

**ESSAYS ON TRUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY**  
**VOLUME 8 (2020)**

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## 1. VICTORIAN RELIGION AND THE GREAT RUSSIAN WRITERS

The great Russian writers and theologians took a great interest in English religion in the Victorian era. Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow (+1867) conducted negotiations with a high-ranking delegation from the American Episcopalian Church, and was visited by Lewis Carroll, author of *Alice in Wonderland* and a High-Church Anglican priest. Both Lev Nikolaievich Tolstoy (+1910) and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky (+1881) visited London in the early 1860s and wrote about their visits. So did the famous Russian Slavophile theologian Alexis Stepanovich Khomiakov (+1860), who was amazed at how silent the streets of London were on a Sunday. And he wrote: "Germany has in reality no religion at all but the idolatry of science; France has no serious longings for truth, and little sincerity; England with its modest science and its serious love of religious truth might give some hopes..."

What was the reality that they found there?

"It would be easy," writes Robert Tombs, "to present Victorian England as a mass of contradictions. It rang with moral exhortation: listening to sermons was a popular pastime, even on honeymoon. Yet vices were not only secretly indulged but publicly flaunted. Politicians could show off their mistresses: for example, the Marquess of Hartington, Liberal MP and later holder of many ministerial offices, who openly took the well-known courtesan Catherine ('Skittles') Walters to the Derby in 1862. Aggressive prostitution made parts of London's West End no-go areas for respectable women, and the staff of the well-known Trocadero restaurant were so nervous about prostitutes that any unknown unaccompanied woman was shunted off into a corner so that 'in case of misbehavior we can screen the table off'. Property and convention ruled, but emotion was constantly bursting out as men sobbed and women swooned, sometimes over things that even we would find embarrassingly sentimental: one elderly peer sobbed all night after reading one of Dickens's death scenes. Modernity was lauded; but some of the most creative cultural impulses came from a reinvention of tradition in architecture, art and music. Religion exerted enormous power over people's lives. Yet never before had its power been so publicly questioned. Matthew Arnold's poem 'Dover Beach' (1851), with its sonorous description of Faith ebbing with a 'melancholy, long, withdrawing roar', is said to be the most widely reprinted poem in the language..."<sup>1</sup>

With regard to religion, there was a marked change from the early nineteenth century to the mid-century Victorian era. At the beginning of the century, religion was not something that gentlemen practiced or talked about much. Thus, as David Starkey and Katie Greening write, "the Church of England had fallen to a new low earlier in the century. Its buildings were crumbling, and Anglican church services had become not only devoid of ceremony and ritual, but were often badly organized, understaffed and

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<sup>1</sup> Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 2015, p. 463.

sparsely attended. On Easter Sunday, 1800, only six communicants attended the morning celebration in St. Paul's Cathedral."<sup>2</sup>

William Palmer, looking back in 1883 to England fifty years earlier, wrote: "Allusions to God's being and providence became distasteful to the English parliament. They were voted ill-bred and superstitious; they were the subjects of ridicule as overmuch righteousness. Men were ashamed any longer to say family prayers, or to invoke the blessing of God upon their partaking of His gifts; the food which He alone had provided. The mention of His name was tabooed in polite circles."<sup>3</sup>

And yet only a few decades later, the English could be counted among the more religious nations of Europe. Continental atheism found little response in English hearts. True, Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1816) expressed a fear, not only that science might go off the right path and produce monsters, but that it might reveal that man, like Frankenstein, did not have a soul, but was purely material, so that God did not exist. The rapid growth of science, and the emergence of such atheist theories as Darwinism (Darwin's *Origin of the Species* was published in 1859), accentuated these fears. But in the second half of the century, at any rate, the English remained stubbornly "pious". And if some surprising blasphemies did escape the lips of senior public servants – such as the British consul in Canton's remark: "Jesus Christ is Free Trade, and Free Trade is Jesus Christ" <sup>4</sup> – this was not common. True, Free Trade *was* probably the real faith of many in the English governing classes. But officially England was a "most Christian" nation.

This was owing in no small part to the movement of religious and moral that we know as Victorianism...

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Francis Fukuyama writes: "The Victorian period in Britain and America may seem to many to be the embodiment of traditional values, but when this era began in the mid-nineteenth century, they were anything but traditional. Victorianism was in fact a radical movement that emerged in reaction to the kinds of social disorder that seemed to be spreading everywhere at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a movement that deliberately sought to create new social rules and instill virtues in populations that were seen as wallowing in degeneracy. The shift toward Victorian values began in Britain but was quickly imported into the United States beginning in the 1830s and 1840s. Many of the institutions that were responsible for its spread were overtly religious in nature, and the changes they brought about occurred with remarkable speed. In the words of Paul E. Johnson: 'In 1825 a northern businessman dominated his wife and children, worked irregular hours,

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<sup>2</sup> Starkey and Greening, *Monarchy & Music*, London: BBC Books, 2013, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> Palmer, in Geoffrey Faber, *The Oxford Apostles*, London: Penguin, 1954, pp. 319-320.

<sup>4</sup> J.M. Roberts, *The Penguin History of Europe*, London: Penguin Books, 1997, p. 382.

consumed enormous amounts of alcohol, and seldom voted or went to church. Ten years later the same man went to church twice a week, treated his family with gentleness and love, drank nothing but water, worked steady hours and forced his employees to do the same, campaigned for the Whig Party, and spent his spare time convincing others that if they organized their lives in similar ways, the world would be perfect.' The nonconformist churches in England and the Protestant sects in the United States, particularly the Wesleyan movement, led the Second Great Awakening in the first decades of the century that followed hard on the rise in disorder and created new norms to keep that order under control. The Sunday school movement grew exponentially in both England and America between 1821 and 1851, as did the YMCA movement, which was transplanted from England to America in the 1850s. According to Richard Hofstadter, U.S. church membership doubled between 1800 and 1850, and there was a gradual increase in the respectability of church membership itself as ecstatic, evangelical denominations became more restrained in their religious observances. At the same time, the temperance movement succeeded in lowering per capita alcohol consumption on the part of Americans back down to a little over two gallons by the middle of the century...

"These attempts to reform British and American society from the 1830s on in what we now label the Victorian era were a monumental success..."<sup>5</sup>

We can measure the success of Victorianism by the sharp reversal in the trends for crime and illegitimacy, which increased through the first half of the nineteenth century (and especially during the Napoleonic wars), but from about 1845 declined steadily until the end of the century. We find a similar pattern in America, with the peak in crime coming about thirty years later.

However, in spite of its undoubted success in raising the external morality and efficiency of the Anglo-Saxon nations, Victorianism has had a bad press. It has been seen as the product of pride and hypocrisy. Moreover, it coincided, paradoxically, with a decline in faith in many spheres.

"Victorian England," writes Tombs, "was a highly religious society: this was one of the best and worst things about it. But so had the country been in previous centuries, and so were all contemporary societies. How religious was it? Its favourite books included the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*. But when for the first and only time a census recorded religious practice on Sunday, 30 March, 1851, the statistics shocked many. They showed a relatively high number 'neglecting' religious services – estimated at 5.3 million people, 29 percent of the population. However, 7.3 million did attend church – 41 percent of the population, about 70 percent of those able to do so. These levels are similar to those in the United States in the 2000s, though five times higher than the 8 percent attending Sunday worship in Britain in 2000.

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<sup>5</sup> Fukuyama, *The Great Disruption*, London: Profile Books, 1999, pp. 266-267, 268.

“More than half of 1851 attendances were at Nonconformist chapels, not the Church of England. England had since the seventeenth century been unusually diverse and divided in its beliefs – ‘sixty sects and only one sauce,’ joked a French observer. Yet over the eighteenth century Old Dissent (Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers) legally tolerated in 1689, stagnated, and Anglican dominance seemed unchallengeable. The explosion of ‘New Dissent’ (especially Methodism) from the 1770s to the 1840s marked one of the most dramatic social and cultural changes in the country’s history. English religion no longer consisted of a national Church with a few licensed dissenters, but of some ninety churches and sects. The omnipresent Church of England remained by far the largest – 85 percent of marriage in 1851 were in church, and only 6 percent in chapel. But the 1832 Reform Act had increased the voting power of Nonconformists – about 20 percent of the new electorate. Many of them demanded outright disestablishment, some vehemently denouncing ‘the white-chokered, immoral, wine-spilling, degraded clergy, backed by debauched aristocrats and degraded wives and daughters.’ To understand the continuing importance of the Church, and the vehemence of both its defenders and attackers, we would have to imagine an institution today combining the BBC, the major universities, parts of the Home Office, and much of the welfare, judicial and local-government systems.

“Anglicanism was both strengthened and weakened by its ancient institutional structures. It was strongest in the Midlands and the south of England, and weak around the edges – the north, the south-west, the Scottish and Welsh borders, and Wales. This was originally for basic material reasons – scattered populations, low incomes and inability to support a resident clergy. But from the 1750s these areas boomed in population and industry. By the time the Church responded – building over 4,000 churches between 1820 and 1870, an effort unique in history – many people had been integrated into Nonconformist sects, especially Methodism: on ‘census Sunday’ its chapels attracted about 2.25 million, over 20 percent of the total, and up to half of those in towns. John Wesley’s flexible and even opportunistic methods (moving on when there was no response and consolidating where converts were made) proved highly successful: Methodism was the only denomination that positively thrived on socio-economic change – including population growth, industrialization, migration and social mobility. So, in its various forms, it became the most powerful catalyst of cultural dissidence in England. Chapels and their Sunday schools, often staffed by self-taught artisans and miners, became a channel of revolt against the squire and the parson, providing an autonomous religious environment affording moral legitimacy, solidarity and self-confidence. In rural society, this might attract farmers who resented paying church rates and tithes, labourers in dispute with their bosses – even poachers. In short, all who detested parsons, who were also often Poor Law guardians or JPs: Radicals never forgot that it was a clerical magistrate who had read the Riot Act at Peterloo [in 1819]. The Primitive Methodists (the ‘Prims’), who doubled their numbers during the conflictual 1830s, remained a sect of the poor, preaching a lively message of ‘the 3 Rs’: ‘ruin, repentance and redemption’; and their preachers provided a constant stream of trade union

leaders. Mainstream Methodism attracted the hard-working, respectable and newly prosperous businessmen who now had the vote and became one of the most dynamic forces in English politics.

“Smaller older sects, such as the Quakers and Unitarians, became the religion of urban and business elites, at least as much as the Church of England was that of the squirearchy... Some were also influential philanthropists and campaigners: pious Dissenting families regarded their wealth and privilege as imposing a God-given duty to society. Similarly, Evangelicalism, which influence both Church and Dissent, was a call to public and political action in almost every sphere. It created vast numbers of charities and philanthropic lobby groups – many still in existence – largely depending on the voluntary labours of middle-class women. Women as well as men were politically organized and powerful as lobby groups, despite lacking the vote. To their pressure is due much of what is ‘Victorian’ in social and cultural life: anti-slavery, animal protection, Sunday Observance, prison reform, temperance, protection of women, and prosecution of obscenity and illicit sexuality. The so-called Nonconformist conscience was willing to use political action and law enforcement as a means of extending moral behaviour.

“A challenge to Anglicanism from the other end of the spectrum was the Oxford Movement, an 1820s High Church dons’ revolt led by the poet John Keble, the Regius Professor of Hebrew Edward Pusey, and the vicar of St. Mary’s, John Henry Newman. The rebels were determined, in Newman’s words, to resist ‘Rationalism’ and ‘Liberalism’ in the Church which led to the subversive conclusion that ‘no theological doctrine is any thing more than an opinion.’ During the 1840s Pusey was banned from preaching and Newman censured.”<sup>6</sup>

The Movement began with John Keble’s sermon to the Oxford Assize Judges in July, 1833, in which he warned against “the growing indifference, in which men indulge themselves, to other men’s religious sentiments”.

In his famous *Tract 90*, John Newman sought to interpret the Anglican 39 Articles in such a way as to make them consistent with Catholic teaching. This led to a backlash, which eventually forced Newman to leave Anglicanism and join the Roman Church, where he became a cardinal. The Oxford Movement then devolved into the Cambridge Camden Society, which explored medieval liturgy, music and architecture, and which was led by Edward Pusey.

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The Slavophile writer Alexei Khomiakov was in general severely critical of Western Europe. And yet he “speaks of it in one of his poems as ‘the land of holy miracles’. He was particularly fond of England. The best things in her social and political life were due, he thought, to the right balance being

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<sup>6</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 465-467.



maintained between liberalism and conservatism. The conservatives stood for the organic force of the national life developing from its original sources while the liberals stood for the personal, individual force, for analytical, critical reason. The balance between these two forces in England has never yet been destroyed because 'every liberal is a bit of a conservative at bottom because he is English'. In England, as in Russia, the people have kept their religion and distrust analytical reason. But Protestant scepticism is undermining the balance between the organic and the analytic forces, and this is a menace to England in the future..."<sup>7</sup> In another place, Khomiakov saw the menace to England in her conservatism: "England with her modest science and her serious love of religious truth might give some hope; but – permit the frank expression of my thoughts – England is held by the iron chain of traditional custom."<sup>8</sup>

The interest of Khomiakov was especially aroused by Pusey's Branch theory of the Church, according to which Anglicanism, Catholicism and Orthodoxy were three branches of the One Church. Khomiakov hoped that this belated interest of English Protestantism in *ecclesiology, the dogma of the Church*, would elicit a genuine rapprochement between Anglicans and Orthodox.

And indeed, "the whole point of the [Oxford] Movement," writes Geoffrey Faber, "lay in the assertion – no less passionately made than the Evangelical's assertion of his private intimacy with God – that men deceive themselves if they seek God otherwise than through the Church. It should be needless to add that in the teachings of Keble, Pusey, Newman, and the Tractarians generally, the relationship of the individual soul to God was just as important as in the teaching of John Wesley. But the importance of that relationship was not to be thought of as transcending the importance of the Church. The Church was the divinely established means of grace. But she was something else and something greater. She was the continuing dwelling place of God's spirit upon earth, and as such she had owed to her all the honour and glory within the power of men to pay."<sup>9</sup>

Encouraged by such sentiments, Khomiakov entered into a long and very interesting correspondence with the Anglican deacon William Palmer, which ended only when Palmer joined the Roman Catholic Church. Not that he agreed with Pusey's branch theory: his *The Church is One* is a powerful refutation of the heresy. But England seemed to him, in the midst of her "Babylonian" materialism, as exemplified above all by the 1851 Great

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<sup>7</sup> N.O. Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*, London, 1950, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> Khomiakov, "First Letter to William Palmer", in Birkbeck, *op. cit.*, p. 6; *Living Orthodoxy*, N 138, vol. XXIII, N 6, November-December, 2003, p. 13. It is interesting to compare the Slavophile Khomiakov's estimate of England with that of the westerner Herzen: "He admired England. He admired her constitution; the wild and tangled wool of her unwritten laws and customs brought the full resources of his romantic imagination into play... But he could not altogether like them: they remained too remote from the moral, social and aesthetic issues which lay closer to his own heart, too materialistic and self-satisfied." (Isaiah Berlin, "Herzen and his Memoirs", *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, pp. 516, 517)

<sup>9</sup> Faber, *op. cit.*

Exhibition, to have “higher thoughts”: “England, in my opinion, has never been more worthy of admiration than this year. The Babylonian enterprise of the Exhibition and its Crystal Palace, which shows London to be the true and recognized capital of Universal Industry, would have been sufficient to engross the attention and intellectual powers of any other country; but England stands evidently above its own commercial wonders. Deeper interests agitate her, higher thoughts direct her mental energy...”

Later, however, as the Oxford movement petered out, and England joined with “insincere” France and infidel Turkey in the Crimean War against Holy Russia, Khomiakov’s admiration turned to disillusion and anger...

Lev Tolstoy was not yet the anti-Orthodox firebrand of his later years when he visited London in 1861. He noted the sexual hypocrisy of the city with its thousands of prostitutes, but thought they had an important role to play in preserving the institution of the family! “Imagine London without its 80,000 magdalenes – what would happen to families?” he wrote.<sup>10</sup>

However, Tombs argues that the “widely repeated estimate of 80,000 or more prostitutes in London should probably be closer to 5,000.”<sup>11</sup> A proof of the power of respectable Nonconformity to shape actual behaviour was the rarity of prostitution in the northern towns. We should be skeptical of the idea that hypocrisy was a Victorian hallmark: ‘As a matter of plain fact, sexual hypocrisy in the recorded lives of notable Victorians is rare.’”<sup>12</sup>

Dostoyevsky was also struck by London’s prostitutes during his visit in 1862.

“On the streets,” writes Geir Kjetsaa, Dostoyevsky “saw people wearing beautiful clothes in expensive carriages, side by side with others in filth and rags. The Thames was poisoned, the air polluted; the city seemed marked by joyless drinking and wife abuse. The writer was particularly horrified by child prostitution:

“‘Here in the Haymarket, I saw mothers who brought along their young daughters and taught them their occupation. And these twelve-year-old girls took you by the hand and asked to be accompanied. One evening, in the swarm of people I saw a little girl dressed in rags, dirty, barefoot, emaciated and battered. Through her rags I could see that her body was covered with bloody stripes. She wandered senseless in the crowd... perhaps she was hungry. No one paid her any attention. But what struck me most was her sad expression

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<sup>10</sup> Tolstoy, in Rosamund Bartlett, *Tolstoy: A Russian Life*, Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2011, p. 187.

<sup>11</sup> Gordon Kerr (*A Short History of the Victorian Era*, Harpenden: Oldcastle Books, 2019, p. 95) writes: “It is estimated that there were 8,000 prostitutes working in London alone in 1857.” (V.M.)

<sup>12</sup> Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 2015.

and the hopelessness of her misery. It was rather unreal and terribly painful to look at the despair and cursed existence of this small creature.'

"When he visited the London World's Fair with 'civilization's shining triumphs', Dostoyevsky again found himself possessed by feelings of fear and dejection. Appalled, he recoiled from the hubris that had created the Crystal Palace's 'colossal decorations'. Here was something taken to its absolute limit, he maintained, here man's prideful spirit had erected a temple to an idol of technology: "'This is a Biblical illustration, this speaks of Babylon, in this a prophet of the Apocalypse is come to life. You feel that it would take unbelievable spiritual strength not to succumb to this impression, not to bow before this consummate fact, not to acknowledge this reality as our ideal and mistake Baal for God.'" <sup>13</sup>

Dostoyevsky saw through the Englishman's religiosity, seeing it as a kind of humanism. He noted that English thinkers such as Mill were impressed by Auguste Comte's idea of a "Religion of Humanity", and in 1876 he wrote: "In their overwhelming majority, the English are extremely religious people; they are thirsting for faith and are continually seeking it. However, instead of religion – notwithstanding the state 'Anglican' religion – they are divided into hundreds of sects.... Here, for instance, is what an observer who keeps a keen eye on these things in Europe, told me about the character of certain altogether atheistic doctrines and sects in England: 'You enter into a church: the service is magnificent, the vestments are expensive; censers; solemnity; silence; reverence among those praying. The Bible is read; everybody comes forth and kisses the Holy Book with tears in his eyes, and with affection. And what do you think this is? This is the church of atheists. Why, then, do they kiss the Bible, reverently listening to the reading from it and shedding tears over it? – This is because, having rejected God, they began to worship 'Humanity'. Now they believe in Humanity; they deify and adore it. And what, over long centuries, has been more sacred to mankind than this Holy Book? – Now they worship it because of its love of mankind and for the love of it on the part of mankind; it has benefited mankind during so many centuries – just like the sun, it has illuminated it; it has poured out on mankind its force, its life. And "even though its sense is now lost", yet loving and adoring mankind, they deem it impossible to be ungrateful and to forget the favours bestowed by it upon humanity...'

"In this there is much that is touching and also much enthusiasm. Here there is actual deification of humankind and a passionate urge to reveal their love. Still, what a thirst for prayer, for worship; what a craving for God and faith among these atheists, and how much despair and sorrow; what a funeral procession in lieu of a live, serene life, with its gushing spring of youth, force and hope! But whether it is a funeral or a new and coming force – to many people this is a question." <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Kjetsaa, *Fyodor Dostoyevsky: A Writer's Life*, London: Macmillan, 1987, p. 145.

<sup>14</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, London: Cassell, trans. Boris Brasol, vol. I, pp. 265-266.

Dostoyevsky then quotes from his novel, *A Raw Youth*, from the “dream of a Russian of our times – the Forties – a former landowner, a progressive, a passionate and noble dreamer, side by side with our Great Russian breadth of life in practice. This landowner also has no faith and he, too, adores humanity ‘as it befits a Russian progressive individual.’ He reveals his dream about future mankind when there will vanish from it every conception of God, which, in his judgement, will inevitably happen on earth.

“‘I picture to myself, my dear,’ he began, with a pensive smile, ‘that the battle is over and that the strife has calmed down. After maledictions, lumps of mud and whistles, lull has descended and men have found themselves *alone*, as they wished it; the former great idea has abandoned them; the great wellspring of energy, that has thus far nourished them, has begun to recede as a lofty, receding Sun, but this, as it were, was mankind’s last day. And suddenly men grasped that they had been left all alone, and forthwith they were seized with a feeling of great orphanhood. My dear boy, never was I able to picture people as having grown ungrateful and stupid. Orphaned men would at once begin to draw themselves together closer and with more affection; they would grasp each other’s hands, realizing that now they alone constituted everything to one another. The grand idea of immortality would also vanish, and it would become necessary to replace it, and all the immense over-abundance of love for Him who, indeed, had been Immortality, would in every man be focused on nature, on the universe, on men, on every particle of matter. They would start loving the earth and life irresistibly, in the measure of the gradual realization of their transiency and fluency, and theirs would now be a different love – not like the one in days gone by. They would discern and discover in nature such phenomena and mysteries as had never heretofore been suspected, since they would behold nature with new eyes, with the look of a lover gazing upon his inamorata. They would be waking up and hastening to embrace one another, hastening to love, comprehending that days are short and that this is all that is left to them...’

“Isn’t there here, in this fantasy, something akin to that actually existent ‘Atheists’ Church’?”<sup>15</sup>

March 16/29, 2020.  
*St. Aristoboulos, Apostle of the Seventy, First Bishop of Britain.*

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<sup>15</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, p. 266.

## 2. MICHAEL ALEXANDROVICH ROMANOV: TSAR FOR A DAY?

After the Tsar's abdication, although he had addressed a telegram to "Emperor Michael Alexandrovich" (it reached him in the late morning of March 16)<sup>16</sup>, 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..."<sup>17</sup>

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

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4orSmDAU-w>

<sup>17</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, St Petersburg, 1999, 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.”<sup>18</sup>

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*?”<sup>19</sup>

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.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Service, *The Last Tsar*, London: Pan, 2017, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia* p. 491.

<sup>20</sup> 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.”<sup>21</sup>

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?”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 623.

<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> The last tsar was Nicholas II...

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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'!"<sup>24</sup>

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."<sup>25</sup>

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."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Service, *The Last Tsar*, p. 30.

<sup>24</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, p. 491.

<sup>25</sup> Babkin, "Sviatjshij 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.

<sup>26</sup> 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 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,



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 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...”<sup>27</sup>

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.”<sup>28</sup>

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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...

<sup>27</sup> Groyan, *Tsariu Nebesnomu i Zemnomu Vernij*, Moscow, 1995, pp. 122, 123.

<sup>28</sup> Baroness Sophia Bukshoeveden, *Ventsenosnitsa Muchenitsa* (The Crown-Bearing Martyr), Moscow, 2011, 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..."<sup>29</sup>

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...<sup>30</sup>

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.

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

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<sup>29</sup> Massie, *The Romanovs: The Final Chapter*, London: Arrow, 1995, p.261.

<sup>30</sup> Massie, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-269.

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...”<sup>31</sup>

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...”<sup>32</sup>

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...’

“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,

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<sup>31</sup> Massie, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-262.

<sup>32</sup> Evlogy, *Puti moej zhizni* (The Paths of My Life), Paris: YMCA Press, 1947, p. 604.

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..."<sup>33</sup>

*May 21 / June 3, 2020.  
Holy Equals to the Apostles Constantine and Helena.*

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<sup>33</sup> Nazarov, *Kto Naslednik Rossijskogo Prestola?* (Who is the Heir of the Russian Throne?), Moscow, 1996, p. 375.

### 3. DARWINISM AND ITS EARLY CRITICS

The year 1859, according to M.S. Anderson, "can be seen as the beginning of a new era in intellectual life"; for it "gave birth not merely to the *Origin of Species* but also to Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*".<sup>34</sup> If eighteenth-century Deism had banished God to the heavens, leaving for Him only the function of Creator, Darwinism deprived Him even of this function, ascribing all creation to the blind will of nature working entirely through chance.

The Victorians – that is, approximately the generations from 1830 to 1900 – were probably the most successful breed of human beings in history up to that time. Energetic, wealthy, inventive and courageous, the English Victorians dominated the world not only politically and economically, but even intellectually. They did not create the dominant *Zeitgeist* of the era – the belief that *development* governs all spheres of human activity, from science and politics to theology and morality. That "honour" must belong, first of all, to the Germans in the persons of such philosophers as Hegel, such scientists as Humboldt and such statesmen as Bismarck. But it was the English who propelled the *Zeitgeist* forward throughout the world outside Europe, and provided it with its main pseudo-scientific justification, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

Of course, Darwinism can be seen as the height of irrationalism – which it was, and a return to the pre-Christian nature-worship of men such as Anaximander and Epicurus in a more sophisticated form – which it also was. But Darwin succeeded in ascribing to his pagan mysticism the aura of *science* – and few there were, in that era, who dared to question the authority of science. The trouble is: it was very poor science and even worse philosophy. Thus already in 1866 the Moravian monk Gregor Mendel published his *Experiments on Plant Hybrids*, which laid the foundations for the laws of heredity and the science of genetics, which through the discovery of DNA in 1953 would explode the last remnant of scientific justification for Darwinism...

Darwin was a fantastically industrious man, absolutely devoted to his work; and the Victorians in general were great lovers of knowledge. And yet this love of knowledge was a "grey spirit", in Tennyson's words, fantastically ambitious, at times satanically blasphemous, that led him away from the true wisdom:

*And this grey spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.*

Darwin incarnated this "grey spirit" in his life, in his appearance and in his work. His theory led him gradually away from belief in God into a grey realm

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<sup>34</sup> Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914*, London: Longman, 1985, p. 365.

from which all the colour and wonder at God's creation had been drained away...

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Darwin's theory maintains that all life, even the most complex, has evolved from the simplest organisms over a period of hundreds of millions of years. This process is entirely random, being propelled forward by one mechanism according to Darwin himself: *natural selection*, which "selects out" for survival those organisms with advantageous variations, and, according to his modern followers, the neo-Darwinists, by *two* mechanisms: *natural selection* and *genetic mutation*, which introduces variations into the genotypes of the organisms (Darwin himself knew nothing about genes). Darwin defines natural selection in Malthusian terms as follows: "As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be *naturally selected*. From the strong principle of inheritance, any selected variety will tend to propagate its new and modified form."<sup>35</sup>

According to Darwin, wrote Bertrand Russell, "among chance variations those that are favourable will preponderate among adults in each generation. Thus from age to age deer run more swiftly, cats stalk their prey more silently, and giraffes' necks become longer. Given enough time, this mechanism, so Darwin contended, could account for the whole long development from the protozoa to *homo sapiens*."<sup>36</sup>

"Given enough time..." Time - enormous amounts of it - was indeed a critical ingredient in Darwin's theory; in fact it took the place of a satisfactory causal mechanism. But such a theory chimed in with the historicist temper of the times - and with the *Principles of Geology* of his friend Charles Lyell. It also chimed in with the idea, as Jacques Barzun writes, "that everything is alive and in motion - a dynamic universe"<sup>37</sup>, which in turn chimed in with the great dogma of the day, the idea of PROGRESS.

Liberals believed in gradual progress, socialists believed in revolutionary progress, everyone except for a few diehards like the Pope believed in progress, that things in general were changing for the better. For evolution appealed to man's pride, to the belief that he is destined for ever greater things. "You know," says Lady Constance in Disraeli's novel *Tancred* (1847), "all is development - the principle is perpetually going on. First, there was nothing; then - I forget the next - I think there were shells; then fishes; then we came - let me see - did we

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<sup>35</sup> Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, introduction.

<sup>36</sup> Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen Lane, 1946, p. 752.

<sup>37</sup> Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 501.

come next? Never mind, we came at last and the next change will be something very superior to us, something with wings."<sup>38</sup> It will be noted that this was written twelve years before Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, which shows that the "scientific" theory filled an emotional need already expressed by poets and novelists.

A.N. Wilson's recent biography of Darwin, which begins with the striking sentence: "Darwin was wrong", argues that "Darwinism succeeded for precisely the reason that so many critics of religions believe that religions succeed. Darwin offered to the emergent Victorian middle classes a consolation myth. He told them that all their getting and spending, all their neglect of their own poor huddled masses, all their greed and selfishness was in fact *natural*. It was the way things were. The whole of nature, arising from the primeval slime and evolving through its various animal forms from amoebas to the higher primates, was on a journey of improvement, moving onwards and upwards, from barnacles to shrimps, from fish to fowl, from orang-outangs to silk-hatted Members of Parliament and leaders of British industry. It was all happening without the interference or tiresome conscience-pricking of the Almighty. He, in fact, had been conveniently removed from the picture, as had the names of many other thinkers and scientists, including Darwin's own grandfather, who had posited theories of evolution a good deal more plausible than his own. Copernicus had removed the earth – and by implication the human race – from the centre of the universe. Darwin in effect put them back. For all the brave, Darwinian talk of natural selection being non-purposive and impersonal, it breathes through the pores of everything which Darwin and Darwinists write that natural selection in fact favours white middle-class people, Western people, educated people, over 'savages'. The survival of the fittest was really the survival of the Darwin family and of their type – a relatively new class, which emerged in the years after the Napoleonic Wars in Britain and held sway until relatively recently. It remains to be seen, as this class dies out, to be replaced by quite different social groupings, whether the Darwinian idea will survive, or whether, like other cranky Victorian fads – the belief in mesmerism or in phrenology, for example – it will be visited only by those interested in the quainter byways of intellectual history..."<sup>39</sup>

Darwin knew that his theory was incompatible with Christianity. He had studied theology at Cambridge, and was impressed by Paley's *View of the Evidences of Christianity*. But as an older man he was less impressed: "Although I did not think much about the existence of a personal God until a considerably later period of my life, I will here give the vague conclusions to which I have been driven. The old argument from design in Nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails, now that the law of natural selection has been discovered..."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Disraeli, in Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

<sup>39</sup> Wilson, *Charles Darwin, Victorian Mythmaker*, London: John Murray, 2017, pp. 17-18.

<sup>40</sup> Wilson, *Charles Darwin*, p. 81.

As H.G. Wells put it: "If all animals and man evolved, then there were no first parents, no paradise, no fall. And if there had been no fall, then the entire historic fabric of Christianity, the story of the first sin, and the reason for the atonement, collapses like a house of cards."<sup>41</sup> Again, in 1880 Darwin wrote to Francis McDermott: "I am sorry to have to inform you that I do not believe in the Bible as a divine revelation & therefore not in Jesus Christ as the son of God."<sup>42</sup>

The destruction of faith in the Bible, in Christ, in the Holy Trinity, had already been underway for a long time. In the nineteenth century, the complete allegorization of the Genesis narrative – a teaching already known to, and clearly rejected by, the Holy Fathers as early as St. Basil the Great's *Hexaemeron* – was supplemented by a method of Biblical criticism coming from Germany called "Higher Criticism", a trend that was exemplified in English-speaking world by "the South African Bishop Colenso's *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (7 volumes, 1862-1875), or the fearlessly demythologizing *Essays and Reviews* authored by six ultra-liberal churchmen (1860), which treated the Bible essentially like a secular text. David Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, translated into English by George Eliot (*nom de plume* of Mary Ann Evans, 1846), which emphasized Christ's humanity rather more than his divinity, was another influential publication in the same vein..."<sup>43</sup>

But the great and the good of the British establishment managed – to their satisfaction at any rate – to square the circle of believing that the Bible was the word of God and the atheism of evolutionism. Evolution was soon seen as the *means* by which God "created" the world; this was "theological evolutionism". One of its adherents was the famous Cardinal Newman, who "regarded Darwin's theory as compatible with his Catholic beliefs. As the devout High Church Anglican Gladstone put it, 'Evolution, if it be true, enhances in my judgement the proper idea of the greatness of God.'"<sup>44</sup>

Darwin had been ruminating on his ideas – which were by no means original, similar ideas had been circulating in many places in both Britain and Europe – for at least twenty years before the publication of *Origin of Species*. However, Darwin delayed to publish out of fear of the reaction of the conservative believers who still dominated the Church, the government and the universities. And he also feared the criticisms of other scientists, which were frequent in the early decades.

However, the book, when it came out, was a sensation and the first edition quickly sold out. Then, the next year, a famous debate on Darwinism took place in Oxford between Thomas Huxley and Samuel Wilberforce ("Soapy Sam"),

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<sup>41</sup> Wells, *The Outline of History*, London: Cassell, 1925, p. 616.

<sup>42</sup> "A Matter of Faith for Darwin", *The Irish Times*, Fine Arts and Antiques Section, September 19, 2015, p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> Neil Thomas, *Taking Leave of Darwin*, Seattle: Discovery Institute, 2021, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 470.



the Bishop of Oxford, at the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Wilberforce was the son of the famous social reformer, William Wilberforce, who had succeeded in getting slavery outlawed in the British empire. "Soapy Sam" was not a scientist, but a clever and highly educated man who hit on two problems with the theory to which the Darwinists have no real answer to this day. "The first concerned the analogy Darwin wished to draw with the selective breeding of domesticated species. Darwin envisaged natural selection, a sort of impersonal deity, 'daily and hourly' scrutinizing species over the space of entire geological epochs. The problem with the analogy, Wilberforce said, was that domestic breeders do not, in fact, create new species – they merely modify existing species – and the wild descendants of domesticated types, rather than continuing to 'develop', in fact revert to the original type. If anything, therefore, the behaviour of animals under domestication disproved rather than proved the Darwinian thesis.

"Wilberforce's second accusation was that Darwin, if not misrepresenting Lyell, misused him. Lyell's *Geology* shows that there is no geological evidence which proves the existence of transitional forms, of one species turning into another. Darwin acknowledged 'gaps' in the geological evidence, but appeared to be enlisting Lyell for his argument. In fact, there were no 'gaps', simply insufficient evidence. Darwin [in his writings – he was not present at the Oxford debate] acknowledged that Wilberforce's argument was 'uncommonly clever' and that 'he picks out with skill all the most conjectural parts, and beings forward well all the difficulties.'...

"Had the Bishop of Oxford left his argument there he might well have been deemed the victor in the debate that morning. But having scrutinized Darwin's inductive methodology for about half an hour, the Bishop could not help disobeying [Darwin's old friend] Henslow's injunction that speakers should keep the discussion on a scientific footing. Christianity, he stated, offered a nobler view of life than Darwinism. The Bishop shuddered to think of a world where Darwinian evolution would be adopted as a creed. He rejoiced that the 'greatest names in science' had already rejected Darwin's theory, which, he believed, was 'opposed to the interests of science and of humanity'.

"Even now Soapy Sam, in spite of having spoken for too long, could have sat down covered with honour. He had the audience on his side, however, and their excitement went to the Bishop's head. He could not resist a little quip. He turned to Huxley who was, he patronizingly said, 'about to demolish me' and inquired: 'Was it through his grandfather or his grandmother that he traced his descent from an ape?'"<sup>45</sup>

"On this," wrote a Darwinist witness, Isabelle Sidgwick, "Mr. Huxley slowly and deliberately arose. A slight tall figure stern and pale, very quiet and very grave, he stood before us and spoke these tremendous words – words which no one seems sure of now, nor I think, could remember just after they were

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<sup>45</sup> Wilson, op. cit., pp. 258-259, 263.

spoken for their meaning took away our breath, though it left us in no doubt as to what it was. He was not ashamed to have a monkey for his ancestor, but he would be ashamed to be connected with a man who used great gifts to obscure the truth..."<sup>46</sup>

In fact, Huxley turned out to be dishonest: he personally did not believe in natural selection, but simply used Darwinism to undermine the doctrine of Divine creation.

Paradoxically, Darwin's book never actually discussed the very first and simplest step in evolution, the supposed transformation of inorganic matter into organic. This was perhaps because Darwin knew of Louis Pasteur's contemporary discovery that spontaneous generation is impossible.<sup>47</sup> But modern scientists have continued to try and prove the impossible to be possible in their laboratories - with no success whatsoever, even with the huge advantage possessed by human empirical purposiveness over blind chance.

Darwin himself had doubts about natural selection. "To suppose," he wrote. "that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree."<sup>48</sup>

Instead he turned to the discredited theory of Lamarck, that acquired characteristics are inherited - a theory accepted, in modern times, only by Stalin's Lysenko...

Darwin was right to be troubled by the example of the eye. Fr. Job Gumerov writes: "Evolutionism is fundamentally at odds with the systemic methodology. Consider the human eye. It is a complex, finely ordered system. If you remove at least one element, the system will lose its properties and will not be able to perform its functions. The eye could not have arisen in the process of evolution. Evolutionists place a person, a bird, and a frog in a certain sequence on the axis of progress. However, the eyes of each of these species are different systems. They are distinguished not by the degree of perfection, but by a different system-constructive principle."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Sidgwick, in Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 472. Disraeli once said that as between the idea that man was an ape or an angel, he was "on the side of the angels"; but he forgot that, as Lady Constance had opined in his novel *Tancred*, evolution was for many a way of attaining angelic status ("something with wings") in the very long run. For those who did not believe in the deification of man through Christ, evolution provided another, secular and atheist form of deification - more like the kind offered by Satan in the Garden of Eden. This elicited the not unfounded derision of the conservatives. Thus Gobineau said that man was "not descended from the apes, but rapidly getting there". (Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 571)

<sup>47</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spontaneous\\_generation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spontaneous_generation)

<sup>48</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 1909, Harvard Classics edition, p. 190.

<sup>49</sup> Gumerov, "The Orthodox Church Rejects Evolution & Accepts Genuine Science", *Russian Faith; Science as a Confirmation of the Biblical Doctrine of Creation*, Samara, 2001, pp. 26-27.

The German philosopher Nietzsche rejected Darwinism, pointing out, as Copleston writes, "that during most of the time taken up in the formation of a certain organ or quality, the inchoate organ is of no use to its possessor and cannot aid it in its struggle with external circumstances and forces. The influence of 'external circumstances' is absurdly *overrated* by Darwin. The essential factor in the vital process is precisely the tremendous power to shape and create forms from *within*, a power which *uses* and *exploits* the environment."<sup>50</sup> Thus Nietzsche anticipated "the tremendous power to shape and create form from within", which some 150 years later, was discovered to reside in the DNA molecule...

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The idea that all things came into being out of nothing by chance was rejected already in the fourth century by St. Basil the Great: "Where did you get what you have? If you say that you received it by chance, you are an atheist, you do not know your Creator and are not grateful to your Benefactor."<sup>51</sup>

"Accounts of the evolutionary emergence of life were also central in the debates between science and religion from the late nineteenth century in Greece, as elsewhere. This was the issue that consistently polarized the Greek public sphere, producing a number of political disputes. Particularly prominent in this debate was the exchange between the journal *Prometheus* (founded in 1890 by K. Mitsopoulos, a modernist who was at the same time devoutly Orthodox, as a 'periodical of physical and applied sciences') and the Orthodox journal *Anaplassis*. Both sides were unrelenting in the defense of what they saw as a moral and intellectual undertaking. An exchange of pointed articles between the two journals took place in 1890–1891, the period during which the short-lived *Prometheus* was published, but the issue was raised as early as 1876 and discussed as late as 1936. It is not easy to identify what the sides of the debate were, however. Many scientists, such as the University of Athens Chair of Zoology N. Apostolidis (1856–1916), proudly declared that they would not be teaching Darwinism in their university courses. Other Greek intellectuals tried to defend Darwinism, claiming that the idea of evolution actually had a Greek ancestry. Finally, the suicide of a depressive student at the University of Athens in the 1880s was linked to the teaching of Darwinism, sparking moral outrage in ecclesiastical circles."<sup>52</sup>

St. Nectarius, Metropolitan of Pentapolis, writing in 1885, was withering in his rejection of this new version of a very old heresy: "The followers of

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<sup>50</sup> Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, part II: Schopenhauer to Nietzsche, Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1965, pp. 185–186.

<sup>51</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Sermon on Avarice*.

<sup>52</sup> Efthymios Nicolaidis, Eudoxie Delli, Nikolaos Livanos, Kostas Tampakis, and George Vlahakis, "Science and Orthodox Christianity: An Overview", *Isis*, volume 107, number 3., 2016.

*pithecogeny* [the derivation of man from the apes] are ignorant of man and of his lofty destiny, because they have denied him his soul and Divine revelation. They have rejected the Spirit, and the Spirit has abandoned them. They withdrew from God, and God withdrew from them; for, thinking they were wise, they became fools... If they had acted with knowledge, they would not have lowered themselves so much, nor would they have taken pride in tracing the origin of the human race to the most shameless of animals. Rightly did the Prophet say of them: 'Man being in honour, did not understand; he is compared to the dumb beasts, and is become like unto them.'<sup>53</sup>

The Russian St. Theophan the Recluse (+1894) spoke of the "geological madness" of Darwinism: "Once a man came to me who simply couldn't believe that there had been a flood. Then I told him that on very high mountains in the sand are found shells and other remains from the ocean floor, and how geology testifies to the flood, and he came to believe. You see how necessary learning is at times." And again the elder said: "God not only permits, but demands of man that he grow in knowledge. However, it is necessary to live and learn so that not only does knowledge not ruin morality, but that morality not ruin knowledge."<sup>54</sup>

And again: "They have heaped up a multitude of fanciful suppositions for themselves, elevated them to the status of irrefutable truths and plumed themselves on them, assuming that nothing can be said against them. In fact, they are so ungrounded that it is not even worthwhile speaking against them. All of their sophistry is a house of cards – blow on it and it flies apart. There is no need to refute it in its parts; it is enough to regard it as one regards dreams. When speaking against dreams, people do not prove the absurdity in their composition or in their individual parts, but only say, 'It's a dream,' and with that they resolve everything. It is the same with the theory of the formation of the world from a nebula and its supports, with the theory of abiogenesis and Darwin's origin of genera and species, and with his last dream about the descent of man. It is all like delirium. When you read them you are walking in the midst of shadows. And scientists? Well, what can you do with them? Their motto is "If you don't like it, don't listen, but don't prevent me from lying."

And again, St. Theophan wrote: "These days many nihilists of both sexes, naturalists, Darwinists, Spiritists, and Westernizers in general have multiplied among us. All right, you're thinking – would the Church have been silent, would it not have proffered its voice, would it not have condemned or anathematized them if there had been something new in their teaching? To be sure – a council would have done so without doubt, and all of them, with their teachings, would have been given over to anathema. To the current Rite of Orthodoxy only the following item would have been added: 'To Büchner, Feuerbach, Darwin, Renan, Kardec, and all their followers – anathema! But

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<sup>53</sup> St. Nectarios, *Sketch concerning Man*, Athens, 1885.

<sup>54</sup> *Zhitia prepodobnykh Startsev Optinoj Pustyni* (The Lives of the Holy Elders of Optina Desert), Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1992.

there is no need, either for a special council or for any kind of addition. All of their false teachings were anathematized long ago. At the present time, not only in principal cities but in all places and churches the Rite of Orthodoxy ought to be brought in and celebrated, so that all the teachings contrary to the word of God might be collected and that it might be proclaimed to everyone what they must fear and from what teachings they must flee, and all might know. Many are seduced intellectually only through ignorance, and therefore a public condemnation of pernicious teachings would save them from destruction. If the action of an anathema is terrible to someone, then let him avoid the teachings that lead to it. Let him who is afraid of it for the sake of others bring them back to a healthy teaching. If you who are not favorably disposed to this action are Orthodox, then you are going against yourself; and if you have already lost sound teaching, then what business do you have concerning what is done in the Church that supports it? After all, you've already separated yourself from the Church and have your own convictions, your own way of looking at things – well, live with them then. It's all the same whether or not your name and your teaching are uttered under the anathema: you are already under anathema if you philosophize against the Church and persist in this philosophizing.”<sup>55</sup>

The most famous monastery in Russia was Optina Desert. Its elders were unanimous in rejecting Darwinism. Thus St. Ambrose of Optina (+1891) wrote: “Don't believe at face value all kinds of nonsense without investigation: that something can come into being [of itself] from dust, and that people used to be apes.”<sup>56</sup> A little later, St. Nektary of Optina (+1928) affirmed that the fossils, the only scientific evidence for evolution, were actually laid down by the Great Flood, which is why so many of them were to be found on the tops of high mountains.<sup>57</sup>

Again, the future hieromartyr and Metropolitan of Kiev Vladimir (Bogoiavlensky) wrote: “Only at the present time has such an audacious philosophy found a place for itself, which overthrows human worth and tries to give its false teaching a wide dissemination ... Man did not originate from God's hands, it says; in an endless and gradual transition from imperfection to perfection he developed from the animal kingdom, and as little soul as animals have, so little does man have ... How immeasurably deeply does all this degrade and insult man! From the highest step in the progression of creation he is reduced to the same level as the animals ... There is no need to refute such a teaching on a scientific basis, although it would not be difficult to do so, since unbelief has far from proved its position ... But if such a teaching finds more and more followers at the present time, this is not because the teaching of unbelief has supposedly become inarguably true, but because it does not hinder a corrupt heart that is inclined to sin from giving itself over to its passions. For if man is not immortal, if he is nothing more than the attainment

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<sup>55</sup> St. Theophan, *Sozertsanie i razmyshlenie* (Contemplations and Reflections), 1998, p. 146.

<sup>56</sup> St. Ambrose, *Soviety suprugam i roditeliam* (Counsels to spouses and parents).

<sup>57</sup> *Zhitia prepodobnykh Startsev Optinoj Pustyni*.

of the highest development of the animals, then he has no business with God  
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"Brethren, do not listen to the pernicious, poison-bearing teaching of unbelief, which lowers you to the level of animals and, depriving you of human worth, promises you nothing but despair and an inconsolable life."<sup>58</sup>

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It was the implicit denial of the rational, free, spiritual and immortal soul that particularly shocked the early critics of Darwinism. For as Darwinism rapidly evolved from a purely biological theory of origins into the metaphysical theory of universal evolutionism, going back to what scientists now call the Big Bang, the image of man that emerged was not simply animalian but completely material. Man was made in the image, not of God, or even of the beast, but of dead matter.

Moreover, evolutionism turned out to be an explanation of the origins of the whole universe on the basis of a supposedly new philosophy or religion that was in fact very old and very pagan. For "all things were made" now, not by God the Word, the eternal Life and Light of the world, but by blind mutation and "natural selection" (i.e. death). These were the two hands of original Chaos, the father of all things - a conception as old as the pre-Socratic philosophers Anaximander and Heraclitus and as retrogressive as the pre-Christian religions of Egypt and Babylon. Darwin's idea of species evolving into and from each other also recalls the Hindu idea of reincarnation.

More recent influences included Hegel. The dialectical structure of Hegel's philosophy is congruent with Darwin's. Thus the organism (thesis) comes into conflict with nature (antithesis), which produces a new species (synthesis).

But a more likely direct and contemporary influence was Schopenhauer's philosophy of Will. For both Schopenhauer and Darwin the blind, selfish Will to live was everything; for both there was neither intelligent design nor selfless love, but only the struggle to survive; for both the best that mankind could hope for was not Paradise but a kind of Buddhist nirvana.

Schopenhauer in metaphysics, Darwin in science, and Marx in politics formed a kind of unholy trinity of false prophets, whose essential concept was *Will*.<sup>59</sup> Marx liked Darwinism because it appeared to justify class struggle as the fundamental mechanism of human evolution. "The idea of class struggle logically flows from 'the law of the struggle for existence'. It is precisely by this

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<sup>58</sup> St. Vladimir, "Gde istinnoe shchast'e: V vere ili neverii? (Where is true happiness? In faith or unbelief?), 1905.

<sup>59</sup> Marx's task was "to convert the 'Will' of German philosophy and this abstraction into a force in the practical world" (A.N. Wilson, *After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2005, p. 126).

law that Marxism explains the emergence of classes and their struggle, whence logically proceeds the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Instead of racist pre-eminence class pre-eminence is preached."<sup>60</sup>

However, Darwinism's blind historicism and implicit atheism was also congenial to Marx. As Richard Wurmbrand notes: "After Marx had read *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin, he wrote a letter to Lassalle in which he exults that God - in the natural sciences at least - had been given 'the death blow'".<sup>61</sup>

"Karl Marx," writes Hieromonk Damascene, "was a devout Darwinist, who in *Das Kapital* called Darwin's theory 'epoch making'. He believed his reductionist, materialistic theories of the evolution of social organization to be deducible from Darwin's discoveries, and thus proposed to dedicate *Das Kapital* to Darwin. The funeral oration over Marx's body, delivered by Engels, stressed the evolutionary basis of communism: 'Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history.'"<sup>62</sup>

"Darwinism and Marxism," wrote Fr. Seraphim Rose, "are inextricably linked. Karl Marx, one of world history's biggest villains, dedicated his book *Das Kapital* to Darwin. The five biggest mass murderers in world history, Pol Pot, Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao, were all heavily influenced by Darwin. With Darwinist-utilitarian logic, Pol Pot stated, 'Keeping you is no gain. Losing you is no loss.' Adolf Hitler dedicated his memoir *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) to the subtitle of *The Origin of Species*, and tried to put Darwin's theory into practice by conducting the Holocaust. Vladimir Lenin said, 'Darwin put an end to the belief that the animal and vegetable species bear no relation to one another, except by chance, and that they were created by God, and hence immutable.' He also owned a bronze statue of an ape gazing at an oversized human skull on a stack of his books, one of them being *The Origin of Species*. His right-hand man Leon Trotsky also talked about Darwin's influence on himself. When Joseph Stalin came across Darwin as a young kid, he became convinced that God does not exist, and told a classmate all about him. When he took power, he said, 'There are three things that we do to disabuse the minds of our seminary students. We had to teach them the age of the earth, the geologic origin, and Darwin's teachings.' Stalin also tried to create ape-men super warriors by putting human semen into female apes. Mao Tse-tung listed Darwin as the most influential Westerner in his life, along with Darwin's followers Thomas Huxley, Darwin's cousin Francis Galton, and Herbert

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<sup>60</sup> Fr. Timothy Alferov, *Pravoslavnoe Mirovozzrenie i Sovremennoe Estestvoznanie* (The Orthodox World-View and the Contemporary Science of Nature), Moscow: "Palomnik", 1998, p. 158.

<sup>61</sup> Wurmbrand, *Was Karl Marx a Satanist?*, Diane Books (USA), 1976, p. 44.

<sup>62</sup> Hieromonk Damascene, in Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Genesis, Creation and Early Man*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 2000, p. 339, note.

Spencer. Mao also said 'The basis of Chinese socialism rests on Darwin and his theory of evolution.'"<sup>63</sup>

"The years after 1870," writes Gareth Stedman Jones, "were dominated by the prestige of the natural sciences, especially that of Darwin. Playing to these preoccupations, Engels presented Marx's work, not as a theory of communism or as a study of capitalism, but as the foundation of a parallel 'science of historical materialism'. Socialism had made a transition from 'utopia' to 'science'..."<sup>64</sup>

Bertrand Russell wrote: "Darwinism was an application to the whole of animal and vegetable life of Malthus's theory of population, which was an integral part of the politics and economics of the Benthamites - a global free competition, in which victory went to the animals that most resembled successful capitalists. Darwin himself was influenced by Malthus, and was in general sympathy with the Philosophical Radicals. There was, however, a great difference between the competition admired by orthodox economists and the struggle for existence which Darwin proclaimed as the motive force of evolution. 'Free competition,' in orthodox economics, is a very artificial conception, hedged in by legal restrictions. You may undersell a competitor, but you must not murder him. You must not use the armed forces of the State to help you to get the better of foreign manufacturers. Those who have the good fortune to possess capital must not seek to improve their lot by revolution. 'Free competition', as understood by the Benthamites, was by no means really free.

"Darwinian competition was not of this limited sort; there were no rules against hitting below the belt. The framework of law does not exist among animals, nor is war excluded as a competitive method. The use of the State to secure victory in competition was against the rules as conceived by the Benthamites, but could not be excluded from the Darwinian struggle. In fact, though Darwin himself was a Liberal, and though Nietzsche never mentions him except with contempt, Darwin's 'Survival of the Fittest' led, when thoroughly assimilated, to something much more like Nietzsche's philosophy than like Bentham's. These developments, however, belong to a later period, since Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859, and its political implications were not at first perceived..."<sup>65</sup>

The political implications of Darwin's book are obvious from its full title: *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the struggle for life*. Darwin did not mean by "races" races of men, but species of animals. However, the inference was easily drawn that certain races of men are more "favoured" than others; and this inference was still more easily drawn after the publication of *The Descent of Man* in 1871.

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<sup>63</sup> Rose, *Genesis, Creation, and Early Man*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press.

<sup>64</sup> Gareth Jones, "The Routes of Revolution", *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 3 (6), June, 2002, p. 36.

<sup>65</sup> Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 807-808



Darwin's theory is definitely racist, however much contemporary liberals might argue otherwise. In *The Descent of Man* he wrote, "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilised state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla."<sup>66</sup>

Very soon different races or classes or groups of men were being viewed as if they were different species. "Applied to politics," writes Jacques Barzun, "[Darwinism] bred the doctrine that nations and other social groups struggle endlessly in order that the fittest shall survive. So attractive was this 'principle' that it got the name of Social Darwinism."<sup>67</sup>

Thus Social Darwinism may be defined as the idea that "human affairs are a jungle in which only the fittest of nations, classes, or individuals will survive".<sup>68</sup>

Social Darwinism leads to the conclusion that certain races are congenitally superior to others. "Only congenital characteristics are inherited," writes Russell, "apart from certain not very important exceptions. Thus the congenital differences between men acquire fundamental importance."<sup>69</sup>

Darwin's views in *The Descent of Man*, writes Wilson, "when placed beside even the most reactionary or fascistically inclined readers of the twenty-first century, seem simply monstrous. For here in all its fullness is an exposition of his belief in the survival of the fittest, by which he meant the white races of the globe in preference to the brown-skinned races, the supremacy; among the British, of the class to which Darwin happened himself to belong, and among that class, the Darwin family, and himself, in particular. The grand end of the struggle for life was to allow the rentier class to live in comfort while lower ranks toiled..."<sup>70</sup>

As Fr. Timothy Alferov writes: "The ideas of racial pre-eminence - racism, Hitlerism - come from the Darwinist teaching on the origin of the races and their unequal significance. The law of the struggle for existence supposedly obliges the strong races to exert a strong dominance over the other races, to the extent of destroying the latter. It is not necessary to describe here the

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<sup>66</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, London: John Murray, 1873, p. 178.

<sup>67</sup> Barzun, *op. cit.* pp. 571-572.

<sup>68</sup> Norman Davies, *Europe*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 794.

<sup>69</sup> Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 753.

<sup>70</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-297.

incarnation of these ideas in life in the example of Hitlerism, but it is worth noting that Hitler greatly venerated Darwin."<sup>71</sup>

Social Darwinism also had an important effect on criminology. Thus, as Evans writes, "Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), who served with the Italian army in 1863 fighting brigands in Calabria, came to the view that criminals were not made but born, representing throwbacks to an earlier stage of human evolution. In 1876 he published *Criminal Man*, which took advantage of the development of photography to argue that born criminals had long arms, simian features and other physical attributes of the ape. Lombroso's idea of atavism, of criminals as evolutionary throwbacks, never received much support, and as time went on he modified his arguments to suggest that hereditary criminality was also the consequence of generations of alcoholism, or sexually transmitted diseases, or malnutrition; but more generally the basic idea that criminality was inherited began to exert a growing influence across Europe in the late nineteenth century.

"The consequences of Lombroso's basic argument, popularized by his student Enrico Ferri (1856-1929) in Italy, by Gustav Aschaffenburg (1866-1944) in Germany, by Francis Galton (1822-1911) in Britain, and by Rafael Salillas (1854-1923) in Spain, were momentous. The study of crime and criminality became the province not of law and its practitioners but of medicine and of professional criminology. Increasingly, In the 1890s and beyond, arguments began to be raised in favour of the compulsory sterilization of the 'inferior' who might be found work but should not be allowed to reproduce. Lombroso himself, along with many others who shared at least some of his views, began to argue for capital punishment on new grounds, namely that the extremely degenerate offender, the criminal with inherited violent traits, could neither be rendered safe nor removed from the chain of heredity unless he or she was eliminated altogether. Punishment had come full circle, from the medieval and early modern punishment of the body to the Enlightenment and Victorian punishment of the mind, and back again to the turn-of-the-century punishment of the body again."<sup>72</sup>

However, while appearing to widen the differences between races and classes of men, Social Darwinism also *reduces* them between men and other species - with startling consequences. Thus Bertrand Russell writes: "If men and animals have a common ancestry, and if men developed by such slow stages that there were creatures which we should not know whether to classify as human or not, the question arises: at what stage in evolution did men, or their semi-human ancestors, begin to be all equal? Would *Pithecanthropus erectus*, if he had been properly educated, have done work as good as Newton's? Would the Piltdown Men have written Shakespeare's poetry if there had been anybody to convict him of poaching? A resolute egalitarian who answers these questions

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<sup>71</sup> Alferov, *Pravoslavnoe Mirovozzrenie i Sovremennoe Estesvoznanie* (The Orthodox World-View and the Contemporary Science of Nature), Moscow: "Palomnik", 1998, pp. 157-158.

<sup>72</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 439-440.

in the affirmative will find himself forced to regard apes as the equals of human beings. And why stop at apes? I do not see how he is to resist an argument in favour of Votes for Oysters. An adherent of evolution should maintain that not only the doctrine of the equality of all men, but also that of the rights of man, must be condemned as unbiological, since it makes too emphatic a distinction between men and other animals."<sup>73</sup>

Since Russell's time this idea of the essential equality between men and animals has come to be taken more seriously than even the Social Darwinists evidently took it...

Thus a British Channel 4 television programme once seriously debated the question whether apes should have the same rights as human beings, and came to a positive conclusion...<sup>74</sup> However, practical steps do not seem to have been made to this end, which shows that common sense still prevails against the march of "enlightened science" – at least some of the time...

Arthur Balfour, who became British Prime Minister in 1902, and issued his famous Declaration on a Homeland for the Jews in 1917, described universal evolutionism as follows: "A man - so far as natural science is able to teach us, is no longer... the Heaven-descended heir of all the ages. His very existence is an accident, his story a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Of the combination of causes which first converted a dead organic compound into the living progenitors of humanity, science indeed, as yet knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings famine, disease, and mutual slaughter, fit nurses of the future lords of creation, have gradually evolved after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to feel that it is vile, and intelligent enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past, and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish..."<sup>75</sup>

A truly melancholy philosophy... C.S. Lewis wrote: "By universal evolutionism I mean the belief that the very formula of universal process is from imperfect to perfect, from small beginnings to great endings, from the rudimentary to the elaborate, the belief which makes people find it natural to think that morality springs from savage taboos, adult sentiment from infantile sexual maladjustments, thought from instinct, mind from matter, organic from

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<sup>73</sup> Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 753.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. See Joanna Bourke, *What it Means to be Human*, London: Virago, 2011.

<sup>75</sup> Balfour, *The Foundations of Belief*, 1895, pp. 30-31; in Wilson, *The Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2002, p. 557.

inorganic, cosmos from chaos. This is perhaps the deepest habit of mind in the contemporary world. It seems to me immensely implausible, because it makes the general course of nature so very unlike those parts of nature we can observe. You remember the old puzzle as to whether the owl came from the egg or the egg from the owl. The modern acquiescence in universal evolutionism is a kind of optical illusion, produced by attending exclusively to the owl's emergence from the egg. We are taught from childhood to notice how the perfect oak grows from the acorn and to forget that the acorn itself was dropped by a perfect oak. We are reminded constantly that the adult human being was an embryo, never that the life of the embryo came from two adult human beings. We love to notice that the express engine of today is the descendant of the 'Rocket'; we do not equally remember that the 'Rocket' springs not from some even more rudimentary engine, but from something much more perfect and complicated than itself - namely, a man of genius. The obviousness or naturalness which most people seem to find in the idea of emergent evolution thus seems to be a pure hallucination..."<sup>76</sup>

*May 14/27, 2020; revised November 19 / December 2, 2021.*

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<sup>76</sup> Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?" in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, New York: Macmillan, 1949.

#### 4. THE CONCILIAR CHURCH AND THE CYPRIANTE HERESY

To know the truth, and to be united with others in knowing the truth – there is no greater joy than this. As David says: “What is so good or so joyous as for brethren to dwell together in unity?” (Psalm 132.1). “Jerusalem is builded as a city which its dwellers share in concord” (Psalm 121.2).

How do we attain the truth? Here, tragically, lies the first cause of disunity, of estrangement from the truth. For the great majority of so-called civilized mankind believes that the answer is: in reason, in science. Only a minority believes that, besides reason, or science, there is another path to truth: Divine revelation. Moreover, the Christian part of that minority believes that only Divine revelation provides *knowledge with certainty, knowledge of the really important things in life, knowledge that can really unite rather than divide people*.

Modern science has now existed for several hundred years. It promised much: not only truth, but happiness, no less. There is no sign that it is fulfilling its promises. Like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it looks good on the outside, but its aftertaste is bitter, deadly even.

Scientists have learned an enormous amount about a great deal of unimportant things. The greatest scientists recognized with humility that there were many things, including all the most important things, which they did not know. Sir Isaac Newton believed in Divine revelation as well as science, and after his death it was discovered among his papers in Cambridge that he had written extensive commentaries on several books of the Old and New Testaments. In particular, he wanted to know when the end of the world would be, and using Daniel and the Book of Revelation rather than science, he came up with the date: 2060. There is no good reason to believe he was right, but at least he acknowledged that there is another spring of truth besides the mind of man: the Mind of God.

Albert Einstein was not a Christian. But he did believe in the beauty of the universe, and that therefore there was an Author of that beauty: God. And so he declared: “God does not play with dice,” for neither beauty nor truth can come from mere chance. Unfortunately, the great majority of modern physicists do not agree with him, but believe the truly fantastical proposition that everything came out of nothing, or rather, from a tiny handful of super-heated dust that appeared out of nowhere, *by chance*, completely by chance. Truly did David say of such men: “The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God.”

The whole truth about everything important came to man through Divine Revelation. First, the truth about the creation of the world and man and the fundamental principles of individual and social life were revealed by God to Moses and the prophets. Then the truth about how to be saved and enter into eternal life was revealed by God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And finally, the truth about the end of the world and the Last Judgement was revealed by God through Christ and his holy apostles. God has not ceased to

reveal further truths about great and small things down the ages; but all the great foundational truths are contained in God's Word, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Unfortunately, man's mind is curious, proud and fallen. And so from the beginning "there crept in certain men unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3). They disputed and distorted the truths of Divine Revelation even while pretending to believe in them; "suppressing the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1.18), they fell away from the truth and led all who believed in them out of the Church and into the abyss of heresy.

However, God has a remedy for this: the spring of truth that is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Church, being the Body of Christ Himself and filled with the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of truth", is called "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3.15). She, and she alone among all the world's created institutions, is given the grace to know the truth and to discern all deviations from the truth. The organs of the Church's revelation of truth and exposure of falsehood are the Councils of her leading bishops, especially the Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787), but also several important Pan-Orthodox and Local Councils that have taken place in the last 1233 years. The Fathers of the first such Council, which took place in Jerusalem a few years after the Resurrection of Christ, recognized that the springs of the truth that they proclaimed were: the Holy Spirit, and their own enlightened minds working in concord. "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us..." (Acts 15.28).

If, therefore, we wish to know the truth about any important spiritual issue, we must turn to the life-giving springs of living water, *the Councils of the Holy Fathers*. So important is this fact that many of the services of the Church begin and end with the words: "Through the prayers of the Holy Fathers..." The Church is the Church of the Holy Fathers *meeting in Council*, and she even defines herself as *Conciliar*, which is very close in meaning to *Catholic* (the inspired translation of the Greek word "Catholic" in the Creed into the Slavonic of Saints Cyril and Methodius is "Sobornaia", that is to say, "Conciliar" in English).

In recent years, however, an attack on the Conciliarity of the Church has been launched in the context of the most important conciliar decision of recent times. The anathema against ecumenism, hurled by a Local Council of the Russian Church Abroad in 1983, declared all ecumenist churches who confessed the heretical branch theory of the Church, to be outside the Church. In the following year, a Greek hierarch in schism from his lawful hierarchy, Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili and Oropo, issued his *Ecclesiological Theses*, which argued that heretics that have not been condemned specifically by an Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Council, remain "uncondemned" until condemned by such a Council. His unstated target was the Russian Church's anathema of the previous year; he wished to say that the ecumenist heretics

anathematized by the Local Council of 1983 were in fact “uncondemned” and therefore grace-bearing, albeit “sick”, members of the True Church.

The falseness of the Cyprianite position is demonstrated by the story of the most famous of all heretics, Arius. First, Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, expelled him from communion in his diocese. This was a local decision, but its validity was contested by nobody – Cyprianism was unknown in those days. Then, some years later, when St. Peter was in prison, Arius feigned repentance, and several priests, including the future bishops Achilles and Alexander, came to St. Peter to entreat him to accept him into communion. However, St. Peter refused, saying: “Arius I refuse to accept, for he has been cast out of the Holy Church by God Himself and excommunicated *not so much in accordance with my judgement as with God’s...*” And then to Achilles and Alexander alone he said: “I call him accursed, *not by my own judgement but by that of Christ my God*, Who appeared to me last night. As I was praying, according to my custom, a brilliant light suddenly shone in my prison cell, and I beheld the Lord Jesus Christ in the guise of a youth twelve years of age. His face was more radiant than the sun, so that I could not bear to look upon the ineffable glory of His countenance. He was clad in a white robe torn from top to bottom, which He held to His breast with both hands to cover His nakedness. Seeing this, terror fell upon me, and I asked Him, ‘Who is it, O Saviour, that hath rent Thy garment?’ The Lord answered, ‘The mindless Arius rent it by dividing the people Whom I redeemed by My blood. Take care not to receive him into communion with the Church.’”

Now the Church of God, the tunic of Christ, is always one, and cannot be divided within itself. Nevertheless, Arius is said to have divided it by his heresy, which can only mean that, without tearing the Church herself, he tore people *away from* the Church through his heresy. This in turn means that heresy divides heretics from the Church, not through any act of the Church’s hierarchy, but through the judgement of Christ Himself *before* the actions of any earthly hierarchs, whether in Local or Ecumenical Councils. The hierarchs of the earthly Church *discern* and *obey* and *confirm* the judgement of the Heavenly Church and of her Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. For He alone “killeth and maketh alive, bringeth down into hades and raiseth up again” (I Kings (I Samuel) 2.6), He alone “has the keys of hades and death” (Revelation 1.18) – together with those faithful hierarchs to whom He has given the power to bind and to loose from hades and death because of their discernment of His judgements. It is in this context that we can understand the Lord’s words to Nicodemus: “He that believeth not *is condemned already*” (John 3.18). Again, the Apostle Paul says: “A man that is a heretic... *is self-condemned*” (Titus 3.10, 11). So there can be no “not-as-yet condemned heretics”, as the Cyprianites affirm: *all* heretics are condemned immediately they preach heresy publicly, and are “false bishops” even “*before conciliar condemnation*”, as is explicitly affirmed by the 15<sup>th</sup> Canon of the First-and-Second Council of 861.

The reaction to Cyprian’s false teaching on the Church’s conciliarity was swift: in 1986 a Council of the bishops of the True Orthodox Church of Greece

under Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kiouisis) of Athens defrocked him for schism and heresy. The Russian Church Abroad under Metropolitan Vitaly later confirmed the Greeks' decision against Cyprianism in 2001, as did the Russian True Orthodox (Catacomb) Church under Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia.

So the ecumenists have been validly anathematized by the decisions of several Local Councils; they are *outside the Church and deprived of the grace of sacraments*. No further decision of a Pan-Orthodox or Ecumenical Council is required to "validate" those decisions, and Cyprian's teaching that such a validation is required in order truly to cast the ecumenists out of the Church is false. In fact, all heretics, immediately they begin spewing their heresy publicly, are already "self-condemned" for blaspheming against "the theology on high", falling under the pre-eternal curses of the primordial Council of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

For since the Church of Christ is Conciliar by nature, her bishops meeting in councils, whether big or small, whether Local or Ecumenical, are fully empowered to cast heretics out of the Church provided their decisions are consonant with the decisions of all previous Councils in that golden chain of sanctity and truth that constitutes the history of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. And so, as the kontakion for today's feast declares: *The preaching of the Apostles and the doctrines of the Fathers confirmed the one Faith of the Church. And wearing the garment of truth woven from the theology on high, she rightly divideth and glorifieth the great mystery of piety.*

May 18/31, 2020.  
Sunday of the Holy Fathers.  
St. Elgiva, Queen of England.



## 5. HISTORY, HISTORICISM AND HEGEL

The pace of change in the period 1789-1830 was so great that men began to look at history itself in a new way...

Since the beginning of the Christian era, the attitude to time and history had been very specific. Time is real, but not, as it were, timeless. Unlike Aristotle, for example, Christians did not believe that time has no beginning or end. Just as God made all things "in the beginning" in Christ, so all material things will come to an end in time, when Christ comes again in glory to take the whole of redeemed humanity out of time into eternal life with God in heaven, while unredeemed humanity is condemned to eternal death, but continuing existence, with the devil in hell. Therefore all earthly hopes and fears, including all political and social institutions and their associated values, will perish. The one exception is the Church of Christ, which, being the Body of God Incarnate, cannot change; nor can the dogmatic truths and values it proclaims - including, most importantly, the rightness and naturalness of monarchical rule and the hierarchical nature of society, - change in any fundamental way. Both the Orthodox in the East and the Roman Catholics in the West stood for *unchanging truth*; their teaching was the *philosophia perennis*. (In fact, the popes took it upon themselves to "develop", that is, change doctrine through their supposedly infallible pronouncements, such as the addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed. But their *claim* was to express unchanging truth.)

This attitude began to change during the Renaissance, when the idea of radical change became popular and acceptable. However, the Renaissance philosophers looked back, not forward in time; their ideal was a "rebirth" of Greco-Roman antiquity, and their aim was to fuse Christian culture and art with the Classical culture and art of the ancients. Change was welcomed, not because it brought in something new, but because it returned that which was old and supposedly better than the Christian present.

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

“What emerged, then, from Vico’s thought was a concept of liberty which worked as a natural law in history and through history. ‘Everything is history,’ the Neapolitan maintained, a remark Croce was fond of repeating later on. While accepting the primacy of the spirit in the human struggle for liberty, the adherents of the religion of liberty abandoned the cyclical rhythm of history in favor of a concept of progress based, as it was, on the optimistic belief of the Enlightenment in the triumph of reason. Now, however, this concept of progress was combined with an awareness of the importance of historical development. Human progress developed through the laws of history and not through the inevitable triumph of reason alone. A concept of liberty was central to this human progress in the sense of liberty’s progress as a part of man’s progress through history.”<sup>77</sup>

The conceptual breakthrough – or rather, breakdown, that is, conceptual collapse – came with the Enlightenment idea of *Progress*. The ideal now was not a return to past glories, but constant progress towards the unknown and almost unimaginable glories of a future golden age through the application of reason, science and education on an ever-increasing scale. Crucially, this progress was considered to be *inevitable, determined*. So if unhappy events such as wars, pandemics or civil strife took place, these were mere “blips” in the unending progress to a happier future. Or rather, such “blips” should not be considered as “bad” in a real sense, but as creative means towards the providential end of history, that is, a glorious utopia for all those who cooperated with her march (while for those who resisted her there was reserved “the dustbin of history”). This way of thinking, called *historicism*, held a major attraction for nineteenth-century Europeans: it could plausibly (for the unwary) be considered to be compatible both with what was still the majority’s old, Christian world-view (providing Christ Himself was airbrushed out of the picture), and with the newest fad of the “enlightened” classes – Romanticism.

For could not History on this view be considered to be God Himself, albeit in an impersonal, secular form? And could not the tragic “blips” in history be compared with the inevitable sufferings of the Christian that purify and train him, making him fit for the infinite joy at the end of the Divine Comedy? And cannot the eternal heaven and hell of Christianity be compared to the fate of the good “progressives” and bad “reactionaries” of historicism, History’s chosen and damned? As for Romantic art, did it not thrive on its dynamism, as opposed to the serene, quasi-immobility of baroque and Renaissance art? Thus while the polyphony of a Palestrina motet created the sensation of never-changing timelessness, the *Sturm und Drang* symphonies of Haydn, or Beethoven’s *Appassionata* sonata, created the sensation of constant movement from one dissonance to another, finding rest only in the heart-easing consonance of the final chord?

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<sup>77</sup> Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1988.

Whatever the philosophical implications of historicism, there is no denying that the greatly increased interest in history that we see in this period produced great advances in knowledge. The nineteenth century saw an explosion in historiography from Michelet in France to Macaulay in England to innumerable German historians. There is no doubt that the historical approach also brought spiritual benefits. Thus Karamzin's *History of the Russian State* was, according to Pushkin, "a revelation. You could say that Karamzin discovered ancient Russia as Columbus discovered America." Even dogmatics becomes clearer when viewed in a historical context.

However, historicism encountered a major problem in explaining the very recent history of the French revolution and the Napoleonic despotism. Most intellectuals of the post-Napoleonic generation believed passionately, following Vico, that history followed natural laws which included a law of ever-increasing liberty. But, as Mosse writes, "had liberty not led to the Terror, to Jacobin tyranny and, in the end, to Napoleon's iron grip on Europe? Would liberty, even if conceived in historical terms, not lead to new excesses? The adherents of this new liberty had to face this problem. They believed in liberty but hated what Robespierre and Napoleon had made out of this human longing. The emphasis on history helped here, for such an emphasis precluded sudden innovations. They went one step further and repudiated the revolutionary concept of democracy, a concept they felt led not to liberty but to absolutism. They blamed Rousseau's doctrine of the general will and Robespierre's use of it. Madame de Staël, in her *Considerations upon the French Revolution* (1816), spoke of the Revolution as a crisis in the history of liberty. She contrasted ancient liberty, sanctified by history, to the modernity of despotism. Jacobin popular democracy was, for her, just another form of tyranny; liberty had to be obtained in another way, a way outlined by the French constitution of 1791 and the constitution of England (for Madame de Staël admired the English constitution as did Montesquieu before her). 'It is a beautiful sight this constitution, vacillating a little as it sets out from its port, like a vessel launched at sea, yet unfurling its sails, it gives full play to everything great and generous in the human soul.' Through such a constitution liberty unfolds within the historical process. Liberty was all-important to this talented and famous woman; she hated the Terror but she did not lay it at the doorstep of the Revolution. The *ancien régime* had so corrupted the morals of the people that despotism, not liberty, had to be the outcome of their justified revolt. She held to the oft-repeated view that the champions of reaction, not the revolutionaries, were the ultimate causes of revolutions."<sup>78</sup>

So de Staël's argument came down to the following. First, contrary to the flow of history, despotism had come to power in France under the Bourbons. This then had two contradictory effects: on the one hand, it stimulated the revolution of 1789, which was a glorious step forward for freedom; but on other hand, it also stimulated the Jacobin Terror of 1793, which was a gigantic step backwards towards an even darker despotism.

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<sup>78</sup> Mosse, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

Now French liberals such as Madame de Staël or Benjamin Constant might speak about the historical process. But their understanding of that process was something quite different from what it meant to the new wave of romantic philosophers that were beginning to make their reputations across the Rhine, to which we now turn...

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By contrast with the Age of Rationalism, which had sought to elucidate truths that were valid for all cultures and all times, in the new romantic age that followed it truth was ineluctably *historical*, *changeable* and *particularist*. And this meant not simply, in accordance with the teaching of Herder and Hamann, that the truth about a person or nation can be understood only in his or its historical context, which is an idea acceptable to most men reasonably educated in history. It meant that *truth itself changes with time*.

Thus God for the romantics was a dynamic, evolving being indistinguishable from nature and history, always overcoming contradictions (theses and antitheses) and rising to ever higher unities (syntheses) that overcome the contradictions. It followed that there was no perfectly revealed religion, no absolute truth. "Christians must not be 'vain and foolish', Friedrich Schleiermacher warned, for their religion is not the only 'revealed religion'. All religions are revealed from God. Christianity is the center around which all others gather. The disunity of religions is an evil and 'only in the totality of all such possible forms can there be given the true religion,' Schleiermacher added."<sup>79</sup>

This schema was developed by Friedrich Schelling, who distinguished, as Fr. Michael Azkoul writes, "the three ages of history - the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Holy Spirit which correspond to the events of creation, redemption and consummation. Schelling believed that Christianity was now passing through 'the second age' which Christ 'incarnated' almost two millennia ago.

"In the vocabulary of the Romantics, Christ brought 'the Idea of Christianity' with Him. An 'Idea' is the invisible, unchangeable, and eternal aspect of each thing. (Plato was probably the first to teach 'Idealism'.) Phenomena are visible, changeable, and temporary. Put another way, the Idea of Christianity ('one Church') is what the historical institution will become when it finishes growing, or, as Schelling would say, when God becomes fully God. One may compare its Idea to wheat and historical Christianity (the Idea) to what Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Christianity will become. When the multiplicity of churches grows into the ecumenical Church, then, the Idea of Christianity, of 'one church', will have been actualised in space and time. It will

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<sup>79</sup> Azkoul, *Anti-Christianity: The New Atheism*, Montreal: Monastery Press, 1984, p. 34.

be actualised in the coming of 'the third age', 'the age of the Spirit', 'the age of consummation'.<sup>80</sup>

The desire to keep always "in step with the times" was manifested especially by the third famous Friedrich of the era, Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Indeed, Hegel must be considered one of the most influential thinkers of all time, whose thought profoundly influenced both Marxism and Fascism.

As Sir Richard Evans writes, Hegel "grew up in south-west Germany under the influence of the Enlightenment, was an admirer of the French Revolution, and of Napoleon. Whom he witnessed entering Jena after the winning the battle of 1806. Following a variety of teaching positions, Hegel was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy in Berlin in 1818, where he remained until his death of cholera in 1831. An atheist, he replaced the concept of God with the idea of the 'World Spirit' of rationality, which he believed was working out its purposes in a process he called 'dialectical', in which one historical condition would be replaced by its antithesis, and then the two would combine to create a final synthesis. As he became more conservative, Hegel began to regard the state of Prussia after 1815 as a 'synthesis' requiring no further alteration. Not surprisingly, he was soon known as 'the Prussian state philosopher'. But his core idea of ineluctable historical progress held a considerable appeal for radicals in many parts of Europe..."<sup>81</sup>

The essence of Hegel's philosophy of history was contained in the phrase: "The History of the World is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom." In spite of its zig-zags, history was a constant progress, a progress towards ever-expanding *freedom*. Thus history progressed from the despotism of the pagan era, through the partial liberty provided by the Classical Greeks, to the synthesis of despotism and liberty in the Roman State, to Christianity with its break-through insight into the freedom of the individual, through the setback of the medieval era to the glorious emancipation of the eras of the Renaissance and the Reformation, culminating in the French revolution, which he saw as predominantly a good, progressive phenomenon.

If freedom was the goal – the inevitable goal – of history, then the question arises: did Hegel see that goal achieved in contemporary Prussia?

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Now Prussia was a mass of contradictions. Stretching in a broad swathe from the conservative eastern province, close to the Russian border, to the liberal Rhineland in the west, it embraced a mass of nationalities with no central

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<sup>80</sup> Azkoul, *op cit.*, pp. 77-78. Schleiermacher saw the essence of religion in the supposed fact that "it resigns at once all claims on anything that belongs either to science or morality. In essence it is neither thought nor action but intuitive contemplation and sentiment" (*Speeches on Religion to its Cultured Despisers*, 1799, Second Speech).

<sup>81</sup> Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, p. 175.

national assembly or historical or religious communality. It was “a linguistic and cultural patchwork”<sup>82</sup>, whose only unifying element was *the state*, which is perhaps why Hegel appeared to deify the Prussian state as both Prussia’s and History’s only possible synthesis – although he appears also to see America as a possible future synthesis of the World Spirit.

“The state, Hegel argued, was an organism possessing will, rationality and purpose. Its destiny – like that of any living thing – was to change, grow and progressively develop. The state was the power of reason actualizing itself as will; it was a transcendent domain in which the alienated, competitive ‘particular interests’ of civil society merged into coherence and identity. There was a theological core to Hegel’s reflections on the state: the state had a quasi-divine purpose; it was ‘God’s march through the world’; in Hegel’s hands it became the quasi-divine apparatus by which the multitude of subjects who constituted civil society was redeemed into universality.”<sup>83</sup>

Hume had demonstrated the irrationality of rationalism, of “pure” empiricism. Kant had demonstrated that the application of reason presupposes a spirit transcending the empirical world, but could not explain how this free realm of spirit related to the causally determined world of matter. Hegel expanded the realm of spirit to engulf everything, making it into a kind of pantheistic god called the Absolute Idea or the World Spirit. To this Spirit, which is the All and can only be understood, like an organism, from the point of view of the All, he gave all the attributes that romanticism had rescued from the maw of devouring rationalism: emotion, mystery, dynamism, history, even nationalism.

Thus to the bright empiricist-rationalist thesis, and its dark romantic-idealist antithesis, Hegel supplied a cloudy, metaphysical, empiricist-rationalist *and* romantic-idealist synthesis.

And a nonsensically self-contradictory one at that, if Hegel’s severest critic, Sir Karl Popper, is to be believed. Hegel taught that “everything is in flux, even essences... History, as he sees it, is the thought process of the ‘Absolute Spirit’ or ‘World Spirit’. It is the manifestation of this Spirit. It is a kind of huge dialectical syllogism; reasoned out, as it were, by Providence. The syllogism is the plan which Providence follows; and the logical conclusion arrived at it’s the end which Providence pursues – the perfection of the world. ‘The only thought,’ Hegel writes in his *Philosophy of History*, ‘with which Philosophy approaches History, is the simple conception of Reason; it is the doctrine that Reason is the Sovereign of the World, and that the History of the World, therefore, presents us with a *rational process*. This conviction and intuition is... no hypothesis in the domain of Philosophy. It is there proven... that Reason... is *Substance*; as well as *Infinite Power*;... *Infinite Matter*...; *Infinite Form*...; *Infinite*

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<sup>82</sup> Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, London: Penguin, 2006, p. 428.

