not such a venerator of Soviet power as the Church renovationists, headed by the Higher Church Council, declare themselves to be, but on the other hand I am not such an enemy of it as people present me to be. If in the first year of the existence of Soviet power I sometimes permitted sharp attacks against it, I did this in consequence of my education and the orientation that prevailed in the Council at that time. But with time much began to change and become clear, and now, for example, it is necessary to ask Soviet power to intercede in the defence of the offended Russian Orthodox in Poland and in Grodno region, where the Poles have closed Orthodox churches. However, already at the beginning of 1919 I tried to wall the Church off from Tsarism and intervention, and in September of the same year I appealed to the archpastors and pastors not to intervene in politics..."⁸⁸⁷

884 Pospelovsky writes: "If by the end of 1922 the patriarchal Church in Moscow had only 4 churches against the 400 or so of the renovationists, in Petrograd after the exile of Bishop Nicholas almost all the churches had been seized by the renovationists, and throughout the country about 66% of the functioning churches were in the hands of the renovationists, then by November, 1924 the renovationists had about 14,000 churches, not more than 30%" ("Obnovlenchestvo: Pereosmyslenie techenia v svete arkhivnykh dokumentov" (Renovationism: A Rethinking of the Tendency in the Light of Archival Documents), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 168, II-III, 1993, p. 217).

885 Swan, op. cit., p. 83.

886 Quoted in Protopriest Lev Lebedev, "Dialogue between the ROCA and the MP: Why and How?", report to be given to the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside Russia, Great Lent, 1998.

887 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

In spite of the Patriarch's "repentance", the Bolsheviks continued to back the renovationists, and on December 8, 1923 forbade the commemoration of the "former" Patriarch in that such an act would be seen "as having the character of a clearly political demonstration against the Worker-Peasants' authorities."⁸⁸⁸ Moreover, the Patriarch was still seen, as Lebedev writes, "as a *criminal* whose accusation *had not been removed*... For violating this ban, according to the circular of Narkomiust N 254 of December 8, 1923, those guilty (that is, those who would continue to consider the Patriarch the head of the Church and commemorate him during the Divine services) were subjected to *the punishment appointed for criminals* – three years in the camps! But in spite of everything the people, the priests and deacons *continued to commemorate him!*"⁸⁸⁹

On July 15, the Patriarch anathematized the Living Church, declaring: "They have separated themselves from the body of the Ecumenical Church and deprived themselves of God's favour, which resides only in the Church of Christ. Consequently, all arrangements made during our absence by those ruling the Church, since they had neither legal right nor canonical authority, are invalid and void, and all actions and sacraments performed by bishops and clergymen who have forsaken the Church are devoid of God's grace and power; the faithful taking part in such prayers and sacraments shall receive no sanctification thereby, and are subject to condemnation for participating in their sin..."⁸⁹⁰

This was the signal for the fall of renovationism. Large numbers of parishes, especially in such important urban centres as Petrograd and Voronezh, renounced it. And influential renovationist hierarchs such as Metropolitan Sergei hastened (and yet not *that* quickly, as Hieromartyr Bishop Damaskin of Glukhov pointed out⁸⁹¹) to make public confession to the Patriarch. Renovationism never fully recovered...

In receiving Sergei, the Patriarch explained that it was his Christian duty to forgive him, but that since his guilt was great before the people also, he had to repent before them, too. Then he would receive him with joy and love. And so he stood through the liturgy in simple monastic garments without his Episcopal mantia, klobuk, panagia, and cross. At the end of the liturgy he was led by the Patriarch out onto the amvon where he bowed to the people three times, after which the Patriarch restored to him then his panagia with cross, white klobuk, mantia, and staff.⁸⁹²

888 M.E. Danilushkin (ed.), *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovlenia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnei* (A History of the Russian Church from the Reestablishment of the Patriarchate to our Days), ol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 192.

889 Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, p. 577.

890 Regelson, op. cit., p. 347; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 291.

891 E.L. *Episkopy-Ispovedniki*, San Francisco, 1971, p. 68, note.

892 Parayev, "Istinnoe Pravoslavie i Sergianstvo", *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti*, September, 1997, <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=544>.

Some sergianists have tried to show that Sergei did not really share the renovationist position. However, Sergei's published statements, especially his epistle of June 16, 1922, contradict this view. Moreover, the renowned Elder Nektary of Optina prophetically said that, even after his repentance, the poison of renovationism was in him still.⁸⁹³

"Honour and glory to the late patriarch," wrote Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) in 1925, "that, with all his good-natured condescension towards people, with all his yearning for peace, he never gave an inch of ground to this barren 'living church', but received penitents from her according to the rite for the reception of heretics and schismatics, and re-consecrated churches which were returned from them to their lawful pastors as churches 'defiled by heretics'."⁸⁹⁴

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On April 18, 1924 the Russian renovationists tried a new tack in their continuing assault on the True Church: they voted to ease the difficult situation of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Ataturk's Turkey by offering him to settle freely in one of the cities of Russia in exchange for his accepting all the decrees of their 1923 council. On May 6, Patriarch Gregory duly obliged, "removed" Patriarch Tikhon from administering the Russian Church, called on him to retire, and decided to send a delegation to Moscow to investigate and "to bring peace and end the present anomaly". He also demanded "that the Russian Metropolitan Anthony and Archbishop Anastasy, who were residing in Constantinople at the time, cease their activities against the Soviet regime and stop commemorating Patriarch Tikhon. Receiving no compliance from them, Patriarch Gregory organized an investigation and suspended the two bishops from serving. He asked Patriarch Demetrius [of Serbia] to close down the Russian Council of Bishops in Sremsky-Karlovtsy, but Demetrius refused..."⁸⁹⁵

"The initiative of Constantinople with regard to this question," writes Gubonin, "had been elicited by the provocative and lying 'information' from the renovationist Synod concerning a supposed 'Tikhonite schism' in the Russian Orthodox Church (that is, among them – the renovationists) and the supposedly universal desire among the clerical leaders (that is, of the renovationist-synodalists) to bring peace into the difficult situation that had been created with the cooperation of the lofty authority of the Ecumenical

893 I.M. Kontsevich, *Optina pustyn' i ee vremia* (Optina Desert and its Time), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery Press, 1971, p. 546. The elder also said of the renovationist "church": "There is no Grace there. By rebelling against the lawful Patriarch, Tikhon, the bishops and priests of the Living Church have deprived themselves of Grace and have lost, according to canonical ruling, their hierarchical office. Because of this, the liturgy performed by them is a blasphemy..." (Kontsevich, *Elder Nektary of Optina*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1998, p. 209)

894 Metropolitan Anthony, in *Orthodox Life*, vol. 25, March-April, 1975.

895 Monk Gorazd, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 122.

Vladyka (since, they said, all means had already been exhausted and they had no other hope!).

“Taking into account the complete isolation of the Russian Church from communion with the external world at that time, the falsely informed Patriarch Gregory VII fell into this renovationist trap, but was stopped in time by the sobering epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon.”⁸⁹⁶

Gregory abandoned his plans to send a mission to Russia, but relations between the two Churches continued to be frosty. When Metropolitan Peter came to power in Russia in April, 1925, he was presented with a letter from Patriarch Basil III which called on the “Old Churchmen” to unite with the renovationists. His comment was: “We still have to check whether this Patriarch is Orthodox...” Metropolitan Sergei (Stragorodsky) was also sceptical; he reacted to Constantinople’s recognition of the renovationists as follows: “Let them recognize them; the renovationists have not become Orthodox from this, only the Patriarchs have become renovationists!”⁸⁹⁷

The Greeks continued to hedge their bets between the Russian Churches. Thus on July 10, 1927, Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem wrote to the renovationist synod recognizing it as “the only lawful bearer of Higher Ecclesiastical Authority on the territory of the USSR”.⁸⁹⁸ However, his successor, Patriarch Basil III broke communion with the Living Church in 1929 – only to enter into communion with the by now neo-renovationist Metropolitan Sergei! Nor did the reception into the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris, a rebel from ROCOR and a supporter of the heresy of sophianism, improve matters...

If the Moscow Council of 1917-18 established the basic position of the Church vis-à-vis the State, the renovationist council of 1923 revealed the basic modes of attack employed by the State against the Church, and thus provided the Church with valuable experience for the still fiercer struggles ahead. These basic modes of attack were:-

1. Control of the Central Church Administration. Like the State, the Church in Her post-revolutionary structure was a highly centralized organism. The astonishing success of the Living Church in its early stages was partly the result of its usurpation of the central administration and the confusion this engendered in the faithful. The Patriarch was in prison, and some reports said that he had resigned, others – that he had been killed. Although Metropolitan Agathangel, circulated a secret order directing the bishops to rule their dioceses independently in accordance with the Patriarch’s *ukaz* no. 362 of November 7/20, 1920, the habit of looking to the centre for all major directives was difficult

⁸⁹⁶ Gubonin, op. cit., p. 747.

⁸⁹⁷ Sokurova, O.B. *Nepokolebimij Kamen’ Tserkvi* (Unshakeable Rock of the Church), St. Petersburg: “Nauka”, 1998, p. 32.

⁸⁹⁸ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 155.

to break. This habit was broken, for some, only after the still greater shock of the events of 1927, when another unscrupulous hierarch, Metropolitan Sergei (Stragorodsky), took control of the central administration of the Church.

2. The Façade of Canonical Orthodoxy. At first the renovationists put on a mask of canonical Orthodoxy, claiming to have received power by legal transfer from the Patriarch. But soon they – mistakenly – threw off this mask; and, as we have seen, the crudity of their attacks on the Faith and monasticism repelled the people. In future, the GPU would take care that their candidate for the leadership of the Russian Church would have at least the appearance of canonical and dogmatic Orthodoxy.

3. The Lure of State Legalization. In spite of the Patriarch's "confession", the Patriarchal Church never received legalization by the State during his lifetime. This meant that the Church was always as it were in the wilderness, without the favour and security enjoyed by the renovationists. The depths to which the renovationists were prepared to go in order to win this security is shown by the pannikhida they celebrated for Lenin after his death, in which they described his soul as "essentially Christian"! In the same vein was Vvedensky's speech to the 1923 council, in which he said: "We must turn to the government with words of deeply felt gratitude. The Church is not persecuted, whatever the calumnies of the foreign propagandists may say. Everyone in Russia can voice his conviction. We must direct this message of thanks to the only Government in the world, which, though it does not believe in God, yet acts in accordance with love, which is more than we, who believe, can claim for ourselves."⁸⁹⁹

Ironically, therefore, as Fr. Aidan Nichols writes, the renovationists came "to resemble the pre-Revolutionary establishment in their spirit of subordination to the State."⁹⁰⁰ The Patriarchal Church, however, gained in spiritual authority. For, already in the early 1920s, the view was current that the faithful were living, in the Patriarch's words, "in the years of the triumph of Satan and of the power of the Antichrist". So the "Living Church", in coming to terms with Soviet power, was, as the Patriarch said, "an institution of the Antichrist".⁹⁰¹ The Patriarchal Church, on the other hand, was like the woman fleeing into the wilderness from the red dragon (Revelation 12). And it was still to her that the faithful children of the Church clung...

However, in absolute terms the number of Russian Orthodox Christians was still falling, especially in the countryside. "When the Bolsheviks had fulfilled their promise about land after the revolution, most of the peasants in Central Russia were completely satisfied, and were ready to acknowledge their ideology, becoming cooler and cooler towards the Church. Although in the 1920s the Bolsheviks were still afraid to persecute the Church in the villages,

⁸⁹⁹ Cited in Arfed Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville, 1960.

⁹⁰⁰ Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 53.

⁹⁰¹ Regelson, op. cit., p. 313.

the number of those who attended Church services was reduced to one third of that before the revolution."⁹⁰²

⁹⁰² Benevich, *op. cit.*

55. SOCIALISM TURNS FASCIST: (1) MUSSOLINI

A big problem at the Versailles peace conference was the combative attitude of *Italy*. At the secret Treaty of London in 1915, Italy had joined the Entente in exchange for the promise, after the war, of parts of Istria, Dalmatia, Albania and Asia Minor. When the armistice with Austria-Hungary was signed on November 3, 1918, Italian troops poured into those parts of Istria and Dalmatia assigned to her by the secret treaty. Of course, one of Wilson's Fourteen Points had specifically abjured such secret treaties. But neither Italy nor any of the European Great Powers allowed this Point (or, of course, the Points about national self-determination) to interfere with their *Realpolitik*...

Besides, the Italian Prime Minister Orlando declared in parliament that Italy's victory in the war had been the greatest in recorded history. This fantasy, writes David Gilmour, "encouraged him and his supporters to make extravagant claims at the peace conference... In addition to gaining what he called Italy's 'God-given' borders in the Alps, Orlando demanded Fiume [Rijeka], a Croatian port with an Italian middle class that had formerly been administered by Hungary. Although the city had not been included in the provisions of the Treaty of London, and though it was superfluous now that Trieste was in Italian hands, Orlando insisted on acquiring a place which, he mysteriously asserted, was 'more Italian than Rome'. Sonnino, who was still foreign minister, was even more demanding than Orlando..."⁹⁰³

The only person prepared to stand up to the Italians was President Wilson, whose Ninth Point had stated that "readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality". This, continues Gilmour, "was plainly an appalling principle for Sonnino, who was intent on acquiring a large chunk of Dalmatia even though its population of 610,000 was almost entirely Slav and included only 18,000 Italian speakers. One Italian diplomat supported his view by arguing that self-determination may have been 'applicable to many regions but not to the shores of the Adriatic'. Arguments of this sort bewildered the American president, who could not understand how the nation of Garibaldi and Mazzini could aspire to rule subject peoples."⁹⁰⁴

Wilson appealed to the Italian people to renounce their leaders' unjust claims. This caused a nationalist reaction in Italy, which pushed to the fore the futurist poet and war hero Gabriele D'Annunzio. In September, 1919, in a famous swashbuckling adventure, he marched on Rijeka; and although the garrison had been ordered by Rome to resist him, he seized it with a force of 2,500 Sardinian Grenadiers. "According to the poet," writes Piers Brendon, "he and his heroic force were inspired by the chance to recapture the mystic exaltation and the redemptive splendour of bloodshed, as experienced during the Great War: 'Where masses of slaughtered flesh decompose, here

903 Gilmour, *The Pursuit of Italy*, London: Penguin, 2011, p. 290.

904 Gilmour, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

fermentations are born.' So, until evicted by an embarrassed and increasingly discredited Italian government in 1921, D'Annunzio set up what was, at least from the histrionic point of view, a fascist dictatorship."⁹⁰⁵

"Over the next eighteen months," writes Misha Glenny, "theatre and politics merged into an astonishing spectacle. The set pieces were D'Annunzio's impassioned speeches from the balcony of the Governor's Palace overlooking Piazza Dante in the centre of Fiume. He drove his audience into frenzies of patriotism, worshipping huge blood-bespattered flags as the central icons of the new politics. As a Dutch historian has noted, 'virtually the entire ritual of Fascism came from the 'Free State of Fiume': the balcony address, the Roman salute, the use of religious symbols in a new secular setting, the eulogies to the 'martyrs' of the cause and the employment of these relicts in political ceremonies. Moreover, quite aside from the poet's contribution to the form and style of Fascist politics, Mussolini's movement first started to attract great strength when the future dictator supported D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume.' Throughout the fourteen-month existence of the Free State of Fiume, the government in Rome denounced D'Annunzio's adventure but never felt compelled to remove the municipal dictator by force. Fiume attracted thousands upon thousands of mutinous Italian soldiers, so that within five months of having proclaimed his city state, he had to appeal to the troops to stop signing up for his militia. Fiume could no longer accommodate or feed them. On a number of occasions, the Italian government was deeply concerned that D'Annunzio understood Fiume as a prologue to an assault on Rome itself. Yet despite the animosity between D'Annunzio and Nitti, the regime in Fiume bolstered the Italian delegation's position in Paris. The Italian government also did nothing to prevent D'Annunzio's attempts to spread his irredentist message into Dalmatia, and when, in the summer of 1920, Italians embarked on a violent spree against Croats and Slovenes inside Italian-occupied areas, Rome was slow to respond.

"Gradually Yugoslav resistance to Italy's expansionist programme was worn down. In the middle of January 1920, Clemenceau called in Trumbić and Pašić and told them to give up Fiume or else the entire London Treaty would be implemented while Fiume was still up for discussion. The Yugoslav delegation held out for another nine months with commendable, if progressively less effective, support from Washington. But in November 1920, its representatives were finally forced to sign the Treaty of Rapallo. This created an independent Fiumean state under the control of neither Italy nor the SCS. But the Yugoslavs had to make substantial concessions in Istria and the Dalmatian islands..."⁹⁰⁶

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⁹⁰⁵ Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁹⁰⁶ Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, pp. 376-377.

D'Annunzio may have been a Fascist, but the real founder of Italian Fascism was, of course, Benito Mussolini, whose career demonstrates the close kinship between Fascism and Communism, and how easy it is to change from being an internationalist revolutionary to a nationalist one. For he began as a Leninist kind of socialist.

"His father, a farrier and small property owner, was a socialist-anarchist; his mother a teacher. They filled him with a wide range of political philosophy, which included Nietzsche – he knew all about 'the will to power' – and he was much more broadly read than Lenin. But his political formation was fundamentally Marxist. Marx, he wrote, was 'the father and mother'; he was 'the magnificent philosopher of working-class violence'. But, like Lenin, he advocated the formation of 'vanguard minorities' which could 'engage the sentiment, faith and will of irresolute masses'. These vanguards had to be composed of specially trained, dedicated people, elites. Such revolutionary leadership should concern itself with the psychology of classes and the technique of mass-mobilization; and, through the use of myth and symbolic innovation, raise the consciousness of the proletariat. Like Lenin, again, he thought violence would be necessary: 'Instead of deluding the proletariat as to the possibility of eradicating all causes of bloodbaths, we wish to prepare it and accustom it to war for the day of the 'greatest bloodbath of all', when the two hostile classes will clash in the supreme trial.' Again, there is the endless repetition of activist verbs, the militaristic ideology.

"In the years before 1914, from his impotent exile in Switzerland, Lenin watched the progress of Mussolini with approval and some envy. Mussolini turned the province of Forlì into an island of socialism – the first of many in Italy – by supporting the *braccianti* labourers against the landowners. He became one of the most effective and widely read socialist journalists in Europe. In 1912, aged twenty-nine, he took over the Italian Socialist Party at the Congress of Reggio Emilia, by insisting that socialism must be Marxist, thoroughgoing, internationalist, uncompromising. Lenin, reporting the congress for *Pravda* (15 July 1912), rejoiced: 'The party of the socialist proletariat has taken the right path.' He agreed when Mussolini prevented the socialists from participating in the 'bourgeois reformist' Giolitti government, and so foreshadowed the emergence of the Italian Communist Party. He strongly endorsed Mussolini's prophecy on the eve of war: 'With the unleashing of a mighty clash of peoples, the bourgeoisie is playing its last card and calls forth on the world scene that which Karl Marx called the sixth great power: the socialist revolution.'"⁹⁰⁷

But then, writes Matthew Kneale, "the First World War changed his political direction. Soon after the conflict broke out, when Italy was still neutral, he abandoned pacifism and socialism and – possibly financed by the British secret services – he urged Italians to join the Allies against Austria and Germany. After serving in the war for two years without great distinction he discerned

⁹⁰⁷ Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, p. 57.

an element in Italian society that could prove a powerful political force [Hitler would make the same discovery]: embittered ex-soldiers who returned from the front to find their families struggling and their jobs gone. Mussolini urged them to seize power as a new elite: the *trincerocrazia*, or trenchocracy. He led them against his former socialist colleagues. As squads of ex-soldiers violently broke up left-wing demonstrations and strikes, Mussolini became the darling of Italy's wealthy, who saw him as their best defence against Bolshevik revolution..."⁹⁰⁸

Brendon writes: "Full of the half-digested catch-phrases of radical philosophers such as Sorel and Nietzsche, he glorified violence and saw himself as the embodiment of the will to power. Blood was the essential fuel and lubricant to turn the wheels of history. War would act on modern Italy as the barbarian tribes had once done on the Roman empire, sweeping away decadent institutions so that virile new structures could rise on their ruins. Mussolini, Superman in the making, would be architect of a revived Italy. In 1915 he fostered Revolutionary Action Groups (*Fasci*) to agitate for intervention. 'Today is War,' he cried, 'it will be Revolution tomorrow.'

"Mussolini was bombastic, inconsistent, shallow and vainglorious. But he was also, in some respects, a true prophet. The war proved a catastrophe for Italy simply because it lacked the resources to sustain it. Despite its pretensions to being a great power, Italy was a new, poor, fragmented and undeveloped nation. It suffered acutely from the disruption that followed the war. In 1920 the lira lost more than half its value and inflation raised the cost of living, afflicted the middle classes and led to serious civil disorder. The chaos was compounded by the hordes of demobilised soldiers who, having fed on pledges that their sacrifice would not be in vain, now found themselves jobless and landless while war profiteers lived in ostentatious luxury. Italy's parliamentary institutions, already stunted and shaky, were further undermined by Orlando's failure at Versailles and by D'Annunzio's success at Fiume. Between 1919 and 1922 one weak government followed another as Italy rapidly became ungovernable. Mussolini was not far wrong in declaring that democracy had been killed during the war.

"Mussolini's own strategy – to obtain power for himself – was as steady as his tactics were mercurial. At first, as a professed socialist, he behaved like a Latin Lenin. In March 1919 he revived his *Fasci*, making a fruitless attempt to form revolutionary cadres from embittered and ambitious ex-servicemen, with promises of profit-sharing for industrial workers and smallholdings for peasants. But in 1920 the strikes, riots, factory occupations and agrarian disturbances increased to such an extent that Red revolution seemed imminent. Mussolini realized that there was more to be won from attacking Bolshevism. During the winter of 1920-21 his Fascist movement gained enormous support as a result of the successful deployment of counter-revolutionary terror. With the connivance of the government and the active backing of industrialists and

⁹⁰⁸ Kneale, *Rome. A History in Seven Sackings*, London: Simon Schuster, 2017, pp. 288-289.

landowners, Mussolini's black-shirted squads raided the political headquarters of their opponents, destroyed trade union offices, burnt down cooperative institutions, and forcibly fed Communists on castor oil. Hundreds were killed and thousands injured. By July 1921 Mussolini would proclaim, 'Bolshevism is vanquished.' It was now time to deny his more radical pronouncements against the monarchy and the Church, and to temper street violence with political intrigue.

"How could Mussolini justify the shameless changes, the abrupt *volte-faces*, the flagrant internal contradictions of Fascism? The answer is that Fascism was not 'being' but 'becoming', not a creed but a dynamic. Mussolini made up his own reality as he went along, like his admirer Luigi Pirandello. The playwright had anticipated Fascism, as one critic wrote, 'in so far as it denies the concepts of the absolute and affirms the vital necessity of the continuous creation of *illusion*, of relative realities'. Mussolini was an animator of fantasy, the chief character as well as the author of his own theatre of the absurd. Fascism was form rather than content, style rather than substance. It was, as Mussolini said, 'a doctrine of action'. It was a revolt against the crippling alienation and the stultifying conformity of bourgeois society. More than that, it was a kind of political mysticism. Mussolini himself, as a French observer wrote, was 'a mystic of risk, with a quasi-religious faith in the absolute value of dynamism, considered as having an efficaciousness superior to all the calculations of reason.'

"Fascism was a belief in the common bond of nationhood enshrined in the personality of a charismatic leader. The gospel that the leader preached was less important than his magical capacity to evoke the latent genius of his people..."⁹⁰⁹

In 1921 Mussolini was elected to parliament with thirty-four other fascists out of 500 seats. Later that year he formed the National Fascist Party. On that slender electoral basis, writes Stephen Kotkin, he demanded "to be made prime minister, threatening to march on Rome with hordes of Blackshirts known as *squadristi*. The squads were lightly armed, their numbers exaggerated. The proposed 'march' was a colossal bluff, an exercise in psychological warfare, and King Vittorio Emanuele III seemed ready to summon the army to disperse the ruffians. But the king backed off from the anticipated bloodshed, and the well-equipped army did not act on its own. On the contrary, the brass, as well as influential businessmen, the pope, and even some constitutionalists thought Mussolini should be given a chance to 'restore order' as an antidote to the left. The vacillating king telegraphed Mussolini to ask him to become prime minister to a coalition (with just those 35 fascists in the Chamber of Deputies). On October 30, 1922, the thirty-nine-year-old fascist leader arrived in a luxury sleeping car, alighting at the last station before Rome, which he then entered as if on a march. Mussolini had almost lost his nerve; a comrade bucked up his resolve. Only after he had been made prime minister did about 20,000 fascist

909 Brendon, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

marchers enter Rome. Many of them had failed to muster at appointed locations, and many of those who did arrived short of weapons or food. After the *squadisti* paraded around Rome like conquerors, paying tribute to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and at the palace of the king, whom they saluted in ancient Roman style (right arm outstretched), Mussolini sent them home. But their presence in Rome created a myth of successful coup d'état..."⁹¹⁰

Mussolini soon won a democratic mandate. As Ian Kershaw writes: "In the election of 1924..., the national bloc, most of them Fascists, won two-thirds of the votes, giving them 375 out of 535, thanks in no small part to a campaign of violence against their opponents. Opposition parties remained in existence. But the Socialists and People's Party had lost much of their former strength. Outside the working class, most Italians were, with varying degrees, ready to accept Mussolini's leadership.

"A dangerous flashpoint occurred in June 1924, when the Socialist leader Giacomo Matteotti, who had denounced the election result as fraudulent, disappeared and was later found dead – murdered, as all rightly presumed, by Fascists, almost certainly on the orders of Mussolini or leading members of his entourage. A first-rate political crisis ensued. The Socialists withdrew from parliament in protest – a move whose only effect was to strengthen the position of the government. Opposition remained divided and impotent. Mussolini, meanwhile, played the moderate. He made concessions to bring some nationalists, monarchists and rightist Liberals into government posts, and incorporated the Fascist militia into the armed forces. Fearful of any revival of socialism, the 'big battalions' – the King, the Church, the army and major industrialists – backed Mussolini. But the Fascist provincial bosses made their own support conditional upon their leader moving to a fully fledged Fascist regime. A new wave of violence emphasized the point.

"As throughout his rise to power, Mussolini faced both ways, manoeuvring between conservatives who were needed to establish political control, and his Fascist radicals, unhappy at any steps towards moderation. Forced to accommodate his party bosses, while adamantly refusing during a speech in parliament in January 1925 to acknowledge his complicity in Matteotti's murder, Mussolini publicly accepted full responsibility for what had happened. Placating the radicals, he stated: 'If two irreconcilable elements are struggling with each other, the solution lies in force.' The principle was put into practice. Political opponents were arrested, opposition parties suppressed, the freedom of the press was abolished and government left almost completely in the hands of the Fascists. The Matteotti crisis might have broken Mussolini. It ended by strengthening him. Fascist power was secure..."⁹¹¹

⁹¹⁰ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I. *Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. 549.

⁹¹¹ Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 140-141.

“Two years later, when he placed executive authority in the hands of the Fascist Grand Council, the country had effectively become a one-party police state.”⁹¹²

In 1926, writes Frank Dikötter, Augusto Turati, the new secretary of the National Fascist Party, “set about consolidating the cult of the Duce, demanding an oath from party members to ensure their absolute obedience to Mussolini. In 1927 he penned the first catechism, entitled *A Revolution and a Leader*, in which he explained that while there was a Great Council, the Duce was the ‘one leader, the only leader, from whom all power flows’. There was, as he put it, ‘a spirit, a soul, a light, a reality of conscience in which all brothers can find themselves and recognize themselves: the spirit, the goodness, the passion of Benito Mussolini’. A year later, in a preface to a textbook on the origins and development of fascism, he equated the revolution with Mussolini and Mussolini with the nation: ‘When the entire nation walks on the road of fascism, its face, its spirit, its faith become one with the Duce’...

“*Il Popolo d'Italia* (‘The People of Italy’) had been Mussolini’s personal newspaper since 1914, and for many years he had exalted himself as a natural leader in its pages. After he handed the editorship to his brother Arnaldo in 1922 the paper began describing the Duce as a demi-god.”⁹¹³

Mussolini looked both back to the past, to the Roman empire, and forward to the future. However, “Fascism’s appeal was not as such atavistic. The hopes, for instance, of Filippo Marinetti and the Futurists, who glorified the revolutionary violence of the modern machine age and lauded Mussolini, lay not in a resort to the past, but in the vision of a utopian modern society. An expressionist poet like Gottfried Benn could be drawn to Nazism as a revolutionary force that would create a new, modern aesthetic – though he was rapidly to be disillusioned. The influential modernist poet and critic Ezra Pound was born in the USA but based in London before the First World War. Disgusted by what he saw as the responsibility of international capitalism for the war and despising liberal democracy, he moved to Paris, then to Italy, where he lauded Mussolini and saw Italian Fascism as the harbinger of a new civilization. In contrast to Benn and others, Pound never became disillusioned. At any rate, he never recanted his belief in Fascism.

“Faith in the ‘new man’, in the renewal of ‘true’ culture and national rebirth, often resulted in mystical expression that defied intellectual rigour. For the French political writer and novelist, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, obsessed as he was with national and cultural decadence, fascism (and the Nazi occupation of France) amounted to ‘the great revolution of the twentieth century’, the spirit of ‘national comradeship’.

912 Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 488.

913 Dikötter, *Dictators*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020, pp. 9, 10.

“The belief in spiritual renewal through national rebirth accounts in good measure for fascism’s appeal to intellectuals. As many as 250 Italian intellectuals signed the Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals in 1925, praising Fascism as ‘the faith of all Italians who disdained the past and longed for renewal’. The Manifesto had been composed by Giovanni Gentile, a distinguished professor of philosophy at the University of Rome. Gentile looked to Italian Fascism to create an ethical state that would supersede the moral will of the individual and overcome the decadence of bourgeois liberalism. He spoke in the mid-1920s of ‘the soul of the new Italy which slowly but surely will prevail over the old’. He was even ready to boast of Fascist barbarity ‘as the expression of the healthy energies which shatter false and baleful idols, and restore the health of the nation within the power of a State conscious of its sovereign rights which are its duties’.”⁹¹⁴

But Mussolini was not capable of producing “spiritual renewal through national rebirth”, even when administering an invigorating dose of “Fascist barbarity”. He “could not or would not conjure a new fascist civilization out of his cloudy formulae. But what he liked doing and felt able to do, and indeed was gifted at doing, was big construction projects. He tackled malaria, then the great, debilitating scourge of central and southern Italy. The draining of the Pontine Marshes was a considerable practical achievement, as well as a symbol of fascist energy. Mussolini encouraged Balbo, a keen pilot, to build a large aviation industry, which won many international awards. Another fascist boss, the Venetian financier Giuseppe Volpi, created a spectacular industrial belt at Mugliera and Mestre on the mainland. He also, as Minister of Finance, revalued the lira, which became a relatively strong currency. Train, postal and phone services markedly improved. There were no strikes. Corruption continued, perhaps increased; but it was less blatant and remarked upon. In Sicily, the Mafia was not destroyed, but it was effectively driven underground. Above all, there was no more violence on the streets. Some of these accomplishments were meretricious, others harmful in the long run. But taken together they looked impressive, to foreigners, to tourists, to many Italians too. No Utopia was emerging in Italy, but the contrast with hungry, terrorized Russia was striking. To those north of the Alps, who rejected alike the Bolshevism of the East and the liberalism of the West, the Italian renaissance seemed to offer a third way...”⁹¹⁵

⁹¹⁴ Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 452-453.

⁹¹⁵ Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 103.

56. SOCIALISM TURNS FASCIST: (2) HITLER

Hitler, like Mussolini, began his political life on the left. He himself had worked for the Department of Propaganda of the short-lived “Soviet republic” of Bavaria in Munich in 1919.⁹¹⁶ As Stephen Kotkin writes, “Film footage from 1918 shows Hitler marching in the funeral procession of provincial Bavaria’s murdered leader, a Jewish Social Democrat; he is wearing two armbands, one black (for mourning) and the other red. In April, 1919, after Social Democrats and anarchists formed the Bavarian Soviet Republic, the Communists quickly seized power. Hitler, who contemplated joining the Social Democrats, served as a delegate from his battalion’s *soviet* (council). He had no profession to speak of but appears to have taken part in leftist indoctrination of the troops. Ten days before Hitler’s 30th birthday the Bavarian Soviet Republic was quickly crushed by the so-called Freikorps...”⁹¹⁷ The party Hitler eventually joined was distinctly proletarian; it was originally called the German Labour Party, which “combined socialism, anticapitalism, and anticlericalism with German nationalism. In 1918, it renamed itself the German National Socialist Labour Party (DNSAP), adding anti-Semitism to its platform and luring to its ranks demobilized war veterans, shopkeepers, and professional personnel. (The word ‘Labour’ in its name was meant to include ‘all who work’, not only industrial workers.) It was this organization that Hitler took over in 1919. According to Bracher, the ideology of the party in its early years ‘contained a thoroughly revolutionary kernel within an irrational, violence-oriented political ideology. It was in no sense a mere expression of reactionary tendencies: it derived from the world of workers and trade unionists.’ The Nazis appealed to the socialist tradition of German labor, declaring the worker ‘a pillar of the community’, and the ‘bourgeois’ – along with the traditional aristocracy – a doomed class. Hitler, who told associates that he was a ‘socialist’, had the party adopt the red flag and, on coming to power, declared May 1 a national holiday; Nazi Party members were ordered to address one another as ‘comrades’ (*Genossen*). His conception of the party was, like Lenin’s, that of a militant organization, a *Kampfbund* or ‘Combat League’... His ultimate aim was a society in which traditional classes would be abolished, and status earned by personal heroism. In typically radical fashion, he envisaged man recreating himself: ‘Man is becoming god,’ he told Rauschning. ‘Man is god in the making.’”⁹¹⁸

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There were many similarities between Russia and Germany after the First World War. Both countries had suffered defeat; both were treated as pariahs by the western powers. Both bitterly resented this treatment, and therefore gravitated, psychologically and ideologically, towards each other.

⁹¹⁶ Benjamin Carter Hett, *The Death of Democracy. Hitler’s Rise to Power*, London: Windmill Books, 2018, p. 47.

⁹¹⁷ Kotkin, “When Stalin Faced Hitler”, *Foreign Affairs*, November / December, 2017, p. 53.

⁹¹⁸ Pipes, op. cit., p. 260.

At exactly the same time and almost the same place that Lloyd George had summoned an international conference at Genoa with the aim of bringing Germany and Russia “in from the cold” into political and commercial relations with the West, military and trade links were established between the Germans and the Russians at the secret Treaty of Rapallo in 1922. (The German foreign minister Walter Rathenau tried to warn Lloyd George, but the British prime minister did not take his calls.⁹¹⁹ Rathenau, a Jew, was soon murdered.)

Even earlier, a dark love-hate relationship had begun to develop between nationalist elements in Germany and Soviet Bolshevism. For a significant minority in Germany the violence in the East was a stimulant and a magnet, not a spectre. Thus in 1924 D.H. Lawrence, whose wife was German, wrote a “Letter from Germany”, in which he declared: “the great leaning of the Germanic spirit is once more eastwards, towards Russia, towards Tataria.” “It was, he said, ‘as if the Germanic life were slowly ebbing away from contact with western Europe, ebbing to the deserts of the east.’ On his last visit in 1921, Germany ‘was still open to Europe. Then it still looked to western Europe for a reunion... reconciliation. Now that is over... the positivity of our civilization has broken. The influences that come, come invisibly out of Tataria... Returning again to the fascination of the destructive East that produced Attila.’”⁹²⁰

In accordance with this insight, we may see that the Proto-Nazism of the early 1920s was a kind of nationalist version of contemporary Bolshevism, building on a nostalgia for one-man-rule and on the resentment at defeat in the war. Attraction to it was especially strong among the soldiers – that is, those 100,000 soldiers that the Versailles Treaty had allowed to the Germans. In the West, the government had used unemployed soldiers, or *Freikorps*, to suppress the communist uprisings that took place in Berlin, Bavaria and other places. And many soldiers in the East went on fighting even after the armistice – but not now against Russians.

As Hawes writes: “Entire divisions of the Free Corps, artillery and all, fought over Posen/Poznan and Silesia with the Poles. They actually tried to conquer the Baltic States. When one of their leaders, Hans von Manteuffel, fell during the storming of Riga in May 1919, his funeral rites self-consciously harked back to the Teutonic Knights – as did the propaganda of the newly formed *German National People's Party* (DNVP).

“The DNVP was founded in 1919 as an umbrella group, for former members of the Junker-run Conservative Party or of the army-funded *Fatherland Party*, for Pan-Germans, Anti-semites and suchlike. It allowed no Jews in. It was monarchist, thoroughly based in East Elbia and entirely Protestant.

⁹¹⁹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 445.

⁹²⁰ Lawrence, in Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, p. 136.

"The politicians it identified as enemies were publicly lambasted as being traitors in the pay of Jewish and/or Catholic interests; several were assassinated by men with clear links to the party. By 1924, the DNVP was the second largest party in the Reichstag. But its almost-fifth share of the national vote came overwhelmingly from East Elbian Prussia."⁹²¹

These rightist Easterners were not brought under control by the government, and poured into the gangster gangs that roamed the German streets.

"Statistics compiled in 1922 over a four-year period (1919-22) show that there were 354 murders committed by the Right and twenty-two by the Left. Those responsible for every one of the left-wing murders were brought to court; ten were executed and twenty-eight others received sentences averaging fifteen years. Of the right-wing murders, 326 were never solved; fifty killers confessed, but of these more than half were acquitted despite confessions, and twenty-four received sentences averaging four months.

"The Right, in short, could practice violence with little fear of legal retribution. Judges and juries felt they were participating in the battle between German culture and alien civilization: it was right to recognize that violence might be a legitimate response to cultural provocation. Thus when the great liberal journalist Maximilian Harden, who was also a Jew, was nearly beaten to death by two thugs in 1922, the would-be killers got only a nominal sentence. The defence argued that Harden provoked the attack by his 'unpatriotic articles', and the jury found 'mitigating circumstances'."⁹²²

Now the leader of Germany's rump army after Versailles was General Hans von Seeckt, "an arch-Junker – his father had governed the now-lost region of Posen/Poznan – and he made sure that the right sort of people got the few thousand officers' postings left. Every insider knew, for example, that the inoffensively modern-sounding *Ninth Infantry* considered itself heir to the exclusively Prussian Imperial Guard.

"The result was that the German army after 1919, the *Reichswehr*, was proportionally even more a Prussian Junker one than before 1914, packed tight with highly decorated junior officers of ancient military names who would never get promotion unless the army grew vastly again. They had seen their beloved Prussia republicanized and amputated in favour of their former underlings, the Poles. The smoke of WW1 had scarcely cleared before their leader, Seeckt, was looking forward to the day when this would be put right.

⁹²¹ Hawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

⁹²² Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 125. The students were also very right-wing. Thus when the Jewish statesman and industrialist Walter Rathenau was murdered in 1922, "the authorities at Berlin University cancelled a memorial service in [his] honour rather than risk a violent student demonstration. This policy of appeasement towards student violence became the pattern of the 1920s" (*op. cit.*, p. 127).

“His remedy was to be a revival of the old Prussia-Russia axis. It may seem deeply unlikely that monarchist Junker officers could agree on anything with Russian Bolsheviks. In fact, beneath the superficial difference in their supposed ideologies, they shared profound cultural affinities: a scornful hatred of the democratic West and its alleged decadence; the worship of sheer brute force; and, most importantly of all, a loathing of the reborn Poland.

“As early as April 1920, one of Lenin’s diplomats in Berlin was already suggesting the possibility of *combining the German Army and the Red Army* for a joint war on Poland. Von Seeckt was enthusiastic. To him Russia was still Russia, whether it was a monarchy or a Soviet republic, and he believed that Russia and Prussia could bury their differences, as they had throughout the 19th century in an anti-Polish alliance...

“Lenin himself realized that radicalized Junkers after WW1 were a new sort of animal. He called them *a curious type of reactionary-revolutionary* and was happy to do business with them. At Rapallo in 1922, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia came to terms on reparations. But unknown to the world, the Reichswehr and the Red Army also did a deal which allowed Seeckt’s men to lease various training-camps deep in Russia, far from prying Western eyes. In these secret facilities both armies could train in the use of modern weapons, especially tanks, which were forbidden to Germany by the Versailles Treaty...”⁹²³

A Bolshevik who believed in the similarity between the two systems – and yet thought that they would have to war against each other one day – was Nikolai Bukharin. As Brendon writes, “he was struck by the similarities between Stalinism and Nazism. Both systems dehumanised their own people by suppressing intellectual liberty through force and fraud. In the last article he wrote for *Izvestia*, on 6 July 1936, Bukharin made the identification as explicit as he dared. At a time when every utterance was combed for hidden meanings, it was tantamount to a manifesto: ‘A complicated network of decorative deceit in words and action is a highly essential characteristic of Fascist regimes of all stamps and hues.’”⁹²⁴

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

⁹²³ Hawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-152.

⁹²⁴ Brendon, *The Dark Valley. A Panorama of the 1930s*, London: Pimlico, 2001, p. 568.

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..."⁹²⁵

There were indeed many close similarities between Nationalist Socialism and "Socialism in One Country". "In the SS and Gestapo Hitler had created a secret police system that looked and functioned a good deal like Stalin's NKVD. He had openly modeled his Four-Year Plan for the German economy on Stalin's Five-Year Plan, breaking with his Economics Minister Schlacht in order to impose something more like a command system."⁹²⁶ Hitler had clearly socialist policies on employment for all, education and nationalized healthcare. Even the art of the two systems was similar. And, of course, their propensity for murder on an industrial scale...

Again, the war correspondent and disillusioned communist Vasily Grossman, in a novel entitled *Life and Fate*, which was completed in 1960 but published only decades later, emphasizes 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."⁹²⁷

Even while trying to destroy the German communists, Hitler acknowledged that "there is more that binds us to Bolshevism that separates us from it".⁹²⁸ On February 24, 1941 he stated bluntly that "basically National Socialism and Marxism are the same".⁹²⁹

And in *Hitler Speaks* (1939) Rauschning reported Hitler calling himself the executor of Marxism (*der Voltstrecher des Marxismus*). "He conceded his debt to socialism: 'I have learned a great deal from Marxism as I do not hesitate to admit. I don't mean their tiresome social doctrine or the materialist conception of history, or their absurd 'marginal utility' theories, and so on. But I have learned from their methods. The difference between them and myself is that I have really put into practice what these peddlers and pen-pushers have timidly begun. The whole of National Socialism is based on it. Look at the workers' sports clubs, the industrial cells, the mass demonstrations, the propaganda leaflets written specially for the comprehension of the masses; all these new methods of political struggle are essentially Marxist in origin. All I had to do was take over these methods and adapt them to our purpose. I only

⁹²⁵ Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 219-220.

⁹²⁶ Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, p. 424.

⁹²⁷ Grossmann, in Arkady Ostrovsky, "Flirting with Stalin", *Prospect*, September, 2008, p. 33.

⁹²⁸ Brendon, op. cit., p. 244.

⁹²⁹ Pipes, op. cit., p. 259, note.

had to develop logically what Social Democracy repeatedly failed in because of its attempt to realize its evolution within the framework of democracy. National Socialism is what Marxism might have been if it could have broken its absurd and artificial ties with a democratic order."⁹³⁰

As Paul Johnson points out, the Communist and Fascist modes of totalitarianism were closely linked. "There was indeed an element of self-deception right at the heart of the rivalry between the Communist and fascist forms of totalitarianism. They were organically linked in the process of historical development: just as the war had made Lenin's violent seizure of power possible, and German 'War Socialism' had given him an economic policy, so the very existence of the Leninist state, with its one-party control of all aspects of public life and its systematized moral relativism, offered a model to all those who hated the liberal society, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. It inspired imitation and it generated fear, and those who feared it most were most inclined to imitate its methods in constructing defensive counter-models of their own. Totalitarianism of the Left bred totalitarianism of the Right; Communism and fascism were the hammer and the anvil on which liberalism was broken to pieces. The emergence of Stalin's autocracy changed the dynamic of corruption not in kind but in degree. For Stalin 'was but old Lenin writ large'. The change in degree nonetheless was important because of its sheer scale. The arrests, the prisons, the camps, the scope, the brutality and violence of the social engineering – nothing like it had ever been seen and imagined before. So the counter-model became more monstrously ambitious; and the fear which energized its construction more intense. If Leninism begot the fascism of Mussolini, it was Stalinism which made possible the Nazi Leviathan."⁹³¹

Hitler had built up a certain base of support among the workers of the West and the soldiers of the East. But he could not come to power until he made inroads into the middle classes, who did not like his bully-boy tactics and still clung on to the Weimar democracy for want of anything better. What he needed was for the middle classes to acquire some of his own contempt for Weimar.

This came about through the financial crisis and hyperinflation of 1923, which we shall now examine...

⁹³⁰ Pipes, op. cit., p. 259.

⁹³¹ Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 277.

57. HYPERINFLATION AND THE BEER-HALL PUTSCH

Adam Tooze writes: "World War I ratified the emergence of the US as the dominant force in the world economy. The rivalrous talk in London and Washington could give the impression that the issue at stake was the question of how America would succeed to Britain's position of pre-eminence. But that seriously understated the novelty of the situation created by the war. In its pomp Victorian Britain had never commanded the kind of leverage over Prussia, or Napoleon III's France, or Alexander III's Russia, that Washington was accumulating. In their struggle to defeat Germany, the Entente entered into an unprecedented period of dependence on the United States. This new asymmetrical financial geometry signaled the end to the great power competition that had defined the age of imperialism. It did so in a double sense. On the one hand, the Entente's transatlantic war effort defeated Germany. But at the same time it raised the US to a position of unprecedented dominion, not over its Caribbean satrapies or the Philippines, but over Britain, France and Italy, the great powers of Europe. In its basic outline this was exactly the kind of unilateral power to which Woodrow Wilson had aspired with his strategy of 'peace without victory'...

"That there would be need for such leadership was by 1918 painfully evident. Despite American support, the underlying weakness of the British, French and Italian currencies was unmistakable. And their anxious gyrations were superimposed on a more basic global trend: inflation. The post-war hyperinflation that wracked the Weimar Republic in 1923 is the stuff of legend. But it was not a unique experience. In the aftermath of the war, Poland, Austria and Russia all suffered devastating hyperinflations. And it was not until 1920 that the trajectory of these countries diverged fundamentally from that of the other combatants. Between 1914 and 1920, inflation swept the world. In Sierra Leone the price of a cup of rice rose fivefold. In Harare the real wages of African workers halved. In Egypt, as in India, the metallic basis of the currency was replaced by the dubious backing of British government debt. The money supply promptly doubled, leading to a dangerous surge in the urban cost of living...

"The ultimate driver of this inflationary wave was monetary expansion originating at the heart of the global monetary system in Europe and the US. As war expenditure surged, in none of the combatant countries did taxes keep up. The state skimmed off purchasing power by issuing government bonds repayable long after the end of the war. But such surplus purchasing power remained in circulation. Furthermore, a large part of the bonds were purchased not by savers but by banks. Rather than immobilizing household funds, the bonds provided the banks with a safe investment that could be resold for cash to the central bank – the Bank of England, Bank of France or Reichsbank. Like a cash deposit, the bonds therefore served as the basis for a pyramid of credit-creation. The central banks were transformed into inflationary pumps. The entire sterling zone of the British Empire was swept up in the inflation issuing from London, the Treasury and the Bank of England. Through these same

mechanisms, rapid inflation came even to the heart of the new structure of financial power, the United States.

“Far from serving as the stable anchor of a new international economic order, the effect of the wartime mobilization on the US economy was profoundly destabilizing. Both the American public and key decision-makers in the Wilson administration came to experience their country no longer as standing detached and pre-eminent above the global crisis, but as dangerously enmeshed without it. The stage was set for the post-war backlash...”⁹³²

For France, the problem at the beginning of 1923 was essentially the same as it had been in 1919. Having suffered most in the world war, France needed either war reparations from Germany, or a cancellation of inter-Allied war debts, if she was to pull out of an economic black hole. The Americans held the world’s purse-strings, but would not consider cancellation or any significant “haircut”. Only from 1926 did American (private) investment enter in large quantities, causing a temporary recovery in Germany. But then it retreated again after the 1929 stock market crash, causing the Great Depression...