<sup>83</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 431.

*Energy... That this "Idea" or "Reason" is the True, the Eternal, the absolutely Powerful Essence; that it reveals itself in the World, and that in that World nothing else is revealed but this and its honour and glory – this is a thesis which, as we have said, has been proven in Philosophy, and is here regarded as demonstrated."*<sup>84</sup>

"For Hegel as for Kant," writes Niall Ferguson, "'human arbitrariness and even external necessity' had to be subordinated to 'a higher necessity'. 'The sole aim of philosophical inquiry,' as he put it in the second draft of his *Philosophical History of the World*, was 'to eliminate the contingent... In history, we must look for a general design, the ultimate end of the world. We must bring into history the belief and conviction that the realm of the will is not at the mercy of contingency.' However, Hegel's 'higher necessity' was not material but supernatural – indeed, in many ways it closely resembled the traditional Christian God, most obviously when he spoke of 'an eternal justice and love, the absolute and ultimate end [of] which is truth in and for itself'. Hegel just happened to call his God 'Reason'. Thus his basic 'presupposition' was 'the idea that a reason governs the world and that history therefore is a rational process': 'That world history is governed by an ultimate design... whose rationality is... a divine and absolute reason – this is the proposition whose truth we must assume; its proof lies in the study of world history itself, which is the image and enactment of reason... Whoever looks at the world rationally will find that it assumes a rational aspect... The overall content of world history is rational and indeed has to be rational; a divine will rules supreme and is strong enough to determine the overall content. Our aim must be to discern this substance, and to do so, we must bring with us a rational consciousness.' This somewhat circular argumentation was the second possible way [the first was Kant's theory of phenomenal and noumenal realities] of dealing with the Cartesian claim that determinism did not apply to the non-material world. Hegel had no desire to give precedence to materialism: 'The spirit and the course of its development are the true substance of history,' he maintained; and the role of 'physical nature' was emphatically subordinate to the role of 'the spirit'. But 'the spirit', he argued, was just as subject to deterministic forces as physical nature.

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

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<sup>84</sup> Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, pp. 46, 47.

the debasement, fragmentation and destruction of the preceding mode of reality... The universal arises out of the particular and determinate and its negation... All this takes place automatically.'

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

"With such arguments, Hegel had, it might be said, secularised predestination, translating Calvin's theological dogma into the realm of history. The individual now lost control not only of his salvation in the afterlife, but also of his fate on earth... At the same time, there was at least a superficial resemblance between Hegel's idealist philosophy of history and the materialist theories which had developed elsewhere. Hegel's 'cunning of Reason' was perhaps a harsher master than Kant's 'Nature' and Smith's 'Invisible Hand'; but these other quasi-deities performed analogous roles."<sup>85</sup>

Hegel denied freedom while seeming to glorify it. "Hegel vehemently rejected the metaphorical machine-state favoured by theorists of the high enlightenment, on the grounds that it treated 'free human beings' as if they were mere cogs in its mechanism. The Hegelian state was not an imposed concept, but the highest expression of the ethical substance of a people, the unfolding of a transcendent and rational order, the 'actualization of freedom'."<sup>86</sup>

Here we clearly see the influence on Hegel of a central pillar of German romanticism - the cult of the personality, freedom and creativity.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how the most romantic of German philosophies, that of Hegel, is compatible with personal freedom and creativity. As Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "The romantic cult of personality,

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<sup>85</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Virtual History*, London: Picador, 1997, pp. 28-31.

<sup>86</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 431.



unrepeatable, autonomous and self-sufficient, which itself ascribes its own laws, the Fichtean pathos of the freedom of moral creativity, Schelling's aestheticism of genius, Schleiermacher's religion of feeling and mood - all this is too well known. And this whole series is completed by Hegelianism, in which freedom, the freedom of creative self-definition becomes the main theme of cosmic development. And yet at the same time, in these individualistic systems, personality, strictly speaking... disappears, there is no place in them for the *creative* personality. We shall not understand the real reason for this unexpected event if we search for it in the 'pantheism' of the world-feeling of the time: after all, it was not a matter of dissolving the personality in nature, but of finding the whole of nature within oneself, as in an autonomous 'microcosm'. The resolution of the enigma must be sought, not in a *world-feeling*, but in a *world-understanding*. *Logical providentialism* - that is how best to express the characteristic trait of this world-understanding; and it is precisely this idea of *the sheer logicalness of the world, the rationality of history*, so to speak, *the rational transparency* of the cosmic process that is the profound source of the inner dissonances of idealistic individualism.

"The world, both in its stasis and in its movement, is seen as the realization of a certain reasonable plan. Moreover, - this is very essential, - this plan is recognized as not exceeding the power of human attainment. Every moment of historical development is presented as the incarnation of some 'idea' that admits of an abstract formulation. Also in the succession of these 'epochs' is revealed a definite logical order, and the whole series is oriented in the direction of a certain accomplished structure in which the fullness of its reasonable content is revealed. That necessity with which the whole system of affirmations in space proceeds in its smallest details as from the axioms of geometry, is also seen in cosmic evolution, in the advancing pace of human history. The role of axioms is played here by the elementary motifs of the Reason that creates the universe, which are accepted as something accessible to human knowledge, so that, proceeding from them, we can as it were divine in advance every bend in the evolutionary flow. The course of history turns out to be unambiguously determined. And thought does not stop at the 'beginning' of the world, but also penetrates into the mysteries of that 'which was when there was nothing', and demonstrates the fated necessity of the building of the Absolute First-Cause of all itself. It demonstrates that the world could not fail to arise, and moreover could not fail to arise precisely as we know it. Thus the 'thinking through' of history, carried to its conclusion, leads to inevitable determinism: every ray of freedom or creativity dies in the vice of iron logic. Nothing 'new' in essence can arise; only the inescapable conclusions from pre-eternal postulates come into being - come into being in and of themselves.

"But this is not all: the 'rationalization' of history includes one more thought. The aim of history is the realization of a definite *construction*, the installation into life of a definite *form of existence*. This 'construction' and 'existence' turn out to be the single value, and this will and must be so, since logical completion and moral worth have been equated with each other from the very beginning. The forms of natural existence or the forms of social organization are subject to

moral justification, and they are the same; only abstractions have moral meaning. The individual can have an ethical content only *indirectly*, only insofar as it realizes an 'idea', and only because it serves as its shell. In other words, unconditional meaning belongs, not to people, but to ideas. 'The good' can be a theocracy, a democratic state or *der geschlossene Handelsstaat* [closed mercantile state], but not creative personalities.

"And finally, if the gradation of values exactly reproduces the dialectical succession of ideas, then, in essence, this gradation does not exist as such; historical development goes from the imperfect to increasing perfection, from the worse to the better, so that it ends with all-perfection, the highest concentration of the Good. But this highest level, which is in a fatalistic way inevitable, is at the same time absolutely impossible without the lower levels. It possesses its own *worth only because* behind it lies the unworthy. Good is impossible without Evil, and not only because these concepts are co-relative, but also because ontologically the power of the Good grows only out of the not-good. Evil is not only undeveloped good, incomplete perfection, but also a *necessary* constituent *part* of the Good. Evil had to arise inside the Divinity itself in order that God could become the real God, completely Unconditional. The meaning of the world can be realized only through meaninglessness. And it is clear that in this way that unconditional disparity that characterizes the predicates 'good' and 'bad' for the 'naïve' moral consciousness is removed. 'Sin' is turned into the inevitable 'mistake' of immature age, and moral tragedy becomes a cunningly devised melodrama..."<sup>87</sup>

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Hegelianism, wrote Schopenhauer, was "a colossal piece of mystification which will yet provide posterity with an inexhaustible theme for laughter at our times; it is a pseudo-philosophy paralyzing all mental powers, stifling all real thinking, and, by the most outrageous misuse of language, putting in its place the hollowest, most senseless, thoughtless, and, as is confirmed by its success, most stupefying verbiage." And again: "The height of audacity in serving up pure nonsense, in stringing together senseless and extravagant mazes of words, such as had been only previously known in madhouses, was finally reached in Hegel, and became the instrument of the most barefaced, general mystification that has ever taken place, with a result which will appear fabulous to posterity, as a monument to German stupidity."<sup>88</sup>

According to the German historian Golo Mann, Hegel's philosophy is "a fantastic, almost mad, almost successful [!] attempt to give an answer to every question ever asked, and to assign to every answer ever given to every question a historical place within his own great, final answer – an attempt to create being dialectically from thought, to reconcile idea and reality and to overcome the

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<sup>87</sup> Florovsky, "Smysl istorii i smysl zhizni" (The Meaning of History and the Meaning of Life), *Vera i Kultura* (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 63-65.

<sup>88</sup> Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality; Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy*.

cleavage between self and non-self. It was this cleavage – the existence of the self in an alien world – that Hegel made his starting-point. What he found was the identity of everything with everything, of God with the world, of logic with reality, of motion with rest, of necessity with freedom. The world spirit is everywhere, in nature, in man, in the history of man. The spirit, alienated from itself in nature, comes into its own in man. This process takes place on the one hand in the true history of peoples and states, and on the other in art, religion and philosophy. All these spheres correspond to each other; what is accomplished in each individual sector belongs to the whole and fits into it or nothing will be accomplished. ‘As far as the individual is concerned each person cannot in any even help being the child of his time. So too philosophy is the expression of its time in ideas.’ ‘He who expresses and accomplishes what his time wills is the great man of his time.’ Every present is always a single whole, just as the history of mankind is its general lines a whole. It finds expression in peoples, states and civilizations, of which the west European or, as Hegel calls it, the Germanic is the highest so far attained.<sup>89</sup> Will there be higher ones? On this point the philosopher is silent. One can only understand the past, and the present to the extent that it is the final product of all pasts which are preserved in it. The future cannot be explored or understood; it does not exist for the spirit. No other historical thinker was so little concerned with the future as Hegel. What he hinted at, or what followed from his doctrine, was that the future would be something entirely different from the past. For philosophy comes late, at the end of an epoch. It does not come to change or improve, but merely to understand and to express; it constructs in the realm of the spirit what has already been constructed in the realm of reality. ‘When philosophy paints its picture in grey on grey, it means that a form of life has grown old, and by painting it grey on grey it cannot be restored to its youth, but is only recognised...’ This applies to all true philosophies, and is most valid for the philosophy of all philosophies, namely the Hegelian, which brings to an end the epoch of all epochs: the age of Protestantism, enlightenment and revolution. What was still to come? Hegel shrugged his shoulders sadly at this question. His philosophy gave no answer, and given its nature could not venture to attempt one. ‘The spirit is in its full essence in the present...’ But this philosophy of fulfilment, this song of praise of Man-God contains an element of pessimism: after 1815 nothing further is to be expected.

“Though Hegel’s philosophy as a whole contains rest, fulfilment and finality, it is full of unrest and struggle, both in the realm of the spirit and of reality. The spirit is never content with what has been achieved, it always seeks new conflicts, it must struggle to find and express itself anew. States and peoples are never at rest, they come into conflict and one of them must give way. The world spirit advances by catastrophes, and its path is marked by forms that are used up, emptied, and jettisoned. Quiet is only apparent quiet, lull before a new storm; as mere rest it is of no interest to the historian. ‘Epochs of happiness are empty pages in the history of the world.’ History does not

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<sup>89</sup> Not quite: he said that “the final embodiment of the Absolute Idea, beyond which no further development would be possible” was *America*. (V.M.)

exist for the happiness, the idyllic contentment of the individual. The goal is set high: the reconciliation of all contradictions, absolute justice, complete knowledge, the incarnation of reason on earth, the presence of God. The road to it is one of exertion and ever new confusion. But what has happened is the only thing that could have happened and how it happened was right. Terrible things occurred; the rise of the Roman Empire was terrible and terrible was its fall. But everything had a purpose and was as it should be. Julius Caesar was murdered after he had done what the age wanted from him; the Roman Empire collapsed after it had completed its historical mission. Otherwise how could it have fallen? It is useless to lament the abysses of history, the crimes of power, the sufferings of good men. The world spirit is right in the end, its will will be obeyed, its purpose fulfilled; what does it care about the happiness or unhappiness of individuals?<sup>90</sup> 'The real is rational and the rational is the real.' When something ceases to be rational, when the spirit has already moved on, it will wither away and die. The individual may not understand his fate because he is liable to over-estimate himself and believes that history revolves around his person at the centre. The philosopher who perceives the kernel in the multi-coloured rind of what occurs will provide the insight too.

"Power, and war, which creates and enhances power, cannot be omitted from all this. Man only realizes himself in the state and the state exists only where there is power to defend and attack. Might gives right. It is unlikely, it is in fact impossible, that the state without right on its side will win. What sort of right? Not a universally valid, pale right invented by stoicist philosophers, but historical right, the superiority of the historical mission. Thus right was on the side of the Spaniards against the Peruvians, in spite of all their cruelty and deceit; right was on Napoleon's side against the antiquated German Empire. Later, on the other hand, right was on the side of allied Europe against Napoleon only because, the professor concluded after much puzzling over this problem in his study, the arrogant Emperor, himself now outdated, gave the Allies the right to conquer him, and only because he put himself in the wrong could he be conquered. Success, the outcome, provide the justification; in power there lies truth..."<sup>91</sup>

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Hegel's philosophy was manifestly false, but hugely influential. He made rebelliousness and revolution respectable, as being, not optional modes of thought and action, but inherent in the deepest nature of things. Rebelliousness was an aspect of "alienation", and revolution – of the self-realization of the World Spirit.

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<sup>90</sup> "The deeds of Great Men, of the Personalities of World History,... must not be brought into collision with irrelevant moral claims. *The Litany of private virtues, of modesty, humility, philanthropy, and forbearance*, must not be raised against them. The History of the World can, in principle, entirely ignore the circle within which morality... lies'." (in Popper, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68) (V.M.)

<sup>91</sup> Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, 1996, pp. 46-48.

For "Hegel's dialectic," writes Sir Roger Scruton, "implies that all knowledge, all activity and all emotions exist in a state of tension, and are driven by this tension to enact a primeval drama. Each concept, desire and feeling exists first in a primitive, immediate and unified form – without self-knowledge, and inherently unstable, but nevertheless at home with itself. Its final 'realization' is achieved only in a condition of 'unity restored', a homecoming to the primordial point of rest, but in a condition of achieved self-knowledge and fulfilled intention. In order to reach this final point, each aspect of spirit must pass through a long trajectory of separation, sundered from its home, and struggling to affirm itself in a world that it does not control. This state of alienation – the vale of tears – is the realm of becoming, in which consciousness is separated from its object and also from itself. There are as many varieties of alienation as there are forms of spiritual life; but in each form the fundamental drama is the same: spirit can know itself only if it 'posits' an object of knowledge – only if it invests its world with the idea of the other. In doing this it becomes other to itself, and lives through conflict and disharmony, until finally uniting with the other – as we unite with the object of science when fully understanding it; with the self when overcoming guilt and religious estrangement; with other people when joined in a lawful body politic."<sup>92</sup>

Lionel Trilling writes: "The historical process that Hegel undertakes to expound is the self-realization of Spirit through the changing relation of the individual to the external power of society in two of its aspects, the political power of the state and the power of wealth. In an initial stage of the process that is being described the individual consciousness renders what Hegel calls 'obedient service' to the external power and feels for it an 'inner reverence'. Its service is not only obedient but also silent and unreasoned, taken for granted; Hegel calls this 'the heroism of dumb service'. This entire and inarticulate accord of the individual consciousness with the external power of society is said to have the attribute of 'nobility'.

"But the harmonious relation of the individual consciousness to the state power and to wealth is not destined to endure. It is the nature of Spirit, Hegel tells us, to seek 'existence on its own account' – that is, to free itself from limiting conditions, to press towards autonomy. In rendering 'obedient service' to and in feeling 'inner reverence' for anything except itself it consents to the denial of its own nature. If it is to fulfill its natural destiny of self-realization, it must bring an end to its accord with the external power of society. And in terminating this 'noble' relation the individual consciousness moves towards a relation with external power which Hegel calls 'base'.

"The change is not immediate. Between the noble relation of the individual consciousness to state power and to wealth and the developing base relation there stands what Hegel speaks of as a 'mediating term'. In this transitional stage the 'heroism of dumb service' modifies itself to become a heroism which is not dumb but articulate, what Hegel calls the 'heroism of flattery'. The

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<sup>92</sup> Scruton, *Modern Philosophy*, London: Arrow, 1997, pp. 463-464.

individual, that is to say, becomes conscious of his relation to the external power of society; he becomes conscious of having made the choice to maintain the relationship and of the prudential reasons which induced him to make it – the ‘flattery’ is, in effect, the rationale of his choice which the individual formulates in terms of the virtues of the external power, presumably a personal monarch. We might suppose that Hegel had in mind the relation of the court aristocracy to Louis XIV. Consciousness and choice, it is clear, imply a commitment to, rather than identification with, the external power of society.

“From this modification of the ‘noble’ relation to the external power the individual proceeds to the ‘baseness’ of being actually antagonistic to the external power. What was once served and revered now comes to be regarded with resentment and bitterness. Hegel’s description of the new attitude is explicit: ‘It [that is, the individual consciousness] looks upon the authoritative power of the state as a chain, as something suppressing its separate autonomous existence, and hence hates the ruler, obeys only with secret malice and stands ever ready to burst out in rebellion.’ And the relation of the individual self to wealth is even baser, if only because of the ambivalence which marks it – the self loves wealth but at the same time despises it; through wealth the self ‘attains to the enjoyment of its own independent existence’, but it finds wealth discordant with the nature of Spirit, for it is of the nature of Spirit to be permanent, whereas enjoyment is evanescent.

“The process thus described makes an unhappy state of affairs but not, as Hegel judges it, by any means a deplorable one. He intends us to understand that the movement from ‘nobility’ to ‘baseness’ is not a devolution but a development. So far from deploring ‘baseness’, Hegel celebrates it. And he further confounds our understanding by saying that ‘baseness’ leads to and therefore is ‘nobility’. What is the purpose of this high-handed inversion of common meanings?

“An answer might begin with the observation that the words ‘noble’ and ‘base’, although they have been assimilated to moral judgement, did not originally express concepts of moral law, of a prescriptive and prohibitory code which is taken to be of general, commanding, and even supernal authority and in which a chief criterion of a person’s rightdoing and wrongdoing is the effect of his conduct upon other persons. The words were applied, rather, to the ideal of personal existence of a ruling class at a certain time – its ethos, in that sense of the word which conveys the idea not of abstractly right conduct but of a characteristic manner or style of approved conduct. What is in accord with this ethos is noble; what falls short of it or derogates from it is base. The noble self is not shaped by its beneficent intentions towards others; its intention is wholly towards itself, and such moral virtue as may be attributed to it follows incidentally from its expressing the privilege and function of its social status in mien and deportment. We might observe that the traits once thought appropriate to the military life are definitive in the formation of the noble self. It stands before the world boldly defined, its purposes clearly conceived and openly avowed. In its consciousness there is no division, it is at one with itself.

The base self similarly expresses a social condition, in the first instance by its characteristic mien and deportment, as these are presumed or required to be, and ultimately by the way in which it carries out those of its purposes that are self-serving beyond the limits deemed appropriate to its social status. These purposes can be realized only by covert means and are therefore shameful. Between the intentions of the base self and its avowals there is no congruence. But the base self, exactly because it is not under the control of the noble ethos, has won at least a degree of autonomy and has thereby fulfilled the nature of Spirit. In refusing its obedient service to the state power and to wealth it has lost its wholeness; its selfhood is 'disintegrated'; the self is 'alienated' from itself. But because it has detached itself from imposed conditions, Hegel says that it has made a step in progress. He puts it that the existence of the self 'on its own account' is, strictly speaking, the loss of itself'. The statement can also be made the other way round: 'Alienation of self is really self-preservation'."<sup>93</sup>

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

"As might be expected, he assigns the highest role to the Germans in the terrestrial development of Spirit. 'The German spirit is the spirit of the new world. Its aim is the realization of absolute Truth as the unlimited self-determination of freedom – that freedom which has its own absolute form itself as its purport.'<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Oxford University Press, 1974, pp. 35-38.

<sup>94</sup> "And after a eulogy of Prussia, the government of which, Hegel assures us, 'rests with the official world, whose apex is the personal decision of the Monarch; for a final decision is, as shown above, an absolute necessity', Hegel reaches the crowning conclusion of his work: 'This is the point,' he says, 'which consciousness has attained, and these are the principal phases of that form in which Freedom has realized itself; for the History of the World is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom... That the History of the World... is the realization of Spirit, this is the true Theodicy, the justification of God in History... What has happened and is happening... is essentially His Work...'

"I ask whether I was not justified when I said that Hegel presents us with an apology for God and Prussia at the same time, and whether it is not clear that the state which Hegel

"This is a very superfine brand of freedom. It does not mean that you will be able to keep out of a concentration camp. It does not imply democracy, or a free press, or any of the usual Liberal watchwords, which Hegel rejects with contempt. When Spirit gives laws to itself, it does so freely. To our mundane vision, it may seem that the Spirit that gives laws is embodied in the monarch, and the Spirit to which laws are given is embodied in his subjects. But from the point of view of the Absolute the distinction between monarch and subjects, like all other distinctions, is illusory, and when the monarch imprisons a liberal-minded subject, that is still Spirit freely determining itself. Hegel praises Rousseau for distinguishing between the general will and the will of all. One gathers that the monarch embodies the general will, whereas a parliamentary majority only embodies the will of all...

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

"Nations, in Hegel, play the part that classes play in Marx. The principle of historical development, he says, is national genius. In every age, there is some one nation which is charged with the mission of carrying the world through the stage of the dialectic that it has reached. In our age, of course, this nation is Germany.<sup>95</sup> But in addition to nations, we must also take account of world-historical individuals; these are men in whose aims are embodied the dialectical transitions that are due to take place in their time. These men are heroes, and may justifiably contravene ordinary moral rules...

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

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commands us to worship as the Divine Idea on earth is not simply Frederick William's Prussia from 1800 to 1830...

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

<sup>95</sup> "The Nation State is Spirit in its substantive rationality and immediate actuality,' he writes; 'it is therefore the absolute power on earth...The State is the Spirit of the People itself. The actual State is animated by this spirit, in all its particular affairs, its Wars, and its Institutions... The self-consciousness of one particular Nation is the vehicle for the... development of the collective spirit;... in it, the Spirit of the Time invests its Will. Against this Will, the other national minds have no rights: *that* Nation dominates the World.'" (Popper, *op. cit.*, p. 58).



“We are told in *The Philosophy of History* that ‘the State is the actually existing realized moral life’, and that all the spiritual reality possessed by a human being he possesses only through the State. ‘For his spiritual reality consists in this, that his own essence – Reason – is objectively present to him, that it possesses objective immediate existence for him... For truth is the unity of the universal and subjective Will, and the universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth.’<sup>96</sup>...

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

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

“The habit of speaking of ‘the State’, as if there were only one, is misleading so long as there is no world State. Duty being, for Hegel, solely a relation of the individual to his State, no principle is left by which to moralize the relations between States. This Hegel recognizes. In external relations, he says, the State is an individual, and each State is independent as against the others. ‘Since in this independence the being-for-self of real spirit has its existence, it is the first freedom and highest honour of a people.’ He goes on to argue against any sort of League of Nations by which the independence of separate States might be limited. The duty of a citizen is entirely confined (so far as the external relations

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<sup>96</sup> Hegel goes on: “We must therefore worship the State as the manifestation of the Divine on earth, and consider that, if it is difficult to comprehend Nature, it is infinitely harder to grasp the Essence of the State... The State is the march of God through the world.... The State must be comprehended as an organism... To the complete State belongs, essentially, consciousness and thought. The State knows what it wills... The State is real; and... true reality is necessary. What is real is eternally necessary... The State... exists for its own sake... The State is the actually existing, realized moral life.” (Popper, *op. cit.*, p. 31).

of his State are concerned) to upholding the substantial individuality and independence and sovereignty of his own State. It follows that war is not wholly an evil, or something that we should seek to abolish. The purpose of the State is not merely to uphold the life and property of the citizens, and this fact provides the moral justification of war, which is not to be regarded as an absolute evil or as accidental, or as having its cause in something that ought not to be.

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

“Such is Hegel’s doctrine of the State – a doctrine which, if accepted, justifies every internal tyranny and every external aggression that can possibly be imagined...”<sup>97</sup>

For, as Hegel put it, “the march of world history stands outside virtue, vice and justice...”<sup>98</sup>

As Fr. Frederick Copleston points out, “it is essential to remember that Hegel is speaking throughout of the concept of the State, its ideal essence. He has no intention of suggesting that historical States are immune from criticism.”<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, the similarities between Hegel and the modern totalitarians, especially the Fascists, are clear: “(a) Nationalism, in the form of the historicist idea that the state is the incarnation of the Spirit (or now, of the Blood) of the state-creating nation (or race); one chosen nation (now, the chosen race) is destined for world domination. (b) The state as the natural enemy of all other states must assert its existence in war. (c) The state is exempt from any kind of moral obligation; history, that is, historical success, is the sole judge; collective utility is the sole principle of personal conduct; propagandist lying and

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<sup>97</sup> Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1946, pp. 763-764, 765-769.

<sup>98</sup> Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, p. 448; in Berlin, “The Originality of Machiavelli”, *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 317.

<sup>99</sup> Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, part I: Fichte to Hegel, pp. 255-256.

distortion of the truth is permissible. (d) The 'ethical' idea of war (total and collectivist), particularly of young nations against older ones; war, fate and fame as most desirable goods. (e) The creative role of the Great Man, the world-historical personality, the man of deep knowledge and great passion (now, the principle of leadership). (f) The ideal of the heroic life ('live dangerously') and of the 'heroic man' as opposed to the petty bourgeois and his life of shallow mediocrity."<sup>100</sup>

Barzun has sought to lessen Hegel's guilt somewhat: "Hegel did express himself in favor of a strong state. What intelligent German who remembered 200 years of helplessness would want a weak one? In Hegel's day, the state created by the Prussian awakening was less than 20 years old and must not be allowed to droop again"<sup>101</sup> True; and yet the desire for a strong state, which is compatible with many creeds and philosophies, need not be translated into the *worship* of the State as the Divine Idea on earth, which is in effect Hegel's idea. As he put it: "the State is the basis and centre of all the concrete elements in the life of a people: of Art, Law, Morals, Religion, and Science..."<sup>102</sup> This is idolatry, State-worship, and the purest atheism...

Golo Mann writes penetratingly about Hegel: "If Hegel's philosophy had been true, then it could not remain true: it must be treated as Hegel had treated all earlier philosophy, 'set aside', affirmed and denied at the same time. Hegel had started life as a Protestant and had somehow managed to bring Christianity even into his mature philosophy. His disciples or their disciples broke with Christianity and became atheists – an attitude which could be derived from Hegel's philosophy, if it was followed to its logical conclusion. They took it upon themselves to explain Christianity, like all religious belief, historically, as a reflection of social reality, as a self-misunderstanding. Hegel had spoken much of the reconciliation of idea and reality, but he had achieved this reconciliation only in the mind, through his philosophy; it was for philosophy to recognize retrospectively that what happened in reality was reasonable. Hegel's successors, however, claimed that reality was not reasonable but must be *made* reasonable, not by dreams but by political action. Politics, rightly understood, was thus in the end the true philosophy. Hegel had spoken of the 'truth of power', and had meant the power of the state, of kings, of victorious armies. His followers spoke of the truth of revolutions, of majorities, of mass action. There was no need to fear the masses as Hegel had feared them. The rights of the private individual were not as important as liberals believed. The state could not be too powerful, provided it was a scientifically directed state, free from all superstition. Such a state would do away with the remains of the Middle Ages and make men free..."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Popper, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>101</sup> Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 508.

<sup>102</sup> Popper, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>103</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

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

Such was the fall of western civilization, its thesis and antithesis. So far it had not found – or, more exactly, had not recovered (since it used to have it in the pre-schism, Orthodox period) - its synthesis. And until it did, only violent, increasingly destructive swings between thesis and antithesis were to be expected...

*May 23 / June 5, 2020; revised November 19 / December 2, 2021.*

## 6. THE RISE OF LUTHERANISM

St. Peter's cathedral at the Vatican in Rome had witnessed many of the most important events in European history: the martyrdom of St. Peter himself, the conquest of the city by St. Constantine, who built the first basilica; the crowning of Charlemagne in 800. Now the destruction of the old Orthodox building by Pope Julius II in what John Julius Norwich calls "one of the most shameless acts of official vandalism in all Christian history"<sup>104</sup>, became the indirect cause of one of the great revolutions in human thought. Not coincidentally, the greatest enemy of Roman Catholicism in the West, Protestantism, appeared as the result of an act of vandalism against the West's oldest monument to its Orthodox Christian past...

Julius II was succeeded by Pope Leo X (Giovanni de Medici). As the art historian E.H. Gombrich writes, two Medici popes were the patrons of some of the greatest artists of the Renaissance, and had transformed their native city of Florence. Now, on their initiative, "the grandest and most magnificent buildings rose into the sky of Rome. Old St. Peter's... was too plain for their taste. They planned to build a new church, far bigger and more beautiful than any seen before. But it would cost a great deal of money. Where that money came from mattered less to the popes of the day than getting hold of it and completing their wonderful church. And in their desire to please the pope, priests and monks collected money in a way which did not conform with the teachings of the Church. They made the faithful pay for the forgiveness of their sins, and called it 'selling indulgences'. They did this in spite of the Church's own teaching, according to which only sinner who repented might be forgiven.

"Now there was at that time in Wittenberg, in Germany, a monk who belonged to the order of the Augustinians. His name was Martin Luther. When, in 1517, one of these sellers of indulgences came to Wittenberg to collect money for the new St. Peter's, whose construction that year was under the supervision of Raphael, the most famous painter in the world, Luther was determined to draw attention to the irreligious nature of this way of raising funds. He nailed a kind of poster to the doors of the church, on which he had written ninety-five theses – or points for discussion – denouncing the trade in divine forgiveness. What shocked Luther most was that people might think that they could atone for their sins with *money*, that God's free, forgiving mercy could be bought. He had always seen himself as a sinner, living, like all sinners, in fear of God's wrath. Only one thing could save him from God's punishment and that was God's infinite mercy which, as Luther believed, could not be bought, for if it could, it would no longer be mercy. Before God, who sees all and knows all, even a good person is a sinner who deserves to be punished. Only faith in God's freely given mercy can save him, and nothing else.

"In the bitter arguments that broke out on the subject of indulgences and their abuse, Luther's opinions took on an increasingly insistent and forceful

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<sup>104</sup> John Julius Norwich, *Four Princes*, London: John Murray, 2017, p. 116.

tone, both in his teaching and his writings. Nothing but faith matters, said Luther. All else is superfluous. And that also goes for the Church and the priests who, when they celebrate Mass, intercede on behalf of the faithful so that they, too, may share in God's mercy. God's mercy needs no intercessors. All an individual needs to be saved if is his own unshakable belief and faith in his God. Faith means believing in the great mysteries of the Gospel, believing that we are eating Christ's body and drinking his blood from the chalice when we take Holy Communion. No one can help another person to obtain God's grace. Every believer is, as it were, his own priest. A priest of the Church is not more than a teacher and helper, and as such may live like other men, and even marry: A believer must not be content to accept this teaching of the Church. He must look to the Bible for God's purpose and seek it out for himself. For, in Luther's opinion, the truth was only to be found in the Bible."<sup>105</sup>

Thus began the second great intellectual revolution in the history of modern Europe after the liberal humanism of the Renaissance – the Protestant Reformation. All the main Protestant churches were founded in the following years: the Lutheran, the Anglican (1534), the Calvinist (1555), the Presbyterian (1560), the Congregationalist (1582), and the Baptist (1609).

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Almost all the main ideas of Protestantism had appeared centuries before, in the Proto-Protestantism of such men as the Italian Marsilius, the Englishman John Wycliffe and the Czech Jan Hus. But by about 1450 they had been crushed by the resurgent power of the post-Avignon papacy. What enabled them finally to revive and take root in the early sixteenth century was, first, the heady atmosphere of intellectual freedom engendered by Renaissance humanism. And secondly, the invention of the printing press.

The printing press was invented in Mainz between 1446 and 1450 by Johannes Gutenberg. "By 1500, printing presses in operation throughout Western Europe had already produced more than twenty million volumes. In the 16th century, with presses spreading further afield, their output rose tenfold to an estimated 150 to 200 million copies. The operation of a press became synonymous with the enterprise of printing, and lent its name to a new branch of media, 'the press'." <sup>106</sup>

Luther's tracts were written in German, and were immediately spread far and wide through the new technology. Apart from their impact on theological discussion, they gave an important impulse to the unity and self-consciousness of the German nation. Luther's translation of the Bible "into sharp, pungent, popular German" <sup>107</sup> was the most culturally influential work to come off Gutenberg's presses. It has been called "the central document in the evolution

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<sup>105</sup> Gombrich, *A Little History of the World*, London: Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 181-182.

<sup>106</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing\\_press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing_press)

<sup>107</sup> Andrew Marr, *A History of the World*, London: Pan, 2012, p. 277.

of the German language”, comparable to the influence of the King James translation of the Bible on English.

Only a little less important was his influence on liturgical music. “He himself contributed new German texts to sixteen out of the twenty-four hymns printed for the first time in 1524. One of the most stirring of them – ‘Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott’ (‘A mighty fortress is our God’) – has music *and* words by Luther.”<sup>108</sup> This gave Lutheranism an aesthetic attractiveness that the Catholics had difficulty in matching. And for centuries to come, especially through the music of that archetypal Lutheran, Johann Sebastian Bach... For John Eliot Gardiner notes a “close synergy between Luther and Bach, though separated by almost two centuries. The bond between them was established at birth: by geography [Thuringia was their common homeland], by the coincidence of their schooling and membership of the Georgenschule choir and the extracurricular singing for bread. It was reinforced by the thoroughgoing ways that Luther’s hymns and theology impregnated Bach’s school lessons...; they really were the principal means by which he imbibed and assimilated knowledge of the world around him. By the time Bach reached his early twenties Luther’s teaching had become all-pervasive in his musical training, and now formed the very clay from which he modelled his first music for use in church...”

“The specific task of music, as defined by Luther, is to give expression and added eloquence to biblical texts: *Die Noten machen den Text lebendig* (‘The notes make the words live’). As two of God’s most powerful gifts to humanity, words and music must be forged into one invisible and indivisible force, the text appealing primarily to the intellect (but also to the passions); while music is addressed primarily to the passions (but also to the intellect). Luther maintained that without music, man is little more than a stone; but, with music, he can drive the Devil away: ‘It has often revived me and relieved me from heavy burdens,’ he admitted. This belief was to give fundamental justification to Bach’s vocation (*Amt*) and craft as a musician, lending credence to his professional status and comfort to his artistic goals, while his emphasis on a ‘vocal’ delivery of Scripture would later help to provide his *raison d’être* as a composer of church music...”<sup>109</sup>

Printing was crucial to the Reformation’s success. “Cities with at least one printing press,” writes Niall Ferguson, “were significantly more likely to adopt Protestantism than cities without printing, but it was cities with multiple competing printers that were most likely to turn Protestant.”<sup>110</sup>

In fact, the invention of the press gave an enormous impetus to learning of all kinds. Not since the great Irish monastic schools of the early Middle Ages

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<sup>108</sup> John Eliot Gardiner, *Music in the Castle of Heaven. A Portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. 29.

<sup>109</sup> Gardiner, *Music in the Castle of Heaven*, pp. 128, 129.

<sup>110</sup> Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 83.

were so many people able to read, not only Latin, but also Greek and Hebrew as a result of the printing revolution. Of course, this was partly the result of the emigration of many Greek scholars to the West after 1453 - but printing spread Greek scholarship further.

Robert Tombs writes: "There was a desire to re-examine the sources of beliefs by studying original texts. In the 1430s, for example, philology had demonstrated that the supposedly fourth-century 'Donation of Constantine', which the papacy had claimed as the origin of its temporal authority, was a forgery.

"By far the most important new text was the Bible itself. Newly acquired knowledge of languages meant that humanist scholars could study the recently published Greek and Hebrew originals, even finding mistakes in the orthodox Latin 'Vulgate', St. Jerome's thousand-year-old translation on which the Western Church had based its teachings. The most famous humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam, in 1516 produced an edition of the Greek New Testament with a new parallel Latin translation giving changes of wording - significant because fundamental beliefs could hang on particular phrases, even words. Humanists such as Erasmus, John Colet, the dean of St. Paul's, and Thomas More, lawyer, member of Parliament and 1529 Chancellor, had hoped that these intellectual advances would lead to religious reform and renewal. But they became weapons in an assault on authority.

"Printing (from the 1430s) and cheaper paper meant that copies of ancient texts and modern translations could be made available outside the clerical and aristocratic elite, even to ordinary literate people - the gentry, merchants, yeomen, artisans. Printed Bibles appeared in German in 1466, and in Italian, Dutch, French, Spanish and Czech in the 1470s. Lay readers ceased to be dependent on the clergy to transmit the word of God. Instead of asking what God meant (which required experts to explain) they began to ask simply what God said, and decide on his meaning themselves. England was well behind on this because of strict anti-Lollard legislation.

"Late medieval Christianity, like most religions, invested enormously in mechanisms of salvation: ceremonies, rituals, chapels, chantries, shrines, relics, statues, pilgrimages and indulgences. This familiar, beautiful, mysterious and yet accessible form of worship provided comfort and hope. Most people clung to it. Most of the cultural glories of Europe derived from it, as did the power and wealth of the Church. But it could become a squalid transaction between man and God by which favour, forgiveness and salvation were bought by performing a quasi-magical act, paying a fee, making a material gift to God or a saint, or bequeathing money for posthumous prayers. Intellectual scepticism could draw on traditional resentment of the clergy's wealth, as in the early example of Lollardy. 'Jesus said, "Feed my lambs," not "Shear my sheep", joked English reformers.'



"Luther's open challenge in 1517 was a denunciation of the 'sale' of indulgences, by which punishment for sin could be remitted by a cash donation to the Church – currently, to build the magnificent basilica of St. Peter in Rome. Luther rejected the whole system of belief on which this kind of piety was based. Drawing on ideas of the fifth-century St. Augustine [and the first-century St. Paul], he denied that merit or forgiveness could be gained by anything that sinful man could do: salvation depended solely on the mercy of God. Human beings could do nothing to deserve this mercy: God chose them to receive it. Though this idea had always been present in Western Christian teaching, the conclusions that Luther began to draw were that many of the activities of the Church, including most of the sacraments, were best useless and at worst blasphemous, and that its ruling authorities were corrupt and oppressive, in effect perpetrating a huge confidence trick on Christians.

"Luther's message appealed to many educated people, first of all in the German and Swiss cities, who were already emancipating themselves intellectually from the clergy by reading the Bible, which seemed to be the true way to faith, godliness and salvation. Luther also appealed, as Wyclif had done more than a century earlier, to nobles and princes for whom bishops, abbots and the Pope were powerful and wealthy rivals. Luther and his followers believed that religion and society needed authority, but that Christian princes, not the Pope, would yield it. It turned out that authority and order were not so easily preserved amid the moral and intellectual revolution Luther had ignited. Over much of northern Europe, crowds smashed statues in churches. In 1524, popular revolts, the so-called Peasants' War, began to sweep across Central Europe from the Rhine to Poland. Ancient social tensions were inflamed by religious radicalism, despite Luther's furious denunciation of 'thieving murdering peasants'. Many thousands were eventually slaughtered, tortured and executed in the biggest ideological upheaval in Europe since before the French Revolution. No one could doubt that religious dissension affected everything.

"Amid this European turmoil, in 1526 a young former Oxford scholar, William Tyndale, began to print copies in Cologne of his English translation of the New Testament from the Greek, undertaken in defiance of English law. They were seized in a raid on his printer, but he began again in Worms, and then again in Antwerp. Tyndale... believed that biblical interpretation did not require clerical authority, for it was simple and unambiguous: 'The scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense'. Perhaps 16,000 copies of his translation were smuggled into England over the next ten years (compared with the hundreds of manuscript copies the Lollards had managed to produce). He is supposed to have said to a critic that 'ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the scripture than thou dost'. This was a truly revolutionary ambition..."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-162.

Thanks to the accessibility of Luther's printed works, "Many people were won over by his argument. When the pope came to hear of it, he threatened to excommunicate Luther. But Luther's following was by now so great that he no longer cared. He burned the pope's letter in public, and then he really was excommunicated. Next he announced that he and his followers had left the Church altogether. Germany was in an uproar, and many people sided with him, for the luxury-loving pope, with all his wealth, was not at all popular in Germany. Nor was there much opposition from the German princes, for if the bishops and archbishops were to lose their power, the Church's vast estates would fall to them. So they, too, joined the Reformation, which was the name that was given to Luther's attempt to reawaken the Christian piety of old." <sup>112</sup>

The champion of Roman Catholicism turned out to be the new Habsburg Emperor Charles V, who in 1519 ascended the throne of the Holy Roman Empire at the age of nineteen. In 1521 he summoned Luther to appear before him at the Imperial Diet in Worms. "Already excommunicated by Leo X," writes Bridget Heal, "Luther faced condemnation by the pope's secular counterpart, the most powerful monarch in Christendom. Even more than the posting of the *Ninety-Five Theses*, Luther's appearance at the Rhineland city was a defining moment in the Reformation. Luther and his companions spent ten days travelling west from Wittenberg and were greeted enthusiastically along the way. When the reformer arrived at Worms, 2,000 people supposedly gathered in the streets, testimony to the public interest Luther had awoken. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, as he went to the Diet, people climbed onto rooftops in their eagerness to see him; his arrival was described in terms that consciously echoes the story of Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Clothed in a simple black cassock, he stood alone before the assembled might and splendour of the Empire. He was presented with a pile of books and was asked whether they were his and whether he would retract what he had written. He requested an adjournment and when he appeared again the following day, he delivered an extraordinarily courageous speech, refusing to recant and concluding that 'unless I am convinced by the testimony of scriptures I have quoted and by clear reason... I am bound by the scriptures and my conscience is captive to the Word of God.' According to the account of events published by his supporters shortly afterwards, he added: 'I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen.'

"The events at Worms propelled his message far beyond those concerned with theology and the reform of the German church. His defiance of the emperor and of the secular and ecclesiastical estates of the Empire became, even during his own lifetime, legendary. It made him into a hero..."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Gombrich, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>113</sup> Heal, "Martin Luther and the German Reformation", *History Today*, March, 2017, pp. 34-35.

These words represent the essence of his creed and of his revolutionary challenge to the whole of Christendom. For by placing his individual conscience above every collective authority, whether secular or ecclesiastical, he undermined *all* authority, replacing it with the most individualist kind of anarchism. This individualism is the root dogma of Protestantism, more fundamental than its well-known teachings on Holy Scripture, on faith and works, and on the Church.

Of course, Luther also appealed to Scripture, to the Word of God, as a figleaf for his anarchism. But what was Holy Scripture? Luther himself would judge that. "Notoriously," writes John Barton, "he went further than almost any Christian before or since in concluding that certain books were not an authentic expression of the gospel, and when he translated the Bible he removed them to an appendix. The books in question are Esther (demoted because it nowhere mentions God), Hebrews, James and Revelation. Conversely, Luther was prepared to say which books were the most important, the 'truest and noblest books': John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Peter and 1 John... Thus Luther's criticism of authority reached even to criticism of the authority of parts of the Bible itself, in the name of principles derived from what he took to be the Bible's overall drift." <sup>114</sup>

However, by making every individual believer the interpreter of Scripture, Luther undermined scriptural authority also. Scripture, the written word of God, was only a seeming authority, a fig-leaf to hide the real authority, the believer's self-will. The only authority left was the naked ego...

And yet even the holy Apostle Paul did not rely on his own individual conscience and revelation alone, but checked his convictions against those of the other apostles. As he writes: "I communicated to them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any chance I might run, or had run, in vain" (Galatians 2.2). For Paul knew that although he had received the Gospel from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, he could still err because of the sin that still dwelt in him as it dwells in all mortal men. For the truth is given collectively to the Church, "the pillar and ground of the Truth" (I Timothy 3.15), whose existence and authority will survive even the gates of hell (Matthew 16.18). But any individual member of the Church, no matter who he is, may fall away from it and therefore from the truth. That is why St. Paul disciplined his body, "lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (I Corinthians 9.27) as a witness to the truth.

Luther's attitude is what we may call Protestant rationalism; it was born in the soil of Catholic rationalism, which placed the mind of one man, the Pope, above the Catholic consciousness of the Church, the Mind of Christ. Protestantism rejected Papism, but did not reject its underlying principle. Thus instead of placing the mind of *one* man above the Church, it placed the mind of

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<sup>114</sup> Barton, *A History of the Bible*, London: Allen Lane, 2019, pp. 394-395.

every man, every believer, above it. As Luther himself declared: "In matters of faith each Christian is for himself Pope and Church."<sup>115</sup> And so Protestantism, as New Hieromartyr Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky) put it, "placed a papal tiara on every German professor and, with its countless number of popes, completely destroyed the concept of the Church, substituting faith with the reason of each separate personality."<sup>116</sup>

As Frank Furedi writes, "His defiant stand, would eventually provide legitimization for disobeying all forms of authority....

"Did Luther really hurl the legendary words – 'Here I stand, so help me God, I can do no other' – at his accusers? In a sense it does not matter. Luther did not merely assert the authority of individual conscience to justify his own actions: he advanced a compelling case for the value of people being able to act in accordance with the dictates of their conscience. In so doing his argument implicitly called into question the right of external authority to exercise power over the inner life of people.

"The distinction that Luther drew about the nature of authority represented an important step in the conceptualisation of a new limit on its exercise. His *Treatise on Good Works* (1520) asserted that 'the power of the temporal authority, whether it does right or wrong, cannot harm the soul'. This idealisation of the soul and its protected status from external authority encouraged European culture to devote greater interest in individual conscience and eventually to endow the self with moral authority.

"In helping to free the inner person from the power of external authority, Luther's theology contributed to the weakening of the very concept of external authority, *including that of divine authority* [my italics – V.M.] The freeing of the inner person from the power of external authority restricted the exercise of absolute authority in all its forms."<sup>117</sup>

The Russian Slavophile Ivan Vasilievich Kireyevsky compared Western rationalism, both Catholic and Protestant, with the Orthodox love of wisdom as follows: "The main trait distinguishing Orthodox Christianity from the Latin confession and the Protestant teaching of the faith in their influence on the intellectual and moral development of man consists in the fact that the Orthodox Church strictly adheres to the boundary between Divine Revelation and human reason, that it preserves without any change the dogmas of Revelation as they have existed from the first days of Christianity and have been confirmed by the Ecumenical Councils, not allowing the hand of man to touch their holiness or allowing human reason to modify their meaning and expression in accordance with its temporary systems. But at the same time the

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<sup>115</sup> *Martin Luthers Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar, 1885, 405, 35. Quoted by Deacon John Whiteford in [ORTHODOX@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU](mailto:ORTHODOX@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU), September 6, 1999.

<sup>116</sup> Troitsky, *Christianity or the Church?*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1971, p. 28.

<sup>117</sup> Furedi, "The Invention of Individual Freedom", *History Today*, April, 2017, p. 7.

Orthodox Church does not restrict reason in its natural activity and in its free striving to search out the truths not communicated to it by Revelation; but it does not give to any rational system or plausible view of science the status of infallible truth, ascribing to them an identical inviolability and holiness to that possessed by Divine Revelation.

“The Latin church, on the contrary, does not know any firm boundaries between human reason and Divine Revelation. It ascribes to its visible head or to a local council the right to introduce a new dogma into the number of those revealed and confirmed by the Ecumenical Councils; to some systems of human reason it ascribes the exceptional right of ascendancy over others, and in this way, even if it does not directly destroy the revealed dogmas, it changes their meaning, while it restricts human reason in the freedom of its natural activity and limits its sacred right and duty to seek from a rapprochement between human truths and Divine truths, natural truths and revealed ones.

“The Protestant teachings of the faith are based on the same annihilation of the boundary between human reason and Divine revelation, with this difference from the Latin teaching, however, that they do not raise any human point of view or systematic mental construction to the level of Divine Revelation, thereby restricting the activity of reason; but, on the contrary, they give human reason ascendancy over the Divine dogmas, changing them or annihilating them in accordance with the personal reasoning of man...

“It is natural that the follower of the Protestant confession, recognizing reason to be the chief foundation of truth, should in accordance with the measure of his education more and more submit his faith itself to his personal reasoning, until the concepts of natural reason take the place for him of all the Traditions of Divine Revelation and the Holy Apostolic Church.

“[However,] where only pure Divine Revelation is recognized to be higher than reason – Revelation which man cannot alter in accordance with his own reasonings, but with which he can only bring his reasoning into agreement, - there, naturally, the more educated a man or a people is, the more its concepts will be penetrated with the teaching of the faith, for the truth is one and the striving to find this oneness amidst the variety of the cognitive and productive actions of the mind is the constant law of all development. But in order to bring the truths of reason into agreement with the truth of Revelation that is above reason a dual activity of reason is necessary. It is not enough to arrange one’s rational concepts in accordance with the postulates of faith, to choose those that agree with them and exclude those that contradict them, and thereby purify them of all contradiction: it is also necessary to raise the very mode of rational activity to the level at which reason can sympathize with faith and where both spheres merge into one seamless contemplation of the truth. Such is the aim determining the direction of the mental development of the Orthodox Christian, and the inner consciousness of this sought-after region of mental

activity is constantly present in every movement of his reason, the breathing of his mental life..."<sup>118</sup>

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Having established that the root of Lutheranism is simply self-will, the exaltation of the human mind above all authority, secular and ecclesiastical, human and Divine, let us return and look more closely at its teaching on faith and works.

The first protest of Lutheran Protestantism was against an unquestionably evil work, the practice of indulgences, from which was derived the teaching of the superiority of faith to works... Now the practice of indulgences was based on the belief that "as soon as the coin in the coffer rings,/The soul from purgatory springs". The Reformation grew out of a reasoned protest against this and other undoubted abuses by the Roman Catholic Church. As Jacques Barzun writes: "The priest, instead of being a teacher, was ignorant; the monk, instead of helping to save the world by his piety, was an idle profiteer; the bishop, instead of supervising the care of souls in his diocese was a politician and a businessman. One of them here or there might be pious and a scholar – he showed that goodness was not impossible. But too often the bishop was a boy of twelve, his influential family having provided early for his future happiness. The system was rotten..."<sup>119</sup>

This reaction against the hypocrisy of the clergy led to the teaching that good works – especially such hypocritical good works as those that produced indulgences from the clergy – were not necessary for salvation. In fact, sin is so deeply rooted in human nature that it cannot be extirpated. Nevertheless, salvation is given to us by faith in Christ's sacrifice, which wipes out all sin without the necessity of good works. "Faith alone," wrote Luther in *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520), "without works, justifies, frees and saves." For that reason Luther rejected the Epistle of James and Revelation because of their emphasis on the important of good works.

However, too many interpreted this teaching to mean that good works are unnecessary, even vain. Since faith alone justifies the sinner, why undertake good works such as fasting, virginity and alms-giving? And so the Reformation became, as Jacob Burckhardt said, not the *restoration* of a discipline that the Catholics had violated, but an *escape* from discipline..."<sup>120</sup>

The Protestant escape from discipline manifested itself in three ways. First, as we have seen, in escape from the obligation to follow the conciliar conscience of the Church – hence the Protestant doctrine of the infallibility of the

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<sup>118</sup> Kireyevsky, "Indifferentizm" ("Indifferentism"), in *Razum na puti k istine* (Reason on the Path to Truth), Moscow, 2002, pp. 88-91.

<sup>119</sup> Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 11.

<sup>120</sup> Burckhardt, *Judgements on History*.

individual conscience and the individual's interpretation of Scripture. The Holy Fathers were not authorities for Luther – he called St. John Chrysostom “only a foolish babbler”. Secondly, in escape from the obligation to do good works or practice asceticism. And thirdly, in escape from the obligation to obey not only ecclesiastical, but also secular authorities, which we do not find in Luther himself, but in many more radical Protestants, especially the Calvinists. Taken together, these allow us to define the fundamental essence of Protestantism: escape from the law, from the Church and from the State – in other words, from all authority.

Now the most basic good work of a Christian is participation in the sacraments. While baptism was retained by the Lutherans, and some form of Eucharistic service, the significance and centrality of these sacraments to the Christian life was greatly diminished, and in general the very idea that matter can be sanctified by the Spirit in the form of icons, relics, holy water, holy oil and all the symbols and ceremonies of Catholic worship, was discarded.

The Swiss Reformer Zwingli, who greatly influenced the first Anglican Archbishop Cranmer, rejected the belief that the Eucharist was, after consecration, the Body and Blood of Christ, treating it as a service of remembrance, a memorial meal, no more. Luther did believe in the Body and Blood of Christ; but he thought that it coexisted with the bread and the wine. So he did not believe in what the Catholics called Transubstantiation.

One might have expected that the Reformers would here encounter some difficulties, in that if, as William Tyndale said, “The scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense”, then there could be no doubt that the Eucharist was the Body and Blood of Christ insofar Christ said as much clearly and unambiguously in the Holy Scriptures (Matthew 26.26-28; John 6.53-56). Moreover, the whole of Church tradition for the last 1500 years had asserted that these passages were indeed to be interpreted literally. But the Protestants rejected the literal interpretation, thereby showing that their real motivation was not obedience to Scripture alone, but *revolution* – the overthrow of traditional Christianity.

In view of this selective, biased and inconsistent approach to Holy Scripture, it is not to be wondered at that even the text of the Bible itself was cut down to size by Luther's rationalistic axe. Thus he reduced the number of canonical books, rejecting the so-called “apocryphal” books of the Old Testament and casting doubt on such New Testament books as the Epistle of James. Moreover, it was from the Protestants (and Jews such as Spinoza) that the terribly destructive so-called “Higher Criticism” of the Bible began. Nothing was sacred for the Protestants, but only the disembodied, thinking mind of the individual believer.

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What gave Luther this boldness, this extreme self-confidence in the infallibility of his own conscience and his own reasoning? The answer lies in another characteristic and fundamental doctrine of Protestantism, *predestination*. It was the Protestants' belief that they were elect and saved that gave the Reformers the boldness – more exactly, the extreme folly – to raise their minds above all established authority. Unlike Erasmus, who believed in free will, Luther believed, as the title of one his works declares, in the enslavement of free will (*De Servo Arbitrio*), which made salvation a matter of God's will alone. Thus he wrote: "With regard to God, and in all that bears on salvation or damnation, (man) has no 'free-will', but is a captive, prisoner and bonds slave, either to the will of God, or to the will of Satan."<sup>121</sup>

"Predestination," wrote Christopher Hill, "is at the heart of Protestantism. Luther saw that it was the only guarantee of the Covenant. 'For if you doubt, or disdain to know that God foreknows and wills all things, not contingently but necessarily and immutably, how can you believe confidently, trust to and depend upon his promises?' Without predestination, 'Christian faith is utterly destroyed, and the promises of God and the whole Gospel entirely fall to the ground for the greatest and only consolation of Christians in their adversities is the knowing that God lies not, but does all things immutably, and that his will cannot be resisted, changed or hindered'. *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*. Luther declared that he would not have wanted free will, even if it could have been granted to him: only God can make salvation *certain*, for some it not for all. Indeed, the whole point for Luther lies in the *uniqueness* of the elect. Once touched with divine grace they are differentiated from the mass of humanity: their consciousness of salvation will make them work consciously to glorify God. The psychological effects of this *conscious* segregation of a group from the mass is enormous.

"Calvin went a step further and boldly proclaimed that God was useless to humanity unless he had knowable purposes which we can trust and with which we can cooperate. 'What avails it, in short, to know a God with whom we have nothing to do... How can the idea of God enter your mind without instantly giving rise to the thought that since you are his workmanship, you are bound, by the very law of creation, to submit to his authority?' 'Ignorance of Providence is the greatest of all miseries, and the knowledge of it the highest happiness.' Faith gives us 'sure certainty and complete security of mind', of a sort that is self-evident to those who possess it and inexplicable to those who do not.

"Men have often commented on the apparent paradox of a predestinarian theological system producing in its adherents an emphasis on effort, on moral energy. One explanation that has been offered is that, for the Calvinist, faith revealed itself in works, and that therefore the only way in which an individual could be assured of his own salvation was by scrutinizing his behaviour

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<sup>121</sup> Luther, "Bondage of the Will," *Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings*, ed. by Dillenberger, Anchor Books, 1962 p. 190.



carefully night and day to see where he did in fact bring forth works worthy of salvation...

"But I am not entirely convinced that this is the sole explanation. It is highly sophisticated. Most of the evidence for it among the preachers comes from the later seventeenth century, when for other reasons works were being emphasized once more. I believe that the resolution of the paradox is psychologically simpler, if philosophically more complex. Salvation, consciousness of election, consisted of the turning of the heart towards God. A man knew that he was saved because he felt, at some stage of his life, an inner satisfaction, a glow, which told him that he was in direct communion with God. Cromwell was said to have died happy when assured that grace once known could never be lost: for once he had been in a state of grace. We are not dealing here with the mystical ecstasy of a recluse: we are dealing rather with the conscience of the average gentleman, merchant or artisan. What gave him consciousness of election was not the painful scrutiny of his works, for the preachers never tired of telling him that none could keep the commandment, that 'we cannot cooperate with any grace of God' unless there is 'a special spirit infused'. It was the sense of elation and power that justified him and his worldly activities, that gave him self-confidence in a world of economic uncertainty and political hostility. The elect were those who thought they were elect, because they had an inner faith which made them feel free, whatever their external difficulties.

"Philosophically, the argument is circular. But Calvinism did not exist primarily as a philosophical system. It gave courage and confidence to a group of those who believed themselves to be God's elect. It justified them, in this world and the next... 'Men, who have assurance that they are to inherit heaven, have a way of presently taking possession of the earth.'" <sup>122</sup>

Thus in order to understand Protestantism we must go beyond the intellectual pride that it inherited from Papism and Renaissance humanism to the emotional vacuum that it sought to fill – and filled with some success, although the new wine it proposed to pour into the old bottles of Christendom turned out to be distinctly vinegary. For it was not their protests against the abuses of Papism that made Luther and Calvin such important figures: Wycliff and Hus, Machiavelli and Erasmus and many others had been exposing these abuses long before Luther nailed his theses to the church door in Worms. What distinguished Luther and Calvin was that they were able to offer hungry hearts that no longer believed in the certainties of Holy Tradition another kind of certainty – that offered by faith in one's individual infallibility and salvation, giving to those who no longer believed in the consolations of Mother Church another kind of consolation – that offered by predestination to salvation. All that was necessary was to say: I believe, and the believer could be sure that he was saved! Nor did he need the Church or the Priesthood or the Sacraments or good works to be saved. For faith alone justifies, and all believing men are

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<sup>122</sup> Hill, *God's Englishman*, London: Penguin, 1970, pp. 211-213.

“priests for ever... worthy to appear before God, to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things that are of God.”<sup>123</sup>

Thus was Western thought directed along a path of ever-increasing individualism and subjectivism. We can see this in the close relationship between the thought of Luther and that of the French rationalist philosopher René Descartes. For Luther, the individual’s consciousness that he believed was the guarantee of his salvation. For Descartes, the existence of this disembodied, thinking mind – a mind free from the limitations of space and time – was the first axiom of all knowledge: *Cogito, ergo sum*, “I think, therefore I am”. From the existence of the thinking mind he deduced his own existence, and from that the existence of everything else.

Of course, since this was still a believing, Christian age, the existence of some objective truths that were independent of the subject was still affirmed. Descartes sometimes wrote as if Divine Revelation were a still higher criterion of truth than his own thought. Thus he wrote in *The Principles of Philosophy*: “Above all else we must impress on our memory the overriding rule that whatever God has revealed to us must be accepted as more certain than anything else. And although the light of reason may, with the utmost clarity and evidence appear to suggest something different, we must still put our entire faith in Divine authority rather than in our own judgement.” However, the course of western philosophy after Descartes showed that, once human reason is given a place that is not fitting to it, it squeezes out Divine Revelation altogether.

Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” was only a desiccated, secularised and intellectualised version of Luther’s “I believe, therefore I am saved”. The difference between Luther and Descartes was the difference between theological rationalism and philosophical rationalism: the Protestant deduced the certainty of salvation from his personal faith, while the philosopher derived the certainty of his existence from his personal thought. The one deduction was momentous in its consequences and the other was relatively trivial (those who take philosophy seriously are a very small minority); the one had a big emotional charge and the other had very little. But in essence they were very similar. In this way was philosophical rationalism born from Protestant rationalism. The philosophical rationalism of a Descartes or a Kant was unthinkable without the religious rationalism of a Luther or a Calvin.

“As... V.A. Kozhevnikov points out in his study of godhood, ‘the Cartesian: “I think, therefore I am” already gave a basis for godmanhood in the sense of human self-affirmation.’ In fact, in that all-encompassing doubt, which was permitted by Descartes before this affirmation, all knowledge that does not depend on the reasoning subject is rejected, and it is admitted that if a man had no help from anyone or anything, his mind would manage with its own resources to learn the truth. ‘The isolation and self-sufficiency of the thinking

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<sup>123</sup> Luther, *On the Liberty of the Christian*.

person is put as the head of the corner of the temple of philosophical wisdom.' With such a *terminus a quo*, 'the purely subjective attainment of the truth, remarks V. Kozhevnikov, 'becomes the sole confirmation of existence itself. The existent is confirmed on the basis of the conceivable, the real – on the intellectual... The purely human, and the solely human, acquires its basis and justification in the purely human mind. The whole evolution of the new philosophical thinking from Descartes to Kant revolves unfolds under the conscious or unnoticed, but irresistible attraction in this direction.'"<sup>124</sup>

"The first step of the Reformation," writes V.A. Zhukovsky, "decided the fate of the European world: instead of the historical abuses of ecclesiastical power, it destroyed the spiritual... power of the Church herself; it incited the democratic mind to rebel against her being above judgement; in allowing revelation to be checked, it shook the faith, and with the faith everything holy. For this holiness was substituted the pagan wisdom of the ancients; the spirit of contradiction was born; the revolt against all authority, Divine as well as human, began. This revolt went along two paths: on the first – the destruction of the authority of the Church produced rationalism (the rejection of the Divinity of Christ), whence came... atheism (the rejection of the existence of God); and on the other – the concept of autocratic power as proceeding from God gave way to the concept of the social contract. Thence came the concept of the autocracy of the people, whose first step is representative democracy, second step – democracy, and third step – socialism and communism. Perhaps there is also a fourth and final step: the destruction of the family, and in consequence of this the exaltation of humanity, liberated from every obligation that might in any way limit its personal independence, to the dignity of completely free cattle. And so two paths: on the one hand, the autocracy of the human mind and the annihilation of the Kingdom of God; on the other – the dominion of each and every one, and the annihilation of society."<sup>125</sup>

May 28 / June 10, 2020.

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<sup>124</sup> Tikhomirov, *Religio-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii* (The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, p. 474.

<sup>125</sup> Zhukovsky, "O stikhotvorenii 'Sviataia Rus'" ("On the Poem 'Holy Rus'"), in V.F. Ivanov, *Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do Nashikh Dnej* (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry: from Peter I to our Days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow: "Moskva", 1997, p. 74.

## 7. HERESY, HYSTERIA AND MADNESS

The Holy Church is accustomed to dealing with false teachings of various kinds, which we call heresies. Heresy is usually considered to be the product of a sound mind which has gone wrong in some way, leading it to false conclusions, errors in logical thinking that may be caused by a moral defect or passion, or even demon-possession, but which cannot be classified as a mental illness. However, the false thinking we are witnessing in the world today is difficult to classify as heresy: it is more akin to madness.

In order to understand how heresy, under some conditions, can pass over into a kind of mass psychosis, let us first consider an intermediate phenomenon: mass hysteria. In Wikipedia we read: “In sociology and psychology, [mass hysteria](#) (also known as *mass psychogenic illness*, *collective hysteria*, *group hysteria*, or *collective obsessional behavior*) is a phenomenon that transmits collective [illusions](#) of threats, whether real or imaginary, through a population in society as a result of rumors and fear.” The article goes on to list a long series of cases of mass hysteria from the Salem witches trial of the seventeenth century to the mass reaction to the “War of the Worlds” radio broadcast of 1938 to several contemporary phenomena.

Now it could be argued that many of these phenomena have simple physical or biological explanations. Perhaps... But that is not the point here. The point is that, whatever the ultimate cause, false beliefs can acquire a degree of irrationality that is akin to madness. And this very often takes place in large groups of people, in what Douglas Murray calls “The Madness of Crowds”, as the quasi-virus of false belief spreads with amazing speed through a population.

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We find this particularly in times of religious or political revolution. Consider, for example, the French Revolution. In the first week of September 1792 there took place, according to John Julius Norwich, “the September Massacres – perhaps the ugliest chapter of the whole history of the Revolution... These were based on fears that the Duke of Brunswick, who was believed to be advancing on Paris at the head of the Prussian army, would on his arrival free all the inmates of the city’s prisons, who would at once rally to his support. The radicals, and particularly the extremist journalist Jean-Paul Marat, called for pre-emptive action, demanding that all the prisoners in the city should be slaughtered at once. Men of the National Guard, and others from the *fédérés* set to with a will; by 6 September half the prison population – 1,400 to 1,500 – had been killed. Well over two hundred of them were Catholic priests, whose only crime had been to submit to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Nor were these straight, clean killings; those responsible soon became no better than homicidal lunatics, torturing, amputating, eviscerating their victims in an orgy of bloodlust. Few of these unfortunates suffered more than the queen’s greatest friend, the Princesse de Lambelle. She was stripped, raped

and savagely mutilated; her heart roasted and eaten, and her head, impaled on another pike, paraded beneath the queen's window at the Temple." <sup>126</sup>

The Christian hardly needs convincing that such incidents are the product, not simply of psychological madness, but of demonic possession. In his novel *The Demons*, Dostoyevsky describes the collective madness of a whole provincial town caused by the advent of an antichrist-like figure, Stavrogin, and prefaces the novel with a quotation from the Gospel story of the Gadarene swine.

It is not too much to suppose that a collective hysteria swept much of Nazi Germany in the 1930s whose cause was demonic possession. Thus "two British guests at a Hitler rally in Berlin in 1934, seated in a stadium just feet behind him, watched him captivate his listeners with the familiar rising passion and jarring voice. 'Then an amazing thing happened,' continued the account: '[we] both saw a blue flash of lightning come out of Hitler's back... We were surprised that those of us close behind Hitler had not all been struck dead.' The two men afterwards discussed whether Hitler was actually possessed at certain moments by the Devil: 'We came to the conclusion that he was.'"

Freud's former disciple Karl Jung declared in 1945 that the cause of the German people's surrender to Nazism was demon-possession: "Germany has always been a country of psychological catastrophes: the Reformation, the peasant and religious [30-year] wars. Under the National Socialists the pressure of the demons increased to such an extent that human beings that fell under their power were turned into sleep-walking super-men, the first of whom was Hitler, who infected all the others with the same. All the Nazi leaders were possessed in the literal sense of the word... Ten percent of the German population today is hopelessly psychopathic..."

Already in the 1840s the poet Heinrich Heine saw this coming: "A drama will be enacted in Germany compared with which the French Revolution will seem like a harmless idyll. Christianity may have restrained the martial ardour of the Teutons for a time, but it did not destroy it. Now that the restraining talisman, the cross, has rotted away, the old frenzied madness will break out again."

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More alarming even than these cases of mass hysteria and mass possession is the spread of completely illogical ideas in a calm, seemingly rational way among large populations of rational, well-educated people. This also is madness – madness without the hysteria, the wildness.

A clear example is the ecumenical movement. Although ecumenists can be found even in the early centuries of Christianity, ecumenism became a mass

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<sup>126</sup> John Julius Norwich, *France. From Gaul to DeGaulle*, London: John Murray, 2019, p. 210.

phenomenon only after the Second World War. Ecumenism is completely irrational because it maintains that obviously logically incompatible beliefs are nevertheless compatible. So Christians believe in Christ as the Son of God, but the Jews believe he is the son of a prostitute burning in hell. But they are one, assert the madmen! The Christians believe in the Holy Trinity, but the Muslims reject the Trinity. But they are one, assert the madmen! If the ecumenists said to each other: "We all believe different, incompatible things. But let us ignore this, and pretend it is not so, for the sake of peace," they would at least be displaying some honesty, some consistency – albeit without that love of truth which alone brings salvation. But they are going far further than that in actual fact; in fact they are trying to build the one true religion, based on all the incompatibilities of all the existing world religions. And that is madness!

Now let us turn to LGBT. A man who is biologically a man - a fact of nature which cannot be changed by any amount of surgery, since it is determined by his DNA - declares himself to be a woman, and anyone who disputes his claim is sued in the courts for slander and violation of human rights. Again: a man who is biologically a man but claims to be a woman "marries" a woman who is biologically a woman but claims to be a man. Madness! Or rather: that is what every generation of every civilization prior to our own would say. But in our generation even the cleverest of scientists bow down to this madness as if it were the highest wisdom. For we have reached the time foretold by St. Anthony the Great when the whole world would go mad through drinking "loony water", while the sane people remaining would be considered the mad ones. That prophecy has been fulfilled.

Or let us take perhaps a less serious but even more contemporary case: COVID-19. The conventional wisdom is that saving lives are the highest concern, so lockdown must take place, basic freedoms must be violated and economies and livelihoods (especially if the most poor and vulnerable) must be destroyed. The results are paradoxical: *more* people are dying than before. Thus in Romania three times more people have died of cancer at this time (30,000 more) than the same time last year, almost certainly because so many resources have been devoted to COVID-19 cases instead. Was such a result difficult to predict? Not at all! And yet the vast majority of educated commentary has gone along with this madness, to the extent of censoring and punishing those who think more soberly.

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We know that a wound, if not healed, becomes gangrenous and may spread its poison around the whole body, leading to death. The same happens in the spiritual life, and in the life of whole nations and civilizations. In the mid-eleventh century, the West fell into the abyss of the heresy of papism, which places the opinion of a mortal man above that of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Although there were martyrs and confessors of the truth in every subsequent age, this heresy was not treated, but spread and mutated into

many new kinds of heresy, such as Protestantism and Liberalism, that we may collectively call westernism.

Orthodox Christians like to think that Eastern Orthodoxy escaped this miasma. But in truth the infection spread very rapidly eastwards, and by the early twentieth century westernism had conquered most of the Orthodox East, especially the educated classes. In the period 1917-1945 God punished the Orthodox peoples mightily – unfortunately, with little revivifying effect except in the glorious band of new martyrs and confessors. There was no national or collective repentance. Collective hysterias every bit as bad as anything taking place in the West took place in the East – for example, the worship of Stalin. Speaking of the MP's idolatrous address to Stalin on the occasion of his seventieth birthday in 1949, Fr. Gleb Yakunin and a group of Orthodox Christians wrote with complete justification: "Without the slightest hesitation, we can call this address the most shameful document ever composed in the name of the Church in the whole history of the existence of Christianity and still more in the thousand-year history of Christianity in Rus'." Even to this day, long after the supposed fall of communism, Putin defends Stalin, and has pushed through legislation imprisoning anyone who dares to criticize the shameful Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939. Madness!

Again, Orthodox Christians – especially Putin and his pocket-patriarch Cyril Gundiaev – like to boast that they protect "Christian values" better than the West. It is true and important that, by contrast with the West, LGBT is rejected in the East. But it is equally true and important to recognize this parade of righteousness is spoiled by two things. First, most of the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate, the nation's spiritual leaders, are homosexual – which makes them a fine bunch of hypocrites! And secondly, Russia's "Christian values", according to Putin and Gundiaev, are identical with those of Islam – which would mean that they are not Christian at all!.. The sad truth is that in our global, ecumenical world the Orthodox East is hardly less prone to heresies and hysteria than the West. Rare, very rare, is the spiritual leader who is not either heretical, flagrantly immoral or a slave to whatever is the current secular ideology. About even the best of these "scribes and Pharisees who sit in Moses's seat" the warning applies: "whatever they tell you to observe, do, but do not according to their works" (Matthew 23.3).

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How are we to remain sane in the surrounding madness? Are we to take up arms against this sea of troubles? No, we must hunker down, keep quiet as far as we can without betraying the truth, and wait for the storm to pass. At the same time, however, we must clearly understand and firmly believe three things:

- The origin of all the contemporary madnesses is *the Russian Revolution*. For it was the revolution that removed "him that restraineth" the coming of the Antichrist, the Orthodox tsar, paving the

way for the onset of the present universal madness; this was the event that marked the beginning of the end days, the age of the Apocalypse. Therefore nobody and nothing that justifies or in any way supports the revolution, directly or indirectly, openly or in a hidden manner, should be believed or trusted.

- The revolution, in its original aim as formulated by Lenin and Trotsky, was *global* in scope; Lenin believed that it would not succeed even in Russia if it did not become global. Therefore the present-day successors of Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin – Putin and his kleptocratic clique, -together with their allies, the Chinese and the Shiite Muslims, and the Neo- and Cultural Marxists throughout the world, will never rest until they have undermined every remnant of lawful power in the West. It follows that almost all the madresses of the West will be found to have neo-Soviet human agents or bots stirring them up and pushing them on. The final end of the revolution will therefore be the subjugation of America, in accordance with the prophecy of Elder Ignaty of Harbin: “What began in Russia will end in America”.

- While we must remain sane amidst the madresses that are destroying our civilization, we should not be despondent over its final destruction. Rather, we should rejoice; for do not the apostles and saints rejoice over the fall of Babylon in Revelation 18? For then, as read in the following chapter, Christ will come in triumph to cast the Antichristian beast into the lake of fire...

*May 31 / June 13, 2020.  
Apodosis of Pentecost.*



## 8. FREEMASONRY, ECUMENISM AND THE 2020 AMERICAN REVOLUTION

During the eighteenth century, in spite of the spread of Enlightenment ideas, the old despotic order still reigned in Europe; and with rulers such as Frederick the Great in Prussia and Catherine the Great in Russia turning in practice against the Enlightenment ideas they embraced in theory it was clear that the "mystery of iniquity" needed a new stimulus to recover its momentum and propel it towards its goal. That stimulus came in the form of an element that was already well known to European history, but which only now began to acquire a dominant position in politics - Jewish power. One major channel of Jewish influence was finance; a second was Freemasonry, which because of its close links with Jewry is often called "Judaean-Masonry".

The main targets of the Masons were: the hierarchical principle, respect for tradition, the Church and the Monarchy. They did not originate the attacks on these: the roots of anti-authoritarianism in both Church and State go back at least to the eleventh-century Papacy. What they did do was use an already existing sceptical and rationalist climate of opinion to intensify and give direction to the revolutionary movement, "the mystery of iniquity".

Since belief in the existence of a Masonic conspiracy against civilization is often taken as evidence of madness, or at any rate of political incorrectness, it is necessary to assert from the beginning that, as L.A. Tikhomirov rightly says, "it is strange to attribute to the Masons the whole complexity of the evolution of human societies. One must not have the idea that people lived happily and in a healthy state, but then the Masonic organization appeared and corrupted them all. It is necessary to know the laws of the development of societies, which would be such as they are if the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem had never taken place. In general the study of Masonry can be fruitful only on condition that it is conducted scientifically. Only such a study is capable of clarifying the true level of influence of this or that secret society on the evolution of peoples and states." <sup>127</sup>

While Tikhomirov has no doubts about the existence of the Judaean-Masonic conspiracy, he nevertheless insists that the blame for the destruction of society lies "most of all not on some premeditatedly evil influence of the Masons or whatever other organisation, but on the false direction of our own constructive activities." <sup>128</sup> For "there has never been a man or a society which has not been corrupted through his or its own free will." <sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Tikhomirov, "K voprosu o masonakh" ("Towards the Question on the Masons"), *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), in *Kritika Demokratii* (A Criticism of Democracy), Moscow, 1997 pp. 330-331.

<sup>128</sup> Tikhomirov, "V chem nasha opasnost?" ("In What does the Danger to Us Consist?"), *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), *op. cit.*, p. 333.

<sup>129</sup> Tikhomirov, "Bor'ba s Masonstvom" ("The Struggle with Masonry"), in *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), p. 336.

In other words, the Masons would have no power over society if society had not voluntarily abandoned its own defensive principles and institutions.

As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: "In evaluating the role of the Jewish core of World Masonry, two extremes are possible: the complete denial of any Judaeo-Masonic secret plot and secret leadership of world processes, and the extreme exaggeration of the degree and size of this leadership (when it seems that 'they' are everywhere and everything is ruled by 'them')... In fact, it is all not like that. The life of the world, even the development of its scientific-technical and industrial civilization is a very weird and changeable combination of elemental, ungovernable processes and planned, governable processes. In the final analysis everything is truly ruled by the Providence of God, but in such a way that the free will of man is not abolished. For that reason in their successful moments it can seem, and seems, to the Judaeo-Masons, who really are striving for ever greater subjection of the processes of global life to themselves, that to an ever greater degree it is by their own, human powers that everything is achieved..."<sup>130</sup>

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

According to Masonic theory, "Free", "Speculative" or "Symbolic" Masonry began when the meeting-places, or lodges, of the "Operative" Masons, the stonemasons who built the medieval cathedrals, gradually began to decline in importance with the decline in their craft, and they were joined by intellectuals who used the lodges for their own intellectual, and often heretical or occult, activities. One of the first modern "speculative" Masons was the English antiquarian and astrologer, Elias Ashmole, who was initiated in 1646 and died in 1692.<sup>131</sup> Another early Mason was Sir Christopher Wren. Christopher Hodapp, a Mason, writes: "The Great London Fire had destroyed much of the city [of London] in 1666, and rebuilding it took decades. Freemason Christopher Wren had designed an astonishing number of the new buildings, and construction projects were everywhere. One of the biggest was the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral. It started in 1673 and took almost 40 years to complete. Operative Masons came from all over England to work on the project, and many joined the Lodge of St. Paul. By 1710, the great cathedral was complete, and many lodges disbanded as Masons returned to their hometowns. By 1715, there were just four London city lodges left."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 407.

<sup>131</sup> Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999, p. 22; G. Toppin, "Starred First", *Oxford Today*, vol. 12, N 1, Michaelmas term, 1999, pp. 32-34.

<sup>132</sup> Hodapp, *Freemasons for Dummies*, Indianapolis: Wiley, 2005, pp. 30-31.

Even at this very early stage, Masonry aroused suspicion. Thus in 1698 a certain Mr. Winter circulated a leaflet in London warning “all godly people in the City of London of the Mischiefs and Evils practised in the Sight of God by those called Freed Masons... For this devilish Sect of Men are Meeters in secret which swear against all without their Following. They are the Anti Christ which was to come, leading Men from fear of God.”<sup>133</sup>

The traditional official birthday of Masonry is July 24, 1717, when the four remaining London lodges met in a pub in St. Paul’s churchyard and created a Great Lodge as their ruling centre.<sup>134</sup> The first grandmaster was a nobleman, and the leaders of English Masonry to the present day have tended to be members of the royal family. Consonant with this royal connection, there was nothing revolutionary in a political sense in early English Masonry. Thus when Dr. James Anderson, a Presbyterian minister and master of Lodge number 17 of London, drew up the *Constitutions* of Masonry in 1723, great emphasis was laid on the Masons’ loyalty to King and country: “A mason is a peaceable subject to the civil powers, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against the peace and welfare of the nation. If a brother should be a rebel against the state, he is not to be countenanced in his rebellion, however he may be pitied as an unhappy man; and if convicted of not other crime, though the brotherhood must and ought to dismiss his rebellion, and give no umbrage or ground of political jealousy to the government for the time being; they cannot expel him from the lodge, and his relation to it remains indefeasible.”<sup>135</sup>

The Masons, writes O.F. Soloviev, called themselves “men of good will, peace-lovers, builders of the future just construction of society and at the same time patriots of their own fatherlands, law-abiding subjects and citizens, as is emphasized in all the constitutional documents. They went towards the highest ideals not through the preaching of abstract truths, but by serving their own peoples. They did not wall themselves off by an invisible wall from their compatriots, but completely shared their destiny with all their woes and sufferings. They were distinguished by a striving to help those around them, to draw a middle line between extremes and introduce at any rate a little humanism into the bonds of war that have been inevitable up to now.”<sup>136</sup>

That was the theory. But in the order’s secrecy, in the religiosity of its three degrees, and in its subversive political influence, a great danger to the powers that be was in fact present; and in 1736 Pope Clement XII anathematized it. Moreover, “it was gradually revealed that the ritual humility of Symbolical Masonry had ceased to satisfy the leaders of the ‘obediences’, scions of the

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<sup>133</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>134</sup> The original lodges were numbers 1 to 4. However, in Scotland, the Kilwinning Lodge, which called itself “the Mother Lodge of Scotland” and claimed to go back to 1140, rejected the claims of the English Grand Lodge and called itself Lodge no. 0 (Hodapp, *op. cit.*, p. 26).

<sup>135</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>136</sup> O.F. Soloviev, *Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veka* (Masonry in World Politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), Moscow, 1998, p. 15.

ruling dynasties and nobility, who strove to elaborate the inner decoration of the lodges and especially the rituals. The desired basis for reform was found in the specially transformed legend of the fate of the knightly order of the Templars, whose leader de Molay and his fellows had perished on the gallows in Paris in 1517 in accordance with the inquisitors' false [?] accusations of terrible heresies. The Templars began to be portrayed as the immediate forerunners of the 'free Masons', which required the introduction of several higher degrees into their order, to signify the special merits and great knowledge of individually chosen adepts. One of the initiators of the reform, the Scottish nobleman A. Ramsay, declared in 1737: 'Our forefathers the crusaders wanted to unite into one brotherhood the subjects of all states', so as in time to create 'a new people, which, representing many nations, would unite them in the bonds of virtue and science'. After the introduction of several higher degrees with luxurious rituals, a series of associations formed several systems, including the highly centralized system 'of strict observance' with rigorous discipline for its adepts, that was significantly developed in the German lands, in Russia and in Sweden."<sup>137</sup>

And so, within twenty years of its official birthday, Masonry had developed from a talking-shop for liberal intellectuals into a new religion tracing its roots to the Templars and beyond. This reinforced suspicions about its antichristian nature. At this point, however, the noble membership of the order proved useful. The Masons were saved from persecution by their success in recruiting members from the aristocracy, whose names were immediately published to show how "respectable" Masonry was. Moreover, a ban was placed on political discussions in the English lodges. It was emphasized that, as Anderson's *Constitutions* put it, "a Mason is a peaceable subject to the Civil Power, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concern'd in Plots and Conspiracies against the Peace and Welfare of the Nation."