A possible solution to the reparations problem was some kind of Franco-German or even West European economic or even political union. As Tony Judt writes, the idea, “in one form or another, was not new. The nineteenth century had seen a variety of more or less unsuccessful customs unions in central and western Europe and even before World War One there had been occasional idealistic talk, drawing on the idea that Europe’s future lay in a coming together of its disparate parts.”⁹³³

Conan Fischer writes: “The pre-First World War French prime minister, Joseph Cailloux, shared his contemporaries’ fears of German militarism but, rather than confront Germany, he sought to improve relations through mutually beneficial economic collaboration. Klaus Wilsberg has demonstrated that far-reaching commercial links between the French and German business sectors offered Cailloux the means to achieve his objectives. Unfortunately for the cause of peace, his ministry fell in January 1912 and his successor, Raymond Poincaré, looked to France’s military alliances to guarantee national security.

“French diplomacy revisited Cailloux’s strategy immediately after the Great War. A secret delegation sounded out Berlin in January 1919 about plans for a Franco-German partnership to reorganize the European economy and, although the initiative failed, two further approaches followed in 1921 and 1922. The 1921 Wiesbaden Agreement envisaged German reparations payments to France being replaced by massive German direct investment in the devastated war zones of northern France, but British obstruction effectively derailed this initiative. The 1922 Steinnes-Lubersac Agreement, concluded between German and French business magnates and parliamentarians, sought

⁹³² Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 211-212, 212-215, 216.

⁹³³ Judt, *Post-War*, London: Pimlico, 2007, pp. 153-154.

to revive the Wiesbaden Agreement, but failed to win Poincaré, who had returned to office in January.

“By this time, Germany had suspended the payment of reparations in cash as its domestic finances imploded, bringing Poincaré to favour coercion over consensus. In January 1923 a French-led expeditionary force [with 60,000 French soldiers] invaded the Ruhr, Germany’s industrial heartland, ostensibly to collect unpaid reparations, but in fact, as recent research reveals, to precipitate the territorial fragmentation of the Reich.”⁹³⁴

“Paris calculated that the cost of sending the French Army into the Ruhr, the heartland of West German industry, would be as little as 125 million francs. The return from the exploitation of the Ruhr’s coal mines could be as much as 850 million gold francs per annum. As it turned out, the military occupation of western Germany did offer France a substantial return. But it also provoked a crisis that pushed the German nation state to the brink of collapse.”⁹³⁵

Who were to blame – the Germans for defaulting, the French for invading, or the Americans for withdrawing? The root cause of the crisis, according to James Hawes, “was the bonds Imperial Germany had used to fund the war. Essentially, the government had borrowed from its own people at unrealistically generous interest rates. The plan had been to pay this money back by, in effect, robbing conquered peoples. That was now impossible.

“The new Weimar Republic was thereby saddled at birth with state debts roughly proportionate to those of Greece in 2013 (c. 175% of GDP). But there was no one to bail it out. The Allies wanted a new Germany, but they also insisted that it should pay for the old Germany’s war. On top of this huge inherited debt, the republic now had vast reparation bills to the victors, which had to be settled in hard currency.

“Germany was too fragile politically for massive tax-rises to be an option, or for any national, patriotic appeal to stand a chance. So the government started printing money...”⁹³⁶

Piers Brendon writes: “It now seems clear that German governments were themselves, at least in part, responsible for the ‘flight from the mark’. As the entrepreneur Hugo Stinnes said, they had to spend beyond their means in the terrible aftermath of the war in order to sustain life and to find work for returning soldiers. Otherwise ‘Bolshevism would have seized Germany’. But the German authorities also aimed to avoid paying reparations. They deliberately engineered currency depreciation in order to promote cheap exports and to exert ‘economic pressure on the Allies’.”⁹³⁷

934 Fischer, “The Limits of Nationhood”, *History Today*, June, 2017, pp. 12-13.

935 Tooze, op. cit., p. 440.

936 Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*, Devon: Old Street Publishing, 2018, p. 154.

937 Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, p. 27.

Niall Ferguson writes: "When the total indemnity was fixed in 1921, the Germans found themselves saddled with a huge new external debt with a nominal capital value of 132 billion 'gold marks' (pre-war marks), equivalent to more than three times national income. Although not all this new debt was immediately interest-bearing, the scheduled reparations payments accounted for more than a third of all Reich expenditure in 1921 and 1922. No investor who contemplated Germany's position in the summer of 1921 could have felt optimistic, and such foreign capital as did flow into the country after the war was speculative or 'hot' money, which soon departed when the going got tough.

"Yet it would be wrong to see the hyperinflation of 1923 as a simple consequence of the Versailles Treaty. That was how the Germans liked to see it, of course. Their claim throughout the post-war period was that the reparations burden created an unsustainable current account deficit; that there was no alternative but to print yet more paper marks in order to finance it; that the inflation was a direct consequence of the resulting depreciation of the mark. All of this was to overlook the domestic political roots of the monetary crisis. The Weimar tax system was feeble, not least because the new regime lacked legitimacy among higher income groups who declined to pay the taxes imposed on them. At the same time, public money was spent recklessly, particularly on generous wage settlements for public sector unions. The combination of insufficient taxation and excessive spending created enormous deficits in 1919 and 1920 (in excess of 10 per cent of net national product), before the victors had even presented their reparations bill. The deficit in 1923, when Germany had suspended reparations payments, was even larger. Moreover, those in charge of Weimar economic policy in the early 1920s felt they had little incentive to stabilize German fiscal and monetary policy, even when an opportunity presented itself in the middle of 1920. A common calculation among Germany's financial elites was that runaway currency depreciation would force the Allied powers into revising the reparations settlement, since the effect would be to cheapen German exports relative to American, British and French manufacturers. It was true, as far as it went, that the downward slide of the mark boosted German exports. What the Germans overlooked was that the inflation-induced boom of 1920-22, at a time when the US and UK economies were in the depths of a post-war recession, caused an even bigger surge in imports, thus negating the economic pressure they had hoped to exert. At the heart of the German hyperinflation was a miscalculation. When the French cottoned on to the insincerity of official German pledges to fulfill their reparations commitments, they drew the conclusion that reparations would have to be collected by force and invaded the industrial Ruhr region. The Germans reacted by proclaiming a general strike ('passive resistance'), which they financed with yet more paper money. The hyperinflationary endgame had now arrived..."⁹³⁸

⁹³⁸ Ferguson, *The Ascent of Money*, New York: The Penguin Press, 2008, pp. 102-104.

"Life was transformed," writes Piers Brendon, "into a bizarre paperchase. Patrons of restaurants found their meals becoming more expensive as they ate. Factory workers saw their wages shrinking in value as they queued to collect them. However fast they ran to the shops, prices outstripped them. Shopkeepers, indeed, looked on their customers almost as thieves for taking goods which could only be replaced at prohibitive expense. Peasants refused to sell their produce for paper money, saying: 'We don't want any Jew-confetti from Berlin.' Beggars rejected anything less than a million marks. New notes appeared, issued by municipalities and acceptable locally. Forgeries added to the confusion. Some people paid in kind: theatre seats were sold for a couple of eggs; prostitutes offered their services for cigarettes. Interest rates rose to 20 per cent a day and loans were made in rye or coal or even electric kilowatts. Bureaucrats in the Finance Ministry took part of their salaries in potatoes.

"Those who possessed foreign currency were impossibly rich, for no one had enough marks to change anything but the smallest denominations. Ten dollars would purchase a large modern house. Foreign profiteers took advantage of the situation to make a killing, while American tourists lit their cigarettes with million-mark notes and pasted larger denominations on their suitcases, further exacerbating German chauvinism. In the words of one contemporary, 'Germany was a rapidly decomposing corpse, on which the birds of prey were swooping down from all directions.' At the height of the inflation, according to a familiar story, a woman who left a basket of marks on the pavement came back to find the basket stolen and the marks in the gutter. Currency notes were used as lavatory paper. Germans talked of the death of money. Stephan Zweig minted a compelling metaphor for that awesome demise in his story of a blind man whose family had secretly sold his cherished collection of drawings in order to keep alive, replacing them in his portfolio with blank sheets of paper. In the same vein, Hitler dismissed the Treaty of Versailles as a scrap of paper.

"Not everyone suffered. Landowners actually benefited, often paying off their mortgages in depreciated marks. So did industrialists, especially if they sold abroad. Trade-unionists had a measure of protection. But at a time when a pound of ersatz butter could cost a labourer's daily wage and it might take five months' earnings to buy a suit of clothes, the working class was sucked into a maelstrom of misery. Even worse off were pensioners and those living on fixed incomes. Their savings vanished and they faced not only indigence but starvation. Here was a revolution as sweeping as that of the Bolsheviks. At a stroke property was destroyed and 'the bourgeoisie was proletarianised'. Middle-class values were turned upside down: debtors were virtuous while thrift was a vice; wealth was no longer the index of worth. As one contemporary said, 'Inflation finished the process of moral decay which the war had started.'

"Crime spread: so many potato fields were raided that police had to guard them in order to preserve the seed crop. There was an increase in suicide, malnutrition, illness and emigration. Infant mortality rates rose. Economic

paralysis set in, unemployment grew, strikes and disturbances spread, shops were ransacked and towns looted. Corruption and anti-Semitism flourished – the Jews were accused of exploiting the tragedy. Germany's physical and psychic health decayed together. Life became 'madness, nightmare, desperation, chaos'. Observing that the inflation had revived Germany's 'old, bristling, savage spirit', D.H. Lawrence said: 'Money becomes insane, and people with it.' Sexual decadence seemed to be a by-product of the bankruptcy of traditional values. A foreigner exclaimed, 'Nothing brought you so much face to face with the pathological distortion of Germany's postwar mentality as the weird night life of Berlin.' Describing the way in which inflation infected everything, one historian has written that was a 'revolutionary influence much more powerful than the war itself'.

"Inevitably this crisis threatened Germany's fragile democracy. Since the State was unable to protect its citizens they were bound to look elsewhere, especially when, in September 1923, the impotent government surrendered to French coercion in the Ruhr. Many workers turned to the Communists; Saxony and Thuringia were menaced by Red revolution. Many of the dispossessed middle class were seduced by right-wing movements. None was more rabid than the National Socialist Party, which promised to restore a strong, unified Reich that was both anti-capitalist and anti-Bolshevist. And no one articulated petty-bourgeois bitterness more vehemently than its leader, Adolf Hitler, who larded his speeches with hideous invective against money-grubbing Jews.⁹³⁹ As Otto Strasser said, 'His words go like an arrow to their target, he touches each private wound on the raw, liberating the unconscious, exposing its innermost aspirations, telling it what it most wants to hear.' Damning Weimar as a 'robber's state', Hitler declared that people starving on billions must withdraw allegiance from a Republic 'built on the swindling idea of the majority'. They must embrace instead dictatorship. To financial problems Hitler had only political solutions. He aimed to smash the State which had encompassed Germany's defeat and ruin, and build one which enshrined racial purity and national greatness – with himself at its head. The shackles of the past could only be broken by his indomitable will. 'For liberation something more is necessary than an economic policy,' he declared, 'something more than industry: if a people is to become free, it needs pride and will-power, defiance, hate, hate and once again hate'. Noting that Germans needed to humiliate others in order to compensate for their own sense of mass worthlessness during the 'witches' Sabbath of devaluation', Elias Canetti thought that without it the Führer could not have induced them to participate in the destruction of the Jews."⁹⁴⁰

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⁹³⁹ According to Eckart, after Hitler was imprisoned following the failed Beer Hall putsch of 1923, he was seen pacing up and down the courtyard shouting: "I must enter Berlin like Christ in the Temple of Jerusalem and scourge out the moneylenders". (V.M.)

⁹⁴⁰ Brendon, *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s*, London: Pimlico, 2001, pp. 28-30.

Meanwhile, links were being forged between Hitler's tiny German National Socialist Labour Party (DNSAP) and the much larger *DNVP*. The mediator was Captain Ernst Röhm, "a war-disfigured army staff officer whose nickname in Munich was *the machine-gun king* because he controlled access to the Bavarian army's secret arms dumps. He liked this new little party [the Nazis] so much that he eventually joined it and became head of its paramilitary wing, the *Sturmabteilung*, or S.A. (Assault Division).

"Röhm was vital as a broker of contacts to the old Prussian elite. This, too, was central to Nazi success. In 1922/24, Hitler was very much second fiddle on the right to General Ludendorff, who'd effectively been boss of Germany in 1917-18. Being close to Ludendorff gave Hitler priceless respectability and wealthy sponsors. It also changed his own thinking in a fateful way. It was only now that the arch-Prussian idea of colonial *Living-Space* (*Lebensraum*) in the east became a central part of Hitler's ideology – it wasn't mentioned in the original 1920 Nazi manifesto at all.

"On 9 November 1923, Hitler and Ludendorff staged an attempted coup – the *Beer Hall Putsch* – in Munich, intending afterwards to march on Berlin. It was a debacle which should have ended Hitler's career there and then. But instead of a punishment fitting the crime of high treason, anti-Berlin judges in Bavaria gave him a year's fortress arrest (*Festungshaft*). This was usually reserved for army officers who'd broken the civilian law but not the military code of honour. A non-sentence like this was a distinction for ex-corporal Hitler, not a punishment at all..."⁹⁴¹

"The Beer Hall Putsch," writes Brendon, "has often been dismissed as a fiasco worthy of its name, a storm in a stein. It is true that the Nazis were dispersed by a whiff of carbine shot. But at the time the British Ambassador thought the coup 'looked very much like the beginning of civil war'. Moreover the putsch brought Hitler to national prominence, so much so that he regarded it as 'perhaps the greatest stroke of luck in my life'. The subsequent trial allowed Hitler to present himself as much more than a local rabble rouser – now he was the leader of a serious political party. He and his co-defendants were treated with the utmost indulgence and Hitler was permitted to speechify from the dock. He claimed sole responsibility for the putsch, upstaged Ludendorff and turned the court into a theatre of propaganda. 'The man who is born to be a dictator is not compelled, he wills,' Hitler said, 'he is not driven forward, he drives himself forward.' His sentence for high treason – five years' imprisonment – was so lenient as to imply that the authorities themselves had been found guilty. Hitler was now frequently acclaimed as 'Der Führer' and even his gaolers adopted the 'Heil Hitler' greeting.

"By then the mark had been stabilized. The new Currency Commissioner, Hjalmar Schacht, had introduced the Rentenmark, soon to become the Reichsmark. This was valued at a trillion old marks (of which the Reichsbank

941 Hawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

now had supplies enough to fill 300 ten-ton railway trucks) and was nominally secured on all land in Germany. The economy remained exceedingly fragile, in part because inflation had reduced funds available for investment. But high interest rates attracted foreign capital and under the Dawes Plan American subventions helped to achieve a patchy revival in Weimar fortunes. Indeed, between 1924 and 1930 Germany received more in loans from abroad than it paid in reparations. However, the country's dependency on alien investment was a sign of domestic weakness: when American credit was to be withdrawn as a result of boom and bust on Wall Street, Germany would suffer accordingly. In the meantime recovery boded ill for the Nazis and, as a British diplomat noted, 'Hitler's greatest enemy is the Rentenmark'. The Führer would have to change his tactics and hope that he could climb to power over the ruins of a new economic catastrophe. That catastrophe, when it came, was made worse because the hyper-inflation of 1923 had traumatised not just Germany but the world. In 1929 governments were so determined to protect their currencies and balance their budgets that they resisted the temptation to spend their way out of the crisis. So the Slump turned into the Depression..."⁹⁴²

It was during Hitler's cushy prison sentence that he wrote *Mein Kampf*, which "summarized much of what Hitler had said in his beer-hall speeches. Behind every one of the country's woes, be it a corrupt parliamentary system or the threat of communism, there lay a Jewish hand. His programme was clear: abrogate the Versailles Treaty, remove the Jews, punish France, build a greater Germany and invade the Soviet Union for 'living space' (*Lebensraum*)."⁹⁴³

"Hitler emerged from the Landsberg prison at the end of 1924 at almost exactly the same moment that Stalin completed the political destruction of Trotsky and established himself in a commanding position at the head of the Leninist state. The two events were connected, for Hitler now realized that he could not storm the Weimar state by force but would have to infiltrate it by creating a mass party, and the lengthening shadow of Stalin was an essential ally in this task. It was the Communist state of 1919 which first gave Hitler his base in Bavaria, bringing together in a unity of fear the 'black' Catholic separatists and the 'brown' radical-nationalists of Captain Roehm's private army [the S.A.]. The core of the party was Bavarian as well as an important group of Baltic refugees from Leninism living in Bavaria. But to take power Hitler had to break out of the Bavarian enclave and move into the industrial north. In 1925 he formed an alliance with Gregory Strasser, a radical demagogue who, with his gifted lieutenant Joseph Goebbels, preached his own brand of socialist revolution to the working class. Hitler persuaded Strasser to transform his idea of a specifically 'German revolution', with its anti-capitalist but nationalist aims, into an 'anti-Jewish revolution', which had a broader middle-class appeal. It was Strasser and Goebbels who first established Nazism as a broad movement in the north. But at the Bamberg Conference in

⁹⁴² Brendon, op. cit., p. 32-33.

⁹⁴³ Dikötter, *Dictators*, pp. 16-17.

1926 Hitler was able to assert his supremacy in the party and Goebbels transferred his allegiance..."⁹⁴⁴

He was on his way...

⁹⁴⁴ Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 277-278.

58. THE DECLINE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Superficially, Britain had done well out of the Great War: new mandates in the Middle East and new colonies in Africa; “the map, as Balfour said, had yet ‘more red on it’. ‘In the British War Cabinet’s concluding meeting before the Versailles Conference, Edwin Montague had commented drily that he would like to hear some arguments *against* Britain’s annexing the whole world.’”⁹⁴⁵ And indeed, the British Empire in 1919 covered one-quarter of the surface of the globe – the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination was not allowed to be applied in the British and French empires.

The British Dominions had voluntarily joined the mother country in the world war, and had made great contributions. Thus one in ten of Australia’s male population had been killed or wounded; the figure was one in twenty for Canada.⁹⁴⁶ India had also contributed much. The Anzac landings at Gallipoli in 1915 not only showed the loyalty of the Australians and New Zealanders to the Mother Country: they were nation-building events.

However, the loyalty of the Dominions could no longer be counted on. Perhaps the first sign of this came in August, 1922, when Lloyd George, taking the Greek side in their struggle with Turkey, prepared to defend Chanak against the advancing Turks. “He assumed that the Empire would endorse his decision without hesitation. This did not happen. Only New Zealand responded automatically and at once. The Australian Prime Minister rebuked Lloyd George in the strongest terms for suggesting that Australia should join in a British war with which Australians were not concerned. The South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts responded with the equivalent of a diplomatic illness. He would not be able to reply to the British Government’s request for troops to be used against Turkey until after his return from a visit to the Transvaal which would take at least a fortnight. The Canadians prevaricated too. The then powerful India office in Whitehall, strongly supported by the Viceroy, argued that it would not be possible to expect the Indian army, largely Moslem, to take up arms against another Islamic country – Turkey.

“None of these disputes was publicly acknowledged at the time. But the Chanak incident marked the beginning of a family quarrel within the British Empire, which weakened it. The mother country’s children were no longer prepared to war simply because mother said so...”⁹⁴⁷

In fact, the Empire represented a mixed picture of strength and weakness. “Outside Europe,” writes Robert Tombs, “the British Empire emerged from the war more powerful – certainly bigger, with 500 million people – than ever. It had acquired major tracts of Africa and much of the Middle East under League of Nations ‘mandates’: theoretically, the League was placing former German or

⁹⁴⁵ Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, London: Penguin, 1999. P. 414.

⁹⁴⁶ Rebecca Fraser, *A People’s History of Britain*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2003, p. 669.

⁹⁴⁷ Mark Arnold-Foster, *The World at War*, London: Collins, 1973, p. 6.

Turkish possessions under the care of benevolent British administration. Its main global rivals, Germany and Russia, had been eliminated. A simplified 'Basic English' was created to be the new world language. Many foreign observers regarded the empire as by far the greatest world power. In terms of population and resources, it clearly was. But those resources were controlled by a complexity of governments and peoples. In war, they might cooperate. In peace, they did not. The war effort, furthermore, created expectations of reward. The Dominions themselves took German colonies - South Africa took German South-West Africa, Australia took part of New Guinea. White settlers in African colonies were constantly insubordinate. The Statute of Westminster (1931) formally recognized the legal independence of the Dominions within a 'Commonwealth' in which they were as independent as they chose to be.⁹⁴⁸

"When new global dangers appeared, the Dominions proved even more inclined to isolation, cost-cutting, appeasement and wishful thinking than Britain, and the need to defend them was an extra burden.

"Following the solidarity displayed during the war, the empire commanded general approval in Britain. There were practically no absolute anti-imperialists within the Labour Party. The public considered it a beneficent and largely willing association, notwithstanding widespread unrest. The empire could only justified in England by the belief that it was a 'family' based on loyalty - a vision that the monarchy did much to support - and was bringing general progress. The term 'Commonwealth' became popular well before it was officially adopted. This view of empire required considerable wishful thinking, but it was not wholly false. There were now some subsidized development projects, and with the onset of the Great Depression imperial trading preference became a reality. As new dangers arose from states motivated by totalitarian and racist expansionism, the empire provided some protection for its more exposed elements.

"But the barbarism of the war had shaken the psychological bondage of the empire's subjects. European superiority was no longer intellectually or physically unchallengeable. The economic shockwaves of the war and a postwar slump affected the colonized peoples. There was unrest in Nyasaland, Ceylon, Somaliland, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq and the West Indies. India was in a state of sporadic rebellion, in which regional and religious tensions were accompanied by rising political support for the nationalist Congress Party. Palestine saw increasing friction between Jewish settlers and the native population. The Russian Revolution and conflict in Ireland created apprehension of 'a world movement', as Balfour put it, 'plainly discernable on every continent ... We are only at the beginning of our troubles.' A senior

⁹⁴⁸ This followed on the Imperial Conference of 1926, which "fashioned a new entity from the old self-governing dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, giving it the Cromwellian name 'Commonwealth'. It did not [for the time being] embrace non-white colonies." (Simon Jenkins, *A Short History of England*, London: Profile, 2011, p. 236) (V.M.)

general warned of being 'spread all over the world, strong nowhere, weak everywhere'."⁹⁴⁹

Imperialism was no longer respectable in the eyes of many, and had to be justified. Thus "the British military occupation of Egypt in 1882 had been primarily intended to (and did in fact) stabilize Egyptian finances, in the interests not only of British investors but also of European investors generally. However, it was a long-standing diplomatic embarrassment. Between 1882 and 1922 Britain felt obliged to promise the other powers no fewer than sixty-six times that she would end her occupation of Egypt. It did not happen, and from the moment Egypt was occupied, Britain found herself at a diplomatic disadvantage when trying to check analogous expansion by her two main imperial rivals."⁹⁵⁰

As if conscious that it was time to hand over global supremacy to another power, in the Allied Naval Conference of November, 1921 in Washington, Britain agreed to scrap hundreds of thousands of tons of capital ships, and to fix the ratio of the American, British and Japanese fleets to 5:5:3.⁹⁵¹ Under pressure from the Americans, the British jettisoned their alliance with Japan, which angered the Japanese, significantly weakened Britain's defence of her Far Eastern colonies, and was to have serious effects in World War Two... It seemed that Britain no longer ruled the waves, but was looking to hand over the mantle of liberal empire and global hegemony as soon as possible – an enormous change, reflecting Britain's consciousness that she was tired and over-stretched, and needed to retrench...

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The biggest worry for the British was India, where, as Alan Tooze writes, "the upsurge in the Indian Home Rule movement was so massive that it caused Lloyd George's coalition on 20th August 1917 grudgingly to define the trajectory of the British Empire as one of 'responsible government' for India. What this meant in practice was a ramshackle constitutional scheme including a tiered system of representative councils, which were first elected on a highly restricted franchise, in 1920. In the wake of the massacre of Amritsar⁹⁵² and the radicalisation of the Indian nationalist movement, such concessions were too little, too late. But they marked a caesura in a double sense. They were both the last gasp of the 19th-century vision of liberal empire, and the opening chapter in the turbulent history of mass democracy in modern India."⁹⁵³

⁹⁴⁹ Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, pp. 658-660.

⁹⁵⁰ Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 41.

⁹⁵¹ Tooze, *The Deluge*, p. 397.

⁹⁵² "In April 1919, at Amritsar, some 400 people were coldly shot down in what Churchill called a 'monstrous' and 'sinister' 'terrorism' and 'racial humiliation'. The Government of India Act (1919) conceded some provincial self-government and a wider franchise." (Tombs, op. cit., p. 661) Andrew Roberts (*A History of the English-Speaking Peoples since 1900* (London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 149-153) has defended the action of the British General Dyer. (V.M.)

⁹⁵³ Tooze, "365 Days that Shook the World", *Prospect*, January, 1917, p. 26.

An important and unusual enemy of British rule at this time was Mahatma K. Gandhi. A vegetarian Hindu and supposed champion of the poor, “his *ashram*, with his own very expensive ‘simple’ tastes and innumerable ‘secretaries’ and handmaidens, had to be heavily subsidizd by three merchant princes. As one of his circle observed: ‘It costs a great deal of money to keep Gandhi living in poverty.’”⁹⁵⁴

As Jon Wilson writes, Gandhi was born in India in 1860, studied in London, “and became involved in politics while working as a lawyer in South Africa. Campaigning against the discrimination Indians suffered in the then British colony, Gandhi found that the most effective way to oppose the British government was through peaceful protest. The imperial state was founded on the use of force, and Gandhi argued that violent protest would lead to overwhelming retaliation, creating cycles of violence that would ultimately fuel the regime’s power. The alternative was to treat the enemy as a moral being. The protester would then offer their own suffering in an appeal to the enemy’s conscience and, in doing so, limit the use of violence on each side.

“As the scholar Karuna Mantena argues, Gandhi was not an idealistic saint trapped in a world of violence and venal passion. Rather, he was an arch-political realist who developed tactics for opposing imperial rule that more or less worked. He believed that British rule in India could survive only with Indian support, urging his compatriots to recognize that ‘one hundred thousand Englishmen need not frighten three hundred million human beings’, and concluding that British control seemed proof of some kind of Indian collaboration. If Indians withdraw from this relationship to create their own institutions and way of life, he suggested, British rule would collapse. And, eventually, it did. The British didn’t choose to leave India in 1947. They had no choice but to go – because by then so few Indians acquiesced in their power.”⁹⁵⁵

In 1920 the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres became known in India. Indian Muslims, furious at the humiliation of the Turkish Sultan and Muslim Turkey in the Treaty (although Turkey in fact gained much from it), now joined with the Hindus for the first time in demanding Home Rule for India. Gandhi exploited this situation, and in February, 1922 after some of his followers burned to death twenty-three police officers in Uttar Pradesh, London demanded his arrest. However, the Viceroy, Lord Reading, held back. “Gandhi must be arrested, but first the government of India should solidify its moral position by removing the basic grievance that had driven the Muslim population into Gandhi’s arms. To restore its authority in India on liberal terms, the empire must reach a just peace with Turkey. Without gaining the backing of the full British cabinet, [Secretary of State for India, Edwin] Montagu approved a statement in the press demanding for India a hearing on the question of Turkey. India’s services in the Great War were undeniable. In

⁹⁵⁴ Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, p. 471.

⁹⁵⁵ Wilson, “A History of Non-Violence”, *World Histories*, vol. 8, February/March, 2018, p. 7.

Mesopotamia and Palestine, Indian Muslims had laid down their lives for the empire. On their behalf, the government of India insisted that there must be a withdrawal of all British and French forces from Constantinople, the traditional seat of the Khalif. The Sultan's 'suzerainty over the holy places' must be restored. The Greeks must withdraw altogether from Anatolia. And the final boundary line with Greece must preserve Ottoman Thrace for Turkey.

"Not surprisingly, the Foreign Secretary, George Curzon, was outraged. That 'a subordinate branch of the British government 6000 miles away' should seek to dictate to London 'what line it thinks I should pursue' was 'quite intolerable'. If the government of India was 'entitled to express and publish its views about what we do in Smyrna or Thrace, why not equally in Egypt, the Sudan, Palestine, Arabia, the Malay peninsula or any other part of the Muslim world?' This question, which went to the heart of the problem of how to govern a global empire under democratic conditions, was never answered. Instead, on 9 March 1922 Montagu was forced to resign. The following day, without uproar, Gandhi was arrested. Within a week, the man with whom Montagu and Reading had hope to negotiate a new foundation for a liberal empire was sentenced to six years in prison...

"Up to the very end, Montague insisted that his policy in India had been undone by the irrational aggression of the Turkophobes. Even in his last speech as Secretary of State for India to the House of Commons he doggedly held fast to Lord Macaulay's famous justification of empire as a vehicle for progress. 'India should realize,' Montague insisted, 'that, denied her by the British parliament... if India will believe in our good faith... if she will accept the offer that has been made to her by the British parliament, then she will find that the British Empire, for which so many Indians and Englishmen have so recently died, and which at this present moment is saving the world, will give her liberty not license, freedom but not anarchy, progress but not stampede, peace and the fulfilment of the best destinies that the future can offer.' But Montague ignored the contradictions repeatedly demonstrated by the liberal imperial model. Liberal visions were necessary to sustain empire in the sense that they offered fundamental justifications. But they were always likely to be reduced to painful hypocrisy by the real practices of imperial power and by the resistance of those subjected to empire. In the 1850s the liberal vision of empire articulated in the 1830s had been swept away by the Indian Mutiny. A full revolution of the cycle from liberation to repression was avoided in India in 1917-22. But the oscillation between liberalism and reaction was now accelerating into a dizzying and unrelenting switchback that sapped the will of empire..."⁹⁵⁶

"In 1929," writes Tombs, "the Viceroy, the moderate Tory Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax), offered talks to Indian nationalists with a view to India attaining future 'Dominion status', like Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Although Churchill insisted in 1930 that Indian independence could not

⁹⁵⁶ Tooze, *op. cit.*, pp. 389-390, 391.

happen in 'any period which we can even remotely foresee' – the usual reasons being that India was too big, too diverse, too backward, too divided and too turbulent to exist without a firm but fair British umpire – in fact rapid steps towards self-government were being taken, under unrelenting political, moral and economic pressure from the embarrassingly peaceful Mohandas Gandhi, a hero to many in England, and whose popular campaigns undermined the deference to British was authority on which imperial rule depended."⁹⁵⁷

In 1930 Gandhi set off on a "salt march" to protest against a tax on the production and sale of salt. At the end of it, he said: "I cannot withhold my compliments from the government for the policy of complete non-interference adopted by them throughout the march. I wish I could believe this non-interference was due to any change of heart or policy. The only interpretation I can put on this non-interference is that the British Government, powerful though it is, is sensitive to world opinion which will not tolerate repression of extreme political agitation which civil disobedience is, so long as disobedience remains civil and therefore necessarily non-violent." He was right: world opinion now was a significant factor influencing – and weakening – British power...

"The Baldwin government," continues Tombs, "passed the Government of India Act (1935), against the impassioned opposition of backbench imperialists led by Churchill. It established relatively democratic self-government at provincial level, in the hope of maintaining imperial control of the whole – a doomed compromise.

"The empire seemed to insiders 'a brontosaurus with huge, vulnerable limbs which the central nervous system had little capacity to protect, direct or control. Postwar economic problems made it even more than usually short of resources. Little more than a decade after its great victory, it would face the most dangerous predators in its history..."⁹⁵⁸

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Another problem region was Palestine. Lord Balfour said a year after the end of the war, "The four great powers are committed to Zionism and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desire and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land."⁹⁵⁹ However, thanks to T.E. Lawrence among others, there was an increasing appreciation of the rights of the Arab population...

"The San Remo Convention of the victorious powers decided on April 18, 1920,... to grant Britain the Mandate for Palestine and give it responsibility for

⁹⁵⁷ Tombs, op. cit., p. 661.

⁹⁵⁸ Tombs, op. cit., p. 662.

⁹⁵⁹ Balfour, in Peter Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East*, London: Penguin, 2003, pp. 164-165.

implementing the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration thus ceased to be a unilateral British declaration and became the policy of the Entente Powers, with international legal status. Because of the pro-Arab leanings of the military government, it was decided at San Remo to transfer power from the military to a civil government. Herbert Samuel, a keen British Zionist and former minister – a man of great talent and administrative experience, and also a man of action – was appointed Palestine's first high commissioner. This was a clear pro-Zionist statement by the British government, still headed by Lloyd George."⁹⁶⁰

Accordingly, the British civil government tended to favour the Jews – at first. However, in 1921 the new high commissioner Samuel Montagu, an atheist Jew, encouraged the appointment of the extremist Arab Haji Amin as Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, which “turned out to be one of the most tragic and decisive errors of the century. It is not clear whether a Jewish-Arab agreement to work together in Palestine would have been feasible even under sensible Arab leadership. But it became absolutely impossible once Haji Amin became Grand Mufti. Samuel compounded his initial misjudgement by promoting the formation of a Supreme Moslem Council, which the mufti and his associates promptly captured and turned into a tyrannical instrument of terror. Still worse, he encouraged the Palestinian Arabs to make contact with their neighbours and promote pan-Arabism. Hence the mufti was able to infect the pan-Arab movement with his violent anti-Zionism. He was a soft-spoken killer and organizer of killers. The great majority of his victims were fellow Arabs. His prime purpose was to silence moderation in Arab Palestine, and he succeeded completely. He became Britain's outstanding opponent in the Middle East, and in due course he made common cause with the Nazis and strongly supported Hitler's 'Final Solution'. But the principal victims of his unbalanced personality were the ordinary people of Arab Palestine. As the historian Elie Kedourie has well observed, 'It was the Hussainis who directed the political strategy of the Palestinians until 1947 and they led them to utter ruin.'"⁹⁶¹

The Balfour Declaration, writes Tombs, “had paid lip service to the interest of both Jews and Arabs, but by encouraging Jewish immigration and land purchase, it inevitably fuelled conflict. By the late 1920s the governor had concluded that the Jews were ungrateful, the Arabs impertinent, and the Balfour Declaration a ‘colossal blunder’. Arab uprisings in the 1930s were treated with harsh but ineffective repression combined with a promise to limit Jewish immigration and create an independent two-state Palestine, which satisfied neither side.”⁹⁶²

As Jewish immigration increased towards the end of the 1920s, Arab resentment increased and in 1929 there was a major riot of Palestinian Arabs. For each year, writes Dan Cohn-Sherbok, “there were more than 30,000 arrivals [of Jewish immigrants], and in 1935 the number grew to 62,000. In response, in

⁹⁶⁰ Anita Shapira, *Israel. A History*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2014, p. 75.

⁹⁶¹ Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix, 1995, pp. 418-419.

⁹⁶² Tombs, op. cit., p. 661.

April 1936 a major Arab uprising took place. On 7 July 1937 a commission headed by Lord Peel recommended that Jewish immigration be reduced to 12,000 a year, and restrictions were placed on land purchases. In addition a three-way partition was suggested: the coastal strip, Galilee and the Jezreel valley should be formed into a Jewish state, whereas the Judaeen hills, the Negev and Ephraim should be the Arab state. The plan was rejected by the Arabs, and another revolt took place in 1937. In the following year, the Pan-Arab Conference in Cairo adopted a policy whereby all Arab communities pledged that they would take action to prevent further Zionist expansion.

“After the failure of the tripartite plan in London in 1939 the British abandoned the policy of partition. In May 1939 a new White Paper was published stating that only 75,000 more Jews could be admitted over five years, and thereafter none except with Arab agreement...”⁹⁶³ The White Paper was issued at a sensitive time when Hitler was persecuting the Jews, and very few countries were admitting Jewish refugees. Not surprisingly, the Zionists did not like it. As Vital writes, it “pointed to the ambiguity in the expression ‘a national home for the Jewish people’ as the fundamental cause of unrest and hostility between Arabs and Jews. Affirming the 1922 interpretation given by Colonial Secretary Churchill [appointed in 1922] that the government ‘at no time contemplated the subordination of the Arabic population, language, or culture in Palestine,’ this White Paper declared ‘it was not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish state... This would be contrary to their obligations under the Mandate, as well as to the assurances which have been given to the Arab people in the pact that the Arab population of Palestine should not be made the subjects of a Jewish state against their will.’ The goal was described as an independent Palestine within ten years, in which ‘Arabs and Jews could share in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each are safeguarded.’ In such a Palestinian state, it was envisioned that ‘Jews and Arabs would be as Palestinian as English and Scottish in Britain are British...”⁹⁶⁴

“The British issued the White Paper,” writes Michael Burleigh, “to ensure that the wider Arab world, from which Britain derived 60 per cent of its oil, did not switch to the Axis side during the imminent war. As [Colonial Secretary Malcolm] MacDonald explained, ‘We could not let emotion rule our policy. We must accept the facts of the extremely dangerous prospect with absolute, unsentimental and, some people would say, even cynical realism. The Jews would be on our side in any case in the struggle against Hitler. Would the independent Arab nations adopt the same attitude?

“While this local example of appeasement did not lead to a recrudescence of the Anglo-Arab alliance of the First World War, it did mean that no major trouble jeopardized trans-Jordanian oil pipelines or threatened British bases in

⁹⁶³ Cohn-Sherbok, *Atlas of Jewish History*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 188.

⁹⁶⁴ Vital, *A People Apart. The Jews of Europe, 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, p. 33.

Egypt, even when the British heavy-handedly deposed the Egyptian Prime Minister. Nor, given the Nazis' pathological hatred of the Jews, did the British have cause to worry where the latter's sympathies might lie. The Zionist-Fascists led by Vladimir Jabotinsky were a tiny if noisy minority, although one of Jabotinsky's most devoted disciples was Menachem Begin, later leader of the Irgun terrorist organization. The majority Zionist response to a war that was existential for the Jewish people was encapsulated by David Ben-Gurion's formula that 'we shall fight with Great Britain in this war as if there were no White Paper, and we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no war.'"⁹⁶⁵

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If the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine was relatively new, that between British and Irish in Ireland was, of course, ancient, although the cause was similar in the two cases: the British encouragement of new settlers into the land without thinking about the interests of the native inhabitants. In 1798, in the middle of a major continental war, the Irish nationalists had sought Napoleon's assistance against the British, but were defeated. They did something similar now, only the Kaiser was the ally they invoked, and again they were defeated – temporarily...

In April 1916, writes Tombs, "there were an uprising in Dublin and small disturbances in Wexford and Cork. Home Rule [Irish self-government] within the United Kingdom had been voted by the Commons in May 1914, but subsequently suspended until the peace. The moderate nationalist John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, supported the war effort, hoping that a common patriotic struggle would unite Catholics and Protestants. The *Irish Times* extolled 'the spectacle of Irish Unionists and Nationalists fighting side by side in Flanders... little more than a year ago they were preparing to kill one another. Today many of them have died for one another.' This policy was widely supported, including by volunteering for the army, supporting the Red Cross, and sheltering Belgian refugees. But it was utterly rejected by radical nationalists, who feared that they were losing ground to the moderates. 'Home Rule was in the air. The overwhelming majority of the people supported Redmond... There were reports of the success of recruiting [for] the British Army... Our dream castles toppled about us with a crash... The Irish people had recognized themselves as part of England.' To disrupt this, radicals sought German assistance for an insurrection: a glorious revolt which, even if defeated, would inflame nationalism, and reap its reward when Germany won the war. On 24 April, Easter Monday, some 1,500 insurgents seized the General Post Office and other buildings in the centre of Dublin. In the ensuing conflict, 116 soldiers, 16 policemen and over 60 rebels were killed, as were a considerable number of civilians. Some 400 rebels were imprisoned in England and released after a few months; but 15 of the leaders were court-martialled and shot. Comparable punishment – and probably with greater severity – would have been inflicted in any of the belligerent countries. Yet it

⁹⁶⁵ Burleigh, *Small Wars, Far Away Places*, London: Pan, 2013, pp. 95=96.

was a political disaster, tipping much Irish opinion towards sympathy with the rebels. Nevertheless, Irishmen, including Catholic Dubliners, continued to volunteer for the British army throughout the war; and no Irish regiment ever mutinied. The well-received visit of the Irish Canadian Rangers (a predominantly Catholic regiment recruited in Quebec) to Dublin, Belfast and other Irish cities in January 1917 demonstrated that many Irish Catholics still supported the war effort eight months after the execution of the rebel leaders. However, the war polarized opinion. Sinn Fein [the Irish nationalist party] began to win by-elections at the expense of Redmond's moderate nationalists, exploiting fears (never realized, but seemingly imminent during the crisis of the great German offensive of 1918) that the military conscription recently adopted in Britain might be extended to Ireland."⁹⁶⁶

Amidst much low-level conflict, Sinn Fein set up its own symbolic parliament in January 1919. "Westminster legislated in 1920 for two Irish parliaments, in Dublin and Belfast, with a joint Council of Ireland. Sinn Fein rejected this 'partition', denied Westminster's right to legislate for Ireland, and began killing policemen and miscellaneous others, seemingly to prevent compromise by provoking conflict. Conflict duly came with retaliatory killings of Sinn Feiners and anti-Catholic violence in Ulster. The British government, trying to extricate itself from Ireland, and lacking the resources, the will and the wisdom to defuse the conflict, tried to snuff out the violence by interning activists. The weakened and demoralised Royal Irish Constabulary, mostly Catholic, was reinforced by auxiliary police, including the 10,000 'Black and Tans', mostly British former soldiers. Nationalist killings were met with a semi-official policy of reprisals, including shooting to kill and burning houses. Death squads operated on both sides. The most notorious single incident was 'Bloody Sunday', 11 November 1920, when fourteen supposed British intelligence officers were assassinated and vengeful 'Black and Tans' shot fourteen dead at a Gaelic football match in Dublin – 'Dublin's Amritsar'. In May 1921 the two Irish parliaments were elected, one dominated by Sinn Fein, the other by Ulster Unionists. A conference in London sought a solution based on an independent Ireland, with autonomy for Ulster, membership of the Commonwealth and safeguards for Britain's security. On 6 December 1921 a treaty established an 'Irish Free State' within the Commonwealth. But worsening political and sectarian murders in both Ulster and the Free State, and a refusal by many nationalists to accept the treaty, led to a three-way civil war in the summer of 1922 when Dublin government forces raided Ulster and also attacked anti-treaty rebels of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Dublin. The Dublin government sent more rebels to firing squads than the British had in 1916, and the civil war petered out in 1923. It had cost some 2,000 lives – relatively few compared, for example, with the 36,000 killed in the simultaneous civil war in Finland, or the large number of Irishmen killed in the Great War. The outcome was a grudging compromise: the Irish Free State attained independence and remained nominally a member of the Commonwealth and 'six counties' centred on Protestant Ulster became a self-governing province of the United

⁹⁶⁶ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 623.

Kingdom; but hopes of a gradual reunification of north and south and friendly relations with Britain had evaporated. It took until 1998 to return to the outcome available in 1920.”⁹⁶⁷

“The new arrangements,” writes Andrew Roberts, “led to disaster for the Protestants of the south, just as the Unionists had been predicting ever since Home Rule had first erupted onto the British political agenda half a century earlier. Protestants in the south were ‘menaced, boycotted, frightened, plundered or deprived of their land’. Houses, churches and public buildings were burnt down as were many of the country’s most beautiful stately homes, such as Palmerston in County Kildare, Castleboro in County Wexford and Desart Court in County Kilkenny. There were massacres too: fourteen Protestants were killed on a single day in West Cork in April 1922, for example. Loyal and conscientious Catholic officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary and their families were also forced to flee north to the United Kingdom, for fear of retribution from their nationalist co-religionists. It was the first and only mass displacement of any native group in the British Isles since the seventeenth century.

“The demographic statistics since 1922 are compelling: at the time of partition Catholics in the North made up approximately 34% of the six counties, whereas by the end of the century this had grown to 44% of the population, a proportion that is believed to be rising. By stark contrast, Protestants made up more than 12% of the population in the southern part of the island in 1920, yet by 2000 they were less than 2%...”⁹⁶⁸

Paradoxically, this period was also one of Irish cultural efflorescence. Sean O’Casey, George Bernard Shaw and James Joyce were among the famous Irish authors of the period (writing in English, of course). The great poet W.B. Yeats was both a Protestant, an Irish nationalist and even briefly a member of the Irish blue-shirt movement. But in general he shrank in horror from the internecine violence that is characteristic of all revolutionary nationalist movements.

For, as P.S. O’Hegarty, said: “We [the IRA] adopted political assassination as a principle. We turned the whole thoughts and passions of a generation upon blood and revenge and death; we placed gunmen, most half-educated and totally inexperienced, as dictators with powers of life and death over large areas. We decided the moral law, and said there was no law but the law of force, and the moral law answered us. Every devilish thing we did against the British army went full circle, and then boomeranged and smote us tenfold; and the cumulative effect of the whole of it was a general moral weakening and a general degradation, a general cynicism and disbelief in either virtue or decency, in goodness or uprightness or honesty.”

⁹⁶⁷ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 660-661.

⁹⁶⁸ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

The decline of the British Empire abroad reflected continuing weakness at home. The indebtedness of the state, and the failure of the economy to return to its pre-war levels, meant that life was still very difficult for the majority, in spite of the fact that the increase in welfare provisions conceded during the war were not retracted after the war. Literature reflected the mood: the most popular work of the era, A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* (1926) expressed a desire to escape to the innocence of childhood and a rural, arcadian life...

"The war," writes Tombs, "had cost Britain the financial and economic pre-eminence built up since the eighteenth century, undermining its foundations as the world's greatest creditor, exporter and financial centre. Its long-established deficit in 'visible' trade (goods, including food and raw materials) had previously been balanced by 'invisible' earnings from banking, insurance and shipping, and pushed far into surplus by overseas investment earnings. The war cost Britain more than any of the Allies and its national debt had risen to 126 percent of GDP. (In 2014 it was around 60 percent.) Its old financial strength had ebbed and its balance of payments was in the red. Worse still, Europe's overseas markets had shrunk. In 1913 Britain had been the world's biggest exporter of manufactured goods, principally in India, Germany, South America and the Dominions. During the war, production had been diverted to the war effort, cutting deliveries to overseas customers. They had found other suppliers or built their own factories. America and Japan had moved into British markets in South America and Asia, tripling their exports during the war years. India, the biggest customer for England's biggest export, cotton cloth, was being lost: the war boosted India's own textile industry, and political boycotts of British goods increased. China followed the same path. Total exports of cotton cloth fell by 71 percent between 1913 and 1937. The war had stimulated frenetic production of coal, ships, metals, aircraft, motor vehicles and chemicals. Some new industries survived and helped to transform the economy; but others depended on wartime demand – for example, replacing merchant ships sunk by submarines. The end of the war saw a collapse of both overseas and home demand in staple industries: 60 percent of the steel industry was idle; total exports fell by half between 1913 and 1937. This was the economic death of Victorian England..."⁹⁶⁹

In 1922, as A.N. Wilson writes, "Arthur Balfour, Lord President of the Council, was delegated to send a polite note reminding the European allies of their debts – in all some £1,300 million to Britain from Russia and France, and £1,450 million owing from Germany in reparations. There was no hope of recovering this debt, of course, even though Britain was forced to honour its £850 million debt to the United States. When Balfour gingerly suggested cancelling all these debts in 'one great transaction', he received an abrupt

⁹⁶⁹ Tombs, op. cit., pp. 665-666.

response from the new president, Calvin Coolidge – ‘They hired the money, didn’t they?’”⁹⁷⁰

The situation was not helped by a major misjudgement by the Conservative government: in 1925, the Chancellor, Winston Churchill, put Britain back on the Gold Standard.