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<sup>137</sup> Soloviev, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Thus Piers Paul Read writes: "Andrew Ramsay, a Scottish Jacobite exiled in France who was Chancellor of the French Grand Lodge in the 1730s, claimed that the first Freemasons had been StoneMasons in the crusader states who had learned the secret rituals and gained the special wisdom of the ancient world. Ramsay made no specific claim for the Templars, probably because he did not wish to antagonise his host, the King of France; but in Germany another Scottish exile, George Frederick Johnson, concocted a myth that transformed 'the Templars... from their ostensible status of unlearned and fanatical soldier-monks to that of enlightened and wise knightly seers, who had used their sojourn in the East to recover its profoundest secrets, and to emancipate themselves from medieval Catholic credulity'.

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

But if English Masonry by and large respected this ban, this was certainly not to be the case with its daughter lodges in Europe and America. Thus St. Andrew's lodge in Boston became "a hotbed of sedition" at the time of the American revolution.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, the *Constitutions* clearly witnessed both to Masonry's revolutionary potential and to its religious nature. Its religiosity is particularly obvious when in one and the same breath the *Constitutions* both disclaim any interest in religion and then claim to profess "the best [religion] that ever was, or will or can be..."<sup>139</sup>

What is this religion? In some formulations it is like the Deism that was becoming fashionable in England and America, in which God, "the Great Architect of the Universe", is seen as creating and activating the laws of nature, and then playing no further part in history. In others it is closer to Pantheism. Thus the *Constitutions* declare: "[Masons are]... oblig'd... to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is to be good men and true, or men of honour and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasion they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the centre of union, and the means of consolidating true friendship among persons that have remained at a perpetual distance. .. The religion we profess... is the best that ever was, or will or can be..., for it is the law of Nature, which is the law of God, for God is nature. It is to love God above all things and our neighbour as our self; this is the true, primitive, catholic and universal religion agreed to be so in all times and ages."

"God is nature..." This is clearly pantheism, and no amount of Christian terminology can disguise that fact... But this Masonic god, as revealed in one of the degrees of initiation, is also personal; he is "Jah-Bul-On"...

"Jah" clearly refers to the Jehovah of the Old Testament, whom Christians identify with Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. But "Bul" and "On" have their roots in Canaanite idolatry. "Bul" is "Baal", while the word "On", sometimes falsely identified with the Egyptian Osiris, can actually be found in Hosea 4.15: "Judah, do not go up to Gilgal, and do not go up to the House of On". Blessed Theodoret of Cyrus comments on this passage: "'On' is the name of the idol in Bethel; it does not mean 'eternal' - that is, living - as some commentators imagined; instead, it is a Hebrew word, not Greek. The other Hebrew-speaking translators clearly informed us of this: Aquila and Theodotion rendered it 'useless house', and Symmachus 'house of iniquity'."<sup>140</sup>

The famous American Mason, Albert Pike, also drew attention to the Masons' worship of the Egyptian god *Osiris*. "Osiris was the brother and husband of Isis, with Horus being considered his posthumously begotten son.

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<sup>138</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>139</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>140</sup> Theodoret, *Commentaries on the Prophets*, volume 3: commentary on the Twelve Prophets, Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006, p. 50.

In the Old Kingdom (2686 - 2181 BC) the pharaoh was considered a son of the sun god Ra who, after his death, ascended to join Ra in the sky. Osiris was the judge of the dead and the underworld, and the agency that granted all life, including sprouting vegetation and the fertile flooding of the Nile River. He was described as 'He Who is Permanently Benign and Youthful' and the 'Lord of Silence'. The kings of Egypt were associated with Osiris in death – as Osiris rose from the dead so they would be in union with him, and inherit eternal life through a process of imitative magic. "<sup>141</sup>

The distant, but real similarity between Osiris and Christ made him an ideal substitute for Christ in the Masonic imagination. The importance of Osiris in Masonic ritual is demonstrated in Mozart's famous aria "O Isis and Osiris" in *The Magic Flute* (1791). According to Pike, "Osiris had a rival: 'Long known as... Adonai [another name for Jehovah, the Lord of the Bible];... the rival of Bal and Osiris".<sup>142</sup>

In fact, according to Phillip Darrell Collins and Paul David Collins, "Bal and Osiris were one and the same, representing the 'invisible God' worshipped 'beyond the orb [sun]'. This was the reason for Pike's capitalization of the word 'Sun'. He was not referring to the corporeal 'orb' that provides earth with daylight, but an 'invisible God' whose identity was known only to a few."<sup>143</sup>

This is clearly Lucifer, or Satan...

So closer examination reveals Masonry in its developed form to be a kind of Manichaeism. There are two gods, Christ and Satan, of whom the one, Christ, is hated, and the other, Satan, is adored. As Pike wrote: "To the crowd we must say: we worship a God, but it is the God one adores without superstition. To you, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, we say this, that you may repeat it to the brethren of the 32nd, 31st and 30th degrees: all of us initiates of the high degrees should maintain the Masonic religion in the purity of the Luciferian doctrine. If Lucifer were not God, would Adonai, the God of the Christians, whose deeds prove his cruelty, perfidy and hatred of man, his barbarism and repulsion for science, would Adonai and his priests calumniate him? Yes, Lucifer is God, and unfortunately Adonai is also God... religious philosophy in its purity and youth consists in the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonai."<sup>144</sup>

"We have the testimony, writes Tikhomirov, "of [the former Mason and investigator of Masonry] Copin Albancelli, whom we can in no way suspect of making up things, when he declares positively that he had genuine documents about this in his hands. I, he says, had the opportunity several years ago to find

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<sup>141</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osiris>.

<sup>142</sup> Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, Richmond, Virginia: J.L. Jenkins, 1942, p. 697.

<sup>143</sup> Collins and Collins, *The Ascendancy of the Scientific Dictatorship*, New York: iUniverse, 2004, p. 204.

<sup>144</sup> Pike, in A.C. de la Rive, *La Femme et l'Enfant dans la Franc-Maçonnerie Universelle* (The Woman and the Child in Universal Freemasonry), p. 588.

a proof that there exist certain Masonic societies which are satanic societies, not in the sense that the devil used to come personally to preside at their meetings, as that charlatan Leo Taxil says, but in the sense that their members confess the cult of Satan. They adore Lucifer as being supposedly the true God and are inspired by an irreconcilable hatred against the Christian God.' They even have a special formula casting 'curses' on Him and proclaiming the glory of and love for Lucifer..."<sup>145</sup>

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When we examine the rites and religious practices of Masonry, and especially of its higher degrees, a strongly Jewish element is immediately apparent. As an example, let us take the Masonic practice of wearing aprons. Michael Hoffman, following John L. Brooke, writes: "The Babylonian Talmud claims that the forbidden tree in the Garden, from which Adam ate was a fig: 'Rabbi Nehemiah holds that the tree of which Adam ate was the fig tree ' (BT Berakoth 40a). The Kabbalah teaches that the leaves of this fig tree conveyed powers of sorcery and magic (Zohar 1:56b Bereshit). Consequently, in the rabbinic mind, the aprons worn by Adam and Eve, being made from the leaves of the fig tree, were garments that gave the wearers magic powers. These aprons made from fig leaves had the power to give the bearer to enjoy 'the fruits of the world-to-come' (BT Bava Metzia 114b). It is with this rabbinic understanding that Freemasons and Mormons wear these aprons in their own rituals." <sup>146</sup>

Moreover, there is a significant personal input of Jewry into Masonry, especially at the highest levels. For the three symbolical degrees of Masonry are supplemented by thirty higher levels, which in turn are crowned by what has been called "invisible Masonry". And "all this impenetrably dark power is crowned, according to the conviction and affirmation of Copin Albancelli, by still another level: the Jewish centre, which pursues the aims of the universal lordship of Israel and holds in its hands both visible Masonry with its 33 degrees and the invisible degrees of invisible Masonry or 'Illuminism'..."<sup>147</sup>

"It is true, of course," writes Bernard Lazare, "that there were Jews connected with Freemasonry from its birth, students of the Kabbala, as is shown by certain rites which survive. It is very probable, too, that in the years preceding the outbreak of the French Revolution, they entered in greater numbers than ever into the councils of the secret societies, becoming indeed themselves the founders of secret associations. There were Jews in the circle around Weishaupt, and a Jew of Portuguese origin, Martinez de Pasquales, established numerous groups of Illuminati in France and gathered around him a large number of disciples whom he instructed in the doctrines of re-

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<sup>145</sup> Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii* (The Religious-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, p. 448.

<sup>146</sup> Michael Hoffman, *Judaism Discovered*, Independent History and Research, 2008, p. 198.

<sup>147</sup> Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

integration. The lodges which Martinez founded were mystic in character, whereas the other orders of Freemasonry were, on the whole, rationalistic in their teachings.... There would be little difficulty in showing how these two tendencies worked in harmony; how Cazotte, Cagliostro, Martinez, Saint-Martin, the Comte de Saint Germain and Eckartshausen were practically in alliance with the Encyclopaedists and Jacobins, and how both, in spite of their seeming hostility, succeeded in arriving at the same end, the undermining, namely, of Christianity.

“This, too, then, would tend to show that though the Jews might very well have been active participants in the agitation carried on by the secret societies, it was not because they were the founders of such associations, but merely because the doctrines of the secret societies agreed so well with their own.”<sup>148</sup>

Thus according to Lazare Freemasonry was not controlled by the Jews. Whether we believe that or not, Judaism and Masonry had a great deal in common: Anti-Christianity, a taste for a Kabbalistic type of mysticism, revolutionary politics and many members of Jewish blood.

But this is only the beginning. It is when one enters into the details of the rites, especially the rites of the higher degrees, that the resemblances become really striking. “The connections are more intimate,” wrote a Parisian Jewish review, “than one would imagine...

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

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

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<sup>148</sup> Lazare, *Antisemitisme* (Antisemitism), pp. 308-309; De Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.



every initiate pledges his devotion and undertakes to lay his stone, a sublime work which has been carried on for centuries.”<sup>149</sup>

This talk of universal fraternity in the rebuilding of the Temple is deception. If there is fraternity, it is a Jewish fraternity. “As for the final result of the messianic revolution,” writes Batault, “it will always be the same: God will overthrow the nations and the kings and will cause Israel and her king to triumph; the nations will be converted to Judaism and will obey the Law or else they will be destroyed and the Jews will be the masters of the world. The Jews’ international dream is to unite the world with the Jewish law, under the direction and domination of the priestly people – a general form... of imperialism...”<sup>150</sup>

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

The rites of Freemasonry themselves declare that the secret aim of the rebuilding of the Temple is to undo the work of Christ on the Cross. Thus the 18th or Rosicrucian Degree<sup>151</sup> speaks of the ninth hour of the day as “the hour when the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain and darkness overspread the earth, when the true Light departed from us, the Altar was thrown down, the Blazing Star was eclipsed, the Cubic Stone poured forth Blood and Water, the Word was lost, and despair and tribulation sat heavily upon us. It goes on to exhort the Masons: “Since Masonry has experienced such dire calamities it is our duty, Princes, by renewed labours, to retrieve our loss.”

The Reverend Walter Hannah justly comments: “For any Christian to declare that Masonry experienced ‘a dire calamity’ at the Crucifixion, or that Masons suffered a ‘loss’ at the triumphant death of our Saviour on the Cross which the Excellent and Perfect Princes of the Rose Croix of Heredom can by their own labour ‘retrieve’ seems not only heretical but actually blasphemous. The only interpretation which makes sense of this passage would appear to be that it is not the death of our Lord which is mourned, but the defeat of Satan.”<sup>152</sup>

Indeed, for “the eclipse of the Blazing Star” can only mean the defeat of Satan, while the Cubic Stone pouring forth Blood and Water can only mean the triumph of Christ on the Cross - Christ, Who is “the Stone that the builders rejected” which became “the chief Corner-Stone” of the New Testament Church (Matthew 21.42), having been rejected as “the wrong shape” by the

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<sup>149</sup> *La Vérité Israélite* (The Israelite Truth), 1861, vol. 5, p. 74; De Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>150</sup> G. Batault, *Le Problème Juif* (The Jewish Problem); De Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>151</sup> Rosicrucianism was founded as a separate order in Masonry in 1757 in Frankfurt, and counted among its leading adepts the charlatans Saint-Germain and Calioistro.

<sup>152</sup> Hannah, *Darkness Visible*, London: Augustine Press, 1952, p. 203.

leaders of Old Israel. As the Apostle Peter said to the Sanhedrin: "This [Christ] is the Stone which was rejected by you builders [Jews, Masons], which has become the chief Corner-Stone" (Acts 4.11). Any Temple which does not have Christ as the chief Corner-Stone is an abomination to God and will be destroyed by Him just as the Old Testament Temple was destroyed; for "whoever falls on this Stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to power" (Matthew 21.44). It is in the same Rosicrucian Degree that initiates are told to walk over the Cross of Christ...

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And so Masonry is revealed as a web of deceit whose outer layers are liberalism, scientism, and rationalism; whose inner layers are the overthrow of the existing world order in both Church and State; and whose innermost sanctum is the most explicit Antichristianity, the worship of Satan.

The first power in the West clearly to see the threat of Masonry to both Church and State was the Vatican. Catholicism made no radical distinction between English and French Masonry. In 1738 Masonry of all kinds was condemned by Pope Clement XII, in 1751 - by Benedict XIV, in 1821 - by Pius VII, in 1825 - by Leo XII, in 1829 - by Pius VIII, in 1832 and 1839 - by Gregory XVI, in 1846, 1864, 1865, 1873 and 1876 - by Pius IX, and in 1884 - by Leo XIII. The latter's bull, *Humanum Genus*, declared of the Freemasons: "Their ultimate aim is to uproot completely the whole religious and political order of the world... This will mean that the foundation and the laws of the new structure of society will be drawn from pure Naturalism." <sup>153</sup>

The Popes were right (in this, but not, of course, in many other things). And yet they were powerless to stem the tide of naturalism and unbelief that was sweeping Europe on the eve of the French Revolution. Nor could the revolution planned by the Grand Orient of Paris be prevented by the Vatican, for the simple reason that the Vatican had started the whole long process of apostasy herself: from Papism to Humanism to Protestantism, from Deism to the Enlightenment and Freemasonry, and on into the still more bloody and blasphemous future - it had all begun in Rome, when the first heretical Popes broke away from the Orthodox Church and the Byzantine Autocracy. The Papacy was therefore compromised; and if deliverance from the rapid growth

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<sup>153</sup> Count Leon de Poncins, *Freemasonry and the Vatican*, London: Britons Publishing Company, 1968, p. 31. The bull went on: "In the sphere of politics, the Naturalists lay down that all men have the same rights and that all are equal and alike in every respect; that everyone is by nature free and independent; that no one has the right to exercise authority over another; that it is an act of violence to demand of men obedience to any authority not emanating from themselves. All power is, therefore, in the free people. Those who exercise authority do so either by the mandate or the permission of the people, so that, when the popular will changes, rulers of States may lawfully be deposed even against their will. The source of all rights and civic duties is held to reside either in the multitude or in the ruling power in the State, provided that it has been constituted according to the new principles. They hold also that the State should not acknowledge God and that, out of the various forms of religion, there is no reason why one should be preferred to another. According to them, all should be on the same level..."

of Masonry was to come it could only come from the Orthodox Church and that Autocracy that now stood in the place of Byzantium – the Third Rome of Russia...

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Of course, the Masons did not advertise their Satanism. Instead, they attached themselves to the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, which was *indifferentism*, or what we would now call *ecumenism*. As religious passions cooled in Europe after the end of the religious wars, the Masons took the lead in preaching religious tolerance; and many were deceived into thinking that they could be Christians and Masons at the same time.

Ecumenism has deep roots in European paganism. In a sense the Roman Empire was ecumenist, since it embraced all religions so long as they did not constitute a threat to the worship of the State. Thus in the year 384, Symmachus, the pagan leader of the Roman Senate, wrote to the Emperor Theodosius the Great, appealing to him to be tolerant towards the pagans because, as he said, many paths led to God... He chose the wrong emperor to appeal to, because St. Theodosius was the most anti-ecumenist of Christians, who banned all pagan worship.

An excellent definition of the folly of ecumenism as understood by the Romans was given by St. Leo the Great in the fifth century: "Rome..., though it ruled almost all nations, was enthralled by the errors of them all, and seemed to itself to have fostered religion greatly, because it rejected no falsehood." It was only the Christians and the Jews who did not accept the Roman thesis that all religions are to be respected. They asserted, by contrast, that "all the gods of the pagans are demons" (Psalm 95.5).

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

"Starting from this point of view, he established an atheist dogma of unity, which has been called, after him, 'the atheist dogma of Apelles', with the notorious slogan: '... We don't have to examine the matter thoroughly, everyone can remain in his faith; for those who hope on the Crucified One,' he declared, 'will be saved so long as they are found to have good works.' Or, to put it more simply: 'it is not at all necessary to examine the matter – the

differences between us – but everyone should retain his convictions, because,’ he declared, ‘those who hope on the Crucified One will be saved so long as they are found to practise good works!...’ It would be superfluous to explain that this atheist dogma of Apelles was first formulated by the heretic Marcion himself (whom St. Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John, called ‘the first-born of Satan’) and is entirely alien to the Christians. We Christians love the heterodox and we long for a real and holy union with them – when they become sober and believe in an Orthodox manner in our Lord Jesus Christ, abandoning their heretical and mistaken beliefs and ‘their distorted image of Christ’ (see Eusebius, *History*, bk. 5, 13-15; Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Dodecabilon*, bk. 2, chapter 13, para. 3).<sup>154</sup>

Apelles’ dogma was condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, but reappeared at a later date. Thus the twelfth-century Arab philosopher and doctor Avveroes pleaded for a kind of union between Christians, Jews, Muslims and pagans that was avidly discussed in western circles.<sup>155</sup>

Again, the variant of Apelleanism known as uniatism – that is, the union between Roman Catholicism and other forms of Christianity – appeared after the schism of 1054. As Elder Augustine explains: “After the canonical cutting off of the Latins from the Church as a whole in 1054, that is, after their definitive schism and anathematisation, there was also the acceptance, or rather the application, of the atheist dogma of Apelles. The Catholic (=Orthodox) Church of Christ condemned the heresies of the Nestorians, Monophysites and Monothelites in the (Third, Fourth and Sixth) Ecumenical Councils. It anathematised the heretics and their heretical teachings and declared those who remained in the above-mentioned heresies to be excommunicate. The apostate ‘church’ of Rome took no account of the decisions of these Ecumenical Councils, but received into communion the unrepentant and condemned Nestorian, Monophysite and Monothelite heretics without any formality, with only the recognition of the Pope as Monarch of the Church. And not only the heretics, but also many others after this, were received into communion with only the recognition of the Monarchy of the blood-stained beast that presided in it.”<sup>156</sup>

However, Apelleanism in its modern, ecumenist variety is a product of the Protestant Reformation. The Protestants rejected the idea of the Church as “the pillar and ground of the Truth” (I Timothy 3.15) and vaunted the power of the individual mind to find the truth independently of any Church. This led to a proliferation of Protestant sects, which in turn led to attempts to achieve unity by agreeing on a minimum truth, which in turn led to the idea that all faiths are true “in their own way”. Thus the Anglican Settlement of the mid-sixteenth

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<sup>154</sup> Monk Augustine, “To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou”, *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites* (Mount Athos), 121, September-October, 1990, pp. 33-34, 1

<sup>155</sup> Monk Augustine, “To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou”, *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites*, 120, July-August, 1990, pp. 21-21.

<sup>156</sup> Monk Augustine, “To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou”, *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites*, 120, July-August, 1990, pp. 21-22.

century was a kind of Protestant Unia. The Anglican Church was allowed to retain some of the outward trappings of Catholicism, but without its central pivot, the papacy, which was replaced by obedience to the secular monarch as head of the Church. Being a politically motivated compromise from the beginning, Anglicanism has always been partial to ever more comprehensive schemes of inter-Church and inter-faith union, and many leaders of the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century were Anglicans.<sup>157</sup>

In 1614 there appeared the first modern ecumenist, George Kalixtos, a man famous, according to Elder Augustine, “for the breadth of his knowledge and his ‘eirenic’ spirit in tackling various questions, including ecclesiastical ones. Propelled by this spirit, he declared that there was no need of, nor did he even seek, the union of the various Churches... Nevertheless, he did demand their mutual recognition and the retaining of reciprocal ‘love’ through the reciprocal tolerance of the manifold differences of each ‘Church’...”<sup>158</sup>

As religious passions cooled round Europe at the end of the Thirty Years War, the Freemasons took the lead in preaching religious tolerance and indifference. The ecumenism of English Masonry was linked to the crisis of faith in the Anglican church in the early eighteenth century, and in particular to the loss of faith in the unique truth and saving power of Christianity.

Thus “in 1717,” wrote William Palmer, “a controversy arose on occasion of the writings of Hoadly, bishop of Bangor, in which he maintained that it was needless to believe in any particular creed, or to be united to any particular Church; and that sincerity, or our own persuasion of the correctness of our opinions (whether well or ill founded) is sufficient. These doctrines were evidently calculated to subvert the necessity of believing the articles of the Christian faith, and to justify all classes of schismatics or separatists from the Church. The convocation deemed these opinions so mischievous, that a committee was appointed to select propositions from Hoadly’s books, and to procure their censure; but before his trial could take place, the convocation was prorogued by an arbitrary exercise of the royal authority...”<sup>159</sup>

Hardly coincidentally, 1717, the year in which Hoadly’s heretical views were published, was the same year in which the Grand Lodge of England was founded. And we find a very similar doctrine enshrined in Dr. Anderson’s *Constitutions*: “Let a man’s religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the order, provided he believe in the glorious architect of heaven and earth.” In accordance with this principle, Jews were admitted to the Masonic lodges as early as 1724.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> V. Moss, “Ecucommunism”, *Living Orthodoxy*, September-October, 1989, vol. XI, N 5, pp. 13-18.

<sup>158</sup> Monk Augustine, “To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou”, *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites*, 121, September-October, 1990, pp. 33-34.

<sup>159</sup> Palmer, *A Compendious Ecclesiastical History*, New York: Stanford & Swords, 1850, p. 165.

<sup>160</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

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

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

A critical role in the development of ecumenism was played by Rousseau, who insisted that men should believe in a “civil religion” that combined belief in “the existence of an omnipotent, benevolent divinity that foresees and provides; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the punishment of sinners; the sanctity of the social contract and the law”.<sup>161</sup> If any citizen accepted these beliefs, but then “behaved as if he did not believe in them”, the punishment was death. As Jacques Barzun writes: “Rousseau reminds the reader that two-thirds of mankind are neither Christians nor Jews, nor Mohammedans, from which it follows that God cannot be the exclusive possession of any sect or people; all their ideas as to His demands and His judgements are imaginings. He asks only that we love Him and pursue the good. All else we know nothing about. That there should be quarrels and bloodshed about what we can never know is the greatest impiety.”<sup>162</sup>

Now Ecumenism may be described as religious egalitarianism, the doctrine that one religion is as good as any other. When combined, as it was in the lodges of Europe and America, with political and social egalitarianism, the doctrine that one *person* is as good as any other, it made for an explosive mixture – not

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<sup>161</sup> Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, London: Penguin Books, p. 286.

<sup>162</sup> Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 387.

just a philosophy, but a programme for revolutionary action. And this revolutionary potential of Masonry became evident very soon after it spread from England to the Continent...

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Although Freemasonry is best-known for its catastrophic influence on the French and Russian revolutions, its influence was hardly less profound on the American revolution and on the whole political and cultural development of America, where the great majority of Masonic lodges are to be found today.

Now there were essentially two kinds of American religion in the eighteenth century: on the one hand, the Masonry of the cultured leaders of the Revolution, who usually belonged to some institutional church but whose real temple was the lodge, and who, as Karen Armstrong writes, “experienced the revolution as a secular event”,<sup>163</sup> and on the other, the Protestantism of the lower classes.

The first Masonic lodges were established in Boston and Philadelphia by 1730. As we have seen, St. Andrew’s lodge in Boston became “a hotbed of sedition” at the time of the American revolution. And several of the leaders of the American revolution were Masons, including Benjamin Franklin (master of his lodge in Philadelphia), George Washington (master of Alexandria lodge No. 22), John Hancock, James Madison, James Monroe, Paul Revere, John Paul Jones and La Fayette. As Niall Ferguson points out, “At his first presidential inauguration on 30 April 1789, Washington swore the oath of office on the Bible of the St. John’s Masonic Lodge No. 1 of New York. The oath was administered by Robert Livingston, the Chancellor of New York (the State’s highest judicial office) and another Mason, indeed the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York. In 1794, Washington sat for the artist Joseph Williams, who painted him dressed in the full Masonic regalia the president had worn to level the cornerstone of the United States Capitol a year before. George Washington’s apron deserves to be as famous in the folklore of the American Revolution as Paul Revere’s ride; for it seems doubtful that either man would have had the influence he enjoyed had it not been for his membership of the Masonic brotherhood. Later historians have cast doubt on the Masonic origins of iconography of the Great Seal of the United States, globally recognizable since its incorporation in the one-dollar bill in 1955. Yet the all-seeing eye of Providence that crowns the unfinished pyramid on the obverse of the seal does closely resemble the eye that gazes out at us from Washington’s apron in nineteenth-century lithographs of the first president in Masonic attire...

“The evidence suggests that [Freemasonry] was at least as important as secular political rhetoric or religious doctrines in animating the men who made the revolution...”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, New York: Ballantine books, 2000, p. 81.

<sup>164</sup> Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, pp. 115, 111.

American Masonry was a mixture of English and French Masonry (Rousseau died two years before the American Declaration of Independence in 1776). Lafayette represented radical French Masonry, but there were also representatives of the more conservative English Masonry. Thus “of the 7 Provincial Grand Masters [in America], 5 supported George III, and condemned revolutionary agitation against the established authority.”<sup>165</sup> Moreover, many of the leaders of the British forces were Masons. The movement therefore had the property of spawning, as well as most of the leaders of the revolution, several of the leaders of the counter-revolution. A similar paradox existed in Europe. Thus the anti-revolutionary Comte d’Artois and King Gustavus Adolphus III of Sweden were Freemasons, while the ultra-revolutionary Danton and Robespierre were not; Napoleon was not a Freemason (although he protected it), while the reactionary generals who defeated him – Wellington, Blücher and Kutuzov – were.

One reason for this paradoxical phenomenon was the distinction, made in a famous speech by Sir Isaiah Berlin, between two concepts of freedom prevailing in eighteenth-century thought: freedom as a *negative* concept, that is, freedom *from* restrictions of various kinds, and freedom as a *positive* concept, that is, freedom *to* do certain things. English liberalism and the English Enlightenment, and therefore English Masonry, understood freedom in the negative sense; whereas the French Enlightenment and Rousseau and the Grand Orient of Paris tended to understand it in the positive – that is, revolutionary – sense. Many of those who joined the ranks of the Masons were lovers of freedom in the negative sense. But when some of them saw how the Rousseauist, positive concept of freedom led to Jacobinism and all the horrors of the French revolution, they turned sharply against it. Some still remained members of the lodge, but others broke all links with it. Thus the Duke of Wellington never entered a lodge after his membership lapsed in 1795, and in 1851 wrote that he “had no recollection of having been admitted a Freemason”.

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Masonry’s organization was decentralised and diffuse, and it had very broad criteria of membership. This meant that a very wide range of people could enter its ranks. But this precluded the degree of control and discipline that was essential for the attainment and, still more important, the retention of supreme political power.

Masonry was therefore the ideal kind of organization for the first stage in the revolutionary process, the dissemination of revolutionary ideas as quickly as possible through as large a proportion of the population as possible.

But if “the mystery of iniquity” was to achieve real political power, this first stage had to be succeeded by a second in which a more highly disciplined and

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<sup>165</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>166</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 161.



ruthless, Communist-style party took over the leadership. Such a take-over took place in both the French and the Russian revolutions. Thus in France the Masonic constitutionalists, such as Mirabeau and Lafayette, were pushed aside by the anti-democratic, anti-constitutionalist Jacobins or “Illuminati”; while in the Russian revolution, the Masonic constitutionalists, such as Guchkov and Lvov, were pushed aside by the anti-constitutionalist Lenin and Stalin (the Mason Kerensky was a link between the two).

The American Revolution was unique in that the first stage has not been succeeded by the second – until today... And we may speculate that this fact is owing in part to the continuing influence of lower-class Revivalism on American political culture. For Revivalism is highly emotional, even anarchical; it is not conducive to the secretive, disciplined, hierarchical discipline of Illuminati-like movements. Moreover, the American colonies, however much they might complain about the British, were not subject to any severe kind of hierarchical control, whether in Church or State.

Indeed, the United States may be called the world’s first Masonic state. And this dark beginning hangs over it still. Thus in 1976 Fr. Seraphim Rose wrote: "In America this is the ‘bicentennial’ year – and we feel it as especially dark and ominous. Each nation has its guardian angel – thus also each pagan or masonic festival must have its special demon! We in America are grateful for our freedom, but we know the dark masonic origins of our American ideology and tremble for the future when the meaning of the occult symbols of our government (visible in our currency, for example – the unfinished pyramid, the all-seeing eye, the number 13 everywhere, the *novus ordo seclorum*) will begin to be fulfilled. Even without a Communist coup, our future is dark; ‘democracy,’ after all, only prepared the way for Communism, and spiritually they come from the same source and prepare for the same future..."

But now, in 2020, it looks as if the Masonic experiment of American statehood is finally unravelling as the first phase of the revolution gives way to the second. Anarchy rules, and as in the Russian revolution, even the police, the last guardians of law and order, are being eliminated – that is, either killed outright, or neutered by timid, liberal-minded state governors, or forced to bow the knee – literally – to the Black Lives Matter movement, which is led by trained Marxists. Superficially, it would seem as if the President of the United States still stands against this red tide; and there is little doubt that he *wants* to resist it. But his power and authority have been thoroughly undermined by the fact, for which there is substantial evidence, that he has been deeply compromised by his business links with the Russians, and even that he was caught in a classic honey-trap and is being held as a hostage by them. Thus the Russian-American historian Yury Felshtinsky wrote on the eve of Trump’s electoral victory in 2016: “The behavior of Trump in relation to Russia fits into the schema of an agent’s behavior. I shall immediately qualify myself: I have no proofs that he is an agent of Putin. But the whole of his behavior points exclusively to this schema. Agent Trump is not allowed to criticise Putin; he is not allowed to criticise the foreign policy of Russia; he is not allowed to raise

the question of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea; he is not allowed to encourage the strengthening of NATO and opposition to Russian aggression in Europe; he is not allowed to criticise Russian interference in the civil war in Syria.

“Trump is allowed to criticise American policy in relation to Syria and Iraq; to call for the weakening of NATO and the American withdrawal from Europe, Japan and the Muslim East; to call for the smoothing of relations with Russia and the restructuring (in reality, the worsening) of relations with Mexico, on the one hand, and with China, on the other.

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

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

Since those words were written, much more evidence has accrued that Trump is the agent of Putin (if not in domestic, at any rate in foreign policy), and that even the election process in the United States is increasingly influenced by Russian bots, leading us to the conclusion that the KGB/FSB has taken over control of the American revolution at the highest level – the level of the Presidency. If this hypothesis proves to be true, then it points to the deepest and highest penetration yet into the fortress of the West by the Russian revolution, and the possible fulfilment of the prophecy of Elder Ignaty of Harbin (+1958): *“What began in Russia will end in America.”*

Finally, let us not forget the religious, Jewish aspect of the revolution. Under Trump, with the active intervention of his Jewish son-in-law, and with the connivance of the ecumenist religious elites of America and the formerly Christian world, Israel has been given the green light to move its capital to Jerusalem, and to carry forward its plans to take over the Temple Mount and rebuild the Temple. A Sanhedrin, a priesthood and even a red heifer have been prepared...

God will foil this plan, as He foiled it in the time of Julian the Apostate. In any case, we do not have to wait for the enthronement of the Antichrist: the western world, and America at its head, is now falling to the second, communist phase of the revolution, the reign of the collective Antichrist that has already devastated Holy Russia. “So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near – at the doors!” (Matthew 24.33).

*June 10/23, 2020.  
Holy New Martyrs of China.*

## 9. THE AMERICAN DREAM

By the 1830s, the French revolution, in spite of its radicalism, had not attained its revolutionary aims. It required further revolutions – in 1830, in 1848 and even in 1871 – to remove from it the last remnants of Bonapartism and monarchism and reduce it to some kind of stable republicanism and democratism (not to mention atheism). America, by contrast, was more advanced than any other major European country from a liberal point of view. Her economic system was more purely and successfully capitalist than any other's, and her government more democratic, with a by now stable party system; for the supposed scourge of monarchism had been more effectively removed from America than from any other country. So from the leftist point of view, America was, as Hegel put it, "the land of the future, where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the world's history shall reveal itself. It is a land of desire for all those who are weary of the historical lumber room of Europe."<sup>167</sup>

That the old world of Europe should project its desires onto the New World across the ocean was natural enough. And America certainly played a major part in tidying up Europe's lumber room in the mid-twentieth century. But the idea that America, whose genes, both physical and cultural, were largely European, could escape the inheritance of Europe's original sin, her rejection of the Orthodox faith and the Orthodox autocracy, was a fantasy; and no amount of dreaming about her "manifest destiny", or speculation about the workings of the "World Spirit", could eradicate the contradictions in her historical path...

Nevertheless, disillusion with America lay far in the future; and in this period "the American dream" was a common fantasy. That the republic, as Hugh Brogan writes, "was now a democracy, was patent to all. But it was a democracy of a particular kind. Every white male adult citizen was, or could be, involved (the percentage of the electorate voting in 1840 was 80.2 – a proportion to be surpassed only in 1860 and 1870); a legal revolution could occur every four years. A permanent contest had sprung up spontaneously between the Ins and the Outs: whatever the good luck or the good management of the ruling party, there would always be an opposition ready to fight. The spoils system [whereby a new incoming government necessitated the removal and replacement of all existing officials] gave it something to hope for; the prospect of another election gave it something to hope for; and though a party might be defeated nationally, it would have great reserves of strength in the states, cities and counties which it still controlled – for no party victory has ever been absolutely complete – and, throughout the history of the American party system, local victory has always seemed, to some politicians, more important than a national one. The contest was by no means wholly cynical. Whigs and Democrats stood for significantly different economic programmes, and

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<sup>167</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 576.

although both parties tried to appeal to all parts of the country equally, they did not sink all their beliefs in order to do so. The Democrats stuck by the doctrines they had inherited from Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. The federal government, they believed, should be weak, the states strong. There should be no national bank, nor paper money, but instead a currency of gold and silver, and an independent Treasury where federal revenues, derived from the sales of public lands rather than the tariff (the Democrats were a party of free-traders), could be kept safe from aristocratic speculators and corrupters. The Whigs were equally loyal to the memory of Hamilton's reports on manufactures and banking, and to Henry Clay's American System, which contradicted the notions of the Democracy at every point. The Whigs wanted to build up American national strength by building up the economy; if that meant creating a class of rich men, so much the better. But they were not undemocratic, in the political sense: they enjoyed the game too much for that; nor were they illiberal or reactionary as to social policy. This was a great era of experimental reform, and of noisy egalitarianism. The Whigs, or some of them at any rate, espoused both. Seward, for example, began his career as a leader of the so-called Anti-Masonic Party in New York state, which in the early thirties suspected the Freemasons of dreadful conspiracies against democracy; and as governor of New York he showed himself a human supporter of prison reform." <sup>168</sup>

The failure of the Anti-Masonic Party was perhaps the greatest failure of the American Republic, and doomed it to eventual disaster. For God's blessing could not be on the state whose main religion after Protestantism (there were more Masonic lodges in America than in any other country) was anti-Christian Masonry, whose blasphemies and plotting against lawful authority was to destroy the Russian Empire in 1917. But leaving aside this most fundamental defect, American democracy had others, which even some democrats detected.

Thus the New Yorker Thomas Whitney declared: "I take direct issue with democracy. If democracy implies universal suffrage, or the right of all men to take part in the control of the State without regard to the intelligence, the morals, or the principles of the man, I am no democrat... As soon would I place my person and property at the mercy of an infuriated mob... as place the liberties of my country in the hands of an ignorant, superstitious, and vacillating populace." <sup>169</sup> Lord Macaulay wrote in a similar vein to the American Henry Stephens Randall: "I have not the smallest doubt that if we had a purely democratic government here... either the poor would plunder the rich, and civilization would perish, or order and prosperity would be saved by a strong military government, and liberty would perish." <sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA*, London: Penguin, 2019, p. 278.

<sup>169</sup> Whitney, in David Reynolds, *America, Empire of Liberty*, London: Penguin, 2010, pp. 171-172.

<sup>170</sup> Macaulay, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 611.

A fine critique of the American dream was written by the French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville. He wrote in his *Democracy in America* (1835) that the Russians and the Anglo-Americans seemed each “to be summoned by a secret plan of Providence one day to hold in its hands the destinies of half the world”.<sup>171</sup>

He was famously right about that. So, on the assumption that he shared the prejudice of almost all educated westerners that Russia was an evil despotism, how did he rate the world’s only democratic superpower-to-be?

The short answer is: not as highly as one might expect... “Following his famous visit to America,” writes Stephen Holt, “he suggested that democracy, if unchecked by religion and other forms of association, could well be characterized by self-destructive individualism, oppressive egalitarianism and an anxious desire to acquire, or be provided with, material well being.”<sup>172</sup>

An important defect of American democracy, Tocqueville thought, was what he called “the tyranny of the majority”: “In the United States, as in every country where the people rules, it is the majority which governs in the name of the people... If ever liberty dies in America, we shall have to blame it on the omnipotence of the majority which will have reduced the minorities to despair and compelled them to make an appeal to physical force. We shall then see anarchy, but it will come as the consequence of despotism.”<sup>173</sup>

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

“The idea that the majority has a right based on enlightenment to govern society was brought to the United States by its first inhabitants; and this idea, which would of itself be enough to create a free nation, has by now passed into mores and affects even the smallest habits of life...”<sup>174</sup>

The worst aspect of this freedom was its extreme intolerance of any minority opinion. “I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. The majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion; within these barriers an author may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them.”<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Bk. 1, pt. 2, ch. 10.

<sup>172</sup> Holt, review of Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* in *History Today*, May 2001, p. 58.

<sup>173</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Bk. 1, pt. 2, chs. 1,7.

<sup>174</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, New York: Fontana, 1968, vol. I, pp. 305-306.

<sup>175</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

This contributed to a general “dumbing down” of culture, although this cultivated Frenchman admitted it also prevented complete brutalization. “Few pleasures are either very refined or very coarse, and highly polished manners are as uncommon as great brutality of tastes. Neither men of great learning nor extremely ignorant communities are to be met with; genius becomes more rare, information more diffused. There is less perfection, but more abundance in all the productions of the arts.”<sup>176</sup>

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

“The consequences of this state of affairs are fate-laden and dangerous for the future...”<sup>177</sup>

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

“As the majority is the only power whom it is important to please, all its projects are taken up with great ardour; but as soon as its attention is turned elsewhere, all these efforts cease; whereas in free European states, where the administrative authority has an independent existence and an assured position, the legislator’s wishes continue to be executed even when he is occupied by other matters.”<sup>178</sup>

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

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

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

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<sup>176</sup> Tocqueville, *On the Effects of Future Democratization*, 1840.

<sup>177</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 306-307.

<sup>178</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 307-308.

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

“Consequently, when I refuse to obey an unjust law, I by no means deny the majority’s right to give orders; I only appeal from the sovereignty of the people to the sovereignty of the human race.”<sup>179</sup>

In a believing age, instead of “the sovereignty of the human race”, the phrase would have been: “the sovereignty of God” or “the authority of the Church”. But after this obeisance to the atheist temper of his age, Tocqueville does in fact invoke the sovereignty of God. For the essential fact is that the majority – even the majority of the human race – can be wrong, and that only God is infallible. Therefore “omnipotence in itself seems a bad and dangerous thing. I think that its exercise is beyond man’s strength, whoever he be, and that only God can be omnipotent without danger because His wisdom and justice are always equal to His power. So there is no power on earth in itself so worthy of respect or vested with such a sacred right that I would wish to let it act without control and dominate without obstacles. So when I see the right and capacity to do all given to any authority whatsoever, whether it be called people or king, democracy or aristocracy, and whether the scene of action is a monarchy or a republic, I say: the germ of tyranny is there, and I will go look for other laws under which to live.

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

“When a man or a party suffers an injustice in the United States, to whom can he turn? To public opinion? That is what forms the majority. To the legislative body? It represents the majority and obeys it blindly. To the executive power? It is appointed by the majority and serves as its passive instrument. To the police? They are nothing but the majority under arms. A jury? The jury is the majority vested with the right to pronounce judgement; even the judges in certain states are elected by the majority. So, however, iniquitous or unreasonable the measure which hurts you, you must submit.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Tocqueville, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-310.

<sup>180</sup> Tocqueville, *op. cit.*, pp. 311- 313. “I am guided by Alexis de Tocqueville,” writes Charles C. Camosy, “in my assessment of the course of liberal democracy, who observed that as democracy becomes ‘more itself,’ it becomes ‘less itself.’ Thus, the end station of democracy, according to Tocqueville, was despotism” (“Why Individualist Liberalism Wins, and the Catholic Side Loses”, *Crux*, December 19, 2017).

Towards the end of his great work, Tocqueville describes in a remarkably prescient manner how he sees democracy changing into a benevolent yet sinister despotism: "I ask myself in what form will despotism reappear in the world. I see an immense agglomeration of people, all equal and alike, each of them restlessly active in getting for himself petty and vulgar pleasures which fill his whole being. Each of them, left to himself, is stranger to the fate of all the others. A vast, protecting power overshadows them. This power alone is responsible for securing their satisfaction and for watching over their fates. The power is absolute, concerned with every detail, smooth in operation, takes account of the future, and is not harsh... The power wants all citizens to be happy, provided that happiness is their sole aim. It works willingly for their well-being, but insists upon being the source of this well-being and the sole judge of what it should consist. It gives them security, foresees and supplies their needs, facilitates their pleasures, conducts the principal business of their lives, manages their industries, divides their properties and regulates their inheritances and, in short, saves them from the trouble of thinking and the difficulties of living.

"This tutelary power is continuously at work to render less useful and more infrequent the use of free-will; the sphere of liberty of decision is thus restricted more and more until every citizen loses, as it were, the control of himself. Equality has conditioned men for all these transformations and prepared to accept such things and even to welcome them as beneficial.

"After having brought the individual, stage by stage, into its mighty bonds and moulded him to its wishes, the sovereign extends its tentacles over the community as a whole, and covers the surface of society with a network of little rules, complicated, detailed and uniform, but from beneath which the more original minds and the more vigorous personalities can find no way of extricating themselves and rising above the crowd. The sovereign does not break the wills of the subjects; it enervates them, bends them to its purpose, directs them, rarely forcing them to act, but continually preventing them from action; it does not destroy, but merely prevents things from coming to life; it never tyrannizes, but it hampers, dumps down, constricts, suffocates, and at the last reduces every nation to the level of timid and industrious animals of whom the Government is the shepherd...

"This kind of regulated servitude, well regulated, placid and gentle, could be combined – more easily than one would think possible – with the forms of liberty and could even establish itself under the shadow of the sovereignty of the people." <sup>181</sup>

The democratic government Tocqueville had in mind here as preventing the tyranny of the majority was probably that of England, with its rule by "the king in parliament", its respect for custom and a strong aristocratic element. England's aristocratic element did indeed protect the English from some of the

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<sup>181</sup> De Tocqueville, *op. cit.*



excesses of democracy for a time. This elicited the comment of Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev that parliamentary government was possible only in England.

In this context, and in the light of our modern experience of democracy, it will be useful to examine the estimate of Tocqueville given by his fellow Frenchman and fierce anti-communist, Jean-François Revel: "Tocqueville the visionary depicted with stunning precision the coming ascension of the omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient state that twentieth-century man knows so well; the state as protector, entrepreneur, educator; the physician-state, helpful and predatory, tyrant and guardian, economist, journalist, moralist, shipper, trader, advertiser, banker, father and jailer all at once. The state ransoms and the state subsidizes. It settles without violence into a wheedling, meticulous despotism that no monarchy, no tyranny, no political authority of the past had the means to achieve. Its power borders on the absolute partly because it is scarcely felt, having increased by imperceptible stages at the wish of its subjects, who turn to it instead of to each other. In these pages by Tocqueville we find the germ both of George Orwell's 1984 and David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*."

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

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

"This sort of behavior splinters democratic societies into separate groups, each battling for advantage and caring little for the interests of others or society as a whole. Public opinion, instead of being united by uniform thinking, is fragmented into a variety of cultures that can be so different in tastes, ways of living, attitudes and language that they understand each other only dimly, if at

all. They coexist but do not mingle. Public opinion in today's democracies forms an archipelago, not a continent. Each island in the chain ranks its own distinctiveness above membership in a national group and even higher above its association with a group of democratic nations.

"In one sense, we do live in a mass era as residents of a 'planetary village' where manners and fashions blend. But, paradoxically, we also live in an age of the triumph of minorities, of a juxtaposition of widely differing attitudes. While it is obvious that the passion for equality, identified by Tocqueville as the drive wheel of democracy, generates uniformity, let's not forget that democracy also rests on a passion for liberty, which fosters diversity, fragmentation, unorthodoxy. Plato, democracy's shrewdest enemy, saw this when he compared it to a motley cloak splashed with many colours. In a democracy, he said, everyone claims the right to live as he chooses [*Republic* 8], so that ways of living multiply and jostle each other. To Aristotle, too, liberty was the basic principle of democracy. He broke this down into two tenets: 'for all to rule and be ruled in turn' and 'a man should live as he likes'. In American democracy, the right to do one's own thing is as much or more cherished than equality."<sup>182</sup>

More cherished even than the Christianity that they so prided themselves on, which exhorted men to be "free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice" (*I Peter* 2.16)...

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This brings us to the question of American religion and the secular religion of Americanness. "In America," wrote Sir Roger Scruton in 2002, "religion has been a vital force in building the nation. The initial unity of faith among the Pilgrim Fathers rapidly disintegrated, however, and while religious worship remains an important feature of the American experience, freedom of conscience has been guaranteed from the beginning by the Bill of Rights. This does not mean that America is a secular nation, or that religion has no part to play in establishing the legitimacy of American institutions. It means, rather, that all the many religions of America are bound to acknowledge the authority of the territorial law, and that each renounces the right to intrude on the claims of the state. Furthermore, these religions come under pressure to divert their emotional currents into the common flow of patriotic sentiment: the God of the American sects speaks with an American accent.

"The patriotism that upholds the nation-state may embellish itself with far-reaching and even metaphysical ideas like the theories of race and culture that derive from Herder, Fichte and the German romantics. But it might just as easily rest content with a kind of mute sense of belonging – an inarticulate experience of neighbourliness – founded in the recognition that this place where we live is ours. This is the patriotism of the village, of the rural

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<sup>182</sup> Revel, *How Democracies Perish*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985, pp. 13-15.

community, and also of the city street, and it has been a vital force in the building of modern America. Indeed, in the last analysis, national identity, like territorial jurisdiction, is an outgrowth of the experience of a common home.

“Of course, if people turn their backs on one another, live behind closed doors in suburban isolation, then this sense of neighbourliness dwindles. But it can also be restored through the ‘little platoons’ described by Burke and recognized by Tocqueville as the true lifeblood of America. By joining clubs and societies, by forming teams, troupes, and competitions, by acquiring sociable hobbies and outgoing modes of entertainment, people come to feel that they and their neighbours belong together, and this ‘belonging’ has more importance, in times of emergency, than any private difference in matters of religion or family life. Indeed, freedom of association has an inherent tendency to generate territorial loyalties and so to displace religion from the public to the private realm...”<sup>183</sup>

This may have been true in the nineteenth century, or even in some parts in the 1950s, but it feels outdated today, in the twenty-first century, when social cohesiveness has declined drastically, political divides have become much deeper and fiercer, and religion has been not only banished to the private realm, but been invaded and trampled on. True cohesiveness does not exist without the true faith, which the Americans never did possess (although they gave refuge to many immigrants having the true faith). Hence the sage words of President John Adams: “We have no government capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion... Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people.”

Indeed, we can generalize this conclusion: no constitution can survive the onslaught of unbelief and immorality from the mass of the people. Constitutional “safeguards” are powerless to do anything but delay the eventual collapse of the impious state into anarchy or despotism. Therefore the best “constitution” is that which is united to the true religion and represents its natural political expression....

*June 11/24, 2019.*

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<sup>183</sup> Scruton, *The Rest and the West*, London: Continuum, 2002, pp. 47-49.

## 10. THE COLD WAR

A cold war had existed between the Communist East and the Capitalist West since the early 1920s, interrupted only briefly during the war years 1941-45 and more recently between 1991 and 2007. Such a war had been declared on all “normal” governments by Lenin in 1917, and Stalin had faithfully followed the Leninist line throughout his “reign” except for the short period of the Popular Fronts in the late 1930s and the wartime alliance of 1941-45. So 1948-49 simply marked a return to the norm with regard to the relationship of normal governments to the profoundly abnormal anti-state of the Soviet Union. Only now, thanks to the firmness and generosity of the American leaders (self-interested it also was, but this did not mean it was ungenerous), Western Europe was on the road to economic recovery without the temptations of communism and fascism that had so weakened it in the 1930s, while Eastern Europe, more firmly enslaved than ever, was by the 1960s falling further and further behind economically. Thus was the advantage gained by Stalin after his victory in the Second World War gradually whittled away...

The Stalinists ruled not only through military suppression and secret police infiltration, but also through propaganda – lies – on a scale and with a sophistication hitherto unseen. The Soviets were the masters of what George Orwell in 1984 called “doublespeak”: “To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it.”

For the time being, the Soviet and East European communist parties and their secret services and subservient justice systems kept a lid on potential dissidence.

But many young people knew that they were being lied to. “A communist education,” writes Mark Mazower, “far from brainwashing them, had left them with a deep mistrust of ideology and critical of a political system which treated them ‘like babies’ and deprived them of information. Unlike their elders, they did not compare their lives with the pre-war or war years but rather with their contemporaries in the West.

“They developed lifestyles which alarmed their parents and the Party – based around a private world of transistor radios, cassette players and the dream of Western affluence and autonomy. While some young idealists were attracted to the reform communism of the New Left or aimed a Maoist critique at the tired cadres around them, far more ‘had embraced materialism with a vengeance’. They tended to be both nationalistic (i.e. anti-Russian) and ‘cosmopolitan’. The Romanian politburo were not alone in criticizing their youth for their ‘servitude to the cultural and scientific achievements of the

capitalist countries'. Parties around the region sponsored endless teams of sociologists to research the 'youth problem'."<sup>184</sup>

However, silent disillusion in the "Second World" homelands of Communism was balanced by hordes of new converts in the Third and even the First Worlds. And so the West faltered in the late 1960s and 1970s while the Soviets recovered, only to surrender finally in the late 1980s.

Harari summarizes these swings in the pendulum as follows: "The Soviet Union entered the war as an isolated communist pariah. It emerged as one of the two global superpowers and the leader of an expanding international bloc. By 1949 eastern Europe became a Soviet satellite, the Chinese communist party had won the Chinese Civil War, and the United States was gripped by anti-communist hysteria. Revolutionary and anti-colonial movements throughout the world looked longingly towards Moscow and Beijing, while liberalism became identified with the racist European empires. As these empires collapsed they were usually replaced by either military dictatorships or socialist regimes, not liberal democracies. In 1956 the Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, confidently boasted to the liberal West that 'Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you!'

"Khrushchev sincerely believed this, as did increasing numbers of Third World leaders and First World intellectuals. In the 1960s and 1970s the word 'liberal' became a term of abuse in many Western universities. North America and western Europe experienced growing social unrest as radical left-wing movements strove to undermine the liberal order. Students in Cambridge, the Sorbonne and the People's Republic of Berkeley thumbed through Chairman Mao's Little Red Book and hung Che Guevara's heroic portrait over their beds. In 1968 the wave crested with the outbreak of protests and riots all over the Western world. Mexican security forces killed dozens of students in the notorious Tlatelolco Massacre, the students in Rome fought the Italian police in the so-called Battle of Valle Giulia, and the assassination of Martin Luther King sparked days of riots and protests in more than a hundred American cities. In May students took over the streets of Paris, President de Gaulle fled to a French military base in Germany, and well-to-do French citizens trembled in their beds, having guillotine nightmares.

"By 1970 the world contained 130 independent countries, but only thirty of these were liberal democracies, most of which were crammed into the north-western corner of Europe. India was the only important Third World country that committed to the liberal path after securing its independence, but even India distanced itself from the Western bloc and leaned towards the Soviets.

"In 1975 the liberal camp suffered its most humiliating defeat of all: the Vietnam War ended with the North Vietnamese David overcoming the American Goliath. In quick succession communism took over South Vietnam,

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<sup>184</sup> Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999,

Laos and Cambodia. On 17 April 1975 the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, fell to the Khmer Rouge. Two weeks later people all over the world watched on TV as helicopters evacuated the last Yankees from the rooftop of the American Embassy in Saigon. Many were certain that the American Empire was falling. Before anyone could say 'domino theory', in June Indira Gandhi proclaimed the Emergency in India, and it seemed that the world's largest democracy was on its way to becoming yet another socialist dictatorship.

"Liberal democracy increasingly looked like an exclusive club for ageing white imperialists who had little to offer the rest of the world or even to their own youth. Washington hailed itself as the leader of the free world, but most of its allies were either authoritarian kings (such as King Khaled of Saudi Arabia, King Hassan of Morocco and the Persian shah) or military dictators (such as the Greek colonels, General Pinochet in Chile, General Franco in Spain, General Park in South Korea, General Geisel in Brazil and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan).

"Despite the support of all these kings and generals, militarily the Warsaw Pact had a huge numerical superiority over NATO. In order to reach parity in conventional armaments, Western countries would probably have had to scrap liberal democracy and the free market, and become totalitarian states on a permanent war footing. Liberal democracy was saved only by nuclear weapons. NATO adopted the MAD doctrine (Mutual Assured Destruction), according to which even conventional Soviet attacks would be answered by an all-out nuclear strike. 'If you attack us,' threatened the liberals, 'we will make sure nobody comes out alive.' Behind this monstrous shield liberal democracy and the free market managed to hold out in their last bastions, and Westerners got to enjoy sex, drugs and rock and roll, as well as washing machines, refrigerators and televisions. Without nukes there would have been no Beatles, no Woodstock and no overflowing supermarkets. But in the mid-1970s it seemed that nuclear weapons notwithstanding, the future belonged to socialism...

"And then everything changed. Liberal democracy crawled out of history's dustbin, cleaned itself up and conquered the world. The supermarket proved to be far stronger than the gulag. The blitz-krieg began in southern Europe where the authoritarian regimes in Greece, Spain and Portugal collapsed, giving way to democratic governments. In 1977 Indira Gandhi ended the Emergency, re-establishing democracy in India. During the 1980s military dictatorships in East Asia and Latin America were replaced by democratic governments in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Taiwan and South Korea. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the liberal wave turned into a veritable tsunami, sweeping away the mighty Soviet empire and raising expectations of the coming end of history. After decades of defeats and setbacks, liberalism won a decisive victory in the Cold War, emerging triumphant from the humanist wars of religion, albeit a bit worse for wear..."<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus*, London: Vintage, 2017, pp. 3-7-311.

And yet this is an over-simplification. It is true that of the three forms of humanism – liberal, socialist and evolutionary (fascist) – that fought for supremacy in the period 1914 to 1991, it was the liberal form that emerged triumphant in 1991. But its main rival from 1945, socialist humanism, was never defeated in war, and in the absence of a real refutation of humanism itself (something that liberal humanism by its very nature is unable to provide), there was nothing to prevent socialism re-emerging in new and subtler guises – as, for example, in the European Union. Nor was there anything to prevent the loser in 1991 from mutating into a new kind of evolutionary humanism – as, for example, in the present-day Russian Federation. Nor is liberal humanism itself immune from corruption and mutation in a socialist direction, as it seems to be doing at the time of writing (2020). A root-and-branch elimination of humanism can only come about through a revival of the true faith, which did not take place in this period...

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As this summary demonstrates, the Cold War involved almost no shots fired in anger between the United States and the Soviet Union except in the air over Korea. It was conducted in other countries through proxy armies. As such, it recalls the imperialist rivalries between European countries such as Britain and France in the nineteenth century, in which one country would try and steal a march on another, and create alliances against the other, but which did not lead to direct warfare between the two.

There are indeed similarities, but the differences are more important. The British and French may have believed in the glories of their own civilization – but these civilizational benefits to the colonies were secondary to the commercial gains to themselves. The Americans and the Soviets, on the other hand, were truly fighting for the liberal and socialist varieties of humanism respectively; their war was ideological in a way that the wars of imperial conquest were not – which is not to say that other motives were not also involved.

Moreover, the dynamics of the two anti-imperialist empires were very different. The old European empires, with the blessing of America, proceeded to free their former colonies, hoping to install in their place the ideology of liberal democracy – with varied success, as we have seen. The Soviets, on the other hand, not only did not liberate any part of the former Russian empire, but imposed a yoke far harsher than the nineteenth century empires on Eastern Europe, taking care that the same totalitarian cruelty should reign there as in the “mother country”.

As Jean-François Revel wrote in 1985, “Since 1945 the two imperialisms have moved in exactly the opposite directions. Since the Second World War, the major ex-colonial powers that make up today’s capitalist world have abandoned, willingly or not, the territory they had annexed over the centuries.

Spain long ago lost its vast American possessions. Since then, the former overseas holdings of Britain, Holland, France, Belgium and Portugal have become a crowd of independent nations. In some cases, decolonization went ahead with speed and intelligence, in others slowly and stupidly, with terrible carnage, but in the end it was done everywhere. It is interesting to note that the colonial powers that tried to resist the trend were disapproved of by the other capitalist countries; they were isolated even among their allies and forced to give in. Just how much real independence many of these new Third World states have is a matter of considerable debate. The fact remains, however, that aspiration and accession to independence on the part of any group with even the slightest claim to statehood is one of the great postwar historical phenomena.

“At a time, then, when territorial annexation, once considered a legitimate reward for military superiority, has given way to peoples’ right to self-determination and national status, only the Soviet Union continues to grow by means of armed conquest. In the 1940-80 period of decolonization, when the old empires were restoring independence to or conferring it on the territories they had subjugated over the centuries, the Soviet Union was moving the other way, appropriating a number of foreign countries by trick or by force.

“I would hesitate to weary the reader with a list he should be able to find in the encyclopedias and history books if it were not that most of these reference books, reflecting Europe’s cultural Finlandization, shamelessly gloss over the brilliant achievements of Soviet expansionism.

“By what right, for example, did the USSR cling after the war to the countries Germany ceded to it as payment for its neutrality under the Hitler-Stalin treaty sharing out a dismembered Europe? This is how the Soviets acquired the Baltic states, eastern Poland, southern Finland and part of Romania (Bessarabia and southern Bukovina). I grant that it was Germany that later broke the treaty and invaded the Soviet Union, which, it is worth recalling, would have liked nothing better than to go on enjoying its fruitful cooperation with the Nazis. Involuntarily and oh how regrettably, Moscow had no choice but to switch camps. Indeed, it *was switched* by Hitler.

“Was this any reason for the democracies not to reconsider what Hitler had bestowed on Stalin? Fighting alongside the Allies in the second phase of the war of course gave USSR the right, as it did to all the victors, to recover its own territory intact. But this did not authorize it to expand, as it alone did, at the expense of other martyred countries and certainly not to keep the proceeds of its collusion with the Nazis. Yet not only did the Allies fail to challenge these ill-gotten acquisitions, but they even threw in a few gifts, such as East Prussia, Ruthenia (a part of Czechoslovakia), the Kurile Islands, and the southern part of Sakhalin Island (in the Sea of Okhotsk, north of Japan). No popular vote, no referendum or plebiscite was organized or even contemplated through which to ask all these Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians, Letts, Romanians, Slovaks, Germans and others if they wanted to become Soviet subjects. The Allies shut



their eyes firmly to these annexations, a disconcerting application of the principles guiding their destruction of nazism. Absorption of these countries into Soviet territory, so prodigiously contrary to the principles of that period of decolonization, revived the practices of a monarchist Europe that died two centuries ago. It constituted what may be called the first wave of imperialism and the first zone of national annexation.

“The second wave led to the creation of a second imperial zone, that of the satellite countries.

“Just how Eastern and Central Europe were subjugated is too well known to need repeating here. The technique used in this form of colonialism is to set up the façade of an ostensibly independent state. Administration of this state is entrusted to loyal nationals who function as provincial governors and who are allowed only a few minor departures from the Soviet system, as long as they don’t tamper with its essentials. In practice, the democracies very quickly recognized the Soviet Union’s right to quell by force any disturbances arising out of demands for genuine independence in the European satellites. In other words, they soon agreed to view the European satellites as appendices to Soviet territory, a de facto situation that the Helsinki pact would legitimize in 1975.

“The third wave and third zone of Soviet territorial conquest covered more distant countries that have been annexed or subjected to Soviet control since 1960. Some of these countries, including Cuba and Vietnam, are satellites in the strict sense; another, South Yemen, has been working since 1982 to destabilize the neighboring state of North Yemen. For, driving by unflagging effort, the Soviet advance never stops.

“Then came the African satellites: Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Benin, Guinea, and other, lesser prey, often colonized by mercenaries from other satellites – Cubans or East Germans. These are more fragile protectorates, subject to the sort of accidents that caused the fall in Equatorial Guinea (the former Spanish Guinea) of dictator Francisco Macias Nguema, who, with the help of Soviet advisers, had exterminated or exiled a good third of his country’s population in only a few years.

“Fragile though they are, these distant protectorates must nevertheless be considered satellites insofar as their policies, armies, police, transport, and diplomacy are in the hands of Soviets or Soviet agents...”<sup>186</sup>

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It is fashionable now to consider Communism and Capitalism as equally evil. In their long-term effects, such a case could be argued, based on the fact that both ideologies have their roots in the same anti-Christian philosophy of the Enlightenment, so that both ultimately lead to the Antichrist. But in the

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<sup>186</sup> Revel, op. cit., pp. 56-58.

short- and medium-term – that is, in the period of the Cold War – the idea of a moral equivalence between them is manifestly false, even absurd.

The historian Neil Ferguson has argued this point well in his voluminous biography of Henry Kissinger: “The Cold War, which was the defining event of Henry Kissinger’s two careers as a scholar and as a policy-maker, took many forms. It was a nuclear arms race that on more than one occasion came close to turning into a devastating thermonuclear war. It was also, in some respects, a contest between two great empires, an American and a Russian, which sent their legions all around the world, though they seldom met face-to-face. It was a competition between two economic systems, capitalist and socialist, symbolized by Nixon’s ‘kitchen debate’ with Khrushchev in Moscow in 1959. It was a great if deadly game between intelligence agencies, glamorized in the novels of Ian Fleming, more accurately recorded in those of John le Carré. It was a cultural battle, in which chattering professors, touring jazz bands, and defecting ballet dancers played their parts. Yet at its root, the Cold War was a struggle between two rival ideologies, the theories of the Enlightenment as encapsulated in the American Constitution, and the theories of Marx and Lenin [also based on the (Rousseauist) Enlightenment] as articulated by successive Soviet leaders. Only one of these ideologies was intent, as a matter of theoretical principle, on struggle. And only one of these states was wholly unconstrained by the rule of law.

“The mass murderers of the Cold War were not to be found in Washington, much less in the capitals of U.S. allies in Western Europe. According to the estimates in the *Black Book of Communism*, the ‘grand total of victims of Communism was between 85 and 100 million’ for the twentieth century as a whole. Mao alone, as Frank Dikötter has shown, accounted for tens of millions, 2 million between 1949 and 1951, another 3 million by the end of the 1950s, a staggering 45 million in the man-made famine known as the ‘Great Leap Forward’, yet more in the mayhem of the Cultural Revolution. According to the lowest estimate, the total number of Soviet citizens who lost their lives as a direct result of Stalin’s policies was more than 20 million, a quarter of them in the years after World War II. Even the less bloodthirsty regimes of Eastern Europe killed and imprisoned their citizens on a shocking scale. In the Soviet Union, 2.75 million people were in the Gulag at Stalin’s death. The numbers were greatly reduced thereafter, but until the very end of the Soviet system its inhabitants lived in the knowledge that there was nothing but their own guile to protect them from an arbitrary and corrupt state. These stark and incontrovertible facts make a mockery of the efforts of the so-called revisionist historians, beginning with William Appleman Williams, to assert a moral equivalence between the Soviet Union and the United States in the Cold War.

“All Communist regimes everywhere, without exception, were merciless in their treatment of class enemies, from the North Korea of the Kims to the North Vietnam of Ho Chi Minh, from the Ethiopia of Mengistu Haile Mariam to the Angola of Agostinho Neto. Pol Pot was the worst of them all, but even Castro’s Cuba was no workers’ paradise. And Communist regimes were aggressive, too,

overtly invading country after country during the Cold War. Through which foreign cities did American tanks drive in 1956, when Soviet tanks crushed resistance in Budapest? In 1968, when Soviet armor rolled into Prague, U.S. tanks were in Saigon and Hue, their commanders little suspecting that within less than six months they would be defending those cities against a massive North Vietnamese offensive. Did South Korea invade North Korea? Did South Vietnam invade North Vietnam?

“Moreover, we now know from the secret documents brought to the West by Vasili Mitrokhin just how extensive and ruthless the KGB’s system of international espionage and subversion was. In the global Cold War, inextricably entangled as it was with the fall of the European empires, the Soviet Union nearly always made the first move, leaving the United States to retaliate where it could. That retaliation took many ugly forms, no doubt. Graham Greene had it right when he mocked *The Quiet American*, whose talk of a ‘third force’ sounded just like imperialism to everyone else. But in terms of both economic growth and political freedom, it was always better for ordinary people and their children if the United States won. The burden of proof is therefore on the critics of U.S. policy to show that a policy of nonintervention – of the sort that had been adopted by the Western powers when the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and fascist Italy took sides in the Spanish Civil War, and again when the Germans demanded the breakup of Czechoslovakia – would have produced better results. As Kissinger pointed out to Oriana Fallaci, ‘the history of things that didn’t happen’ needs to be considered before we may pass any judgement on the history of things that did happen. We need to consider not only the consequences of what American governments did during the Cold War, but also the probable consequences of the different policies that might have been adopted.

“What if the United States had never adopted George Kennan’s policy of containment but had opted again for isolationism after 1945? What, conversely, if the United States had adopted a more aggressive strategy aimed at ‘rolling back’ Soviet gains, at the risk of precipitating a nuclear war? Both alternatives had their advocates at the time, just as there were advocates of both less and more forceful policies during Kissinger’s time of office. Anyone who presumes to condemn what decision-makers did in this or that location must be able to argue plausibly that their preferred alternative policy would have had fewer American and non-American casualties and no large second-order effects in other parts of the world...”<sup>187</sup>

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On December 25, 1991, while the Americans were celebrating Western Christmas, the communist red flag came down for the last time over the Kremlin and the red, white and blue of Russia, which had also been Russia’s pre-revolutionary flag, was raised in its stead. A few days later, President Bush,

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<sup>187</sup> Ferguson, *Kissinger. 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, pp. 21-24.

in his State of the Union address, “referred to the implosion of the Soviet Union in a year that had seen ‘changes of almost biblical proportions,’ declared that ‘by the grace of God, America won the Cold War,’ and announced the dawning of a new world order. ‘A world once divided into two armed camps,’ Bush told the joint session of the US Senate and House of Representatives, ‘now recognizes one sole and preeminent power, the United States of America.’ The audience exploded in applause...”<sup>188</sup>

For the third time in seventy years the United States bestrode the globe like a colossus. All three victories – those of 1918, 1945 and 1991 – can plausibly be claimed to have been victories of American democracy over one or another species of totalitarianism. But the differences between them were important. In 1918 the proto-totalitarian state of Germany had been defeated, but it had been the Europeans who had borne the main brunt of the war, while Germany herself had been neither occupied, nor purged of her totalitarian spirit, which went on to grow in fierceness under Hitler, necessitating a second world war. Moreover, a new totalitarian empire, that of Soviet Russia, had been growing with equal speed and ferocity... In 1945 America’s share in the final victory was much larger, and the demons of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan were finally exorcised. But Germany’s loss had been the Soviet Union’s gain; and that empire was now at the height of its powers and more than ever dangerous, making the Cold War inevitable (the only alternative was a hot war, which thankfully was avoided). In that war, America’s share in the victory was larger still: the other western powers had contributed a little, but not much by comparison. Moreover, by 1991 none of the old totalitarian powers was left standing and only China, which had nipped the democratic virus in the bud on Tiananmen Square, appeared as a possible future rival of the all-conquering American colossus.

But there were disturbing resemblances between 1918 and 1991. Once again, the defeated power had not been occupied, nor its totalitarian spirit exorcised. As in 1918, so in 1991, the defeated power felt that it had been “stabbed in the back”, betrayed by foreign and domestic enemies. To make things worse, it was still a nuclear power. In December, 1994 Russia, Ukraine, the United States and the United Kingdom signed “the Budapest Memorandum”, thereby guaranteeing the territorial integrity of Ukraine, Belarus’ and Kazakhstan in exchange for giving their nuclear weapons to Russia. This solved the problem of nuclear proliferation that had so worried the Americans. But it gave Russia still more power to blackmail its neighbours. And, as events in 2014 were to prove, Ukraine’s territorial guarantees (like Czechoslovakia’s in 1938) were not worth the paper they were written on...

Scott D. Sagan writes: “In 1947, the American diplomat George Kennan outlined a strategy for the ‘patient but firm and vigilant containment’ of the

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<sup>188</sup> Serhii Plokhy, *The Last Empire. The Final Days of the Soviet Union*, London: Oneworld Publications, 2015, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

Soviet Union... He predicted that such a policy would eventually lead to 'either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.' He was right."<sup>189</sup>

But was he really right? The Soviet Union "mellowed" in its later years in that it killed and tortured fewer people; but from the perspective of 2020 it is difficult to say that Sovietism has really disappeared. In fact, the evil spirit laid in it at its very foundation has not only not disappeared, but appears to have mutated into a new, but no less virulent power. Nor could it be otherwise. For evil spirits do not "mellow", nor can they be "contained" indefinitely: if they are not to break out again; they must be *exorcised*...

The Soviet Union appeared to be dead... But could "the Long War", in Philip Bobbitt's phrase, between democracy and totalitarianism really be over? Was there not a final battle still to be fought, whose consequences this time would surely be a nuclear holocaust wiping out most of humanity? As President Bush soberly noted, the prospects for such a war had dramatically receded, but they had not gone away completely... They had not gone away, fundamentally, because of the wrath of man, on the one hand: those still imbued with the spirit of Soviet Russia were burning to avenge its defeat in the Cold War. And on the other hand, because the wrath of God had not been expiated through repentance for the terrible, unprecedented sins of the Soviet period...

In the euphoria of this great, but incomplete and inevitably temporary triumph over evil, it was necessary to recall the words of the Apocalypse concerning the red beast: "And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the earth marvelled and followed the beast" (Revelation 13.3). The beast has been wounded, but it is not yet dead...

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The point is: final victory can never be defined in purely material terms, either in its causes or in its essence. In our materialist age, it is tempting to see economic or technological factors as the causes of victory in war. Certainly, there is no denying that technological factors have been important in past wars. We think of the "Greek fire" used so successfully by the Byzantines against the Persians and Muslims; and the horsemanship displayed by the Mongols against the Russians in the thirteenth century; and the long bow used by the English against the French in the Hundred Years' War; and the heavy cannon invented by the Hungarian Urban and equally successfully used by the Muslims against the Byzantines in 1453; and the copper plating giving extra speed to the British ships in the Napoleonic Wars; and the railways used so effectively by Bismarck against the French at Sedan; and the Maxim gun used by the British to slaughter the Sudanese at Omdurman; and the German use of tanks in World War Two; and the British use of radar and Turing's computer to crack the German enigma code in the same war...

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<sup>189</sup> Sagan, "The Korean Missile Crisis", *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2017, p. 82.

Nevertheless, material factors are never as important as spiritual or psychological ones – morale, patriotism and faith. For “some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God” (Psalms 19.7). The Vietnamese defeated the Americans largely through their superior discipline and morale, in spite of being far inferior in technological and economic resources. And in general American patriotism flagged in the 1970s, allowing the Soviets to gain a series of victories in the Third World. But the West recovered confidence under Reagan and Thatcher, and in the late 1980s the Soviets began to lose faith in their own system...

Material advantages create the opportunity, and morale consolidates that advantage, or even reverses the material deficit. But final victory in war is attained only in two ways: either by completely destroying the enemy, or by converting him to your side. There is no third way: a victory attained in any other way is no real victory, but only a battle won, which may end in final victory – or in defeat. The victory of the West over the Soviet Union in the Cold War in 1989-91 was one such inconclusive victory, a battle won that may yet end in final defeat in the long war that began in 1917, but has not come to an end yet...

The victories won by annihilation of the enemy are many. One of the most famous in ancient times was Rome’s victory over Carthage. The Romans so respected their enemies, who had dealt them their worst ever defeat at Carrhae that they did not stop at reversing that defeat and defeating them at Zama in 202 B.C., but declared: *Carthago delenda est*, “Carthage must be destroyed”. And Carthage was destroyed – completely – in 146 B.C. It never rose again.

Another victory by annihilation was the Allies’ conquest of Germany in 1945. The victory over the Kaiser’s Germany in 1918 had been incomplete. No Allied army stepped foot in Germany; its economic and war-making potential, though damaged, was not destroyed. Most important, the Germans did not *feel* defeated; they felt they had been “stabbed in the back”. Reparations were insufficient to repay the losses suffered by the Western powers, especially France. By the time Hitler came to power, they had been remitted completely. So the still living snake was able to rise again because the seat of its power – its head – had not been crushed. That took place only in 1945, when Nazi power was crushed utterly, as was its capital. This was a real “twilight of the gods”. The false gods of German nationalism had been truly destroyed. And the population was converted to a new god – democracy.

Victories by conversion are much rarer and, of course, much greater from a moral point of view. Such a victory was the triumph of the Anglo-Saxon King Alfred the Great over the pagan Danes under King Guthrum in 878. Alfred defeated the Danes in battle at Ethandune; but, knowing that his victory could not be final, and that his enemy still occupied the whole of East Anglia, he offered him something quite different: baptism into the Orthodox Church (Alfred became Guthrum’s sponsor), followed by a twelve-day baptismal feast

and the present of the whole of East Anglia as a baptismal gift. Nor was this a superficial charade. The Danes remained Christian, and were soon fully integrated into Orthodox England...

In the Cold War the enemy was neither crushed nor converted. It was a very long war, beginning soon after World War Two, in which many millions died around the globe. And yet the main antagonists – the NATO allies and the Soviet Union – never fired a single shot against each other in anger (if we exclude the shooting down of the U-2 plane in 1960), preferring instead to fight by proxy and by the threat of mutually assured destruction. Nor did the supposed victors ever set foot on Soviet soil. The Communist enemy simply melted away, changing its name and its ideology at the same time...

Not having occupied the communist homeland, the victors were able to make only a feeble attempt to convert them. By contrast, the Germans after 1945 were subjected to a denazification programme which took time to produce the necessary good fruits – real repentance for the horrors of Nazism – but eventually did produce them. Moreover, they were given a vast sum of money in the Marshall Plan that helped them rebuild their economy and become again a prosperous and peaceful nation. But there was no decommunization programme in Eastern Europe after 1991, and the people, after making a fitful start at repentance for the unprecedented crimes of the Soviet period after the fall of communism, now appear to be indulging in an orgy of self-justification. Not a single Communist leader or Gulag commandant was brought to trial for his crimes.

As for economic aid, there was some of it, but – with the exception of the aid given to the former East Germany by West Germany – it came nowhere near the levels needed or asked for – and so generously provided by the Americans in 1948. And so in 1999 Yeltsin appointed the KGB director Vladimir Putin as his successor. The KGB was back, and with the striving, conscious or unconscious, to return to Soviet despotism, albeit in a modernized form.

Putin has openly declared his intent to avenge Russia's defeat in the Cold War, just as Hitler set out to avenge Germany's defeat in World War One. He is able to say this because Communism was not truly defeated in the Cold War. Its leaders were not tried and punished, its ideology not exposed for the fraud it undoubtedly is.

As for Putin's new – or rather, old – ideology of Fascist-style nationalism, it is even admired in the West, even by many Orthodox Christians, who mistake his Communist Christianity mixed with neo-Soviet patriotism for the real thing and regard Putin himself as "the new Constantine". Putin's secret service agents have retained their stranglehold over the Orthodox Church and Russia's foreign embassies and very many of her emigres. Thus the Orthodox Church under Patriarch Cyril (KGB "Agent Mikhailov") glorifies the victory of Stalin and militant atheism in 1945 as something to be celebrated on a par with Christ's Resurrection!

Just as the incomplete and mismanaged victory celebrated at Versailles in 1919 led to the rise of an avenging angel in the form of Hitler, so the incomplete and mismanaged victory over Communism in 1991 has given birth to another avenging angel in the form of Putin, whose murderous desires only a truly useless idiot can fail to see. But he knows that he can achieve final victory only by completely *annihilating* his opponent. That is why he gives full rein to his propagandist, Alexander Dugin (who likes to say: "Putin is *all!*"), when he calls for "the closing down of America" as "our religious duty". Dmitri Kiselev, another Putinist propagandist, appeared to rejoice on TV when speaking about the reduction of the West to ashes. These men know that their and their master's goal – final victory over the West – can only be achieved by the West's complete destruction. Putin himself has made it quite clear that he is prepared to use the nuclear option if he feels threatened – although it is he, of course, that is the real threatener. The only way in which he could achieve final victory over the West without an annihilatory war is by destroying its last values and the last remnants of its will to live through his hidden support for Cultural Marxism, that deadly mutant of Leninist Marxism which is well on the way to destroying America today (in 2020), so bringing about the fulfillment of the prophecy of Elder Ignaty of Harbin: *What began in Russia will end in America*.

All this leads us to believe that the Cold War was only a phase of a long, still-uncompleted struggle, the final resolution of which is still in the future. And it is by no means certain who will win. For it is possible to win all the battles in a war while losing the last, ultimately decisive one... Even if Communism in its new, Fascist mutation loses the final battle of this coming war, a deep and long-lasting peace is guaranteed only if the whole Enlightenment philosophy that gave birth not only to Communism, but also to Fascism and Democracy, is renounced by both victors and losers. The only teaching which does not simply oppose this triple-headed monster but *conquers* and *destroys* it is the Orthodox Christian Faith. For "this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith" (I John 5.5). It was the renunciation of that faith by Russia in 1917 that set in motion the long cycle of bloody and inconclusive wars that we have witnessed over the last century. Only the resurrection of that faith, and the true repentance of Russia, will bring the final victory and true peace on earth, God's good will among men...

*November 1/14, 2020.*



## 11. THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN POLITICAL THEOLOGY

The foundation of the Church's political theology was laid by the Lord Himself, Who accepted the Roman political order as legitimate, and exhorted His disciples to obey it as long as it did not compel them to disobey the Law of God: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22.21). Although Christians, being in essence free-born sons of the Heavenly King, were inwardly not subject to the yoke of earthly kings, nevertheless this yoke was to be accepted voluntarily "lest we should offend them" (Matthew 17.27). For, as St. Theophan the Recluse writes, "The Lord paid the required temple tribute and kept all other practices, both temple-related and civic. He fulfilled this and taught the Apostles to do the same, and the Apostles in turn passed this same law on to all Christians. Only the spirit of life was made new; externally all remained as it had been, except what was clearly against the will of God – for instance, participating in sacrifices to idols, etc. Then Christianity gained the upper hand, displaced all the former practices, and established its own."<sup>190</sup>

Following the Lord's teaching, the holy Apostle Peter writes: "Be subject for the Lord's sake, to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and praise those who do right... Fear God. Honour the king." (I Peter 2.13, 17) And the holy Apostle Paul commands Christians to give thanks for the emperor "and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2.1-2). For it is precisely the emperor's ability to maintain law and order, "a quiet and peaceful life", which makes him so important for the Church. And so "let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power that is not from God; the powers that be are ordained by God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and those who resist shall receive for themselves damnation" (Romans 13.1-2).<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> St. Theophan, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2010, p. 167.

<sup>191</sup> The Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside Russia wrote that "the Apostles Peter and Paul required of the Christians of their time submission to the Roman authority, even though it later persecuted the followers of Christ. The Romans by nature were distinguished by their moral valor, for which, according to the words of Augustine in his book *On the City of God*, the Lord magnified and glorified them. To the genius of the Romans humanity owes the working out of a more perfect law, which was the foundation of its famous governmental structure, by which it subjected the world to itself to an even greater degree than by its renowned sword. Under the shadow of the Roman eagle many tribes and nations prospered, enjoying peace and free internal self-government. Respect and tolerance for all religion were so great in Rome that they were at first also extended to recently engendered Christianity. It is sufficient to remember that the Roman procurator Pilate tried to defend Christ the Savior from the malice of the Jews, pointing out His innocence and finding nothing blameworthy in the doctrine He preached. During his many evangelical travels, which brought him into contact with the inhabitants of foreign lands, the Apostle Paul, as a Roman citizen, appealed for the protection of Roman law for defense against both the Jews and the pagans. And, of course, he

It is worth pondering on what a remarkable doctrine this was if we take into account the (at least intermittent) hostility of the Roman emperors to the Christians and their extreme wealth and moral corruption. The Apostles' secular lords were the emperors of the Julio-Flavian dynasty that began with Augustus and contained such monsters as Caligula and Nero. Rome's cruelty and corruption was symbolized above all by the gladiatorial contests and spectacles held in the Flavian Amphitheatre, later called the Colosseum because of "a colossal golden statue 35 metres high that stood just beside it. The statue had been commissioned by Emperor Nero, whom it depicted, quite naked, until his successor Vespasian had the head removed and replaced by that of the sun god Helios. The towering Flavian Amphitheatre was by far the largest of its kind in the Empire: a dazzling feat of architecture that could be emptied of its 50,000 spectators in minutes and which had water fountains at every level. It was a source of immense pride to the Romans"<sup>192</sup> – and of immense suffering to the many Christians who were martyred there. "To this day the Colosseum remains the world's most concentrated killing ground, and it is estimated that between a quarter and half a million people had their lives abruptly ended in the arena, along with several million animals large and small, common and rare. Species became extinct in its service..."<sup>193</sup>

And yet the Christians honoured and obeyed the monsters of depravity that so many of the Roman emperors were, in obedience to the apostolic command. The only exception was when they were asked to worship idols...

The question arises: was the apostle saying that *all* political authority is established by God, whatever its attitude to God Himself? Or are some authorities not established by God, but only *allowed to exist* by Him, so that they should not be obeyed as being in fact established by Satan? The patristic consensus is that the apostle was *not* saying that everything that calls itself an authority is blessed by God, but that authority is *in principle* good and God-established and therefore should be obeyed – because, as he goes on to say, political power is *in general* wielded in order to punish evil-doers and protect public order. Roman power, he says, is established by God, and therefore is a true political authority that must be obeyed in all its commands that do not directly contradict the commandments of God Himself. Hence the veneration and obedience that the early Christians displayed towards it.

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asked that his case be judged by Caesar, who, according to tradition, found him to be innocent of what he was accused of only later, after his return to Rome from Spain, did he undergo martyrdom there.

"The persecution of Christians never permeated the Roman system, and was a matter of the personal initiative of individual emperors, who saw in the wide dissemination of the new Faith a danger for the state religion, and also for the order of the State, until one of them, St. Constantine, finally understood that they really did not know what they were doing, and laid his sword and sceptre at the footstool of the Cross of Christ..." (*Encyclical Letter of the Council of Russian Bishops Abroad to the Russian Orthodox Flock*, 23 March, 1933; *Living Orthodoxy*, #131, vol. XXII, N 5, September-October, 2001, pp. 13-14)

<sup>192</sup> Matthew Kneale, *Rome. A History in Seven Sackings*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2017, p. 42.

<sup>193</sup> Kneale, op. cit., p. 44.

Thus St. John Chrysostom asks: "Is every ruler elected by God to the throne he occupies? Is every emperor, king, and prince chosen by rule? If so, is every law and decree promulgated by a ruler to be regarded as good, and thus to be obeyed without question? The answer to all these questions is, no. God has ordained that every society should have rulers, whose task it is to maintain order, so that people may live in peace. God allows rulers to employ soldiers, whose task it is to capture and imprison those who violate social order.

"Thus God will bless and guide any ruler and any soldier who acts according to these principles. But many rulers abuse their authority by amassing huge wealth for themselves at the expense of their people, by unjustly punishing those who dare to speak against their evil, and by making unjust wars against neighbours. Such rulers have not been elected by God, but rather have usurped the position which a righteous ruler should occupy. And if their laws are wrong, we should not obey them. The supreme authority in all matters is not the law of the land, but the law of God; and if one conflicts with the other, we must obey God's law."<sup>194</sup>

This "theology of politics", enjoining the veneration of, and obedience to, political authorities so long as they do not compel transgression of the Law of God, is found in the earliest Fathers. Thus St. Clement of Rome writes in the first century: "Give us, O Master, peace and concord, even as Thou didst give it to our forefathers when they called devoutly upon Thee in faith and truth. And make us obedient to Thine own almighty and all-holy name, and to all who have the rule and governance over us upon the earth. For it is Thou, O Lord, Who in Thy supreme and ineffable might hast given them their sovereign authority; to the intent that we, acknowledging the glory and honour Thou hast bestowed upon them, should show them all submission. Grant to them health and peace, that they may exercise without offence the sovereignty which Thou hast given them."<sup>195</sup>

Again, in the second century St. Justin the Martyr wrote: "We worship God only, but in other things we gladly serve you, acknowledging you as emperors and rulers of men and women, and praying that with your imperial power you may also be found to possess sound judgement..."<sup>196</sup> Similarly, the holy Martyr Apollonius (+c. 185) expressed the classic Christian attitude towards the emperor thus: "With all Christians I offer a pure and unbloody sacrifice to almighty God, the Lord of heaven and earth and of all that breathes, a sacrifice of prayer especially on behalf of the spiritual and rational images that have been disposed by God's providence to rule over the earth. Wherefore obeying a just precept we pray daily to God, Who dwells in the heavens, on behalf of Commodus who is our ruler in this world, for we are well aware that he rules over the earth by nothing else but the will of the invincible God Who

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<sup>194</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *On Living Simply*.

<sup>195</sup> St. Clement of Rome, *To the Corinthians*, 60.

<sup>196</sup> St. Justin the Martyr, *First Apology*, 17.

comprehends all things.”<sup>197</sup> Again, Athenagoras of Athens wrote to Marcus Aurelius that Christians pray for the authorities, so that the son should inherit the kingdom from his father and that the power of the Caesars should be continually extended and confirmed, and that everyone should submit to it. And St. Theophilus of Antioch wrote: “Therefore I would rather venerate the king than your gods – venerate, not worship him, but pray for him... Praying in this way, you fulfil the will of God. For the law of God says: ‘My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not mix with rebels’ (Proverbs 24.21).”<sup>198</sup>

Tertullian (+ c. 240) employed a similar argument. “Anticipating Eusebius, he insisted that Christians rendered ‘such reverential homage as is lawful for us and good for him; regarding him as the human being next to God who from God has received all his power, and is less than God alone.’ Christians, Tertullian argued, were even perfectly willing to offer sacrifice on behalf of the emperor, though it had to be a Christian sacrifice: ‘We therefore sacrifice for the emperor’s safety, but to our God and his, and after the manner God has enjoined, in simple prayer.’ Pagan sacrifices are useless, the ‘food of devils’. Christians appeal to God, praying ‘for the imperial well-being, as those who seek it at the hands of Him who is able to bestow it.’.. Christians do just what the imperial cult demands, though in his own way.”<sup>199</sup> In other words, the only legitimate sacrifice a Christian can make to the emperor is the sacrifice of prayer on his behalf; for he rules, not as a god, but “by the will of God”. So the Christians by no means refused to give to Caesar what was his. Indeed, the emperor was, in Tertullian’s words, “more truly ours (than yours) because he was put into power by our God”, which is why the Christians prayed that he should have “a long life, a safe empire, a quiet home, strong armies, a faithful senate, honest subjects, a world at peace”.<sup>200</sup>

As for the pagan sacrifice to the emperor himself, Hieromartyr Hippolytus of Rome (+235) wrote: “Believers in God must not be hypocritical, nor fear people invested in authority, with the exception of those cases when some evil deed is committed [Romans 13.1-4]. On the contrary, if the leaders, having in mind their faith in God, force them to do something contrary to this faith, then it is better for them to die than to carry out the command of the leaders. After all, when the apostle teaches submission to ‘all the powers that be’ (Romans 13.1), he was not saying that we should renounce our faith and the Divine commandments, and indifferently carry out everything that people tell us to do; but that we, while fearing the authorities, should do nothing evil and that we should not deserve punishment from them as some evildoers (Romans 13.4). That is why he says: ‘The servant of God is an avenger of [those who do] evil’ (I Peter 2.14-20; Romans 13.4). And so? ‘Do you not want to fear the

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<sup>197</sup> Athenagoras, *Representation for the Christians*, in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 93.

<sup>198</sup> St. Theophilus, *Three Books to Autolycus*.

<sup>199</sup> Peter J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2010, p. 281.

<sup>200</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 33.1.

authorities? Do good and you will have praise from him; but if you do evil, fear, for he does not bear the sword without reason' (Romans 13.4)."<sup>201</sup>

This attitude was well exemplified by St. Maurice and his Christian legion in Agaunum. Like many martyrs before them, they did not refuse to fight in the armies of the pagan Roman emperors against the pagans. But they refused to destroy a village composed of fellow-Christians. For "we are your soldiers, yes," said Maurice, "but we are also the soldiers of God. To you, we owe the dues of military service – but to Him the purity of our souls."<sup>202</sup>

So even the persecuting emperors were recognized as having legitimate authority: it was only when their commands contradicted the Law of God that they were defied. And even then, there is no hint of physical rebellion against the powers that be among pre-Constantinian Christians. Their attitude to Diocletian was like that of the Prophet Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar: his power is from God, even if he sometimes uses it against God. And this attitude bore good fruit: Nebuchadnezzar threw the Holy Three Children into the furnace, but he later repented and praised the God of Daniel.

However, the mention of Daniel reminds us that there was a somewhat different and darker attitude to Rome among the Christian writers. Following Daniel's prophecy of the four beasts (Daniel 7), Rome was seen as the last of four kingdoms – the others were Babylon, Persia and Macedon – that would finally be destroyed in the last days by the Kingdom of Christ. According to this tradition, the pagan absolutist kings who persecuted the people of God were not legitimate rulers but tyrants. Nebuchadnezzar, for example, is called "tyrant" in some liturgical texts: "Caught and held fast by love for the King of all, the Children despised the impious threats of the tyrant in his boundless fury."<sup>203</sup>

Now the distinction between the true monarch, *basileus*, and the unlawful usurper, rebel or tyrant, *tyrannis*, was not new. Aristotle wrote: "There is a third kind of tyranny, which is the most typical form and is the counterpart to the perfect monarchy. This tyranny is just that arbitrary power of an individual which is responsible to no-one and governs all alike, whether equals or betters, with a view to its own advantage, not to that of its subjects and therefore against their will."<sup>204</sup>

King Solomon wrote: "Fear the Lord and the king, and do not mix with rebels" (Proverbs 24.21). After Solomon's death, there was a rebellion against his legitimate successor, Rehoboam, by Jeroboam, the founder of the northern kingdom of Israel. And although the Prophets Elijah and Elisha lived and worked mainly in the northern kingdom, they always made clear their loyalty

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<sup>201</sup> St. Hippolytus, in Fomin, S. & Fomina, T. *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. I, p. 56.

<sup>202</sup> Eucherius of Lyons, *The Passion of the Martyrs*.

<sup>203</sup> *Festal Menaion*, The Nativity of Christ, Mattins, Canon, Canticle Seven, second irmos.

<sup>204</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, IV, 10.

to the legitimate kings of Judah over the usurping kings of Israel. Thus when both kings, in a rare moment of alliance, approached the Prophet Elisha for his advice, he said to the king of Israel: "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother... As the Lord of hosts lives, Whom I serve, were it not that I have regard for Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would neither look at you, nor see you." (II Kings 3.13, 14)...

If Rehoboam and Nebuchadnezzar were tyrants, then it was logical to see tyranny also in the Roman emperors who persecuted the Church. Thus some early interpreters saw in one or other of the evil symbolic figures of the Revelation of St. John the Theologian, which was written during the persecution of Domitian (c. 92), references to Roman power.

Indeed, what contemporary Christian could not fail to think of Rome when reading about that great city, symbolically called a whore and Babylon, who sits on seven hills (Rome is situated on seven hills), who is "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth", that is, the multitude of pagan cults that all found refuge in Rome, "a woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17.5, 6)? Thus Hieromartyr Victorinus, Bishop of Petau, wrote that the whore's downfall was "the ruin of great Babylon, that is, of the city of Rome."<sup>205</sup> In other words, Rome, according to this tradition, was seen, not as a lawful monarchy or the blueprint of a future Christian autocracy, but as a bloody and blasphemous despotism, in the tradition of the ancient despotisms that derived from Nimrod's Babylon.<sup>206</sup>

This tradition became more popular as the history of pagan Rome reached its bloody climax in the early fourth century. For the Church was now threatened, not with a merely local persecution by local madmen, but with a determined attempt to destroy it completely at the hands of men who considered themselves gods and whose personal lives were often extraordinarily corrupt. The empire concentrated in itself, and especially in its capital city, all the demons of all the pagan cults together with all the moral depravity and cruelty and rabid antichristianity which those cults encouraged. How could such a kingdom be established by God? Was it not that tyrannical beast of which Scripture said that it was established by the devil (Revelation 13.2)? And so the image of the Empire was ambiguous for the early Christians: it was both a true kingdom, an anti-type of God's Kingdom, and a tyranny, a forerunner of the kingdom of the Antichrist that would be wiped out at the Second Coming of Christ Himself... Nevertheless, it was the more optimistic view of Rome that prevailed. And even during the persecution of Diocletian, when the Church was threatened with extinction, the Christians never rebelled against the empire, but only against its unlawful demands. And in reward for

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<sup>205</sup> Hieromartyr Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*.

<sup>206</sup> Some saw in I Peter 5.13 a similar identification of Rome with Babylon, but this is doubtful. The Babylon referred to there is probably Babylon in Egypt, from where St. Peter was writing his epistle. However, there can be no doubt that for John's first readers the image of Babylon would have reminded them in the first place of Rome under Nero and Domitian.

this patience, the Lord finally broke the crust of ancient pagan despotism, bringing to birth a new creature designed specifically for the spreading of the Faith throughout the world – Christian, or New Rome...<sup>207</sup>

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“The first millennium BC,” writes Harari, “witnessed the appearance of three potential universal orders, whose devotees could for the first time imagine the entire world and the entire human race as a single unit governed by a single set of laws. Everyone was ‘us’, at least potentially. There was no longer ‘them’. The first universal order to appear was economic: the monetary order. The second universal order to appear was political: the imperial order. The third universal order was religious: the order of universal religions such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

“Merchants, conquerors and prophets were the first people who managed to transcend the binary division, ‘us vs. them’, and foresee the potential unity of mankind. For the merchants, the entire world was a single market and all humans were potential customers. They tried to establish an economic order that would apply to all, everywhere. For the conquerors, the entire world was a single empire and all humans were potential subjects, and for prophets, the entire world held a single truth and all humans were potential believers. They too tried to establish an order that would be applicable for everyone everywhere.

“During the last three millennia, people made more and more ambitious attempts to realize that global vision...”<sup>208</sup>

The first state that realized this vision – that is, provided a potentially *global* economic, political and religious order – was the Roman empire in the time of Augustus. By the time of St. Constantine the vast empire was united economically by the Roman *denarius*, politically by the Roman emperor, culturally by Hellenism and religiously by Christianity. The fact that this empire did not in fact rule over the whole world is less important than the fact that it aspired to that, thereby containing within itself the potential for a *godly globalization*, the only possible *real* unity of the human race.

When the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of heaven, was born as a man on earth, He was immediately enrolled as a citizen of a state of the new-born Roman empire. For “in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2.1), and Christ, too, went to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be registered for taxation in the universal empire ruled by Augustus. As Bishop Nikolai Velimirovič writes: “In those days, Caesar Augustus was ruling the land. His supreme rule over the whole earth is an

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<sup>207</sup> Fr. Michael Azkoul, *The Teachings of the Orthodox Church*, Buena Vista, Co.: Dormition Skete publications, 1986, part I, p. 110.

<sup>208</sup> Harari, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

image of God's supreme rule over both worlds: the spiritual and the material. The many-headed dragon of power, that had, from the beginning of sin, brought decay to the peoples of the earth, was left with only one head. All known nations and tribes on earth were subject to Augustus' power, directly or indirectly, whether only by sending him their tribute or by acknowledging Roman gods and Roman officials. The struggle for power had died down for a time, and the sole power over the whole world was entirely in the hands of Caesar Augustus. There was neither man nor god over him; he himself was proclaimed a god, and men made sacrifices to his image: slaughtered animals and unclean things. From the foundation of the world, no mortal man had risen to greater power than Caesar Augustus, who ruled without rival over the whole world; and indeed, from the foundation of the world, man, created by the living God, had never fallen to such a depth of nothingness and despair as then, when the Roman Emperor began to be deified – and he a man with all man's frailties and weaknesses, with the life-span of a willow tree, with a stomach, intestines, liver and kidneys that were, after a few decades, to turn into a worm-infested stench and lifeless dust; a man, the statues of whom, raised during his reign, were to outlast his life, his power and his reign.

“In this time of external peace and internal despair, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race and Renewer of all creation, was born...”<sup>209</sup>

This coincidence of the birth of the King of kings with the birth of the Roman Empire pointed, for many of the Holy Fathers and Church writers, to a certain special mission of the Roman empire, as if the Empire, being born at the same time as Christ, was Divinely established to be a vehicle for the spreading of the Gospel to all nations, coming into existence precisely for the sake of the Christian Church, and creating a political unity that would help and protect the spiritual unity created by the Church.

Thus Melitus, Bishop of Sardis wrote to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, a philosopher-king who was no friend of the Christians or their philosophy: “Our philosophy flourished first among barbarians; but after it had appeared among your peoples during the mighty principate of your ancestor Augustus, it became an auspicious benefit, especially to your empire. From that time on the power of the Romans increased in a great and splendid way: you became the successor to this whom the people desired and will continue to do so, along with your son, if you protect the philosophy which was nursed in the cradle of the empire and saw the light along with Augustus, which also your ancestors honoured, as they did other religions. And this is the greatest proof of its excellence, that our doctrine has flourished at the same time as the happy beginnings of the empire and that from the time of the principate of Augustus no evil has befallen it, but, on the contrary, all things have been splendid and glorious in accordance with the prayers of all...”<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Velimirovič, “The Nativity of Christ. 2”, *Homilies*, volume 1, Birmingham: Lazarica Press, 1996, pp. 25-26.

<sup>210</sup> St. Melito, in Eusebius, *Church History*, IV, 26, 7-8.



Gibbon said that the century or so of the reigns of the Emperors Nerva, Hadrian, Trajan, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius were probably the most peaceful and prosperous in the history of the world. But this was also the period in which the Peace of Christ was preached throughout the inhabited world, to the furthest bounds of the empire and beyond. Thus a hymn to the Mother of God on an Egyptian papyrus and dating to the mid-second century has even been found as far north as Manchester...

Again, in the third century Origen wrote: "Jesus was born during the reign of Augustus, the one who reduced to uniformity, so to speak, the many kingdoms on earth so that He had a single empire. It would have hindered Jesus' teaching from being spread throughout the world if there had been many kingdoms... Everyone would have been forced to fight in defence of their own country."<sup>211</sup> Origen considered that the peace of Augustus was prophesied in Holy Scripture: "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers even unto the ends of the inhabited earth" (Psalms 71.7), and that it prefigured the spiritual peace of Christ. Moreover, under the reigns of Augustus' successors, the differences between the peoples had been reduced, so that by the time of Christ's Second Coming they would all call on the name of the Lord with one voice and serve Him under one yoke.<sup>212</sup>

Again, in the fourth century St. Gregory the Theologian said: "The state of the Christians and that of the Romans grew up simultaneously and Roman supremacy arose with Christ's sojourn upon earth, previous to which it had not reached monarchical perfection."<sup>213</sup>

And in the fifth century the Spanish priest Orosius, claimed that the Emperor Augustus had paid a kind of compliment to Christ by refusing to call himself Lord at a time when the true Lord of all was becoming man. Christ returned the compliment by having Himself enrolled in Augustus' census. In this way He foreshadowed Rome's historical mission.<sup>214</sup>

Also in the fifth century, St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, wrote: "Divine Providence fashioned the Roman Empire, the growth of which was extended to boundaries so wide that all races everywhere became next-door neighbours. For it was particularly germane to the Divine scheme that many kingdoms should be bound together under a single government, and that the world-wide preaching should have a swift means of access to all people, over whom the rule of a single state held sway."<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus* II, 30.

<sup>212</sup> Charles Davis, "The Middle Ages", in Richard Jenkyns (ed.), *The Legacy of Rome*, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 67.

<sup>213</sup> St. Gregory, *Sermon* 4, P.G. 47, col. 564B.

<sup>214</sup> Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*; in Jenkyns, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-74.

<sup>215</sup> St. Leo, *Sermon* 32, P.L. 54, col. 423.

As Blessed Theodoret of Cyrus wrote, "through the *pax Romana*" God "facilitated the work of the preachers of truth. You see, once a single empire was formed, the uprisings of the nations against one another ceased and peace took hold throughout the whole world; the apostles, entrusted with the preaching of true religion, travelled about safely, and by traversing the world they snared humankind and brought them to life" <sup>216</sup>

The Church sums up this teaching thus: "When Augustus reigned alone upon earth, the many kingdoms of men came to an end: and when Thou wast made man of the pure Virgin, the many gods of idolatry were destroyed. The cities of the world passed under one single rule; and the nations came to believe in one sovereign Godhead. The peoples were enrolled by the decree of Caesar; and we, the faithful, were enrolled in the Name of the Godhead, when Thou, our God, wast made man. Great is Thy mercy: glory to Thee."<sup>217</sup>

Christian kingdoms and autocracies could and did facilitate the acquisition of the inner Kingdom of Grace; indeed, that was their main function. But they could not replace it: the kingdom of men, however exalted, is no substitute for the Kingdom of God. Moreover, the resurrection of kingdoms is as nothing compared to the resurrection of souls and bodies... The degeneration of truly Christian kingdoms into anti-Christian or pseudo-Christian despotisms or democracies that hinder rather than facilitate the acquisition of the Kingdom of God, which resides *within* the redeemed and deified human soul (for, as the Lord said: "The Kingdom of God is *within* you" (Luke 17.21)), constitutes the main tragedy of history in its social, political, collective dimension.

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That the Roman Empire came into existence for the sake of the Church was, on the face of it, a very bold and paradoxical teaching. After all, the people of God at the beginning of the Christian era were the Jews, not the Romans, while the Romans were pagans who worshipped demons, not the True God Who had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In 63 BC they had actually conquered the people of God; their general, Pompey, had blasphemously entered the Holy of holies (this was considered by some to be "the abomination of desolation"), and their rule was bitterly resented. In 70 AD they destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in a campaign of appalling cruelty and scattered the Jews over the face of the earth. How could pagan Rome, the Rome of such fearsome tyrants as Nero and Titus and Caligula and Decius and Domitian and Diocletian, possibly be construed as working with God rather than against Him?

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<sup>216</sup> Blessed Theodoret, *Commentary on Zechariah*, 9. Again, E. Kholmogorov writes: "Rome set herself an unprecedentedly bold task – to establish peace throughout the inhabited world and root out barbarism" ("Vybor Imperii" (The Choice of Empire), *Epokha*, N 11, 2001, pp. 15-16).

<sup>217</sup> *Festal Menaion*, Vespers, the Nativity of Christ, "Lord, I have cried", Glory... Both now...

The solution to this paradox is to be found in two encounters between Christ and two “rulers of this world” – Satan and Pontius Pilate. In the first, Satan takes Christ onto a high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of this world in a moment of time. “And the devil said to Him, ‘All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before Me, all will be Yours.’ And Jesus answered and said to him: ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only will you serve.’” (Luke 4.6-8). Thus Satan has control over all the kingdoms of the world – but by might, the might given him by the sins of men, - not by right.

Thus St. Cyril of Alexandria exclaims: “How dost thou promise that which is not thine? Who made thee heir of God’s kingdom? Who made thee lord of all under heaven? Thou hast seized these things by fraud. Restore them, therefore, to the incarnate Son, the Lord of all...”<sup>218</sup> And indeed, the Lord accepted neither Satan’s lordship over the world, nor the satanism so closely associated with the pagan states of the ancient world. He came to restore true Statehood, which recognises the ultimate supremacy only of the one true God, and which demands veneration of the earthly ruler, but worship only of the Heavenly King. And since, by the time of the Nativity of Christ, all the major pagan kingdoms had been swallowed up in Rome, it was to the transformation of Roman Statehood that the Lord came.

For “the good news announced by the Lord Jesus Christ could not leave untransfigured a single one of the spheres of man’s life. One of the acts of our Lord Jesus Christ consisted in bringing the heavenly truths to the earth, in instilling them into the consciousness of mankind with the aim of its spiritual regeneration, in restructuring the laws of communal life on new principles announced by Christ the Saviour, in the creation of a Christian order of this communal life, and, consequently, in a radical change of pagan statehood. Proceeding from here it becomes clear what place the Church must occupy in relation to the state. It is not the place of an opponent from a hostile camp, not the place of a warring party, but the place of a pastor in relation to his flock, the place of a loving father in relation to his lost children. Even in those moments when there was not and could not be any unanimity or union between the Church and the state, Christ the Saviour forbade the Church to stand on one side from the state, still less to break all links with it, saying: ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s’ (Luke 20.25).<sup>219</sup>

Nevertheless, *full* integration of the Church in the Empire was impossible; for, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, “in ‘this world’ Christians could be but pilgrims and strangers. Their true ‘citizenship’, *politeuma*, was ‘in heaven’ (Philippians 3.20). The Church herself was peregrinating through this world

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<sup>218</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke*, Homily 12, New York: Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 89.

<sup>219</sup> K.V. Glazkov, “Zashchita ot Liberalizma” (“A Defence from Liberalism”), *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (*Orthodox Russia*), N 15 (1636), August 1/14, 1999, p. 10.

(*paroikousa*). 'The Christian fellowship was a bit of extra-territorial jurisdiction on earth of the world above' (Frank Gavin). The Church was 'an outpost of heaven' on earth, or a 'colony of heaven'. It may be true that this attitude of radical detachment had originally an 'apocalyptic' connotation, and was inspired by the expectation of an imminent *parousia*. For, even as an enduring historical society, the Church was bound to be detached from the world. An ethos of 'spiritual segregation' was inherent in the very fabric of the Christian faith, as it was inherent in the faith of Ancient Israel. The Church herself was 'a city', a *polis*, a new and peculiar 'polity'. In their baptismal profession Christians had 'to renounce' this world, with all its vanity, and pride, and pomp, - but also with all its natural ties, even family ties, and to take a solemn oath of allegiance to Christ the King, the only true King on earth and in heaven, to Whom all 'authority' has been given. By this baptismal commitment Christians were radically separated from 'this world'. In this world they had no 'permanent city'. They were 'citizens' of the 'City to come', of which God Himself was builder and maker (Hebrews 13.14; cf. 11.10).

In His trial before Pilate, the Lord insists that his power derived from God, the true King and Lawgiver. For "you could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given to you from above" (John 19.11). These words both limit Caesar's power, insofar as it is subject to God's, and strengthen it, by indicating that it has God's seal and blessing in principle. They do not contradict His earlier words: "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18.36) because as Blessed Theophylact writes: "He did not say: It is not in this world and not here. He rules in this world, takes providential care for it and administers everything according to His will. But His Kingdom is 'not of this world', but from above and before the ages, and 'not from here', that is, it is not composed from the earth, although it has power here".<sup>220</sup>

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovič writes: "Let no-one imagine that Christ the Lord does not have imperial power over this world because He says to Pilate: 'My Kingdom is not of this world.' He who possesses the enduring has power also over the transitory. The Lord speaks of His enduring Kingdom, independent of time and of decay, unrighteousness, illusion and death. Some man might say: 'My riches are not on paper, but in gold.' But does he who has gold not have paper also? Is not gold as paper to its owner? The Lord, then, does not say to Pilate that He is not a king, but, on the contrary, says that He is a higher king than all kings, and His Kingdom is greater and stronger and more enduring than all earthly kingdoms. He refers to His pre-eminent Kingdom, on which depend all kingdoms in time and in space..."<sup>221</sup>

The Lord continues: "Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin" (John 19.11). The one who delivered Christ to Pilate was Caiaphas, chief priest of the Jews. For, as is well known (to all except contemporary

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<sup>220</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *On John* 18.36.

<sup>221</sup> Velimirovič, *The Prologue from Ochrid*, Birmingham: Lazarica Press, 1986, part III, September 30, pp. 395-396.

ecumenist Christians), it was the Jews, His own people, who condemned Christ for blasphemy and demanded His execution at the hands of the Roman authorities in the person of Pontius Pilate. Since Pilate was not interested in the charge of blasphemy, the only way in which the Jews could get their way was to accuse Christ of fomenting rebellion against Rome – a hypocritical charge, since it was precisely the Jews, not Christ, who were planning revolution, and in fact rebelled in 66 A.D.<sup>222</sup> Not only did Pilate not believe this accusation: as the Apostle Peter pointed out, he did everything he could to have Christ released (Acts 3.13), giving in only when he feared that the Jews were about to start a riot and denounce him to the emperor in Rome.

Consequently, insofar as Pilate could have used his God-given power to save the Lord from an unjust death, Roman state power appears in this situation as guilty, but also as the potential, if not yet the actual, protector of Christ from His fiercest enemies. In other words, already during the life of Christ, we see the future role of Rome as the guardian of the Body of Christ and “that which restrains” the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.7).

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Since the time of the Christianization of the Roman Empire under St. Constantine, as St. Seraphim of Sarov taught, the first duty of all Orthodox Christians, after faithfulness to Orthodoxy, is loyalty to the Orthodox Christian Autocrat – in his time, the Russian Tsar. “In explaining how good it was to serve the Tsar,” wrote the saint’s friend, Nicholas Motovilov, “and how much his life should be held dear, he gave as an example Abishai, David’s war-commander.

“‘Once,’ said Batyushka Seraphim, ‘to satisfy the thirst of David, he stole in to a spring in view of the enemy camp and got water, and, in spite of a cloud of arrows released at him from the enemy camp, returned to him completely unharmed, bringing the water in his helmet. He had been saved from the cloud of arrows only because of his zeal towards the King. But when David gave an order, Abishai replied: “Only command, O King, and everything will be done in accordance with your will.” But when the King expressed the desire to take part himself in some bloody deed to encourage his warriors, Abishai besought him to preserve his health and, stopping him from participating in the battle, said: “There are many of us, your Majesty, but you are one among us. Even if all of us were killed, as long as you were alive, Israel would be whole and unconquered. But if you are gone, then what will become of Israel?”...’

“Batyushka Fr. Seraphim loved to explain himself at length, praising the zeal and ardour of faithful subjects to the Tsar, and desiring to explain more clearly how these two Christian virtues are pleasing to God, he said:

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<sup>222</sup> Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), “Christ the Savior and the Jewish Revolution”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 35, no. 4, July-August, 1988, pp. 11-31.

“‘After Orthodoxy, these are our first Russian duty and the chief foundation of true Christian piety.’”<sup>223</sup>

“Often from David he changed the subject to our great Emperor [Nicholas I] and for hours at a time talked to me about him and about the Russian kingdom, bewailing those who plotted evil against his August Person. Clearly revealing to me what they wanted to do, he led me into a state of horror; while speaking about the punishment prepared for them from the Lord, and in confirmation of his words, he added:

“‘This will happen without fail: the Lord, seeing the impenitent spite of their hearts, will permit their undertakings to come to pass for a short period, but their illness will turn upon their heads, and the unrighteousness of their destructive plots will descend upon them. The Russian land will be reddened with streams of blood, and many noblemen will be killed for his great Majesty and the integrity of his Autocracy: but the Lord will not be wroth to the end, and will not allow the Russian land to be destroyed to the end, because in it alone will Orthodoxy and the remnants of Christian piety be especially preserved.

“Once,” as Motovilov continued in his notes, “I was in great sorrow, thinking what would happen in the future with our Orthodox Church if the evil contemporary to us would be multiplied more and more. And being convinced that our Church was in an extremely pitiful state both from the great amount of carnal debauchery and... from the spiritual impiety of godless opinions sown everywhere by the most recent false teachers, I very much wanted to know what Batyushka Seraphim would tell me about this.

“Discussing the holy Prophet Elijah in detail, he said in reply to my question, among other things, the following:

“‘Elijah the Thesbite complained to the Lord about Israel as if it had wholly bowed the knee to Baal, and said in prayer that only he, Elijah, had remained faithful to Lord, but now they were seeking his soul, too, to take it... So what, batyushka, did the Lord reply to this? “I have left seven thousand men in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So if in the kingdom of Israel, which had fallen away from the kingdom of Judah that was faithful to God, and had come to a state of complete corruption, there still remained seven thousand men faithful to the Lord, then what shall we say about Russia? I think that at that time there were no more than three million in the kingdom of Israel at that time. And how many do we have in Russia now, batyushka?’

“I replied: ‘About sixty million.’

“And he continued: ‘Twenty times more. Judge for yourself how many more of those faithful to God that brings!... So, batyushka, those whom He foreknew,

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<sup>223</sup> Quoted also by in S. Nilus, “Chto zhdet Rossii?”, *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, N 68, 1905 (V.M.).

He also predestined; and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He guards, and those He also glorifies... So what is there for us to be despondent about!... God is with us! He who hopes in the Lord is as Mount Sion, and the Lord is round about His people... The Lord will keep you, the Lord will protect you on your right hand, the Lord will preserve your coming in and your going out now and to the ages; the sun will not burn you by day, nor the moon by night.'

"And when I asked him what this meant, and to what end he was talking to me about it:

""To the end,' replied Batyushka Fr. Seraphim, 'that you should know that in this way the Lord guards His people as the apple of His eye, that is, the Orthodox Christians, who love Him and with all their heart, and all their mind, in word and deed, day and night serve Him. And such are those who completely observe all the commandments, dogmas and traditions of our Eastern Universal Church, and confess the piety handed down by it with their lips, and really, in all the circumstances of life, act according to the holy commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"In confirmation of the fact that there were still many in the Russian land who remained faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived in Orthodoxy and piety, batyushka Fr. Seraphim once said to one acquaintance of mine... that once, when he was in the Spirit, he saw the whole land of Russia, and it was filled and as it were covered with the smoke of the prayers of believers praying to the Lord..."<sup>224</sup>

St. Seraphim prophesied what would happen when the people fell away from loyalty to the Tsar: "More than half a century will pass. Then evildoers will raise their heads high. This will happen without fail: the Lord, seeing the impenitent evil of their hearts, will allow their enterprises for a short time. But their sickness will rebound upon their own heads, and the unrighteousness of their destructive plots will fall upon them. The Russian land will become red with rivers of blood... Before the birth of the Antichrist there will be a great, protracted war and a terrible revolution in Russia passing all bounds of human imagination, for the bloodletting will be most terrible: the rebellions of Ryazan, Pugachev and the French revolution will be nothing in comparison with what will take place in Russia. Many people who are faithful to the fatherland will perish, church property and the monasteries will be robbed; the Lord's churches will be desecrated; good rich people will be robbed and killed, rivers of Russian blood will flow..."

*July 19 / August 1, 2020.*

*Translation of the Relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov.*

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<sup>224</sup> Yu.K. Begunov, A.D. Stepanov, K.Yu. Dushenov (eds.), *Tajna Bezzakonia (The Mystery of Iniquity)*, St. Petersburg, 2000, pp. 61-64.





## 12. SCIENCE AND PSEUDO-SCIENCE

Today's age is, above all, the age of *science*. Science was (is) the god of the age, together with democracy and human rights. It has been carried out on a scale never attained before, by all the major powers, who have devoted increasingly vast sums to it, and with some startling results, of which putting a man on the moon was probably the most spectacular.

But together with the advancement of true science, and in spite of it, we also see a deepening of what Dostoyevsky in *The Devils* called the religion of "half science", or *pseudo-science* in the three main sphere of biology, physics and psychology. Several of the greatest minds of the twentieth century, such as Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich and C.S. Lewis, warned against a future dictatorship of science, of "scientism" that does not know the bounds of true science and for which "nothing is sacred". Let us look more closely at the three pre-eminent sciences:-

### I. Biology

In the first half of the twentieth century, the major scientific discoveries had been made in the physical sciences and mathematics. In the second half, it was the turn of the biological sciences. And the greatest single discovery in the history of biology was the discovery of DNA in 1953, leading to the greatest single project in the history of science – the mapping of the human genome, with tis seemingly endless opportunities for the manipulation of human nature.

However, the most important consequence of the discovery of DNA. although this has not been recognized by most scientists to this day, *the discovery of DNA has completely destroyed the theoretical basis of Darwinism*. For it revealed an information-based mechanism for the transmission of the genome that could not possibly have come into existence by chance, but must have been created by an intelligent designer – in other words, God. Information is a concept that makes no sense without a mind possessing it. And the amount of information contained in just the simplest reproducible cell points to an infinite Mind...<sup>225</sup>

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, says that DNA is like computer code – only much more complex and sophisticated than any computer code created by man. Now computer code is always created by an intelligent designer – man. So the question arises: who created the code of DNA?

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<sup>225</sup> In spite of this undoubted fact, huge prizes are still offered to anyone who can produce a genetic code from inorganic material. See Megan Humphrey, "\$5 million Tech Prize Seeks Answer to Origin of Life", *Front Line Genomics*, March 1, 2018, <http://www.frontlinegenomics.com/blog/19919/5-million-tech-prize-seeks-answer-origin-life/>

As regards the complexity of DNA, Raymond G. Halvorson writes: "The human body contains some 100 million cells, with the DNA divided into forty-six chromosomes. The total length of the entire DNA in one cell is about three feet. The total DNA content in a human body is estimated to span the solar system. In terms of an analogy, human DNA is like a very large encyclopaedia of forty-six volumes, with each one having 20,000 pages. Every one of the 100 million cells in a human body contains this entire library.

"As scientists began to decode the human genome they found it to be approximately three billion DNA base pairs long. 'One of the most extraordinary discoveries of the twentieth century,' says Dr. Stephen Meyer, director of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle, Washington, 'was that DNA actually stores information – the detailed instructions for assembling proteins – in the form a four-character digital code.'

"David Coppedge, a systems administrator for the Cassini Mission to Saturn and Titan at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, NASA, made the following observation: 'Life on the molecular level is incredibly complex. A symphony of proteins, enzymes and DNA work in harmony to permit rapid and precisely controlled chemical reactions. At least 239 proteins are required for the simplest conceivable living cell. The change of getting even one of these proteins, even under ideal conditions, is less than one in 10-161 (10 followed by 161 zeros). To get the simplest reproducible cell is one in 10-40,000. Anything less likely than 1 in 10-50 is virtually impossible, anywhere in the whole universe.'...

"Coppedge calculated the probability that the 200 trillion molecules arranged in perfect order within the walls of a cell *would take trillions and trillions of years* to generate spontaneously. That is well beyond the actual age of the earth. The immense complexity of a single cell precludes all possibility of life ever happening by chance..."<sup>226</sup>

The discovery of DNA has revived the teleological understanding of the universe, the argument from design to the existence of a Designer. As Fr. Job Gumerov writes, "William Paley (1743-1805), in *Natural Theology* (1802) formulates it as follows:

"'If you found a watch in an open field, then, based on the obvious complexity of its construction, you would come to the inevitable conclusion about the existence of a watchmaker.'

"A modern scientist, a specialist in molecular biology, Michael Denton, states:

"'Paley was not just right in saying that there is an analogy between a living organism and a machine; he turned out to be a visionary, realizing that the

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<sup>226</sup> Halvorson, *Evolution. The World's Fourth Great Religion*, Colorado Springs: Dawon Media, 2011, pp. 19, 105.

technical idea implemented in living systems far exceeds all human achievements.'

"Each cell of the human body contains more information than in all thirty volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. According to the famous physicist, Nobel Prize laureate Fred Hoyle, the probability of a helical DNA molecule arising from a mixture of ready-made nucleotides and sugars, is as close to zero as the probability that a tornado in a garbage dump will spontaneously cause the emergence of a brand new car.

"Scientists using the mathematical apparatus of probability theory have proved the impossibility of evolution. What is the probability of accidental nucleation of one living cell from non-living elements? Prominent scientist Marcel E. Golay [*Marcel E. Golay, 'Reflections of a Communications Engineer,' Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 33, (June 1961), p. 23*], on the basis of mathematical calculations, estimates the probability of random construction of particles in a self-generating system (even if we allow 30 billion years for it to take place) as 1:10 to 450 degrees. This degree of probability is equivalent to *zero*, according to professional mathematicians."

Darwinists have traditionally attempted to get round these problems by positing an almost infinite period of time in which evolution can take place. "Evolutionists," continues Gumerov, "are free, without sufficient scientific justification, to introduce timelines of millions and billions of years. For their conceptual constructs, time is vital. It replaces the role of the Creator. This argument is not scientific. Time is a duration, and does not possess any creative power. This argument is psychological in nature. It is suggested to the reader that everything is possible in millions and billions of years..."

"Existing dating methods are extremely unreliable. A.V. Lalomov, Candidate of Geological and Mineralogical Sciences, gives examples of the radiometric dating of objects whose age was known in advance. The results were paradoxical. Radiometric dating gave results suggesting that the shells of *living* mollusks were 2000 years old, that *modern* New Zealand lavas were 1-3.5 million years old, that the dacite in the lava dome of the San Helen volcano (1986 eruption) was 0.34-2.8 million years old, and that the Quaternary basalts of the Colorado Plateau were 117 - 2600 million years old. According to generally accepted practice, inconvenient data is discarded under a plausible excuse, or even without it. After obtaining the false results from the Quaternary lavas, the unsuitability of using the K-Ar method for dating olivine was substantiated. Other radioisotope methods are also not faultless, from both theoretical and practical points of view."<sup>227</sup>

Darwinism supposes that life is getting better and better, more and more complex, over time. But, as Gumerov explains, "Science not only does not know

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<sup>227</sup> Gumerov, "The Orthodox Church Rejects Evolution & Accepts Genuine Science", *Russian Faith; Science as a Confirmation of the Biblical Doctrine of Creation*, Samara, 2001, p.26-27.

such a law, but affirms the exact opposite of this. The second law of thermodynamics proves the impossibility of evolution. This fundamental law was discovered in the first half of the 19th century. Its scientific development belongs to the French mathematician N.L.S. Karno (1824), German physicist R. Clausius (1850), and English physicist W. Thomson (Kelvin) (1851). The wordings given by these scientists are considered equivalent. The essence of the second law of thermodynamics is as follows: *In a closed system, entropy can only increase or remain constant.* In other words, any isolated system (and evolutionists do not recognize anything outside this physical universe) tends to degrade, because entropy gradually increases within it.

“This law is universal. It is used in biology, physics, chemistry, geology, and other sciences. All the changes we study occur in the direction of increasing entropy, *i.e.* degradation, deterioration, and decline. My dear friend, if you recognize evolutionism as a science, then you should forget about the laws of thermodynamics, because their statements stand in opposition to evolution. Moreover, the second law of thermodynamics proves that once there was a perfect order (in scientific terms - the optimal state of the system), and the current state of the world is the result of an increase in entropy, *i.e.* gradual degradation. Thus, the world in its present form must have a beginning. This is fully consistent with biblical teaching.”

“An essential, falsifiable prediction of Darwinian theory, therefore, is that *functional information must, on average, increase over time.*

“Interestingly, a prediction of intelligent design science is quite the opposite. Since information always degrades over time for any storage media and replication system, intelligent design science postulates that the digital information of life was initially downloaded into the genomes of life. It predicts that, *on average, genetic information is steadily being corrupted by natural processes.* The beauty of these two mutually incompatible predictions in science is that the falsification of one entails verification of the other. So which prediction does science falsify, and which does science verify?

“Ask computer programmers what effect ongoing random changes in the code would have on the integrity of a program, and they will universally agree that it degrades the software. This is the first problem for neo-Darwinian theory. Mutations produce random changes in the digital information of life. It is generally agreed that the rate of deleterious mutations is much greater than the rate of beneficial mutations. My own work with 35 protein families suggests that the rate of destruction is, at a minimum, 8 times the rate of neutral or beneficial mutations.

“Simply put, the digital information of life is being destroyed much faster than it can be repaired or improved. New functions may evolve, but the overall

loss of functional information in other areas of the genome will, on average, be significantly greater. The net result is that the digital information of life is running down.

“The second series of falsifying observations is indicated by actual organisms we have studied most closely. First, the digital information for the bacterial world is slowly eroding away due to a net deletional bias in mutations involving insertions and deletions. A second example is the fruit fly, one of the most studied life forms in evolutionary biology. It, too, shows an ongoing, genome-wide loss of DNA across the entire genus.

“Finally, humans are not exempt. As biologist Michael Lynch points out in a paper in *PNAS*, ‘Rate, molecular spectrum, and consequences of human mutation’:

“‘Consideration of the long-term consequences of current human behaviour for deleterious-mutation accumulation leads to the conclusion that a substantial reduction in human fitness can be expected over the next few centuries in industrialized societies unless novel means of genetic intervention are developed.’

“We continue to discover **more examples** of DNA loss, suggesting that the biological world is slowly running down. Microevolution is good at fine-tuning existing forms within their information limits and occasionally getting something right, but the steady accumulation of deleterious mutations on the larger scale suggests that mutation-driven evolution is actually destroying biological life, not creating it.

“This is hardly a surprise, as every other area of science, except for evolutionary biology, grants that natural processes degrade information, regardless of the storage media and copying process. For neo-Darwinian macroevolution to work, it requires something that is in flat-out contradiction to the real world.”<sup>228</sup>

As Gumerov writes: “Scientific studies have shown that damage to the genome is constantly monitored and corrected by a special mechanism, because the body has a large number of enzymes, each with its own functions. Their coordinated and sequential actions eliminate 99 to 99.9% of mutations, according to the estimates of the evolutionists themselves. But the most important thing is that, according to statistics, the vast majority of

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<sup>228</sup> Kirk Durston, “An Essential Prediction of Darwinian Theory Is Falsified by Information Degradation”, *Evolution News*, July 9, 2015, [https://evolutionnews.org/2015/07/an\\_essential\\_pr/](https://evolutionnews.org/2015/07/an_essential_pr/)

mutations - if they occur - lead not to improvement, but to degradation. It was experimentally found that most phenotype mutations so violate the structure and physiology of the body that they destroy it – they are *lethal* mutations. The rest, in one way or another, reduce the viability of the body. And only a negligible share, a tiny fraction of a percent, can perhaps increase the adaptive properties of the body to some extent.”

New discoveries keep being made that are incompatible with Darwinism. Thus Eric Metaxas writes: “The Darwinian mechanism of mutation and natural selection explains everything about life, we’re told—except how it began. ‘Assume a self-replicating cell containing information in the form of genetic code,’ Darwinists are forced to say. Well, fine. But where did *that* little miracle come from?

“A new discovery makes explaining even that first cell tougher still. Fossils unearthed by Australian scientists in Greenland may be the oldest traces of life ever discovered. A team from the University of Wollongong recently published their findings in the journal *Nature*, describing a series of structures called ‘stromatolites’ that emerged from receding ice.

“‘Stromatolites’ may sound like something your doctor would diagnose, but they’re actually biological rocks formed by colonies of microbes that live in shallow water. If you visit the Bahamas today, you can see living stromatolites.

“What’s so special about them? Well, they appear in rocks most scientists date to 220 million years older than the oldest fossils, which pushes the supposed date for the origin of life back to 3.7 billion years ago.

“This, admits the *New York Times*, ‘complicate[s] the story of evolution of early life from chemicals...’ No kidding! According to conventional geology, these microbe colonies existed on the heels of a period when Earth was undergoing heavy asteroid bombardment, making it virtually uninhabitable. This early date, adds *The Times*, ‘leaves comparatively little time for evolution to have occurred...’

“That is an understatement. These life forms came into existence virtually overnight, writes David Klinghoffer at *Evolution News and Views*. ‘genetic code, proteins, photosynthesis, the works.’

"This appearance of fully-developed life forms so early in the fossil record led Dr. Abigail Allwood of Caltech to remark that 'life [must not be] a fussy, reluctant and unlikely thing.' Rather, 'it will emerge whenever there's an opportunity.'

"Pardon me? If life occurs so spontaneously and predictably even under the harshest conditions, then it should be popping up all over the place! Yet scientists still cannot come close to producing even a single cell from raw chemicals in the lab.

"Dr. Stephen Meyer explains in his book *Signature in the Cell* why this may be Darwinism's Achilles heel. In order to begin evolution by natural selection, you need a self-replicating unit. But the cell and its DNA blueprint are too complicated by far to have arisen through chance chemical reactions. The odds of even a single protein forming by accident are astronomical. So Meyer and other Intelligent Design theorists conclude that Someone must have designed and created the structures necessary for life." <sup>229</sup>

With the discovery of DNA, in other words, Darwinism became *a statistical impossibility*. Unfortunately, however, the world continued as if nothing had happened. Darwinism remained, and remains at the time of writing, the corner-stone, not only of biological science, but of the whole modern world-view...

At the same time, one of the (very few) encouraging signs about the world today is the stubborn resistance to this corner-stone of the modern world view even among highly educated people.

Thus Yuval Noah Harari writes: "According to a 2012 Gallup survey only 15 percent of Americans think that Homo sapiens evolved through natural selection alone, free of all divine intervention; 32 percent maintain that humans may have evolved from earlier life forms in a process lasting millions of years, but God orchestrated the whole show; 46 percent believe that God created humans in their current form sometime during the last 10,000 years, just as the Bible says. The same survey found that among BA graduates, 46 percent believe in the biblical creation, whereas only 14 percent think that humans evolved without any divine supervision. Even among holders of MA and PhD degrees,

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<sup>229</sup> Metaxas, "New discovery makes Darwinists' case even harder to make", *LifeSiteNews*, September 14, 2016, <https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/evolutions-can-opener>

29 percent believe the Bible, whereas only 29 percent credit natural selection alone with the creation of our species." <sup>230</sup>

The problem with Darwinism does not consist solely in its non-correspondence with the facts. As Fr. Seraphim Rose pointed out, it is *not falsifiable*, and therefore *not science* at all: it is in fact *philosophy*. More accurately, it is a *religion* – a modern, sophisticated form of paganism. Paganism believes in the spontaneous generation of higher life-forms, even gods and goddesses, out of lower forms, as if by magic. So does Darwinism.

The unfalsifiability of Darwinism has been demonstrated by Tom Bethell, who writes: "Natural selection functions in the realm of philosophy, not science." He quotes staunch Darwinian Richard Lewontin of Harvard: "For what good is a theory that is guaranteed by its internal logical structure to agree with all conceivable observations, irrespective of the real structure of the world? If scientists are going to use logically unbeatable theories about the world, they might as well give up natural science and take up religion. Yet is that not exactly the situation with Darwinism?" <sup>231</sup>

"Bethell began his journey as a Darwin skeptic by pondering the circular reasoning inherent in selection theory. Is there any way of deciding what is 'fit' other than seeing what survives?" he asks in the Introduction (p. 11). 'If not, maybe Darwin was arguing in a self-confirming circle: the survival of the survivors.' Throughout his journey, as he documents in the book, he found leading Darwinists admitting to this core flaw in the logic of natural selection..."

Towards the end of the twentieth century the word "creationism" began to be dropped in favour of the less religious-sounding "intelligent design". <sup>232</sup> Those who teach intelligent design are as firmly opposed to evolution as the

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<sup>230</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus*, London: Vintage, 2015, p. 119.

<sup>231</sup> Bethell, "No Controversies about Darwinism? Try this one", *Evolution News*, May 30, 2017; Lewontin, "Testing the Theory of Natural Selection," *Nature* 236, no. 543 (1972): 181-182, cited in Bethell, p. 65.

<sup>232</sup> Of course, there were still some old-fashioned, but formidable scientists who preferred to talk about God. Thus the Nobel Prize winner in Physics, Paul Dirac, whom Einstein considered a genius, said in 1971: "It could be that it is extremely difficult to start life. It might be that it is so difficult to start life that it has happened only once among all the planets... Let us consider, just as a conjecture, that the chance life starting when we have got suitable physical conditions is 10<sup>-100</sup>. I don't have any logical reason for proposing this figure, I just want you to consider it as a possibility. Under those conditions ... it is almost certain that life would not have started. And I feel that under those conditions it will be necessary to assume the existence of a god to start off life. I would like, therefore, to set up this connexion between the existence of a god and the physical laws: if physical laws are such that to start off life involves an excessively small chance, so that it will not be reasonable to suppose that life would have started just by blind chance, then there must be a god, and such a god would probably be showing his influence in the quantum jumps which are taking place later on." (Helge Kragh, *Dirac: A Scientific Biography*. Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 56-257). Of course, if the extreme improbability of the emergence of life is enough to make the existence of God probable, the existence of DNA makes it far more probable!



old-fashioned creationists, but it is not politically correct to say that you believe in a Creator God (you might lose your job). So you have to say that you believe in “intelligent design” instead – which comes to the same thing, for who could have intelligently designed the universe if not God?

Jim Holt provides some examples of “intelligent design” thinking. “Michael Behe attacks Darwinism at the molecular level. If you peer inside a cell, Behe says, you see intricate little machines, made out of proteins, that carry on the functions necessary for life. They so precisely engineered that they exhibit what he calls ‘irreducible complexity’: alter a single part and the whole thing would grind to a halt. How could such machinery have evolved in piecemeal fashion through a series of adaptations, as Darwinism holds?

“Alvin Plantinga makes a philosophical assault on Darwinism, claiming that it is self-undermining. Suppose the Darwinian theory of evolution were true – our mental machinery, having developed from that of lower animals, would be highly unreliable when it came to generating true theories. (Darwin himself once confessed to the same doubt: ‘Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey’s mind?’) In other words, if our belief in Darwinism were true, then none of our theoretical beliefs would be reliable – including our belief in Darwinism. But theism escapes this difficulty: if we are made in the image of God, he can be counted on to have supplied us with reliable cognitive faculties.

“William Dembski bases his anti-Darwinian argument on what he calls ‘the law of conservation of information’. Our DNA contains a wealth of complex information, he observes. How did it get there? Natural causes can’t be responsible. Chance and necessity cannot create information. Therefore, the origin of genetic information ‘is best sought in intelligent causes’.”<sup>233</sup>

These are powerful arguments, and the creationist or intelligent design movement shows no signs of decline. Many thousand of Ph.D. scientists now reject Darwinism, and to many the arguments of leading evolutionists such as Richard Dawkins are no longer convincing. We come back to the question: if DNA is a code, and all known codes are created by intelligent designers, who created the code of DNA?

## II. Physics

Apart from the discovery of DNA in 1953, which radically undermined the Darwinist theory of evolution, the most significant development in twentieth-century science was the discovery, in the 1920s, that the galaxies are flying away from each other – that is, that the universe is expanding. This undermined the idea, accepted by almost all scientists, that the universe is in a “steady state”, with no beginning. For if the galaxies are accelerating away from each other, then if we turn the clock backwards, according to the laws of physics,

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<sup>233</sup> Holt, *Why Does the World Exist?* London: Profile, 2017.

especially General Relativity, there must have been an initial starting point, a beginning in time from which all subsequent space and time evolved – the so-called “Big Bang”. But then the question arises: where did the Big Bang come from? Since space and time are now considered not to be independent of matter, the origin of being must be outside time and beyond any known laws of physics. But what is such a timeless and immaterial beginning if not God, Who is simply “He Who Is” (Exodus 3.14), “the Beginning of every beginning” (I Chronicles 29.12), “without Whom “nothing was made that was made” (John 1.3).

In the 1920s there were still some major scientists who were bold enough to speak about God. They tended to be physicists rather than biologists. One of these was the British physicist Paul Dirac, who won the Nobel prize for physics and whom Einstein considered to be a genius. He said in 1971: “It could be that it is extremely difficult to start life. It might be that it is so difficult to start life that it has happened only once among all the planets... Let us consider, just as a conjecture, that the chance life starting when we have got suitable physical conditions is  $10^{-100}$ . I don't have any logical reason for proposing this figure, I just want you to consider it as a possibility. Under those conditions ... it is almost certain that life would not have started. And I feel that under those conditions it will be necessary to assume the existence of a god to start off life. I would like, therefore, to set up this connexion between the existence of a god and the physical laws: if physical laws are such that to start off life involves an excessively small chance, so that it will not be reasonable to suppose that life would have started just by blind chance, then there must be a god, and such a god would probably be showing his influence in the quantum jumps which are taking place later on.” Of course, if the extreme improbability of the emergence of life is enough to make the existence of God probable, the existence of DNA makes it far more probable!

Human thought, both scientific, commonsensical and religious, sees the history of the universe as going back to a first cause. For if there were no first cause, there would be nothing to set the causal nexus going. However, the first cause must be in some sense outside the causal nexus taken as a whole; and so it must itself be uncaused (and immaterial and non-spatiotemporal). Otherwise, if it were part of the causal nexus, it would itself require a causal explanation. This is recognized by all true religious thought, which calls God the Uncaused Cause and “Beginning of all beginnings”. But modern cosmological thought cannot accept this. If it accepts a first cause, it is only in the sense of the first of the causes, the big bang itself. It cannot accept that the big bang itself must have a cause.

Atheist scientists have tried hard to escape this inescapable conclusion that there is an Uncaused Cause – that is, God. The most famous such attempt was by Stephen Hawking, who argued that the universe owes its origin to a chance quantum fluctuation, which “exploded” into existence fourteen billion years. In a book on Hawking, David Wilkinson, a physicist and Methodist minister, writes that the universe arose by “a chance quantum fluctuation from a state of

absolute nothing... Quantum theory deals with events which do not have deterministic causes. By applying quantum theory to the universe, Hawking is saying that the event that triggered the Big Bang did not have a cause. In this way, science is able not only to encompass the laws of evolution but also the initial conditions."

However, there are huge problems with this idea. First, there is the metaphysical or meta-psychological fact, demonstrated by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, that it is impossible to reason in the "phenomenal" world – that is the world of empirical experience, without the category of causality. Secondly, if in the beginning there was only a wave function, a spectrum of possibilities, then someone had to observe it if that wave function was to collapse and bring a single objective reality – our universe – into being. Who could that "someone" have been if not God? After all, did not the great Newton himself talk about space being God's *sensorium*? Thirdly, the idea that the whole, vast, infinitely varied, infinitely complex and highly organized universe should come from a chance quantum fluctuation is unbelievable (and strictly undemonstrable). Still less believable, fourthly, is the idea that the quantum fluctuation itself should come out of nothing. This is positing nothing as the cause of everything, an obviously nonsensical proposition. For, as King Lear tells the Fool, "Nothing can be made of nothing" (*King Lear* IV, 4, 126).

Wilkinson continues: "Many people find difficulty in imagining where the matter of the universe comes from to begin with. Surely, they say, there must be an amount of matter or a 'primeval atom' with which to go bang? As Einstein's famous equation  $E=mc^2$  implies that energy (E) is equivalent to mass (m) multiplied by the square of the speed of light (c), the question can be translated to where does the energy come from?

"Now energy has the property that it can be either positive or negative. Two objects attracted by the force of gravity need energy to pull them apart, and therefore in that state we say that they have negative gravitational energy.

"It turns out that the energy in matter in the universe is the same amount as the negative energy in the gravitational field of the universe. Thus the total energy of the universe is zero. In this way you can have something from nothing in terms of the matter in the universe. No problem here for the Big Bang..."

But this is simply attempting to solve the problem by sleight of hand. Positive energy is something, and negative energy is something. They are not *numbers* that cancel each other out as in the equation:  $1-1=0$ . They are *things*, and the existence of things needs to be explained. And something cannot come out of nothing except through the creative energy of "Him Who is" (Exodus 3.14) supremely and in the first place, God.

Actually, some of the most famous physicists of our time, while not endorsing the idea that God created the heavens and the earth, nevertheless

admit that the concept of God is not entirely irrelevant here. Einstein famously said that God does not play with dice. And even Stephen Hawking wrote: "It is difficult to discuss the beginning of the Universe without mentioning the concept of God. My work on the origin of the Universe is on the borderline between science and religion, but I try to stay on the scientific side of the border. It is quite possible that God acts in ways that cannot be described by scientific laws. But in that case one would just have to go by personal belief."

However, it is not "just" personal belief but common sense that dictates the conclusion that the Origin of space, time and matter acts in ways that cannot be described by the laws of space, time and matter and therefore cannot be known by science. The Lawgiver is not confined by His own laws; He created those laws, and so must be above and beyond them. All we can do is stand before the mystery in awe as Moses stood before the burning bush, admitting simply that *He is "He Who Is"*, absolute, ineffable, unknowable, indescribable Being.

David Berlinski writes: "The universe, orthodox cosmologists believe, came into existence as the expression of an explosion – what is now called the Big Bang. The word *explosion* is a sign that words have failed us, as they so often do, for it suggests a humanly comprehensible event – a *gigantic* explosion or a *stupendous* eruption. But this is absurd. The Big Bang was not an event taking place at a time or in a place. Space and time were themselves created by the Big Bang, the measure along with the measured..."

"If the Big Bang expresses a new idea in physics, it suggests an old idea in thought: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*. This unwelcome juxtaposition of physical and biblical ideas persuaded the astrophysicist Fred Hoyle, an ardent atheist, to dismiss the Big Bang after he had named it. In this he was not alone. Many physicists have found the idea that the universe had a beginning alarming. 'So long as the universe had a beginning,' Stephen Hawking has written 'we could suppose it had a creator.' *God forbid!*..

"For more than a century, physicists had taken a manful pride in the fact that theirs was a discipline that celebrated the weird, the bizarre, the unexpected, the mind-bending, and the recondite. Here was a connection that any intellectual primitive could at once grasp: The universe had a beginning, thus something must have caused it to happen. Where would physics be, physicists asked themselves, if we had paid the slightest attention to the obvious?..."

"If both theory and evidence suggested that the universe had a beginning, it was natural for physicists to imagine that by tweaking the evidence and adjusting the theory, they could get rid of what they did not want [God]. Perhaps the true and the good universe – the one without a beginning – might be reached by skirting the Big Bang singularity, or bouncing off it in some way? But in the mid-1960s, Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking demonstrated that

insofar as the backward contraction of the universe was controlled by the equations of general relativity almost all lines of conveyance came to an end.

“The singularity was inescapable.

“This conclusion encouraged the theologians but did little to ease physicists in their own minds, for while it strengthened the unwholesome conclusion that Big Bang cosmology had already established, it left a good deal else in a fog. In many ways, this was the worst of all possible worlds. Religious believers had emerged from their seminars well satisfied with what they could understand; the physicists themselves could understand nothing very well.

“The fog that attended the Penrose-Hawking singularity theorems (there is more than one) arose spontaneously whenever physicists tried to determine just what the singularity signified. At the singularity itself, a great many physical parameters zoom to infinity. Just what is one to make of infinite temperature? Or particles that are no distance from one another? The idea of a singularity, as the astronomer Joseph Silk observed, is ‘completely unacceptable as a physical description of the universe... An infinitely dense universe [is] where the laws of physics, and even space and time, break down.’”

“In his book *The Grand Design*... Hawking argues that ‘Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist.’ Thus, for Hawking, ‘It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.’

“[Stephen] Meyer points out, though, that Hawking’s statement betrays a kind of category error — a philosophical misunderstanding of what the laws of nature do. Meyer notes that ‘the laws of nature describe how matter and energy in different states or configurations interact with other material entities. They do not tell us where matter and energy (or space and time) came from in the first place.’”

The Big Bang theory posits a beginning state of the universe that is contrary to the laws of physics. In other words, it is physically impossible. This is an enormous problem for atheist physics, which assumes the law-governed nature of all things, while rejecting a Law-giver, but not for traditional religious thought, which recognizes a Law-giver as well as the law. For if God is the Cause of the entire spatio-temporal universe, then the causality joining God to the universe, as it were, must itself be beyond space and time and not subject to physical laws. For this is not the link between a material cause and a material effect, which expresses a physical law, but the link between the Creator and the whole of His physical creation, that is, all material causes and effects taken together as a single system. In fact, the “causality” that brought the heavens and the earth into being is not *empirical* causality at all, but more like the causality that every rational being experiences every time he exercises his free

will, when he opens his mouth to speak, or his eyes to see. Thus “He spake, and they came to be; He commanded, and they were created” (Psalm 149.5).

Berlinski argues that the fact that “causes in nature come to an end” shows that “the hypothesis of God’s existence and the facts of contemporary cosmology are *consistent*.” However, in order for God’s existence and the supposed facts of contemporary cosmology to be consistent, more is required. Above all, the existence of a form of non-empirical causality, free will, must be admitted – both the free will of God in creating and continuing to uphold the universe, and the free will of men who choose to believe or not to believe in that fact. And surely any sane physicist would accept that he is free in this sense. Otherwise, if all their words and thoughts are just the determined or undetermined products of fate or chance, why should we believe them?

Another attempt to get round the fact that the universe has a beginning in time and therefore a Creator Who is beyond time, is the so-called “multiverse” theory. This is the idea that all the possibilities in the original wave function actually exist in other universes.

Frank Close, professor of physics at Oxford University, explains that the idea of the “multiverse” is, together with string theory, one of the “two leading theories that attempt to explain the most fundamental characteristics of the physical world”. But Close readily admits that it has one or two problems...

The first is that it is *untestable*, which makes it, strictly speaking, *not science at all*. “As there is no possibility of communication between us and other universes, there is no empirical way to test the multiverse theory. George Ellis makes the point explicitly: ‘In a general multiverse model, everything that can happen will happen somewhere, so any data whatever can be accommodated. Hence it cannot be disproved by an observational test at all.’ By implication, the multiverse concept lies outside science.”

So one of the two main mega-theories of contemporary physical science is not science at all. (Close thinks that the situation is a little better with the other mega-theory, string theory, but only just!) Physics was meant to exclude the need for metaphysics, untestable philosophy. But it seems that metaphysics is making a come-back!

And this is not the only problem. According to Close, the different universes of the “multiverse” can “implement different laws of physics”, with the consequence that “if such diverse regions of space exist, then the ‘universe’ as we’ve defined it is not the whole of reality... Ellis and his cosmologist colleague Joe Silk, a professor at the Université de Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris, call this ‘a kaleidoscopic multiverse comprising a myriad of universes’. They, as proxy for many physicists, then pose the basic challenge: the suggestion that another universe need not have the same fundamental constants of nature as ours inspires the question of what determines the values in our universe. Of the variety of universes that could exist, the conditions for the narrow range of

parameters for which intelligent life could exist are trifling. The odds that we exist are therefore so vanishingly small, that multiverse theory claims that there is a 'landscape' of universes 'out there' in which all possible values of these parameters exist. Thus one universe will exist somewhere with conditions just right for life, and we are the proof..."

This reveals what is perhaps the main motivation for multiverse theory *in physics*: to help out evolution theory *in biology* in what should be the very first and easiest step in the ladder of evolution: *the origin of life*. The problem is that, as the physicist Close readily admits, – most biologists are much less sincere, – “the odds that we exist are vanishingly small” because the odds on the existence of all of the ten major constants that make life on earth possible (for example, the distance of the earth from the sun) are also “vanishingly small”. So in order to help out their biological colleagues in their little difficulty (of course, this is only the beginning of the vast difficulties faced by Darwinist theory), the physicists are forced to resort to the fantastical theory that all possible universes exist somewhere in the “multiverse” – including our own fantastically unlikely universe with its life-bearing planet, the Earth.

The Lord said that with God all things are possible. But He did not say that all possibilities will in fact become actual. In fact, He definitively excluded certain possibilities: for example, that falsehood should finally triumph over truth, or good over evil, or that the world will not be brought to an end by His Second Coming. God can do anything – except contradict His own all-holy will. It is His will that decrees which possibilities become reality, and which will never be fulfilled – in any universe.

The concept of *free will* – Divine, human or angelic – is crucial here. For what is an act of will if not the elimination of a range of possibilities in favour of *one reality*? As I write these words, I am excluding all other verbal possibilities from being actualized. Thus freedom to will this as opposed to that is the freedom to create reality out of mere possibility. As I write these words I am not simply banishing the things I am *not* writing to some other universe in which they exist on equal terms with what I *am* writing: I am excluding the very possibility of their being written anywhere.

If, on the other hand, I assert, as the multiverse theorists seem to be asserting, that I am writing an infinite number of other versions of this chapter in an infinite number of other universes, the very concept of “I”, of personal identity, seems to disappear. Physicists have become reconciled to the idea – enormously paradoxical though it is – that a sub-atomic particle can exist in two places at the same time. But this paradox is as nothing by comparison with the idea that there is an infinity of universes in which I write an infinite number of different versions of this chapter. Some of these alternative versions will be gibberish, or represent something completely different from what I actually believe. How, then, can they be said to be what *I* write? Will they not in fact be the products of completely different people? Indeed, if different universes comprise different possibilities that cannot communicate with each other, and

which may obey completely different laws of nature, what basis is there for saying that the I who am writing this chapter in this universe am the same as any of the Is who are writing it in other universes?

Let us remind ourselves of the first difficulty Close finds in multiverse theory: that there is no empirical evidence for the existence of any other universe than our own – that is, the one single concatenation of events in space and time that all human beings with the exception of some contemporary physicists consider to be *reality* and not mere possibility. Indeed, not only is there no empirical evidence for other universes: even theoretically there cannot be any such evidence. For if there were, it would show that those other universes were interacting with our own and therefore formed part of *our reality*. As for there being an *infinity* of other universes, this is even more out of the question. For as the German mathematician David Hilbert says: “Although infinity is needed to complete mathematics, it occurs nowhere in the physical universe.”

Scientists used to pride themselves on their hard-headedness, on their insistence on *facts*, facts that can be empirically seen, heard or touched. Now, however, they deal, not in facts, but in *possibilities*, infinite numbers of them, none of which is more real than any other. They have become other-worldly to the most extreme degree, indulging in fantasies about other universes no less real – or unreal – than our ours but with which we can have no communication and about which we can have no information whatsoever.

The idea of multiple universes is an old one: we find it in Hinduism, and we find it in the dualistic religions of the Middle East.

Just as the idea is old, so is its refutation. As early as the second century, the Holy Fathers rejected the idea put forward by the heretic Marcion that there are two universes, one ruled by a good God and the other by a bad one, each universe following different laws. C.S. Lewis discerns in all forms of the dualistic (and by inference, multiverse) error two major difficulties, one metaphysical and the other moral. The metaphysical difficulty consists in the fact that neither of the two worlds “can claim to be the Ultimate. More ultimate than either of them is the inexplicable fact of their being there together. Neither of them chose this *tête-à-tête*. Each of them therefore is *conditioned* – finds [itself] willy nilly in a situation; and either that situation itself, or some unknown force which produced that situation, is the real Ultimate. Dualism has not yet reached the ground of being. You cannot accept two conditioned and mutually independent beings as the self-grounded, self-comprehending Absolute.” In trying to understand the dualistic multiverse in pictorial terms, we cannot avoid “smuggling in the idea of a common *space* in which they can be together, and thus confessing that we are not yet dealing with the source of the universe but only with two members contained in it. Dualism is a truncated philosophy.”



The moral difficulty is similar. It consists in the fact that if one universe has one system of values, which we from our point of view would call good, and the other a completely different, or contradictory one, which we would call bad, there is no basis on which to judge between the two. "In what sense can one party [or universe] be said to be right and the other wrong? If evil has the same kind of reality as good, the same autonomy and completeness, our allegiance to good becomes the arbitrarily chosen loyalty of a partisan. A sound theory of value demands something very different..."

It does indeed. However, physicists do not generally concern themselves with moral questions, or the origins of morality; so one might argue that this consequence of their theory is irrelevant to physical truth. But this would be disingenuous; for physical, cosmological theories are so ambitious that they quite unashamedly claim to be "Theories of Everything" (TOEs). Everything is everything. You cannot claim to have a theory of everything if "everything" excludes life, consciousness, conscience, art and morality...

The theologians say that God created the universe out of nothing; the physicists say that it "emerged" from nothing. The first explanation is more plausible than the second, for while we cannot know how God created everything out of nothing, the idea itself is nevertheless comprehensible - first because the idea of a Creator Who is incomprehensible to His creatures is in itself quite comprehensible (and logical), and secondly because God is at any rate something and not nothing. Besides, it provides plausible answers to the question "Why?" in the sense of "For what purpose?" We can say, for example, that God created the universe because his nature is love, and He wants creatures to exist in order to share in His love.

The second explanation, however, not only provides no conceivable answer to the questions "How?" and "Why". It is itself nonsensical. For out of nothing nothing can come... And so: "Quantum cosmology is a branch of mathematical metaphysics. It provides no cause for the emergence of the universe, and so does not answer the first cosmological question [how?], and it offers no reason for the existence of the universe, and so does not address the second [why?]. If the mystification induced by its modest mathematics were removed from the subject, what remains does not appear appreciably different in kind from various creation myths in which the origin of the universe is attributed to sexual congress between primordial deities."

For modern cosmology appears to have veered off towards a sophisticated form of Hinduism, whose creation myth tells of a quasi-sexual explosion of multiple seeds of universes through the union of Brahma, "the germ of all being", with his consort Saraswathi. For is not "the sea of indeterminate probability" or "wave function of the universe" a kind of modern version of "the germ of all being", which explodes out of potential being into a multitude of actual universes after coming into contact with an observer? (But who could this observer be if not a God who is not Brahma?) It looks as if the physicists,

who so pride themselves on their rationality, have regressed even further into the mists of magical, pre-scientific paganism.

There is only one philosophy that truly embraces everything: Orthodox Christianity. One of the early Christian martyrs, St. Justin the philosopher, said: "Only Christianity is a reliable and useful philosophy. Only thus and for this reason can I be a philosopher." Modern science has reverted to a way of thinking that recalls many non-Christian religions and heresies, but is essentially simply a stubborn refusal to accept the "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1.3) of the existence of the invisible God from His visible creation – for which unbelief, as St. Paul says, "*there is no excuse*" (Romans 1.20). It has fulfilled the prophecy of St. Nilus the Myrrh-Gusher (+1596) about the twentieth century: "[The Antichrist], the dishonourable one, will so complete science with vainglory that it will lose its way and lead people to unbelief in the existence of the God in three Persons."

St. Nilus points to vainglory as the motive of this pseudo-science (Dostoyevsky called it "half science" in *The Devils*) because leaving God out of every equation enables the scientists to demonstrate the brilliance of their own minds, to earn the plaudits of their colleagues and receive the glory of a world that craves the gold of wisdom but receives only the husks of "the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called science" (I Timothy 6.20). Therefore the way back to true knowledge and wisdom can only be through *humility*, through submitting to "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God", the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1.24), "in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2.3) - but Who enlightens only those who ask him in humility. So let the model for the scientists be the humility of Solomon, the wisest of men, who said: "I am Thy slave and the son of Thy handmaid, a man who is weak and short-lived, with little understanding of judgement and laws; for even if one is perfect among the sons of men, yet without the wisdom that comes from Thee he will be regarded as nothing... For a perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind. We can hardly guess at what is on earth, and what is at hand we find with labour. But who has traced out what is in the heavens, and who has learned Thy counsel, unless Thou give him wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from on high?" (Wisdom of Solomon 9.5-6, 15-17)

### III. Psychology

The contemporary sciences, both physical and biological, appear to rule out the possibility of freewill; everything is chance and/or fate. Psychology is unique in denying the existence of its own object, the *psyche* or soul – and therefore, of course, freewill.

In order to understand the origin of such a fundamental error, we have to distinguish three types of causality: *empirical*, *human* and *Divine*... Let us begin with *empirical* causality, which is the weakest, most insubstantial form of causality. For we never actually *see* an empirical causal bond. What we see is

events of class A being regularly followed by events of class B. We then *infer* that there is something *forcing* this sequence of events, or *making it happen*; and this we call *causality*. But, as David Hume pointed out, we never actually *see* this force, this putative bond uniting A and B.

In fact, our only direct experience of causality is when we cause *our own actions*. Thus when I decide to open the door, I have a direct experience of myself making my hand go towards the door-knob and turning it. This experience of causality is quite different from watching events of class A “causing” events of class B in empirical nature. I do not see the exercise of my will being constantly followed by the opening of doors. I *know* by direct, irrefutable, non-sensory (what the philosophers call *phenomenological*) experience that the cause of that door opening was *I*. This is the second type of causality, *human causality*; and our knowledge of it, unlike our knowledge of any empirical causality, is both direct and *certain*. Moreover, I know that my decision to open the door was *uncaused* in the scientific, empirical sense. Even if a man were standing behind me with a gun and ordering me to open the door, this would not take away from the uncaused nature of my action. It might explain *why* I decided to open the door at that moment; but, as the philosophers have demonstrated, to give *the reasons for an action* is not the same as describing *the causes of an event*; to confuse reasons with causes is a “category mistake”. Only if the man with a gun *took away my power of decision* – that is, hypnotized me to open the door, or took hold of my hand and placed it on the door-knob and then turned my hand, would it be true to say that my action was caused. Or rather, then it would no longer be *my* action, for *my* action can only be the free result of *my* will: it would be the action of another person: *he* would be the cause (the uncaused cause) of the action.

Both human and empirical causality are caused by God, Who brings all things, both rational and irrational, into being. Thus it is the Divine Causality which causes events of type A to be followed always (or almost always – the exception is what we perceive to be miracles) by events of type B: He is the Cause of all empirical causation. But Divine Causality is closer to human causality, in Whose image it was made, insofar as It, too, is (a) empirically uncaused, and (b) personal, whereas every empirical cause is (a) empirically caused (because God has caused it to be so), and (b) impersonal.

We experience Divine Causality in moments of grace. It has this effect on human causality that it does not violate the latter’s free and uncaused nature; It informs it without compelling it. Thus when a saint speaks under the influence of God’s grace, he retains complete control over his own words while submitting to the influence of God’s Word. This is incomprehensible within the scientific world-view. But since the scientists cannot see even the empirical causes they postulate, why should this concern us?...

One of the few Orthodox thinkers who attempted really to come to grips with these issues was the Serbian Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, who died in exile in America in 1956. A polymath with several degrees in Western

universities, he was well qualified to challenge the underlying assumptions of western thought. One of his most important essays was on the nature of causality; in it he demonstrated that empirical causality as scientists understand it is insubstantial by comparison with the only true, *personal* causality, which belongs only to God, men and the angelic world:-

“One of the fundamental points of doctrine in which our Orthodox Faith differs from all the philosophical systems as well as from some non-Orthodox denominations is the conception of causality, i.e., of causes. Those outside are prompt to call our faith mysticism, and our Church the Church of mystics. By the unorthodox theologians we have been often rebuked on that account, and by the atheists ridiculed. Our learned theologians neither denied nor confirmed our mysticism, for we never called ourselves mystics. So, we listened in wonderment and silence, expecting the outsiders to define clearly their meaning of our so-called mysticism. They defined it as a kind of oriental quietism, or a passive plunging into mere contemplation of the things divine. The atheists of our time, in Russia, Yugoslavia and everywhere do not call any religion by any other name but mysticism which for them means superstition. We listen to both sides, and we reject both definitions of our orthodox mysticism, which is neither quietism nor superstition.

“It is true, however, that contemplative practice - not quietism though - is a recommendable part of our spiritual life, but it is not an all embracing rule. Among the great Saints we find not only the contemplative Fathers of the desert and seclusion, but also many warriors, benefactors, missionaries, sacred writers, sacred artists, and other persons of great activities and a sacrificial mode of Christian life. . . And what is our answer to the atheists who call our mystical Faith superstition? Least of all they have the right to call it superstition since, by denying God and the soul and all the higher intelligences, they are indeed bearers of a thoughtless and nefarious superstition which never existed in the history of mankind, at least not on such a scale and with such fanaticism. Now, while those who speak of our mysticism are unable to give a satisfactory explanation of this word, let us ourselves look to it and explain to them from our point of view how should they understand our so-called mysticism. Our religious mysticism is nothing misty, nothing nebulous, nothing obscure or mystified. It is our clear and perennial doctrine of causality. If we have to call this doctrine by an ism, we may call it personalism.

“Every day and everywhere people talk of causes. They say: ‘This is caused by that, and that is caused by this.’ That is to say: the next preceding thing, or event, or fact, or accident is the cause of the next succeeding one.

“This is indeed a superficial and short-sighted notion of causality. We don't wonder about this superficiality of some ignorant persons, especially of the busy people of great cities who have little time for deep and calm thinking. But we are astonished to find the same superficiality with the learned and philosophically minded, as the materialists, naturalists and even deists. And because we call their theory of causes naive and fatalistic, they call us mystics.

We consider that all those persons, be they ignorant or learned, who believe in natural and physical causes as definite, are fatalists. Both naturalism and materialism are teaching a blind fatalism without a smallest door of escape or a smallest window for sunshine. We Orthodox Christians must resist this blind fatalism, as all Christians should do, and defend our intelligent doctrine of personal causality of and in the world.

“This doctrine means that all causes are personal. Not only the first cause of the world is personal (as the deists think), but personal are all the causes of all things, of all facts, of all happenings and changes in all the world. When we say personal, we mean intelligent, conscious and intentional. Yes, we mean that some sort of personal beings are causing all, or better to say, are the causes of all. That is what personal means. I know that at this my first statement some non-Orthodox would remark: ‘That doctrine you are probably drawing from your copious Orthodox tradition, for which we do not care, and not from the Holy Scripture, which we take as the only infallible source of all truths.’ To this I answer: no, not at all; this doctrine is so evident in the Holy Scripture, from the first page to the last, that I have no need this time to quote our tradition at all.

“On the first pages of the sacred Bible a personal God is specified as the First cause, or better to say the First Causer of the world visible and invisible. That God the Creator is personal, this is a professed and upheld dogma not only by all Christian denominations, but by some other religions too. We Christians, however, are privileged to know the inner being of God, i.e., God as Trinity in persons and Oneness in essence. We have learned to know this mystery through the momentous revelation in the New Testament. The dogma of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost means that God is trebly personal, yes supremely personal.

“But not God alone is personal. Personal are also the angels, personal is Satan with his perverse hosts of demons, and finally personal are men. If you carefully read the Bible, without the prejudices of so-called ‘natural laws’ and the supposed ‘accidental causes’, you will find three causal factors, and all the three personal. They are: God, Satan and Man. They are, of course, not equal in personal attributes, and there is no parity among them. Satan has lost all his positive attributes of an angel of light, and has become the chief enemy of God and Man, but still he has remained a personal being, bent though to do evil. Man, since the original of sin, has darkened his glory and deformed God's image in himself; yet, he has remained a personal being, conscious, intelligent and purposefully active, wavering between God and Satan, with his free choice to be saved by the first or destroyed by the second.