Moreover, “for prestige reasons,” writes Ian Kershaw, “Britain (accompanied by a number of other countries) insisted on pre-war parity against the dollar. It was thought to be a ‘return to normalcy’ – the economic security of the pre-war era. But it was a changed world. Fixed exchange rates, in which the position of Britain, a country with serious economic problems, was pivotal, were now a source of weakness...”⁹⁷¹

“The aim,” writes Tombs, “was to restore international price stability, which export-oriented British industry sorely needed. Before 1914 the gold standard had facilitated trade and investment, and so most countries, like Britain, returned to gold if and when they could, including the United States, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Scandinavia. Moreover, gold was popular in England, being associated with cheap food. Economic historians now generally agree that the return to gold was a fundamental cause of economic disaster...”

“The system had worked before 1914 because the main financial centres – London, Paris, Berlin, New York – had cooperated to try to ensure stability, and the keystone of the system, the Bank of England, had been at the centre of a global free-trading economy willing to buy goods from countries in difficulty and invest in their growth. The Bank had when necessary provided bail-outs in foreign countries as ‘lender of last resort’. After 1918 the City was no longer the world’s banker – Wall Street was. But the Americans lacked the will to manage the world economy and, moreover, America was not a free trader. After the war Europe owed America money: the Allies owed what they had borrowed; the defeated Central Powers owed reparations. But protectionist America did not buy enough European goods to enable them to earn the money to pay their debts, and even imposed a 30 percent import tariff. Hence, Europeans depended on America lending them more money to repay what they already owed. A final problem was that America and France had deliberately undervalued their currencies, creating trade surpluses which drew in gold from other countries – by 1929 40 percent of the world’s gold was in Fort Knox. Other countries, losing gold, the guarantee of their currency, were forced to raise interest rates to halt the loss, which further slowed their economies...”⁹⁷²

The result in Britain was a devaluation of the currency and the loss in competitiveness of important exports such as coal. Competitiveness was not

⁹⁷⁰ Wilson, *After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2005, p. 202.

⁹⁷¹ Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 152-153.

⁹⁷² Tombs, op. cit., pp. 667-668.

helped by the fact that while Britain, in accordance with her pre-war policy, did not impose tariffs, Germany, one of her main competitors, did - massively. All this had a negative impact on relations between capital and labour. On the one hand, revolutionary sentiment was running high among the workers. On the other hand, employers felt they could not make concessions to the workers.

59. FROM LENIN TO STALIN

Like Roman Catholicism, the religion of Leninism logically leads to the worship of one man as the infallible incarnation of the one truth. The truth is History, the vanguard of History is the Party, and the leader of the Party is the one true interpreter of its Will. All those who oppose him are deviants who miss the mark, being consigned, in Trotsky's phrase, "to the dustbin of History". Although this teaching had always been implicit in Leninism, and although the Tenth Congress in 1921 had gone a long way, through its banning of all factionalism, to prepare the way for its universal acceptance, it was not until the rise of Stalin as dictator that it was impressed upon the hearts as well as the minds of the Bolshevik faithful. For before that time, while Lenin was the undisputed *vozhd'*, it was not clear whether there could be Leninism without Lenin. After his death from a brain haemorrhage in January, 1924, the answer was clear: just as there can be no Catholicism without the Pope, so there can be no Leninism without Lenin, and the new Lenin was *Stalin*. For, as *Pravda* wrote in January, 1934: *Now when we speak of Lenin, / It means we are speaking of Stalin.*⁹⁷³

By that time Stalin's cult of personality, his elevation to equality (at least) with Lenin, was well-established. But, as Ian Kershaw writes, it "had to be built carefully. This was not just because the man himself was so physically unprepossessing – diminutive and squat, his face dominated by a big walrus moustache and heavily pitted from smallpox – or that he was a secretive, intensely private individual, who spoke in a quiet, undemonstrative voice, his Russian couched in a strong Georgian accent that never left him. The real problem was the giant shadow of Lenin. Stalin could not be seen to be usurping the legendary image of the great Bolshevik hero and leader of the revolution. So at first Stalin trod cautiously. The celebration for his fiftieth birthday in December 1929 brought public eulogies. But the cult was still in its embryonic stages. Stalin professed modesty, publicly disowning attempts to put him on a pedestal with Lenin, and disavowed expressions of personalized devotion. It was no more than a front. Tacitly, he allowed his own elevation – amid outright falsification of his role during the revolution, in reality a fairly minor one – first to equal status with Lenin in a sort of dual cult, then to outright supremacy.

"Untold numbers of minions, time-servers and sycophants rushed to embellish in myriad ways the heroic image of the 'people's leader'. By 1935 there were more than twice as many busts and images of Stalin to be seen in central Moscow than of Lenin. And by now Stalin, no notable philosopher of Marxism, had been elevated into its preeminent theorist, his works published in numbers far exceeding those of Marx and Engels, greater even than those of Lenin. When Stalin made a relatively rare public appearance, dressed as usual in his dull party tunic, at a Moscow congress in 1935, the frenetic applause by over 2,000 delegates lasted fifteen minutes. As it finally subsided, a woman shouted out 'Glory to Stalin', and it all began again..."⁹⁷⁴

⁹⁷³ Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London, 1991, p. 413.

⁹⁷⁴ Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 269.

How did it come to that? How did perhaps the most evil and murderous tyrant in history come to rule over the home of Holy Russia, “the Israel of God”, the largest concentration of truly believing Christians in history?

Stalin’s colleagues, writes Piers Brendon, “had long been aware of his brutal propensities. The first head of the Cheka secret police, Felix Dzerzhinsky, took the job because otherwise it would have fallen to Stalin and ‘he would nurse the baby with blood alone’. But throughout the 1920s Stalin had risen by guile more than force. He was secretive and self-sufficient and he had a memory like a machine. A supreme bureaucrat, nicknamed ‘Comrade Card-index’, he had climbed to power through committees. As General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, he had outmanoeuvred his rivals one by one. He had defeated Lev Kamenev, who called him a ‘ferocious savage’, and Grigori Zinoviev, who described him as a ‘bloodthirsty Ossetian’ with ‘no idea of the meaning of conscience’. He had exiled the inspiring Trotsky, who denounced him as ‘the grave-digger of the proletarian revolution’. He had isolated the intellectual Bukharin, who regarded him as a ‘debased Genghis Khan’. By 1929 Stalin had established what Trotsky called ‘the dictatorship of the secretariat’. He was thus able to initiate a revolution more far-reaching than Lenin’s...”⁹⁷⁵

The rise to power of Stalin over the whole of Russia is one of the mysteries of Soviet history. Why should it have been the plodding, proletarian Stalin, and not Trotsky, the hero of 1905, of October and the Civil War, the brilliant writer and demagogue, the dynamic, cultivated and popular European internationalist, who conquered in their famous struggle for power in the 1920s? How did Stalin, the most undistinguished of the leading Bolsheviks from an intellectual point of view, the uncharismatic bureaucrat, the non-Russian, non-Slav, non-European ex-seminarian and bank robber, acquire, within ten years of the revolution, such ascendancy over the party and the nation?

As a provisional hypothesis to explain this fact we may apply to the Soviet situation the words of the ancient Greek historian Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*: “Inferior minds were as a rule more successful; aware of their own defects and of the intelligence of their opponents, to whom they felt themselves inferior in debate, and by whose versatility of intrigue they were afraid of being surprised, they struck boldly and at once. Their enemies despised them, were confident of detecting their plots, and thought it needless to effect by violence what they could achieve by their brains, and so were caught off guard and destroyed.”

⁹⁷⁵ Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, London: Pimlico, 2001, p. 197.

In agreement with this hypothesis, there is plenty of evidence that Trotsky grossly underestimated Stalin, “the outstanding mediocrity of our Party”, as he said to Sklyansky. Boris Bazhanov, Stalin’s secretary during the mid-twenties, confirms Isaac Deutscher’s opinion that “Trotsky felt it beneath his dignity to cross swords with a man as intellectually undistinguished and personally contemptible as Stalin.”⁹⁷⁶

Trotsky refused to indulge in the kind of political skulduggery that Stalin excelled in, especially the tactic of “divide and conquer”. Stalin’s very obscurity, the stealthy but steady way in which he acquired power, lulled his opponents into inactivity. Trotsky was like a hare, opening up a large lead very quickly but then sitting back and preening his whiskers, while Stalin the tortoise crept past him to the finishing-line. And indeed, we know that he was vain and arrogant, “treasuring his historic role”, in Lunacharsky’s words, in the looking-glass of his imagination. For, already in his teens, Trotsky had manifested this besetting weakness. “The fundamental essence of Bronstein’s personality,” explained G.A. Ziv, who knew him then, “was to demonstrate his will, to tower above everyone, everywhere and always to be first.”⁹⁷⁷ Only to Lenin did he concede precedence (and that only from the summer of 1917 – before that, he had been a fierce critic of him). Stalin, too, was vain, but he hid this fault more carefully...

In any case, Stalin was far more talented than Trotsky supposed. He was a skilled and tenacious guerrilla fighter, bank-robber and organizer in the pre-revolutionary period; and during his numerous exiles and escapes from exile he acquired endurance, prudence and ingenuity. The Western leaders and diplomats who met him in the Second World War admired his toughness, realism and cleverness – sometimes even his supposed moral qualities!⁹⁷⁸ And he outmanoeuvred them time and again... He was a good judge of character, and could be attractive, strange as it may seem, to women, without ever being controlled by them. He knew several languages, had a fine voice, composed poetry, liked to instruct people in art and music, and read voraciously.⁹⁷⁹

In the opinion of the diplomat-defector Fyodor Raskolnikov, Stalin’s “fundamental trait” was a “superhuman strength of will” that “suffocates, destroys the individuality of people who come under his influence”.⁹⁸⁰ At the same time, if he judged that imposing his will was not good politics, he could take the slower, gentler method of patient persuasion, even making concessions to his opponent. That, for example, is what he tried to with the stubborn Finns in 1939, invading their land only when persuasion failed.

⁹⁷⁶ Bazhanov, “Stalin Closely Observed”, in G. Urban (ed.), *Stalinism*, Maurice Temple Smith, 1982; Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky: 1929-1940*, Oxford University Press, 1963.

⁹⁷⁷ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 201.

⁹⁷⁸ Jonathan Fenby, *Alliance*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 16.

⁹⁷⁹ According to Richard Overby, “in the 1930s his library counted 40,000 volumes. He wrote extensively both before 1917 and in the 1920s, works and speeches that ran to thirteen volumes when they were published” (*The Dictators*, London, p. 9).

⁹⁸⁰ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 709.

He could not match Trotsky in oratory, and yet this, too, he turned to his advantage, since it marked him out as a genuine proletarian, which Trotsky certainly was not: in the eyes of rough Bolsheviks from the provinces, writes Sebastian Sebag Montefiore, "his flat quiet public speaking was an asset, a great improvement on Trotsky's oratorical wizardry. His very faults, the chip on the shoulder, the brutality and fits of irrational temper, were the Party's faults. 'He was not trusted but he was the man the Party trusted,' admitted Bukharin. 'He's like the symbol of the Party, the lower strata trust him.' But above all, reflected the future secret police chief, Beria, he was 'supremely intelligent', a political 'genius'. However rude or charming he was, 'he dominated his entourage with his intelligence'." ⁹⁸¹

In fact, Trotsky was more impressed by Stalin than he liked to admit, and foresaw his triumph earlier than most. As Norman Davies writes, "Trotsky saw it coming: in 1924 he was correctly predicting that 'the gravedigger of the Party of the Revolution' would take over: 'The dialectics of history have already hooked him and will raise him up. He is needed by all of them, by the tired radicals, by the bureaucrats, by the nepmen, by the kulaks [!], by the upstarts, by all the sneaks that are crawling out of the upturned soil of the revolution... He speaks their language, and knows how to lead them. Stalin will become the dictator of the USSR..." ⁹⁸² As Montefiore writes: "Stalin impressed Trotsky, whose description reveals why he lost their struggle for power. 'Stalin was very valuable behind the scenes,' he wrote. 'He did have the knack of convincing the average run of leaders, especially the provincials.' He 'wasn't regarded as the official leader of the Party,' says Sagirashvili, another Georgian Menshevik in Petrograd throughout 1917, but 'everyone listened to what he had to say, including Lenin – he was a representative of the rank and file, one who expressed its real views and moods', which were unknown to émigrés like Trotsky. Soso [Stalin] was the 'unquestioned leader' of the Caucasians. Lenin, says Sagirashvili, 'felt that behind him stood countless leaders from the provinces'. While Trotsky was prancing on the stage at the Circus, Stalin was finding new allies such as the young man he had unceremoniously kicked off the Bureau, Molotov." ⁹⁸³

There was another aspect to Trotsky's vanity that placed him at a disadvantage in relation to Stalin. As Edmund Wilson has shown, Trotsky was a deeply committed believer in History, and in the ultimate triumph of international Socialism under History's aegis. ⁹⁸⁴ But it was self-evident to him that such a great movement must have great leaders – educated, internationally minded men who had absorbed all the riches of bourgeois culture, decisive men of action who would jump to the forefront of the masses and be immediately accepted by them.

⁹⁸¹ Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, London: Phoenix, 2004, p. 50.

⁹⁸² Davies, *Europe*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 960.

⁹⁸³ Montefiore, *Young Stalin*, London: Phoenix, 2007, pp. 333-334.

⁹⁸⁴ Wilson, *To the Finland Station*, London: Fontana, 1940.

Lenin fitted this role, which is why Trotsky, from August, 1917 onward, accepted his leadership unquestioningly. But Stalin, the uncouth Asiatic, did *not* fit this role. Trotsky could not see how History could anoint *him*, of all people, to be the leader of the revolutionary movement. Perhaps this betrayed a certain lack of culture and historical acumen on Trotsky's part. After all, the ultimate victor in the great French revolution was the provincial, Napoleon. Stalin, too, was a provincial – and he had studied Napoleon...

Trotsky's fanatical faith in History as a kind of substitute for God (he once spoke of "the great grace of History") was indeed a major bonus at those moments when History seemed to be at her most active – in 1905 and 1917-21.⁹⁸⁵ At such times fiery ardour, disregard of obstacles and the infirmities of men, firm faith in the goal and hope in its attainment, are at a premium. And these were the times when the plodding, cautious Stalin did not shine – although he did not lose ground, either.

But in the ebb of revolutionary fervour, when History seemed to have hidden her face from her devotees, different qualities were required – patience above all, but also hard, detailed, unglamorous work. These were qualities possessed by Stalin, and these were the years – 1906-16 and 1921-27 – when he advanced most rapidly up the ladder of power. Moreover, he continued to show faith in his goddess even in the most difficult times, as during his Siberian exile during the First World War.

"Even this fanatical Marxist," writes Montefiore, "convinced that the progress of history would bring about revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat, must have sometimes doubted if he would ever return. Even Lenin doubted the Revolution, asking Krupskaya, 'Will we ever live to see it?' Yet Stalin never seems to have lost faith. 'The Russian Revolution is as inevitable as the rising of the sun,' he had written back in 1905 and he had not changed his view. 'Can you prevent the sun from rising?'"⁹⁸⁶

In 1919 the Central Committee created the "Orgburo" (Organizational Bureau) "to manage the apparatus under Stalin's command. Hence, even before becoming General Secretary in [April] 1922, Stalin controlled major appointments, including those of provincial party secretaries;⁹⁸⁷ he thereby shaped the composition of party conferences and congresses, a crucial asset in the power struggle of the 1920s. Stalin was also the head of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate (*Rabkrin*), another organ of paramount influence."⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸⁵ Bertram Wolff, *Three Who Made a Revolution*.

⁹⁸⁶ Montefiore, *Young Stalin*, p. 305.

⁹⁸⁷ Orlando Figes writes: "During 1922 alone more than 10,000 provincial officials were appointed by the Orgburo and the Secretariat" (*Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, p. 173). (V.M.)

⁹⁸⁸ Daniel T. Orlovsky, "Russia in War and Revolution 1914-1921", in Gregory L. Frazee (ed.). *Russia. A History*, Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 294-295.

Moreover, he was the commissar in charge of nationalities who created the federal treaty between the central power and the nation-republics that legally created the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922. Here he showed his ruthless cunning and deceitfulness on a vitally important issue – the destruction of the last vestiges of independence of the nation-republics. “Writing to Lenin, he complained that ‘the young generation of communists in the borderlands refuses to treat playing at independence as a mere game, stubbornly taking the words of independence at their face value and just as stubbornly demanding from us the implementation to the letter of the constitutions of the independent republics.’

“Documentary evidence shows that, according to the plan he had worked out, the Central Committee in a secret directive commanded the republics’ central committees to instruct their governments to express their voluntary wish (!) to form a union. There were no referenda, even though they were declared obligatory in Lenin’s 1917 ‘Decree on Peace’. A union engineered by deception and with no regard for the will of the peoples...”⁹⁸⁹

From 1922, when Lenin and Kamenev engineered Stalin’s appointment to the powerful post of General Secretary⁹⁹⁰, they were giving it to an undoubtedly clever, industrious and competent man, ruthless and deceptive in the best traditions of the Bolshevik Party. Trotsky, however, frittered away the enormous advantage given him by his reputation as a war-leader by refusing to build up a political power-base, or appeal to the mass of the party against the growing centralization of power in the Politburo, or in any way to pander to the vanities and jealous susceptibilities of his colleagues. Thus he elicited their contempt by pointedly reading French novels while the Politburo was in session. Through his arrogance, Trotsky made enemies easily – and one of the first was Stalin. Thus when, at the London Congress of 1907, Trotsky attacked the bank robberies that Stalin had organized on Lenin’s behalf, Stalin was hurt, later talking about Trotsky’s “beautiful uselessness”. Trotsky again embittered Stalin by justly attacking his conduct at Tsaritsyn (later Stalingrad) in 1918 during the Civil War.

⁹⁸⁹ Victor Swoboda, letter to *The Independent*, London, August 30, 1991, p. 18.

⁹⁹⁰ The attainment of this post was the critical step in Stalin’s career. It meant, as Niall Ferguson explains, that “As the only person with positions on all three of the most powerful Party institutions – the politburo, orgburo and secretariat – and, as the apparatchik with by far the largest staff, Stalin set about establishing his control by a combination of administrative rigour and personal deviousness. He quickly established his loyalties in the localities and, crucially, in the secret police. He developed the list of senior functionaries known as the nomenklatura so that (as he told the Twelfth Party Congress in April 1923) ‘people who occupy these position are capable of implementing directives, comprehending those directive, accepting those directives as their own and bringing them to life’ The business directorate gave him power over much more than just officials’ expenses; its ‘secret department’, hidden behind steel doors, became an agency for intra-party denunciation and investigations. And the government phone system – the *vertutshka* – and telegram cipher unit gave him control over communications, including the power to eavesdrop on others” (*The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 228).

Unfortunately for Trotsky, Stalin's nature was not such as could shrug off personal insults. He was a bully. But, as Robert Service puts it, "he was an extremely sensitive bully".⁹⁹¹

And that gave him the defining trait of his nature: *vengefulness*. Thus "at a boozy dinner, Kamenev asked everyone round the table to declare their greatest pleasure in life. Some cited women, others earnestly replied that it was the progress of dialectical materialism towards the workers' paradise. Then Stalin answered: 'My greatest pleasure is to choose one's victim, prepare one's plans minutely, slake an implacable vengeance, and then go to bed. There's nothing sweeter in the world.'..."⁹⁹²

This cynical vengefulness is the critical element in Stalin's character, the element that truly distinguishes him from his colleagues. Not that vengefulness was not characteristic of the whole revolutionary movement. But Stalin possessed it to a quite exceptional degree. It appeared early in his life. He felt vengeful towards his father, who used to beat him. Again, Vershak writes: "Stalin's comrades in the seminary circle say that soon after his expulsion [from Tiflis seminary], they were in turn expelled as the result of a denunciation by Stalin to the rector. He did not deny the accusation, but justified the deed by saying that the expelled students, having lost their right to become priests, would become good revolutionaries..." Again, in 1930 the Georgian Menshevik newspaper, *Brdzolis Kkhma*, wrote: "From the earliest days of his activity among the workers, Djughashvili [Stalin] attracted attention by his intrigues against the outstanding Social Democratic leader, Sylvester Jibladze. He was warned but took no notice, continuing to spread slanders with the intention of discrediting the recognized representative of the local organization. Brought before a party tribunal, he was found guilty of unjust slander, and was unanimously excluded from the Tiflis organization."

Again, Iremashvili relates what Stalin said to him on the death of his first wife, Ekaterina: "This creature softened my stony heart. She is dead, and with her have died my last warm feelings for all human beings." Iremashvili comments: "From the day he buried his wife, he indeed lost the last vestige of human feelings. His heart filled with the unutterably malicious hatred which his cruel father had already begun to engender in him while he was still a child. Ruthless with himself, he became ruthless with all people."

One should not discount the importance attached to the death of Stalin's first wife. It was after the death of Tsar Ivan IV's first wife, Anastasia Romanova, that he became "the Terrible", cruel and rapacious. Ivan's decimation of the boyars through his *oprichnina* in the 16th century bears a striking resemblance to Stalin's of the Communist Party through the NKVD in the 1930s; and Stalin showed great interest in the Terrible Ivan.

⁹⁹¹ Service, *Stalin*, London: Pan, p. 247.

⁹⁹² Montefiore, *Young Stalin*, p. 309.

In the period 1923-26 Stalin and his cronies churned out endless propaganda against Trotsky, while the Opposition of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev proved itself inept and divided. Indeed, it was not their ineffective opposition, but, Lenin's Testament with its expressed plea that Stalin be removed as organizational secretary, that most disturbed the budding dictator. Several times he offered to resign, but each time the Central Committee, packed with his stooges, refused his request.

For these years we have the invaluable testimony of Bazhanov, a secretary of the Politburo. He said that Stalin's sole concern during this period "was to outwit his colleagues and lay his hands on the reins of unrestricted power". He accused Stalin of murdering Frunze and Sklyansky. "It was clear to me already in those early years that Stalin was a vindictive Asiatic, with fear, suspicion and revenge deeply embedded in his soul. I could tell from everything he said and left unsaid, his tastes, preferences and demeanour, that he would recoil from nothing, drive every issue to its absurd extreme and send men to their deaths without hesitation if they stood in his way."

Bazhanov considers Trotsky to have been potentially as ruthless as Stalin. But there was an important difference between the two kinds of ruthlessness. Trotsky's was not a personally directed emotion but a kind of impersonal passion stemming directly from his faith in the revolution. As David Deutscher said (perhaps over-generously): "His judgement remained unclouded by any personal emotion against Stalin, and severely objective." Stalin, on the other hand, had the great advantage of really hating his opponent. Deutscher suggests that Stalin must have had "better qualities and emotions, such as intellectual ambition and a degree of sympathy with the oppressed, without which no young man would ever join a persecuted revolutionary party"⁹⁹³. But he produces no evidence in support of this dubious statement. And even he had to admit that Stalin's betrayal of the Warsaw rising in 1944 could have been motivated, not by political expediency, but by nothing else than "that unscrupulous rancour and insensible spite of which he had given so much proof in the great purges".⁹⁹⁴

But hatred and ambition, without intelligence, accomplishes little. And here we must revise the simplistic notion that Trotsky was intelligent and Stalin stupid. Kotkin sums up Stalin's "stupidity" well: "Stalin emerged as a leader of acute political intelligence and bottomless personal resentment..."

"His demonic disposition, which the experience of *this* kind of rule in *this* place heightened, never overwhelmed his ability to function at the highest level. Physically, he continued to suffer from frequent bouts of flu and fever, stomach ailments, dental problems, and severe pain in his joints, but he proved

⁹⁹³ Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast*, p. 455.

⁹⁹⁴ Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography*, Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 524. This spite may have been linked with the defeat that the Poles inflicted on the Red Army near Warsaw in 1920, for which Stalin bore some responsibility.

hearty enough to be a hands-on ruler of one-sixth of the earth's surface. His capacity to work was prodigious, his zeal for detail unquenchable. He received 100 or even 200 documents a day, some of substantial length, and he read many of them, often to the end, scribbling comments or instructions on them. He initiated or approved untold personnel appointments, goaded minions in relentless campaigns, attended myriad congresses and ceremonies bearing the burden of instruction, assiduously followed the public and private statements of cultural figures, edited novels and plays, and prescreened films. He pored over a voluminous flow of intelligence reports and lengthy interrogation protocols of accused spies, wreckers, counterrevolutionaries, traitors. He wrote and rewrote the texts of decrees, newspaper editorials, and his own speeches, confident in his own abilities. Very occasionally he made grammatical mistakes in Russian, his second language, but he wrote accessibly, using rhetorical questions, catchphrases, enumeration. The fools were the ones who took him for a fool..."⁹⁹⁵

As for Trotsky, he was indeed a brilliant intellectual, one of the most acute judges of the national and international scene, not only in politics but also in culture. Not for nothing did Deutscher call him a "prophet". But he had his weaknesses apart from the vanity that we have already mentioned.