“God is activity itself. Not only does he interfere now and then with His wonders and miracles in the life of men and nations, but He is constantly and unceasingly active in supporting and vivifying His creation. ‘Being near to everyone of us’, (Acts 17.27) and ‘knowing even the thoughts of man’ (Psalms 94.11) He eagerly acts and reacts in human affairs: gives or withholds children,

gives or withholds good harvest, approves or threatens, grants peace to the faithful and excites war against the devil worshippers. He commands all the elements of nature, fire and water, hail and storms, either to aid the oppressed righteous or to punish the godless. He calls the locust, caterpillars and worms 'my great army' (Joel 2.25), which He orders to devour the food of the sinners. He 'is able to destroy both soul and body in hell' (Matthew 10.28) He knows 'the number of our hairs', and 'not a sparrow shall fall on the ground' without His will and His knowledge. All this is testified by many instances in the Bible. And this is not all. There is no page in the Scripture which does not refer to God, yea a personal God, His will and His diverse activities. The whole Bible affirms that God is not only the First Causer of the world but also that He is all the time the personal All-ruler - Pantokrator - of the world, as we confirm in the first article of our Creed.

"Another causal factor is Satan, God's adversary, with his hosts of fallen spirits. He is the personal causer of all evil. Ever since his fall as Lucifer from the glory of 'an anointed cherub (Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14) to the dark pit Hell', he is unceasingly trying to infiltrate evil and corruption into every part of God's creation, specially into man. Envious of God and man, he is the hater of both. Christ called him 'a murderer from the beginning' (John 8.44) and also 'a liar and the father of it [lies]'. He is a mighty ruler of evil and darkness, but still subordinate, unwillingly though, to the all-powerful God. Only with God's permission is he able to harm men and to cause illness, confusion, pain, discord, death and destruction. But the more a person or a people sin against God, the greater power Satan gets over that person or that people. At the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ the whole world was lying in evil because of Satan's terrible grasp over the bedevilled mankind. The world then was teeming with evil spirits as never before. Therefore, Satan dared to offer Christ all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them as his own. A robber and liar!

"The third causal factor in this world, according to the Bible, is man. With all his littleness and weaknesses man is the greatest prize for which Satan is relentlessly and desperately fighting, and for which God from the beginning was ready to die. Staggering between God and Satan, man is supported by God and beguiled by Satan, vacillating hither and thither, groping for light, life and happiness in his short span of existence on this planet. Yet, with all his seeming insignificance in this mammoth universe, man is able to change it by his conduct. Confucius said: 'The clouds give the rain or give it not according to men's conduct'. Much more valid is this observation in Christianity with its belief in a personal God, the Giver of rain.

"By his faith and virtues, specially by his obedience to God, man regains the dominion over all the created nature which God in creating him entrusted to him. But by his apostasy and corruption he dethrones himself and comes under the dominion of physical nature and becomes its slave. Instead of commanding he is obeying the mute nature, and fighting it for his mere existence, as you see it still now happening in our own generation. And instead of having God as his only Master, he got two masters over himself, Satan and nature, both

tyrannizing him... By his faith and virtue, man could have removed the mountains, tamed the wild beasts, defeated the aggressor, shut the heaven, stopped calamities, healed the sick, raised the dead. And by his sins and vices, specially by his apostasy from God, his only loving and powerful Friend, he could have caused the destruction of cities and civilizations, the earthquakes, floods, pestilence, eclipse of the sun, famine and all the innumerable evils, pleasing Satan and saddening God. Thus, following God man becomes god, and following the devil, he becomes devil. But be he with God or with God's adversary, man has been from the beginning and is now the focus point of this planet and one of the three most important causes of events and changes in the world. And thus, whatever happens on this world's stage, it happens either by God's benevolent will, or by Satan's evil will, or by man through his free choice between good and evil, right and wrong.

“Now, when we mention only these three causal factors: God, Satan, and Man, you should not think of mere three persons, but of terrific forces behind each of them. Behind God - a numberless host of angels of light, so much so that each man and nation has its own angel guardian; behind Satan - a horrible locust swarm of evil spirits, so much so that a whole legion of them are used to torment one single man, that one of Gadara; behind Man, since Christ's emptying of Hades and His Resurrection, there are by now billions of human souls who, from the other world, from the Church Triumphant, by their intercession and love, are helping us, the many millions of Christ's faithful; they are still fighting against the Satanic forces for Christ and our own salvation. For our chief fight in this world is not against natural and physical adversities which is by comparison a small fight befitting animals rather than men, but as the visionary Paul says: ‘Against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world’ (Ephesians 6.12) i.e., the satanic forces of evil. And we Christians have been, and always shall be, victorious over these satanic forces through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Why through Him? Because love is a greater power than all other powers, visible and invisible. And Christ came to the earth and went down below to the very hellish nest of the satanic hosts to crush them in order to liberate and save men for sheer love of men. Therefore, He could at the end of His victorious mission say: ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth’ (Matthew 28, 18) When He says ‘all power’, He means it literally, all power - in the first place the power over Satan and his satanic forces, then the power over sinners, sin and death. First of all over Satan, the causer of sin and death. ‘For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil’ (I John 3.8) Therefore, we rejoice in our belief that our Lord Jesus Christ is the irresistible Lord. We are acknowledging this belief in every liturgy by stamping the sacred bread for the Holy Communion with the words IC -XC-NI-KA.

“Read and reread the Gospel as much as you like, you will find in Christ's words not the slightest suggestion of natural and physical causes of anything or any event. Clear as the shining sun is Christ's revelation and teaching, that there are only three causal factors in this world: God, Man and Satan. His chief obedience was to His heavenly Father; His chief loving work was the healing

of men's bodies and soul, and His chief dispute with the Pharisees was about His power of driving the evil spirits out of men and the forgiving of sins. As to nature and the so-called natural order and laws, He showed an unheard-of absolute dominion and power. He vigorously impressed His followers that they were 'not of the world', but, said He, 'I have chosen you out of the world' (John 15.19). Now, since the Christians are not of this world, they certainly cannot accept the theory of the men of this world about the impersonal, unintelligent and accidental causes of the process of things and events. Also in our liturgical book you find the same three personal causal factors as in the Gospel. The same in the Life of Saints too. The same in the conviction and consciousness of the masses of our Orthodox people.

"Therefore, whoever speaks of impersonal causes of things, happenings and changes in this world, is limiting God's power, ignoring the powers of darkness, and despising the role and significance of man. The Scripture does not know, and does not mention any impersonal and blindly accidental cause of anything in the world. The Bible teaches us quite clearly, that the causes of all things, facts, events and changes, come from higher personal beings and personal intelligences. And we stick to this teaching of the Holy Book. Therefore we make no concessions to the secular, or scientific theories about impersonal, unintelligent, unintentional or accidental causality in the world. When I say we, I do not think only of the great Fathers of the Church, nor of the Doctors of Divinity, nor of the learned teachers of religion, but also of the masses of our Orthodox people all over the world. Our Orthodox people would not say: a wolf caused the death of somebody's sheep; nor: a falling stone caused the injury of a boy; nor: a tornado was the cause of the destruction of somebody's house; nor: good weather was the cause of an abundant crop. Our people look through the screen of the physical world into a spiritual sphere and there seek the true causes of those events. They always seek a personal cause, or causes. And though this is in accord with the Bible's teaching, some outsiders call us mystics, and our Faith mysticism or superstition. In fact, our mysticism is nothing else than a deeper insight into the spiritual realities, or intelligences, which are personally causing whatever there is or happens, using the natural things and elements only as their instruments, tools, channels, symbols, or signals.

"All this leads us to the following conclusions. First of all, Christianity is a religion not so much of principles, rules and precepts, but primarily and above all of personal attachments, in the first place an affectionate attachment to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through Him to other members of His Church, the living and the dead.

"Secondly, our Orthodox doctrine of personal causality on the whole range of nature and world's history is beyond any doubt the biblical doctrine. It was wholly adopted and explained by the Fathers of the Church, and it is kept lucidly in the consciousness of the Orthodox people.



“The benefits we draw from such personalism in the doctrine of causality are manifold. By it we stir our mind to pierce through the visible events into the realm of the invisible intelligences that caused and dominate the whole drama of the world. It sharpens more than anything else our thinking power, our own intelligence. By it we are constantly made aware of the presence of our Friend, Christ the Saviour, to whom we pray, and also of our arch-enemy, Satan, whom we have to fight and avoid. It helps us enormously towards educating and forming strong personal, or individual, characters. It inspires us with spirit of optimistic heroism in suffering, in self-sacrifice, and in the endurance of martyrdom for Christ's sake beyond description, as testified by our Church history.

“All these and other benefits are not possessed by the follower of the doctrine of impersonal causality; not even the greatest of all benefits - the knowledge of the truth.”

*August 5/18, 2020.  
Holy Martyr-King Oswald of Northumbria.*

### 13. THE FALL OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

In the Punic Wars that ended in 146 BC “the Romans became Romans”, acquiring that iron streak that made them the great conquerors of antiquity and the model of would-be world conquerors for all subsequent ages. But success and prosperity had the same corrupting effect on them as it has had on all the conquering nations of history. For “down to the destruction of Carthage,” wrote the historian Sallust, “the people and senate shared the government peaceably and with restraint... Fear of its enemies preserved the good morals of the state. But when the people were relieved of this fear, the favourite vices of prosperity – licence and pride – appeared as a natural consequence... The nobles started to use their position, and the people their liberty, to gratify their selfish passions, every man snatching and seizing what he could for himself... One small group of oligarchs had everything in its control alike in peace and war – the treasury, the provinces, all distinctions and triumphs. The people were burdened with military service and poverty, while the spoils of war were snatched by the generals and shared with a handful of friends... Thus the possession of power gave unlimited scope to ruthless greed, which violated and plundered everything... till finally it brought about its own downfall....”

As Rome expanded a major flaw in her character became more prominent: a fanatical love of honour and glory - *honestas* in Latin – that ruled the hearts of Romans both individually and collectively. The historian Livy called ambition “the ancestral curse” of Rome, going back to Romulus and Remus; and so it was. On the one hand, the individual Roman was fiercely ambitious, seeking the praise and admiration of his fellow-countrymen through the attainment of high political office or military exploits. On the other hand, the Romans as a whole did not tolerate these individual ambitions going too far, to the detriment of the state as a whole. The glory of Rome was the highest value, higher than the glory of any individual Roman; and the constitution was designed to preserve this balance.

However, as Adrian Galsworthy writes: “The immense profits of conquest and empire threatened delicate balances within politics, society, and the economy. Competition among the aristocracy for high office and status had always been intense, but in the past was kept within strict confines of convention and law. Now many of the props of the system came under threat as senators spent ever-increasing sums to win popularity and significant groups within the population who felt their plight was desperate and readily rallied to anyone who championed their cause. There were opportunities for a few men to rise far higher than had ever been possible in the past and their peers resented and resisted this.”

In the second half of the second century BC, as the Republic’s conquests multiplied, and more and more people from the conquered lands poured into Rome’s crowded slums, tensions between the rich and the poor increased. The poor were led by two brother-tribunes, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, grandsons of Scipio Africanus. As Tom Holland writes, “First Tiberius, in 133

BC, and then Gaius, ten years later, used their tribunes to push for reform in favour of the poor. They proposed that publicly held land be divided into allotments and handed out to the masses, that corn be sold to them below the market rate; even, shockingly, that the Republic should provide the poorest soldiers with clothes. Radical measures indeed, and the aristocracy, unsurprisingly, was appalled. To most nobleman, there appeared something implacable and sinister about the devotion of the Gracchi to the people. True, Tiberius was not the first of his class to have concerned himself with land reform; but his paternalism, as far as his peers were concerned, went altogether too far and too fast. Gaius, even more alarmingly, had a consciously revolutionary vision, of a republic imbued with the values of Greek democracy, in which the balance of power between the classes would be utterly transformed, and the people, not the aristocracy, would serve as the arbiters of Rome. How, his peers wondered, could any nobleman argue for this, unless he aimed to establish himself as a tyrant? What struck them as particularly ominous was the fact that Tiberius, having finished his year of office, had immediately sought re-election, and that Gaius, in 122 BC, had actually succeeded in obtaining a second successive tribunate. Where might illegalities like these not lead? Sacred as the person of a tribune might be, it was not so sacred as the preservation of the Republic itself. Twice the cry went up to defend the constitution and twice it was answered. Twelve years after Tiberius was clubbed to death with a stool-leg in a violent brawl, Gaius, in 121, was also killed by agents of the aristocracy. His corpse was decapitated, and lead poured into his skull. In the wake of his murder three thousand of his followers were executed without trial."

This was the last time that the state was threatened by revolution from below, from the plebs. However, in the first century another, still greater threat appeared in the form of rival aristocrats and war-lords who opposed the authority of the Senate, and manipulated its magistracies, in order to satisfy their own personal ambitions. Men such as Marius, Sulla, Crassus, Pompey and Julius Caesar profited from the fact that the Republic was now fast becoming an empire, with vast territories in both East and West that the senate could not control directly. So ambitious aristocrats sought to be made proconsul of, for example, Asia or Spain or Gaul, where, in addition to enhancing their reputations through military victories, they could make fortunes through looting and tax farming and recruit armies with which to intimidate the Senate when they returned to Rome.

The first to do this was Sulla, and it was Sulla's breaking of the taboo which forbade generals from bringing their troops into the city in 88 that marked the first major break with republican political tradition. After defeating Marius in the first of several civil wars, Sulla became dictator, murdered thousands of his opponents, and in 81 decreed a new, purely political path of advancement for aspiring politicians: he engineered that the major offices of state - quaestor, praetor and consul - should be kept among his supporters, and also muzzled the tribunate...

The next great warlord was Pompey the Great, who had made his reputation by defeating King Mithridates of Pontus and then conquering Judaea, entering the Holy of Holies and installing Herod the Great. Through his Eastern Settlement of 62, he subdued almost the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean as far as the borders of Parthia. "Pompey had exceptional organizational skills, and his Eastern Settlement of 62 BCE laid the foundations for the later *Pax Romana* in the region by means of a three-faceted arrangement that involved: creating a virtually continuous ring of provinces from the southern shore of the Black Sea to Syria/Palestine; founding about forty new cities, and organizing and promoting independent 'client' states as a kind of firewall outside the ring of provinces. On the whole, the new cities began to flourish, bringing Rome a 70 per cent increase in revenue from the region. The client states, many of whose rulers owed their position to Pompey, were nominally independent and maintained friendly relations with Rome in an arrangement modeled on that between a high-ranking Roman *patronus* ('patron') and his *clientes* ('dependents'). Pompey's administrative talents were indisputable, but what really mattered to Rome was that he was a *conqueror*. He was now an incredibly powerful man: he received divine cult on Delos; his eye-watering wealth made him the richest man in Rome; kings were in his debt, both literally and figuratively; his client base encompassed individuals, cities, provinces and kingdoms; and he commanded vast military resources."

But it was Julius Caesar, Pompey's son-in-law and an equally formidable general, who really destroyed the Republic, turning it into a military dictatorship. In 59 he formed "the first triumvirate" with Crassus (probably the richest man in Rome) and Pompey that played fast and loose with the constitution, which was defended by such men as the senator Cato and the lawyer Cicero. However, in 53 Crassus was killed by the Parthians at Carrhae, a terrible defeat second only to the similar-sounding defeat at the hands of Hannibal, leaving only Caesar and Pompey controlling the destinies of the Republic... When Caesar's daughter and Pompey's wife Julia died in childbirth, the bonds between the two men weakened. Pompey now emerged as the champion of the constitution and the Senate. But Caesar proved stronger than all; and "Caesar" with its cognates ("Kaiser", "Tsar", etc.) was to be a byword for one-man, monarchical rule for many centuries to come...

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Having smashed the power of the Celts of Gaul in a series of brilliant campaigns during which he also assaulted the Celts of Southern England, but not getting what he wanted from the senate in Rome, Caesar led his battle-hardened veterans across the river Rubicon into Italy on January 10, 49. This, writes Dominic Sandbrook, "was a treasonable offence, punishable by death. Little wonder, then, that at the water's edge he hesitated. 'Even now we can turn back', he said, 'but when we pass this little bridge, it means war.'

"According to the historian Suetonius, it was now that the gods intervened. Suddenly there appeared 'a being of wondrous stature and beauty, who sat and

played upon a reed.' As some of the soldiers stepped towards him, the apparition grabbed one of their trumpets, 'rushed to the river, and sounding the war-note with a mighty blast, strode to the opposite bank.' That, Suetonius wrote, was the signal that Caesar wanted. 'Let us go where the omens of the gods and the crimes of our enemies call us!' he shouted to his men. '*Alea iacta est!*' (the die is cast). With that Caesar spurred on his horse. The Rubicon had been crossed. Peace wouldn't return to Rome for close on two decades..."

Cowed and humiliated by Caesar's swift advance, the Senate evacuated Rome on the orders of Pompey while Pompey and his army crossed over to Greece. At the battle of Pharsalus in 48, Caesar defeated Pompey, who fled to Alexandria, where he was murdered by Pharaoh Ptolemy. Caesar pursued him to Egypt, where he had an affair with Cleopatra, who bore him a son, Caesarion. Having defeated all his opponents, Caesar returned to Rome in triumph (his fifth). In 44 he was proclaimed dictator for life. The Republic was dead: kingship – more precisely: despotism – was back in power....

Caesar was told that he should beware the Ides of March. Ignoring the warning, he went without a bodyguard to meet the Senate in Pompey's assembly hall on the Ides of March, 44 BC. "Pompey's statue," writes Holland, "still dominated the Senate's meeting-space. After Pharsalus it had been hurriedly pulled down, but Caesar, with typical generosity, had ordered it restored, along with all of Pompey's other statues. An investment policy, Cicero had sneered, against his own being removed – but that was malicious and unfair. Caesar had no reason to fear for the future of his statue. Nor, walking into the assembly hall that morning and seeing the senators rise to greet him, for himself. Not even when a crowd of them approached him with a petition, mobbing him as he sat down on his gilded chair, pressing him down with their kisses. Then suddenly he felt his toga being pulled down from his shoulders. 'Why,' he cried out, startled, 'this is violence!' At the same moment he felt a slashing pain across his throat. Twisting around he saw a dagger, red with his own blood.

"Some sixty men stood in a press around him. All of them had drawn daggers from under their togas. All of them were well known to Caesar. Many were former enemies who had accepted his pardon – but even more were friends. Some were officers who had served with him in Gaul, among them Decius Brutus, commander of the war fleet that had wiped out the Venetians. The most grievous betrayal, however, the one that finally numbed Caesar and stopped him in his desperate efforts to fight back, came from someone closer still. Caesar glimpsed, flashing through the mêlée, a knife aimed at his groin, held by another Brutus, Marcus, his reputed son. 'You, my boy!' he whispered, then fell to the ground. Not wishing to be witnessed in his death agony, he covered his head with the ribbons of his toga. The pool of his blood stained the base of Pompey's statue. Dead, he lay in his great rival's shadow..."

"The rule of the dictator," writes Adrian Galsworthy, "was far from harsh, his reforms practical and generally for the wider good of the state. Yet no one

[in the opinion of the Romans] should have such vast powers at all, let alone in perpetuity. Sulla had been far more brutal, but at least Sulla had resigned his dictatorship after a few years and retired to private life. Julius Caesar called him 'a political illiterate' for doing so, and showed no sign of willingness to give up his dominance of the state. He was in his fifty-sixth year and although troubled with epilepsy, it was perfectly possible that he would live on for decades. The planned Parthian War would give him the clean glory of fighting a foreign enemy, and add even more to his prestige when he returned in three years or so.

"Julius Caesar had *regnum*, effectively royal power over the state. The honours given to him were extensions to those granted to the great men of the past – most notably Pompey – but far surpassed them all in scale. He sat on a golden chair of office, wore the triumphing general's toga and laurel wreath on all public occasions, and was given the right to sport the high boots and long-sleeved tunic which he claimed were the garb of his distant ancestors, the kings of Alba Longa – a city near Rome and a rival in its early history. A pediment, like those on a temple, was added to his house. Other honours brought Julius Caesar very close to divine status, although it is harder to say whether or not he was actually deified in his life-time. The idea was anyway less shocking to the Romans with their polytheistic tradition than to us. Stories told of heroes who became gods through their deeds, and it was common enough to praise great achievements as 'god like'...

"'I am not King [*rex*], but Caesar,' said the dictator in response to a crowd hailing him as king – *Rex* was a family name of another aristocratic line. The subject was delicate. When tribunes had coronets removed from one of his statues, Julius Caesar responded angrily, claiming that they denied him the chance to refuse himself and wanted to blacken his name by drawing attention to the whole business. The most famous incident came at the Festival of the Lupercalia, celebrated on 15 February 44 BC, with teams of priests clad only in goatskin loincloths running through the heart of the City, gently flicking passers-by with their whips. The dictator presided on a tribunal, and the leader of the priests Mark Antony concluded by running up and offering a crown to him. Julius Caesar refused, to the delight of the crowd, repeating the gesture when Anthony offered it again. The most likely interpretation of the affair is that it was a deliberate pantomime, intended to show once and for all that he did not want the title of king. If so, then it did not work. Soon people were saying that it was a test, and that Julius Caesar would have taken the crown if only the people had responded with enthusiasm. Another story circulated that the Senate would debate making him king everywhere except inside Rome itself.

"The truth scarcely mattered. Deep in their souls senators knew that this was not how things should be. King or not, god or not, and however kind and efficient personally, Julius Caesar possessed supreme power, effectively *regnum*, whatever he called himself, and that meant that there could be no *res publica* – no state. For a Roman aristocrat the true Republic only existed when

the senatorial class shared control, guiding magistrates elected through open competition and changing them regularly, so that plenty of people won the chance for high command and profit. This was liberty, and even for quite a few Caesareans it was now clearly dead."

But was that real liberty? And does revolution against despotism, even in the name of "liberty" or "democracy", necessarily bring the real thing? History would prove again and again, beginning in 44 BC, that it does not. Thus Caesar was right when he correctly "predicted renewed civil war if he died suddenly or was killed, and believed others would have the sense to realise this and see that it was for the greater good for him to live... Writing over a century later, Tacitus would characterise the years of civil war and triumvirate as an era when there was 'neither law nor custom'. Basic institutions had broken down and were replaced with arbitrary power."

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Until the rise of the military dictators, the real power in Rome had been the rich, landowning aristocracy of the senators, who manipulated the popular elections through a patronage system and disposed of real champions of the poor such as Tiberius Gracchus. They naturally opposed the dictators, who threatened their power. But the dictators were popular because they were also populists who knew how to buy the support of the lower classes. Thus Sulla gave land to his soldiers (who often found themselves displaced from their farms by neighbours on returning from military service). And Caesar not only gave land to his soldiers but also grain to the poor (many of whom had been also displaced from their land by the landowners). So when Caesar was murdered, the people rioted against the Senate and rallied around Caesar's heirs, especially Mark Antony and Caesar's great-nephew Octavian, a teenager who had been adopted by Caesar and now traded on his name.

In the first part of the civil war that followed, Mark Antony and Octavian fought against each other. But then the two joined up with Lepidus, Caesar's deputy, against the Senate, which it terrorized by the murder of several hundreds, if not thousands, of their enemies in the senate and elsewhere. The famous orator Cicero was one of the victims of these "proscriptions"

The last of the diehard republicans and anti-Caesareans, Brutus and Cassius, who had established themselves in the East, were defeated by Antony at the huge battle of Philippi in 42 and committed suicide. (Octavian was at Philippi, but took little direct part in the battle because of illness, although he claimed otherwise.) As Lepidus faded out of the picture, the two remaining triumvirs decided to divide the world between them, with Antony take the East and Octavian – the West.

But those brought up in the traditions of warlordism can rarely share power among themselves; it was inevitable that they should come to blows eventually. In the conflict that followed, it seemed that Antony, a seasoned warrior, had

many advantages as against the young and inexperienced Octavian. But Octavian was intelligent, sober and calculating, while Antony was defeated both on the battlefield by the Parthians and in the bedchamber by his famous passion for Cleopatra. Under her influence he “soon embraced a Hellenistic eastern vision of kingship, encouraged by Cleopatra, which was very different from the Roman tradition of austere dignity. She was determined to use Roman backing to re-establish the Ptolemaic empire.”

But this was something the Romans could never accept. As Holland writes, “Antony’s partnership with Cleopatra, formalised in 32 when he divorced Octavia, was instinctively recognised by most Romans for what it was – a betrayal of the Republic’s deepest principles and values. That the Republic was dead did not make it any less mourned, nor its prejudices any less savage. To surrender to what was unworthy of a citizen: this was what the Romans had always most dreaded. It was flattering, therefore, to a people who had become unfree to pillory Antony as unmanly and a slave to a foreign queen. For the last time, the Roman people could gird themselves for war and imagine that the Republic and their own virtue were not, after all, entirely dead.

“Many years later, Octavian would boast: ‘The whole of Italy, unprompted, swore allegiance to me, and demanded that I lead her into war. The provinces of Gaul, Spain, Africa, Sicily and Sardinia also swore the same oath.’ Here, in the form of a plebiscite spanning half the world, was something utterly without precedent, a display of universalism consciously designed to put that of Antony and Cleopatra in the shadow, drawn from the traditions not of the East but of the Roman Republic itself. Undisputed autocrat and champion of the city’s most ancient ideals, Octavian sailed to war as both. It was a combination that was to prove irresistible. When, for the third time in less than twenty years, two Roman forces met head to head in the Balkans, it was [Octavian] Caesar, yet again, who emerged triumphant...

“Throughout the summer of 31 BC, with his fleet rotting in the shallows and his army rotting with disease, Antony was blockaded on the eastern coast of Greece. His camp began to empty... Finally, when the stench of defeat had grown too overpowering for Antony to ignore, he decided to make a desperate throw. On 2 September he ordered his fleet to attempt a break out, past the cape of Actium, into the open sea. For much of the day the two great fleets faced each other, motionless in the silence of the crystalline bay. Then suddenly, in the afternoon, there was movement: Cleopatra’s squadron, darting forwards, smashing its way through a gap in Octavian’s line, slipping free. Antony, abandoning his giant flagship for a swifter vessel, followed, but most of the fleet was left behind, his legions too. They quickly surrendered. With this brief, inglorious battle perished all of Antony’s dreams, and all the hopes of the new Isis [Cleopatra].”

Antony committed suicide; Cleopatra did the same nine days later. Octavian was now the sole master of the *Roman empire*; he was to rule from 29 BC to his death in 14 AD. The West appeared to have triumphed over the East, western



republican virtue over eastern despotic decadence. But it was a Pyrrhic victory: the decadence and luxuriousness of the East would penetrate the Roman Empire that Octavian was about to inaugurate. Many western and republican forms remained; but the imperial power became in essence eastern and despotic. Julius Caesar had rejected the offer of a crown by Mark Antony; for kingship still remained a dirty word in the political discourse of the proud, freedom-loving Romans. But Octavian, while claiming to restore and renew the republic, in effect buried it; and after so many years of civil war, the people were prepared to submit to what was in effect a revival of the kingdom, choosing peace over freedom...

The real victor over the Roman republic was the feminine principle incarnate in Cleopatra and Egypt, which had triumphed over the masculine principle incarnate in Caesar and Rome. From now on, the emperors of Rome began to acquire the aura of profane, luxurious divinity that permeated Hellenistic culture, leading in the end to the thoroughly Eastern concept of the god-king that we find in Nero, Domitian and Diocletian. Even Octavian, on his tour of the Eastern Mediterranean after defeating Cleopatra, had given permission to provincials to offer him divine honours, "and major shrines were established at Pergamum the province of Asia and Nicomedia in Bithynia." And the conduit of this cultural transformation was Cleopatra, the goddess-queen of Egypt, the last successor of the Pharaohs, the new Isis, who in defeat conquered her conquerors. ...

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The Senate had been prepared to murder Julius Caesar for the sake of liberty and anti-monarchism. But the years of civil war seem to have persuaded them to value stability and peace over freedom. So there was no opposition when, on January 1, 27, Octavian "announced that he was resigning his powers, and returning control of the provinces, armies and laws to the Senate. In Dio's version he begins by declaring that what he is about to say will amaze them, since he is at the height of well-earned success and could not be forced to give up power. It is only if they consider his virtuous life, and understand that he had acted out of duty to avenge his father [Julius Caesar] and protect the state, that they will find his action now less surprising and more glorious... Julius Caesar is constantly invoked, for his achievements, his own refusal to accept the crown and title of king and his undeserved murder. His heir now follows in his footsteps, perhaps winning even greater glory by laying down the power he wields. He has done what needed to be done, leaving the commonwealth strong and stable, so that the task of governing it can now safely be left to others."

The Senate could do little other than applaud wildly. But then they pleaded with him to remain as consul at the head of the state. Octavian reluctantly agreed, and in the days that followed he agreed to take responsibility "for some provinces, on the basis that these were more in need of protection from foreign enemies or internal disorder. As a result he took control of all of the Spanish

Peninsula, where conquest was incomplete, all of Gaul, where the occupation was still fairly recent and stability threatened by the German tribes from across the Rhine, and Syria, so often disturbed in the civil wars and with Parthia as a neighbour. He also retained control of Egypt, perhaps on the basis that it was a very new province. The entire command was voted to him for ten years, although he stressed that he hope to return some of the regions to senatorial control earlier than this, should he succeed in bringing the area under full control more quickly. The remaining provinces were placed under the supervision of the Senate.

“Caesar’s provinces contained the greater part of the Roman army. There were legions in Macedonia... Africa also contained several legions. Otherwise the senatorial provinces contained no significant military forces. The soldiers in Macedonia and Africa may well have continued to take an oath to Caesar, as was certainly the case within a few years...

“No one could have had any doubts about Caesar’s supremacy. His ten-year command mirrored earlier extraordinary commands of the likes of Pompey and Julius Caesar. It helped to create a façade of a public servant, taking on heavy responsibilities for the common good. The wider population are unlikely to have felt any qualms about this. Extraordinary commands had a proven track record of getting things done far more effectively than the traditional pattern of frequent transfer of responsibilities from one ambitious magistrate to another. Some senators may have felt the same way, and even those who did not drew solace from the chance of participating in the system. There was no other realistic alternative for as long as Caesar controlled the overwhelming bulk of the army. Dio notes cynically that one of the first things Caesar did after he was persuaded to accept a major role in the state was to get the Senate to pass a decree awarding a substantial payrise to his praetorian cohorts. The evidence is poor, but these probably received an annual salary of 375 denarii instead of the 225 denarii paid to legionaries. There were nine cohorts of praetorians, so they were kept just below the nominal strength of a ten-cohort legion, and several cohorts were routinely stationed in or near Rome itself. This was in contrast to Julius Caesar, who had dismissed his bodyguard early in 44 BC. Armed force remained the ultimate guarantee of Caesar’s supremacy.

“Much of the senators’ time in the meetings on 13 and especially 15 and 16 January were taken up with praising Caesar, and awarding him permanent honours. This may well have been an area where members could exercise genuine independence as regards detail, although no doubt the debate was shaped both by Caesar’s selection of the order of speakers and by contributions made by men who had already been primed. Considerable momentum quickly gathered to grant Caesar an additional *cognomen* as a mark of his incredible past and future services to the state. Some speakers suggested that he be called Romulus, linking him for ever with the founder of Rome since he had renewed and effectively refounded the City.

“As well as founder, Romulus was also Rome’s first king, and one tradition maintained that instead of dying he had been raised to the heavens to become a god. Yet some of the associations were less attractive. The foundation of Rome had begun with fratricide, Romulus’ twin brother being killed with a spade, and that was an uncomfortable thought for a generation who had seen so much civil war. An alternative tradition explained the disappearance of Rome’s first king less grandly, claiming that he had been torn in pieces by a mob of senators. After a while, opinion in the Senate shifted away from the idea of giving Caesar the name. Suetonius claims that he and his close advisers were keen, but if so they must have changed their minds at some point. That it was considered so openly and seriously tells us a good deal about the mood of the times. Senators were eager to vote honours to so powerful a man. Whether or not they like him and what he had done, no one doubted the reality of his supremacy.

“Eventually a vote was taken on a proposal by Munatius Plancus, the same man who had once painted himself blue and donned a fishtail to dance for Antony and Cleopatra, and who had later defected to Caesar, bringing news of his rival’s will. Plancus proposed the name Augustus, and the resolution was passed with a sweeping – perhaps unanimous – vote as senators moved to show their acquiescence by standing beside him. The presiding consul now became formally Imperator Caesar Augustus, *divi filius*. No Roman had ever had such a name, and it is easy for familiarity to make us forget just how novel it was. Augustus carried heavy religious overtones of the very Roman tradition of seeking divine guidance and approval through augury. Ennius, Rome’s earliest and most revered poet, spoke of the City being founded with ‘august augury’ in a passage as familiar to Romans as the most famous Shakespearean quotes are to us today.

“Caesar Augustus – sometimes the order was reversed to Augustus Caesar for added emphasis – was special, unlike anyone else, and, unlike the ten-year provincial command, the new name was a permanent honour. It was hard, perhaps impossible, to imagine Imperator Caesar Augustus, the son of a god, ever retiring to private life, or even being approached in glory, *auctoritas*, and pre-eminence by anyone else. Earlier precedents – for instance, Pompey’s extraordinary commands, and his distant supervision of the Spanish provinces from 54 BC onwards – falls far short of Caesar Augustus’ position. Other men had won grand names in the past – Sulla was *Felix* (lucky) and Pompey *Magnus* (great), but none had held so grand and sacred a name as Augustus. The only person to wield comparable power and pre-eminence was Julius Caesar. The convention of referring to his heir as Augustus and not Caesar Augustus can conceal the great similarities between their places in the state...

“Caesar Augustus held a personal permanent pre-eminence in the state, matched in the past only by his father. Like Julius Caesar he continued to hold the consulship every year. The charade of handing over power to the Senate and being handed it straight back was important... This should not make us focus so much on the few differences in Caesar Augustus’ self-presentation and conduct that we are blind to the overwhelming – and very public – similarities

between him and his father. In a sense, he had now fulfilled his teenage announcement of his intention to win the honours and offices of his father. Julius Caesar once dismissed the *res publica* as a 'mere name without form or substance', although we do not know when and in what context he expressed the view. His heir was more tactful, and avoided the abolished title of dictator, but the difference is more apparent than real. He was also *divi filius*, the 'son of a god', and both this and the name Caesar constantly paraded his connection with the murdered Julius Caesar. The monuments adorning Rome and associated with him already far surpassed the ones celebrating the dictator during his lifetime..."

The real significance both of Julius Caesar's dictatorship and of Caesar Augustus' principate is that, although they were both, as everyone knew, despots wielding essentially absolute power, they both tried to justify their power democratically, by reference to the will of the people – more precisely, of the Senate and the People (SPQR). Of course, republicanism was already in the genes of the Romans since the expulsion of their kings. And that purely Roman republicanism was reinforced by the profound influence that Greek culture and political philosophy exerted on the Romans after Greece had been incorporated into the empire. After all, all educated Romans knew Greek as well as Latin and had been tutored, often by Greek tutors, in the humanist ideals of Classical Athens and the anti-authoritarian rhetoric of Demosthenes – Cicero called his anti-Antonian speeches *Philippics* in honour of Demosthenes, and Augustus was particularly fond of citing Greek epigrams. For that cultural milieu, dictatorship might be accepted *de facto* as necessary for the preservation of the state, but it could not be accepted *de jure* – because it was against the law! The only solution was to sugar the pill of despotism with a thick layer of (pretty outrageous) constitutionalism. So the despot had to pretend to surrender his power to the people, and the people then had to pretend to give it back to him. The upshot was that everyone was (more or less) happy: the despot had preserved his power without the threat of civil war, while the Senate had placed the seal of their constitutional approval on his power. Of course, it was a charade. But it was a very important charade, and a charade with lasting and long-term consequences – nothing less than the preservation of the empire for another three hundred years (at least). Augustus' great achievement was that he played this game with great skill and supremely successfully. Thereby he created a precedent that was to be repeated right down the centuries of European history. For while despotism did not disappear, neither did democracy, and the despots had to try and provide democratic justifications for their despotism. So Napoleon was elected first consul of the French Republic by a National Assembly – but four years later crowned himself emperor. And Hitler was legally elected Chancellor of Germany by the Reichstag. And even the most powerful despot of all, Stalin, created a constitution and had himself elected by an "elected" Supreme Soviet. They were all, politically speaking, the children of Caesar Augustus, *divi filii*, "the son of a god", who first fused the despotic and democratic principles to create the greatest empire the world has ever known...

Meanwhile, amidst all this display of raw power and political gamesmanship, “there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2.1), and the real Son of God and King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was neither a self-willed despot nor a slave of the people’s will, was coming to be born in a simple cave in Bethlehem...

*August 9/22, 2020.  
Holy Apostle Matthias.*

## 14. 1968: THE YEAR OF FAILED REVOLUTIONS

The global consequences of the failing American war effort in Vietnam towards the end of the sixties were hardly less important than the regional consequences. For the first time, many people in the West began to have doubts whether the worldwide war against Communism was really worth fighting, and whether, even if it were, the Americans were capable of fighting it. Paradoxically, leftist and neo- or Euro-communist ideas were becoming popular in the West just as disillusion with Communism was setting in in the East. When Solzhenitsyn emigrated to America in 1974, he speculated that there were more true believers in Marxism in the West than in the East, and that the West would never understand the reality of Communism until they had experienced it on their own backs.

In the early months of 1968, it looked as if they might: things seemed to be getting out of control. Anti-Vietnam war protests, Flower Power, Black Power, Women's Power, the Assassination of Martin Luther-King, the resignation of President Johnson under the pressure of all these events... And yet it was not in the United States that a revolution took place, but in the cradle of nineteenth-century revolutionism, Paris. However, compared with the seriousness of the American disturbances, there was something almost trivial about "the events" of May, 1968 in Paris. Nobody died (either at home or abroad), no government was overthrown, and the consequences (apart from a pay rise for the workers) seemed to be minimal – for the time being...

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**1. Paris** The French had always had a snobbish attitude towards American Hollywood and Coca-Cola "culture" (although their "New Wave" film-makers like Truffaut admired Hitchcock), and a none-too-grateful attitude to the nation that had not only joined them in defeating the Kaiser in the First World War, and liberated them from the Nazis in the Second World War, but had also lifted the whole of Western Europe onto its economic feet and created a wall of steel against the Soviet threat at very little cost to the Europeans themselves. In a sixties book called *Le Défi Américain* Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber elaborated on various threats supposedly posed by the Americans, but, as Norman Stone points out, "failed to notice that French industry, far from languishing, was doing better than it had done since the 1890s, when the arrival of electrical energy had enabled it to bypass the coal in which France was poor. Quite soon France was going to overtake England, for the first time since the French Revolution itself.

"All of this allowed de Gaulle to appear as a world statesman, to put France back on the map. Now he, like many Frenchmen and many Europeans in general, resented the American domination. There was not just the unreliability, the way in which the USA, every four years, became paralysed by a prospective presidential election. France's defence was largely dependent upon the USA, and, here, there were fears in Paris and Bonn. They did not find

Washington easy. The more the Americans became bogged down in Vietnam, the more there was head-shaking in Europe. They alone had the nuclear capacity to stop a Russian advance, but the Berlin crisis had already shown that the Americans' willingness to come to Germany's defence was quite limited, and they had not even stood up for their own treaty rights. Now, in 1964, they were involved in a guerrilla war in south-east Asia and were demonstrably making a mess of it: would Europe have any priority? Perhaps, if West Germany had been allowed to have nuclear weapons, the Europeans could have built up a real deterrent of their own, but that was hardly in anyone's mind. The bomb was to be Anglo-American.

"At the turn of 1962-3 the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, had met Kennedy (at Nassau) and agreed to depend upon a little American technology [Polaris nuclear missiles] on condition that the French got even less. There would be no Franco-British nuclear link (France's first atomic test had been in 1960) and as far as de Gaulle was concerned, France would have to make her own way forward. He got his own back. The Americans were trying to manoeuvre Great Britain into the EEC, and, conscious now of their comparative decline, the British reluctantly agreed to be manoeuvred. At a press conference in January 1963, de Gaulle showed them the door. Europe was to be a Franco-German affair, and de Gaulle was its leader. France could not go it alone. If she had seriously to offer a way forward between the world powers, she had to have allies, and Germany was the obvious candidate. Adenauer, too, needed the votes of what, in a more robust age, had been called 'the brutal rurals', and the Common Agricultural Policy bribed them. In return for protection and price support, they would vote for Adenauer, even if they only had some small plot that they worked at weekends.

"France, with a seat on the Security Council and the capacity to make trouble for the USA with the dollar and much else, mattered; the Communists were a useful tool, and they were told not to destabilize de Gaulle. He was being helpful to Moscow. In the first instance, starting in 1964, the French had made problems as regards support for the dollar. They built up gold reserves, and then sold dollars for more gold, on the grounds that the dollar was just paper, and inflationary paper at that. There was of course more to it, in that there was no financial centre in France to rival that of London, and the French lost because they had to use London for financial transactions; by 1966 they were formally refusing to support the dollar any more, and this (an equivalent of French behavior in the early stages of the great Slump of 1929-32) was a pillar knocked from under the entire Atlantic financial system.

"De Gaulle had persuaded himself that the Sino-Soviet split would make the USSR more amenable, that it might even become once more France's ideal eastern partner. There were also signs, he could see, of a new independence in eastern Europe. The new Romanian leader, Ceaușescu, looked with envy on next-door neighbour Tito, cultivated and admired by everybody. Romania had been set up by France a century before, and French had been the second, or even, for the upper classes, the first language until recently. Now, de Gaulle

took up links with her, and also revisited a Poland that he had not seen since 1920, as a young officer. In March 1966 he announced that France would leave the NATO joint command structure, and the body's headquarters were shifted to Brussels, among much irritation at French ingratitude. In June the General visited the USSR itself, and unfolded his schemes to Brezhnev: there should be a new European security system, a nuclear France and a nuclear USSR in partnership, the Americans removed, and a French-dominated Europe balancing between the two sides. He had already made sure of Europe's not having an American component, in that he had vetoed British membership of the Community. Now he would try to persuade Brezhnev that the time had come to get rid of East Germany, to loosen the iron bonds that kept the satellite countries tied to Moscow, and to prepare for serious change in the post-war arrangements. Brezhnev was not particularly interested, and certainly not in the disappearance of East Germany; in any case, although France was unquestionably of interest, it was West Germany that chiefly concerned Moscow, and there were constant problems over Berlin. De Gaulle was useful because, as Brezhnev said, 'thanks to him we have made a breach, without the slightest risk, in American capitalism. De Gaulle is of course an enemy, we know, and the French Party, narrow-minded and seeing only its own interests, has been trying to work us up against him. But look at what we have achieved: the American position in Europe has been weakened, and we have not finished yet.'"

France had indeed acted ungratefully and treacherously, and a serious breach in the Western alliance could well have emerged. However, while France was no longer part of the command structure of NATO, and NATO was forced to withdraw its troops from French soil, the French did not retract their obligation to collective security. As David Reynolds points out, "they intended to engage in such alliance activities as suited them – what one Belgian diplomat called a policy of "Nato à la carte". "(France did not rejoin the command structure until 2009, and then only under 'conditions' that effectively preserved its independence.)" France's behavior was more the result of De Gaulle's ever-prickly personality and national pride than any deeper shift in allegiance; Brezhnev was right to see in him more a useful, but still essentially *Capitalist* idiot than a real convert to the Communist International. In any case, hubris was soon to be followed by humiliation...

For in May, 1968 "the students of Paris rebelled against him, and would have brought him down if the Communist Party had not, for Moscow's sake, saved him. The episode in itself was farcical, but it was a farce with a sinister side, edging into terrorism..."

"It is worth insisting," writes Tony Judt, "upon the parochial and distinctly self-regarding issues that sparked the May Events, lest the ideologically charged language and ambitious programs of the following weeks mislead us. The student occupation of the Sorbonne and subsequent street barricades and clashes with the police, notably on the nights of May 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> and May 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, were led by representatives of the (Trotskyist) *Jeunesse Communiste*



*Révolutionnaire*, as well as officials from established student and junior lecturer unions. But the accompanying Marxist rhetoric, while familiar enough, masked an essentially anarchist spirit whose immediate objective was the removal and humiliation of authority.

“In this sense, as the disdainful French Communist Party leadership rightly insisted, this was a party, not a revolution. It had all the symbolism of a traditional French revolt – armed demonstrators, street barricades, the occupation of strategic buildings and intersections, political demands and counter-demands – but none of the substance. The young men and women in the student crowds were overwhelmingly middle-class – indeed, many of them were from the Parisian bourgeoisie itself: ‘*filles à papa*’ (‘daddy’s boys’), as the PCF leader Georges Marchais derisively called them. It was their own parents, aunts and grandmothers who looked down upon them from the windows of comfortable bourgeois apartment buildings as they lined up in the streets to challenge the armed power of the French state.

“Georges Pompidou, the Gaullist Prime Minister, rapidly took the measure of the troubles. After the initial confrontations he withdrew the police, despite criticism from within his own party and government, leaving the students of Paris in *de facto* control of their university and the surrounding *quartier*. Pompidou – and his President, De Gaulle – were embarrassed by the well-publicized activities of the students. But, except very briefly at the outset when they were taken by surprise, they did not feel threatened by them. When the time came the police, especially the riot police – recruited from the sons of poor provincial peasants and never reluctant to crack the heads of privileged Parisian youth – could be counted on to restore order. What troubled Pompidou was something far more serious.

“The student riots and occupations had set the spark to a nationwide series of strikes and workplace occupations that brought France to a near-standstill by the end of May. Some of the first protests – by reporters at French Television and Radio, for example – were directed at their political chiefs for censoring coverage of the student movement and, in particular, the excessive brutality of some riot policemen. But as the general strike spread, through the aircraft manufacturing plants of Toulouse and the electricity and petro-chemical industries and, most ominously, to the huge Renault factories on the edge of Paris itself, it became clear that something more than a few thousand agitated students was at stake.

“The strikes, sit-ins, office occupations and accompanying demonstrations and marches were the greatest movement of social protest in modern France, far more extensive than those of June 1936. Even in retrospect it is difficult to say with confidence exactly what they were about. The Communist-led trade union organization, the *Confédération du Travail* (CGT) was at first at a loss: when union agreement reached between government, unions and employers was decisively rejected by the Renault workers, despite its promise of improved wages, shorter hours and more consultation.

"The millions of men and women who had stopped work had one thing at least in common with the students. Whatever their particular local grievances, they were above all frustrated with their conditions of existence. They did not so much want to get a better deal at work as to change something about their way of life; pamphlets and manifestos and speeches explicitly said as much. This was good news for the public authorities in that it diluted the mood of the strikers and directed their attention away from political targets; but it suggested a general malaise that would be hard to address.

"France was prosperous and secure and some conservative commentators concluded that the wave of protests was thus driven not by discontent but by simple boredom..."

Boredom, *anomie*, frustration with nobody knew exactly what – this was the existential crisis of comfortable Western Social Democracy in the 1960s. The sheer *frivolity* of the events is illustrated by some of the street slogans: "Liberty, Equality, Sexuality!" "Boredom is counter-revolutionary." "I'm a Marxist – Groucho tendency." "Workers of the world, enjoy yourselves!"

Frivolous though they might be, these slogans pointed to something serious brewing in the souls of the post-Marxist yet abidingly revolutionary young. They suggested that the West's problems were not primarily political or economic, but "existential" – the result of the expulsion of religion from the Social Democratic project. The young perhaps felt it most acutely, but they were simply expressing a general malaise that went deeper as one went further down the scale of class and up the ladder of age. The very *frivolity* and sheer ignorance of their attachments – their passion for Mao and Che Guevara, and even the champions of Cultural Marxism, such as Marcuse, without knowing anything about the mind-boggling evil that such men were accomplishing, or their mindless slogan, 'It is forbidden to forbid' – this amorality, this fundamental lack of seriousness in the generation that was soon to take over the leadership of the West paradoxically highlighted the *seriousness* of the malaise.

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**2. San Francisco** The Vietnam War constitutes a critical turning point in American and Western history. Before it, we see a prosperous country, self-confident, united and to a certain degree childlike in its optimistic, can-do philosophy. During it, and especially from 1968, the country was swept by a wave of anti-authoritarianism that began with the student protests against the war and the burning of draft cards. As Martin Luther-King and Robert Kennedy were shot, it seemed that the United States was closer to anarchy and civil war than at any time since the Civil War of the 1860s.

Perhaps the most typical American cultural figure of the 1950s had been Walt Disney, the Hollywood producer whose animations *Snow White*, *Dumbo*,

*Pinocchio*, *Fantasia* and *Cinderella* were innovatory masterpieces in the history of cinema, while his last film, *Mary Poppins*, emphasized the main theme of his life and period – the wholesomeness of childhood and the family. But with the death of Disney in 1966, the escalation of the Vietnam War, and the draft of unwilling young men into the army to fight a war to which there seemed to be no end, the mood changed. Rebellion was in the air and on the streets... Everything that was old and traditional was questioned, even reviled. And yet had Miller changed so much (he was still popular in Europe)? Or was he guilty of the only real sin in young America – the sin of being *old-fashioned*?

“The words ‘turn on, tune in, drop out’”, writes Peter Furato, “were first publicly uttered in New York during a September 1966 press conference by Timothy Leary (1920-96). They were to become the defining slogan of the 1960s’ counter-culture, providing the theme of the first and arguably most radical ‘happening’ of that movement: the ‘Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In’, which took place in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park on 14 January 1967 and was attended by 30,000 people. Promoted mainly through the ‘underground’ newspaper the *San Francisco Oracle*, it brought together the New Age hippies of the city’s Haight-Ashbury district with the Berkeley campus radicals and the anti-Vietnam War agitators.

“Many movers and shakers of the United States’ counter-culture were present, including San Francisco bands such as *The Grateful Dead* and *Jefferson Airplane*, the poet Allen Ginsburg (1926-97), the activist Jerry Ruben (1938-94), and Timothy Leary himself, the apostle of personal liberation achieved through liberal use of the hallucinogen lysergic acid diethylamide (‘acid’ or LSD). The drug had been developed for therapeutic use in 1947 but made illegal in California in October 1966...”

As political protest descended into hippiedom, drug abuse and the practical (and sometimes public) expression of the slogan “Make love, not war”, it could be seen that the seriousness of the events was not so much in any specific ideas or plans of the youthful “revolutionaries” as in a general sapping of authority and morality in the western world. The new president, Richard Nixon, caught the essence of the situation well in his inaugural speech in 1969: “We are caught in war, wanting peace. We are torn by division, wanting unity. We see around us empty lives, wanting fulfillment...”

The result was the first war that America lost since 1812. The country then entered an altogether darker phase, as if transiting directly from childhood to an embittered old age. The confidence was lost, and with it the illusion that America was unconquerable *because she was good*... Was it really possible that the land of the free, God’s own country, could be defeated by the incarnate evil of Communism? And what did such a defeat augur for the future?

The Vietnam War was unique in that, perhaps for the first time in history, we see the *youth* of a country forcing its leaders to change course on a major issue of war and peace. For it was the prolonged demonstrations of American

youth against the war that finally wore down the administration, first the Senate and then the presidency, leading to the final withdrawal of American involvement in 1975 and a serious undermining of the nation's unity and self-confidence worldwide.

Nor was it only in America that revolutionary youth seemed to take control (if anarchy can be called control), but also in France (in the events of May, 1968), in Czechoslovakia (where students played an important part in the Prague Spring), in England (where the "Swinging Sixties" were largely led by young people), in China (where rampaging young Red Guards led China's Cultural Revolution), and in Cambodia (where the majority of Pol Pot's soldiers in the 1970s were extraordinarily young).

Not coincidentally, this was the first generation to be born after the Second World War, the first generation that had taken no direct part in the titanic struggle between Fascism, Communism and Democracy, that had not shared in the sufferings or the ideological enthusiasms of their parents. They did have their own enthusiasms, but these were of a different kind – essentially anarchical, anti-authoritarian, anti-traditional, unfocussed and frivolous. Of course, youth have always played an important part in revolutions, being drawn by the whiff of violence and sexual license. But earlier revolutions had an ideological content or vision of the future that supplied testosterone-fuelled zeal with a certain intellectual backbone, a self-sacrificial discipline and quasi-justification. Not so with most of the revolutions of the Sixties. Whether in Mao's China or Johnson's America, the revolutionary young could think of no better ideology than Feminism or the Thoughts of Chairman Mao to justify their sickening abuse of almost *everything* that previous generations had considered sacred.

For "this was the freakish moment of history," as Max Hastings writes, "at which a significant portion of the youth of the Western democracies professed to admire Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and other revolutionaries, heedless of the oppression their heroes promoted – and in Mao's case, the mass murders over which he presided, incomparably worse than any modern horror for which the US could be held responsible."

Alexander Woolfson writes: '[Richard] Vinen provides a useful overview [of 'the Long 68']: 'It had several components: general rebellion of the young against the old, political rebellion against militarism, capitalism and the political power of the United States... These rebellions sometimes intersected, but they did not always do so.'

"The year 1968 was an important milestone, the moment that the 'New Left' departed from Marxist orthodoxy. By that point the contradictions of Marxism could no longer be ignored, not just in terms of repressive brutality behind the Iron Curtain but also the failure of the working class to fulfil Marxist theory in the form of revolution. Indeed, 1968 was largely a middle-class affair, seizing

upon the cultural criticisms that the 'Frankfurt School' directed both at capitalism and Soviet socialism.

"In the US, 1968 was largely about opposition to America's involvement in the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. In France it was part student revolt, part disillusionment with contemporary life and part street party. The point is that the events of the 'long 68' were chaotic, even deliberately evasive of concrete definition.

"The multitude of ideas and organisations produced no unified body of political thought. This makes understanding what the demonstrators wanted hard to discern. Much of the discourse of 1968 was concerned with the idea of self-management. Implicit in this was a rejection of the norms of classical ideology and the rejection of the role of intellectuals in forming that framework – perhaps best summarized as 'we don't believe the experts'. Ultimately it was a politics of refusal and individualism that remains most easily defined by what the 68ers were opposed to rather than a concrete programme of change. The result was, in the words of the political theorist Simon Tormey, 'political paganism, a politics of the faithless, of those who move from one campaign against injustice to another'.

"It is easy to dismiss the legacy of 1968. Despite important civil rights victories in the US, which should rightly be seen as an historic triumph, in the short term the protests were largely unsuccessful in fostering the sort of revolution many wanted. There was far greater mobilisation across Europe and the US in favour of the established order. Richard Nixon's electoral triumph at the end of the year came from appealing to the 'silent majority' about the breakdown in law and order that the demonstrations had symbolized. In France too, de Gaulle achieved electoral victory..."

Indeed, in June he won almost the biggest victory in French electoral history. This demonstrated that the majority of the French people were *serious*: they did not want anarchy; the students had not lived through the war, but their parents had, and so were able to evaluate properly the benefits of the peace that followed. De Gaulle soon retired; and with him it seemed that a whole generation – the relatively serious and sober generation that lived through the shame of the thirties and saw its results in the forties – had passed, opening up new and frightening possibilities for the future...

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**3. Prague** The Prague Spring – the brief but highly significant semi-democratization of Czechoslovakia – came to a country that had suffered more than any other Central European nation from post-war Soviet repression. "As late as 1954," writes Norman Stone, "several months after the USSR had started to release Stalin's victims, there was a minor purge trial, and a commission in 1957 even reaffirmed the guilt of the 1950-51 victims, though some were released. A huge Stalin statue even went up in 1955, demolished only when

Khrushchev insisted, along with the removal of Klement Gottwald from his mausoleum. In an obscure place, much later, there was still a little 'Stalin Square'. In Czechoslovakia there was nothing like the Polish peasantry, stubbornly stuck in subsistence agriculture; nor was there anything like the Polish Church, the Czechs having inherited a powerful anti-clerical tradition. Opposition to the Communists was enfeebled from the outset because it was itself largely Communist.

"Still, there were signs of trouble in the woodwork, and a Party congress was postponed for several months in 1962. The 1951 purge trials continued to be a cause of unease, and there was a new commission to investigate them. In 1963 it pinned the blame on Gottwald, and by implication his close colleagues, still in high places. A Slovak journalist – Miroslav Hysko – publicly denounced them, and was not himself arrested: the old trial verdicts were, instead, cancelled. All of this was evidence of much deeper currents. Further evidence came when a report late in 1963 stated that the campaign against Slovak nationalism in 1951 had been unjustified..."

The calls of Slovak Communists for federalization of the country was an important stimulus to what followed. Another was a student demonstration for "More Light!" (both physical and spiritual) in the Strahov district of Prague. But the critical event was the election, on January 5, 1968, of a new First Secretary of the Party after Novotný, Alexander Dubček.

"The new man," writes Tony Judt, "was young (at 47 he was sixteen years Novotný's junior), from the reform wing of the Party and, above all, a Slovak. As leader of the Slovak Communist Party for the past three years he appeared to many to be a credible compromise candidate: a longstanding Communist *apparatchik* who would nevertheless support reforms and appease Slovak resentments. Dubček's early moves seemed to confirm this reading: a month after his appointment the Party leadership gave its unstinting approval to the stalled economic reform program. Dubček's rather artless manner appealed to the young in particular, while his indisputable loyalty to the Party and to 'Socialism' reassured for the time being the Kremlin and other foreign Communist leaders looking anxiously on.

"If Dubček's intentions were obscure to observers, this is probably because he himself was far from sure just where to go. At first this ambiguity worked in his favour, as different factions competed for his support and offered to strengthen his hand. Public rallies in Prague in the weeks following his election demanded an end to censorship, greater press freedom and a genuine inquiry into the purges of the fifties and the responsibilities of the old guard around Novotný (who remained President of the country even after being ousted from the Party leadership). Carried on this wave of popular enthusiasm, Dubček endorsed the call for a relaxation of censorship and initiated a purge of Novotnýites from the Party and from the Czech army.

“In March 22<sup>nd</sup> Novotný reluctantly resigned the presidency and was replaced a week later by General Ludvík Svoboda. Five days after that, the Central Committee adopted an ‘Action Program’ calling for equal status and autonomy for Slovakia, the rehabilitation of past victims and ‘democratisation’ of the political and economic system. The Party was now officially endorsing what the Program called ‘a unique experiment in democratic Communism’: ‘Socialism with a human face’ as it became colloquially known. Over a period of time (the document spoke of a ten-year transition) the Czechoslovak Communist Party would allow the emergence of other parties with whom it would compete in genuine elections. These were hardly original ideas, but publicly pronounced from the official organs of a ruling Communist Party they triggered a political earthquake. The Prague Spring had begun.

“The events of the spring and summer of 1968 in Czechoslovakia hinged on three contemporary illusions. The first, widespread in the country after Dubček’s rise and especially following publication of the Action Program, was that the freedoms and reforms now being discussed could be folded into the ‘Socialist’ (i.e. Communist) project. It would be wrong to suppose, in retrospect, that what the students and writers and Party reformers of 1968 were ‘really’ seeking was to replace Communism with liberal capitalism or that their enthusiasm for ‘Socialism with a human face’ was mere rhetorical compromise or habit. On the contrary: the idea that there existed a ‘third way’, a Democratic Socialism compatible with free institutions, respecting individual freedoms *and* collective goals, had captured the imagination of Czech students no less than Hungarian economists.

“The distinction that was now drawn between the discredited Stalinism of Novotný’s generation and the renewed idealism of the Dubček era, was widely accepted – even, indeed especially, by Party members. As Jiří Pelikán asserted, in his preface to yet a third report on the Czech political trials (commissioned in 1968 by Dubček but suppressed after his fall) ‘the Communist Party had won tremendous popularity and prestige, the people had spontaneously declared themselves for socialism’. That is perhaps a little hyperbolic, but it was not wildly out of line with contemporary opinion. And this, in turn, nourished a second illusion.

“If the people believed the Party could save Socialism from its history, so the Party leadership came to suppose that they could manage this without losing control of the country. A new government headed by Oldřich Černík was installed on April 18<sup>th</sup> and, encouraged by huge public demonstrations of affection and support (notably in the traditional May Day celebrations), it relaxed virtually all formal controls on public expressions of opinion. On June 26<sup>th</sup> censorship of press and media was formally abolished. The same day it was announced that Czechoslovakia was to become a genuine federal state, comprising a Czech Socialist republic and a Slovak Socialist republic (that was the only one of Dubček’s reforms to survive the subsequent repression, becoming law on October 28<sup>th</sup> 1968).

“But having relaxed all control on opinion, the Communist leadership was now pressed from every side to pursue the logic of its actions. Why wait ten years for free and open elections? Now that censorship had been abolished, why retain formal control and ownership of the media? On June 27<sup>th</sup> *Literární Listy* and other Czech publications carried a manifesto by Ludvík Vaculík, ‘Two Thousand Words’, addressed to ‘workers, farmers, officials, artists, scholars, scientists and technicians’. It called for the re-establishment of political parties, the formation of citizens’ committees to defend and advance the cause of reform, and other proposals to take the initiative for further change out of the control of the Party. The battle was not yet won, Vaculík warned: the reactionaries in the Party would fight to preserve their privileges and there was even talk of ‘foreign forces intervening in our development’. The people needed to strengthen the arm of the Communists’ own reformers by pressing them to move forward even faster.

“Dubček rejected Vaculík’s manifesto and its implication that the Communists should abandon their monopoly of power. As a lifelong Communist he would not countenance this crucial qualitative shift (‘bourgeois pluralism’) and anyway saw no need to do so. For Dubček the Party itself was the only appropriate vehicle for radical change if the vital attributes of a Socialist system were to be preserved. But as Vaculík’s manifesto made cruelly clear, the Party’s popularity and its credibility would increasingly rest upon its willingness to pursue changes that might ultimately drive it from power. The fault line between a Communist state and an open society was now fully exposed.

“And this, in turn, directed national attention in the summer of 1968 to the third illusion, the most dangerous of all: Dubček’s conviction that he could keep Moscow at bay, that he would succeed in assuring his Soviet comrades that they had nothing to fear from events in Czechoslovakia – indeed, that they had everything to gain from the newfound popularity of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the renewed faith in a rejuvenated socialist project. If Dubček made this mortal miscalculation it was above all because the Czech reformers had crucially misinterpreted the lesson of 1956. Imre Nagy’s mistake, they thought, had been his departure from the Warsaw Pact and declaration of Hungarian neutrality. So long as Czechoslovakia stayed firmly in the Pact and unambiguously allied to Moscow, Leonid Brezhnev and his colleagues would surely leave them alone.

“But by 1968, the Soviet Union was worried less about military security than the Party’s loss of monopoly control...”

Brezhnev hesitated, knowing the unpopularity this would bring to his regime. Finally, however, on August 21, Soviet tanks invaded the country, restoring “normality” – that is, unreformed Communism – at the barrel of a gun. And yet after 1968 in Paris and Prague, nothing could be “normal” again: both Western liberalism and Soviet socialism had reached their peaks and were on the cusp of a long descent into a new reality...



The Romanian President Ceășescu protested against the invasion. But Moscow could afford to ignore his eccentricities. For he kept an iron grip on his country, encouraging (with the help of his no less unbalanced wife Elena) a cult of his own personality, so his protest was not likely to elicit any liberal reaction that constituted a threat to the communist system...

Jean-François Revel writes: "The Kremlin had made its point – that fraternal socialist states had only limited sovereignty and that any lapse in the Party's monopoly of power might trigger military intervention. Unpopularity at home or abroad was a small price to pay for the stability that this would henceforth ensure. After 1968, the security of the Soviet zone was firmly underwritten by a renewed appreciation of Moscow's willingness to resort to force if necessary. But never again – and this was the true lesson of 1968, first for the Czechs but in due course for everyone else – never again would it be possible to maintain that Communism rested on popular consent, or the legitimacy of a reformed Party, or even the lessons of history...

"The illusion that Communism was reformable, that Stalinism had been a wrong turning, a mistake that could still be corrected, that the core ideals of democratic pluralism might somehow still be compatible with the structures of Marxist collectivism, that illusion was crushed under the tanks on August 21<sup>st</sup> 1968 and it never recovered. Alexander Dubček and his Action Program were not a beginning but an end. Never again would radicals or reformers look to the ruling Party to carry their aspirations or adopt their projects. Communism in Eastern Europe staggered on, sustained by an unlikely alliance of foreign loans and Russian bayonets: the rotting carcass was finally carried away only in 1989. But the soul of Communism had died twenty years before: in Prague, in August 1968..."

"*Pravda* followed up the invasion with a statement reiterating the legitimacy of 'separate roads of socialism' but warned that parties exercising this right 'must damage neither socialism in their own country nor the fundamental interests of the other socialist countries, nor the worldwide workers' movement.' This statement became known as the 'Brezhnev doctrine'; it implied that any reform undertaken by a country within the Warsaw Pact would require the approval of the Soviet communist Party.

"The suppression of reform in Czechoslovakia had profound effects on the Soviet Communist Party. The movement back toward the European Marxist tradition – what was becoming known as 'Eurocommunism' – was halted and reversed. Economic reform of even the timid Kosygin variety became taboo. In a very real sense the Soviet Communist Party became stagnant, unable to reform itself, to tolerate a lively intellectual or cultural life, or to render the economy more productive."

"The Soviet tanks rolling into Czechoslovakia," writes Jean-François Revel, "failed to open De Gaulle's eyes to the nature of communism and the Soviet

system. He attributed that 'accident en route' to the 'policy of blocs' and the damage done by the 'Yalta agreements', thus again displaying his ignorance of just what those agreements were, since the Czech question was not touched on at Yalta. His dream of a Europe in harmony 'from the Atlantic to the Urals' seemed no more unlikely to him after the Red Army occupied Prague than it had before. 'Let us guard against excessive language,' the general said at a French cabinet meeting on August 24. 'Sooner or later, Russia will return [to its old ways].... We must build Europe. We can construct something with the Six [of the original Common Market], even build a political organization. We cannot build Europe without Warsaw, without Budapest, and without Moscow.'

"All the future illusions and surrenders in détente are contained in that statement: De Gaulle's acceptance of Moscow's fait accompli, his unwillingness to consider sanctions to punish a crime against freedom, his de facto alliance with Soviet imperialism, which he forgave all sins. Add to this his lack of understanding of Communist reality, in short, his incompetence and his blind trust in the Soviet Government's desire and ability to become part of a harmonious and homogeneous Europe – which, be it noted, General de Gaulle thought Britain had no right to join!"

De Gaulle died in 1970. He had built his career on rudeness, ingratitude and treachery to Anglo-Saxons who had helped his nation, and friendship to the Soviets who wanted to destroy it. In the end he had no answer to the Maoist youth of Paris who humiliated him, or to the Soviet tanks that rolled into Prague for the second time in a single generation...

*August 16/29, 2020.*

## 15. IS SIN EXCUSABLE?

Fallen man has a persistent tendency to "make excuse for excuses in sins". But are some sins in fact excusable? And is there a sin that is inexcusable?

We may divided the excuses made for sins into three main categories: (1) ignorance, (2) environment, (3) genetics.

**1. Ignorance** Real, involuntary ignorance is certainly a valid excuse in certain cases. It is grounds for clemency according to God's justice, as it is according to man's. Thus the Lord cried out on the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23.24). For as St. Peter said: "I know that you did it [crucified Christ] in ignorance, as did your rulers" (Acts 3.17). One of those who was forgiven, the apostle Paul, declared: "I obtained mercy because I acted in ignorance" (I Timothy 1.13). And the same Paul declared of the times of paganism, before Christ: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17.30). For our Great High Priest is truly One "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (Hebrew 5.2).

However, there is also such a thing as *voluntary* ignorance. Thus St. Paul says of those who do not believe in the one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, that "they are without excuse" (Romans 1.20), for they deny the evidence from creation which is accessible to everyone. Again, St. Peter says: "This they are *willingly* ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men" (II Peter 3.5-7). Again, claiming knowledge when one has none counts as wilful ignorance. For, as Christ said to the Pharisees: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (John 9.41).

Wilful ignorance is very close to conscious resistance to the truth, which receives the greatest condemnation according to the Word of God. Thus those who accept the Antichrist will do so "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2.10-12). And if it seems improbable that God should send anyone a strong delusion, let us remember the lying spirits who, with God's permission, deceived the prophets of King Ahab because they only prophesied what he wanted to hear (I Kings 22.19-24).

Conscious, willing resistance to the truth is the same as that "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" which, in the words of the Lord, "shall not be forgiven unto men... in this age or in the age to come" (Matthew 12.31, 32). As Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) explains: "Blasphemy against the Holy

Spirit, or 'sin unto death', according to the explanation of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (VIII, 75), is a conscious, hardened opposition to the truth, 'because the Spirit is truth' (I John 5.6)."

Wilful ignorance can be of various degrees. There is the wilful ignorance that refuses to believe even when the truth is staring you in the face – this is the most serious kind, the kind practised by the Pharisees and the heresiarchs. But a man can also be said to be wilfully ignorant if he does not take the steps that are necessary in order to discover the truth – this is less serious, but still blameworthy, and is characteristic of many of those who followed the Pharisees and the heresiarchs. Thus we read: "That servant who knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and he to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12.47-48). To which the words of St. Theophylactus of Bulgaria are a fitting commentary: "Here some will object, saying: 'He who knows the will of his Lord, but does not do it, is deservedly punished. But why is the ignorant punished?' Because when he might have known he did not wish to do so, but was the cause of his own ignorance through sloth."

**2. *Environment*** Does a hard, vicious or anti-Christian environment serve as an excuse?

Suppose a man steals because he is hungry. During the Irish famine, writes Robert Kee: "The autumn and winter of 1847-8 were as bad as anything the country had yet experienced with evictions increasing and corpses lying unburied even in a town like Limerick for days on end. Even in the kinder weather of June 1848 one inspector of roads near Clifden, County Galway, had to bury 140 corpses he found scattered along his route, while a man from the same district up on a charge of sheep-stealing was saved from imprisonment by stating in open court that his wife, maddened by hunger had been driven to eat the flesh of her own dead daughter." We do not, of course, know the judgement of God on this man and his wife. But if an Anglo-Irish court saved him from imprisonment, clearly taking the horrific fate of his family as some kind of mitigation of guilt, it is difficult to believe that God would have been less generous.

Multitudes of female slaves in various countries were forced into sexual bondage to their masters. Clearly their lack of freedom mitigated or excused their sin, if it was a sin.

Children born to drunken or vicious or unbelieving parents clearly have more excuses for sins than those born into loving, disciplined, Christian families.

However, the lives of the saints are full of stories of how the saints withstood sin even in the most unpropitious circumstances. Conversely, if a man renounces the faith out of fear of torture, the difficulty of his circumstances does not acquit him of the charge of apostasy. For not only does man have free will, but to the man who was a *good* will, God will give the opportunity to escape out of any temptations, either by giving strength to bear the torments or by removing the sufferer out of the situation entirely. For “God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (I Corinthians 10.13).

**3. *Genetics*** We are not only pushed to sin from the outside, but also pulled towards it from the inside, from our fallen nature. In his conversation with Motovilov, St. Seraphim of Sarov alluded to the fact that some virtues – for example, chastity – come easier to some people than to others because of the nature they have inherited. Some men are naturally more aggressive or lustful than others. Since the fall of Adam, human nature has been naturally inclined to sin. This inclination as to be resisted, and there is no excuse for one who does not resist; but if the inclination to sin is very strong, the very strength of this inherited proclivity may serve as an excuse for, or mitigation of, the sin. God, Who know all the secrets of our hearts, and is just as well as merciful, takes all such factors into account.

The most unique and inexplicable of all sins was the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden. Their environment was perfectly free of incitements to sin. Their nature was pure and free of all sin. They were in full communion with God, and received a very simple, very clear and very easy commandment given by Him Who loved them and Who was loved by them. So it should have been a joy to fulfill; there was absolutely no reason not to fulfill it; they had no excuse for sin. But the perfect creatures in the perfect environment, full of the grace of God and possessed of full knowledge of the Law of God and the consequences of its transgression (death), still sinned. It was inexplicable. It was inexcusable.

In spite of that, God forgave them – after a penance of many thousands of years in hades – because before eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they did not fully know what they were doing. After eating it, they knew what they had done and knew that it was inexcusable. But after they had wept and repented continuously for thousands of years, Christ paid the penalty for their sin and raised them from sin and death.

So is sin excusable? Strictly speaking, *all* sin is *inexcusable*, for if it were excusable it would not be sin. What is the need of forgiveness for that which really cannot be helped? The saints attained sinlessness by refusing to make “excuse for excuses in sins” – that is, by true repentance. They knew that, whatever the possible excuses for sin, there is almost always a hidden, inexcusable element of wilfulness that is extremely difficult for the fallen mind to detect. Therefore if excuses *can* be made for our sins, let *God* make them – after all, He not only *knows* everything; He can also *evaluate* everything,

weighing our sins, ignorances, weaknesses and passions on the perfectly calibrated scales of His Justice. We, on the other hand, neither know all our sins, nor can we evaluate them. As David puts it: “As for transgressions, who will understand them? From my secret sins cleanse me, and from those of others spare Thy servant” (Psalm 18.12). Therefore the saints were always blaming themselves, making no excuses, but accusing rather than excusing themselves, and leaving it to God to excuse them if there was some element in their behaviour which really was excusable. “For,” says St. Paul, “I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this, but He Who judges me is the Lord” (I Corinthians 4.4).

*September 9/22, 2020.*

## 16. GLOBALIZATION AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

“The real victor in 1989,” writes Mark Mazower, “was not democracy but capitalism.”<sup>234</sup> But it was a new kind of capitalism – globalization. Not that globalization was really new. As Peter Frankopan writes, “We think of globalization as a uniquely modern phenomenon; yet 2000 years ago too, it was a fact of life, one that presented opportunities, created problems and prompted technological advance...”

“Two millennia ago, silks made by hand in China were being worn by the rich and powerful in Carthage and other cities in the Mediterranean, while pottery manufactured in southern France could be found in England and in the Persian Gulf. Spices and condiments grown in India were being used in the kitchens of Xinjiang, as they were in those of Rome. Buildings in northern Afghanistan carried inscriptions in Greek, while horses from Central Asia were being ridden proudly thousands of miles away in the east.”<sup>235</sup>

What was new after 1989 was the width and depth of the new wave of globalization that had begun in the 1950s under the aegis of America, and became consolidated after the victory of America, the world’s only remaining superpower, in 1989-91, enabling Eastern Europe and other formerly communist regions to take part in its formerly forbidden delights.

During the Cold War, there had been two very different worlds, Capitalism and Communism, and a third world that swayed from one side to the other. By the end of the millennium there was essentially only *one world*, the world of globalization. Even Russia and China became partially globalized: only North Korea and to some extent Iran remained outside the new global civilization.

“I believe,” wrote Thomas L. Friedman, “that if you want to understand the post-Cold War world you have to start by understanding that a new international system has succeeded it – globalization. This is ‘The One Big Thing’ people should focus on. Globalization is not the only thing influencing events in the world today, but to the extent that there is a North Star and a worldwide shaping force, it is this system. What is new is the system. What is old is power politics, chaos, clashing civilizations and liberalism. And what is the drama of the post-Cold War world is the interaction between this new system and these old passions.”<sup>236</sup>

This was an exaggeration: the old world was by no means dead, neither its “passions” nor its political structures. But there can be no arguing about the importance of globalization. The question is: what is it?

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<sup>234</sup> Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe’s Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 405.

<sup>235</sup> Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, London: Bloomsbury, 2016, pp. 12, 25.

<sup>236</sup> Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*; in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 944.



*Investopedia* defines globalization as “the tendency of investment funds and businesses to move beyond domestic and national markets to other markets around the globe, thereby increasing the interconnection of the world. Globalization has had the effect of markedly increasing international trade and cultural exchange.”<sup>237</sup> But it has eroded the power of national governments and increased those of multi-national corporations (150 MNCs now control two-thirds of the world economy). If national governments do not cooperate with the MNCs and the globalization process, they risk seeing factories and jobs removed to other, lower-wage-paying countries. This causes unemployment in some industries and therefore social unrest.

Moreover, while *trade* liberalization may provide comparative advantage, especially in a period when tariffs are initially high (as in the post-war period), it is quite another matter with *financial* liberalization. For, as Mazower writes, “the globalization of financial makes it increasingly difficult for nation-states to preserve autonomy of action, yet markets – as a series of panics and crashes demonstrates – generate their own irrationalities and social tensions. The globalization of labour, too, challenges prevailing definitions of national citizenship, culture and tradition.”<sup>238</sup>

While true globalists welcome these tensions and disruptions as creating the perceived need for a world government, the shorter-term consequences are undoubtedly bad. Thus Dani Rodrik writes in 2018: “Perhaps the hyper-globalisers’ most egregious mistake after the 1990s was to promote financial globalization. They took the textbook argument and ran amok with it. Free flow of finance across the world would, it was confidently predicted, set money to work where it could do most good. With free-flowing capital, savings would be automatically channeled to countries with higher returns; with access to the world markets, economies and entrepreneurs would have access to more dependable finance; and, ordinary individual savers would benefit, too, as they’d no longer be compelled to put all their nest eggs in one national basket.

“These gains, by and large, simply never materialized; sometimes, the effect was the opposite of what was promised. China became an exporter of capital, rather than an importer of it, which is what the theory implied young and poor countries should be. Loosening the chains of finance produced a string of extremely costly financial crises, including that in East Asia in 1997. There is, at best, a weak correlation between opening up to foreign finance and economic growth. But there is a strong empirical association between financial globalization and financial crises over time, as there have been since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when freely moving international capital would flow with gusto into the Argentinian railways or some far-flung corner of the British Empire one minute, only to flee away from it the next.

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<sup>237</sup> <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/globalization.asp#ixzz4ZuLDrfAT>.

<sup>238</sup> Mazower, op. cit., p. 405.



“Modern financial globalization went furthest in the Eurozone. Monetary unification aimed at complete financial integration, by removing all transaction costs associated with national borders. The introduction of the euro in 1999 did indeed drive down risk premiums in countries such as Greece, Spain, and Portugal, as borrowing costs converged. But what was the effect? To enable borrowers to run large current account deficits, and accumulate problematic amounts of external debt. Money flowed into those parts of the debtor economies that couldn’t be traded across borders – above all, construction – at the expense of tradable activities. Credit booms eventually turned into the inevitable busts, and sustained slumps in Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland followed amid the global credit crunch.

“Today, the economics profession’s view on financial globalization is ambivalent at best. It is well understood that market and government failures – asymmetric information, bank runs, excess volatility, inadequate regulation – are endemic to the financial markets. Globalisation often accentuates these failures. Indeed, in the 1997 East Asian crisis those economies that kept more control of foreign capital survived with less damage. In sum, unconditional openness to foreign finance is hardly ever a good idea...”<sup>239</sup>

Globalization, then, has both pros and cons... Samuel Huntingdon made an important distinction between two different things that were becoming global: modernization and westernization. Globalization in the sense of the modernization and integration of the whole world is not evil in itself. It could even work to the furtherance of the good - and not only economic good - in certain circumstances. If, for example, the True Faith could be preached globally, using global means of communication, as it was in the time of the apostles. Thus would the Lord’s prophecy be fulfilled: “This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24.14). What is evil is the globalization of *westernization*, the spreading of the apostate culture of the western world.

It is easy to see that a global republic or kingdom would have no place in it for Orthodoxy except as a kind of cultural museum, an exhibition of East European folklore, and could very quickly turn the propaganda of freedom into the reality of a tyranny that could be worse than any that has gone before it.

Opinions on globalization are thus sharply divided. Indeed, the debate between the globalists and anti-globalists is probably the sharpest debate in the contemporary world. Christians tend to believe that since the Tower of Babel, different languages and nations have been created by God to *slow down* the spread of evil, and as refuges against it; but for atheist globalists individual, sovereign nations *are* the evil.

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<sup>239</sup> Rorik, “The Great Globalisation Lie”, *Prospect*, January, 2018, p. 33.

Globalization leads logically to the demand for a world government that will regulate the process of globalization, facilitating it and removing the supposed obstacles to the prosperity of the global community, such as global warming or the spread of pandemics or over-population.

There is no longer any secret about the fact that many of the world's richest and most powerful men are working towards a world government. This was being spoken about openly already by Bush and Gorbachev at the end of the Cold War; they saw it as a natural product of the new international situation brought about by perestroika and the end of the Cold War. Bush went further, using what for many was a code word for something more sinister: "the new world order". For Bush this appeared to refer to the rule of international law administered by the United Nations in close cooperation with the United States as the world's only surviving superpower and executed most successfully by the international alliance assembled for Operation Desert Storm against Saddam Hussein. It was based on several presuppositions that were fulfilled, briefly, under Bush senior, but not fulfilled under his son, Bush junior. These included:

- The willingness of the non-democratic members of the Security Council – Russia and China – to cooperate with the consensus of the other nations and not apply their vetoes. As time passed, this willingness disappeared. By 2003 even western members of the Council, such as France, refused to cooperate.
- The willingness of the United States never to take the initiative in overseas military operations without the agreement of the United Nations. This disappeared under Bush junior, whose neo-con government was openly contemptuous of the United Nations.
- The willingness of the United States to act solely in the interests of "the international community", and of the populations of those countries subject to invasion, and not in order to promote its own interests, political, military or economic. This was not the case in 2003, when the interests of the Iraqi people as a whole were scarcely considered, while the interests of American big corporations, such as Halliburton, played a major role.
- The willingness of the United States not to obey the wishes of the Israelis unconditionally. Thus Bush senior "enraged the Israel lobby during the Gulf war by pressuring Israel not to respond to Iraq's missile attacks, choosing not to occupy Baghdad and promising America's Arab allies that the US would push Israel on the Palestinian issue."

President Bush's reference to a "new world order" was rich in connotations for conspiracy theorists, who have seen in this phrase the code-name for an age-old conspiracy at world domination, going back to Weishaupt's *Illuminati* of the late eighteenth century.

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

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

“Today, the Secret Brotherhood’s conspiratorial network includes the mysterious Bilderberg Group; Yale University’s prestigious Skull & Bones Society, the clandestine Black Lodges of Freemasonry, and the secretive Knights of Malta. Its diabolical influence reaches into the corridors of power at the White House, the CIA, the Federal Reserve, even the Vatican...”<sup>240</sup>

“According to Neil Wilgus in *The Illuminati*, George Washington had read [John Robinson’s] *Proofs* [*Proofs of a Conspiracy against All the Religions and Governments of Europe, carried out in the Secret Meetings of the Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies*] and felt that the allegations contained therein deserved further investigation. Washington’s own correspondence with fellow Masons clearly indicates that he was well aware of subversive forces at work within rival branches of masonic lodges in Europe, and expressed concern that the curse had spread to American lodges. Wilgus also writes that Thomas Jefferson was at least somewhat familiar with Weishaupt’s works and felt an admiration for him. It appears Jefferson disagreed with Washington’s point of view that the Illuminati had infiltrated American Freemasonry; Jefferson believed that such a thing could no possibly happen in America, since our freedom of speech would have made secrecy unnecessary. Obviously, Jefferson was either a member of the secret brotherhood, or else he was just painfully

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<sup>240</sup> Hanson, *Bohemian Grove: Cult of Conspiracy*, Austin, Texas: RiverCrest Publishing, 2012, p. 44.

misguided in this belief, for the Illuminati continues to secretly guide American foreign and domestic policy to this very day..."<sup>241</sup>

Hanson's argument is not convincing. It is highly unlikely that the Illuminati were numerous enough to engineer any revolution as early as 1776 and as far away as America... Moreover, there is no evidence for any continuity between the eighteenth-century Illuminati and any twentieth-century American government. Certainly, some American presidents, such as Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, were high-ranking Masons, and Roosevelt may have influenced or even decreed the introduction of the Masonic symbols on the American dollar bill, including the inscription *Novus Ordo Seclorum*. And they may have identified this New World Order with the universal triumph of the American foreign policy aims of democracy, free trade and universal human rights. But there was no secrecy or conspiracy about these aims: they were openly proclaimed from Woodrow Wilson in 1919 to George H. W. Bush in 1991. Conspiracy implies a certain malevolence that needs to be hidden from public view; and such a conspiracy in the highest reaches of American power in that period has yet to be demonstrated.

But this is not to say that some other organization, not directly descended from the *Illuminati*, and not necessarily governmental, but having essentially the same conspiratorial aims, may not exist. For conspiracies *do* exist; and it would be foolish to deny that there may be other non-governmental organizations or global cabals with serious dreams of world domination. The Rothschilds and the Rockefellers are astonishingly rich, as are other famous globalists such as Bill Gates and George Soros; and at the time of writing (2020) these men, all globalists, between them control a large number of the world's most powerful institutions.<sup>242</sup>

One of these institutions is the highly secretive Bilderbergers, founded by a Rothschild ally, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. In June, 1991, at the Bilderberger meeting in Baden-Baden, Germany, David Rockefeller said: "We are grateful to the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Time Magazine* and other great publications whose directors have attended our meetings and respected their promises of discretion for almost forty years. It would have been impossible for us to develop our plan for the world if we had been subjected to the lights of publicity during those years. But, the world is [now] more sophisticated and prepared to march towards a world government. The supranational sovereignty of an intellectual elite and world bankers is surely preferable to the national autodetermination practiced in past centuries." This was proof – by a man who should have known – that there did indeed exist a powerful plutocracy, "an intellectual elite and world bankers" striving to create a world government that would be at the expense of "national autodetermination", that is, the sovereignty of individual national states. From

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<sup>241</sup> Hanson, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>242</sup> See the March, 2020 youtube film, "The Fall of the Cabal", <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL18vrD9EPjAC7cQGB9flzJcziJg4xwZkT>

Rockefeller's remarks, we can see that this plan for a world government had been in the making for nearly sixty-five years, that is, since the early 1950s. (It should be remembered that the plot of land in New York where the United Nations building was built was bought from the Rockefeller family.) We also see from his remarks that the promise of secrecy which the Bilderbergers had felt to be necessary in the early 1950s was now no longer believed to be so pressing at the time of Rockefeller's speech – presumably because that year, 1991, the year of the West's seemingly final victory in the Cold War, seemed to betoken "the End of History" and the final triumph of that system of political and economic governance – liberal democracy and the free market – which the Bilderbergers knew well how to manipulate. Again, at the Bilderberger meeting in May, 1992 Henry Kissinger said: "Today Americans would be outraged if U.N. troops entered Los Angeles to restore order; tomorrow they will be grateful! This is especially true if they were told there was an outside threat from beyond, whether real or promulgated, that threatened our very existence. It is then that all peoples of the world will pledge with world leaders to deliver them from this evil. The one thing every man fears is the unknown. When presented with this scenario, individual rights will be willingly relinquished for the guarantee of their well being granted to them by their world government."

President George H.W. Bush saw in a revamped United Nations the core of global unity: "I see a world of open borders, open trade and, most importantly, open minds; a world that celebrates the common heritage that belongs to all the world's people.... I see a world building on the emerging new model of European unity. ... The United Nations is the place to build international support and consensus for meeting the other challenges we face.... the threats to the environment, terrorism... international drug trafficking... refugees.... We must join together in a new compact -- all of us -- to bring the United Nations into the 21st century."

The Americans under Truman had created the United Nations in 1945, so it was logical for Truman's successor to want to relaunch it in 1991.

However, all confederations of sovereign or quasi-sovereign states are extremely difficult to hold together, as the history of the last days of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia – and probably, in our generation, of the European Union after the departure of Britain – clearly shows. Moreover, the freer and more democratic the members of the confederation are, the more difficult it becomes to achieve consensus, and the greater the temptation to turn these free confederations into less free, more despotic federations. In the case of today's "international community", the difficulties are multiplied many times, while the temptation to form a world government that will *impose* its will on all the nations of the world – through technological means and/or technological created crises, such as the coronavirus – increases proportionately. Unless such a world government can be guaranteed to follow Christian rather than secular and atheist principles, it is likely that it will become the most despotic state in history. Hence we can see how the victory of even the most enlightened

democracy can easily lead to the victory of the most evil and totalitarian despotism – the despotism of the Antichrist himself...

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We have seen how world leaders were already receptive of the argument for a world government in 1989-92. Let us now turn to the argument put forward by the Israeli philosopher Yuval Noah Harari, who writes: "Since around 200 BC, most humans have lived in empires. It seems likely that in the future, too, most humans will live in one. But this time the empire will be truly global. The imperial vision of dominion over the entire world could be imminent.

"As the twenty-first century unfolds, nationalism is fast losing ground. More and more people believe that all of humankind is the legitimate source of political authority, rather than the members of a particular nationality, and that safeguarding human rights and protecting the interests of the entire human species should be the guiding light of politics. If so, having close to 200 independent states is a hindrance rather than a help. Since Swedes, Indonesians and Nigerians deserve the same human rights, wouldn't it be simpler for a single global government to safeguard them?

"The appearance of essentially global problems, such as melting ice caps, nibbles away at whatever legitimacy remains to the independent nation states. No sovereign state will be able to overcome global warming on its own. The Chinese Mandate of Heaven was given by Heaven to solve the problems of mankind. The modern Mandate of Heaven will be given to humankind to solve the problems of heaven, such as the hole in the ozone layer and the accumulation of greenhouse gases. The colour of the global empire may well be green.

"As of 2014, the world is still politically fragmented, but states are fast losing their independence. Not one of them is really able to execute independent economic policies, to declare and wage wars as it pleases, or even to run its own internal affairs as it sees fit. States are increasingly open to the machinations of global markets, to the interference of global companies and NGOs, and to the supervision of global public opinion and the international judicial system. States are obliged to conform to global standards of financial behavior, environmental policy and justice. Immensely powerful currents of capital, labour and information turn and shape the world, with a growing disregard for the borders and opinions of states.

"The global empire being forged before our eyes is not governed by any particular state or ethnic group. Much like the Late Roman Empire, it is ruled by a multi-ethnic elite, and is held together by a common culture and common interests. Throughout the world, more and more entrepreneurs, engineers, experts, scholars, lawyers and managers are called to join the empire. They

must ponder whether to answer the imperial call or to remain loyal to their state and people. More and more choose the empire..."<sup>243</sup>

"The empire"... Yes indeed; for one thing is clear: a world government or empire is highly unlikely to be democratic, however much lipservice may be paid to democracy. And if it is not democratic, then it will be despotic. This is the whole pathos of the position of the Brexiteers who led Britain out of the European Union in January, 2020. Although most of the arguments have been about economics, the true Brexiteers, as the historian Niall Ferguson, a former "Remainer", has ruefully come to recognize, are quite prepared for their country to take a "hit" in terms of economics so long as it retains true sovereignty, that is, real independence from the European Commission, that is, the despotic Politburo of the European Union. However, the "Remainers" retort that this is not so, that the admitted "democratic deficit" is being overcome, that the European parliament is – or, at any rate one day will be – the real sovereign power in Europe and the true expression of the democratic will of the European peoples.

The argument between globalists and anti-globalists in Europe is a vitally important one, which neither side can afford to lose. For the European Union is seen by many as a kind of microcosm of world government, and the acid test of its real feasibility.<sup>244</sup> For if, it is argued, globalism can triumph on the European continent, which is a kaleidoscope of so many different languages, cultures and historical traditions whose lack of unity has engendered so many of the most destructive wars in human history, then it can triumph anywhere and everywhere. If, on the other hand, even such a modern country as Britain, which has been historically at the forefront of almost every modernist wave in politics, economics and culture, succeeds in her bid for freedom, then she will become a beacon for the so-called "populists" or anti-globalists everywhere. Moreover, it is argued, Europe *must* hold off the British challenge insofar as Europe is the original homeland of democracy, claims to promote democracy as one of its core values, and admits only democracies among its member-states (that is, democracies prepared to surrender their freedom to the new despotism).

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Globalism is certainly the main trend in geopolitics. But whether globalism is truly irresistible is another matter...

Martin Wolf points out that "globalization is not destined, it is chosen. It is a choice made to enhance a nation's economic well being – indeed, experience suggests that the opening of trade and of most capital flows enriches most

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<sup>243</sup> Harari, Sapiens. *A Brief History of Humankind*, London: Vintage, 2011, pp. 231-232.

<sup>244</sup> See, for example, the emotional pleading for the EU as a model of World Government, combined with mocking of Brexit, by Ullrich Fichtner, "From Brussels to the Rest of the World. How Europe Became a Model for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", *Der Spiegel*, February 4, 2021.

countries.”<sup>245</sup> But if globalization is freely chosen, it can also be freely rejected. Suppose a nation decides to put other values above economic well-being? Is it free to do so? If the will of the people is strong enough to endure relative poverty, it is free, and it will retain its freedom so long as certain critical instruments – for example, control of its own currency and taxation and borders – remain within its power. But once it gives these up to a supra-national union, it loses that freedom.

Suppose a nation decides to put its religion above all, seeing it as threatened by the global religion of ecumenism or the various New Age cults that accompany it? This is what Putin’s Russia claims to be doing. It openly rejects western liberalism and LGBT-ism, is planning (with China and Iran) to introduce a new reserve currency to replace the dollar, and wants to create a Eurasian space to rival and eventually replace America’s global sphere of influence.

However, as more and more people both inside and outside of Russia are coming to realize, Putin’s plans are unrealistic and not succeeding. First, as Stephen Kotkin points out, while Putin may be dreaming of a Eurasian sphere of influence, it is China that is actually creating it; meanwhile, Russia becomes weaker and weaker by comparison with China and more dependent on it. Secondly, while opposing the global new order, Putin still wants to be part of it for the simple reason that he and his criminal Mafiosi colleagues depend on participation in it to make the huge ill-gotten gains they are now addicted to. Thirdly, in the moral-religious sphere Putin’s Russia is displaying gigantic hypocrisy. What is the use of opposing LGBT if most of your bishops are homosexuals? Or of denigrating western religions by comparison with Orthodoxy if you still belong to the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement, and hob-nob with the leaders of all the world’s false religions?

In principle, the attempt to escape the globalistic new world order is not only praiseworthy for an Orthodox nation but *absolutely necessary* if its people are to achieve salvation. However, for such an attempt to succeed, which is possible only with God’s help, it is necessary that the confession of the nation and its leaders must be *truly Orthodox*, which it certainly is not now. Moreover, the Russian nation and Church must be prepared to undergo considerable material losses and deprivation; for economic autarchy, like political autocracy, comes at a price. Such a transformation – in effect, a second Russian revolution – is possible. With God all things are possible...

September 11/24, 2020.

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<sup>245</sup> Wolf, “Will the Nation-State Survive Globalization?” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2001, p. 182.



## 17. POST-WAR WESTERN CHRISTIAN THINKERS

As Tony Judt writes, the ravages of Hitler and Stalin may be seen as complementing each other in their destruction of pre-war bourgeois civilization, both Christian and Jewish: "Hitler's war amounted, *de facto*, to a major European revolution, transforming Central and Eastern Europe and preparing the way for the 'Socialist' regimes of the postwar years which built upon the radical change Hitler had brought about – notably the destruction of the intelligentsia and urban middle class of the region, first through the murder of the Jews and then as a result of the postwar expulsion of Germans from the liberated Slav lands." <sup>246</sup>

The destruction was less in France and England, where the horrors of the Second World War, unlike the First War, elicited a reaction against the bestiality of extremist ideologies, both of the right and of the left. Liberalism and democracy enjoyed a kind of resurrection, especially in England. There was even what George L. Mosse has called a "Christian renaissance" – although that description is probably an exaggeration of a real, but short-lived phenomenon. Nevertheless, for a short period a number of intellectuals sincerely wrote and spoke of the possibility of reviving Western Christian civilization by returning to its roots. Thus the French Catholic Jacques Maritain put forward a "neo-Thomist synthesis".

Again, the philosopher C.E.M. Joad, a leading agnostic, "confessed that the Nazis had turned his mind to religion.

"Joad's reasons for conversion point out the essence of the Protestant revival. The problem of human evil occupied his mind. This evil was so widespread that it could not merely be seen as a by-product of unfavourable social or political circumstances; a different approach was needed. For Joad, Christianity provided the answer; it enabled man to face the reality of evil and then to transcend it. Not unnaturally, the Protestant renaissance was deeply concerned with the sinfulness of man and the evil which resulted from this. Existential in orientation, it asked man to confront his sinful nature, to understand it, and to have faith in God." <sup>247</sup>

An Anglican intellectual of a traditionalist Christian bent was the poet T.S. Eliot, author of *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Waste Land*. He wrote: "The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time: so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the World from suicide." <sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe after 1945*, London: Pimlico, 2007.

<sup>247</sup> Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1988, p. 402.

<sup>248</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Thoughts after Lambeth*.

A Catholic intellectual with a similar message was Malcolm Muggeridge, one of the very few journalists who had told the truth about the Ukrainian famine in the 1930s. He was more pessimistic than Eliot: "So the final conclusion would surely be that whereas other civilizations have been brought down by attacks of barbarians from without, ours had the unique distinction of training its own destroyers at its own educational institutions, and then providing them with facilities for propagating their destructive ideology far and wide, all at the public expense. Thus did Western Man decide to abolish himself, creating his own boredom out of his own affluence, his own vulnerability out of his own strength, his own impotence out of his own erotomania, himself blowing the trumpet that brought the walls of his own city tumbling down, and having convinced himself that he was too numerous, labored with pill and scalpel and syringe to make himself fewer. Until at last, having educated himself into imbecility, and polluted and drugged himself into stupefaction, he keeled over – a weary, battered old brontosaurus – and became extinct."

Still more influential were the Oxford dons J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Hobbit*, and C.S. Lewis, author of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Significantly, both these works were stories for children: only in this allegorical form, it would seem, could the old world and the old faith be celebrated with conviction. Tolkien's ambition, writes Tom Holland, "had been to communicate to those who might not appreciate them the beauties of the Christian religion, and its truth. The popularity of his novel suggested to him that he had succeeded. *The Lord of the Rings* would end up the most widely read work of fiction of the twentieth century, and Tolkien its most widely read Christian author..."<sup>249</sup> Tolkien and Lewis remain very popular to this day, with successful film adaptations of their works; Lewis in particular remains a powerful force for conservatism in contemporary western theology.

Bradley J. Birzer writes: "Clyde Kilby, an English professor from Wheaton College, worked with Tolkien in the summer of 1966, helping him to organize the manuscript for *The Silmarillion*. 'Tolkien was an Old Western Man who was staggered at the present direction of civilization,' Kilby recorded after a summer of conversations with Tolkien. 'Even our much vaunted talk of equality he felt debased by our attempts to "mechanize and formalize it."' Tolkien wrote that the saints living in the modern world were those 'who have for all their imperfections never finally bowed head and will to the world or the evil spirit (in modern but not universal terms: mechanism, "scientific" materialism, Socialism in either of its factions now at war).'"

"Like many Englishmen," continues Birzer, Tolkien "feared a world divided in two, in which the smaller peoples would be swallowed. Only fifteen years earlier, in reaction to the Teheran Conference, Tolkien had written: 'I heard of

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<sup>249</sup> Holland, *Dominion*, London: Abacus, 2019, p. 470.

that bloodthirsty old murderer Josef Stalin inviting all nations to join a happy family of folks devoted to the abolition of tyranny and intolerance!’ One would be blind to miss Tolkien’s disgust. ‘I wonder (if we survive this war) if there will be any niche, even of sufferance, left for reactionary back numbers like me (and you). The bigger things get the smaller and duller or flatter the globe gets. It is getting to be one blasted little provincial suburb.’ Soon, he feared, America would spread its ‘sanitation, morale-pep, feminism, and mass production’ throughout the world. Neither ‘ism’ - corporate consumer capitalism or communism, both radical forms of materialism - seemed particularly attractive to Tolkien, a man who loved England (but not Great Britain!) and who loved monarchy according to medieval conventions, while hating statism in any form.

“In his politics, Tolkien greatly resembled his closest friend and fellow member of the Inklings (the famous Oxford literary group), C.S. Lewis. During England’s darkest days of World War II, hope emerged from an unlikely source. An Oxford don - a professor of English literature, who would later be best known for a seven-part children’s fantasy series - gave frequent public addresses to the English people. Their purpose was to bolster English spirits. In late February, 1943, he devoted three of his addresses to a philosophical rather than a theological question. These relatively heady lectures were entitled: ‘Men without Chests,’ ‘The Way,’ and ‘The Abolition of Man.’ In each, C.S. Lewis addressed the nature and the future of character in England. Rather than spending his address on buoying the optimism of the English during the war against the German National Socialists, Lewis decided to ask what the English were really fighting for. Freedom from Nazi brutality was good, of course, but not, he argued, if it merely led to the victory of the ‘conditioners,’ the democratic bureaucrats on the loose in England who served as an internal threat. The conditioners claimed to be liberating individuals from arbitrary restraints imposed by ‘religious sanction, and inherited taboos, in order that “real” and “basic” values may emerge.’ In other words, the conditioners needed to destroy history and faith, which they claimed as artificial shackles on the true, unadulterated self. Such debasement of tradition, Lewis argued, can only lead to the creation of man-made (and consequently, man-centered) philosophies, ignoring the Natural Law. But, the Natural Law, Lewis cautioned, ‘is not one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the sole source of all value judgements. If it is rejected, all value is rejected.’ Anything created outside of the Natural Law will simply be mere ‘ideologies,’ that is, finite systems created by finite minds, shadows of shadows of a complex and nuanced world. ‘The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of imagining a new primary colour, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in,’ Lewis concluded.

“Two years later, Lewis published his ideas on character, virtue, and the Natural Law in novel form, *That Hideous Strength*, part three of his renowned space trilogy. Published two years before Orwell’s similar anti-totalitarian masterpiece, Lewis’s novel is a theistic *1984*. The story revolves around a group of academic and bureaucratic conditioners - known as the N.I.C.E. (National

Institute for Coordinated Experiments), who take over a small but elite English college as a prelude to a takeover of Britain. To stop 'That Hideous Strength,' a new King Arthur emerges in the form of a philology professor, Dr. Ransom. With the aid of small group of friends, he awakens Merlin from a fifteen-century long sleep. Modernity perplexes Merlin. In a telling conversation, Merlin states: 'This is a cold age in which I have awaked. If all this West part of the world is apostate, might it not be lawful, in our great need, to look farther... beyond Christendom? Should we not find some even among the heathen who are not wholly corrupt? There were tales in my day of some such men who knew not the articles of the most holy Faith, but who worshipped God as they could and acknowledged the Law of Nature. Sir, I believe it would be lawful to see help even there. Beyond Byzantium.'

"Ransom responds: 'The poison was brewed in these West lands but it has spat itself everywhere by now. However far you went you would find the machines, the crowded cities, the empty thrones, the false writings, the barren books: men maddened with false promises and soured with true miseries, worshipping the iron works of their own hands, cut off from Earth their mother and from the Father in Heaven. You might go East so far that East becomes West and you returned to Britain across the great ocean, but even so you would not have come out anywhere into the light. The shadow of one dark wing is over all.'

"Lewis was virulently anti-Nazi and anti-communist, and, like Tolkien, he also knew that democracy has its own risks. The West has bred all three political/economic systems. As an ideology, man-made and man-centered, bureaucratic democracy may appear as a brightly-colored package, more pleasing to the eye than the grittiness of socialism, but it too desires to make man a means to an end, to make him a mere cog in a machine..."<sup>250</sup>

In spite of his being a democrat, Lewis was very perceptive about the evil uses to which the word "democracy" could be put. Thus his *Screwtape* (an imaginative incarnation of the devil) writes: "*Democracy* is the word with which you must lead them by the nose. The good work which our philological experts have already done in the corruption of human language makes it unnecessary to warn you that they should never be allowed to give this word a clear and definable meaning. They won't. It will never occur to them that *democracy* is properly the name of a political system, even a system of voting, and that this has the most remote and tenuous connection with what you are trying to sell them. Nor of course must they ever be allowed to raise Aristotle's question: whether 'democratic behaviour' means the behaviour that democracies like or the behaviour that will preserve a democracy. For if they did, it could hardly fail to occur to them that these need not be the same.

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<sup>250</sup> Birzer, "How Did Lewis and Tolkien Defend the Old West?", *The Intelligent Conservative*, July, 2015, <http://www.theimaginativeconservative.org/2015/07/how-did-lewis-and-tolkien-defend-the-old-west.html>.

"You are to use the word purely as an incantation; if you like, purely for its selling power. It is a name they venerate. And of course it is connected with the political ideal that men should be equally treated. You then make a stealthy transition in their minds from this political ideal to a factual belief that all men *are* equal. Especially the man you are working on. As a result you can use the word *democracy* to sanction in his thought the most degrading (and also the most enjoyable) of all human feelings... The feeling I mean is of course that which prompts a man to say *I'm as good as you*. The first and most obvious advantage is that you thus induce him to enthrone at the centre of his life a good, solid, resounding lie.

"Now, this useful phenomenon is in itself by no means new. Under the name of Envy it has been known to the humans for thousands of years. But hitherto they always regarded it as the most odious, and also the most comical, of vices. Those who were aware of feeling it felt it with shame; those who were not gave it no quarter in others. The delightful novelty of the present situation is that you can sanction it - make it respectable and even laudable - by the incantatory use of the word *democracy*." <sup>251</sup>

Tolkien took a similar view: "I am not a 'democrat' if only because 'humility' and equality are spiritual principles corrupted by the attempt to mechanize and formalize them, with the result that we get not universal smallness and humility, but universal greatness and pride, till some Orc gets hold of a ring of power - and then we get and are getting slavery." <sup>252</sup>

In another place Lewis admits that "monarchy is the channel through which all the *vital* elements of citizenship - loyalty, the consecration of secular life, the hierarchical principle, splendour, ceremony, continuity - still trickle down to irrigate the dustbowl of modern economic Statecraft."

It is this old-fashioned attachment to monarchism and the hierarchical principle that continued to make England different from the Continent in the first two decades after the war. And even after that this cultural difference continued to effect British politics. However, these traditionalist Western Christian critiques of contemporary civilization all suffered from a common defect: they failed to go back to the real source of European Christian civilization, the Orthodox so-called "Dark Ages", which ended with the Great Schism of 1054. This made their critiques insufficiently deep and radical, in spite of their undoubted insights. One Westerner whose critique did not suffer from this defect was the American hieromonk, Fr. Seraphim Rose. A generation younger than Tolkien and Lewis, he noted that the revolutions of Hitler and Stalin were only an early, "negative" phase of the revolution, which prepared the way for a new, "positive" phase that was still more radical: "The Nihilism of Hitler was too pure, too unbalanced, to have more than a negative, preliminary role to play in the whole Nihilist program. Its role, like the role of

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<sup>251</sup> Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>252</sup> *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*.

the purely negative first phase of Bolshevism, is now finished, and the next stage belongs to a power possessing a more complete view of the whole Revolution...”

In fact, it was the western democracies which, in the second half of the century, were carrying out the next phase of the antichristian revolution with hardly less success than the anti-democratic totalitarian regimes of the first half, albeit in less violent ways. This should remind us that Fascism, Communism and Democracy all owe their origins to the first anti-Christian revolution, the French revolution of 1789...

The critical transitional period began in 1953, when, on the one hand, the violent, masculine phase of the revolution passed its peak with Stalin's death, and on the other hand the seductive, feminine phase began with the discovery of the contraceptive pill... 1953 was also the year of the discovery of DNA. Theoretically, this made possible the abolition of disease and old age, even the changing of human nature itself through manipulation of the human genome. Thus the Nihilist dreams of Nechayev and Nietzsche, which became nightmarish reality in the era of Stalin and Hitler, have given way to more peaceful visions of life without God (at least in any form recognizable to traditional monotheism). Thus our ideals now are not salvation or the Kingdom of heaven but education and clean water, human rights and robots (including, human rights for robots!), cloning and gene therapy.

The aim of this continuation of the revolution by non-violent means – its “positive”, “creative” phase, as opposed to its “negative”, “destructive” phase up to 1945 – is the same as before: to reconcile a renewed mankind to a completely this-worldly faith and hope. The first, violent, nihilist phase of the revolution was necessary in order to root out the old, other-worldly faith. In Lenin's famous phrase, “you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.” But now mankind can proceed to a new age of universal prosperity and happiness from which all sorrow and pain will have fled away and in which, consequently, the “opium” of traditional religion will no longer be necessary, being replaced by more this-worldly (but still “spiritual”) opiates...

These opiates are substances that raise the mood, such as serotonin. As Yuval Noah Harari writes: “Today, when we finally realize that the keys to happiness are in the hands of our biochemical system, we can stop wasting our time on politics and social reforms, putsches and ideologies, and focus instead on the only thing that can make us truly happy: manipulating our biochemistry. If we invest billions in understanding our brain chemistry and developing appropriate treatments, we can make people far happier than ever before, without any need of revolutions. Prozac, for example, does not change regimes, but by raising serotonin levels it lifts people out of their depression.

“Nothing captures the biological argument better than the famous New Age slogan: ‘Happiness begins within.’ Money, social status, plastic surgery,

beautiful houses, powerful positions – none of these will bring you happiness. Lasting happiness comes only from serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin.

“In Aldous Huxley’s dystopian novel *Brave New World*, published in 1932 at the height of the Great Depression, happiness is the supreme value and psychiatric drugs replace the police and the ballot as the foundation of politics. Every day, each person takes a dose of ‘soma’, a synthetic drug which makes people happy without harming their productivity and efficiency. The World State that governs the entire globe is never threatened by wars, revolutions, strikes or demonstrations, because all people are supremely content with their current conditions, whatever they may be. Huxley’s vision of the future is far more troubling than George Orwell’s *1984*. Huxley’s world seems monstrous to most readers, but it is hard to explain why. Everybody is happy all the time – what could be wrong with that?”<sup>253</sup>

In October, 1949 Aldous Huxley, prophet of the “positive” phase of the revolution, wrote to his former pupil George Orwell, denouncer of the “negative” phase, after the publication of *1984*: “It was very kind of you to tell your publishers to send me a copy of your book. It arrived as I was in the midst of a piece of work that required much reading and consulting of references; and since poor sight makes it necessary for me to ration my reading, I had to wait a long time before being able to embark on *1984*.”

“Agreeing with all that the critics have written of it, I need not tell you, yet once more, how fine and how profoundly important the book is. May I speak instead of the thing with which the book deals – the ultimate revolution? The first hints of a philosophy of the ultimate revolution – the revolution which lies beyond politics and economics, and which aims at total subversion of the individual’s psychology and physiology – are to be found in the Marquis de Sade, who regarded himself as the continuator, the consummator, of Robespierre and Babeuf. The philosophy of the ruling minority in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a sadism which has been carried to its logical conclusion by going beyond sex and denying it. Whether in actual fact the policy of the boot-on-the-face can go on indefinitely seems doubtful. My own belief is that the ruling oligarchy will find less arduous and wasteful ways of governing and of satisfying its lust for power, and these ways will resemble those which I described in *Brave New World*. I have had occasion recently to look into the history of animal magnetism and hypnotism, and have been greatly struck by the way in which, for a hundred and fifty years, the world has refused to take serious cognizance of the discoveries of Mesmer, Braid, Esdaile, and the rest.

“Partly because of the prevailing materialism and partly because of prevailing respectability, nineteenth-century philosophers and men of science were not willing to investigate the odder facts of psychology for practical men, such as politicians, soldiers and policemen, to apply in the field of government. Thanks to the voluntary ignorance of our fathers, the advent of the ultimate

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<sup>253</sup> Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*, London: Vintage, 2014, p. 456.



revolution was delayed for five or six generations. Another lucky accident was Freud's inability to hypnotize successfully and his consequent disparagement of hypnotism. This delayed the general application of hypnotism to psychiatry for at least forty years. But now psycho-analysis is being combined with hypnosis; and hypnosis has been made easy and indefinitely extensible through the use of barbiturates, which induce a hypnoid and suggestible state in even the most recalcitrant subjects.

"Within the next generation I believe that the world's rulers will discover that infant conditioning and narco-hypnosis are more efficient, as instruments of government, than clubs and prisons, and that the lust for power can be just as completely satisfied by suggesting people into loving their servitude as by flogging and kicking them into obedience. In other words, I feel that the nightmare of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is destined to modulate into the nightmare of a world having more resemblance to that which I imagined in *Brave New World*. The change will be brought about as a result of a felt need for increased efficiency. Meanwhile, of course, there may be a large scale biological and atomic war — in which case we shall have nightmares of other and scarcely imaginable kinds." <sup>254</sup>

Günther Anders suggested how the devil might recommend going about the reconditioning of humanity: "Don't act violently. Hitler's kind of methods are outdated. Just create a collective conditioning so powerful that the very idea of revolt will not even come to the mind of men anymore.

"The ideal would be to format individuals from birth by limiting their innate biological skills. Secondly, conditioning would be continued by drastically reducing education, to bring it back to a form of professional integration. An uneducated individual has only a limited horizon of thought and the more his thought is restricted to poor concerns, the less he can revolt. Access to knowledge must be made more difficult and elitist. Let the gap widen between the people and science, let information for the general public be anaesthetized with any subversive content.

"Especially no philosophy. Again, persuasion should be used not direct violence: entertainment will be broadcast massively, via television, always flattering the emotional or instinctive. We'll occupy the minds with what's futile and playful. It is good, in a chatter and unceasing music, to stop the mind from thinking. We'll put sexuality at the forefront of human interests. Like social tranquilizer, there's nothing better.

"Generally, it will be done to ban the seriousness of existence, to deride everything that is of high value, to maintain a constant apology of lightness, so that the euphoria of advertising becomes the standard of human happiness and the model of freedom. Conditioning will thus result in such an integration

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<sup>254</sup> "Huxley to Orwell: My Hellish Vision of the Future is Better Than Yours (1949)", in *Literature, Philosophy, Politics*, March 17, 2015



itself, that the only fear - which must be maintained - will be that of being excluded from the system and therefore of not being able to access the conditions necessary for happiness.

"The mass man, thus produced, must be treated as he is: as a calf, and he must be monitored as a herd should be. Anything that puts his clarity to sleep is socially good; what would threaten to awaken him must be ridiculed, suffocated, fought. Any doctrine involving the system must first be designated subversive and terrorist and those supporting it should then be treated as such." <sup>255</sup>

"The new age," wrote Fr. Seraphim Rose in the 1960s, "which many call a 'post-Christian' age, is at the same time the age 'beyond Nihilism' - a phrase that expresses at once a fact and a hope. The fact this phrase expresses is that Nihilism, being negative in essence even if positive in aspiration, owing its whole energy to its passion to destroy Christian Truth, comes to the end of its program in the production of a mechanized 'new earth' and a dehumanized 'new man': Christian influence over man and over society having been effectively obliterated, Nihilism must retire and give way to another, more 'constructive' movement capable of acting from autonomous and positive motives. This movement... takes up the Revolution at the point where Nihilism leaves off and attempts to bring the movement which Nihilism began to its logical conclusion."

Compared with the seriousness of the analysis of western civilization by the thinkers we have just discussed, it is somewhat of a shock to encounter the essential *triviality* of the dominant academic philosophies of the time: the Anglo-Saxon school of linguistic philosophy, and the Continental school of Existentialism.

Linguistic philosophy was deeply hostile to metaphysics, considering it to be in the strict sense nonsensical. Progress in philosophy could be made only by careful analysis of language, understanding the rules of "language games" (L. Wittgenstein), which enabled one to avoid "category mistakes" (G. Ryle). Undoubtedly this philosophy made some useful discoveries - for example, that the language of values cannot be reduced to the language of fact (G. Moore). But it had no explanation of its discoveries and made no attempt to integrate them into a larger philosophy of life. For example, no attempt was made to unite facts and values in some supralinguistic reality (such as God).

Existential philosophy at least posed some supralinguistic theses, such as "Man makes himself" (Jean-Paul Sartre). If this is meant to assert that man has free-will, and is not completely dependent on his heredity and environment, it is true. But how then does the free, spiritual man relate to the physically determined man which these philosophers continued to believe in (Jean-Paul Sartre even became a Marxist)? We are given much eloquent verbiage in

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<sup>255</sup> Anders, "The Obsolescence of Man", 1956.

answer to this question, but no real solution to the problem. Or rather: none that is clearly comprehensible to the reader who is not in tune with the mysterious ramblings of the existentialists...

*October 3/16, 2020.  
St. Dionysius the Areopagite.*

## 18. WHEN IS IT TIME TO DIE?

During this time of coronavirus pandemic, we are being showered with statistics about how many people are dying, who are dying, what are our chances of dying, etc. But Orthodox Christians know that the time and manner of our death is determined by God, not by statistics. This is not to despise statistics (if they are reliable, of course): it is to recognize that Divine Providence presides over all the phenomena of nature and the laws of nature – as well as the exceptions to those laws that we call miracles. We know that “all things work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8.28). It is inconceivable that that fundamental law of God’s Providence should not apply to the most important event of our lives – our death.

Very broadly speaking, we may divide the *real, providential* causes of the time and manner of every man’s death into two categories:-

I. It is conducive to the salvation of a man that he die now, and not earlier or later. For “how could anything continue to exist unless You willed it?” asks the wise Solomon (Wisdom 11.25). And again: “There was a man pleasing to God and loved by Him, and while living among sinners he was taken up, lest evil change his understanding or deceit beguile his soul... He was made perfect... Therefore He took him early from the midst of evil” (4.10-11, 13, 14).

Even the perfect man can fall into temptation (was not Adam perfect before his fall?), and one way of being delivered from temptation is to die before encountering it. The Lord promised salvation to His chosen sheep, saying: “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand” (John 10.28-29). At the same time, we know that during the last times “unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24.22). So death can come as a true deliverance and salvation...

Sometimes death is literally life-saving, as the following story illustrates: “When I was in Boston, USA, I heard about a woman who was living in the same Convent of the Holy Nativity where I was staying as a guest. She was a Greek widow with a twelve-year-old son - her only child, to whom she was very devoted. He was a very nice boy, but weak in character and easily influenced by whatever company he happened to be keeping. At the age of 12 he had cancer of the liver, which was so advanced that the doctors, despairing of helping him, sent him home to die.

“One day his breathing became slower and slower, and his mother sensed that he was dying. She went up to the window and raised her fist to Heaven, saying: ‘If You dare to let him die...’ She went back to her son’s bed expecting to see him die, but to her surprise she noticed that his breathing became gradually easier. As the days passed, to the surprise of everyone, the boy not

only survived but his liver showed not a trace of cancer. It was a miracle, and the newspapers carried the story.

“The widow was thrilled, but deep in her soul she wondered how God could have been frightened of her and therefore allowed her son to live. But she pushed these thoughts from her mind and rejoiced - at first. Some years later, however, when the boy was 15 years old, she noticed money disappearing from her purse and objects disappearing from her home. When she questioned the boy, he was rude, denied everything and daily became more and more difficult to live with. He was in a group of bad youngsters, and his love for his mother seemed to have gone. Instead, he resented her and even seemed to hate her.

“Night after night she lay in bed worrying about him, and one night she said in despair: ‘I wish you were dead!’ As soon as she had said this, she remembered how she had “dared” God with her fist raised, and she started sobbing in despair. Some weeks later, the TV news reported that an old woman had been battered to death in her home by a group of youths. Her heart became heavy with the premonition that her son had been among them. Then there was a knock at the door, and she opened it to a policeman who asked her where her son was. She said that she did not know. He told her that he was suspected of having been a member of the gang. Hours went by in the torture of uncertainty, and finally the police came again, this time to tell her that her son had been one of the gang, that he and the others had been chased by the police, and that he had leapt from a wall and broken his neck. He was dead.

“His mother is now living the rest of her life repenting of her blasphemy and shedding tears on behalf of her son. She tells everyone: ‘God loved my son more than I did, and it was for the sake of the salvation of his soul that He was going to allow him to die at the age of 12 years before corruption would get hold of him. I doubted in the Goodness, Love and Wisdom of God. I dared Him, and for the sake of the salvation of my own soul He granted me my wish to prove that His love is greater than mine. The fate of my son now depends on my tears of contrition. Maybe he repented at the last minute and cried out to God. I shall never know whether he was too hardened. I can only plead with God to have mercy on our souls.’”<sup>256</sup>

If God has chosen a man for eternal life with Him, He will take him away from this life at exactly the right moment for his salvation: long enough, so that he can accomplish good works, repent and receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, and not too long, in case he fall into mortal sin and remain in it.

In the life of St. Joasaph of Belgorod, it is recorded that the holy hierarch came to a parish, where the local priest was 120 years old but still full of health. Wondering at this, the saint invited the priest to do confession with him. During this confession, the priest confessed a mortal sin that he had never before revealed – and promptly died. God in His great mercy had prolonged

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<sup>256</sup> Olga Moss, *Glimpses of Another World*.

his life so that he should be absolved of a sin which, if unconfessed, would have condemned him to eternal death....

The true Christian who is conscious of his sinfulness wishes to put off the hour of his death so that he can continue to repent. Even perfect men have wished for such a postponement, such as St. Sisoies the Great, who asked to stay longer in the flesh "because I have not yet begun to repent". But if a prolongation of life would not be used for repentance or good works, it is better to die...

II. It is better not to die now, but later. St. Paul writes: "I am hard-pressed between the two [life and death], having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith" (Philippians 1.23-25).

We can contribute to the "progress and joy of faith" of our neighbour by living on and doing good works for him, helping him both spiritually and materially. Sometimes the manner of help can be unusual. Thus in the *Evergetinos* we read of a novice who won his salvation through patient obedience to a particularly difficult and cruel elder. So even our evil works may turn out to the benefit of our neighbour through the "many-faceted wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3.10) – which is not, of course, an excuse for doing evil!

Many old people long for death so as not to be a burden on their family or carers. This is understandable, but it must be remembered that looking after an elderly relative is a good work which, if done for the sake of Christ, may well earn salvation for the carer. In today's apostate world a terrible temptation is presented to old people – that they should undergo euthanasia for the sake of their relatives. This not only eliminates the possibility of their relatives carrying out a major good work, "the duty of care": it tempts the old person to consent to the mortal sin of suicide. Suicide is a mortal sin because it consists in trying to make oneself, rather than God, the arbiter of when and how one is to die – and then cuts off the possibility of repentance for that sin, insofar as there is no repentance in hades (Psalms 6.4).

The truth of this is confirmed by an incident in the life of New Hieroconfessor Alexander (Orlov) of Omsk. As a young man, he was deceived by some atheist ideas. In despair he decided to commit suicide. His nearest relatives did not let him out of their sight, but followed him day and night. Many priests tried to convince Athanasius (as he was then called) to abandon his plan, but without success. He took a raw thong from a harness, put his head into a noose and stepped off the stool...

But just at that moment a fiery streak of lightning flashed before his eyes, and for the rest of his life he remembered the voice which he heard: "Now you are mine. There is no repentance in the grave." And then he heard the powerful laugh of the devil.

At that moment he repented and came to on the floor – the end of the raw thong was swaying on the ceiling, and a noose hung round his neck. On hearing the noise his relatives ran up. His godfather, who was a priest, confessed him and gave him communion. He sincerely repented and the thought of suicide never entered his mind again. Another priest, a friend of his father's, said to him: "Athanasius, Satan told you the truth – there is no repentance in the grave. But you are not yet in the grave, and you can still repent."

For the Christian who truly repents, and places his whole life – and death – in the hands of God alone, death can come only as a release and a joy – eternal joy, joy without end. As the holy God-Receiver Symeon, who was permitted by God to live for 360 years in order that He should hold Christ in his arms, said: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace. For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation..."

*October 4/17, 2020.  
St. Hierotheus, Bishop of Athens.*

## 19. OPTINA DESERT AND THE RESURRECTION OF RUSSIA

In spite of the suppression of the Decembrist rebellion by Tsar Nicholas I in 1825, revolutionary ideas and the poison of westernism continued to spread through Russian society. And the liberalizing reforms of Alexander II, regardless of their intrinsic merits or faults, brought Russia closer to the West. At the same time, however, a revival of the Eastern Orthodox teaching and practice of eldership (starchestvo) and hesychasm had also been taking place, whose aim was exactly the opposite of the revolution, that is, the bringing of men into submission to the all-holy Will of God and the lawful authorities that are established by God. The fount and origin of this revival was the great monastic founder St. Paisius Velichkovsky, several of whose Russian disciples spread the word north from Romania into Russia. Besides his personal influence on his disciples, Paisius also translated the Philokalia, a collection of patristic texts on prayer and the spiritual life, into Slavonic; the first edition was published with the help of Metropolitan Gabriel of St. Petersburg in 1793.

Ivan Mikhailovich Kontzevich has identified the essence of eldership, or starchestvo, with the gift of prophecy.<sup>257</sup> The gifts of clairvoyance, of foreseeing the future and accurately assessing the present that we associate with Old Testament prophecy are certainly part of this New Testament charisma. But a study of the lives of the holy elders and their discussions with the thousands of people of all classes, ages and conditions who poured into Optina seeking advice and consolation shows that eldership was much more than that. It can be summarized as the knowledge of the will of God for every individual supplicant and the ability to guide him to accept and fulfill that will to the end of eternal salvation. The future confessor of the faith E. Poselyanin described it as follows: "The business of saving souls is a difficult one. The unceasing struggle with self, that is, the struggle of the spirit with a nature infected with original sin, and a continuous watch over self, necessary for success in this struggle, are not yet enough. A vast knowledge of human nature and its relations with the external world, of the spiritual benefit and harm which may be derived from contact with the world, and of the way by which grace is obtained is needed. To aid the soul in its exercises, and to preserve its balance, continuous guidance is necessary. Such guidance makes uninterrupted progress toward perfection possible, without the spiritual fluctuations and vicissitudes common to people who have no guide. There is needed someone who knows the soul, its dispositions, abilities and sins, a person with spiritual experience and wisdom who can guide the soul, encouraging it in times of laziness and sadness and restraining it in times of immoderate elation, one who knows how to humble pride, foresee danger and treat sin with penance. Quick and safe is the way of the man who has subjected himself to such guidance because he practices then the great virtues: obedience and humility. Revelation of thoughts, which is the condition sine qua non of starchestvo, is a powerful means of progress, terrible to the enemy of our

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<sup>257</sup> Kontzevich, *Optina Pustyn' i ee Vremia* (Optina Desert and its Time), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1977.

salvation. The unrevealed thought troubles and depresses the soul; revealed, it falls away and does no harm.”<sup>258</sup>

“The path of guidance by an elder,” wrote Fr. Clement Sederholm in 1875, “has been recognized throughout all ages of Christianity by all the great desert dwellers, fathers and teachers of the Church as being the most reliable and surest of all that are known to the Church of Christ. Eldership blossomed in the ancient Egyptian and Palestinian communities; it was afterwards planted on Athos, and from the East it was brought to Russia. But in the last centuries, in view of the general decline of faith and asceticism, it has gradually fallen into neglect, so that many have even begun to reject it. In the times of St. Nilus of Sora, the way of eldership was already scorned by many; and by the end of the past century [that is, the 18<sup>th</sup>] it had become almost entirely unknown. For the restoration of this form of monastic life, which is founded upon the teaching of the Holy Fathers, much was done by the famous and great Archimandrite of the Moldavian monasteries, Paisius Velichkovsky. With great labor he gathered together on Athos and translated from Greek into Slavonic the works of the ascetic writers, which set forth the patristic teaching on monastic life in general and the spiritual relationship to an elder in particular. At the same time in Niamets and in the other Moldavian monasteries under his rule, he exhibited in practice the application of this teaching. One of the disciples of Archimandrite Paisius, Schemamonk Theodore, who lived in Moldavia almost 20 years, transmitted this teaching to Hiero-schemamonk Father Leonid and through him and his disciple, the Elder Hiero-schemamonk Macarius, it was planted in the Optina monastery.

“The abbot of Optina at that time, Fr. Moses, and his brother, the Skete superior Fr. Anthony, who laid the beginning of their monastic life in the Bryansk forest in the spirit of the ancient great desert dwellers, wished for a long time to introduce eldership into the Optina Monastery. By themselves, however, they could not fulfill this task; they were burdened by many difficult and complicated occupations in conjunction with the development and governance of the Monastery. Furthermore, although in general the combining of the duties of the abbacy and eldership in one person was possible in the ancient times of simplicity of character, as we have already mentioned, in our times it is very hard and even impossible. However, when Fr. Leonid settled in Optina, Fr. Moses, knowing and taking advantage of his experience in the spiritual life, entrusted all the brothers who live in the Optina Monastery to his guidance, as well as all others who would come to live in the Monastery.

“From that time the entire order of the monastic life at the Optina monastery changed. Without the counsel and blessing of the Elder nothing of importance was undertaken in the Monastery. Every day, especially in the evening, the brotherhood came to his cell with their spiritual needs. Each one hastened to reveal before the Elder how he had transgressed during the course of the day

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<sup>258</sup> Posleyanin, *Russkie Podvizhniki 19-go veka* (Russian Ascetics of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century), St. Petersburg, 1910, pp. 221-222.



in deed, word or thought, in order to ask for counsel for the resolution of problems that had arisen, consolation in some sorrow that he had met, help and strength in the internal battle with the passions and with the invisible enemies of our salvation. The Elder received all with fatherly love and offered all a word of experience instruction and consolation.”<sup>259</sup>

Nor was it only monks who sought the instruction of the Optina elders: people from all walks of life from generals to peasants poured in their thousands through the gates of the monastery. The influence of the Optina elders, together with that of other Russian elders from other great monasteries in the same tradition such as Valaam, Sarov, Glinsk, Kiev and the Rossikon (St. Panteleimon’s on Mount Athos), and holy bishops such as Theophan the Recluse, Ignaty Brianchaninov, Innocent of Kherson, Philaret of Kiev and Philaret of Moscow, constituted a powerful spiritual antithesis to the influence of westernism in nineteenth-century Russia. Nor was Optina’s significance confined to pre-revolutionary Russia: many of the confessor bishops and priests of the early Soviet period had been trained by the Optina elders. No less than fourteen Optina startsy or elders have been glorified as saints. The most recent was St. Nektary, who died in exile from the Sovietized monastery in 1928. After the first two great elders, Lev (Nagolkin) and Makary (Ivanov), the most famous and influential was Makary’s disciple Ambrose (Grenkov). St. Lev’s disciples included the famous Bishop of the Black Sea and the Caucasus, St. Ignaty Brianchaninov. St. Makary of Optina had a great influence on Nikolai Gogol and the Slavophile writer Ivan Kireyevsky, while St. Ambrose’s influence would extend wider still, including the famous writers Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

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Among the spiritual sicknesses coming from the West and identified by the holy elders was indifferentism, what we would now call ecumenism, that is, an increased tolerance for Christian heresies to the extent of placing them on a par with Orthodoxy. As we have seen, the first ecumenical dialogue with the American Episcopalians had begun, and while the Church leaders stood firm in Orthodoxy, the spirit of Anglican indifferentism was infectious.

Thus in the 1850s St. Ambrose of Optina wrote: “Now many educated people bear only the name of Orthodox, but in actual fact completely adhere to the morals and customs of foreign lands and foreign beliefs. Without any torment of conscience they violate the regulations of the Orthodox Church concerning fasts and gather together at balls and dances on the eves of great Feasts of the Lord, when Orthodox Christians should be in church in prayerful vigil. This would be excusable if such gatherings took place on the eves of ordinary days, but not on the eves of Feasts, and especially great Feasts. Are not such acts and deeds clearly inspired by our enemy, the destroyer of souls,

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<sup>259</sup> Sederholm, *Elder Leonid of Optina*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1990, pp. 49-52.

contrary to the commandment of the Lord which says: carry out your ordinary affairs for six days, but the seventh (festal) day must be devoted to God in pious service? How have Orthodox Christians come to such acts hated by God? Is it not for no other reason than indiscriminate communion with believers of other faiths?..."

In 1863 St. Theophan the Recluse described how western indifferentism had begun already centuries before: "Have you heard of the indulgences of the Pope of Rome? Here is what they are: special treatment and leniency, which he gives, defying the law of Christ. And what is the result? From all of this, the West is corrupt in faith and in its way of life, and is now getting lost in its disbelief and in the unrestrained life with its indulgences.

"The Pope changed many doctrines, spoiled all the sacraments, nullified the canons concerning the regulation of the Church and the correction of morals. Everything has begun going contrary to the will of the Lord, and has become worse and worse.

"Then along came Luther, a smart man, but stubborn. He said, The Pope changed everything as he wanted, why shouldn't I do the same? He started to modify and to re-modify everything in his own way, and in this way established the new Lutheran faith, which only slightly resembles what the Lord commanded and the holy apostles delivered to us.

"After Luther came the philosophers. And they in turn said, Luther has established himself a new faith, supposedly based on the Gospel, though in reality based on his own way of thinking. Why, then, don't we also compose doctrines based on our own way of thinking, completely ignoring the Gospel? They then started rationalizing, and speculating about God, the world and man, each in his own way. And they mixed up so many doctrines that one gets dizzy just counting them.

"Now the westerners have the following views: Believe what you think best, live as you like, satisfy whatever captivates your soul. This is why they do not recognize any law or restriction and do not abide by God's Word. Their road is wide, all obstacles removed. But the broad way leads to perdition, according to what the Lord says..."<sup>260</sup>

And again he wrote: "'If any man shall say to you, here is Christ; or lo, He is there, believe him not.' (Mark 13.21). Christ the Lord, our Saviour, having established upon earth the Holy Church, is well pleased to abide in it as its Head, Enlivener and Ruler. Christ is here, in our Orthodox Church, and He is not in any other church. Do not search for Him elsewhere, for you will not find Him. Therefore, if someone from a non-Orthodox assemblage comes to you and begins to suggest that they have Christ - do not believe it. If someone says to you, 'We have an apostolic community, and we have Christ,' do not believe

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<sup>260</sup> St. Theophan the Recluse, *Sermon on the Sunday after Nativity*, December 29, 1863.

them. The Church founded by the Apostles abides on the earth - it is the Orthodox Church, and Christ is in it. A community established only yesterday cannot be apostolic, and Christ is not in it. If you hear someone say, 'Christ is speaking in me,' while he shuns the [Orthodox] Church, does not venerate or know its pastors, and is not sanctified by the Sacraments, do not believe him. Christ is not in him: rather, another spirit is in him, one that appropriates the name of Christ in order to divert people from Christ the Lord and from His Holy Church. Neither believe anyone who suggests even some small thing alien to the [Orthodox] Church. Recognize all such people to be instruments of seducing spirits and lying preachers of falsehood." <sup>261</sup>

The danger of religious indifferentism was especially noted by St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, a disciple of the Optina Elder Lev: "You say, 'heretics are Christians just the same.' Where did you take that from? Perhaps someone or other calling himself a Christian while knowing nothing of Christ, may in his extreme ignorance decide to acknowledge himself as the same kind of Christian as heretics, and fail to distinguish the holy Christian faith from those offspring of the curse, blasphemous heresies. Quite otherwise, however, do true Christians reason about this. A whole multitude of saints has received a martyr's crown, has preferred the most cruel and prolonged tortures, prison, exile, rather than agree to take part with heretics in their blasphemous teaching.

"The Ecumenical Church has always recognised heresy as a mortal sin; she has always recognised that the man infected with the terrible malady of heresy is spiritually dead, a stranger to grace and salvation, in communion with the devil and the devil's damnation. Heresy is a sin of the mind; it is more a diabolic than a human sin. It is the devil's offspring, his invention; it is an impiety that is near idol-worship. Every heresy contains in itself the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, whether against the dogma or the action of the Holy Spirit." <sup>262</sup>

"The reading of the Fathers clearly convinced me that salvation in the bosom of the Orthodox Russian Church was undoubted, something of which the religions of Western Europe are deprived since they have not preserved whole either the dogmatic or the moral teaching of the Church of Christ from her beginning." <sup>263</sup>

St. Ignaty was especially fierce against the heresy of Papism: "Papism is the name of a heresy that seized the West and from which there came, like the branches from a tree, various Protestant teachings. Papism ascribes to the Pope the properties of Christ and thereby rejects Christ. Some western writers have almost openly pronounced this rejection, saying that the rejection of Christ is a much smaller sin than the rejection of the Pope. The Pope is the idol of the

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<sup>261</sup> St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year*, Moscow, 2010, p. 40.

<sup>262</sup> Brianchaninov, *Pis'ma*, no. 283; translated as "Concerning the Impossibility of Salvation for the Heterodox and Heretics", *The Orthodox Word*, March-April, 1965, and *Orthodox Life*, January-February, 1991.

<sup>263</sup> Brianchaninov, "Lamentation", in *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 2003, p. 20.

papists; he is their divinity. Because of this terrible error, the Grace of God has left the papists; they have given themselves over to Satan – the inventor and father of all heresies, among which is Papism. In this condition of the darkening [of the mind], they have distorted several dogmas and sacraments, while they have deprived the Divine Liturgy of its essential significance by casting out of it the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of the offerings of bread and wine, at which they are transmuted into the Body and Blood of Christ... No heresy expresses so openly and blatantly their immeasurable pride, their cruel disdain for men and their hatred of them."

St. Ignaty was pessimistic about the future of Russia: "It is evident that the apostasy from the Orthodox faith is general among the people. One is an open atheist, another is a deist, another a Protestant, another an indifferentist, another a schismatic. There is no healing or cure for this plague."

"What has been foretold in the Scriptures is being fulfilled: a cooling towards the faith has engulfed both our people and all the countries in which Orthodoxy was maintained up to now."

"Religion is falling in the people in general. Nihilism is penetrating into the merchant class, from where it has not far to go to the peasants. In most peasants a decisive indifference to the Church has appeared, and a terrible moral disorder."<sup>264</sup>

"The people is being corrupted, and the monasteries are also being corrupted," said the same holy bishop to Tsar Alexander II in 1866, one year before his own death<sup>265</sup>.

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow feared "storm-clouds coming from the West", and advised that rizas should not be made for icons, because "the time is approaching when ill-intentioned people will remove the rizas from the icons."<sup>266</sup>

Another pessimist was St. Makary of Optina, who wrote: "The heart flows with blood, in pondering our beloved fatherland Russia, our dear mother. Where is she racing headlong, what is she seeking? What does she await? Education increases but it is pseudo-education, it deceives itself in its hope. The young generation is not being nourished by the milk of the doctrine of our Holy Orthodox Church but has been poisoned by some alien, vile, venomous spirit, and how long can this continue? Of course, in the decrees of God's Providence

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<sup>264</sup> Brianchaninov, in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 339, 340.

<sup>265</sup> *Zhizneopisanie Sviatitelia Ignatia Brianchaninova*, p. 485. In the last decade of his life the holy hierarch composed notes for an agenda of a Council of the Russian Church that would tackle the grave problems facing her. See <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=1968>.

<sup>266</sup> Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 349.

it has been written what must come to pass, but this has been hidden from us in His unfathomable wisdom..."<sup>267</sup>

Visions from above seemed to confirm that apocalyptic times were approaching. Thus in 1871 the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Count Alexander Petrovich Tolstoy, had the following vision: "It was as if I were in my own house standing in the entrance-hall. Beyond was a room in which on the ledge between the windows there was a large icon of the God of Sabaoth that gave out such blinding light that from the other room (the entrance-hall) it was impossible to look at it. Still further in was a room in which there were Protopriest Matthew Alexandrovich Konstantinovsky and the reposed Metropolitan Philaret. And this room was full of books; along the walls from ceiling to floor there were books; on the long tables there were piles of books; and while I certainly had to go into this room, I was held back by fear, and in terror, covering my face with my hand, I passed through the first room and, on entering the next room, I saw Protopriest Matthew Alexandrovich dressed in a simple black cassock; on his head was a skull-cap; in his hands was an unbent book, and he motioned me with his head to find a similar book and open it. At the same time the metropolitan, turning the pages of this book said: 'Rome, Troy, Egypt, Russia, the Bible.' I saw that in my book 'Bible' was written in very heavy lettering. Suddenly there was a noise and I woke up in great fear. I thought a lot about what it could all mean. My dream seemed terrible to me - it would have been better to have seen nothing. Could I not ask those experienced in the spiritual life concerning the meaning of this vision in sleep? But an inner voice explained the dream even to me myself. However, the explanation was so terrible that I did not want to agree with it."

St. Ambrose of Optina gave the following interpretation of this vision: "He who was shown this remarkable vision in sleep, and who then heard the very significant words, very probably received the explanation of what he had seen and heard through his guardian angel, since he himself recognized that an inner voice explained the meaning of the dream to him. However, since we have been asked, we also shall give our opinion..."

"...The words 'Rome, Troy, Egypt' may have the following significance. Rome at the time of the Nativity of Christ was the capital of the world, and, from the beginning of the patriarchate, had the primacy of honour; but because of love of power and deviation from the truth she was later rejected and humiliated. Ancient Troy and Egypt were notable for the fact that they were punished for their pride and impiety - the first by destruction, and the second by various punishments and the drowning of Pharaoh with his army in the Red Sea. But in Christian times, in the countries where Troy was located there were founded the Christian patriarchates of Antioch and Constantinople, which flourished for a long time, embellishing the Orthodox Church with their piety and right dogmas; but later, according to the inscrutable destinies of God, they

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<sup>267</sup> St. Makary, *Letter 165 to Monastics*, in Fr. Leonid Kavelin, *Elder Macarius of Optina*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1995, pp. 309-310.

were conquered by barbarians - the Muslims, and up to now have borne this heavy slavery, which restricts the freedom of Christian piety and right belief. And in Egypt, together with the ancient impiety, there was from the first times of Christianity such a flowering of piety that the deserts were populated by tens of thousands of monastics, not to speak of the great numbers of pious laity from whom they came. But then, by reason of moral licentiousness, there followed such an impoverishment of Christian piety in that country that at a certain time in Alexandria the patriarch remained with only one priest.

"... After the three portentous names 'Rome, Troy, Egypt', the name of 'Russia' was also mentioned - Russia, which at the present time is counted as an independent Orthodox state, but where the elements of foreign heterodoxy and impiety have already penetrated and taken root among us and threaten us with the same sufferings as the above-mentioned countries have undergone.

"Then there comes the word 'Bible'. No other state is mentioned. This may signify that if in Russia, too, because of the disdain of God's commandments and the weakening of the canons and decrees of the Orthodox Church and for other reasons, piety is impoverished, then there must immediately follow the final fulfillment of that which is written at the end of the Bible, in the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian.

"He who saw this vision correctly observed that the explanation given him by an inner voice was terrible. Terrible will be the Second Coming of Christ and terrible the last judgement of the world. But not without terrors will also be the period before that when the Antichrist will reign, as it is said in the Apocalypse: 'And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and death shall flee from them' (9.6). The Antichrist will come during a period of anarchy, as the apostle says: 'until he that restraineth be taken away from the midst' (II Thessalonians 2.7), that is, when the powers that be no longer exist."<sup>268</sup>

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St. Ambrose's identification of "him that restraineth" the coming of the Antichrist with the Russian Tsardom had long roots in the patristic writings. St. John Chrysostom, Blessed Theophylact and others identified him with the Roman emperor, whose successor, as being the emperor of "the Third Rome", Russia, was the Russian Tsar. Metropolitan Philaret had restated the political teaching of Orthodoxy with exceptional eloquence in the previous reign. And now St. Theophan the Recluse wrote: "The Tsar's authority, having in its hands the means of restraining the movements of the people and itself relying on Christian principles, does not allow the people to fall away from them, but will restrain it. And since the main work of the Antichrist will be to turn everyone away from Christ, he will not appear as long as the Tsar is in power. The latter's authority will not let him show himself, but will prevent him from acting in his own spirit. That is what he that restraineth is. When the Tsar's authority falls,

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<sup>268</sup> St. Ambrose of Optina, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Sergiev Posad, 1908, part 1, pp. 21-22.

and the peoples everywhere acquire self-government (republics, democracies), then the Antichrist will have room to manoeuvre. It will not be difficult for Satan to train voices urging apostasy from Christ, as experience showed in the time of the French revolution. Nobody will give a powerful 'veto' to this. A humble declaration of faith will not be tolerated. And so, when these arrangements have been made everywhere, arrangements which are favourable to the exposure of antichristian aims, then the Antichrist will also appear. Until that time he waits, and is restrained."

St. Theophan wrote: "When these principles [Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality] weaken or are changed, the Russian people will cease to be Russian. It will then lose its sacred three-coloured banner." And again: "Our Russians are beginning to decline from the faith: one part is completely and in all ways falling into unbelief, another is falling into Protestantism, a third is secretly weaving together beliefs in such a way as to bring together spiritism and geological madness with Divine Revelation. Evil is growing: evil faith and lack of faith are raising their head: faith and Orthodoxy are weakening. Will we come to our senses? O Lord! Save and have mercy on Orthodox Russia from Thy righteous and fitting punishment!"<sup>269</sup>

And again, he wrote: "Do you know what bleak thoughts I have? And they are not unfounded. I meet people who are numbered among the Orthodox, who in spirit are Voltaireans, naturalists, Lutherans, and all manner of free-thinkers. They have studied all the sciences in our institutions of higher education. They are not stupid nor are they evil, but with respect to the Church they are good for nothing. Their fathers and mothers were pious; the ruin came in during the period of their education outside of the family homes. Their memories of childhood and their parents' spirit keeps them within certain bounds. But what will their own children be like? What will restrain them within the needed bounds? I draw the conclusion from this that in one or two generations our Orthodoxy will dry up."

As St. Ignaty Brianchaninov wrote: "We are helpless to arrest this apostasy. Impotent hands will have no power against it and nothing more will be required than the attempt to withhold it. The spirit of the age will reveal the apostasy. Study it, if you wish to avoid it, if you wish to escape this age and the temptation of its spirits. One can suppose, too, that the institution of the Church which has been tottering for so long will fall terribly and suddenly. Indeed, no-one is able to stop or prevent it. The present means to sustain the institutional Church are borrowed from the elements of the world, things inimical to the Church, and the consequence will be only to accelerate its fall. Nevertheless, the Lord protects the elect and their limited number will be filled."<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> St. Theophan, in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 346, 347.

<sup>270</sup> Sokolov, L.A. *Episkop Ignatij Brianchaninov* (Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov), Kiev, 1915, vol. 2, p. 250. Italics mine (V.M.).

Although the Optina elders prophesied the revolution because of the people's unfaithfulness to God and the Tsar, they did not see this as the end of True Orthodoxy in Russia.

St. Anatoly (Potapov) (+1922) said: "There will be a storm. And the Russian ship will be destroyed. Yes, it will happen, but, you know, people can be saved on splinters and wreckage. Not all, not all will perish..."

But he also prophesied that canonical unity would be restored: "A great miracle of God will be revealed. And all the splinters and wreckage will, by the will of God and His might, be gathered together and united, and the ship will be recreated in its beauty and will go along the path foreordained for it by God. That's how it will be, a miracle manifest to all..."

Elder Alexis (Mechev) of Moscow (+1922), a disciple of the Optina elders who was imbued with their spirit and teaching, said: "When the time comes, God will send the necessary people, who will do this work and will annihilate the Bolsheviks in the same way that a storm breaks the wood of a mast."

Finally, St. Nektary of Optina (+1928), who refused to be in communion with the Moscow Patriarchate after 1927, and joined the Catacomb Church, saying that Metropolitan Sergius was still filled with the poison of renovationism, declared: "If even a few faithful Orthodox will be preserved in Russia, God will have mercy on her... Russia will arise, and materially she will not be wealthy. But in spirit she will be wealthy, and in Optina there will yet be seven luminaries, seven pillars..."

*October 10/23, 2020.  
Holy Fourteen Elders of Optina.*



## 20. WHO COULD BE THE TSAR OF RUSSIA?

The recent emergence of a powerful monarchist movement in Russia<sup>271</sup> and the proposal that Vladimir Putin should become tsar, has raised two important questions. First: What is Orthodox autocracy. And secondly: Could Putin qualify as an Orthodox Autocrat?

### Three Conditions of Autocracy

—“Thy will be done”: that is the fervent prayer of every Christian, being the natural consequence of the previous petitions of the Lord’s Prayer. For God’s name will be hallowed, and His Kingdom will come, only if His will is done, both in every individual Christian and in society as a whole. But there’s the rub: if it is conceivable that God’s will can be done in the lives of individual Christians, that is, in the lives of those few whom we call saints, this goal seems utopian with regard to society as a whole. For not only is society not composed only of saints: the life of society as a whole is the domain of what we call politics. And politics, as we all know, is a dirty business, which is why we tacitly – but criminally – admit that politics cannot be ruled by the rules of morality, – or, at any rate, Christian morality – but by “reasons of state”, realpolitik, which is almost always very far from Christian morality; for “reasons of state” are in fact the reasons, very often, for some of the greatest crimes the world has ever seen.

However, Orthodox Christianity is utopian in one sense – in the sense, namely, that it believes that the leaven of God’s grace can reach even into the most hardened and worldly sphere of human life – politics. However, grace can penetrate the sphere of politics only under certain, very precisely determined conditions, the conditions that define one, and one only kind of politics. This is the politics of the Orthodox autocracy, a special kind of monarchy. (Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a non-Orthodox autocracy, so the qualification “Orthodox” is unnecessary. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that the word “autocracy” is commonly used to describe a non-Orthodox kind of one-man-rule, despotism, we shall continue to speak of the Orthodox autocracy.)

Now the superiority of autocracy, and its defining conditions, are set out very early in the Divine Revelation, in the book of Deuteronomy. Speaking to the people of Israel through Moses, the Lord lays down the following conditions that a ruler must satisfy if he is to be a true autocrat, and not a pagan-style despot:

“When thou shalt come unto the land which the Lord thy God shall choose, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, ‘I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me’, thou shalt surely set a king over

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<sup>271</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHNBI-JJLPw&feature=youtu.be>.

thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother... And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel" (Deuteronomy 17.14-15,18-20).

Thus God blessed the institution of the monarchy, but stipulated three conditions if His blessing was to rest on it. First, the people must itself *desire* to have a king placed over it. Secondly, the king must be someone "whom the Lord thy God shall choose"; a true king is chosen by God, not by man. Such a man will always be a "brother", that is a member of the People of God, of the Church: if he is not, then God has not chosen him. Thirdly, he will govern in accordance with the Law of God, which he will strive to fulfil in all its parts. The first Israelite leader who fulfilled all three conditions was David, the first true autocrat. (Moses himself also fulfilled these conditions, but in his time the Israelites had not yet come into possession of the land that the Lord had chosen for them; it was not yet time for the foundation of the stable, territorial state.) Every successive autocrat was of the line of David, until the Coming of Christ Himself, "to Whom," As the Archangel Gabriel said to the Holy Virgin, "the Lord God will give the throne of His father David. And He will rule over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1.32-33). In this way another condition of autocracy was established: the hereditary principle, in accordance with the word: "I will establish his seed unto ages of ages, and his throne shall be as the days of heaven... Once have I sworn by My holiness that to David I will not lie; his seed forever shall abide. And his throne shall be as the sun before Me, and as the moon that is established forever" (Psalms 88.28, 34-35).

Let us look more closely at these three conditions:-

### **1. The People Must be Monarchist.**

In today's world the democratic mind-set has conquered almost everywhere. Even in those countries in which there is no real democracy, lipservice is made to democracy and the outer forms of democracy. But God makes it clear that He will give His people a king only if they really *want* a king. That is, they must be eager to obey the will of a king rather than their own will or "the will of the people". In 1917 the Russian Autocracy was removed from the people because they no longer wanted a king. So the autocracy can be restored only if the monarchist mind-set is restored. Such an attitude can be found today in Russia, which is one of the few genuine reasons for optimism in the world today. As Mikhail Suslov writes, "A recent poll conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM) in March 2013 showed that

24 percent of Russians have nothing against the idea of the restoration of the monarchy; an analogous survey in 2006 numbered potential monarchists at 19 percent. In the same period the number of opponents of monarchy has also increased insignificantly: from 66 percent in 2006 to 67 percent in 2013. Thus, we can speak of the stabilization of the number of monarchist sympathizers at a level of approximately one-fifth of the population."<sup>272</sup>

This might not seem a large enough proportion of the population. Nevertheless, it is a beginning, and all the indications are that the proportion of the Russian population with a monarchist mind-set is growing. We must remember that when the first Christian autocrat, St. Constantine the Great, came to power, it is thought that no more than 5-10% of the population of the Roman empire was Christian. The danger is that this monarchist potential in the Russian population may be ambushed by pseudo-monarchists – that is, by the supporters of Vladimir Putin, who can in no way be seen as a potential autocrat in the true, Biblical sense...

## **2. The Autocrat must be Orthodox.**

He must be a member of the People of God, that is, the True Church, because only such a man can become a vessel of the Holy Spirit and understand the true spiritual needs of the people. A heretical Autocrat cannot defend the Orthodox people against heretics, but will rather introduce the tares of heresy among the people. The Byzantine autocracy was overthrown in the fifteenth century because the last three Byzantine emperors were in fact Roman Catholic, and had led Byzantium into the union with Rome at the council of Florence. In the same way the false Tsar Dmitri at the Time of Troubles in the early seventeenth century, while pretending to be Orthodox, in fact belonged to a quite different religion. Vladimir Putin is also a heretic; for he supports the ecumenist actions of the Moscow Patriarchate, and himself practices inter-Christian and inter-faith ecumenism. Moreover, Putin's recent affirmation that the Gospel of Christ is close to Communist ideology leads us to suppose that he is not even an ecumenist Christian, but rather at best a "Communist Christian" and at worst a secret atheist.

## **3. The Autocrat must recognize that he is bound by the Law of God.**

A common misapprehension concerning Orthodox Autocracy is that it is unlimited, absolutist, despotic. Although some Orthodox kings and emperors have behaved at times like despots, these were aberrations, exceptions to the rule. Ivan the Terrible, for example, behaved like an exemplary Orthodox autocrat in the first half of his reign, and declined into absolutism in the second half. A true Orthodox autocrat feels bound by the Orthodox ideal that is preached by the Church, and defers in all spiritual matters to the Orthodox Church. This is what is meant by the "symphony" between the Church and the

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<sup>272</sup> Suslov, "The Genealogy of the Idea of Monarchy in the Post-Soviet Political Discourse of the Russian Orthodox Church", *State, Religion and Church*, vol. 3 (1), 2016, p. 30.

Autocracy that was first proclaimed by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, who in his Novella 131 decreed: "The Church canons have the same force in the State as the State laws: what is permitted or forbidden by the former is permitted or forbidden by the latter. Therefore crimes against the former cannot be tolerated in the State according to State legislation." Even the less distinguished autocrats decreed laws supporting the dogmas and canons of the Church – for example, about attending church on Sundays and feasts, and about the non-participation of the clergy in politics and the army. The autocrat is not limited by the people, by purely human norms and customs. But he bows before the Law of God, and orders his people to do the same. "The power of the tsar," says St. John of Kronstadt, "is autocratic, for he does not receive it from the people, and for that reason it cannot be limited by the people and be responsible to it. Since the tsar's power proceeds from God it is responsible only before Him and can be limited only by the will of God Himself and His holy laws, to which it must be strictly conformed, without deviating from them."

Does Putin feel himself bound by the Law of God? He will probably say that he is; but a close examination both of his words, his personal behaviour and the works of his regime shows that he is not. Orthodox Christianity is supposedly supported – but the MP is in fact a heretical corruption of Orthodoxy. As regards moral values, Putin boasts that his Russia is morally superior to the West with its LGBT agenda. In this respect Russia may indeed be said to be superior to the West; but in most other respects the comparison with the West is not flattering to Russia... Worst of all, his loyalty to Sovietism, and his attempt to revive it in present-day Russia, rule him out as the successor of the Russian Tsars.

### *The Hereditary Principle*

To the three principles of autocracy described above must be added a fourth: the hereditary principle. Of course, the advantages of the hereditary principle have been known since ancient times, which is why we find it being applied in almost all the pagan kingdoms of antiquity. The most obvious and least commendable advantage of the principle is that it keeps wealth and power "within the family". More commendable and important is that it provides continuity and a peaceful transition from father to son while avoiding the evils of civil war. As Ivan Solonevich writes: "Power passes without quarrel and pain: the king is dead, long live the king!"<sup>273</sup>

Now from an Orthodox, spiritual point of view the great virtue of the hereditary principle is that it leaves the choice of who will be king to God, not man. As God through the Prophet-King David says in Psalm 88: "I have made a covenant with My chosen ones, I have sworn unto David My servant: I will establish thy seed unto eternity: I will establish thy seed unto eternity, and build up thy throne unto generation and generation... I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. For ever shall I keep for him My

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<sup>273</sup> Solonevich, *Narodnaia Monarkhia* (The People's Monarchy), Minsk, 1998, p. 87.

mercy, and My covenant shall be faithful unto him. And I will establish his seed unto ages of ages, and his throne shall be as the days of heaven. (vv. 3, 25-28).

The seed of David was the line of Jewish kings descending from him and culminating in Christ, Who was born as the King of Israel by right of inheritance, being “the Son of David”: as the Archangel Gabriel says to the Holy Virgin Mary: “the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the House of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1.32-33).

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow sees the hereditary principle as made in the image of God’s rule from age to age: “God established a tsar on earth in the image of His own heavenly single rule, an autocratic tsar in the image of His own autocracy, and a hereditary tsar in the image of His unfailing Kingdom, which continues from age to age.”<sup>274</sup>

There has been criticism of the hereditary principle in contemporary Russia, as Suslov writes, “on the grounds that a person unfit for the role may come to the throne. In fact, it appears that the Moscow Patriarchate is veering away from support of monarchism to support of Putin-style despotism. Referring to current political events in Russia in 2009, Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov, then deputy chair and director of the administrative staff of the Patriarchal Commission on Family Matters and the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood, asserted that strong presidential rule with the transfer of power to a designated “successor” was better than monarchy, which offers no guarantee against accidents of birth. Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeev) has spoken similarly: in his view monarchy is not the best form of government, for in history there have been various monarchs, some worthy and some not, and various presidents, but monarchy intrinsically does not preclude the transfer of power to an unworthy successor.”<sup>275</sup>

Indeed: but “an unworthy successor” may be precisely what God wants (or, more accurately: allows). For there is no such thing as “accidents of birth”; there is no such thing as chance in general; what is “chance” to the human eye conceals the purposeful Providence of God. Again we turn to Psalms 88: “If My statutes they profane, and keep not My commandments, I will visit their iniquities with a rod, and their injustices with scourges. But My mercy will I not disperse away from them, nor will I wrong them in My truth. Nor will I profane My covenant, nor the things that proceed from My lips will I make void. Once have I sworn by My holiness that to David I will not lie; his seed for ever shall abide. (vv. 29-33). Here the Lord is talking about the successors of David, the kings of Israel and Judah from Solomon and Rehoboam onwards. As we know from the Holy Scriptures, several of them were unworthy men. But God allowed them to reign; he did not interrupt the hereditary succession. They

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<sup>274</sup> *Gosudarstvennoe Uchenie Filareta Mitropolita Moskovskogo*, Jordanville. N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, p. 8.

<sup>275</sup> Suslov, op. cit., p. 45.

were placed on the throne by Him either because the people were not worthy of better kings, or because their patience and faithfulness to God were to be tested and strengthened by their endurance of bad kings. For since they are chosen by God, even the bad kings must be obeyed – except in the case that they demand the violation of God’s law.

The hereditary principle is deemed irrational by people of a democratic mentality (which means almost all people in today’s world) because they have no control over it. In a democratic election, the ruler is chosen – theoretically, at any rate - for his personal qualities and experience that makes him capable, in the judgement of the people, of wielding executive power. Thus democracy is based – again, theoretically – on meritocracy, on the eminently rational basis that this man is the best qualified for the job. But a religious people thinks quite differently. They think and feel that they are not capable of choosing who is best for the job. They believe that only God can know that. And so they try as hard as they can to take the choice *out* of their own, merely human hands and into the hands of God alone. They welcome the supposedly “chance” nature of hereditary election; for it places the election out of their control and therefore in the control of God alone.

Of course, the hereditary principle cannot be applied to the very first member of a dynasty, or when a dynasty has come to an end. In that case, God’s choice is manifested in a different way. The question then arises: in what way?

In the case of David, the model for all subsequent autocrats and dynastic founders, God’s choice was revealed through the Prophet Samuel, who anointed David to the kingdom many years before he actually ascended the throne. The equivalent to the Old Testament prophet and priest Samuel in New Testament times is the Church of Christ, which possesses the prophetic, priestly and kingly charismas within itself. And so the founders of New Testament dynasties are called directly by God or indirectly by the leaders of the Church; they are not elected by men. Thus St. Constantine, the first Christian autocrat, was called by the sign of the Cross appearing to him in the heavens accompanied by the Divine voice saying: “By this sign conquer”. Again, King Alfred, the founder of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty of Orthodox kings, was called by Pope Leo IV, who anointed him and gave him the rank of Roman consul, although he was not even his father’s eldest son!

An especially striking example of Divine calling to the kingdom is found in the life of St. Gregory, archbishop of the South Arabian kingdom of Homer: “Raising his eyes and mind and hands to heaven, [Gregory] prayed fervently and for a long time that God, Who knows the life and thoughts of every man, should indicate to him the man who was worthy of the kingdom. During the prayer of the archbishop, the invisible power of the Lord suddenly raised a certain man by the name of Abraham into the air and placed him in front of King Elesbaan [of Ethiopia]. Everyone cried out in awe for a long time: ‘Lord, have mercy!’ The archbishop said: ‘Here is the man whom you demanded should be anointed to the kingdom. Leave him here as king, we shall be of one

mind with him, and God will help us in everything.’ Great joy filled everyone on beholding the providence of God. Then King Elesbaan took the man Abraham, who had been revealed by God, led him to the temple of the All-Holy Trinity which was in the royal city of Afar, put the royal purple on him and laid the diadem on his head. Then St. Gregory anointed him and the bloodless Sacrifice was offered for the kings and all the people, and both kings communicated in the Divine Mysteries from the hands of the archbishop...”<sup>276</sup>

No Orthodox nation adhered more strongly to the hereditary principle than Russia. In 1613, when the Rurikid dynasty had already come to an end, a “Council of the Land” (Zemsky Sobor) elected Michael Romanov as the first autocrat of a new dynasty on the model of the Israelites’ election of Jephtha (Judges 11.11). Moreover, the members of the Council bound themselves and their descendants by a terrible oath and anathema to be loyal both to Tsar Michael and to all his descendants *forever*.

However, while it is commonly asserted that Michael Romanov was elected to the throne of Russia, as if he were not God’s choice, but the people’s, this is not how the people saw it. They did not see themselves as having elected and therefore created the Tsar, but rather as having *recognized* his election by *God*. They did not regard the tsar as democratically accountable to themselves, but saw themselves as bound to obey him and his successors in all things. For, as Fr. Lev Lebedev writes: “Tsars are not elected! And a Council, even a Zemsky Sobor, cannot be the source of his power. The kingdom is a calling of God, the Council can determine who is the lawful Tsar and summon him.”<sup>277</sup>

Solonevich confirms this thought: “When, after the Time of Troubles, the question was raised concerning the restoration of the monarchy, there was no hint of an ‘election to the kingdom’. There was a ‘search’ for people who had the greatest hereditary right to the throne. And not an ‘election’ of the more worthy. There were not, and could not be, any ‘merits’ in the young Michael Fyodorovich. But since only the hereditary principle affords the advantage of absolutely indisputability, it was on this that the ‘election’ was based.”<sup>278</sup>

For, as St. John Maximovich explains, Michael Romanov was not elected because of any special personal qualities or experience, but only because he was “the closest heir to the now defunct royal line”: “What drew the hearts of all to Michael Romanov? He had neither experience of statecraft, nor had he done any service to the state. He was not distinguished by the state wisdom of Boris Godunov or by the eminence of his race, as was Basil Shuisky. He was sixteen years old, and ‘Misha Romanov’, as he was generally known, had not yet managed to show his worth in anything. But why did the Russian people rest on him, and why with his crowning did all the quarrels and disturbances

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<sup>276</sup> “The Life of the Holy Hierarch Gregory, Bishop of Homer”, *Living Orthodoxy*, November-December, 1996, pp. 5-6.

<sup>277</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 126.