Bazhanov says that he was naïve with the naïveté that comes from fanaticism. Lunacharsky said that he was a bad organizer. These two faults were linked to a third, which may be called a kind of stupidity: his blindly optimistic faith in the infallibility of the party. As he wrote to Zinoviev: "The party in the last analysis is always right, because the party is the single historic instrument given to the proletariat for the solution of its fundamental problems... I know that one must not be right *against* the party."

It was because of this faith in the party – and in Lenin – that Trotsky accepted the ban on factionalism at the Tenth Party Congress in 1921 and refrained from any anti-Stalinist activity that might have been interpreted as factionalist, leaving the field open to Stalin's faction.

And yet he understood better than anybody what this "egocentralist" restriction of free speech within the party would lead to. (At the Thirteenth Party Congress in January 1924 Stalin used it to try to expel Trotsky from the Central Committee.) As he had declared several years earlier: "The organization of the party takes the place of the party itself; the Central Committee takes the place of the organization; and finally the dictator takes the place of the Central Committee."

Why, then, did he not protest when he saw Stalin attaining supreme power by precisely these means, using his position as General Secretary to fill the party with men loyal to himself alone? Partly because, as we have seen, he underestimated Stalin. And partly because, after Lenin's death in 1924, he did

⁹⁹⁵ Kotkin, *Stalin. Waiting for Hitler. 1929-1941*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 303.

not want to appear to be stepping too eagerly into Lenin's shoes. But mainly because he simply trusted in the Party to get it right in the long run.

Stalin also believed in the Party. But the Party would become his own creation, and so be manipulated by him... The Party was always right because Stalin was always right...

This attitude of Trotsky's persisted for a long time, even after he had been expelled from the country and the horrors of the First Five-Year-Plan had revealed the extent of Stalin's "bureaucratic collectivist" heresy. As late as October, 1932, Trotsky refused to support a "Remove Stalin!" slogan because it might encourage counter-revolution. Instead, he proposed the formation of a Fourth International opposed to the Stalin-controlled Comintern - but only after Hitler (aided by the Comintern's refusal to form a Popular Front with the other left-wing parties) had come to power in Germany. Even then he said that this new International should have jurisdiction only up to, but not beyond, the frontiers of the USSR. And it was only in October, 1933 that he declared that the Opposition should constitute a new party against the Bolshevik party within the country.

Indeed, it was not until the later 1930s that Trotsky began, in a letter to Angelica Balabanov, to rebel both against the Party and History herself: "History has to be taken as she is; but when she allows herself such extraordinary and filthy outrages [Stalin's show-trials], one must fight back at her with one's fists..."

Stalin had no such ideological scruples, no agonies of a revolutionary conscience. He was clever enough to become a follower of Lenin as early as 1903 and to stick to him, in spite of some disagreements, right up to the revolution. Not that he loved Lenin - he was delighted at the news of Lenin's death, according to Bazhanov, whereas Trotsky fainted for two hours, according to Krupskaya. Nor was he a consistent Leninist thereafter, for all his propaganda to the contrary - Stalin's career covers the most extraordinary range between extreme communism to near-convergence with capitalism, from strident Russian nationalism to the purest internationalism, from world revolutionary to "socialism in one country".

What mattered to him was not ideological purity, but power; and while he did not underestimate the importance of ideology in the attainment and maintenance of power - in this respect Lenin trained him well, - he never mistook the means for the end. Thus he paid attention to organization and to the shifting patterns of alliances within the party. He did not wear his heart on his sleeve, and was capable of the most studied hypocrisy in the manner of Shakespeare's Iago or Richard III. In October, 1917 Trotsky had impetuously condemned Zinoviev and Kamenev "to the dustbin of history" for their refusal to back Lenin's call for an immediate putsch; but Stalin held his fire. Thus he was able to use Zinoviev and Kamenev against Trotsky, and then, when his own power base had been established, destroy all three of them. This

combination of hatred with prudence, cunning with caution, made him a formidable politician.

Other objective aspects of the political situation in the mid-twenties favoured Stalin against Trotsky. Stalin's discovery (with Bukharin) of the slogan "Socialism in One Country" answered to the country's pride in itself, its weariness with the failure of European revolution and its longing for stability. The fact that Stalin later stole so many pages out of Trotsky's book – his emphasis on rapid industrialization, on militarization of the unions and on discipline within the party – does not contradict this thesis. In the early twenties, when Trotsky proposed these policies, the time was not yet ripe for their implementation; whereas in the late twenties and early thirties, when the New Economic Policy had run into the sands and political power was concentrated exclusively in Stalin's hands, they could be embarked upon with some prospect of success – according to Stalin's criteria, that is.

Have we then succeeded in explaining why Stalin triumphed over Trotsky? Can we say that Stalin's greater hatred, cunning, prudence and organizational ability, on the one hand, and Trotsky's vanity, naiveté, on the other, were bound to lead to Stalin's triumph in the conditions of ideological cooling-off and party sclerosis that prevailed in the mid-1920s? No, because the factors mentioned above do not help us to understand the extraordinary drama that took place over Lenin's will in the critical years 1922-24, when Stalin was very nearly catapulted from power, and in which it is difficult not to see another, metaphysical factor entering into the situation...

*

In April, 1922 Stalin became General Secretary, the critical platform for his rise to supreme power. In May, Lenin suffered his first stroke, thereby removing the main obstacle to Stalin's exploiting the secretariat in his personal bid for power. Then, during the autumn, while he was slowly recovering from his stroke, Lenin fell out for the first time with the man whom, in 1913, he had called "the wonderful Georgian".

The quarrel seems to have been initially over Georgia, which the Second Army, on instructions from Stalin, had invaded in 1921. Contrary to Stalin, Ordzhonikidze and Dzerzhinsky, but in agreement with Mdivani Makharadze and others, Lenin believed that Georgia, like other autonomous, non-Russian regions, should have the right of secession from the Union because, as Figs writes, "he thought they would want to be part of the Soviet federation in any case. As he saw it, the revolution trumped all national interests.

"Stalin's plans were bitterly opposed by the Georgian Bolsheviks, whose power base depended on their having gained a measure of autonomy from Moscow for their country. The entire Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party resigned in protest against Stalin's policy. Lenin intervened. He was outraged when he learned [from Dzerzhinsky] that in an argument

Sergo Ordzhonikidze, the head of Moscow's Caucasian Bureau and Stalin's close ally, had beaten up a Georgian Bolshevik. It made him see Stalin and his Georgian base in a different light. In his notes for the Congress Lenin called Stalin a 'rascal and a tyrant' who would only bully and subjugate small nations, whereas what was needed was 'profound caution, sensitivity, and a readiness to compromise' with their legitimate national aspirations, especially if the Soviet Union was not to become a new empire and was to pose as a friend and liberator of the oppressed nations in the colonial world.

"Because of Lenin's illness, Stalin got his way. The founding treaty of the Soviet Union was basically centralist in character, allowing the republics to develop cultural forms of 'nationhood' within a political framework set by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in Moscow. The Politburo purged the Georgian Bolsheviks as 'national deviationists' – a label Stalin would use against many leaders in the non-Russian regions in the years to come..."⁹⁹⁶

"Seeking for an ally," writes Alan Bullock, "Lenin turned to Trotsky. Twice in the course of 1922 he had urged Trotsky to accept the post of a deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, and twice Trotsky had refused, failing to see the opportunity Lenin was offering him to establish his political position as first among his deputies. In December, however, when Lenin opposed a move by Stalin to relax the government's monopoly of foreign trade, he was delighted to find that Trotsky was willing to put his views to the Central Committee, and even more delighted when the committee was persuaded to reverse its original decision. 'We have captured the position without a fight,' he wrote. 'I propose that we do not stop but press on with the attack.' In a private talk with Trotsky Lenin renewed his offer of the post of deputy chairman and declared he was ready to form a bloc to fight bureaucratism in both the state and the party. A few days later, however, Lenin suffered his second stroke and nothing more came of a proposal which could have had far-reaching consequences for Stalin."⁹⁹⁷

On March 4, there appeared in *Pravda* a blistering attack by Lenin on Stalin's work as Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate. Deutsch wrote: "This was Lenin's first, publicly delivered blow. Behind the scenes he prepared for a final attack at the twelfth party congress, convened for April; and he agreed with Trotsky on joint action. On 5 March, the day after *Pravda* had at last published his criticisms of Stalin's Commissariat, he had a sharp exchange with Stalin. He then dictated a brief letter to Stalin, telling him that he 'broke off' all personal relations with him. The next day, 6 March, he wired a message to the leaders of the Georgian opposition, promising to take up their case at the congress: 'I am with you in this matter with all my heart. I am outraged by the arrogance of Ordzhonikidze and the connivance of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky.' He again communicated with Trotsky about their joint tactics in

⁹⁹⁶ Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁹⁹⁷ Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

the Georgian business; and he briefed Kamenev who was to depart for Tiflis with a special commission of inquiry. Just in the middle of all these moves, on 9 March, he suffered the third attack of his illness, from which he was not to recover..."⁹⁹⁸

With Lenin *hors de combat*, the scene was set for a battle royal between Stalin and Trotsky at the 12th Party Congress in April, 1923. Before the Congress, Stalin had used his powers as party secretary to conduct a cull of Trotsky's supporters from the Central Committee.⁹⁹⁹ Although Trotsky still had important supporters (notably Radek and Bukharin), he made the mistake of attacking the NEP, which Lenin had introduced. Even if many of the Communist leaders (including Stalin) agreed with him on this, it was not a politic thing to say at that time. On delivering the speech, he immediately left the hall...

This was Stalin's chance. He delivered a speech on nationalities, in which he, too, criticized Lenin – but much more subtly and respectfully. Stalin accurately demonstrated that, in spite of the recent Georgian crisis, Lenin had always been a centralizer-federalist at heart – which was just as well, because the creation of the federal USSR had just been agreed on at the recent plenum (which Lenin had not been able to attend). Moreover, Lenin stood for a single, integrated economy among all the republics. So "for Lenin the national question is a question subordinated to a higher question – the workers' question." The vast majority of the delegates lined up behind Stalin, to thunderous applause. Stalin had pulled off an amazing victory: while actually opposing Lenin, he had successfully made himself out to be the true disciple of Lenin. And so at the new elections to the Central Committee, "Trotsky came in thirty-fifth place in the total number of positive votes, as opposed to second, where he had stood in the elections at the previous Party Congress. Kamenev came in twenty-fourth, Zinoviev thirty-second, and Stalin tied for first (384 votes out of 386) with Lenin..."¹⁰⁰⁰

Stalin had emerged as Lenin's likely successor...

But then a most unexpected bolt came out of the blue. In late May, 1923, Lenin's wife Krupskaya "bought forth a very short document purporting to be dictation from Lenin. She handed it to Zinoviev, with whom she had developed close relations dating back to the emigration in Switzerland. [Another secretary] Volodicheva, again, was said to have taken the dictation, over several sessions, recorded on December 24-25, 1922. But the purported dictation had not been registered in the documents journal in Lenin's secretariat. It was a typescript; no shorthand or stenographic originals can be found in the archives. Lenin had not initiated the typescript, not even with his unparalyzed left hand. According to Trotsky, the typescript had no title. Later,

⁹⁹⁸ Deutscher, *Stalin*, pp. 252-253.

⁹⁹⁹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 495.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 497.

title would be affixed – Lenin’s Testament or “Letter to the Congress” – and an elaborate mythology would be concocted about how the dictation had been placed in a wax-sealed envelope with Lenin’s instructions that it be opened only after his death. Of course, Krupskaya had given the document to Zinoviev while Lenin was still alive...

“These were extraordinary pieces of paper, consisting of barbed evaluations of six people. (When Stalin was handed and read the dictation, he is said to have exclaimed of Lenin: ‘He shit on himself and he shit on us!’”¹⁰⁰¹

Commenting on each member of the Politburo in the Testament, Lenin wrote (supposedly): “Comrade Trotsky, as his fight against the Central Committee in connection with the issue of the people’s commissariat of railways, is distinguished by the highest qualities. He is personally perhaps the most able man in the present Central Committee, but he has displayed excessive self-assurance and shown excessive preoccupation with the purely administrative side of matters.”

Of Stalin he wrote: “Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution...”

“I think that the hastiness and administrative clumsiness of Stalin played a fatal role here [in Georgia], and also his spite against the notorious ‘social chauvinism’. Spite in general plays the worst possible role in politics...”

Fairly mild criticism, perhaps (for Lenin). But a quarrel between Stalin and Krupskaya had led to a significant hardening in Lenin’s attitude in the few months remaining to him. It appears that the Politburo had banned Lenin from working more than ten minutes a day, a restriction which it was Stalin’s responsibility to enforce. This led to the quarrel with Krupskaya and then with Lenin himself.

“Stalin’s row with Lenin’s wife,” writes Sebag Montefiore, “outraged Lenin’s bourgeois sentiments. But Stalin thought it was entirely consistent with Party culture. ‘Why should I stand on my hindlegs for her? To sleep with Lenin does not mean you understand Marxism-Leninism. Just because she used the same toilet as Lenin...’ This led to some classic Stalin jokes, in which he warned Krupskaya that if she did not obey, the Central Committee would appoint someone else as Lenin’s wife. That is a very Bolshevik concept. His disrespect for Krupskaya was probably not helped by her complaints about Lenin’s flirtations with his assistants, including Yelena Stasova, the one whom Stalin threatened to promote to ‘wife’”¹⁰⁰²

¹⁰⁰¹ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 498.

¹⁰⁰² Montefiore, *Stalin*, p. 3).

On January 4, 1923, in a supposed postscript to his will, Lenin wrote: "Stalin is too rude, and this fault... becomes unbearable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may appear an insignificant trifle, but in view of what I have written above about the relations between Stalin and Trotsky, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance."

"The dictation warned that 'these two qualities of the two outstanding leaders of the present Central Committee – Stalin's incaution, Trotsky's self-assured political daftness – 'can inadvertently lead to a schism, and if our party does not take steps to avert this, the schism may come unexpectedly...'"¹⁰⁰³

There is strong suspicion (although Stalin, surprisingly, never expressed it) that the "Testament" was a forgery by Krupskaya. She may have considered that she was conveying Lenin's real feelings. Lenin's sister, Maria Ulyanova, another of his secretaries, certainly thought so...¹⁰⁰⁴

At the Twelfth Congress in January, 1924, Stalin attacked Trotsky for attempting to create an illegal faction, "and threatened severe measures against anyone circulating secret documents, a possible reference to Lenin's Testament".¹⁰⁰⁵ So the contents were not made known until just before the Thirteenth Congress in May, 1924. By that time, however, Stalin had worked hard to create a bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev against Trotsky.

So when the matter came up before the Central Committee plenum, Zinoviev and Kamenev spoke in favour of Stalin and against the publication of the Testament, deciding instead "to read the document only to select delegates as opposed to the entire assembled congress. Trotsky, reluctant to appear divisive in his coming bid for power, did not intervene [for which he was rebuked by Krupskaya]. Stalin, pale as death, humbly asked for release from his duties, hoping that his show of contrition would prompt the Central Committee to refuse his request."¹⁰⁰⁶ His gamble paid off, but left him seething with resentment. He was the disciple of a man who seemed to have demanded his removal..."¹⁰⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰³ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 500.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 501.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁰⁶ "Stalin offered to step down. 'Well, yes, I am definitely rude.' Trotsky quoted Stalin as saying: 'Ilich [Lenin] proposes to you to find another person who differs from me only in external politeness. Well, ok, try to find such a person.' But in a hall packed with Stalin loyalists, a voice chanted out: 'It's nothing. We are not frightened by rudeness, our whole party is rude, proletarian.' A neat trick, but the situation was extraordinary all the same." (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 541).

¹⁰⁰⁷ Frank Dikötter, *Dictators*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020, p. 69.

Stalin, though wounded, was saved... But Lenin's hostile remarks about him in his "Testament" haunted him for the rest of his life...

"By the end of 1924 Stalin, with Kamenev and Zinoviev doing the dirty work, had created the heresy of 'Trotskyism' and related it to Trotsky's earlier disputes with Lenin, who had been embalmed and put into his apotheosis-tomb five months earlier. In January 1925 Stalin was thus able to strip Trotsky of his army control with the full approval of the party. Party stalwarts were now informed that Trotsky's part in the Revolution was very much less than he claimed and his face was already being blacked out of relevant photographs – the first instance of Stalinist re-writing of history."¹⁰⁰⁸

Two years later, Stalin was stronger than all three – Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev – put together. In November, 1927 Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the party, and in December the Fifteenth Party Congress confirmed the decision... In January, 1928 Trotsky was bundled off (wearing only pyjamas, socks and a greatcoat) to internal exile in Kazakhstan; he never returned to Moscow. In 1936 Kamenev and Zinoviev were tried and executed, and in 1940 Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico with a pick-axe...

Bazhanov writes: "Trotsky's position in 1923-4 was strong. If he had used the cards history had dealt him, Stalin could have been stopped. Of course Stalin *was* an accomplished schemer, but with the support Lenin had given him Trotsky could have lined up the party behind him if his temperament had not stood in the way. But he failed to understand the nature of the Party machine, Stalin's use of it, and the full significance Stalin's position as General Secretary had acquired by the time of the Thirteenth Congress."

*

And yet there was more to it than that. The vital factor was the timing of Lenin's strokes, and above all the fact that the last stroke incapacitated him without immediately killing him. Was this a product of blind Chance (as Bullock implies)? Or History's choice of Stalin (as Trotsky should have inferred, however reluctantly)? Or God's judgement on apostate Russia?

For a believer in the true God there can be only one possible answer to this question. God acted now as He had acted in seventh-century Byzantium when He allowed the cruel tyrant Phocas to murder the good Emperor Maurice and ascend the throne. "One contemporary," writes Alexander Dvorkin, "cites the story of a certain man who cried out to God: 'Why did You send Your people such a blood-thirsty wolf?' And the Lord replied to him: 'I tried to find someone worse than Phocas, so as to punish the people for its self-will, but was unable. But from now on don't you question the judgements of God...'"¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰⁸ Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 265.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Dvorkin, *Ocherki po Istorii Vselenskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Sketches on the History of the Universal Orthodox Church), Nizhni-Novgorod, 2006, p. 439.

CONCLUSION. THE COLLECTIVE ANTICHRIST

Lenin and the other leading Bolsheviks quite consciously modelled their revolution on the Jacobins' Great Terror of 1793-94 and the French revolutionary Gracchus Babeuf's communist *Manifesto of Equals* (1796): "The French Revolution is only the forerunner of another, even greater revolution that will finally put an end to the era of revolutions. The people have swept away the kings and priests who have been in league with them... We intend the COMMON GOOD or the COMMUNITY OF GOODS."¹⁰¹⁰

Babeuf was right at any rate in his first statement – the French Revolution was only the forerunner of the still greater Russian, or Leninist revolution. But he was utterly naïve in thinking that the French revolution or any of its successors or imitators had anything essentially to do with communism in the sense of the community of goods. The spirit of Leninism – and it was indeed a spirit, not just an ideology – was far deeper and darker than that. Goods were not held in common but stolen and appropriated by a new upper class, the *nomenklatura* of the Communist Party. And those who seized them could keep them – and their lives – only if they behaved themselves...

Leninism was supposed to be an application of Marxist theory. But, as Douglas Smith writes, the foot soldiers of the revolution "had no understanding or even interest in Marxist theory, nor were they concerned with what the new Russian society would look like. Rather, they were motivated by one thing: the desire to destroy the old order..."¹⁰¹¹

It was precisely the destructive madness of Lenin that made him the man of the moment, the politician best suited for those mad times. The word "madness" here is not used in a wholly metaphorical sense. Of course, in 1917 he was not mad in the sense that he had lost contact with ordinary, everyday reality – his clever tactical manoeuvring and his final success in October proves that he was more realistic about Russian politics than many. But in a spiritual sense he was mad with the madness of the devil himself: he was demonized, with an irrational rage against God and man, an urge to destroy and kill and maim that can have no rational basis.

As the SR leader Victor Chernov wrote in 1924: "Nothing to him was worse than sentimentality, a name he was ready to apply to all moral and ethical considerations in politics. Such things were to him trifles, hypocrisy, 'parson's talk'. Politics to him meant strategy, pure and simple. Victory was the only commandment to observe; the will to rule and to carry through a political program without compromise that was the only virtue; hesitation, that was the only crime.

¹⁰¹⁰ Babeuf, in Martin Crook, *Napoleon Comes to Power*, 1998, pp. 106, 107.

¹⁰¹¹ Smith, *Former People: The Last Days of the Russian Aristocracy*, London: Macmillan, 2012, p. 10.

"It has been said that war is a continuation of politics, though employing different means. Lenin would undoubtedly have reversed this dictum and said that politics is the continuation of war under another guise. The essential effect of war on a citizen's conscience is nothing but a legalization and glorification of things that in times of peace constitute crime. In war the turning of a flourishing country into a desert is a mere tactical move; robbery is a 'requisition', deceit a stratagem, readiness to shed the blood of one's brother military zeal; heartlessness towards one's victims is laudable self-command; pitilessness and inhumanity are one's duty. In war all means are good, and the best ones are precisely the things most condemned in normal human intercourse. And as politics is disguised war, the rules of war constitute its principles..."¹⁰¹²

Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes that Lenin "understood *the main thing* in Marx and Marxism and created not simply a political revolutionary party on the basis of the economic and social 'scientific' theory of Marxism: he founded a *religion*, and one, moreover, in which 'god' turned out to be himself! In this lies the essence of all the disagreements between Lenin and the legal Marxists like Struve and Plekhanov, and the Mensheviks – that is, all those who through naivety and evident misunderstanding took Marxism to be precisely a 'scientific' theory able to serve the 'radiant future' of humanity, beginning with Russia... For Lenin, as for Marx, the only thing that was necessary and important was his *personal power* with the obligatory *deification* of his own person, regardless not only of objections or criticisms, but even simply of insufficient *servility*. Lenin (like Marx) considered himself to be nothing less than the 'Messiah' – the 'teacher' and 'leader' not only of Russian, but also of world significance. This was *the psychology of the Antichrist*, which was reflected both in Lenin's teaching on 'the new type of party', and in the 'world revolution', and in the construction of socialism in Russia, and in his 'philosophy', and in his methods of 'leadership', when he and his 'comrades' came to power. In the sphere of politics Lenin was always, from the very beginning, an inveterate *criminal*. For him there existed no juridical, ethical or moral limitations of any kind. All means, any means, depending on the circumstances, were permissible for the attainment of his goal. Lies, deceit, slander, treachery, bribery, blackmail, murder – this was the almost daily choice of means that he and his party used, while at the same time preserving for rank-and-file party members and the masses the *mask* of 'crystal honesty', decency and humanity – which, of course, required exceptional art and skilfulness in lying. Lenin always took a special pleasure in news of *murders*, both individual and, still more mass murders – carried out *with impunity*. At such moments he was sincerely happy. This bloodthirstiness is the key to that *special power* that 'the leader of the world proletariat' received from the devil and the angels of the abyss. In the sphere of philosophy Lenin was amazingly *talentless*. How to lie a little more successfully – that was essentially his only concern in the sphere of ideas. But when he really had to *think*, he admitted blunders that were unforgivable in a 'genius'...