<sup>278</sup> Solonevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

regarding the royal throne come to an end? The Russian people longed for a lawful, 'native' Sovereign, and was convinced that without him there could be no order or peace in Russia. When Boris Godunov and Prince Basil Shuisky were elected, although they had, to a certain degree, rights to the throne through their kinship with the previous tsars, they were not elected by reason of their exclusive rights, but their personalities were taken into account. There was no strict lawful succession in their case. This explained the success of the pretenders. However, it was almost impossible to elect someone as tsar for his qualities. Everyone evaluated the candidates from their point of view. However, the absence of a definite law which would have provided an heir in the case of the cutting off of the line of the Great Princes and Tsars of Moscow made it necessary for the people itself to indicate who they wanted as tsar. The descendants of the appanage princes, although they came from the same race as that of the Moscow Tsars (and never forgot that), were in the eyes of the people simple noblemen, 'serfs' of the Moscow sovereigns; their distant kinship with the royal line had already lost its significance. Moreover, it was difficult to establish precisely which of the descendants of St. Vladimir on the male side had the most grounds for being recognized as the closest heir to the defunct royal line. In such circumstances all united in the suggestion that the extinct Royal branch should be continued by the closest relative of the last 'native', lawful Tsar. The closest relatives of Tsar Theodore Ioannovich [the son of Ivan the Terrible] were his cousins on his mother's side: Theodore, in monasticism Philaret, and Ivan Nikitich Romanov, both of whom had sons. In that case the throne had to pass to Theodore, as the eldest, but his monasticism and the rank of Metropolitan of Rostov was an obstacle to this. His heir was his only son Michael. Thus the question was no longer about the election of a Tsar, but about the recognition that a definite person had the rights to the throne. The Russian people, tormented by the time of troubles and the lawlessness, welcomed this decision, since it saw that order could be restored only by a lawful 'native' Tsar. The people remembered the services of the Romanovs to their homeland, their sufferings for it, the meek Tsaritsa Anastasia Romanova, the firmness of Philaret Nikitich. All this still more strongly attracted the hearts of the people to the announced tsar. But these qualities were possessed also by some other statesmen and sorrowers for Rus'. And this was not the reason for the election of Tsar Michael Romanov, but the fact that in him Rus' saw their most lawful and native Sovereign.

"In the acts on the election to the kingdom of Michael Fyodorovich, the idea that he was ascending the throne by virtue of his election by the people was carefully avoided, and it was pointed out that the new Tsar was the elect of God, the direct descendant of the last lawful Sovereign."<sup>279</sup>

After "electing" the first Romanov tsar, the people retained no right to depose him or any of his successors. On the contrary, they elected a hereditary dynasty, and specifically bound themselves by an oath to be loyal to that

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<sup>279</sup> Maximovich, *Proiskhozhdenie zakona o prestolonasledii v Rossii* (The Origin of the Law of Succession in Russia), Shanghai, 1936, Podolsk, 1994, pp. 13, 43-45.



dynasty forever. Hence the peculiar horror and *accursedness* of their rejection of Tsar Nicholas II in 1917, when not only was the hereditary succession of the Romanov dynasty interrupted, but the very concept of sacred, God-crowned kingship was abolished in favour of the pagan principle of democracy, rule by the people....

### *The Future Tsar*

In a conversation with Tsar Paul I (+1801), after correctly prophesying the destinies of all the Tsars from Paul I to Nicholas II, the Prophet Abel the Monk (+1831) said about the last tsar: "What is impossible for man is possible for God. God delays with His help, but it is said that he will give it soon and will raise the horn of Russian salvation. And there will arise a great prince from your race in exile, who stands for the sons of his people. He will be a chosen one of God, and on his head will be blessing. He will be the only one comprehensible to all, the very heart of Russia will sense him. His appearance will be sovereign and radiant, and nobody will say: 'The Tsar is here or there', but all will say: 'That's him'. The will of the people will submit to the mercy of God, and he himself will confirm his calling... His name has occurred three times in Russian history. Two of the same name have already been on the throne, but not on the Tsar's throne. But he will sit on the Tsar's throne as the third. In him will be the salvation and happiness of the Russian realm."

So the future Tsar will not be elected by the people, like Putin or his like. He will be called by God, and the people will recognize his calling, "submitting to the mercy of God". And they will be counted worthy of that mercy when they will have submitted to the will of God, not their own will, in the "election" of an autocrat to rule over them.

As for the hereditary principle, it will be present, although the hereditary link with the old dynasty will be still more indirect than it was in 1613. Thus Archbishop Theophan of Poltava (+1940), spiritual father of the Royal Family, passed on the words of the sayings of the Valaam elders: "Before the coming of the Antichrist Russia must yet be restored - to be sure, for a short time. And in Russia there must be a Tsar forechosen by the Lord Himself. He will be a man of burning faith, great mind and iron will. This much has been revealed about him. He will not be a Romanov, but he will be of the Romanovs according to the maternal line....

And again: "He will be of the family of the Romanovs according to the female line. Russia will be a powerful state, but only for 'a short time'... And then the Antichrist will come into the world, with all the horrors of the end as described in the Apocalypse." Again, he said: "He [the future Tsar] will not be a Romanov, but he will be from the Romanovs on the maternal line, he will re-establish the fertility of Siberia."

“The Church”, said St. John of Kronstadt, “will remain unshaken to the end of the age, and a Monarch of Russia, if he remains faithful to the Orthodox Church, will be established on the Throne of Russia until the end of the age...”

*November 14/27, 2018; revised October 16/29, 2020.*

## 21. GENETICS, UFOS AND THE BIRTH OF THE ANTICHRIST

### Introduction

If the first half of the twentieth century was distinguished by an amazing increase in our knowledge of the physical world, the second half was distinguished by an even more amazing increase in our knowledge of the biological world, and especially the world of human genetics and human reproduction. The vital break-through here was the discovery of DNA in 1953. Then came the introduction of the contraceptive pill, in vitro fertilisation and surrogate motherhood. As one journalist put it: "First, contraception severed the connection between sex and reproduction. It became possible to have sex without having babies. Then modern technology severed the connection between reproduction and sex. It became possible to have babies without having sex." <sup>280</sup> The most alarming developments have been genetic manipulation and cloning. Animal clones have been produced, and claims have even been made for a human clone. <sup>281</sup> So-called "cyborgs" are mixtures of human beings with biomechanical parts, including computer-assisted brains.

As early as 1976, the director of the Institute of Genetics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Academician N.P. Dubinin, was predicting the scale of this revolution: "The achievements of human genetics, and of general and molecular genetics, will push forward the problem of interference in human heredity. The coming revolution in genetics will demand a decisive overturning of the previously dominant view concerning the primacy of nature in its natural form. Genetics will turn out to be capable of overcoming the natural story of life and creating organic forms inconceivable in the light of the laws of natural evolution... For the molecular genetics and the molecular biology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century there lies in store the prospect of creating cells as the only self-regulating open living system, which will be bound up with the understanding of the essence of life. An exchange of living forms will take place between the earth and other worlds... The aim of genetic engineering is the creation of organisms according to a given model, whose hereditary program is formed by means of introducing the recipient of new genetic information. This information can be artificially synthesised or separated in the form of natural genetic structures from various organisms. In this way a new single genetic system which cannot arise by means of natural evolution will be created experimentally... Various manipulations with DNA molecules can lead to the unforeseen creation of biologically dangerous hybrid forms..." <sup>282</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Anthony Daniels, "How far has humanity sunk when we treat the creation of life just like ordering a new car?", *Daily Mail* (London), August 13, 2001, p. 12.

<sup>281</sup> David Fisher, "Russians 'have human clones'", *Metro* (London), August 13, 2001, p. 4.

<sup>282</sup> Дубинин, *Общая Генетика*, Москва: Наука, 1976 г.; цит. по: Протоиерей Владислав Свешников, "Работа адова делается уже", *Континент*, 71, 1992 г., СС. 270-271.

After quoting this passage, Fr. Vladislav Sveshnikov expressed the truly apocalyptic fear: "We have to admit that contemporary science is preparing the ground for the coming of the Antichrist."<sup>283</sup> How? By the manipulation of genes in order to produce the "superman" or "man-god" of Nietzsche's imagination, who will be at the same time the "devil-man" or "Antichrist" of Christian patristic teaching. In more recent years, with the mapping of the human genome, and the development of ever more sophisticated methods of genetic manipulation, these fantastical ideas seem less fantastical by the day...

The purpose of this article is to show the light shed by the Holy Fathers on this possible link between genetic science and the birth of the Antichrist, and also on what may be meant by Dubinin's words: "*An exchange of living forms will take place between the earth and other worlds...*"

### 1. Man, not demon

The birth of the Antichrist is described by the Fathers as being from an unclean woman of the tribe of Dan. This is the teaching of St. Irenaeus of Lyons<sup>284</sup>, St. Hippolytus of Rome<sup>285</sup>, St. Hilary of Poitiers, St. Ambrose of Milan and Blessed Jerome in the West<sup>286</sup>, and of St. Narses of Armenia<sup>287</sup>, St. John Chrysostom<sup>288</sup>, Blessed Theodoretus of Cyr<sup>289</sup> and St. John of Damascus<sup>290</sup> in the East. In the *Synaxarion* for Meatfare Sunday, the Sunday of the Last Judgement, we read: "The Antichrist will come and be born, as

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<sup>283</sup> СВЕШНИКОВ, там же, С. 271.

<sup>284</sup> "Receiving all the power of the devil,... summing up within himself the apostasy of the devil" (*Against Heresies*, V, 25, 1).

<sup>285</sup> "Just as the Saviour appeared in the form of a man, so he too [the Antichrist] will come in the form of a man" (*Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, 6).

<sup>286</sup> "Nor let us think that he [the Antichrist] is the devil or a demon, but a man in whom satan is to dwell wholly and bodily" (*On Daniel* 7.8).

<sup>287</sup> "Think ye not that he is Satan, or a devil from among his hosts. No, but a man lost in mind and soul of the tribe of Dan." (In W. Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999, 254).

<sup>288</sup> "Who is he? Is he Satan? By no means, but some man, who allows him to work fully in him. For he is a man... He will not introduce idolatry, but will be a kind of opponent to God; he will abolish all the gods, and will order men to worship him instead of God, and he will be seated in the temple of God, not only the one in Jerusalem, but also in every church..." (*Homily 3 on II Thessalonians*).

<sup>289</sup> "Before Christ's Coming there shall appear in the world the enemy of man, the opponent of God, vested in human nature." (*A Short Exposition of the Divine Dogmas*, 23).

<sup>290</sup> "The devil himself does not become man in the way that the Lord was made man. God forbid! But he becomes man as the offspring of fornication and receiveth all the energy of Satan. For God, knowing the strangeness of the choice that he would make, allows the devil to take up his abode in him. Born of a fornicator, he shall be raised in secret, shall be announced to all unexpectedly, and will ascend the throne." (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, IV, 26).

St. Hippolytus of Rome says, of a polluted woman, a supposed virgin, a Jewess of the tribe of Dan.”<sup>291</sup>

The most detailed description of this tradition is to be found in St. Nilus the Myrrh-gusher of Mount Athos (+1596): “The Antichrist will be born of an unclean, wanton maid. All debaucheries will be united within this maid, and she will be the treasure house of fornication. Every evil of the world, every uncleanness, every sin will be embodied in her. Through her conceiving from secret wantonness, all sins will be combined in a womb of uncleanness and will be brought to life together with the spiritual impoverishment of the world. When the world will be deprived of the grace of the Most Holy Spirit, then the Antichrist will come to life in the womb of the unclean, from the most filthy and impure woman to have lived, though she will appear as a virgin. Conceived from such secret and unnatural wantonness, the offspring will be the container of every evil, as opposed to the way in which Christ was the ideal of every good quality, and His Most Pure Mother was the ideal of womanhood.”<sup>292</sup>

The question is: who will be the father? Since the Antichrist will attempt to imitate Christ in all things, it has been suggested by some of the Fathers that he will try to imitate Him also in His birth. Thus just as Christ was born of the Virgin, so the Antichrist will be born of a supposed virgin; and just as Christ had no human father, but was conceived of the Holy Spirit, so the Antichrist will have no human father, but will be conceived of - the devil?

Such an idea *appears* to have been suggested by the further words of St. Nilus: “Yea, he will be born of seed, but without man’s sowing. He will be born with seed, but not with the seed of a man.” And some expressions from some early Western Fathers might seem to encourage this hypothesis. Thus both St. Constantine’s tutor, Lactantius<sup>293</sup> and St. Martin of Tours<sup>294</sup> say that the Antichrist will be “conceived by an evil spirit”, while Ambrosiaster (probably a fourth-century Roman) writes: “As the Son of God in His human birth manifested His Divine nature, so also shall Satan appear in human form.”<sup>295</sup> In fact, Bousset claims that “the tradition wavers between the concept of the Antichrist as of a man controlled by the devil and that of his identification with Satan.”<sup>296</sup>

However, this is an exaggeration. The consensus of the Fathers rules out a real incarnation of the devil in a man. Nevertheless, the Fathers do not deny that the devil will *try* to incarnate himself in a man in imitation of

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<sup>291</sup> *Lenten Triodion*, Moscow: Synodal Press, 1897, pp. 30b-31a

<sup>292</sup> St. Nilus, in Archimandrite Panteleimon, *A Ray of Light*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1976, p. 76.

<sup>293</sup> Lactantius, *The Divine Statutes*, VII, 17.

<sup>294</sup> St. Martin, in Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogue*, II, 14. Cf. Prosper of Aquitaine, *On the Promises and Predictions of God*, IV, 8.

<sup>295</sup> Ambrosiaster, *On II Thessalonians*, ii, 2; in Bousset, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>296</sup> Bousset, op. cit., p. 142.

Christ's Incarnation. Thus Blessed Theodoretus of Cyrus writes: "The persecutor of men imitates the incarnation of our God and Saviour. And as He by assuming our human nature accomplished our salvation, so he [the devil], by choosing a man capable of receiving the fullness of his power, shall tempt man."<sup>297</sup>

And in the middle of the tenth century, the French Abbot Adso of Montier-en-Der developed this idea as follows: "He is born by intercourse from a father and a mother, like other men - not, as some fantasize, from a virgin alone... But in the very beginning of his conception the devil will at the same time enter into the womb of his mother and will totally fill her, and totally circumscribe her, and totally hold her, and totally possess her from without and within, so that she will conceive through a man with the devil's cooperation, and that which will be born will be totally iniquitous, totally evil and totally lost..."<sup>298</sup>

## 2. Can demons unite with men?

Some further light has been shed on this mystery by St. Seraphim of Sarov, who prophesied: "Jesus Christ, the true God-Man, the Son of God the Father, was born in Israel by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the true Antichrist, the devil-man, will be born amidst the Russians. He will be the son of a fornicating woman of the tribe of Dan and the son of the devil through the artificial transfer to her of the seed of the man, with which the spirit of darkness will settle in her womb. But one of the Russians who will live to the time of the birth of the Antichrist (like Simeon the God-receiver, who announced the birth of the Child Jesus to the world) will curse the newborn babe and will announce to the world that it is the true Antichrist."<sup>299</sup>

So here we find a new twist, as it were, to what we might have been tempted to dismiss as the myth of the devil-man. The Antichrist will be truly man - on both his father's and his mother's side. But the fallen angelic nature will also be innate in him, being mixed with his father's seed even before his conception. At the same time, we may suppose, genetic engineering will take place on the seed, so as to make the child born of it the most brilliant and talented, but at the same time most corrupted person ever born! How costly for mankind is the transgressing of God's laws concerning marriage and the begetting of children - nothing less than the birth of the Antichrist!

Perhaps we can now better understand an apparent ambiguity in St. Andrew of Caesarea's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, in which he at one

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<sup>297</sup> Blessed Theodoretus, *On II Thessalonians*, 2.3.

<sup>298</sup> Adso, *Libellus de Antichristo*, 1292B.

<sup>299</sup> St. Seraphim, text supplied by Fr. Victor Potapov; a variant was published in *Literaturnaia Ucheba*, January-February, 1991, pp. 131-134.



moment asserts that the “angelic substance” is assumed in the Antichrist (50.13), and at another that “the devil operates in the Antichrist” (51.45).

There *is* a sense in which the “angelic substance” is assumed in the Antichrist, since it is joined to him from his very conception, and therefore influences him from within and from the beginning, rather than possessing him from without and ex post facto. On the other hand, it is not a real incarnation of the devil, nor a real imitation of the Virgin Birth, since neither is his mother a virgin, nor is he without a human father. It is not, as Ambrosiaster puts it, that “as the Son of God in His human birth manifested His Divine nature, so also shall Satan appear in human form”.<sup>300</sup> It is rather, as St. Cyril of Jerusalem puts it, “Satan uses him as an organ, working in his own person through him”.<sup>301</sup>

But is it in principle possible for the human and angelic natures to unite, not merely through possession, that is, the union of two persons, one human and the other angelic (demonic) under one skin, but *hypostatically*, through the union of two *natures*, one human and the other angelic, in one *person*?

This question was actively discussed by the Fathers in relation to one of the most puzzling passages in Holy Scripture: **And it came to pass when men began to be numerous upon the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the angels of God [or: sons of God], having seen the daughters of men that they were beautiful, took for themselves wives from all whom they chose. And the Lord God said, My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men for ever, for they are flesh, but their days shall be one hundred and twenty years. Now the giants were upon the earth in those days, and after that the angels of God [sons of God] were wont to enter in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the giants of old, the men of renown.** (Genesis 6.1-5).

The understanding of this passage hinges on the meaning of the word translated “angels of God” or “sons of God” in verses 2 and 4. In the Hebrew Massoretic text the word is bene-ha-elohim, literally “sons of God”. In the Greek translation of the Septuagint, which is the oldest and most authoritative text that we have, the Cambridge text edited by Brooke-Mclean has “angels of God” (οι αγγελου του Θεου) in verse 2, and “sons of God” (οι υιοι του Θεου) in verse 4.

P. S. Alexander writes: “The translator has not been inconsistent, for closer inspection shows that, though there are no significant variants at verse 4, a number of important witnesses at verse 2 read, not οι αγγελου του Θεου [the angels of God], but οι υιοι του Θεου [the sons of God]. Moreover, the main support in verse 2 for οι αγγελου του Θεου (viz. Cod. A) has the reading over an erasure. It seems most likely, then, that LXX [the

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<sup>300</sup> Ambrosiaster, *On II Thessalonians*, 2.3.

<sup>301</sup> St. Cyril, *Catechetical Discourses*, XV,14.

Septuagint] originally read οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ ("the sons of God"), in both places. It was later altered, but inconsistently. The literal rendering οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ [i.e. "sons of God"] is found in other Greek texts, as well as in the Vulgate, the Peshitta and the Biblical text of the *Ps-Philonian Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (=LAB)."<sup>302</sup>

Be that as it may, and even if there is not absolute unanimity concerning which reading is correct, there is complete unanimity, from the earliest Jewish commentators until the early third century, about its meaning. All commentators and writers agree that the reference here is to *angels*. Such an interpretation is supported by the fact that in three passages from *Job* (1.6, 2.1, 38.7) the phrase "sons of God" certainly refers to angels. Also, the fact that the women gave birth to *giants*<sup>303</sup> suggests something abnormal, something more than just a normal human coupling....

We find this interpretation both in pre-Christian Jewish literature - for example, *The Book of Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *The Testament of the 12 Patriarchs*, Philo and Josephus - and in the early Christian Fathers and writers such as Justin the Philosopher, Irenaeus, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Methodius of Olympus.

Thus Josephus writes: "Now this posterity of Seth continued to esteem God as the Lord of the universe, and to have an entire regard to virtue, for seven generations; but in process of time they were perverted, and forsook the practices of their forefathers, and did neither pay those honours to God which were appointed them, nor had they any concern to do justice towards men; but for what degree of zeal they had formerly shown for virtue, they now showed by their actions a double degree of wickedness, whereby they made God to be their enemy. *For many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons* that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength; for the tradition is, that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants. But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their disposition, and their actions for the better: but seeing they did not yield to him, but were slaves to wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of the land."<sup>304</sup>

Again, St. Justin writes: "In ancient times wicked demons appeared and defiled women... [God] committed the care of men and of all things under heaven to angels whom He placed over them. But the angels violated this

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<sup>302</sup> Alexander, "The Targumim and Early Exegesis of 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6", *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 1972, 23, pp. 60-71.

<sup>303</sup> These "giants" are also referred to in *Baruch* 3.26-28; *Sirach* 16.7; *Wisdom* 14.6; *Judith* 16.7.

<sup>304</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, I, 3.



appointment and were captivated by women and begat children who are called demons.”<sup>305</sup>

Again, Clement of Alexandria writes: “An example for you is the angels who forsook the beauty of God for perishable beauty and fell as far as heaven is from the earth.”<sup>306</sup>

Again, St. Methodius writes: “The others remained in the positions for which God made and appointed them; but the devil was insolent, and having conceived envy of us, behaved wickedly in the charge committed to him; as also did those who subsequently were enamoured of fleshly charms, and had illicit intercourse with the daughters of men. For to them also, as was the case with men, God granted the possession of their own choice.”<sup>307</sup>

Again, St. Irenaeus writes: “And for a very long while wickedness extended and spread, and reached and laid hold upon the whole race of mankind, until a very small seed of righteousness remained among them: and illicit unions took place upon the earth, since angels were united with the daughters of the race of mankind; and they bore to them sons who for their exceeding greatness were called giants. And the angels brought as presents to their wives teachings of wickedness, in that they brought them the virtues of roots and herbs, and dyeing in colours and cosmetics, the discovery of rare substances, love-potions, aversions, amours, concupiscence, constraints of love, spells of bewitchment, and all sorcery and idolatry hateful to God; by the entry of which things into the world evil extended and spread, while righteousness was diminished and enfeebled...”<sup>308</sup>

According to the patristic scholar J.N.D. Kelly, these angels are referred to in another passage of Holy Scripture, I Peter 3.19: **[Christ] went and preached to the spirits in prison who once upon a time refused obedience when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah...** Again, we read in II Peter 2.4-5: **If God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into tartarus, and committed them to pits of nether gloom to be kept until the judgement; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah...** Jude says something similar: **And the angels that did not keep their own position but left their proper dwelling have been kept by Him in eternal chains in the nether gloom until the judgement of the great day** (Jude 6). From the context of these passages, it appears that they are referring to the angels’ cohabitation with the daughters of men and their subsequent punishment in hell.

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<sup>305</sup> St. Justin, *First Apology*, V, 2.

<sup>306</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Christ the Educator*, 3.2.14.

<sup>307</sup> St. Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection*, 7.

<sup>308</sup> St. Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 18.

However, in spite of all these early witnesses, the later Fathers from about the second half of the fourth century - including John Chrysostom, Ephraim the Syrian, Blessed Theodoretus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Blessed Jerome and Blessed Augustine - turned sharply against this interpretation, choosing rather to understand the term "sons of God" as denoting the men of the line of Seth, and the "daughters of men" - the women of the line of Cain; so that the event described in Genesis 6 involved an unlawful mixing between the pious and the impious human generations.

Thus St. John Chrysostom writes that it would be "folly to accept such insane blasphemy, saying that an incorporeal and spiritual nature could have united itself to human bodies".<sup>309</sup>

Again, St. Augustine, after noting that "the Septuagint calls them the angels and sons of God", goes on to write: "According to the Hebrew canonical Scriptures [i.e. as opposed to apocrypha such as The Book of Enoch], there is no doubt that there were giants upon the earth before the deluge, and that they were the sons of the men of earth, and citizens of the carnal city, unto which the sons of God, being Seth's in the flesh, forsaking righteousness, adjoined themselves."<sup>310</sup>

Again, St. Ephraim the Syrian writes: "The daughters of Cain adorned themselves and became a snare to the eyes of the sons of Seth... The entire tribe of Seth... was stirred to a frenzy over them... Because the sons of Seth were going in to the daughters of Cain, they turned away from their first wives whom they had previously taken. Then these wives, too, disdained their own continence and now, because of their husbands, quickly began to abandon their modesty, which up until that time they had preserved for their husbands' sake. It is because of this wantonness that assailed both the men and the women, that Scripture says, **All flesh had corrupted its way** (6.13)."<sup>311</sup>

However, St. Ambrose of Milan reverts to the earlier, pre-Nicene tradition, writing: "'The giants (Nephilim) were on earth in those days.' The author of the divine Scripture... asserts that those whom he defines with such a name because of the extraordinary size of their bodies generated by angels and women."<sup>312</sup>

To the later, post-Nicene line of interpretation belong the words of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow: "According to the text of the Alexandrian Bible, [the words are] 'Angels of God'. Lactantius is of this opinion, as are many ancient authors. Justin affirms that from the marriages of Angels with

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<sup>309</sup> St. Chrysostom, *On Genesis*, 5:136-7.

<sup>310</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, XV, 23.

<sup>311</sup> St. Ephraim, *Commentary on Genesis*, 6.3. Quoted in Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Genesis, Creation and Early Man*, Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 2000, p. 244.

<sup>312</sup> St. Ambrose, *On Noah*, 4.8.

the daughters of men there came demons. Athenagoras ascribes the fall of the Angels to these same marriages, and it was from them that the giants came. Tertullian ascribes to these Angels the acquisition of Astrology, precious stones, metals and some female adornments. But all these traditions contradict the witness of Jesus Christ, that **the Angels do not marry** (Matthew 22.30)...

“According to the opinion of the most recent interpreters, [the sons of God are] the descendants of the race of *Shem*, who not only were *sons of God by grace* (cf. Deuteronomy 14.1; I John 3.1), but they also probably formed a society under this name (cf. Genesis 4.26)<sup>313</sup> which was opposed to the society of *the sons of men*, that is, the descendants of *Cain*, who were led only by their fallen human nature. Moses ascribes the beginning of the mixing of such contrary societies to the fascination with the *beauty* of the daughters of men; and as a consequence even those who belonged to the society of those who walk in the Spirit became **flesh**, and light itself began to be turned into darkness.”<sup>314</sup>

### 3. Demons, Women and UFOs

However, even if we exclude the possibility of a *real, hypostatic* union between angels (demons) and men, it is another question whether demons may not *desire* such a union and *strive* for it.

But why should they wish to unite with women? First, because demons, though bodiless, are possessed by bodily lust.<sup>315</sup> In this connection the words of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 11.10 are relevant: **For this cause ought the woman to have authority on her head on account of the angels.** Commenting on this passage, St. Paulinus of Nola writes: “Let them realize why Paul ordered their heads to be clothed with a more abundant covering: it is because of the angels, that is, the angels who are ready to seduce them and whom the saints will condemn.”<sup>316</sup>

And if this seems fantastical, let us pay heed to very recent reports that some women (usually with a spiritistic past) claim in all seriousness to sleep with “ghosts” who look like men but whom we can confidently call demons. Women who are dissatisfied with their human lovers seem able to “summon” these “ghosts”, who are all too happy to satisfy their desires...

A second reason is that Satan almost certainly wishes to imitate the union of the two natures in one Person which Christ achieved at His incarnation,

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<sup>313</sup> According to Aquila’s translation, this verse reads: “Then they began to be called by the name of the Lord” – that is, “sons of God”. Cf. Metropolitan Philaret, *Notes leading to a fundamental understanding of the Book of Genesis*, Moscow, 1867, p. 100 (in Russian).

<sup>314</sup> Metropolitan Philaret, *Notes*, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>315</sup> Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov, *On Orthodoxy*.

<sup>316</sup> St. Paulinus, *Letter 23: To Severus*.

only substituting the demonic nature for the Divine, a whore for the Virgin Mother of God, and the Antichrist for Christ. Such a motive is suggested by the fact, emphasised by many of the Fathers, that the Antichrist will seek to imitate Christ in all things. And if in all things, why not in his very birth?

Let us recall the prophecies of Saints Nilus and Seraphim that the conception of the Antichrist will be through a technique of artificial insemination, whereby the devil will seize and possess the sperm before it has reached the mother's egg. Since the technique will be artificial insemination, rather than the normal process of sexual intercourse, the mother will be able to claim – falsely, of course – that she is a “virgin”. And since artificial insemination takes place in a test-tube, outside both human bodies, the possibilities for possession and genetic manipulation of the sperm by the devil will be maximised.

Moreover, having taking possession of the sperm before it fertilises the egg, the devil will be able to claim that he is the father of the Antichrist “from eternity” – or, at any rate, before the human father could beget him. Then the Antichrist will be, according to the demonic anti-theology, one person in two natures – from a bodiless father before he became man, and from a virgin mother at the moment of conception...

Could the demons already be experimenting on the union of the human and demonic natures? After all, the technique of artificial insemination already exists. Moreover, “genetic engineering”, and the union of human and animal species, is already well advanced in human laboratories<sup>317</sup> – undoubtedly under the direct influence of demons.

But the participation of demons may be more direct than that; for it is not just deluded human beings are attempting to change and manipulate and hybridise the nature of man... According to reputable Orthodox writers, such as Hieromonk Seraphim Rose, the inhabitants of the so-called “Unidentified Flying Objects” (UFOs), which have so struck the popular imagination in recent decades, are in fact demons.<sup>318</sup> Other writers have seen a parallel between the phenomenon of the UFOs coming to earth and the story of the visitation of the daughters of men by the son of God in Genesis 6, which produced the hybrid offspring of the “giants”, “watchers” or “fallen ones”.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Alok Jha, “First British human-animal hybrid embryos created by scientists”, *The Guardian*, April 2, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2008/apr/02/medicalresearch.ethicsofscience?gusrc=rs&feed=networkfront>.

<sup>318</sup> Rose, *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1990, chapter 6. See also David Ritchie, “UFOs: The Demonic Connection”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 43, no. 2, March-April, 1993, pp. 18-37; Archbishop Chrysostomos, “Alien Abductions and the Orthodox Christian”, *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XIV, 1997, pp. 57-62.

<sup>319</sup> See Andrew Collins, *From the Ashes of the Angels*, London: Penguin Books, 1997, p. 371.

Moreover, according to the Harvard Professor of Psychiatry, John Mack, there is now well established evidence that men and women have been abducted onto UFOs, where their alien “hosts”, i.e. demons, have performed sexual experiments upon them. There have been reported cases of matings between demons and human beings on board these craft. But still more sinister, sperm has been taken from men, and ova from women. “Fertilized eggs, which may have been genetically altered, are implanted, and later there is the eventual removal of the pregnancy. In subsequent abductions, experiencers are shown hybrid offspring and may even be asked to hold or nurture them.”<sup>320</sup>

These ideas indicate how Genesis 6.1-5, modern experiments on human sexuality and reproduction (by both humans and demons) and the doctrine of the Antichrist, may come together in a fantastic, nightmarish scenario that nevertheless has the stamp of reality. Moved by envy, lust and jealousy, the devil, the enemy of mankind, has from primordial times tried to interfere with, corrupt, abuse and radically subvert human nature. And just as Christ recreated human nature in the image and likeness of God by becoming incarnate of the Virgin Mother of God, so the devil wishes to recreate it in *his* image and likeness by becoming incarnate of a pseudo-virgin, the mother of the Antichrist.

However, *real* demonic incarnation, the creation of a true demon-man, is impossible because of the bounds between species and kinds of rational beings created by God. So Satan resorts to as close an imitation as possible: through the demonic possession of human seed even before conception, and its genetic manipulation to accentuate the worst qualities in fallen human nature, he plans to create, if not a true demon-man, at any rate the demonic man par excellence. But since, unlike God, he cannot create out of nothing or at once, he requires time and experimentation, in order gradually, by trial and error, to “work out” his perverted masterpiece. For, as Fr. Justin Popovich writes: “The Antichrist will be, as it were, an incarnation of the devil, for Christ is the incarnation of God...”<sup>321</sup>

## Conclusion

Let us go back to Genesis. It will be recalled that almost immediately after the attempt of the “sons of God” to seduce the daughters of men, and the birth from these unions of giants, there came the universal flood which swept away all mankind except Noah and his family. Whether or not there is a direct causal connection between the two events is not indicated: but their close proximity is very suggestive. Now in the New Testament the Lord said: **As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were**

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<sup>320</sup> Mack, *Abduction*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 394.

<sup>321</sup> Popovich, *Interpretation of the Epistles of St. John the Theologian*, Munich, 2000, p. 36 (in Russian).

**given in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all** (Luke 17.26-27). The period we are living through now appears very similar to the period the Lord was speaking about, and so also to the period just before the Flood. Now, as then, men have begun to multiply on the earth, and now, as then, the condition of mankind is one of spiritual and moral degeneration.

But could the correspondence between the Old and the New Testaments be even closer here? Could it be that just as the universal flood and the destruction of the old world was brought about by an unnatural union of demons and men and the consequent birth of giants, so the Second Coming of Christ and the burning up of the material universe at His Coming will be brought about by an unnatural union of Satan and a woman and the consequent birth of the Antichrist? Could it be that just as in Genesis a terrible corruption of human nature led to the end of the “old world”, with only one family being saved in Noah’s ark, so a still more terrible corruption of human nature and blasphemy against God in our time will lead to the end also of our “brave new world”, with only a tiny remnant of righteous men being saved in the Ark of the Church?

We cannot prevent the birth of the Antichrist, **for the Scriptures must be fulfilled** (Mark 14.49). But we can delay his appearing by living a godly life and by being keenly aware, through a knowledge of the Scriptures, of the snares of the devil. And we must be aware above all that the human spirit, being free and under the protection of God for as long as it seeks it, is not subject to the flesh, however corrupted, manipulated and even demon-possessed it may be. The Lord said of the last times: **except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved** (Matthew 24.22). But He also said of His sheep: **They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand** (John 10.28)...

*April 24 / May 7, 2004; revised March 20 / April 2, 2008, December 31 / January 13, 2008/2009, June 7/20, 2010, November 2/15, 2015, February 24 / March 7, 2016 and October 17/30, 2020.*



## 22. THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN HOLOCAUST IN CROATIA

In 1941 Hitler was preparing Operation Marita, the invasion of Greece, for which he needed Bulgarian and Yugoslav support... The Bulgarians procrastinated, but eventually agreed to join the Tripartite Alliance on the very first day of the invasion, March 1.

As for the Yugoslavs, they were negotiating a treaty with the Germans in Vienna that was, according to Misha Glenny, "a diplomatic triumph. The only real concession made to the Germans in the secret clauses attached to the published agreement concerning the transport of war materials through Yugoslavia. The Germans were not permitted to send troops across the country; nor did the agreement burden Yugoslavia with any other military obligations towards the Axis powers. Although a member of the Tripartite Pact, Yugoslavia would keep her neutrality virtually intact."<sup>322</sup>

However, this judgment concerning the Vienna treaty was disputed by many Yugoslavs, and on March 27 the government under Prince Paul was overthrown in a coup led by the head of the Yugoslav air force, General Dušan Simović. The new pro-Allied government under King Peter renounced the agreement with the Axis powers. This coup was supported by the famous Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, who sent the following telegram to the citizens of Kraljevo: "Grateful to God, thankful to the people, we now look forward to a bright future without the stain of shame."

While the coup was morally admirable (and was acclaimed as such by Churchill), the Yugoslavs were in no position to make an effective resistance. The basic problem lay in the fact that Yugoslavia was no longer a centralized state. For, as Glenny writes, "in August 1939 Cvetković, the Prime Minister, had come to an agreement with Vladko Maček, the man who had assumed the leadership of the Croatian Peasant Party after the murder of Stjepan Radić. The Cvetković-Maček *Sporazum* (Agreement) had effectively split the country in two, creating an autonomous area of Croatia which included roughly half of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Most Serb opposition parties deeply resented the *Sporazum*", as did the Church in the persons of Patriarch Gavrilo and Bishop Nikolai Velimirović...

"Simović was not in a position to establish control throughout the country unless he could come to an agreement with the Croats, and with Maček in particular. He secured this agreement, but only under certain conditions. The most important of these was a declaration to stand by the Vienna Agreement, committing Yugoslavia to the Tripartite Pact. Belatedly recognizing that the Yugoslav Army could not possibly resist a German onslaught, Simović and the new government consented to Maček's condition. So the very reason for

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<sup>322</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, pp. 473-474.

organizing a coup in the first place – resistance to the Tripartite Pact – was thrown out by the new government almost as soon as it was formed.

“Yet before Simović persuaded the Croats to back his government, Hitler had undergone a dramatic change of mood. Irritated by the intricacies of Balkan politics, the Führer exploded in fury on receipt of the news from Belgrade. Almost immediately, he tore up the Tripartite Agreement with Yugoslavia, and ordered the Wehrmacht to invade the country. As Maček appeared to be cooperating with Simović, Ribbentrop was persuaded by Mussolini to switch German backing in Croatia to Ante Pavelić and his small gang of fascist thugs, who numbered no more than 360 when they seized control of the government in Zagreb in early April. They were brought to power solely by German guns and Italian politicians, and not by popular sentiment in Croatia, which overwhelmingly backed Maček. The installation of Pavelić’s brutal fascist regime resulted in the single most disastrous episode in Yugoslav history, whose consequences were still being felt in the 1990s...”<sup>323</sup>

Hitler invaded on April 6. Deserted by Pavelić’s Croats, the Serbian resistance was soon crushed... The surrender was so rapid that many Serbian units, the so-called Četniks, escaped and formed an anti-Nazi resistance movement led by Draža Mihailović that was loyal to Prince Pavle’s government-in-exile in London. The Bulgarians occupied Yugoslav Macedonia, the Hungarians – Vojvodina, the Italians – Kosovo, and the Croatian Ustaše – much of Bosnia. Many bishops, priests and laity were killed in all these occupied regions.

The Bulgarians were especially ruthless. “As a result of wholesale ethnic cleansing, only 2,000 of Skopje’s pre-war population of 20,000 Serbs... remained in the city by the spring of 1942.”<sup>324</sup>

“Germany had also declared war on Greece on April 6, to rescue Mussolini’s failed invasion (launched back on October 28, 1940). German troops, pouring in via Bulgaria, halted a Greek offensive [supported by British troops], and by April 27 the swastika rose over the Acropolis. Mussolini’s army had suffered 154,172 dead, wounded and sick, and the Greek army about 90,000 casualties. German losses for Yugoslavia and Greece combined were 2,559 killed, 5,820 wounded, and 3,169 missing. While Italy occupied the Greek mainland and the Bulgarians hastily went into Thrace, German forces occupied Athens, Thessaloniki, central Macedonia, Crete, and other Aegean islands, taking 218,000 Greeks and 9,000 British prisoners.”<sup>325</sup>

The British position in the Mediterranean was now significantly weaker, and the Soviets, too, were imperilled by the German conquest of the Balkans...

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<sup>323</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 475-476.

<sup>324</sup> Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, p. 465.

<sup>325</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 849.



The Germans arrested Patriarch Gavriilo and Bishop Nikolai; but although the two hierarchs were to spend the whole war in prisons and concentration camps (the last one was Dachau), they refused the Nazis' suggestion that they collaborate with them. Once they were asked whether they would call on the Serbian people to rise up against the partisan communists. They replied: "The Serbian Church is not fighting against the communists. The Serbian Church is fighting against the atheists and the atheist ideology, against the atheists on the right and on the left, that is, against the German atheism from outside and our atheism from within and with every other atheism. But the partisans are our lost and deceived children and brothers. When the thunders of military conflict die down, each of them will return to his own peaceful work."

Nikolaj told Gavriilo that "a proclamation against the Communist Party would have been a grave mistake and an unpardonable error," because "it is very dangerous for the Church to issue proclamations against a political party, in this case the Communist Party. The Church is only concerned with whether a respective party programme propagates atheism or not. We are against atheism whether it is from the left or right; in other words, we are opposed to Hitler's atheists just as we are opposed to the Soviet ones. We can issue a proclamation only insofar as it is opposed to atheism and not communism. For should Communism recognize religion and revoke atheism from the party's program tomorrow, which could happen, we then have nothing against communism and its economic program or political program in general."<sup>326</sup>

In neighbouring Czechoslovakia Bishop Gorazd of Moravia-Silesia, a former Old Catholic, after being cut off from the Serbian Patriarchate, to which he was canonically subject, turned to ROCOR's Metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade) in Berlin, asking him to take his diocese under his protection. Metropolitan Seraphim agreed, and gave him holy chrism and antimensia.<sup>327</sup> However, in September, 1942 "when the Nazi governor of Czechoslovakia was assassinated, those involved hid in the cathedral but were discovered by authorities. St. Gorazd (who had actually been trying to get them out of the cathedral basement) chose to take full responsibility for harboring them and so, he was tortured, then executed on September 4. Slain with him were the two priests of the cathedral, Sts. Vaclav (Vyacheslav), Vladimir and a pious layman Jan (John), and 546 others, including an entire village."<sup>328</sup> "The Orthodox Church in Bohemia and Moravia was shut down and its priests sent to camps in Germany."<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Bishop Artemije, *The New Chrysostom, Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović*, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2011, p. 85.

<sup>327</sup> Seraphim, with the blessing of the Serbian Bishop Irinei, also took under his wing the parishes in Vojvodina that were now part of Hungary.

<sup>328</sup> Angelo Pepps, *Facebook*, September 5, 2020.

<sup>329</sup> Monk Gorazd, "Sviashchennomuchenik Gorazd" (Hieromartyr Gorazd), *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 12 (1465), June 15/28, 1992.

It was in Croatia and Bosnia that the worst atrocities were committed against the Serbs by the Ustaše and the Catholics.<sup>330</sup> On April 28, 1941, the Catholic Archbishop Stepinac of Zagreb issued an appeal rapturously praising the Ustaše and calling on all Catholic priests to collaborate with them. Three days before, the government had issued banned the Cyrillic script and imposed a special tax on the patriarchate. On May 8-10 the Serbs in Zagreb were expelled to the suburbs and forbidden from leaving their homes before six in the evening. On June 3 all Orthodox schools and kindergardens were closed, and on June 26 all Serbs were forced to wear coloured armbands with the letter "P" (for *Pravoslavac* – Orthodox). On July 18 the use of the term "Serbian Orthodox religion" was banned; in its place "Eastern Greek faith" was to be substituted. On August 9 services were banned in all Orthodox churches. On June 22 the minister of education said that one third of the Serbs in Croatia would be expelled, one third killed and one third converted to Catholicism. In July the arrests of Serbs began. By the autumn over 15,000 Serbs had passed through the camps, and by 1943 there were 300,000 Serbia refugees from Croatia in Serbia. On April 4, 1942 the Croatians passed a law ordering all Church feasts to be celebrated according to the new calendar. The Russian émigrés were informed of this, and were threatened with punishment if they did not obey. Metropolitan Anastasy, however, immediately petitioned for an exception to be made for the Russian parishes, and with the help of the German Evangelical Bishop Hackel, this request was granted. However, no Serb was allowed to visit the émigré services.<sup>331</sup>

Joachim Wertz writes: "In many villages the massacres followed a certain pattern. The Ustashi would arrive and assemble all the Serbs. They would then order them to convert to Catholicism. Those who refused, as the majority did, were told to assemble in their local Orthodox parish church. They would then lock them in the church and set it ablaze. In this manner many Orthodox men, women and children perished in scores of Serbian settlements."<sup>332</sup>

According to Archbishop Stepinac's report to the Pope on May 8, 1944, 240,000 Serbs apostasized to Catholicism. However, many of these returned to Orthodoxy after the war. Hundreds of churches were destroyed or desecrated, and vast amounts of property were confiscated. According to German Nazi figures, about 750,000 Orthodox Serbs were killed, including five bishops and 177 other clergy.

Bishop Nikolai Velimirović inscribed these martyrs into the Church calendar for August 31: "The 700,000 who suffered for the Orthodox faith at the

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<sup>330</sup> See Sean Mac Mathuna, "The Role of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia's Holocaust", <http://churchandstate.org.uk/2015/12/the-role-of-the-catholic-church-in-yugoslavia-holocaust/>

<sup>331</sup> M.V. Shkvarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Church Emigration), St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2009, p. 105; in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 35.

<sup>332</sup> Wertz, "On the Serbian Orthodox Martyrs of the Second World War", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 33, N 1, January-February, 1983, pp. 15-26.

hands of the Roman crusaders and Ustashi during the time of the Second World War. These are the New Serbian Martyrs.”<sup>333</sup>

With the single exception of the Catholic Bishop of Mostar, all the Catholic bishops joined in the persecution of the Orthodox. The Franciscans were particularly cruel. Thus in the notorious camp of Jasenovac, where 200,000 Serbs perished, together with many Jews and Gypsies, 40,000 of them died on the orders of the Franciscan Father Filipovich. In Livno one Franciscan told his flock: “Brother Croats, go and kill the Serbs. And first of all, kill my sister, who has married a Serb. And then kill all the Serbs one by one. When you have finished your job, come to me, I will listen to your confessions and give you absolution of your sins.”<sup>334</sup>

The Germans knew what was going on. Thus on February 17, 1942 Heindrich, who masterminded the Holocaust, wrote to Himmler: “The number of Slavs destroyed by the Croats by the most sadistic methods has reached 300,000... If the Serbs living in Croatia accept Catholicism they are allowed to live without persecution.”<sup>335</sup>

One of those martyred in Jasenovac was an old man called Vukashin. He was standing “in an aura of peace and joy, softly praying to Christ. The executioner was greatly angered by the old man’s peacefulness and saintly composure, and he ordered that he be dragged to the place of execution.

“St. Vukashin was given the usual charge, ‘Accept the Pope or die a most terrible death’.

“The old man signed himself with the honourable Cross and peacefully intoned, ‘Just do your job, my son’.

“The executioner trembled with anger. He brutally slashed off one of the saint’s ears, repeating his charge. The Holy Martyr again peacefully replied, ‘Just continue to do your job, my son.’ And so the irrational persecutor continued: first the other ear, then the nose, and the fingers one by one. Like a

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<sup>333</sup> However, more recent scholarship gives generally lower figures for those killed. The Simon Wiesenthal Center calculated that 600,000 Serbs, 30,000 Jews and 29,000 Gypsies were killed (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 21). Mark Almond writes: “Probably about 325,000 Serbs were killed by the Ustasha in the NDH [Independent State of Croatia, which included Bosnia], including about 60,000 at Jasenovac alone. In other words about one in every six Serbs in Pavelic’s realm was killed.” (*Europe’s Backyard War*, London: Mandarin, 1994, p. 137). See also Aleksa Djilas, “The Yugoslav Tragedy”, *Prospect*, October, 1995, p. 39). Again, the Serb scholar Bogoljub Kocovic writes that 487,000 Serbs were killed during World War II altogether, as opposed to 207,000 Croats, 86,000 Muslims and 234,000 others; while the Croatian scholar Vladimir Zerjavic gives: 530,000 Serbs, 192,000 Croats, 103,000 Muslims and 202,000 others (Kocovic, *Zrtve drugog svetskog rata u Jugoslaviji*, London: Libra Books, 1985, pp. 102, 174, 182; Zerjavic, *Gubici stanovnistva Jugoslavije u drugom svjetskom ratu*, Zagreb: Jugoslavensko Viktimolosko Drustvo, 1989, pp. 61, 82.

<sup>334</sup> Shkvarovsky, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>335</sup> Heindrich, in Karlheinz Deschner, *With God and Fuhrer*, p. 282.

new James of Persia, St. Vukashin was 'pruned as a sacred grapevine of God.' With each grisly and bloody cut, the noble Vukashin, filled with peace and joy by the Holy Spirit, calmly replied, 'Just continue to do your job, my son.'

"At length, the vicious torturer gouged out the eyes of the martyr, and the saint once more replied, 'Just continue to do your job, my son.' With that, the executioner flew into a rage and slew the holy martyr. Almost immediately, the executioner lost his mind and went completely mad."<sup>336</sup>

In February, 1942, Dr. Privislav Grisogno, a Croatian Catholic member of the former Yugoslav cabinet, wrote in protest to Archbishop Stepinac: "I am writing to you as a man to a man, as a Christian to a Christian. I have been meaning to do this for months hoping that the dreadful news from Croatia would cease so that I could collect my thoughts and write to you in peace.

"For the last ten months Serbs have been killed and destroyed in Croatia in the most ruthless manner and the value of their property that has been destroyed reaches billions. Blushes of shame and anger cover the faces of every honest Croat.

"The slaughter of Serbs began from the very first day of the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (Gospic, Gudovan, Bosanska Krajina, etc.) and has continued relentlessly to this very day. The horror is not only in the killing. The killing includes everybody: old men, women and children. With accompanying barbaric torture. These innocent Serbs have been impaled, fire has been lit on their bare chest, they have been roasted alive, burned in their homes and churches while still living, covered with boiling water, then their skin was peeled off, salt poured into their wounds, their eyes have been pulled out, their ears, noses and tongues cut off, the priests have had their beards and moustaches torn off from their skulls, their sex organs severed and put into their mouths, they have been tied to trucks and then dragged along the ground, nails have been pressed into their heads, their heads nailed to the floor, they have been thrown alive into wells and over cliffs, and grenades thrown after them, their heads smashed against walls, their backs broken against rocks and tree stumps, and many other horrible tortures were perpetrated, such as normal people can hardly imagine.

"Their rivers Sava, Drav, the Danube and their tributaries have carried thousands and thousands of their corpses. Dead bodies have been found with the inscription: 'direction Belgrade - traveling to King Peter'. In a boat which was found on the Sava river there was a heap of children's heads with the head of a woman (which could have been a head of one of the mothers of the children) with the inscription: 'Meat for the Jovanova Market in Belgrade'.

"Horrifying is the case of Mileva Bozinic from Stanbandza whose child was removed from her womb. There was also the case of the roasted heads in

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<sup>336</sup> "Holy New Martyr Vukashin", *Orthodoxy Canada*, N 114, May-June, 1986, p. 3.

Bosnia, the vessels full of Serbian blood, the cases of Serbs being forced to drink the warm blood of their slaughtered kin. Countless women, girls and children in front of their mothers were raped or else sent off to Ustashi camps to serve the Ustashi; rapes even took place on the altars of Orthodox churches. In the Petrinje county a son was forced to rape his own mother. The slaughter of the Serbs in the Glina Orthodox church and the murder of Serbs on the altar of the Kladusa church is without precedent in history. There are detailed and original accounts of all these horrors. Even the Germans and Italians were astounded by these crimes. They photographed a large number of cases of such slaughter. The Germans are saying that the Croats did this also during the Thirty Years War and that is why there has been a saying in Germany since then: 'God save us from plague, hunger and Croats.'

"The Srem Germans despise us because of this and behave in a more humane fashion with the Serbs. The Italians photographed a vessel with 3.5 kilograms of Serbian eyes, as well as a Croat who wore a necklace strung with Serbian eyes, and another one who came to Dubrovnik with a belt on which severed Serbian tongues were hanging!

"The horrors of the camps in which thousands of Serbs were killed or were left to die from exposure, hunger and cold weather, are too terrible to mention. The Germans have been talking about a camp in Lika where there were thousands of Serbs; but when the Germans got there they found the camp empty, drenched in blood and bloody clothing. In that camp it has been said a Serbian bishop also lost his life. Thousands upon thousands of Serbs in the camp of Jasenovac are still being tortured as they are spending fierce winter in wooden Gypsy shacks with no straw or covering and with a ration of two potatoes per day. In the history of Europe there have been no similar cases. One would have to go to Asia at the time of Tamerlane, or Genghis-Khan, or to Africa, to the countries of their bloodthirsty rulers to come upon similar situations. These events have shamed the name of Croatia for centuries to come. Nothing can absolve us fully from this ever again. We will not be able to tell even the last wretched man in the Balkans about our thousand year old Croatian culture, because even the Gypsies never perpetrated such cruelties. Why am I writing this to you, when you are not a political personage and cannot bear responsibility for all this. Here is why: in all these unprecedented barbarian crimes which are more than Godless, our Catholic church participated in two ways. A large number of clergy, priests, friars and organized Catholic youth took an active part in all this. It has also happened that Catholic priests became camp guards and Ustashi accomplices and so approved of the torture and slaughter of Christians. A Catholic priest even personally slaughtered an Orthodox clergyman. They could not have done all this without the permission of their bishops, and if they did, they would have had to lose their jobs and be taken to court. Since this did not happen, it means that their bishops granted them permission.

"Secondly, the Catholic Church made us of all this to convert the surviving Serbs. And while the soil was still steaming from the innocent victims' blood,

while groans shuddered from the chests of the surviving victims, the priests, friars, nuns carried in one hand the Ustashi daggers and in the other their prayer books and rosaries. The whole of Srem is inundated with leaflets written by Bishop Aksamovic and printed in his printing shop in Djakovo, calling upon Serbs to save their lives and property by converting to Catholicism. It was as if our church wanted to show that it could destroy souls just as the Ustashi authorities destroy bodies. It is an even greater blot on the Catholic church, since at the same time many Orthodox churches and all the Orthodox monasteries have been confiscated, their property plundered as well as many historical treasures. Even the Patriarchal church in Sremski Karlovci has not been spared. All this violence against conscience and the spirit has brought even greater disgrace to the Croat nation and name...

"I write this to save my soul and leave it to you (Archbishop Stepinac) to find a way to save your soul."<sup>337</sup>

Although some have claimed that Stepinac tried to restrain the murderers, there can be no doubt about his fanatical hatred of Orthodoxy. Thus on March 27 and 28, 1941, he wrote in his diary: "The spirit of Byzantium – that is, of the Eastern Orthodox Church – is something so terrible that only the Omnipotent and Omniscient God could tolerate it... The Croats and the Serbs are from two different worlds, two different poles; without a miracle of God they will never find a common language. The schism of the Eastern Orthodox Church is the greatest curse in Europe, perhaps even worse than Protestantism." In 1946 Stepinac was tried by the communist government, found guilty of treason to the State and the murder of Serbs, and imprisoned for five years. On coming out of prison he was awarded a cardinal's hat by the Vatican, and in 1998 was beatified by Pope John Paul II!

In spite of their mass murders of the Serbs, the Croats failed to achieve their "final solution" of the Serbian problem. So they had recourse to a clever plan: to create a so-called "Croatian Orthodox Church" for the Serbs in Croatia that would be completely under their control. On June 8, 1942, Archbishop Hermogen (Maximov) of Yekaterinoslav was raised to the rank of metropolitan of this uncanonical church, whose main task was to "Croatize" the Serbs. It enjoyed the full support of the Croatian authorities, but was rejected by the Serbian Church and by ROCOR under Metropolitan Anastasy, who banned Hermogen.

Nor did any other Orthodox Church recognize the new Church *de jure*. *De facto*, however, the Romanian Patriarch recognized it by sending Metropolitan

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<sup>337</sup> Grisogno, in Liudmilla Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 230-233, and "Stepinac's Hat is Blood-Red", *The Christian Century*, January 14, 1953, pp. 42-43. See also the article by the Catholic writer Richard West, "The War in Bosnia", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, September 11/24, 1995, and Marko Markovich, "La Responsabilité de l'Eglise Catholique dans le Genocide des Serbes par les Oustachis au cours de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale", in G. Ivanoff-Trinadtsaty, *Regards sur l'Orthodoxie* (Points of View on Orthodoxy), Lausanne: "L'Age d'Homme, 1997, pp. 173-190.

Vissarion (Puo) to Zagreb in order to consecrate a new bishop, Spyridon (Mifka), together with Hermogen. The Serbian Church protested, pointing out that it had defrocked Spyridon in 1936. In October, 1944, Metropolitan Vissarion, learning that the Serbs and ROCOR had refused to recognize the Croatian Church, apologized to Metropolitan Anastasy.<sup>338</sup>

By the end of 1942 Metropolitan Hermogen had about 70 clergy and 42 parishes. But by the end of 1944 he had about 30 priests. So not many Orthodox supported him...<sup>339</sup>

On May 8, 1945 Metropolitan Hermogen was captured by Yugoslav partisans and dragged naked through the streets. On June 29 he, Bishop Seraphim and other clergy and laymen – 49 people in all – were sentenced to death by a Titoist court in Zagreb and killed – some by shooting, others by hanging – a few days later.<sup>340</sup> On March 7, 1956 the ROCOR Synod issued a special decree that “although Archbishop Hermogen committed a terrible sin against the Church, having fallen away from the Russian Church, and, having created an uncanonical church organization, he did not fall completely away from Orthodoxy, but partly redeemed his guilt through a martyric death.”<sup>341</sup>

But can schismatics be martyrs? That is the question...

By contrast, in 1946 Cardinal Stepinac, who had killed so many Serbian Orthodox, was sentenced to sixteen years in prison, being released after only two years. He died in 1960, and was put forward for canonization by Pope John-Paul II.

*November 3/16, 2020.*

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<sup>338</sup> Shkvarovsky, op. cit., p. 158. In 1953, Metropolitan Vissarion, together with Archbishop John Maximovich and Bishop Nathaniel (Lvov), consecrated Archimandrite Theophilus (Ionescu) for the new calendarist Romanian flock in Western Europe.

<sup>339</sup> Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij*, part 3, pp. 43-44, 44-45; Bishop Gregory Grabbe, *Zaviet Sviatogo Patriarkha* (The Testament of the Holy Patriarch), Moscow, 1996, p. 33.

<sup>340</sup> Shkvarovsky, op. cit., pp. 160-161; Ilya Goriachev, in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 89-90.

<sup>341</sup> Shkvarovsky, op. cit., p. 160.

## 23. GOD AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

That the crisis which nearly led to MAD should have taken place in Cuba was a function both of timing – Soviet ambitions had been thwarted in Europe, so they began to look for greener pastures elsewhere – and of that country's geographical closeness to the United States. It can also be argued, as we shall see later, that Khrushchev aim in creating a pressure-point in Cuba, was to create still more pressure on the American position in Berlin...

Cuba had been among the last Latin American countries to abolish slavery, in the 1880s, and had then, with American help, rebelled successfully against Spanish rule. But its development as an independent republic was troubled...

Fr. James Thornton writes: "In 1933, a leftist revolutionary uprising overthrew the administration of President Gerardo Machado and put Ramón Grau San Martín in power as the head of what came to be called the 'One Hundred Days Government.' Grau himself was a moderate reformer but was surrounded by radicals in his administration. That government was overthrown in January 1934 by Army Chief of Staff Colonel Fulgencio Batista, who installed a series of provisional governments throughout the remainder of the decade.

"In the election of 1940, which was reportedly open and fair, Batista won the presidency. He was succeeded in office by Grau, who was elected in 1944, and Carlos Prío Socarrás, elected in 1948. Prío's period in office was marred by a substantial increase in government corruption and political violence. Consequently, in March 1952, Batista, in concert with leaders of the military and police, seized power to prevent the country from sinking into complete chaos. The outcome of free elections in 1953, which made Batista legally the president, seemed to signal the approval of most Cubans of the coup of the previous year, since the country had grown impatient with the seemingly endless disorder.

"About Batista's administration one can say both bad things and good. On the bad side, corruption was not eliminated and organized crime, which had gained a considerable toehold in Cuba immediately after the Second World War, continued to thrive. On the good side, the nation enjoyed tremendous prosperity in the 1950s. Wages in Cuba were the eighth highest in the world. The country was blessed by a large and growing middle class, which constituted approximately one-third of the population. Social mobility (the ability of members of one class in the social strata to rise to higher levels) became a genuine reality. Of the working class, more than 20 percent were classified as skilled. During the Batista years, Cuba enjoyed the third-highest per-capita income in Latin America and possessed an excellent network of highways and railroads, along with many modern ports. Cubans had the highest per-capita consumption in Latin America of meat, vegetables, cereals,



automobiles, telephones, and radios, and was fifth highest in the number of television sets in the world.

“Cuba’s healthcare system was outstanding, with one of the highest numbers of medical doctors per capita in the world, the third-lowest adult mortality rate in the world, and the lowest infant mortality rate in Latin America. Cuba during the 1950s spent more on education than any other Latin American country and had the fourth-highest literacy rate in Latin America.

“President Batista built part of his following through an alliance with organized labor. As a result, workers by law worked an eight-hour day, 44 hours per week. They received a month’s paid vacation, plus four additional paid holidays per year. They were also entitled to nine days of sick leave with pay per year. In short, while things were not perfect in all of the areas just noted, they were nevertheless remarkably advanced and were gradually improving. Yet, much work remained to be done in rural regions, where poverty and the lack of a complete modern infrastructure remained a problem...

“In July 1953, a little-known revolutionary named Fidel Castro, his brother Raúl, and a small group of rebels attacked a military barracks in the southeast of the country hoping to spark a revolution, but were defeated. The Castro brothers were captured and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Unfortunately for Cuba and its people, President Batista declared a general amnesty in 1955, which set the Castros free. The two then travelled to Mexico where they, in conjunction with Argentinian Marxist terrorist Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, organized a revolutionary group known as the ‘26th of July Movement,’ the aim of which was to overthrow the Cuban government and seize power. In December 1956, the group of some 82 fighters boarded a yacht and sailed to Cuba, where they were confronted by elements of Batista’s armed forces. In the ensuing clash, most of the insurgents were either killed or captured. However, the Castro brothers, Guevara, and a small group of about 12 others escaped and fled into the Sierra Maestra mountains, where they launched the beginnings of the revolution that would bring Fidel Castro to power.

“Castro portrayed himself at that time as a devotee of democratic rule, contrasting that with Batista’s non-democratic authoritarianism, and promised American-style freedoms and an end to dictatorship. Some members of his 26th of July Movement, and even a few members of the leadership corps of that organization, were actually anti-communists, misled by Castro as to the true nature of his ultimate goals. The propaganda about a return to a representative and just government was widely believed, particularly among the poorer classes, students, and some intellectuals. Consequently, Castro’s movement

grew as people hoped for an end to corruption, political upheaval, and revolutionary violence. Those people were soon to be sorely disappointed.

“During the late 1950s, after Castro had begun his revolutionary activities in the mountains of southeastern Cuba and up until Castro grabbed the reins of power, two men served as U.S. ambassadors to Cuba: Arthur Gardner, who served from 1953 to 1957, and Earl T. Smith, who served from 1957 to 1959. In testimony before the U.S. Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, Ambassador Gardner declared on August 27, 1960 that ‘U.S. Government agencies and the U.S. press played a major role in bringing Castro to power.’ He also testified that Castro was receiving illegal arms shipments from the United States, about which our government was aware, while, at the same time, the U.S. government halted arms sales to Batista, even halting shipments of arms for which the Cuban government had already paid. Senator Thomas J. Dodd asked if Gardner believed that the U.S. State Department ‘was anxious to replace Batista with Castro,’ to which he answered, ‘I think they were.’

“Ambassador Earl T. Smith testified before the same committee on August 30, 1960. He declared in his testimony that, ‘Without the United States, Castro would not be in power today.’ Smith wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* in September 1979 in connection with the communist revolution in Nicaragua that put the Sandinista regime in power. Smith wished to illustrate how forces within the U.S. government brought both ultra-leftist governments to power. He wrote: ‘After a few months as chief of mission [that is, as Ambassador to Cuba], it became obvious to me that the Castro-led 26th of July movement embraced every element of radical political thought and terrorist inclination in Cuba. The State Department consistently intervened ... to bring about the downfall of President Fulgencio Batista, thereby making it possible for Fidel Castro to take over the Government of Cuba. The final coup in favor of Castro came on Dec. 17, 1958. On that date, in accordance with my instructions from the State Department, I personally conveyed to President Batista that the Department of State would view with skepticism any plan on his part, or any intention on his part, to remain in Cuba indefinitely. I had dealt him a mortal blow. He said in substance: “You have intervened in behalf of the Castros, but I know it is not your doing and that you are only following out your instructions.” Fourteen days later, on Jan. 1, 1959, the Government of Cuba fell.’

“In Ambassador Smith’s book, *The Fourth Floor*, he lists the many actions by the United States that led to the fall of the Batista government. Among these were suspending arms sales, halting the sale of replacement parts for military equipment, persuading other governments not to sell arms to Batista, and public statements that assisted Castro and sabotaged Batista. These actions and many others, he wrote, ‘had a devastating psychological effect upon those supporting the [pro-American, anti-Communist] government of Cuba.’

“Left-leaning journalists were as ubiquitous in the 1950s as they are today. One of these, *New York Times* reporter Herbert Matthews, interviewed Castro in February 1957, reporting that Castro ‘has strong ideas of liberty, democracy, social justice, the need to restore the Constitution, to hold elections.’ Matthews went on to say that Castro was not only *not* a communist, but was definitely an anti-communist. That story, and other similar stories, created a myth that Fidel Castro was actually a friend of the United States and its way of life, that he was the ‘George Washington of Cuba’ (as television entertainer and columnist Ed Sullivan called him), and that what he fought for was a program of mild agrarian reform, an end to corruption, and constitutional representative government. The myth also claimed that after his victory in January 1959, he was driven into the arms of the USSR by the uncooperative and even hostile attitude of the United States. Curiously, that myth is still repeated to this day. However, the truth about Castro is as far from that myth as possible, as we shall now see.

“Cuba officially established diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union in 1943, during the Second World War. Among the functionaries of the Soviet staff sent to Cuba was one Gumar W. Bashirov, an official of the NKVD, the Soviet secret police (later known as the KGB). Bashirov’s job was to recruit a group of Cuban youths who, over time, could be used to subvert Cuban society and thereby advance the cause of world communism. Among those almost immediately recruited was the young Fidel Castro.

“Castro himself admitted in an interview with leftist journalist Saul Landau that he had become a Marxist when, as a student, he first read the *Communist Manifesto*. For that reason he willingly became a Soviet agent in 1943, when he was only 17 years of age. After the Soviet conquest of Eastern Europe in 1944-45, some of Bashirov’s young recruits were sent to Czechoslovakia for training. But the Soviets forbade Castro himself from joining the Communist Party or any communist front organizations so that he would remain untainted by such associations. Instead, they placed him in reserve, saving him for future eventualities. We see, therefore, that Fidel Castro was a Communist and a Soviet agent long before he took power in 1959.”<sup>342</sup>

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“Castro’s regime,” writes Michael Burleigh, “was exceptionally popular, and would remain so for many years. He seemed to be a revolutionary nationalist, a Garibaldi or Nasser, bent on freeing Cuba from colonial shackles, rather than a totalitarian tyrant intent on creating a ‘new man’ to serve the revolution, which he defined in Guevarist terms as a process with no time limit.

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<sup>342</sup> Thornton, “Partnering with Putin”, *New American*, November 20, 2015, <http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/history/item/21998-partnering-with-putin>.

There was a powerful sense of new beginnings, and it was favourably noted that the new masters of Cuba were personally austere with regard to money, although of course they took their pick from among the large number of young women excited by the hot rush of liberation..."<sup>343</sup>

But already in the first month the arrests, tortures, expropriations and show trials began. "In an early indication that relations with the US would be turbulent, Fidel said that if Washington did not like these trials it could send in the Marines, and there would be 'two hundred thousand dead gringos'. In a conversation with President Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela, he volunteered that he was thinking 'of having a game with the gringos'. The Eisenhower administration remained unsure whether Fidel was intent on confrontation or simply raising the stakes towards an eventual settlement, even though from April 1959 onwards the new regime sponsored subversive acts in Panama, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. At a conference of US ambassadors in the Caribbean, those willing to give Castro the benefit of the doubt, including Philip Bonsal, the new man in Havana, outnumbered those favouring a hardline response. The State Department hinted that a major economic crisis assistance programme was possible, but Fidel did not pursue the offer.

"Just before his departure on a tour of the US in April 1959, Fidel explained at a reception at the US embassy that elections could not be held before necessary agrarian reforms and general improvements in popular health and education. His unstructured visit to the US distracted from that significant shift in priorities. Predictably he was fêted at various Ivy League universities, where the spoiled offspring of the Western bourgeoisie found much to like in this tropical communitarian, so removed in spirit from the dull puritanism of Moscow or Beijing. Newspaper editors were charmed by Castro's jokes, as were the usual suspects from the American *gauche caviar*. UN delegates were less enchanted when he gave the longest ever speech to the General Assembly...

"Shortly after his return to Havana, Castro presented the cabinet with a draft Agrarian Reform Law, which they were not allowed to discuss. Land over a thousand acres was to be expropriated, in return for interest-yielding government bonds, which in the event were never issued. A National Agrarian Reform Institute (INRA) would run the land as co-operatives or grant sixty-seven acre plots to individual families. Foreigners could no longer own shares in sugar plantations, and ownership of refining mills was separated from the plantations. Young INRA officials with degrees but no practical experience took over virtually all the livestock farms, fecklessly butchering laying hens and dairy herds, and even a prize pedigree bull worth \$20,000. Castro dismissed cabinet members who protested against the folly, and thereafter the cabinet became irrelevant as the real business of government was conducted by decree.

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<sup>343</sup> Burleigh, *Small Wars, Far Away Places*, London: Pan, 2013, p. 434.

“Criticism of the growing influence of Communism was not tolerated. Castro sacked Pedro Luis Diaz Lanz, the head of the Revolutionary Air Force who had flown in arms and ammunition for the revolution in 1958, and deposed President Urrutia in favour of Osvaldo Dorticós, a wealthy closet Communist. He made himself prime minister to ‘popular acclaim’, for monster rallies styled as direct democracy had become his preferred means of claiming to express the popular will. By the autumn there were more people in prison than had ever been the case under Batista, and the death penalty, abolished in 1940, was restored for counter-revolutionaries. Brother Raúl, starting with military intelligence or G2, merged the guerrillas with what was left of the army to create the new Revolutionary Armed Forces. One of his first acts was to make a secret request to the Soviets to send a mission of Spanish Communist exiles who had served in the Red Army. Five KGB officers arrived to train a new secret police.

“Shortly afterwards, when Diaz Lanz flew an aircraft over Havana dropping anti-Castro leaflets, improperly fused anti-aircraft shells fired by Cuban gunners burst on return to the ground and Fidel accused the US of complicity in ‘terror bombing’. The remaining liberals in the government were forced out, and Guevara was appointed director of the National Bank, triggering financial panic and a run on the banks. Investors withdrew over US \$50 million in days. In October, Huber Matos, the military commander of Camaguey Province, attempted to resign along with forty of his officers because of Communist infiltration of the army. He was tried for ‘betraying the revolution’ and sentenced to twenty years in jail. In November the regime suspended habeas corpus indefinitely and the following month all Cubans were encouraged to become informers and to report any overheard criticism of the regime. Eventually, this was institutionalized by enrolling 800,000 people in Committees for the Defence of the Revolution.

“And on it went, an avalanche of decrees that often contradicted each other, by accident or design making the normal conduct of business impossible as managers spent all their time trying to comply. There was also a *Kulturkampf* against black social clubs and Santeria religious festivals – which fused folk Catholicism with Yoruba traditions from West Africa – as well as against all private clubs and associations. The labour unions, cringingly aware that their support for Batista was a sword hanging over their heads, were taken over by the Communists, who promptly requested the abolition of the right to strike. They muffled the freedom of speech that Batista had never dared to suppress by censoring all publications. All radio and TV stations were subsumed into a state corporation. Meanwhile the militarization of Cuban society proceeded apace with the creation of a 100,000-strong militia.”<sup>344</sup>

“During the repressions of the 1960s”, write Pascal Fontaine, Yves Santamaria and Sylvain Boulouque, “between 7,000 and 10,000 people were

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<sup>344</sup> Burleigh, *op. cit.*, 434, 435, 437-438.

killed and 30,000 people imprisoned for political reasons.”<sup>345</sup> Conditions in the prisons were appalling, torture was normal. Much of the economy was run on slave labour provided by prisoners. The massive support the country received from the Soviet Union was not able to make up for the collapse of the economy created by Guevaran economic socialism, on the one hand, and by the American embargo, on the other.

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Cuba’s close proximity to the United States meant that the Americans could never tolerate the Castro revolution. Moreover, a large part of the population of Florida was made up of fervently anti-communist exiles from Cuba. So in April, 1961 President John F. Kennedy, using Cuban exiles, Mafia mobsters (whose businesses on Cuba had been appropriated by Castro) and American bombers, made a bungled attempt to topple Castro in the Bay of Pigs invasion. Many died, and America’s reputation was severely damaged. Guevara got a message out to JFK: “Thanks for Playa Girón. Before the invasion, the revolution was weak. Now it’s stronger than ever.”<sup>346</sup> Which was, unfortunately, quite true...

The Bay of Pigs was followed by farcical attempts to assassinate Castro. “Defence Secretary Robert McNamara admitted: ‘We were hysterical about Castro at the time of the Bay of Pigs and thereafter.’ At various times, there were plans to employ gangsters to attack Cuban officials, to spread the rumour that Castro was Antichrist and a Second Coming imminent, with a submarine letting off star shells, to attack sugar-workers with non-lethal chemicals, to use thallium salts to make Castro’s beard fall out, to lace his cigars with disorienting chemicals or impregnate them with deadly botulinus, to give his mistress, Marie Lorenz, poison capsules, to use Cuban-American gangsters to assassinate him under contract, to give him a scuba-diving suit impregnated with a tuberculus bacillus and a skin-fungus, and to plant a rare seashell, with an explosive device, in the area where he dived. Richard Helms, whom Kennedy had made head of the CIA, later testified: ‘It was the policy at the time to get rid of Castro, and if killing him was one of the things that was to be done... we felt we were acting well within the guidelines... Nobody wants to embarrass a President... by discussing the assassination of foreign leaders in his presence.’”<sup>347</sup>

And yet how could the President not be embarrassed when his own brother and closest confidant, Bobby Kennedy, ran the operational division of the CIA, which organized the assassination attempts?

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<sup>345</sup> Fontaine, Santamaria and Boulouque, “Communism in Latin America”, in Stéphane Courtois and others, *The Black Book of Communism*, London and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 656.

<sup>346</sup> Burleigh, op. cit., p. 448.

<sup>347</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 624-625.

“Thus was created the paradox of the top law officer in the country directing an organization whose activities were legal only on rare occasions...

“Although forbidden by law to operate in the US, the world’s largest CIA station, codenamed JMWAVE, mushroomed on the south campus of the University of Miami, with an annual budget of \$50 million. This was four times the total the CIA spent on spying in twenty Latin American countries. Disguised as Zenica Technical Enterprises, it housed 300 CIA officers, who recruited thousands of Cuban exiles as agents...”<sup>348</sup>

Lawlessness was unfortunately a basic characteristic of the Kennedy brothers, whose family, some opined, was under a curse. “They learned their Realpolitik at home. Growing up a Kennedy was itself an advanced-level course. Their [very rich] father was a bootlegger, a womanizer, and an appeaser [that is, he supported the Munich agreement as US ambassador to London]. John and Robert Kennedy lost their eldest sister to a lobotomy in 1941, their eldest brother to the war in 1944, and their second sister to a plane crash in 1948. Jack Kennedy was a war hero but also a consummate cheat. His compulsive infidelity to his wife was only one of many deceptions. Throughout his political career, he concealed the severity of his medical problems (he suffered from acute back pain, hypothyroidism, and Addison’s disease, a condition that causes the adrenal glands to produce insufficient steroid hormones, and for which he needed continual cortisone injections.) He deliberately missed the Senate vote censuring Joe McCarthy, who had more than once been a Kennedy houseguest. He lied to his own brother about his decision to make Lyndon Johnson his running mate in 1960. His campaign may have called on Mafia assistance to defeat Richard Nixon that year... John F. Kennedy had won the presidency of the United States by fighting dirty, state by state...”<sup>349</sup>

But of course, in Khrushchev, a murderer both during and after Stalin’s reign, Kennedy had found his match in cunning and the ability to play dirty. “Khrushchev’s motivation [in sending missiles to Cuba] was not just to defend Cuba’s experiment with Marxism, though Castro was more than happy to interpret it in that way. Nor was the Soviet leader merely trying to win a psychological victory. His strategic calculation was twofold. First, by turning Cuba into Launchpad for intermediate-range missiles directed at American target, he could narrow the gap in nuclear capability between the Soviet Union and the United States, the true nature of which the Soviets knew full well. The plan was to send forty ballistic missiles to Cuba: twenty-four medium-range R-12s (with a range of 1,050 miles, long enough to hit Washington, D.C.) and sixteen intermediate-range R-14s, which had twice that range. Both types carried one-megaton warheads. This would double the number of Soviet missiles capable of reaching the United States, and it would do it far more cheaply than the construction of new intercontinental missiles.

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<sup>348</sup> Burleigh, op. cit., p. 452.

<sup>349</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger. 1923-1964: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, pp. 514-515.

“To justify this action, Khrushchev had only to look out from his Georgian holiday house at Pitsunda near Turkey, where fifteen U.S. PGM-12 Jupiter missiles had been deployed in 1961 as part of the post-*Sputnik* response to the imaginary missile gap. ‘What do you see?’ he would ask visitors, handing them binoculars. ‘I see U.S. missiles in Turkey, aimed at my dacha.’ (The Jupiters were in fact stationed at Izmir, on the Aegean coast.) Soviet missiles on Cuba would simply give the Americans ‘a little of their own medicine’. But it is clear that Khrushchev was thinking less of Turkey than of Germany. His second objective was to checkmate the Americans in Berlin. Kennedy did not initially grasp this, but then the penny dropped: ‘whatever we do in regard to Cuba, it gives them the chance to do the same with regard to Berlin.’ A U.S. blockade of Cuba would risk a Soviet blockade of West Berlin. A U.S. attack on Cuba would risk a Soviet attack on West Berlin.

“Operation Anadyr was in one respect a triumph of Soviet strategy. In addition to the missiles, the Soviets sent four motorized regiments, two tank battalions, MiG-21 fighter wing, some antiaircraft gun batteries, twelve SA-2 surface-to-air missile detachments with 144 missile-launchers, and forty-two Il-28 medium jet bombers equipped with nuclear bombs. They also sent nuclear warheads for the Sopka coastal defence cruise missiles that had previously been supplied to the Cubans. This was a huge operation. Yet between September 8, when the first nuclear ballistic missile reached Cuba, and October 15, when U.S. intelligence identified the missile sites, the U.S. government was oblivious to the fact that the arms being supplied to Cuba were nuclear. Indeed, the period of ignorance might have lasted even longer – perhaps until Khrushchev’s planned visit to the United States, when he intended to reveal his masterstroke – if the Soviet troops on Cuba had thought to camouflage the launch sites, or to shoot down the U-2s that spotted them...”<sup>350</sup>

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The crisis this caused very nearly brought the world to nuclear war and MAD. Kennedy was almost alone on the American side in rejecting the option of invading Cuba, and chose instead to blockade the island. As American secretary of state Dean Rusk put it, the two superpowers had been “eyeball to eyeball” and in the end it was the Soviets who “blinked”. The Soviet ships heading for Cuba with military hardware turned back in exchange for the American’s removing their Jupiter missiles from Turkey. So in fact Kennedy “blinked” too. But unlike Khrushchev he did not lose face, insofar as the “swap” of Turkish missiles for Cuban ones – a sensible one, which saved the world – was kept secret...<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Ferguson, *Kissinger*, pp. 547-548.

<sup>351</sup> Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West*, London: Allen Press, 1999, pp. 235-240.



“Far more important, however [than the Turkish missiles], was Kennedy’s acquiescence in the continuation of a Communist regime in Cuba, in open military alliance with Soviet Russia. On the practical issue of Cuba and Caribbean security, Kennedy lost the missile crisis. It was an American defeat: the worst it had so far suffered in the Cold War”<sup>352</sup> – although, as a consolation prize for the US, it probably led in the end to Khrushchev’s fall from power two years later.

But from the purely strategic point of view, the advantage was definitely with the Soviets. For besides the surrender of the Turkish missiles, they got a secure base only ninety miles from the shores of the United States ruled by a communist dictator whom the Americans were now not allowed to topple by military force, and who proceeded successfully to foment revolution throughout the Third World. “In the event, the Castro regime long outlived the Soviet Union itself. The Cuban missile crisis was therefore a Soviet victory, which the Kennedy White House – by keeping the peace terms secret – managed to spin into an American victory instead. Yet if anyone ‘blinked first’, it had been JFK...”<sup>353</sup>

The decisive moment came on October 27, when Castro “went ballistic” in a metaphorical sense; having driven to the Soviet embassy, he “raved about Cuban honour and his willingness to die ‘with supreme dignity’”. He spewed out a torrent of words which Soviet stenographers tried to pare down to a message for Khrushchev...

“Castro’s letter had a sobering effect on the Soviets. After waiting a few days, Khrushchev sent a paternal rebuke, reminding Castro that ‘above all Cuba would have been the first to burn in the fire of war’. If Castro wanted to commit suicide that was his affair: ‘We struggle against imperialism not to die but to make full use of our possibilities, so that in this struggle we win more than we lose and achieve the victory of Communism.’ Castro was so annoyed by the Soviet climbdown that he smashed a mirror... Although the crisis had abated by 29 October 1962, it took months for a settlement to be agreed. On 5 November the *Alexandrovsk* sailed home with its nuclear warheads, followed by MRBM warheads that had already reached Cuba. In late November the Soviets agreed to remove the Ilyushin bombers [from Cuba]. Some but not all of the tactical warheads were shipped out on Christmas Day 1962 and the remainder remained strictly under Soviet control until they too were withdrawn. In turn the US ended the naval quarantine... The Jupiters in Turkey were dismantled in April. JFK refused to make a formal pledge of non-aggression towards Cuba, reserving the right to take military action should the Castro regime persist in using the island ‘as a springboard for subversion’...

“There were global ramifications to events in Cuba. Chinese newspapers took the opportunity to laud Castro’s heroic resistance in bold type, while

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<sup>352</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 628.

<sup>353</sup> Roberts, op. cit., pp. 455-456.

comparing Khrushchev to Neville Chamberlain at Munich in 1938. Given that shortly after Munich the Soviets had allied with Hitler, this was very provocative. From grudgingly and belatedly supporting China in its border war with India, the Soviets started selling India MIG-21 fighters instead. Relations between the two great Communist powers got steadily worse, while Castro joined China on a global crusade against imperialism. In late 1963 in response to an appeal from [Algeria's] Ben Bella a battalion of Cuban troops, together with tanks, artillery and other heavy weapons arrived to support the Algerian regime in a confrontation with Morocco. It was a decisive intervention, and marked the beginning of a long period of semi-independent Cuban involvement in Africa, which tended to lead rather than follow the Soviet line..."<sup>354</sup>

There were consequences in the West, too: the fact that Kennedy kept secret the swap of Cuban for Turkish missiles undermined trust of the Americans among their Western European NATO allies. Trust plummeted further during the Vietnam War, which was just beginning. But Armageddon might well have taken place if individuals had not intervened with restraint at various stages...

However, the possibility of Armageddon still existed (and still does exist) thanks not only to mad or semi-mad individuals,<sup>355</sup> but also to a whole mad culture of strategic defence that had been in place now for generations in both East and West...