1012 Chernov, "Lenin", in *Foreign Affairs*, January-February, 2012, pp. 10-12.

“But the question is: *how* could a teaching that conquered millions of minds in Russia and throughout the world be created on the basis of such an intellectually impoverished, primitive basis?! An adequate answer can never be given if one does not take into account the main thing about Marxism-Leninism – that it is not simply a teaching, but a *religion, a cult of the personality* of its founders and each of the successive ‘leaders’, that was nourished, not by human, but by *demonic* forces from ‘the satanic depths’. Therefore its action on the minds took place simultaneously with a demonic *delusion* that blinded and darkened the reasoning powers. In order to receive such support from hell, it was necessary to deserve it in a special way, by immersing oneself (being ‘initiated’) into Satanism. And Lenin, beginning in 1905, together with his more ‘conscious comrades’ immersed himself in it (in particular, through the shedding of *innocent blood*), although there is not information to the effect that he personally killed anybody. The ‘leader’ had to remain ‘unsullied’... By contrast with certain other satanic religions, the religion of Bolshevism had the express character of *the worship of the man-god* (and of his works as sacred scripture). This was profoundly non-coincidental, since what was being formed here was nothing other than the religion of *the coming Antichrist*. Lenin was one of the most striking prefigurations of the Antichrist, one of his forerunners, right up to a resemblance to the beast whose name is 666 in certain concrete details of his life (his receiving of a deadly wound and healing from it). Lenin was not able to create for himself a general cult during his lifetime, since he was forced to share the worship of the party and the masses with such co-workers as, for example, Trotsky. But the ‘faithful Leninist’ Stalin was able truly to take ‘Lenin’s work’ *to its conclusion*, that is, to the point of absurdity... He fully attained his own cult during the life and posthumous cult of personality of his ‘teacher’. Lenin, who called religion ‘necrophilia’, was the founder of the religion of his own *corpse, the main ‘holy thing’* of Bolshevism to this day! All this conditioned, to an exceptional degree, the extraordinary *power* of Lenin and his party-sect...”¹⁰¹³

The Bolshevik party was indeed more like a religious sect than a normal political party. While members of other parties, even socialist ones, had a private life separate from their political life, this was not so for the Bolsheviks and the parties modelled on them.

Thus Igor Shafarevich writes: “The German publicist V. Schlamm tells the story of how in 1919, at the age of 15, he was a fellow-traveller of the communists, but did not penetrate into the narrow circle of their functionaries. The reason was explained to him twenty years later by one of them, who by that time had broken with communism. It turns out that Schlamm, when invited to join the party, had said: ‘I am ready to give to the party everything except two evenings a week, when I listen to Mozart.’ That reply turned out to be fatal: a man having interests that he did not want to submit to the party was not suitable for it.

¹⁰¹³ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 445-447.

“Another aspect of these relations was expressed by Trotsky. Having been defeated by his opponents, in a speech that turned out to be his last at a party congress, he said: ‘I know that it is impossible to be right against the party. One can be right only with the party, for History has not created any other ways to realize rightness.’

“Finally, here is how Piatakov, already in disgrace and expelled from the party, explained his relationship to the party to his party comrade N.V. Valentinov. Remembering Lenin’s thesis: ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat is a power realized by the party and relying on violence and not bound by any laws’ (from the article, ‘The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky’), Piatakov added that the central idea here was not ‘violence’ but precisely ‘not being bound by any laws’. He said: ‘Everything that bears the seal of human will must not, cannot be considered inviolable, as being bound by certain insuperable laws. Law is a restriction, a ban, a decree that one phenomenon is impermissible, another act is possible, and yet another impossible. When the mind holds to violence as a matter of principle, is psychologically free, and is not bound by any laws, limitations or obstacles, then the sphere of possible action is enlarged to a gigantic degree, while the sphere of the impossible is squeezed to an extreme degree, to the point of nothingness... Bolshevism is the party that bears the idea of turning into life that which is considered to be impossible, unrealizable and impermissible... For the honour and glory of being in her ranks we must truly sacrifice both pride and self-love and everything else. On returning to the party, we cast out of our heads all convictions that are condemned by it, even if we defended them when we were in opposition... I agree that those who are not Bolsheviks and in general the category of ordinary people cannot in a moment make changes, reversals or amputations of their convictions... We are the party consisting of people who make the impossible possible; penetrated by the idea of violence, we direct it against ourselves, while if the party demands it, if it is necessary and important for the party, we can by an act of will in 24 hours cast out of our heads ideas that we have lived with for years... In suppressing our convictions and casting them out, it is necessary to reconstruct ourselves in the shortest time in such a way as to be inwardly, with all our minds, with all our essence, in agreement with this or that decision decreed by the party. Is it easy violently to cast out of one’s head that which yesterday I considered to be right, but which today, in order to be in complete agreement with the party, I consider to be false? It goes without saying – no. Nevertheless, by violence on ourselves the necessary result is attained. The rejection of life, a shot in the temple from a revolver – these are sheer trivialities by comparison with that other manifestation of will that I am talking about. This violence on oneself is felt sharply, acutely, but in the resort to this violence with the aim of breaking oneself and being in complete agreement with the party is expressed the essence of the real, convinced Bolshevik-Communist... I have heard the following form of reasoning... It (the party) can be cruelly mistaken, for example, in considering black that which is in reality clearly and unquestionably white... To all those who put this example to me, I say: yes, I

will consider black that which I considered and which might appear to me to be white, since for me there is no life outside the party and outside agreement with it.”¹⁰¹⁴

Having completely surrendered their minds and wills to the party, much as the Jesuits surrendered theirs to the Pope (Chernov compared Lenin to Torquemada), the Bolsheviks proceeded to shed blood on a scale not seen since Genghiz Khan.

And it was unrestrained by any kind of morality. Thus Lenin called for “mass terror against the kulaks, priests and White Guards”. And Trotsky said: “We must put an end, once and for all, to the papist-Quaker babble about the sanctity of human life”.¹⁰¹⁵ Again, Gregory Zinoviev said: “To overcome our enemies we must have our own socialist militarism. We must carry along with us 90 million out of the 100 million of Soviet Russia’s population. As for the rest, we have nothing to say to them. They must be annihilated...” Again, the first issue of the Kiev Cheka newspaper, *Krasnij Mech* (The Red Sword), for 1918 proclaimed: “We reject the old systems of morality and ‘humanity’ invented by the bourgeoisie to oppress and exploit the ‘lower classes’. Our morality has no precedent, and our humanity is absolute because it rests on a new ideal. Our aim is to destroy all forms of oppression and violence. To us, everything is permitted, for we are the first to raise the sword not to oppress races and reduce them to slavery, but to liberate humanity from its shackles... Blood? Let blood flow like water! Let blood stain forever the black pirate’s flag flown by the bourgeoisie, and let our flag be blood-red forever! For only through the death of the old world can we liberate ourselves from the return of those jackals!”¹⁰¹⁶

In view of the fact that communism is by a wide margin the most bloodthirsty movement in human history, having already killed hundreds of millions of people worldwide (and we are still counting), it is necessary to say a few words about this aspect of its activity, which cannot be understood by reference to its ideology – which in any case was closer to Bakunin’s anarchism than Marx’s materialism.

According to Lebedev, the essence of the movement was “*devil-worshipping*. For the blood it sheds is always ritualistic, it is a sacrifice to demons. As St. John Chrysostom wrote: ‘It is a habit among the demons that when men give Divine *worship* to them with the stench and smoke of blood, they, like bloodthirsty and insatiable dogs, *remain in those places* for eating and enjoyment.’ It is from such bloody sacrifices that the Satanists receive those demonic *energies* which are so necessary to them in their struggle for power or for the sake of its preservation. It is precisely here that we decipher the enigma: the strange bloodthirstiness of

1014 Shafarevich, *Sotsializm kak iavlenie mirovoj istorii* (Socialism as a phenomenon of world history), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, pp. 284-286.

1015 Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 150, 148.

1016 Nicholas Werth, “A State against its People”, in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 102.

all, without exception all, revolutions, and of the whole of the regime of the Bolsheviks from 1917 to 1953.”¹⁰¹⁷

That communism, a supposedly “scientific” and atheist doctrine, should be compared to devil-worshipping may at first seem strange. And yet closer study of communist history confirms this verdict. The communists’ extraordinary hatred of God and Christians, and indeed of mankind in general, can only be explained by demon-possession – more precisely, by an unconscious compulsion to bring blood-sacrifices to the devil, who was, in Christ’s words, “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8.44)...

“This party,” writes Lebedev, “created a state-werewolf in its image and likeness: according to the constitution, the law and its official decrees it was one thing, but in essence, in spirit and in works it was something completely different!

“There has never been any such thing in the history of humanity! There have been cruel, unjust or lying rulers, whose works did not accord with their words. But never have there been rulers, or governments, which set as their aim the annihilation of a people and a people’s economy that came into their possession! But this is precisely what they began to do in Russia.

“There are now various estimates of the victims of the Bolshevik regime (higher and lower). It goes without saying that it is impossible to establish exact figures. We have tried to take a middle course. And according to such middling estimates, from 1917 to 1945 in one way or another (through shooting, camps and prisons, the two famines of the beginning of the 1920s and 1930s, the deliberately ‘Pyrrhic’ victories in the Second World War) up to 80 million Great Russians only were annihilated (not counting Ukrainians, Belorussians and other nationalities of the former Russian empire). In all, up to 100 million. From 1917 to 1926 20 million were simply shot. We must think that from 1927 to 1937 not less than 10 million. Under ‘collectivization’ 4 million were immediately shot. So that out of the 80 million who perished by 1945 about 30-40 million were simply executed. These figures could not have been made up of political enemies, representatives of the ‘former ones’ (landowners and capitalists), nor of ‘their own’, that is, those communists who for some reason or other became unsuitable. All these together constituted only a small percentage of those who perished. The main mass – tens of millions – were the ‘simple’ Russian People, that is, all the firmly believing Orthodox people who, even if they did not oppose the new power, could not be re-educated and re-persuaded... These were simple peasants and town-dwellers, who in spite of everything kept the Orthodox faith. And these were the overwhelming majority of the Russian People. Among them, of course, there perished the overwhelming majority of the clergy and monastics (by 1941 100,000 clergy and 205 bishops had been annihilated).

1017 Lebedev, op. cit., p. 429.

“At the same time, from 1917 to 1945, from the offspring of the off-scourings of the people, but also from unfortunate fellow-travellers for whom self-preservation was higher than all truths and principles, a new people grew up – the ‘Soviet’ people, or ‘Sovki’, as we now call ourselves. From 1918 children in schools no longer learned the Law of God, but learned atheist filthy thinking (and it is like that to the present day). After 1945 it was mainly this new, ‘Soviet’ people that remained alive. Individual representatives of the former Russian, that is, Orthodox People who survived by chance constituted such a tiny number that one could ignore them, since they could no longer become the basis of the regeneration of the true, real Rus’...”¹⁰¹⁸

Some will quarrel with some details of this analysis. Thus Lebedev’s figures for those killed count among the higher estimates.¹⁰¹⁹ Again, already in the 1920s and 1930s a larger proportion of the population was probably genuinely Soviet and anti-Orthodox than Lebedev admits. On the other hand, more genuinely Russian and Orthodox people survived into the post-war period than he admits. Nevertheless, his words have been quoted here because their *main* message about the Russian revolution is *true*. Too often commentators in both East and West have tried to push the Russian revolution into the frame of “ordinary” history, grossly underestimating the unprecedented scale of the tragedy – and its anti-Russian nature.

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We have seen that Leninism, far from being a scientifically based doctrine, was much closer in essence to pagan demon-worship with its incessant demand for more and more blood. The murder of the Tsar and his family was particularly marked by its ritual character. As the number of victims mounted, the Church began to protest more loudly.

Thus on August 8, 1918, the Patriarch addressed the Russian Church as follows: “Sin has fanned everywhere the flame of the passions, enmity and wrath; brother has risen up against brother; the prisons are filled with captives; the earth is soaked in innocent blood, shed by a brother’s hand; it is defiled by violence, pillaging, fornication and every uncleanness. From this same poisonous source of sin has issued the great deception of material earthly goods, by which our people is enticed, forgetting the one thing necessary. We have not rejected this temptation, as the Saviour Christ rejected it in the

1018 Lebedev, “Sovmestimost’ Khrista i Veliara – k 70-letiu ‘sergianstva’”, *Russkij Pastyr*, 28-29, 1997, pp. 174-175.

1019 Official figures for those condemned for counter-revolution and other serious political crimes between 1921 and 1953 come to only a little more than four million, of whom only about 800,000 were shot. This, of course, excludes those killed in the Civil War and other armed uprisings, and in the great famines in Ukraine and elsewhere. See GARF, *Kollektsia dokumentov*; Popov, V.P. “Gosudarstvennij terror v sovietsoj Rossii. 1923-1953 gg.; istochniki i ikh interpretatsia,” *Otechestvennie arkhivy*, 1992, N 2. p. 28. For commentaries on these figures, see <http://mitr.livejournal.com/227089.html>; http://community.livejournal.com/idu_shagayu/2052449.html.

wilderness. We have wanted to create a paradise on earth, but without God and His holy commandments. God is not mocked. And so we hunger and thirst and are naked upon the earth, blessed with an abundance of nature's gifts, and the seal of the curse has fallen on the very work of the people and on all the undertakings of our hands. Sin, heavy and unrepented of, has summoned Satan from the abyss, and he is now bellowing his slander against the Lord and against His Christ, and is raising an open persecution against the Church."¹⁰²⁰

In characterizing Socialism in similar terms to those used by Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, the Patriarch certainly gave a valid critique of Socialism as it was and still is popularly understood – that is, as a striving for social justice on earth, or, as the former Marxist Fr. Sergei Bulgakov put it in 1917, “the thought that first of all and at any price hunger must be conquered and the chains of poverty broken... Socialism does not signify a radical reform of life, it is charity, one of its forms as indicated by contemporary life – and nothing more. The triumph of socialism would not introduce anything essentially new into life.”¹⁰²¹ From this point of view, Socialism is essentially a well-intentioned movement that has gone wrong because it fails to take into account God, the commandments of God and the fallenness of human nature. The guilt of the Socialists consists in the fact that, rather than seeking paradise in heaven and with God through the fulfilment of His commandments, they “have wanted to create a paradise on earth, but without God and His holy commandments”.

However, as Igor Shafarevich has demonstrated, Socialism in its more radical form – that is, Revolutionary Socialism (Bolshevism, Leninism) as opposed to Welfare Socialism - is very little concerned with justice and not at all with charity. Its real motivation is simply satanic *hatred*, hatred of the whole of the old world and all those in it, and the desire to destroy it to its very foundations. Its supposed striving for social justice is only a cover, a fig-leaf, a propaganda tool for the attainment of this purely destructive aim.

This aim can be analyzed into the destruction of four objects: (i) hierarchy, (ii) private property, (iii) the family, and (iv) religion.¹⁰²²

1. Hierarchy. The state hierarchies stemming from the tsar had already largely been destroyed by the time the Bolsheviks came to power: from that time the only hierarchy was that of the Communist Party stemming from the new tsar, Lenin. All foreign hierarchies were also targeted. For, as the Third Communist International (the Comintern), founded in Moscow in March, 1919, declared: its goal was “the fighting, by every means, even by force of arms, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and the creation of an international Soviet republic”. Thus Lenin was a “Leveller” *par excellence*, a true

1020 Regelson, *Tragedia Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1945* (The Tragedy of the Russian Church, 1917-1945), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, p. 52.

1021 Bulgakov, *Sotsializm i Khristianstvo* (Socialism and Christianity), Moscow, 1917.

1022 Shafarevich, "Sotsializm", in Solzhenitsyn, A. (ed.) *Iz-pod Glyb* (From Under the Rubble), Paris: YMCA Press, 1974; *Sotsializm kak Iavlenie Mirovoj Istorii* (Socialism as a Phenomenon of World History), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, p. 265.

spiritual descendant of the Levellers of the English revolution. As in the time of Nimrod, a tower was built from earth to heaven in order to bring God down to the earth and trample Him in the dust...

2. Private Property. Lenin proclaimed: "Loot the loot" (*grab' nagrablyennoe*), and by the end of the Civil War most property had passed into the hands of the new aristocracy, the Communist Party. Lenin's plans were aided by the peasants' refusal to admit the right of any but peasants to the land.

As Pipes writes: "The peasant was revolutionary in one respect only: he did not acknowledge private ownership of land. Although on the eve of the Revolution he owned nine-tenths of the country's arable, he craved for the remaining 10 percent held by landlords, merchants, and noncommunal peasants. No economic or legal arguments could change his mind: he felt he had a God-given right to that land and that someday it would be his. And by his he meant the commune's, which would allocate it justly to its members. The prevalence of communal landholding in European Russia was, along with the legacy of serfdom, a fundamental fact of Russian social history. It meant that along with a poorly developed sense for law, the peasant also had little respect for private property. Both tendencies were exploited and exacerbated by radical intellectuals for their own ends to incite the peasants against the status quo.

"Russia's industrial workers were potentially destabilizing not because they assimilated revolutionary ideologies – very few of them did and even they were excluded from leadership positions in the revolutionary parties. Rather, since most of them were one or at most two generations removed from the village and only superficially urbanized, they carried with them to the factory rural attitudes only slightly adjusted to industrial conditions. They were not socialists but syndicalists, believing that as their village relatives were entitled to all the land, so they had a right to the factories..."¹⁰²³

3. The Family. In 1975 Archbishop Andrew (Rymarenko) of Rockland explained to Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "I saw everything that happened before the revolution and what prepared it. *It was ungodliness in all forms*, and chiefly the violation of family life and the corruption of youth..."¹⁰²⁴

Orlando Figes writes: "The Bolsheviks envisaged the building of their Communist utopia as a constant battle against custom and habit. With the end of the Civil War they prepared for a new and longer struggle on the 'internal front', a revolutionary war for the liberation of the communistic personality through the eradication of individualistic ('bourgeois') behaviour and deviant habits (prostitution, alcoholism, hooliganism and religion) inherited from the old society. There was little dispute among the Bolsheviks that this battle to

¹⁰²³ Pipes, *Russia under the Bolsheviks*, p. 494.

¹⁰²⁴ Archbishop Andrew, "The Restoration of the Orthodox Way of Life", *The Orthodox Word*, July-August, 1975, p. 171.

transform human nature would take decades. There was only disagreement about when the battle should begin. Marx had taught that the alteration of consciousness was dependent on changes to the material base, and Lenin, when he introduced the NEP, affirmed that until the material conditions of a Communist society had been created – a process that would take an entire historical epoch – there was no point trying to engineer a Communist system of morality in private life. But most Bolsheviks did not accept that the NEP required a retreat from the private sphere. On the contrary, as they were increasingly inclined to think, active engagement was essential at every moment and in every battlefield of everyday life – in the family, the home and the inner world of the individual, where the persistence of old mentalities was a major threat to the Party's basic ideological goals. And as they watched the individualistic instincts of the 'petty-bourgeois' masses become stronger in the culture of the NEP, they redoubled their efforts. As Anatoly Lunacharsky wrote in 1927: 'The so-called sphere of private life cannot slip away from us, because it is precisely here that the final goal of the Revolution is to be reached.'

"The family was the first arena in which the Bolsheviks engaged the struggle. In the 1920s, they took it as an article of faith that the 'bourgeois family' was socially harmful: it was inward-looking and conservative, a stronghold of religion, superstition, ignorance and prejudice; it fostered egotism and material acquisitiveness, and oppressed women and children. The Bolsheviks expected that the family would disappear as Soviet Russia developed into a fully socialist system, in which the state took responsibility for all the basic household functions, providing nurseries, laundries and canteens in public centres and apartment blocks. Liberated from labour in the home, women would be free to enter the workforce on an equal footing with men. The patriarchal marriage, with its attendant sexual morals, would die out – to be replaced, the radicals believed, by 'free unions of love'.

"As the Bolsheviks saw it, the family was the biggest obstacle to the socialization of children. 'By loving a child, the family turns him into an egotistical being, encouraging him to see himself as the centre of the universe,' wrote the Soviet educational thinker Zlata Lilina. Bolshevik theorists agreed on the need to replace this 'egotistic love' with the 'rational love' of a broader 'social family'. *The ABC of Communism* (1919) envisaged a future society in which parents would no longer use the word 'my' to refer to their children, but would care for all the children in their community. Among the Bolsheviks there were different views about how long this change would take. Radicals argued that the Party should take direct action to undermine the family immediately, but most accepted the arguments of Bukharin and NEP theorists that in a peasant country such as Soviet Russia the family would remain for some time the primary unity of production and consumption and that it would weaken gradually as the country made the transition to an urban socialist society.

"Meanwhile the Bolsheviks adopted various strategies – such as the transformation of domestic space – intended to accelerate the disintegration of the family. To tackle the housing shortages in the overcrowded cities the

Bolsheviks compelled wealthy families to share their apartments with the urban poor – a policy known as ‘condensation’ (*uplotnenie*). During the 1920s the most common type of communal apartment (*kommunalka*) was one in which the original owners occupied the main rooms on the ‘parade side’ while the back rooms were filled by other families. At that time it was still possible for the former owners to select their co-inhabitants, provided they fulfilled the ‘sanitary norm’ (a per capita allowance of living space which fell from 13.5 square metres in 1926 to just 9 square metres in 1931). Many families brought in servants or acquaintances to prevent strangers being moved in to fill up the surplus living space. The policy had a strong ideological appeal, not just as a war on privilege, which is how it was presented in the propaganda of the new regime (‘War against the Palaces!’), but also as part of a crusade to engineer a more collective way of life. By forcing people to share communal apartments, the Bolsheviks believed that they could make them communistic in their basic thinking and behaviour. Private space and property would disappear, the individual (‘bourgeois’) family would be replaced by communistic fraternity and organization, and the life of the individual would become immersed in the community. From the middle of the 1920s, new types of housing were designed with this transformation in mind. The most radical Soviet architects, like the Constructivists in the Union of Contemporary Architects, proposed the complete obliteration of the private sphere by building ‘commune houses’ (*doma kommuny*) where all the property, including even clothes and underwear, would be shared by the inhabitants, where domestic tasks like cooking and childcare would be assigned to teams on a rotating basis, and where everybody would sleep in one big dormitory, divided by gender, with private rooms for sexual liaisons. Few houses of this sort were ever built, although they loomed large in the utopian imagination and futuristic novels such as Yevgeny Zamiatin’s *We* (1920). Most of the projects which did materialize, like the Narkomfin (Ministry of Finance) house in Moscow (1930) designed by the Constructivist Moisei Ginzburg, tended to stop short of the full communal form and included both private living spaces and communalized blocks for laundries, baths, dining rooms and kitchens, nurseries and schools. Yet the goal remained to marshal architecture in a way that would induce the individual to move away from private (‘bourgeois’) forms of domesticity to a more collective way of life.

“The Bolsheviks also intervened more directly in domestic life. The new *Code on Marriage and the Family* (1918) established a legislative framework that clearly aimed to facilitate the breakdown of the traditional family. It removed the influence of the Church from marriage and divorce, making both a process of simple registration with the state. It granted the same legal rights to de facto marriages (couples living together) as it gave to legal marriages. The Code turned divorce from a luxury for the rich to something that was easy and affordable for all. The result was a huge increase in casual marriages and the highest rate of divorce in the world – three times higher than in France or Germany and twenty-six times higher than in England by 1926 – as the collapse

of the Christian-patriarchal order and the chaos of the revolutionary years loosened sexual morals along with family and communal ties.”¹⁰²⁵

On November 18, 1920 Lenin decreed the legalization of abortions (the first such decree in the world); they were made available free of charge at the mother’s request.

For “in Soviet Russia,” writes Pipes, “as in the rest of Europe, World War I led to a loosening of sexual mores, which here was justified on moral grounds. The apostle of free love in Soviet Russia was Alexandra Kollontai, the most prominent woman Bolshevik. Whether she practiced what she preached or preached what she practiced, is not for the historian to determine; but the evidence suggests that she had an uncontrollable sex drive coupled with an inability to form enduring relationships. Born the daughter of a wealthy general, terribly spoiled in childhood, she reacted to the love lavished on her with rebellion. In 1906 she joined the Mensheviks, then, in 1915, switched to Lenin, whose antiwar stand she admired. Subsequently, she performed for him valuable services as agent and courier.

“In her writings, Kollontai argued that the modern family had lost its traditional economic function, which meant that women should be set free to choose their partners. In 1919 she published *The New Morality and the Working Class*, a work based on the writings of the German feminist Grete Meisel-Hess. In it she maintained that women had to be emancipated not only economically

1025 Figs, *The Whisperers*, London, 2007, pp. 7-10. Figs continues: “In the early years of Soviet power, family breakdown was so common among revolutionary activists that it almost constituted an occupational hazard. Casual relationships were practically the norm in Bolshevik circles during the Civil War, when any comrade could be sent at a moment’s notice to some distant sector of the front. Such relaxed attitudes remained common through the 1920s, as Party activists and their young emulators in the Komsomol [Communist Youth League] were taught to put their commitment to the proletariat before romantic love or family. Sexual promiscuity was more pronounced in the Party’s youthful ranks than among Soviet youth in general. Many Bolsheviks regarded sexual licence as a form of liberation from bourgeois moral conventions and as a sign of ‘Soviet modernity’. Some even advocated promiscuity as a way to counteract the formation of coupling relationships that separated lovers from the collective and detracted from their loyalty to the Party.

“It was a commonplace that the Bolshevik made a bad husband a father because the demands of the Party took him away from the home. ‘We Communists don’t know our own families,’ remarked one Moscow Bolshevik. ‘You leave early and come home late. You seldom see your wife and almost never your children.’ At Party congresses, where the issue was discussed throughout the 1920s, it was recognized that Bolsheviks were far more likely than non-Party husbands to abandon wives and families, and that this had much to do with the primacy of Party loyalties over sexual fidelity. But in fact the problem of absent wives and mothers was almost as acute in Party circles, as indeed it was in the broader circle of the Soviet intelligentsia, where most women were involved in the public sphere.

“Trotsky argued that the Bolsheviks were more affected than others by domestic breakdown because they were ‘most exposed to the influence of new conditions’. As pioneers of a modern way of life, Trotsky wrote in 1923, the ‘Communist vanguard merely passes sooner and more violently through what is inevitable’ for the population as a whole. In many Party households there was certainly a sense of pioneering a new type of family – one that liberated both parents for public activities – albeit at the cost of intimate involvement with their children.” (pp. 10-11)

but also psychologically. The ideal of '*grand amour*' was very difficult to realize, especially for men, because it clashed with their worldly ambitions. To be capable of it, individuals had to undergo an apprenticeship in the form of 'love games' or 'erotic friendships', which taught them to engage in sexual relations free of both emotional attachment and personal domination. Casual sex alone conditioned women to safeguard their individuality in a society dominated by men. Every form of sexual relationship was acceptable: Kollontai advocated what she called 'successive polygamy'. In the capacity of Commissar of Guardianship (Prizrenia) she promoted communal kitchens as a way of 'separating the kitchen from marriage'. She, too, wanted the care of children to be assumed by the community. She predicted that in time the family would disappear, and women should learn to treat all children as their own. She popularized her theories in a novel, *Free Love: The Love of Worker Bees* (*Svobodnaia liubov': liubov' pchel trudovykh*) (1924), one part of which was called, 'The Love of Three Generations'. Its heroine preached divorcing sex from morality as well as from politics. Generous with her body, she said she loved everybody, from Lenin down, and gave herself to any man who happened to attract her.

"Although often regarded as the authoritarian theoretician of Communist sex morals, Kollontai was very much the exception who scandalized her colleagues. Lenin regarded 'free love' as a 'bourgeois' idea – by which he meant not so much extramarital affairs (with which he himself had had experience) as casual sex...

"Studies of the sexual mores of Soviet youth conducted in the 1920s revealed considerable discrepancy between what young people said they believed and what they actually practiced: unusually, in this instance behaviour was less promiscuous than theory. Russia's young people stated they considered love and marriage 'bourgeois' relics and thought Communists should enjoy a sexual life unhampered by any inhibitions: the less affection and commitment entered into male-female relations, the more 'communist' they were. According to opinion surveys, students looked on marriage as confining and, for women, degrading: the largest number of respondents – 50.8 percent of the women and 67.3 of the women – expressed a preference for long-term relationships based on mutual affection but without the formality of marriage.

"Deeper probing of their attitudes, however, revealed that behind the façade of defiance of tradition, old attitudes survived intact. Relations based on love were the ideal of 82.6 percent of the men and 90.5 percent of the women: 'This is what they secretly long for and dream about,' according to the author of the survey. Few approved of the kind of casual sex advocated by Kollontai and widely associated with early Communism: a mere 13.3 percent of the men and 10.6 of the women. Strong emotional and moral factors continued to inhibit casual sex: one Soviet survey revealed that over half of the female student respondents were virgins..."¹⁰²⁶

1026 Pipes, op. cit., pp. 330, 331-332, 333.

In this continuing conservatism of Soviet youth we see the continuing influence of the Orthodox Church, into which most Russians had been baptized. The Church resisted all the Soviet innovations, including civil marriage, abortion and divorce on demand. But the constant pressure of communist ideology had its effect: "although church marriage continued to be the norm in the countryside, less than a third of marriages in Moscow were accompanied by a church ceremony in 1925."¹⁰²⁷

4. Religion. Leninism was in essence a new religion, an atheism that wanted first to destroy the old man, *homo sapiens*, and then construct a new one in its place, *homo sovieticus*, and finally create a new man-god to replace the God-Man Jesus Christ.

As Marxists, writes Figes, the Bolsheviks "believed that human nature was a product of historical development, and could thus be transformed by a revolution in the way that people lived. Lenin was deeply influenced by the ideas of the physiologist Ivan Sechenov, who maintained that the brain was an electromagnetical device responding to external stimuli. Sechenov's materialism was the starting point for I.P. Pavlov's research on the conditioned reflexes of the brain (dog's brains in particular), which was heavily supported by the Soviet government despite Pavlov's well-known anti-Soviet views. This was where science and socialism met. Lenin spoke of Pavlov's work as 'hugely significant for our revolution'. Trotsky waxed lyrical on the 'real possibility' of reconstructing man: 'What is man? He is by no means a finished or harmonious being. No, he is still a highly awkward creature. Man, as an animal, has not evolved by plan but spontaneously, and has accumulated many contradictions. The question of how to educate and regulate, of how to improve and complete the physical and spiritual construction of man, is a colossal problem which can only be understood on the basis of socialism. We can construct a railway across the Sahara, we can built the Eiffel Tower and talk directly with New York, but surely we cannot improve on man. Yes we can! To produce a new, 'improved version' of man – that is the future task of communism. And for that we first have to find out everything about man, his anatomy, his physiology and that part of his physiology which is called his psychology. Man must look at himself as a raw material, or at best as a semi-manufactured product, and say: "At last, my dear *homo sapiens*, I will work on you.'"¹⁰²⁸

Since their aim was the creation of new species of man, and therefore of a new society to house and educate the new species, the Bolsheviks placed such a high priority on destroying the old religions of the old man, especially Orthodox Christianity. The incompatibility between Socialism and Christianity was never doubted by the apostles of Socialism. Religion was to Marx "opium for the people", and to Lenin – "spiritual vodka". Lenin wrote that "every religious idea, every idea of a god, even flirting with the idea of God is

¹⁰²⁷ S.A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 343.

¹⁰²⁸ Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, London: Penguin, 2002, pp. 446-447.

unutterable vileness of the most dangerous kind".¹⁰²⁹ And in 1918 he said to Krasin: "Electricity will take the place of God. Let the peasant pray to electricity; he's going to feel the power of the central authorities more than that of heaven."¹⁰³⁰ On May 1, 1919 Lenin sent a secret instruction to Dzerzhinsky: "arrest... popes [priests] as counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs, shoot them mercilessly everywhere. And as many as possible."¹⁰³¹

As for morality in general, in his address to the Third All-Russian congress of the Union of Russian Youth in October, 1920, Lenin said: "In what sense do we reject morality and ethics? In the sense in which it is preached by the bourgeoisie, which has derived this morality from the commandments of God. Of course, as regards God, we say that we do not believe in Him, and we very well know that it was in the name of God that the clergy used to speak, that the landowners spoke, that the bourgeoisie spoke, so as to promote their exploitative interests. Or... they derived morality from idealistic or semi-idealistic phrases, which always came down to something very similar to the commandments of God. All such morality which is taken from extra-human, extra-class conceptions, we reject. We say that it is a deception, that it is a swindle, that it is oppression of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landowners and capitalists. We say that our morality is entirely subject to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality derives from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat."¹⁰³²

Of course, there is an inner contradiction here. If God exists, and all the older systems of morality are nonsense, why entertain any notions of good and evil? In fact, if God does not exist, then, as Dostoyevsky said, everything is permitted. And this is what we actually find in Bolshevism – everything was permitted, including the murder of the proletariat provided it benefited the interests of the Communist Party. In any case, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote: "The line dividing good and evil passes not between states, not between classes, and not between parties – it passes through each human heart – and through all human hearts..."¹⁰³³ And again he wrote: "Within the philosophical system of Marx and Lenin, and at the heart of their psychology, hatred of God is the principal driving force, more fundamental than all their political and economic pretensions. Militant atheism is not merely incidental or marginal to Communist policy. It is not a side-effect, but the central pivot..."¹⁰³⁴

1029 Lenin, Letter to Gorky (1913), *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Collected Works) (second edition, 1926-1932), vol. 17, pp. 81-86. Cf. S.G. Pushkarev, *Lenin i Rossia* (Lenin and Russia), Frankfurt: Possev-Verlag, 1986, introduction; R. Wurmbrand, *Was Karl Marx a Satanist?*, Diane books, 1978.

1030 Liberman, S.I. "Narodnij komisar Krasin" (The People's Commissar Krasin), *Novij Zhurnal* (The New Journal), N 7, 1944, p. 309; quoted in Volkogonov, D. *Lenin*, London: Harper Collins, 1994, p. 372.

1031 V. Karpov, *Genralissimus*, Kaliningrad, 2004, p. 79.

1032 Lenin, op. cit., vol. 41, p. 309.

1033 Solzhenitsyn, *Arkhipelag GULag* (The GULag Archipelago), Paris: YMCA Press, volume 2, p. 602.

1034 Solzhenitsyn, Acceptance Speech, Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, 1983; *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), N 3465, 19 May, 1983, p. 6.

Using his position as the head of the Church and last man in Russia who was allowed to speak his mind, on October 26, 1918 Patriarch Tikhon wrote to the Sovnarkom: “‘All those who take up the sword will perish by the sword’ (Matthew 26.52). This prophecy of the Saviour we apply to you, the present determiners of the destinies of our fatherland, who call yourselves ‘people’s commissars’. For a whole year you have held State power in your hands and you are already preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the October revolution, but the blood poured out in torrents of our brothers pitilessly slaughtered in accordance with your appeals, cries out to heaven and forces us to speak to you this bitter word of righteousness.

“In truth you gave it a stone instead of bread and a serpent instead of a fish (Matthew 7.9, 10). You promised to give the people, worn out by bloody war, peace ‘without annexations and requisitions’. In seizing power and calling on the people to trust you, what promises did you give it and how did you carry out these promises? What conquests could you renounce when you had brought Russia to a shameful peace [the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk] whose humiliating conditions you yourselves did not even decide to publish fully? Instead of annexations and requisitions our great homeland has been conquered, reduced and divided, and in payment of the tribute imposed on it you will secretly export to Germany the gold which was accumulated by others than you... You have divided the whole people into warring camps, and plunged them into a fratricide of unprecedented ferocity. You have openly exchanged the love of Christ for hatred, and instead of peace you have artificially inflamed class enmity. And there is no end in sight to the war you have started, since you are trying to use the workers and peasants to bring victory to the spectre of world revolution... It is not enough that you have drenched the hands of the Russian people in the blood of brothers, covering yourselves with contributions, requisitions and nationalizations under various names: you have incited the people to the most blatant and shameless looting. At your instigation there has been the looting or confiscation of lands, estates, factories, houses and cattle; money, objects, furniture and clothing are looted. At first you robbed the more wealthy and industrious peasants under the name of ‘bourgeois’, thereby multiplying the numbers of the poor, although you could not fail to realize that by devastating a great number of individual citizens the people’s wealth is being destroyed and the country itself ravaged.

“Having seduced the dark and ignorant people with the opportunity of easy and unpunished profit, you darkened their consciences and drowned out in them the consciousness of sin. But with whatever names you cover your evil deeds – murder, violence and looting will always remain heavy sins and crimes that cry out to heaven for revenge.

“You promised freedom. Rightly understood, as freedom from evil, that does not restrict others, and does not pass over into licence and self-will, freedom is a great good. But you have not given that kind of freedom: the freedom given by you consists in indulging in every way the base passions of

the mob, and in not punishing murder and robbery. Every manifestation both of true civil and the higher spiritual freedom of mankind is mercilessly suppressed by you. Is it freedom when nobody can get food for himself, or rent a flat, or move from city to city without special permission? Is it freedom when families, and sometimes the populations of whole houses are resettled and their property thrown out into the street, and when citizens are artificially divided into categories, some of which are given over to hunger and pillaging? Is it freedom when nobody can openly express his opinion for fear of being accused of counter-revolution?

“Where is freedom of the word and the press, where is the freedom of Church preaching? Many bold Church preachers have already paid with the blood of their martyrdom; the voice of social and state discussion and reproach is suppressed; the press, except for the narrowly Bolshevik press, has been completely smothered. The violation of freedom in matters of the faith is especially painful and cruel. There does not pass a day in which the most monstrous slanders against the Church of Christ and her servers, and malicious blasphemies and sacrilege, are not published in the organs of your press. You mock the servers of the altar, you force a bishop to dig ditches (Bishop Hermogen of Tobolsk), and you send priests to do dirty work. You have placed your hands on the heritage of the Church, which has been gathered by generations of believing people, and you have not hesitated to violate their last will. You have closed a series of monasteries and house churches without any reason or cause. You have cut off access to the Moscow Kremlin, that sacred heritage of the whole believing people... It is not our task to judge earthly powers; every power allowed by God would attract to itself Our blessing if it were in truth a servant of God subject to the good, and was ‘terrible not for good deeds, but for evil’ (Romans 13.3,4). Now we extend to you, who are using your power for the persecution of your neighbours and the destruction of the innocent, Our word of exhortation: celebrate the anniversary of your coming to power by liberating the imprisoned, by stopping the blood-letting, violence, destruction and restriction of the faith. Turn not to destruction, but to the establishment of order and legality. Give the people the rest from civil war that they desire and deserve. Otherwise ‘from you will be required all the righteous blood that you have shed’ (Luke 11.51), ‘and you who have taken up the sword will perish by the sword’.”¹⁰³⁵

“The effect that persecution had on religious sentiments and practices during the first decade of Communist rule is difficult to assess. There is a great deal of circumstantial evidence, however, that people continued to observe religious rituals and customs, treating the Communists as they would heathen conquerors. Although the observance of religious holidays had been outlawed, the prohibition could not be enforced. As early as 1918 workers received

1035 *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), 1968, NN 89-90, pp. 19-23; Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' tserkovnykh sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (Chronicle of Church Events, beginning from 1917), www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm, pp. 25-26.

permission to celebrate Easter provided they did not absent themselves from work for more than five days. Later on, the authorities acquiesced in the suspension of work on Christmas under both the old and new calendars. There are reports of religious processions (*krestnye khody*) in the capital as well as in provincial towns. In the rural districts, the peasants insisted on regarding as legitimate only marriages performed by a priest.

“Religious fervor, which, along with monarchic sentiments, had perceptibly ebbed in 1917, revived in the spring of 1918, when many Christians courted martyrdom by demonstrating, holding protest meetings, and fasting. The fervor increased with each year: in 1920, ‘The Churches filled with worshippers; among them there was not that predominance of women that could be noted before the revolution. Confession acquired particular importance... Church holidays attracted immense crowds. Church life in 1920 was fully restored and perhaps even exceeded the old, pre-Revolutionary one. Without a doubt, the inner growth of church self-consciousness among Russian believers attained a height unknown during the preceding two centuries.’

“Tikhon confirmed this judgement in an interview with an American journalist the same year, saying that ‘the influence of the church on the lives of the people was stronger than ever in all its history’. Confirming these impressions, one well-informed observer concluded in 1926 that the church had emerged victorious from its conflict with the Communists: ‘The only thing the Bolsheviks had achieved was to loosen the hierarchy and split the church’.

“But ahead of it lay trials such as no church had ever endured...”¹⁰³⁶

Lenin went clinically mad towards the end of his life, - the photographs of him in his last illness reveal a man who was truly, clinically mad, and post-mortems showed that his brain had been terribly damaged by syphilis - while his fate in the next life was already made known in this one: "A Red Army soldier in his youth, together with many others, were guarding the building where Lenin was dying. The area was several miles in circumference, a circumstance made necessary because of the horrible shrieks of the dying Lenin. They had to protect the area and were ordered to shoot to kill anyone who would approach the area. These cries of utter despair in death were so mystically horrible that he remembered them the rest of his life with shuddering, being deeply convinced that these shrieks came from a soul that was foretasting infernal torments..."¹⁰³⁷

Stalin had Lenin's body embalmed and placed in a pagan-style mausoleum, while his brain was sliced into 30,000 pieces in order to search out the secret of his "genius". "Lenin lives!" was the new slogan that appeared immediately he died. The Age of Atheism had finally found and glorified its god...

¹⁰³⁶ Pipes, op. cit., pp. 367-368.

¹⁰³⁷ I.M. Andreyev and Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Monastery Press, p. 623.

The Russian revolution brought to an end the Christian period of history, characterized by monarchical governments ruling – or, at any rate, claiming to rule – by Christian principles. It ushered in an age that claimed to be based on no religious faith, and no morality other than the negation of morality which goes by the name of “revolutionary morality”. But is that possible? Can a state be run without belief in any god or any morality?

St. Nektarios, metropolitan of Pentapolis (+1920), once said: "The state presupposes religion, for the state requires that its members respect the ideals of faith, love, and altruism, and these are not to be found in an irreligious society: what is there in such a society to quell the urge to acquire another's wealth by deception, for example? Lacking this, there is no state. Moreover, suppose that some strong will should establish a polity by means of force. Such a polity would quickly fall into ruin, because it lacks the most powerful means by which societies are set in good order, for man is not reined in by force, but rather, by faith. Even Draco's laws would be of no avail there. It is not what is condemned by the laws that corrupts and destroys communities, but rather, it is what the law upholds: namely, moral feebleness and corruption born of unbelief and irreligion."¹⁰³⁸

These words are a death sentence on all the societies (and there have been many) that have modelled themselves on the Leninist state. But the Russian revolution not only ushered in the Age of Atheism, that is, the age of failed states based on the absence of faith and morality. It ushered in the Age of *Antitheism*, of Warfare against God, of the Collective Antichrist...

The terms “Antichrist” and “The Age of the Antichrist” need to be defined. St. John of Damascus writes: “It should be known that the Antichrist is bound to come. Every one, therefore, who confesses not that the Son of God came in the flesh and is perfect God and became perfect man, after being God, is Antichrist (I John 2:22). But in a peculiar and special sense he who comes at the consummation of the age is called Antichrist. First, then, it is requisite that the Gospel should be preached among all nations, as the Lord said (Matthew 24.14), and then he will come to refute the impious Jews.”¹⁰³⁹

Archimandrite Justin (Popovich) writes: “The Antichrist will be, as it were, an incarnation of the devil, for Christ is the incarnation of God. The Antichrist will be the personification of evil, hatred, lying, pride and unrighteousness, for Christ is the personification of goodness, love, truth, humility and righteousness. Such will be the chief Antichrist, who will appear before the Second Coming of the Lord Christ, and will stand in the place of God and proclaim himself to be God (whom He will destroy at His glorious Second Coming with the breath of His mouth (II Thessalonians 2.4)). But before him

¹⁰³⁸ St. Nektarios, sermon delivered on January 30, 1889, the Feast of the Three Hierarchs, at the Archilopouleio Girls' School in Cairo.

¹⁰³⁹ St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, IV, 26.

there will be forerunners, innumerable antichrists. For an antichrist is every one who wishes to take the place of Christ; an antichrist is every one who wishes, in place of the truth of Christ, to place his own truth, in place of the righteousness of Christ – his own righteousness, in place of the love of Christ – his own love, in place of the Goodness of Christ – his own goodness, in place of the Gospel of Christ – his own gospel...

“In what does his main lie consist? In the rejection of the God-Man Christ, in the affirmation that Jesus is not God, not the Messiah-Christ, not the Saviour. Therefore this is the work of the Antichrist. The main deceiver in the world is the devil, and with him – the Antichrist. It goes without saying that a deceiver is every one who in anyway rejects that Jesus is God, the Messiah, the Saviour. This is the main lie in the world, and all the rest either proceeds from it, or is on the way to it.”¹⁰⁴⁰

So anyone who rejects the Divinity of Christ is an antichrist, while the Antichrist, or the chief Antichrist, will appear as an evil world-ruler towards the end of the world. In the first sense, of course, there have been multitudes of antichrists long before 1917. As the Holy Apostle John said already in the first century: “Children, it is the last times, and as you have heard that the Antichrist will come, so even now there are many antichrists” (I John 2.18). As for the Antichrist, he has not appeared yet. So in what sense could the Antichrist be said to have appeared in the period surveyed in this book?

In order to answer this question we need to turn to a prophecy of the Holy Apostle Paul concerning the Antichrist: “You know what is restraining his appearance in his time. The mystery of iniquity is already at work: only he who restrains will continue to restrain until he is removed from the midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed” (II Thessalonians 2.6-8). Now the unanimous teaching of the Early Church, as of more recent commentators such as St. Theophan the Recluse, is that “he who restrains” is *the Roman emperor*, or, more generally, *all legitimate State power on the Roman model*. In the pre-revolutionary period this legitimate State power was incarnated especially in the Russian Tsar, the last Orthodox Christian Emperor, whose empire was known as “the Third Rome”. Thus his “removal from the midst” would be followed, according to the prophecy, by the appearance of the Antichrist.

Now in 1905 the Tsar’s October Manifesto, which significantly limited his autocratic power and therefore his ability to restrain “the mystery of iniquity”, or the revolution, was followed *immediately* by the appearance of the Petersburg Soviet led by Lev Trotsky. In March, 1917, when the Tsar abdicated, the Soviets again appeared *immediately* (in fact, the Petrograd Soviet was created one day *before* the abdication, on March 1), and from October the Soviets, dominated now by Lenin and Trotsky, won supreme power in the country. The Church had existed without a Christian Emperor in the first centuries of her existence, and she would continue to do so after 1917. Nevertheless, “from the day of his

1040 Popovich, *Interpretation of the Epistles of St. John the Theologian*, Munich, 2000, pp. 36, 38.

abdication,” as St. John Maximovich writes, “everything began to collapse. It could not have been otherwise. The one who united everything, who stood guard for the truth, was overthrown.”¹⁰⁴¹ So if we expect the Antichrist to appear after the removal of “him who restrains”, the Orthodox emperor, then the significance of the appearance of Soviet power immediately after the removal of the tsar is obvious.

Of course, it is also obvious that Lenin was not *the* Antichrist for the simple reason that the Antichrist, according to all the prophecies, will be a Jewish king who claims to be the Messiah and God, whereas Lenin was Jewish only through one grandfather (although most of his leading followers were Jewish), but also an atheist and an enemy of all religions, including the Jewish one. Moreover, the Soviet Antichrist was not the only Beast in this period. Whether in imitation of him, or in reaction to him, but using essentially the same methods and with the same aims, a number of Antichrist rulers appeared around the world – Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Mao, Kim Il-Sung – who, while rejecting theism, nevertheless allowed themselves to be worshipped as gods, and claimed the same total control over the lives of their worshippers as can be fittingly ascribed only to the One True God...

This phenomenon – the return, in a modern idiom, of the age of the god-kings of pagan antiquity – has been called “totalitarianism”, a Fascist term that has received criticism but which is a more or less accurate characterization of the reality. For what all these Antichrists had in common was a desire to possess *the totality* of man, body, soul and spirit, public persona and private personhood. For those living under one of the totalitarian dictators of the twentieth century there was no private space they could retreat to in order to get away from the pressure of public politics. For in their dictatorships *everything* – politics, religion, science, art, even personal relationships – came under the dominion of forerunners of that “son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God ... The coming of the lawless one is... with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God [sent] them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, and that all [might] be condemned who [did] not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (II Thessalonians 2.3,4,9, 10-11).

1041 St. John Maximovich, “Homily before a Memorial Service for the Tsar-Martyr”, in *Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco*, Redding, Ca., 1994, p. 133.