"In the final analysis," writes Ferguson, "Kennedy triumphed because of a mixture of luck, risk aversion, and deft public relations. He was lucky [or wise?] that he did not heed those who urged an amphibious invasion, because Khrushchev's initial instruction to the Soviet commander in Cuba, General Issa Pliyev, on the night of October 22-23 was unambiguous: 'If there is a [U.S.] landing, [use] the tactical atomic weapons, but [not] the strategic weapons until [there is] order.' True, under pressure from the more cautious Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan and Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky, he later changed this to an order to use the missiles but without nuclear warheads. Even so, he might have changed his mind in the face of a U.S. invasion, or Pliyev might have changed it for him if communication had been cut." <sup>356</sup>

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Two other important interventions need to be considered. The first was the principled refusal of the second-in-command of the Soviet submarine B-59, Vasili Arkhipov, to agree with his Captain's order to launch nuclear torpedoes against US warships during the crisis. The US had been dropping depth charges near the submarine in an attempt to force it to surface, unaware it was carrying nuclear arms. The Soviet officers, who had lost radio contact with

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<sup>354</sup> Burleigh, op. cit., p. 467-468, 469.

<sup>355</sup> As portrayed in such films as *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) and *Crimson Tide* (1993).

<sup>356</sup> Ferguson, *Kissinger*, p. 556.

Moscow, concluded that World War III had begun, and two of the officers agreed to 'blast the warships out of the water'. Arkhipov refused to agree - unanimous consent of 3 officers was required - and thanks to him, we are here to talk about it.<sup>357</sup>

The second intervention will be discounted by secular historians, but was undoubtedly the decisive one. This was the intervention of *Almighty God*, through the prayers of one of the great confessors of the Catacomb Church, Bishop Michael (Yershov) of Kazan. Stories about him began to seep out to the West towards the end of his life and after his death in 1974. But it was not until a full (739-page) biography of him appeared recently that his full stature and importance became apparent.

Michael Vasilyevich Yershov was born in 1911 into a poor family. His father became a Bolshevik and beat his son, but was later converted by him and repented. In 1931, Michael was imprisoned for the first time for his rejection of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate. Apart from a short period in the early 1940s, he remained in the camps for the rest of his life, being transported from one end of the Gulag to the other and dying, still in prison, on June 4, 1974. He presented an astounding image of patience that converted many to the Faith. He was a wonderworker and had the gifts of healing and prophecy.

But perhaps his most astounding miracle was worked in the Mordovian camps together with his fellow inmate and secret bishop, Basil Vasilyevich Kalinin. "It was August, 1962. The Cuban crisis! The attention of the world was glued to it, and it affected even the special section hidden in the Mordovian forests. 'It has to be...! Khrushchev has penetrated into the bosom of the Americans!' That was how the *zeks* [criminal inmates] interpreted it. People living beyond the barbed wire admitted the possibility that in time of war the local authorities would annihilate them, as the most dangerous politicals, first of all."

"At the special section the *zeks* insisted that Moscow had issued an order that in time of war the politicals and recidivists would be annihilated first of all. The Cuban crisis was soon resolved, and our camp calmed down. Many years later I heard that the fears of the *zeks* in 1962 had not been without foundation. They had really been threatened with annihilation at that time."

"In 1964, soon after the fall of Khrushchev, a colonel from the Georgian KGB came to our camp. And he said, among other things: 'Khrushchev adopted the policy of the complete physical annihilation of the politicals, and first of all the recidivists. During the Cuban crisis everything was prepared for your shooting - even a pit was dug'."

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<sup>357</sup> PBS documentary, "The Man Who Saved the World",  
541 <http://video.pbs.org/video/2295274962>

Bishop Basil remembered that the holy hierarch [Michael] once unexpectedly aroused him from sleep with the words: "Six minutes are remaining. Get up, Basil, and pray! The world is in danger!" And then he learned that this was the critical moment in the Cuban crisis...<sup>358</sup>

Truly, "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5.16). For when the two bishops Michael and Basil prayed to the Lord, the world was saved from nuclear holocaust...

"Let the world mock us," wrote Bishop Michael, "but we, poor people, must give all our strength and desire in prayer to God". "We must strictly watch over ourselves, that we do not fall under the condemnation and wrath of God. We must pour out the balsam of our strength and purity of heart whatever happens, our simple, true and holy prayer to God, which is bound by nothing except simplicity and belief in our eternal inheritance. For the Lord looks on the righteous and on their holy appeals, so that the prayer offered may be the earnest of our strength and the balsam of purification, by which the world might be preserved and the catastrophe which cannot even be expressed in words – God forbid! – might be averted."

"You yourselves know that a city is preserved if a righteous man is praying in it. Once the righteous man has left the city, the elements rule in the city. And so, dear ones, remember this one thing, that now is not that day on which the universe was created, and everything was brought into being, but now is the day on which danger menaces the creation..."<sup>359</sup>

Besides this pure prayer of a righteous man, Bishop Michael insisted on the importance of the pure confession of the truly Orthodox Faith. "Between the Church of the Tikhonite orientation [the True Orthodox Church] and the legal church [the Moscow Patriarchate] there is the following difference. The Church of the Tikhonite orientation zealously fulfils all the laws and rules that are prescribed by the Holy Fathers, while the legal church tolerates atheism, does not struggle against iniquity, but is reconciled with it. I recognize the One Apostolic Church. The legal church recognizes Lenin and Stalin, and serves Soviet power and carries out the orders of the atheist antichrists." <sup>360</sup>

This episode reminds us that, however remote the life of the True Church seems to have been from major political events in this deeply materialist period of world history, it still exerted its influence through the Grace of God, Who holds all things, both the inner-spiritual and the external-political, in His hand. For God does not cease to steer the world directly and indirectly, through His holy angels; and the lives of all men are steered by Him without violating their

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<sup>358</sup> I.V. Ilichev, *Voin Khristov Vernij i Istinnij: Tajnij Episkop IPTs Mikhail (Yershov)* (Faithful and True Warrior of Christ: Secret Bishop Michael (Yershov), Moscow: Bratonezh, 2011, pp. 499-500.

<sup>359</sup> Ilichev, op. cit., p. 506.

<sup>360</sup> Ilichev, op. cit., p. 410.

freedom. The processes of Divine Providence remain shrouded in mystery to us – but they exist, whether we discern them or not.

*November 8/21, 2020.*

*Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Michael and all the Angelic Powers.*

## 24. ROCOR AND THE SOVIET ECCLESIASTICAL DISSIDENTS

The movement of ecclesiastical dissent among some of the clergy of the MP began with the open letter of the Priests Nicholas Yeshliman and Gleb Yakunin to President Podgorny in 1965. They protested against the subservience of the Church to the State, particularly during the Khrushchev persecution, when the Church effectively gave control of the parishes to the State-controlled *dvadsatsky*, handed over lists of those baptized to the local authorities, did not allow children and adolescents under 18 to participate in church life, and ordained to the clergy only men who were pleasing to the Council for Religious Affairs. In 1966 the patriarchate reacted by banning both priests from serving.

Among the laity, the most significant dissident was the philosopher Boris Talantov, who was imprisoned for exposing the activities of the Kirov Bishop John in the closing of churches and suppression of believers. He was slandered publicly on the BBC by Metropolitan Nikodem of Leningrad, and was eventually sent to prison in Kirov, where he died in 1971. In an article entitled "Sergianism, or adaptation to atheism", which had the subtitle "The Leaven of Herod", Talantov denounced Metropolitan Sergei's 1927 declaration as a betrayal of the Church, and the MP as "a secret agent of worldwide antichristianity". Sergianism had not only not "saved" the Church, but, on the contrary, had assisted the loss of true ecclesiastical freedom and turned the Church administration into the obedient tool of the atheist authorities. "Metropolitan Sergei," he wrote, "by his adaptation and lies saved nobody and nothing except himself."

In another samizdat article entitled "The Secret Participation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the struggle of the CPSU against the Orthodox Christian Church" Talantov wrote: "The Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops participate in organized activities of the atheist authorities directed to the closing of churches, the limitation of the spreading of the faith and its undermining in our country... In truth the atheist leaders of the Russian people and the princes of the Church have gathered together against the Lord and His Christ".<sup>361</sup>

In 1972, Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote an open "Lenten Letter" to Patriarch Pimen, describing the patriarchate as being "ruled dictatorially by atheists – a sight never before seen in two millenia!" "The Russian Church," he wrote, "expresses its concern about any evil in distant Africa, while it never has anything at all to say about things which are wrong here at home." And he went on: "By what reasoning is it possible to convince oneself that the planned destruction of the spirit and body of the church under the guidance of atheists

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<sup>361</sup> Talantov, in "Tserkov' Katakombnaia na zemle Rossijskoj (III)" (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land (III), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), No 12 (635), December, 2002, pp. 10-11.

is the best way of preserving it? Preserving it for whom? Certainly not for Christ. Preserving it by what means? By falsehood? But after the falsehood by whose hands are the holy sacraments to be celebrated?"<sup>362</sup>

Solzhenitsyn's appeal "not to live by the lie" was seen by some to lead logically to the adoption of a catacomb existence for the Church. Thus Fr. Sergei Zheludkov replied: "What are we to do in such a situation? Should we say: all or nothing? Should we try to go underground, which in the present system is unthinkable? Or should we try somehow to accept the system and for the present use those opportunities that are permitted?"<sup>363</sup>

Solzhenitsyn emigrated to the West in 1974<sup>364</sup> and was brought to the Third All-Diaspora Council in Jordanville by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, who took the opportunity of his presence to read a report calling on ROCOR to support the dissidents, in spite of the fact that they were ecumenists and in the MP. The implication of the report was to raise the dissidents to the status of true Church confessors on a par with those of the Catacomb Church. Solzhenitsyn denied the very existence of the Catacomb Church... Metropolitan Philaret expressed no desire at all to meet him.<sup>365</sup>

This report was countered by Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, a member of the zealot group of hierarchs that included Metropolitan Philaret and Archbishop Averky of Jordanville, who, while respecting the courage of the dissidents, objected to a recognition that would devalue the witness of the true catacomb confessors.

One of the most important Soviet dissidents was the Moscow priest Fr. Dmitri Dudko, who conducted open meetings in his church that attracted many. Unlike Solzhenitsyn, he knew of the Catacomb Church, and wrote of it in relatively flattering terms: "We all recognize Patriarch Tikhon and we look on Patriarch Sergei's [acts] as a betrayal of the Church's interests to please the authorities. The following (Patriarchs) - Alexis and the present Pimen - only go on the road already opened. We have no other hierarchy. The Catacomb Church would be good - but where is it? The True Orthodox Church - these are good people, morally steadfast; but they have almost no priesthood, and you simply can't find them, while there are many who are thirsting. And one has to be ministered to by the hierarchy we do have. Immediately the question arises: are they ministering to us? Basically, they are the puppets of the atheists.

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<sup>362</sup> Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, London: Allen Croom, 1986, p. 304.

<sup>363</sup> Ellis, op. cit., p. 305.

<sup>364</sup> In Switzerland he would go to the Moscow Patriarchate, while his wife would go to ROCOR, whose ruling bishop there was Anthony of Geneva (personal communication to the writer by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom in 1975).

<sup>365</sup> See his 1975 letter here: [https://goctoronto.org/two-letters-by-the-new-confessor-saint-philaret-metropolitan-of-new-york/?fbclid=IwAR03r0GOtockeszegtAbuBLhTlyuqE-QDd0QgGJN\\_oHT\\_Fjg6zT8R2Rv5eI](https://goctoronto.org/two-letters-by-the-new-confessor-saint-philaret-metropolitan-of-new-york/?fbclid=IwAR03r0GOtockeszegtAbuBLhTlyuqE-QDd0QgGJN_oHT_Fjg6zT8R2Rv5eI)

And another question: at least, are they believers? Who will answer this question? I fear to answer..."<sup>366</sup>

These sentiments elicited sympathy from members of ROCOR. Less well known was Fr. Dmitri's ecumenism – because edited out of his books as published in the West.<sup>367</sup> The right attitude to him would have been to applaud his courage and the correct opinions he expressed, while gently seeking to correct his liberalism and ecumenism. In no way was it right to treat him as if he were a true priest in the True Church, and an example to be followed that was no less praiseworthy than those of the true confessors in the catacombs. But that is precisely what many in ROCOR now began to do.

Even the 1974 Council was tempted, declaring: "The boundary between preservation of the Church and seductive self-preservation was drawn by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, his lawful *locum tenens* Metropolitan Peter, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and the Solovki confessors headed by Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky). In recent years, this boundary has again been clearly drawn by Archbishop Hermogenes, several priests, among them Nicholas Gainov and Dmitri Dudko, the laypeople of Vyatka led by Boris Talantov, the defenders of the Pochaev Lavra such as Theodosia Kuzminichna Varavva, and many others. This boundary has also been drawn by Solzhenitsyn in his appeal 'Do not live by the lie!' Not to live by the lie and to honour the memory of the holy martyrs and confessors of our Church – this is the boundary separating the true Tikhonites from 'the sergianist leaven of Herod', as wrote Boris Talantov, the rebukers of the present leaders of the patriarchate who died in prison. In our unceasing prayers for each other, in our love for the Lord Jesus, in our faithfulness to the ideal of the past and future Orthodox Russia, the faithful archpastors, pastors, monks and laymen on both sides of the iron curtain are united. Together they constitute the Holy Church of Russia, which is indivisible just as the seamless robe of Christ is indivisible."<sup>368</sup>

This was a serious distortion: to place the confessors of the Catacomb Church on the same level as sergianist dissidents. A case could be made for considering that Boris Talantov was a true martyr, since he denounced the MP in terms identical to those employed by the Catacomb Church and paid for his words with his life. But Dudko and Solzhenitsyn did not share the faith of the True Church, and did not join it even after the fall of communism...

Fr. Seraphim Rose criticized Solzhenitsyn: "Let us return to the belief of Solzhenitsyn and all the defenders of the Moscow Patriarchate that the betrayal

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<sup>366</sup> Dudko, in *Posev*, translated in *The Orthodox Word*, September-October, 1979.

<sup>367</sup> Personal communication from Monks of Monastery Press, Montreal, January, 1977.

<sup>368</sup> *Poslanie Tre't'ego Vsezarubezhnogo Sobora Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej Pravoslavnomu russkomu narodu na rodine* (Epistle of the Third All-Emigration Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to the Russian People in the Homeland), September 8/21, 1974.



of her hierarchs does not affect the Church's faithful. This view is based on an entirely false view of the nature of the Church which artificially separates the hierarchs from the believing people and allows 'church life as normal' to go on no matter what happens to the Church leaders. On the contrary, the whole history of the Church of Christ persuades us of the exact opposite. Who else was it but the Bishops of Rome who led the Church of the West into apostasy and schism and heresy? Is it the fault of ordinary believing Roman Catholics that they, the largest group of 'Christians' in the world, are today outside the Church of Christ, and that in order to return to the true Church they must not only reject the false doctrines of Rome, but also completely reform their religious mentality and unlearn the false piety which has been transmitted to them precisely by their bishops? Today, it is true, the Moscow Patriarchate allows Roman Catholics to receive its Sacraments and implicitly already teaches the ecumenist doctrine that these Catholics too are 'part of the Church'. But this fact only shows how far the Moscow Patriarchate has departed from the universal Orthodox tradition of the Church into an erroneous ecclesiology, and how correct the True Orthodox Church is in refusing to have communion with an ecclesiastical body which not only allows its policies to be dictated by atheists, but openly preaches the modern heresies of ecumenism and chiliasm."<sup>369</sup>

In 1976 the ROCOR Synod issued an Epistle to the Russian people which, after declaring unity with the Catacomb Church, went on to say to MP dissidents: "We also kiss the cross that you have taken upon yourselves, O pastors who have found in yourselves the courage and strength of spirit to be open reproachers of the weakness of spirit of your hierarchs, who have surrendered before the atheists... We know of your exploit, we pray for you and ask your prayers for our flock that is in the diaspora. Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!"<sup>370</sup>

"Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!" are words that Orthodox priests exchange in the altar after the consecration of the Holy Gifts. Their use here implied the recognition of the dissidents as co-celebrants with ROCOR, members of the same Church. Clearly the influence of the dissidents was having a corrosive effect on the ecclesiology of ROCOR.

In February, 1976 the Matthewites broke communion with ROCOR, claiming that they had broken their promise to give them a written confession that the new calendarists were graceless<sup>371</sup>, and that Archbishop Anthony of

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<sup>369</sup> Rose, "The Catacomb Tikhonite Church 1974", *The Orthodox Word*, 1974, pp. 241-242.

<sup>370</sup> *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), 1976, No 20.

<sup>371</sup> Although ROCOR officially refused to call the new calendarists graceless, there is evidence that Metropolitan Philaret's personal views were stricter and closer to those of the Greeks. Thus on September 20, 1975, he wrote to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition, the leader of the Old Calendarist Church of Cyprus, with whom he continued to have friendly relations even after the Matthewite Synod to which Epiphanius belonged had broken communion with ROCOR: "From the beginning our Russian Church has known that the calendar innovation was unacceptable, and has not dared to move this boundary set by patristic tradition, for the

Geneva was continuing to have communion with the new calendarists.<sup>372</sup> This was true; and his ecumenist activities continued even after the break with the Matthewites. Thus at Pascha, 1976, he asked permission for pastoral reasons to serve with Russian clerics of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Europe.<sup>373</sup> In October he again concelebrated in London with several heretics at the funeral of Archbishop Nikodem of Great Britain.<sup>374</sup> And in May, 1977 he travelled to Birmingham, England to concelebrate with the local Serbs.

Archbishop Anthony's ecumenist actions caused several priests and parishes to leave him for the Matthewites, including Fr. Basile Sakkas in Switzerland, Hieromonk Cassian (Braun) in France, and a parish in England. Metropolitan Philaret also expressed disapproval of Archbishop Anthony's canonical transgressions.<sup>375</sup>

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In the same critical year of 1976 the well-known Brotherhood of St. Herman of Alaska in Platina, California began to turn away from its previously zealot

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Ecclesiastical Calendar is a support of the life of the Church and as such is fortified by decrees of Holy Tradition.

"However, it is obvious to all that the calendar innovation caused a schism in the Greek Church in 1924, and the responsibility for the schism weighs exclusively on the innovators. This is the conclusion that will be reached by anyone studying the Patriarchal *Tomoi* (as that of 1583) and taking into account the wretched and self-evident fact of the schism and the frightful punishments, persecutions and blasphemies which those who have cleaved to the patristic piety of Holy Tradition have undergone.

"Thinking in this way, our Holy Synod has decreed that we 'flee' concelebrations with the new calendarist modernists. We do not concelebrate with them, nor do we give permission or a blessing to our clergy for such a concelebration. In order to assure you of the truth of what we say, we inform you that whenever a community in the diaspora is received into our Church, they are required to follow the patristic Calendar of the Orthodox Church..." (from the archives of the True Orthodox Church of Greece)

<sup>372</sup> *Kyrix Gnision Orthodoxon* (Herald of the True Orthodox Christians), February, 1976, pp. 5-12.

<sup>373</sup> Psarev, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>374</sup> Archbishop Nikodem was a hierarch of the old school, who rejected the idea that either the Moscow Patriarchate or the Serbian patriarchate had grace. But after his death at the age of 93 in October, 1976, the liberal views of Archbishop Anthony became the norm in both the British and the West European dioceses. According to his obituary in *The Times* (October 19, 1976) Archbishop Nikodem was "born Nikolai Nagaiev, he was educated at the elite Pavlovsky military academy, later becoming an officer in the Tsar's Guards, the Light Infantry 'Sharpshooters' Battalion at Tsaskoe Selo. He fought in the First World War, receiving both wounds and medals. Then came the Communist Revolution, and he became an officer of the general staff of the White Army. Eventually he arrived in Belgrade. In 1943 Metropolitan Anastasy ordained him to the priesthood, and he became a Hieromonk. After the Second World War he went to Munich, thence in 1948 to France to become a parish priest. Then, in 1952, he was appointed Administrator of the Russian Orthodox Diocese in Great Britain. He was raised to the episcopate in 1954,

<sup>375</sup> As he told the present writer in January, 1977, he had a gun at his head. However, he was able to remove the British diocese, where Archbishop Anthony's ecumenism had elicited protests from the English Orthodox Parish of St. Michael, Guildford, to his own jurisdiction later that year.

course to a markedly softer line in relation to the MP and World Orthodoxy.<sup>376</sup> They were influenced in this direction partly by the “dissident fever” that was now raging through most of the Russian part of ROCOR, and partly by the “moderate” ecclesiology of the Greek Old Calendarist Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili. However, a still more important influence may have been a series of controversies – on evolution, on the soul after death, on Blessed Augustine of Hippo – conducted exclusively in the “convert” part of ROCOR between the Platina Brotherhood and the Greek-American monastery in Boston. In all these controversies, in the present writer’s opinion, Platina was right as against Boston. But the negative impression that the Platina monks formed of Boston as a result led them to error in the one area of controversy in which the Boston monastery was right – the canonical status of World Orthodoxy and the MP. Arguing that the Boston monastery’s “super-correctness” was leading them to abandon the “Royal Way” as regards the status of the World Orthodox, Platina came out strongly on the side of the liberal wing of ROCOR led by Archbishop Anthony and his idolisation of Fr. Dmitri Dudko and the other dissidents.

Another important issue was relations with the Serbian Church. The Serbs had joined the WCC in 1965, their ecumenism extended to official acceptance of the canonicity of the Anglican Church<sup>377</sup>, and they were as fully under the thumb of the communists as the MP. In spite of this, Archbishop Anthony continued to serve with the Serbs, citing the pre-war hospitality of the Serbs to ROCOR in his justification.

In this connection Metropolitan Philaret wrote to him: “I consider it my duty to point out to you, Vladyka, that your assertion that we must thank the Serbian Church for her treatment of us, I fully accept, but only as regards her past – the glorious past of the Serbian Church. Yes, of course, we must keep the names of their Holinesses Patriarchs Demetrius and Barnabas in grateful memory for their precious support of the Church Abroad at that time when she had no place to lay her head.

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<sup>376</sup> See especially Fr. Seraphim Rose’s article, “The Royal Path” (*The Orthodox Word*, No 70, 1976), in which he wrote: “The Russian Church Outside of Russia has been placed, by God’s Providence, in a very favourable position for preserving the ‘royal path’ amidst the confusion of so much of 20th century Orthodoxy. Living in exile and poverty in a world that has not understood the suffering of her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, and so quite naturally she finds herself a stranger to the whole ecumenical mentality, which is based on religious indifference and self-satisfaction, material affluence, and soulless internationalism. On the other hand, she has been preserved from falling into extremism on the ‘right side’ (such as might be a declaration that the Mysteries of the Moscow Patriarchate are without grace)... If there seems to be a ‘logical contradiction’ here... it is a problem only for rationalists; those who approach church questions with the heart as well as the head have no trouble accepting this position...”

<sup>377</sup> Thus George Deretich writes: “In Waukegan, Illinois (Feb. 7, 1980),... the pro-Belgrade Bishop Firmilian stated openly in court under oath that Episcopalian clergy are canonical priests recognized by his Orthodox Church” (*Treacherous Unity*, Acel Officeworks, 1998, p. 68).

“There is no denying that a certain honour is due the Serbian Church for her refusing to condemn our Church Abroad at the parasynagogue in Moscow in 1971, and also on later occasions when Moscow again raised the matter. But then, on the other hand, she did participate in the aforementioned parasynagogue, when it elected Pimen, and the Serbian hierarchs did not protest against this absolutely anti-canonical election, when he who had already been chosen and appointed by the God-hating regime was elected. Our Sobor of 1971 did not, and could not, recognize Pimen, whereas the Serbian Patriarchate recognized and does recognize him, addressing him as Patriarch, and is in full communion with him. And thus she opposes us directly, for we attempt at all times to explain to the “Free World” that the Soviet Patriarchate is not the genuine representative and head of the much-suffering Russian Church. But the Serbian Church recognizes her as such, and by so doing commits a grave sin against the Russian Church and the Russian Orthodox people.

“How can there be any talk here of a special gratitude to her? Oh, if the Serbian Church would, while recognizing our righteousness, likewise directly and openly, boldly recognize the unrighteousness of the Soviets! Well – then there would truly be something for us to thank her for! But now, as it is, while extending one hand to us, she extends her other hand to our opponents and the enemies of God and the Church. If it pleases you, having shut your eyes to this sad reality, to thank the Serbs for such ‘podvigs’ of theirs, then that is your affair, but I am not a participant in this expression of gratitude.

“How dangerous are compromises in matters of principle! They render people powerless in defence of the Truth. Why is it that the Serbian Patriarchate cannot resolve to sever communion with the Soviet hierarchy? Because she herself is travelling along the same dark and dangerous path of compromise with the God-hating communists. True, she has not progressed along that path to the extent that the Soviet hierarchy has, and she attempts to preach and defend the faith, but if the shades and nuances here are quite different, yet, in principle, the matter stands on one and the same level.”<sup>378</sup>

In 1979, in response to a series of protests by Fr. Dmitri Dudko against what he saw as excessive strictness on the part of ROCOR towards the MP, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, breaking the rule imposed by Metropolitan Anastasy (and reasserted by Metropolitan Philaret) that ROCOR members should have no contact, “even of an everyday nature”, with Soviet church clergy, wrote to Dudko: “I hasten to console you that the part of the Russian Church which lives in freedom beyond the bounds of the homeland, has never officially considered the Moscow Patriarchate, which is recognised in the USSR, as graceless.... We have never dared to deny the grace-filled nature of

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<sup>378</sup> Letter of Metropolitan Philaret to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, November 16/29, 1977; [https://goctoronto.org/two-letters-by-the-new-confessor-saint-philaret-metropolitan-of-new-york/?fbclid=IwAR03r0G0tockeszegtAbuBLhTIyuqE-QDd0QgGJN\\_oHT\\_Fjg6zT8R2Rv5eI](https://goctoronto.org/two-letters-by-the-new-confessor-saint-philaret-metropolitan-of-new-york/?fbclid=IwAR03r0G0tockeszegtAbuBLhTIyuqE-QDd0QgGJN_oHT_Fjg6zT8R2Rv5eI).

the official church, for we believe that the sacraments carried out by her clergy are sacraments. Therefore our bishops received your clergy into the Church Abroad in their existing rank... On the other hand, the representatives of the Catacomb Church in Russia accuse us of not wanting to recognise the Moscow Patriarchate as graceless.”<sup>379</sup>

However, in 1980, Fr. Dmitri was arrested, which was closely followed by the arrest of his disciples Victor Kapitanchuk and Lev Regelson. Then Dudko issued a recantation on Soviet television in which he confessed that his “so-called struggle with godlessness” was in fact “a struggle with Soviet power”.<sup>380</sup> Kapitanchuk and Regelson confessed to having “criminal ties” with foreign correspondents and of mixing religious activity with politics, while Kapitanchuk said that he had “inflicted damage on the Soviet state for which I am very sorry”. Both men implicated others in their “crimes”.

Metropolitan Philaret wrote: “Why did this calamity befall Father Dmitri Dudko? Let's assume the best, not suspecting him of conscious collaboration with the KGB and betrayal of his convictions, but simply noting the sad fact that he did not endure, but was broken; he capitulated before the enemies of the Church. Why? It would seem that he did display courage and daring; and then suddenly, such an inglorious end. Why?!

“Because his activity took place outside of the true Church...

“What then is the Soviet church? Archimandrite Constantine has often and insistently stated that the most horrible thing that the God-hating regime has done in Russia is the creation of the Soviet Church, which the Bolsheviks presented to the people as the true Church, having driven the genuine Orthodox Church into the catacombs or into the concentration camps.

“This pseudo-church has been twice anathematized. His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the All-Russian Church Sobor anathematized the Communists and all their collaborators. This dread anathema has not been lifted till this day and remains in force, since it can be lifted only by a similar All-Russian Church Sobor, as the canonical supreme ecclesiastical authority. And a terrifying thing happened in 1927, when the head of the Church, Metropolitan Sergei, by his infamous and apostate Declaration, subjected the Russian Church to the

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<sup>379</sup> *Vestnik Zapadno-Evropejskoj Eparkhii* (Herald of the Western European Diocese), 1979, No 14; *Posev* (Sowing), 1979, No 12.

<sup>380</sup> In fact, before his death in 2004 Dudko became an open advocate of Stalinism and Putin's neo-Stalinism: “I hope so much for Vladimir Putin now. It seems to me that he is like Joseph Stalin. I treat Stalin with respect, and I think that he was a very wise leader. It is Stalin who established such a powerful country. Russia has never been that powerful since, and there was no tsar in Russia who was able to accomplish the things that Stalin did. He managed to overcome and sacrifice so much for the sake of the country's greatness. I hope that Putin will follow in Stalin's path...” (<http://english.pravda.ru/politics/2002/11/13/39433>; quoted by Nicholas Candela, “[paradosis] the wisdom of an MP priest”, [orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com](mailto:orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com), January 22, 2004).

Bolsheviks and proclaimed collaboration with them. And thus in a most exact sense was fulfilled the expression in the prayer at the beginning of Confession: having fallen under their own anathema! For in 1918 the Church anathematized all the confederates of Communism, while in 1927 she herself joined the camp of these collaborators and began to laud the red, God-having regime to laud the red beast spoken of in the Apocalypse.

“As if that is not enough. When Metropolitan Sergei promulgated his criminal Declaration, then the faithful children of the Church immediately separated themselves from the Soviet church, and thus the Catacomb Church was formed. And she, in her turn, has anathematized the official church for its betrayal of Christ.

“And it was within this very church of evil-doers that the activities of Father Dmitri Dudko occurred, who has frankly declared in the press that he is not going to break with the Soviet church but will remain in her. Had his spiritual eyes been open, and had he seen the true nature of the official church, he might have found within himself the courage to say: I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, and with the ungodly will I not sit. I am breaking off with the company of the enemies of God, and I am withdrawing from the Soviet church. Why, then for us he would have become one of our own his courage would have destroyed the barrier which irrevocably stands between us by virtue of the fact that the Sobor adopted as its guiding principle the Testament of Metropolitan Anastasy. For in this Testament it is ordered that we must not have any communion whatsoever with the Soviets, not only no communion in prayer, but not even ordinary contact in daily life. But as long as Father Dmitri would have refused to remain in the Soviet pseudo-church, and would have withdrawn from membership in her the barrier would no longer have applied to him.”<sup>381</sup>

Metropolitan Philaret had been proved right – although many continued to justify Dudko and denounced those who “judged” him. But it was not a question of “judging” in the sense of harsh personal condemnation, but of the correct discerning of the boundaries of the Church and the correct attitude to those outside it.

Dudko’s vulnerability consisted, not so much in the fear of physical torture, as in the KGB’s ability to induce in him a feeling of false guilt, guilt that he had objectively harmed the Soviet State. This tragedy exposed an inescapable dilemma facing all the dissidents: that action aimed to restore the freedom of

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<sup>381</sup> “A Letter from Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) to a Priest of the Church Abroad concerning Father Dmitri Dudko and the Moscow Patriarchate”, *Vertograd-Inform*, No 4, February, 1999, pp. 16-20. [https://blessedphilaret.blogspot.com/2008/09/letter-concerning-fr-dimitry-dudko-and.html?m=1&fbclid=IwAR1HxO6kR2z4phdbLoOZPElh5BT-N2-yVQJ\\_5HukL6WgqtmIVjDW6758HU0](https://blessedphilaret.blogspot.com/2008/09/letter-concerning-fr-dimitry-dudko-and.html?m=1&fbclid=IwAR1HxO6kR2z4phdbLoOZPElh5BT-N2-yVQJ_5HukL6WgqtmIVjDW6758HU0). A few years earlier, on August 14/27, 1977, Metropolitan Philaret had told the present writer: “I advise you always to remain faithful to the anathema of the Catacomb Church against the Moscow Patriarchate.”

the Church was necessarily anti-soviet, insofar as the Soviet State and the Orthodox Church represented incompatible aims and ideologies. Therefore every committed campaigner for Church freedom sooner or later had to admit that he was working against Soviet power – if not by physical, at any rate by spiritual, means, and that he had to work outside the political and ecclesiastical institutions of Soviet power. The failure of the dissidents was the natural consequence of the refusal to obey the Apostle's command: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Corinthians 6.14). They refused to obey Patriarch Tikhon's adjuration to the faithful to have no communion at all with the communists, "the outcasts of humanity". They tried to do good from within an accursed evil - the pact between Metropolitan Sergei and the Communists which, in the words of a *samizdat* document dating from the early 1970s, "tied the Church hand and foot by imposing on her a loyalty not only to the State, *but mainly to the communist ideology*."<sup>382</sup>

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The breaking of Dudko elicited the inevitable question: to what extent was the dissident movement infiltrated by the KGB? And still more important: to what extent was ROCOR infiltrated by the KGB? Such a question would arise with particular urgency in the 1990s and 2000s as ROCOR collapsed into union with the MP; but an incident in 1979 involving a layman of ROCOR, Mark Arndt, the future ROCOR Archbishop of Berlin, showed how relevant the question was to Church life already at that time.

Mark was arrested at Leningrad airport for importing anti-Soviet material and then released. The former KGB lieutenant-colonel, now church subdeacon, Konstantin Preobrazhensky, writes:-

"In 1979 the future Archbishop Mark [of Berlin] was arrested at the Soviet border for importing anti-Soviet literature. Nobody knows on what date. Nor does anybody know how long Mark was detained by the KGB, whether for one day or several...

"At that time Mark Arndt was an activist of NTS, the People's Labour Union, which had once been a warlike anti-Soviet organisation but was then properly crammed with KGB agents.

"Some Russian émigrés today say: 'What if the KGB simply frightened Mark and then let him go with God's blessing?'

"I assure you as a retired lieutenant-colonel of the KGB: this could not have happened. Because the import of anti-Soviet literature came under article 70 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, "Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". It

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<sup>382</sup> Keston College *Archives* 12/92, No 8926 March 29, 1972, in *Orthodox Life*, September-October, 1974.

was considered an especially dangerous state crime and promised a considerable jail sentence.

“And how then, after arresting Mark, would the chekists have given an account of their work? Explained that they had let him go? And where would the concrete result so valued by the KGB be? Or, as they say there, ‘the dry remains’?

“But nobody would have allowed him to be released!

“After all, every foreigner who fell for righteousness’ or unrighteousness’ sake into the hands of the KGB was considered to be a fat, tasty chicken. He could have been exchanged for a Soviet spy who had fallen into captivity, or used for communist propaganda.

“All this would have been considered to be a great success and promised rewards for the chekists. But if they released him, there would have been no bonus. After all, the KGB is a military system. Every step there has to be agreed with tens of bosses.

“The chekists could have released him only in exchange for a still greater bonus. And they give that for the recruitment of a foreigner. It is considered the greatest achievement in the work of a chekist. His career would have been on the up.

“They teach how to recruit foreigners who are arrested by them in the Minsk KGB school...

“They worked on Mark. He would even have had to spend the night in the KGB...

“Sergei Grigoryants [the founder of the journal *Glasnost*] told me the following: ‘... The fact that the KGB let Mark go in such a “humane” fashion shows that a love match may have been set up between them.’...

“There are *agents of influence*, who act on the politics of their country in a spirit that is useful for Russia. But as a rule they do not break its laws.

“If Archbishop Mark is truly an agent of the KGB, then he belongs to this category. Does his activity correspond to the external political aims of the Putin administration? Undoubtedly yes. It helps submit the Church Abroad to Moscow, so as to take the Russian emigration under the control of the FSB [the new name for the KGB]...”<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> Preobrazhensky, “Dve Tajny Arkhiepiskopa Marka” (Two Mysteries of Archbishop Mark), Portal-credo.ru, 12 May, 2004, <http://cherksoft.narod.ru/mut59.htm>.



Archbishop Mark immediately and sharply responded to Preobrazhensky's accusations: "I have never and nowhere been arrested, and I will not comment on every absurdity".

More recently, Preobrazhensky has returned to the attack on Archbishop Mark, citing the witness of Bishop Irenaeus of Verney and Semirechiye of the Russian True Orthodox Church, who in 1990, as Protopriest Vladimir Klipenshtein, was appointed rector of the church of St. Symeon of the Wonderful Mountain in Dresden by Archbishop Mark. To his surprise he discovered that this church had formerly been in the MP, but that in that year the government of United Germany had decided to return all the Russian churches to ROCOR – and were prepared to enforce that decision by force if necessary. Fr. Vladimir joyfully phoned Archbishop Mark to tell him about this, but received the unexpected reply:

"I'm ready to hang myself because of your actions!"

"But where then am I to serve?" said Fr. Vladimir in amazement.

"Rent a flat and serve at home!" shouted Archbishop Mark.

"It was strange: it was he who had appointed Fr. Vladimir as rector of the church, but now he was not allowing him to serve in it! Where was the logic in that?"

Fr. Vladimir later learned that, over ten years before ROCOR was engulfed by the MP, Archbishop Mark served with his patriarchal "double", Archbishop Theophan of Berlin and Germany. Moreover, although he visited the Dresden parish and served with its patriarchal rector, Fr. George Davidov, he never took the church from him. Then Fr. Vladimir found out from the German counter-espionage service that all the patriarchal priests in Germany were KGB agents!

Fr. Vladimir's inquiries were extremely displeasing to Archbishop Mark, who recalled him to his monastery of St. Job in Munich, and then told him that he would not be serving in Germany, whereupon he returned to his homeland.

"Bishop Irenaeus noted in a conversation with me that if at that time, in 1999, Mark's work on the cadres in favour of Moscow had become widely known, this would have elicited such a scandal that last year's 'union of the Churches' could not have taken place. The more so in that at that time the leader of the Church Abroad was Metropolitan Vitaly, who was known for his categorical rejection of the Bolsheviks, the chekists and 'the Soviet patriarchate'.

"I am convinced that it was precisely Mark who led the conspiracy to remove Metropolitan Vitaly in 2000," noted Bishop Irenaeus."<sup>384</sup>

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384 Preobrazhensky, "Sviaschenniki i Razvedchiki", <http://elmager.livejournal.com/222404.html?reply>.

*December 11/24, 2020.*

## 25. CAN TRUE PROPHECIES BE FALSIFIED?

\_\_\_As is well known, there are many prophecies of the resurrection of Holy Russia and its flourishing again for a short period before the coming of the Antichrist. In 1980, Fr. Seraphim Rose gave an excellent talk (published in "The Orthodox Word") quoting and discussing several of these prophecies. In 1992 the present writer presented an article on the same subject entitled "The Restoration of Romanity" that was published in "Orthodox Life". However, there has been a marked decline in faith in these prophecies in recent times, even in the True Church. Some people say that the prophecies' fulfilment is conditional on the repentance of their recipients; others simply affirm that the Russian people will not repent, and therefore that the prophecies will not be fulfilled.

However, the Lord asserted that not one jot or tittle of the law would not be fulfilled, and that heaven and earth would pass away, but His words would not pass away. And the Nicene Creed that we recite every day asserts that the Holy Spirit, Who is the Spirit of truth, "spoke through the prophets". Therefore we must not easily or lightly allow the hope of the Church that is based on the prophecies of the holy prophets to be weakened in any way.

Of course, there are legitimate reasons, not for disbelieving the prophecies, but for being perplexed by them. The Book of Revelation, for example, is notoriously difficult to understand, and the seer himself says that exceptional "wisdom" is required to understand the meaning of the number of the beast. But this is not a reason to disbelieve; and St. Barsanuphy of Optina at the beginning of the twentieth century said that it was essential to read the Book of Revelation and at least *try* to understand it, for the time of its fulfilment was near.

Let us take another reason for perplexity: apparent non-fulfilment. In the book of the holy Prophet Haggai we read: "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying: 'I will shake the heaven and earth; I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms; I will overthrow the chariots of those who ride in them; the horses and riders will come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, says the Lord of hosts I will take you, Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, says the Lord, and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts'" (2.22-23). Now Haggai was a contemporary of the Davidic Prince Zerubbabel, one of the ancestors of Christ, whose work in rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem he and the holy Prophet Zechariah strongly supported. The perplexing thing about this prophecy is that there was no overturning of Gentile kingdoms in his time, no civil wars, no "shaking of heaven and earth". The hegemonic power of the time, Persia, remained in power and at peace for centuries to come...

So what is the explanation? The most likely is that Zerubbabel is here a type or forefigure of a future ruler (perhaps an Orthodox autocrat) fulfilling the

same function as Zerubbabel, and living at a time of great international (and perhaps cosmic) disturbance). It is just possible that Christ Himself is meant - but this passage is not commonly counted among the Messianic prophecies.

A better-known example of apparent non-fulfilment is Jonah's prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh. But God did not destroy Nineveh - much to Jonah's annoyance - because the Ninevites, on hearing Jonah's prophecy, repented with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. So was the prophecy was unfulfilled?

No, It was simply *delayed* until the Ninevites, by returning to their evil ways, proved themselves unworthy of the continuing mercy of God... Jonah prophesied during the eighth century; but over one hundred years later, in 612 BC, in accordance with the word of another holy Prophet, Nahum, Nineveh was indeed destroyed, never to rise again. Excavations of the city since 1845 AD corroborated several of the statements of Nahum...

Now let us turn to the prophecies concerning the resurrection of Russia after the Bolshevik yoke. A typical one is that by St. John of Kronstadt: "“I foresee the restoration of a powerful Russia, still stronger and mightier than before. On the bones of these martyrs, remember, as on a strong foundation, will the new Russia be built - according to the old model, strong in her faith in Christ God and in the Holy Trinity! And there will be, in accordance with the covenant of the holy Prince Vladimir, a single Church!” “The Church will remain unshaken to the end of the age, and a Monarch of Russia, if he remains faithful to the Orthodox Church, will be established on the Throne of Russia until the end of the age.”

There were several such prophecies, and many were those who expected the overthrow of the Bolsheviks to take place quickly. But a close examination of the prophecies reveals that this was not what they foretold. Thus St. Aristocles of Moscow (+1918) prophesied that the Whites would not succeed in the Civil War because “the spirit is not right”. Again, the last words of the holy Patriarch Tikhon were discouraging: “The night will be very long and very dark”. Again, the former metropolitan of Moscow, St. Makary Nevsky (+1926) had a vision in 1917 in which he saw that the Tsar would be a great martyr, and also heard the Lord Jesus Christ telling the Apostle Peter that if Russia did not repent by 1922, the whole of Europe would be subject to the same torment. As we know, there was no repentance and the torments of Bolshevism have spread to almost the whole world (but not yet, significantly, to Western Europe).

None of these prophecies denied the resurrection of Russia, but only declared that the recovery would be long and difficult. But such long periods of persecution have not been rare in Church history. We think of the nearly three centuries of persecution in the Roman Empire before St. Constantine. And the more than a century of persecution at the hands of the iconoclasts. And the long centuries of the Turkish Muslim yoke... The Church always survives and triumphs in the end, but the period of darkness can be very long... The resurrection of Russia from the Bolshevik and neo-Bolshevik tyranny is taking

a long time, not because God has changed His mind, but because generations of filth have to be cleared away first. It may even take a world war to make the path straight again for the restoration of the throne of the Orthodox tsars. But the process began in 1982 with the glorification of the new martyrs, and is, I believe, continuing. To take just one, but significant example: the Russian people as a whole now believes that that the Tsar was a martyr and that their rejection of him was the first cause of their sorrows... This is definitely the beginning of the resurrection. And there is no reason why it should not go further. Why should not another generation of Christians be generated from the blood of the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of martyrs who have given their lives for Christ and His Holy Church? With God all things are possible. He has done it before and He can do it again...

The prophecies of the resurrection of Russia are necessary for us in order to prevent us from falling into the trap of fake resurrections such as those presented by the gaudy gold and glitter of the Moscow Patriarchate, and dissolving without trace in the apostate sea of the formerly Christian peoples. They are like night vision spectacles in the dark night of this world, guiding and strengthening us on the way. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5.7). By faith we see further and deeper; for we see with a Divine vision. We are now in the Week of the Holy Forefathers, those holy men and women who held on with faith and undying hope to the prophecies of the Coming Messiah. Like Abraham, who, as the Lord Himself said, "rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad" (John 8.56).

But not all men have faith, not even those who call themselves Christians. Instead, they have so-called *common sense*, which is common in more than one sense. Indeed, it can become senseless, as when most people today, unilluminated by the true light of faith, believe that the whole world came from a pile of overheated dust, and that men derive from the apes. It is common sense that says that Russia cannot be resurrected, just as common sense said that Noah's flood could not take place, and that Moses could not part the waters of the Red Sea, and that the temple could not be rebuilt, and denies countless demonstrations of the power of God in New Testament times.

Our task, as Russian Orthodox Christians, is to rebuild the temple of the Lord in a resurrected Holy Russia. So let us *believe* and set to work, remembering the exhortation of the holy Prophet Haggai and applying it to our time: "The word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet, saying: 'Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: "Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?" 'Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel', says the Lord; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the Lord of hosts. 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you: do not fear!' For thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake the heaven and the earth, the

sea and dry land; and I will shake all nation, and then shall come the desire of all nations. And I will fill this temple with glory,' says the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2.2-7).

*December 16/29, 2020.  
Holy Prophet Haggai.*

## 26. CHRISTIANITY AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The process of the Christianization of the Roman empire came to fruition with the conversion of St. Constantine. "It has been estimated," writes Paul Stephenson, "that the number of Christians grew at a rate of forty percent per decade, through reproduction and conversion. From a tiny pool of believers, the number of Christians grew slowly at first, but eventually exponentially. The period of exponential growth began in the later third century, when from around one million in AD 250, there were almost six million Christians in AD 300, and almost thirty-four million in AD 350."<sup>385</sup>

Even when the last pagan Roman emperor, Julian the apostate, tried to reverse the Constantinian revolution, the momentum proved unstoppable. Like all the previous persecutors of the Christians, he perished in agony, crying, "You have triumphed, Galilean!" And when the last Emperor to unite East and West, Theodosius the Great, bowed in penitence before a Christian bishop, Ambrose of Milan, it seemed as if Ambrose's dream of a Rome purged of its pagan vices and uniting its traditional virtues to the Cross of Christ – a Rome truly *invicta* and *aeterna* because united to the invincible and eternal God – had been realized. For, as St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, said, addressing Rome: "[The Apostles] promoted thee to such glory, that being made a holy nation, a chosen people, a priestly and royal state, and the head of the world through the blessed Peter's holy See thou didst attain a wider sway by the worship of God than by earthly government. For although thou wast increased by many victories, and didst extend thy rule on land and sea, yet what thy toils in war subdued is less than what the peace of Christ has conquered... That state, in ignorance of the Author of its aggrandisement, though it ruled almost all nations, was enthralled by the errors of them all, and seemed to itself to have fostered religion greatly, because it rejected no falsehood [an excellent definition of ecumenism]. And hence its emancipation through Christ was the more wondrous in that it had been so fast bound by Satan."<sup>386</sup>

Roman power already began fulfilling the role of protector of the Christians as early as 35, when, on the basis of a report sent to him by Pilate, the Emperor Tiberius proposed to the senate that Christ should be recognized as a god. The senate refused this request, and declared that Christianity was an "illicit superstition"; but Tiberius ignored this and forbade the bringing of any accusations against the Christians.<sup>387</sup> Moreover, when St. Mary Magdalene complained to the emperor about the unjust sentence passed by Pontius Pilate on Christ, the emperor moved Pilate from Jerusalem to Gaul, where he died after a terrible illness.<sup>388</sup> Again, in 36 or 37 the Roman legate to Syria, Vitellius, deposed Caiaphas for his unlawful execution of the Archdeacon and

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<sup>385</sup> Stephenson, *Constantine. Unconquered Emperor, Christian Victor*, London: Quercus, 2009, p. 38.

<sup>386</sup> St. Leo, *Sermon LXXXII*, on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

<sup>387</sup> Marti Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 18.

<sup>388</sup> Velimirovič, *The Prologue from Ochrid*, part III, July 22, p. 94. Annas and Caiaphas also came to bad ends.

Protomartyr Stephen (in 34), and in 62 the High Priest Ananias was similarly deposed for executing St. James the Just, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. In between these dates the Apostle Paul was saved from a lynching at the hands of the Jews by the Roman authorities (Acts 21, 23.28-29, 25.19).<sup>389</sup>

So at first the Romans, far from being persecutors of the Christians... It was only the Emperor Nero's blaming the Christians for the great fire of Rome in 64, when he called the faith *superstitio illicita* that caused the Romans' attitude to the Church to harden temporarily.

The first epistle of St. Peter was written during the time of Nero's persecution, and the apostle is insistent that the Christians should remain faithful subjects of the Roman emperor ("Honour the king", he says), suffering it patiently if they were treated unjustly. Similarly, during the Jewish rebellion of 66-70, the Christians of Jerusalem remained loyal to Roman power. This remained the attitude of the Church throughout the pre-Constantinian period.

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Edward Gibbon writes: "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord."<sup>390</sup>

But the matter was not as simple as that...

As Alexander Dvorkin writes: "The Roman government in practice was tolerant to any cult if only it did not incite to rebellion and did not undermine morality. Moreover, the Romans thought that one of the reasons for their military successes was the fact that while other peoples worshipped only their own local gods, the Romans showed marks of honour to all the gods without exception and for that were rewarded for their special piety. All cults not established by the state were allowed, but theoretically did not have the right to propagandize in Rome, although their gods also entered into the Roman pantheon. In the first century after Christ religions already known to the contemporary Roman were not, as a rule, persecuted for propagandizing. However, the law retained its prior force and theoretically the possibility of applying it remained. The permitted religions had to satisfy two criteria: place and time. Religion was always a local matter – that is, it was linked to a definite people living in a definite locality, - and also an ancient matter, linked to the history of this people. It was more complicated to assimilate the God of the Jews, Who had no representation and did not accept sacrifices in any place except Jerusalem, into their pantheon. The Jews themselves did not allow His representation to be placed anywhere and stubbornly declined to worship the

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<sup>389</sup> Sordi, *op. cit.*, chapter 1.

<sup>390</sup> Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter 2.



Roman gods. The Jews were monotheists and theoretically understood that their faith in principle excluded all other forms of religion. Nevertheless, in spite of all the complications with the Jews and the strangeness of their religion, it was still tolerated: the religion of the Jews was a national one and, besides, ancient, and it was considered sacrilege to encroach on it. Moreover, the Jews occupied an important political niche that was for the Romans a stronghold of their eastern conquests. In view of all these considerations, the Romans gritted their teeth and recognized the Jewish religion to be permitted. Privileges were given to the Jewish people also because their rites seemed strange and dirty. The Romans thought that the Jews simply could not have proselytes among other peoples and would rather repel the haughty Roman aristocrat. Therefore the Jews were given the right to confess their belief in one God. Until the rebellion of 66-70 the Roman authorities treated them with studied tolerance. Augustus gave the Jews significant privileges, which, after the crisis under Caligula, who wanted to put his statue in the Jerusalem Temple (cf. Mark 13.14 and II Thessalonians 2.3-4), were again renewed by Claudius.

“The circumstances changed when Christianity appeared. Having examined it, the Romans classified the Christians as apostates from the Jewish faith. It was precisely the traits that distinguished the Christians from the Jews that made them still lower in the eyes of the Romans even than the Judaism they had little sympathy for. Christianity did not have the right of belonging to historical antiquity – it was the ‘new religion’ so displeasing to the Roman conservatives. It was not the religion of one people, but on the contrary, lived only through proselytes from other religions. If the propagandizing of other cults by their servers was seen rather as a chance violation, for Christians missionary work was their only *modus vivendi* – a necessity of their very position in history. Christians were always reproached for a lack of historical and national character in their religion. Celsius, for example, saw in Christians a party that had separated from Judaism and inherited from it its inclination for disputes.

“The Christians could demand tolerance either in the name of the truth or in the name of freedom of conscience. But since for the Romans one of the criteria of truth was antiquity, Christianity, a new religion, automatically became a false religion. The right of freedom of conscience that is so important for contemporary man was not even mentioned at that time. Only the state, and not individuals, had the right to establish and legalize religious cults. In rising up against state religion, the Christians became guilty of a state crime – they became in principle enemies of the state. And with such a view of Christianity it was possible to interpret a series of features of their life in a particular way: their nocturnal gatherings, their waiting for a certain king that was to come, the declining of some of them from military service and above all their refusal to offer sacrifices to the emperor.

“The Christians refused to carry out this self-evident, most simple of state duties. Beginning with the Apostle Paul, they affirmed their loyalty, referring to the prayers they said for the emperor, for the authorities and for the

homeland. But they refused to recognize the emperor as 'Lord' and to carry out even an external worship of the idols, for they knew only one Lord, Jesus Christ. The Christians accepted both the state and society, but only to the degree that they did not limit the Lordship of Christ, did not drown out the confession of the Kingdom.

"The Kingdom of God had come and been revealed in the world, and from now on became the single measure of history and human life. In essence, the Christians by their refusal showed that they – almost alone in the whole of what was then an exceptionally religious world – believed in the reality of the idols. Honouring the idols meant recognizing the power of the devil, who had torn the world away from the knowledge of the only true god and forced it to worship statues. But Christ had come to free the world from this power. Paganism came to life in its true religious significance as the kingdom of evil, as a demonic invasion, with which the Christians had entered into a duel to the death.

"Christianity came as a revolution in the history of the world: it was the appearance in it of the Lord for the struggle with that which had usurped His power. The Church had become the witness of His coming and presence. It was precisely this witness that it proclaimed to the whole world..."<sup>391</sup>

The first persecution against the Christians was that of Nero in 64, in which the Apostles Peter and Paul were killed. It was a local persecution in Rome, and was not directly related to religion. The real reason was that Nero needed scapegoats for the fire he himself had caused, which destroyed a large part of the city.

It was not until the persecution under Domitian in the 90s that we see the first violent *ideological* clash between Rome and the Church. Domitian proclaimed himself "lord and god", and required people to swear "by the genius of the emperor". Those who did not were proclaimed to be "atheists". The Apostle John was exiled to Patmos for his refusal to obey the emperor.<sup>392</sup>

However, over the next two centuries and a bit, until the persecution of Diocletian in the early fourth century, periods of persecution, while cruel, were sporadic and short-lived. In fact, as often as not, the emperors, not seeing in the Church any political threat to themselves, and wishing to preserve the general peace, acted in effect to protect the Christians against the pagan mobs that sometimes turned against the Christians in times of natural disaster. Thus in the early second century the Emperor Trajan ordered the end of the persecution after the death of St. Ignatius the God-bearer, so impressed was he by the saint's confession, and he advised Pliny the Younger not to seek out Christians for

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<sup>391</sup> Dvorkin, *Ocherki po Istorii Vselenskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Sketches on the History of the Universal Orthodox Church), Nizhni-Novogorod, 2006, pp. 79-81.

<sup>392</sup> Domitian was seen in antiquity as the worst of the Roman emperors, worse even than Nero and Caligula (Peter Heather, *The Restoration of Rome*, London: Pan Books, 2013, p. 114).

punishment... Until the time of Decius in the mid-third century, these persecutions did not threaten the very existence of the Church. Indeed, until then, the persecutions under the pagan Roman emperors cannot be compared, either in length or bloodthirstiness, to the much more recent persecutions in Soviet Russia. Rather than destroying the Church, they shed the blood that, in Tertullian's phrase, was the seed of future Christian generations.

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The foundation of the Church's political theology was laid by the Lord Himself, Who accepted the Roman political order as legitimate, and exhorted His disciples to obey it as long as it did not compel them to disobey the Law of God: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22.21). Although Christians, being in essence free-born sons of the Heavenly King, were inwardly not subject to the yoke of earthly kings, nevertheless this yoke was to be accepted voluntarily "lest we should offend them" (Matthew 17.27).

For, as St. Theophan the Recluse writes, "The Lord paid the required temple tribute and kept all other practices, both temple-related and civic. He fulfilled this and taught the Apostles to do the same, and the Apostles in turn passed this same law on to all Christians. Only the spirit of life was made new; externally all remained as it had been, except what was clearly against the will of God – for instance, participating in sacrifices to idols, etc. Then Christianity gained the upper hand, displaced all the former practices, and established its own."<sup>393</sup>

Following the Lord's teaching, the holy Apostle Peter writes: "Be subject for the Lord's sake, to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and praise those who do right... Fear God. Honour the king." (I Peter 2.13, 17) And the holy Apostle Paul commands Christians to give thanks for the emperor "and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2.1-2). For it is precisely the emperor's ability to maintain law and order, "a quiet and peaceful life", which makes him so important for the Church. And so "let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power that is not from God; the powers that be are ordained by God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and those who resist shall receive for themselves damnation" (Romans 13.1-2).<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> St. Theophan, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2010, p. 167.

<sup>394</sup> The Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside Russia wrote that "the Apostles Peter and Paul required of the Christians of their time submission to the Roman authority, even though it later persecuted the followers of Christ. The Romans by nature were distinguished by their moral valor, for which, according to the words of Augustine in his book *On the City of God*, the Lord magnified and glorified them. To the genius of the Romans humanity owes the working out of a more perfect law, which was the foundation of its famous governmental

The question arises: is the apostle saying that *all* political authority is established by God, whatever its attitude to God Himself? Or are some authorities not established by God, but only *allowed to exist* by Him, so that they should not be obeyed as being in fact established by Satan? The patristic consensus is that the apostle was *not* saying that everything that calls itself an authority is blessed by God, but that authority is *in principle* good and God-established and therefore should be obeyed – because, as he goes on to say, political power is *in general* wielded in order to punish evil-doers and protect public order. Roman power, he says, is established by God, and therefore is a true political authority that must be obeyed in all its commands that do not directly contradict the commandments of God Himself. Hence the veneration and obedience that the early Christians displayed towards it.

Thus St. John Chrysostom asks: “Is every ruler elected by God to the throne he occupies? Is every emperor, king, and prince chosen by rule? If so, is every law and decree promulgated by a ruler to be regarded as good, and thus to be obeyed without question? The answer to all these questions is, no. God has ordained that every society should have rulers, whose task it is to maintain order, so that people may live in peace. God allows rulers to employ soldiers, whose task it is to capture and imprison those who violate social order.

“Thus God will bless and guide any ruler and any soldier who acts according to these principles. But many rulers abuse their authority by amassing huge wealth for themselves at the expense of their people, by unjustly punishing those who dare to speak against their evil, and by making unjust wars against neighbours. Such rulers have not been elected by God, but rather have usurped the position which a righteous ruler should occupy. And if their laws are wrong, we should not obey them. The supreme authority in all matters

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structure, by which it subjected the world to itself to an even greater degree than by its renowned sword. Under the shadow of the Roman eagle many tribes and nations prospered, enjoying peace and free internal self-government. Respect and tolerance for all religion were so great in Rome that they were at first also extended to recently engendered Christianity. It is sufficient to remember that the Roman procurator Pilate tried to defend Christ the Savior from the malice of the Jews, pointing out His innocence and finding nothing blameworthy in the doctrine He preached. During his many evangelical travels, which brought him into contact with the inhabitants of foreign lands, the Apostle Paul, as a Roman citizen, appealed for the protection of Roman law for defense against both the Jews and the pagans. And, of course, he asked that his case be judged by Caesar, who, according to tradition, found him to be innocent of what he was accused of only later, after his return to Rome from Spain, did he undergo martyrdom there.

“The persecution of Christians never permeated the Roman system, and was a matter of the personal initiative of individual emperors, who saw in the wide dissemination of the new Faith a danger for the state religion, and also for the order of the State, until one of them, St. Constantine, finally understood that they really did not know what they were doing, and laid his sword and sceptre at the footstool of the Cross of Christ...” (*Encyclical Letter of the Council of Russian Bishops Abroad to the Russian Orthodox Flock*, 23 March, 1933; *Living Orthodoxy*, #131, vol. XXII, N 5, September-October, 2001, pp. 13-14)

is not the law of the land, but the law of God; and if one conflicts with the other, we must obey God's law."<sup>395</sup>

This "theology of politics", enjoining the veneration of, and obedience to, political authorities so long as they do not compel transgression of the Law of God, is found in the earliest Fathers. Thus St. Clement of Rome writes in the first century: "Give us, O Master, peace and concord, even as Thou didst give it to our forefathers when they called devoutly upon Thee in faith and truth. And make us obedient to Thine own almighty and all-holy name, and to all who have the rule and governance over us upon the earth. For it is Thou, O Lord, Who in Thy supreme and ineffable might hast given them their sovereign authority; to the intent that we, acknowledging the glory and honour Thou hast bestowed upon them, should show them all submission. Grant to them health and peace, that they may exercise without offence the sovereignty which Thou hast given them."<sup>396</sup>

Again, in the second century St. Justin the Martyr wrote: "We worship God only, but in other things we gladly serve you, acknowledging you as emperors and rulers of men and women, and praying that with your imperial power you may also be found to possess sound judgement..."<sup>397</sup> Similarly, the holy Martyr Apollonius (+c. 185) expressed the classic Christian attitude towards the emperor thus: "With all Christians I offer a pure and unbloody sacrifice to almighty God, the Lord of heaven and earth and of all that breathes, a sacrifice of prayer especially on behalf of the spiritual and rational images that have been disposed by God's providence to rule over the earth. Wherefore obeying a just precept we pray daily to God, Who dwells in the heavens, on behalf of Commodus who is our ruler in this world, for we are well aware that he rules over the earth by nothing else but the will of the invincible God Who comprehends all things."<sup>398</sup> Again, Athenagoras of Athens wrote to Marcus Aurelius that Christians pray for the authorities, so that the son should inherit the kingdom from his father and that the power of the Caesars should be continually extended and confirmed, and that everyone should submit to it.<sup>399</sup> And St. Theophilus of Antioch wrote: "Therefore I would rather venerate the king than your gods – venerate, not worship him, but pray for him... Praying in this way, you fulfil the will of God. For the law of God says: 'My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not mix with rebels' (Proverbs 24.21)."<sup>400</sup>

Tertullian (+ c. 240) employed a similar argument. "Anticipating Eusebius, he insisted that Christians rendered 'such reverential homage as is lawful for us and good for him; regarding him as the human being next to God who from God has received all his power, and is less than God alone.' Christians,

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<sup>395</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *On Living Simply*.

<sup>396</sup> St. Clement of Rome, *To the Corinthians*, 60.

<sup>397</sup> St. Justin the Martyr, *First Apology*, 17.

<sup>398</sup> St. Apollonius, in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

<sup>399</sup> Athenagoras, *Representation for the Christians*, in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, p. 93.

<sup>400</sup> St. Theophilus, *Three Books to Autolycus*.

Tertullian argued, were even perfectly willing to offer sacrifice on behalf of the emperor, though it had to be a Christian sacrifice: 'We therefore sacrifice for the emperor's safety, but to our God and his, and after the manner God has enjoined, in simple prayer.' Pagan sacrifices are useless, the 'food of devils'. Christians appeal to God, praying 'for the imperial well-being, as those who seek it at the hands of Him who is able to bestow it.'.. Christians do just what the imperial cult demands, though in his own way."<sup>401</sup> In other words, the only legitimate sacrifice a Christian can make to the emperor is the sacrifice of prayer on his behalf; for he rules, not as a god, but "by the will of God". So the Christians by no means refused to give to Caesar what was his. Indeed, the emperor was, in Tertullian's words, "more truly ours (than yours) because he was put into power by our God", which is why the Christians prayed that he should have "a long life, a safe empire, a quiet home, strong armies, a faithful senate, honest subjects, a world at peace".<sup>402</sup>

As for the pagan sacrifice to the emperor himself, Hieromartyr Hippolytus of Rome (+235) wrote: "Believers in God must not be hypocritical, nor fear people invested in authority, with the exception of those cases when some evil deed is committed [Romans 13.1-4]. On the contrary, if the leaders, having in mind their faith in God, force them to do something contrary to this faith, then it is better for them to die than to carry out the command of the leaders. After all, when the apostle teaches submission to 'all the powers that be' (Romans 13.1), he was not saying that we should renounce our faith and the Divine commandments, and indifferently carry out everything that people tell us to do; but that we, while fearing the authorities, should do nothing evil and that we should not deserve punishment from them as some evildoers (Romans 13.4). That is why he says: 'The servant of God is an avenger of [those who do] evil' (I Peter 2.14-20; Romans 13.4). And so? 'Do you not want to fear the authorities? Do good and you will have praise from him; but if you do evil, fear, for he does not bear the sword without reason' (Romans 13.4)."<sup>403</sup>

This attitude was well exemplified by St. Maurice and his Christian legion in Agaunum. Like many martyrs before them, they did not refuse to fight in the armies of the pagan Roman emperors against the pagans. But they refused to destroy a village composed of fellow-Christians. For "we are your soldiers, yes," said Maurice, "but we are also the soldiers of God. To you, we owe the dues of military service – but to Him the purity of our souls."<sup>404</sup>

So even the persecuting emperors were recognized as having legitimate authority: it was only when their commands contradicted the Law of God that they were defied. And even then, there is no hint of physical rebellion against

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<sup>401</sup> Tertullian, in Peter J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2010, p. 281.

<sup>402</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 33.1.

<sup>403</sup> St. Hippolytus, in Fomin, S. & Fomina, T. *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1994, vol. I, p. 56.

<sup>404</sup> Eucherius of Lyons, *The Passion of the Martyrs*.

the powers that be among pre-Constantinian Christians. Their attitude to Diocletian was like that of the Prophet Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar: his power is from God, even if he sometimes uses it against God. And this attitude bore good fruit: Nebuchadnezzar threw the Holy Three Children into the furnace, but he later repented and praised the God of Daniel.

However, the mention of Daniel reminds us that there was a somewhat different and darker attitude to Rome among the Christian writers. Following Daniel's prophecy of the four beasts (Daniel 7), Rome was seen as the last of four kingdoms – the others were Babylon, Persia and Macedon – that would finally be destroyed in the last days by the Kingdom of Christ. According to this tradition, the pagan absolutist kings who persecuted the people of God were not legitimate rulers but tyrants. Nebuchadnezzar, for example, is called "tyrant" in some liturgical texts: "Caught and held fast by love for the King of all, the Children despised the impious threats of the tyrant in his boundless fury."<sup>405</sup>

Now the distinction between the true monarch, *basileus*, and the unlawful usurper, rebel or tyrant, *tyrannis*, was not new. Aristotle wrote: "There is a third kind of tyranny, which is the most typical form and is the counterpart to the perfect monarchy. This tyranny is just that arbitrary power of an individual which is responsible to no-one and governs all alike, whether equals or betters, with a view to its own advantage, not to that of its subjects and therefore against their will."<sup>406</sup>

Again, King Solomon wrote: "My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not mix with rebels" (Proverbs 24.21). After Solomon's death, there was a rebellion against his legitimate successor, Rehoboam, by Jeroboam, the founder of the northern kingdom of Israel. And although the Prophets Elijah and Elisha lived and worked mainly in the northern kingdom, they always made clear their loyalty to the legitimate kings of Judah over the usurping kings of Israel. Thus when both kings, in a rare moment of alliance, approached the Prophet Elisha for his advice, he said to the king of Israel: "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother... As the Lord of hosts lives, Whom I serve, were it not that I have regard for Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would neither look at you, nor see you." (II Kings 3.13, 14)...

If Rehoboam and Nebuchadnezzar were tyrants, then it was logical to see tyranny also in the Roman emperors who persecuted the Church. Thus some early interpreters saw in one or other of the evil symbolic figures of the Revelation of St. John the Theologian, which was written during the persecution of Domitian (c. 92), references to Roman power.

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<sup>405</sup> *Festal Menaion*, The Nativity of Christ, Mattins, Canon, Canticle Seven, second irmos.

<sup>406</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, IV, 10.

Indeed, what contemporary Christian could not fail to think of Rome when reading about that great city, symbolically called a whore and Babylon, who sits on seven hills (Rome is situated on seven hills), who is “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth”, that is, the multitude of pagan cults that all found refuge in Rome, “a woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (17.5, 6)? Thus Hieromartyr Victorinus of Petau wrote that the whore’s downfall was “the ruin of great Babylon, that is, of the city of Rome.”<sup>407</sup> In other words, Rome, according to this tradition, was seen, not as a lawful monarchy or the blueprint of a future Christian autocracy, but as a bloody and blasphemous despotism, in the tradition of the ancient despotisms that derived from Nimrod’s Babylon.<sup>408</sup>

This tradition became more popular as the history of pagan Rome reached its bloody climax in the early fourth century. For the Church was now threatened, not with a merely local persecution by local madmen, but with a determined attempt to destroy it completely at the hands of men who considered themselves gods and whose personal lives were often extraordinarily corrupt. The empire concentrated in itself, and especially in its capital city, all the demons of all the pagan cults together with all the moral depravity and cruelty and rabid antichristianity which those cults encouraged. How could such a kingdom be established by God? Was it not that tyrannical beast of which Scripture said that it was established by the devil (Revelation 13.2)? And so the image of the Empire was ambiguous for the early Christians: it was both a true kingdom, an anti-type of God’s Kingdom, and a tyranny, a forerunner of the kingdom of the Antichrist that would be wiped out at the Second Coming of Christ Himself...

Nevertheless, it was the more optimistic view of Rome as the true kingdom that prevailed. And the loyal attitude of the Christians to Rome is demonstrated by the fact that even during the persecution of Diocletian, when the Church was threatened with extinction, the Christians never rebelled against the empire, but only against the unlawful demands of the emperors. And in reward for this patience, the Lord finally broke the crust of ancient pagan despotism, bringing to birth a new creature designed specifically for the spreading of the Faith throughout the world – the Roman Christian Autocracy, or New Rome...<sup>409</sup>

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“The first millennium BC,” writes Harari, “witnessed the appearance of three potential universal orders, whose devotees could for the first time

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<sup>407</sup> Hieromartyr Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*.

<sup>408</sup> Some saw in I Peter 5.13 a similar identification of Rome with Babylon, but this is doubtful. The Babylon referred to there is probably Babylon in Egypt, from where St. Peter was writing his epistle. However, there can be no doubt that for John’s first readers the image of Babylon would have reminded them in the first place of Rome under Nero and Domitian.

<sup>409</sup> Fr. Michael Azkoul, *The Teachings of the Orthodox Church*, Buena Vista, Co.: Dormition Skete publications, 1986, part I, p. 110.



imagine the entire world and the entire human race as a single unit governed by a single set of laws. Everyone was 'us', at least potentially. There was no longer 'them'. The first universal order to appear was economic: the monetary order. The second universal order to appear was political: the imperial order. The third universal order was religious: the order of universal religions such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

"Merchants, conquerors and prophets were the first people who managed to transcend the binary division, 'us vs. them', and foresee the potential unity of mankind. For the merchants, the entire world was a single market and all humans were potential customers. They tried to establish an economic order that would apply to all, everywhere. For the conquerors, the entire world was a single empire and all humans were potential subjects, and for prophets, the entire world held a single truth and all humans were potential believers. They too tried to establish an order that would be applicable for everyone everywhere.

"During the last three millennia, people made more and more ambitious attempts to realize that global vision..."<sup>410</sup>

The first state that realized this vision – that is, provided a potentially *global* economic, political and religious order – was the Roman empire in the time of Augustus. By the time of St. Constantine the vast empire was united economically by the Roman *denarius*, politically by the Roman emperor, culturally by Hellenism and religiously by Christianity. The fact that this empire did not in fact rule over the whole world is less important than the fact that it aspired to that, thereby containing within itself the potential for a *godly globalization*, the only possible *real* unity of mankind.

When the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of heaven, was born as a man on earth, He was immediately enrolled as a citizen of a state of the new-born Roman empire. For "in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2.1), and Christ, too, went to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be registered for taxation in the universal empire ruled by Augustus. As Bishop Nikolai Velimirovič writes: "In those days, Caesar Augustus was ruling the land. His supreme rule over the whole earth is an image of God's supreme rule over both worlds: the spiritual and the material. The many-headed dragon of power, that had, from the beginning of sin, brought decay to the peoples of the earth, was left with only one head. All known nations and tribes on earth were subject to Augustus' power, directly or indirectly, whether only by sending him their tribute or by acknowledging Roman gods and Roman officials. The struggle for power had died down for a time, and the sole power over the whole world was entirely in the hands of Caesar Augustus. There was neither man nor god over him; he himself was proclaimed a god, and men made sacrifices to his image: slaughtered animals and unclean things. From the foundation of the world, no mortal man had risen

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<sup>410</sup> Harari, *Sapiens*, p. 191.

to greater power than Caesar Augustus, who ruled without rival over the whole world; and indeed, from the foundation of the world, man, created by the living God, had never fallen to such a depth of nothingness and despair as then, when the Roman Emperor began to be deified – and he a man with all man's frailties and weaknesses, with the life-span of a willow tree, with a stomach, intestines, liver and kidneys that were, after a few decades, to turn into a worm-infested stench and lifeless dust; a man, the statues of whom, raised during his reign, were to outlast his life, his power and his reign.

"In this time of external peace and internal despair, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race and Renewer of all creation, was born..."<sup>411</sup>

This coincidence of the birth of the King of kings with the birth of the Roman Empire pointed, for many of the Holy Fathers and Church writers, to a certain special mission of the Roman empire, as if the Empire, being born at the same time as Christ, was Divinely established to be a vehicle for the spreading of the Gospel to all nations, coming into existence precisely for the sake of the Christian Church, and creating a political unity that would help and protect the spiritual unity created by the Church.

Thus Melitus, Bishop of Sardis wrote to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, a philosopher-king who was no friend of the Christians or their philosophy: "Our philosophy flourished first among barbarians; but after it had appeared among your peoples during the mighty principate of your ancestor Augustus, it became an auspicious benefit, especially to your empire. From that time on the power of the Romans increased in a great and splendid way: you became the successor to this whom the people desired and will continue to do so, along with your son, if you protect the philosophy which was nursed in the cradle of the empire and saw the light along with Augustus, which also your ancestors honoured, as they did other religions. And this is the greatest proof of its excellence, that our doctrine has flourished at the same time as the happy beginnings of the empire and that from the time of the principate of Augustus no evil has befallen it, but, on the contrary, all things have been splendid and glorious in accordance with the prayers of all..."<sup>412</sup>

The English historian Edward Gibbon said that the century or so of the reigns of the Emperors Nerva, Hadrian, Trajan, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius were probably the most peaceful and prosperous in the history of the world.

But this was also the period in which the Peace of Christ was preached throughout the inhabited world, to the furthest bounds of the empire and beyond. Thus a hymn to the Mother of God on an Egyptian papyrus and dating to the mid-second century has even been found as far north as Manchester...

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<sup>411</sup> Velimirovič, "The Nativity of Christ. 2", *Homilies*, volume 1, Birmingham: Lazarica Press, 1996, pp. 25-26.

<sup>412</sup> St. Melito, in Eusebius, *Church History*, IV, 26, 7-8.

Again, in the third century Origen wrote: "Jesus was born during the reign of Augustus, the one who reduced to uniformity, so to speak, the many kingdoms on earth so that He had a single empire. It would have hindered Jesus' teaching from being spread throughout the world if there had been many kingdoms... Everyone would have been forced to fight in defence of their own country."<sup>413</sup>

Origen considered that the peace of Augustus was prophesied in the scriptural verse: "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers even unto the ends of the inhabited earth" (Psalm 71.7), and that it prefigured the spiritual peace of Christ. Moreover, under the reigns of Augustus' successors, the differences between the peoples had been reduced, so that by the time of Christ's Second Coming they would all call on the name of the Lord with one voice and serve Him under one yoke.<sup>414</sup>

Again, in the fourth century St. Gregory the Theologian said: "The state of the Christians and that of the Romans grew up simultaneously and Roman supremacy arose with Christ's sojourn upon earth, previous to which it had not reached monarchical perfection."<sup>415</sup>

And in the fifth century the Spanish priest Orosius, claimed that the Emperor Augustus had paid a kind of compliment to Christ by refusing to call himself Lord at a time when the true Lord of all was becoming man. Christ returned the compliment by having Himself enrolled in Augustus' census. In this way He foreshadowed Rome's historical mission.<sup>416</sup>

Also in the fifth century, St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, wrote: "Divine Providence fashioned the Roman Empire, the growth of which was extended to boundaries so wide that all races everywhere became next-door neighbours. For it was particularly germane to the Divine scheme that many kingdoms should be bound together under a single government, and that the world-wide preaching should have a swift means of access to all people, over whom the rule of a single state held sway."<sup>417</sup>

As Blessed Theodoret of Cyrus wrote, "through the *pax Romana*" God "facilitated the work of the preachers of truth. You see, once a single empire was formed, the uprisings of the nations against one another ceased and peace took hold throughout the whole world; the apostles, entrusted with the

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<sup>413</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus* II, 30.

<sup>414</sup> Charles Davis, "The Middle Ages", in Richard Jenkyns (ed.), *The Legacy of Rome*, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 67.

<sup>415</sup> St. Gregory, *Sermon* 4, P.G. 47, col. 564B.

<sup>416</sup> Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*; in Jenkyns, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-74.

<sup>417</sup> St. Leo, *Sermon* 32, P.L. 54, col. 423.

preaching of true religion, travelled about safely, and by traversing the world they snared humankind and brought them to life" <sup>418</sup>

The Church sums up this teaching thus in her liturgical worship: "When Augustus reigned alone upon earth, the many kingdoms of men came to an end: and when Thou wast made man of the pure Virgin, the many gods of idolatry were destroyed. The cities of the world passed under one single rule; and the nations came to believe in one sovereign Godhead. The peoples were enrolled by the decree of Caesar; and we, the faithful, were enrolled in the Name of the Godhead, when Thou, our God, wast made man. Great is Thy mercy: glory to Thee."<sup>419</sup>

Christian kingdoms and autocracies could and did facilitate the acquisition of the inner Kingdom of Grace; indeed, that was their main function. But they could not replace it: the kingdom of men, however exalted, is no substitute for the Kingdom of God. Moreover, the resurrection of kingdoms is as nothing compared to the resurrection of souls and bodies... The degeneration of truly Christian kingdoms into anti-Christian or pseudo-Christian despotisms or democracies that hinder rather than facilitate the acquisition of the Kingdom of God, which resides *within* the redeemed and deified human soul (for, as the Lord said: "The Kingdom of God is *within* you" (Luke 17.21)), constitutes the main tragedy of history in its social, political, collective dimension.

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That the Roman Empire came into existence for the sake of the Church was, on the face of it, a very bold and paradoxical teaching. After all, the people of God at the beginning of the Christian era were the Jews, not the Romans, while the Romans were pagans who worshipped demons, not the True God Who had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In 63 BC they had actually conquered the people of God; their general, Pompey, had blasphemously entered the Holy of holies (this was considered by some to be "the abomination of desolation"), and their rule was bitterly resented. In 70 AD they destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in a campaign of appalling cruelty and scattered the Jews over the face of the earth. How could pagan Rome, the Rome of such fearsome tyrants as Nero and Titus and Caligula and Domitian and Diocletian, possibly be construed as working with God rather than against Him?

The solution to this paradox is to be found in two encounters between Christ and two "rulers of this world" – Satan and Pontius Pilate. In the first, Satan takes Christ onto a high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of this world in a moment of time. "And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to

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<sup>418</sup> Blessed Theodoret, *Commentary on Zechariah*, 9. Again, E. Kholmogorov writes: "Rome set herself an unprecedentedly bold task – to establish peace throughout the inhabited world and root out barbarism" ("Vybor Imperii" (The Choice of Empire), *Epokha*, N 11, 2001, pp. 15-16).

<sup>419</sup> *Festal Menaion*, Vespers, the Nativity of Christ, "Lord, I have cried", Glory... Both now...

whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before Me, all will be Yours.' And Jesus answered and said to him: 'Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only will you serve.'" (Luke 4.6-8). Thus Satan has control over all the kingdoms of the world – but by might, the might given him by the sins of men, - not by right.

Thus St. Cyril of Alexandria exclaims: "How dost thou promise that which is not thine? Who made thee heir of God's kingdom? Who made thee lord of all under heaven? Thou hast seized these things by fraud. Restore them, therefore, to the incarnate Son, the Lord of all..."<sup>420</sup> And indeed, the Lord accepted neither Satan's lordship over the world, nor the satanism so closely associated with the pagan states of the ancient world. He came to restore true Statehood, which recognises the ultimate supremacy only of the one true God, and which demands veneration of the earthly ruler, but worship only of the Heavenly King. And since, by the time of the Nativity of Christ, all the major pagan kingdoms had been swallowed up in Rome, it was to the transformation of Roman Statehood that the Lord came.

For "the good news announced by the Lord Jesus Christ could not leave untransfigured a single one of the spheres of man's life. One of the acts of our Lord Jesus Christ consisted in bringing the heavenly truths to the earth, in instilling them into the consciousness of mankind with the aim of its spiritual regeneration, in restructuring the laws of communal life on new principles announced by Christ the Saviour, in the creation of a Christian order of this communal life, and, consequently, in a radical change of pagan statehood. Proceeding from here it becomes clear what place the Church must occupy in relation to the state. It is not the place of an opponent from a hostile camp, not the place of a warring party, but the place of a pastor in relation to his flock, the place of a loving father in relation to his lost children. Even in those moments when there was not and could not be any unanimity or union between the Church and the state, Christ the Saviour forbade the Church to stand on one side from the state, still less to break all links with it, saying: 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's' (Luke 20.25)."<sup>421</sup>

Thus Christ is the true King, but since He grants a qualified authority to earthly kings, Christians owe a qualified loyalty to the empire without full integration into it. *Full* integration was impossible, for, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, "in 'this world' Christians could be but pilgrims and strangers. Their true 'citizenship', *politeuma*, was 'in heaven' (Philippians 3.20). The Church herself was peregrinating through this world (*paroikousa*). 'The Christian fellowship was a bit of extra-territorial jurisdiction on earth of the world above' (Frank Gavin). The Church was 'an outpost of heaven' on earth, or a 'colony of heaven'. It may be true that this attitude of radical detachment

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<sup>420</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke*, Homily 12, New York: Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 89.

<sup>421</sup> K.V. Glazkov, "Zashchita ot Liberalizma" ("A Defence from Liberalism"), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (*Orthodox Russia*), N 15 (1636), August 1/14, 1999, p. 10.

had originally an 'apocalyptic' connotation, and was inspired by the expectation of an imminent *parousia*. For, even as an enduring historical society, the Church was bound to be detached from the world. An ethos of 'spiritual segregation' was inherent in the very fabric of the Christian faith, as it was inherent in the faith of Ancient Israel. The Church herself was 'a city', a *polis*, a new and peculiar 'polity'. In their baptismal profession Christians had 'to renounce' this world, with all its vanity, and pride, and pomp, - but also with all its natural ties, even family ties, and to take a solemn oath of allegiance to Christ the King, the only true King on earth and in heaven, to Whom all 'authority' has been given. By this baptismal commitment Christians were radically separated from 'this world'. In this world they had no 'permanent city'. They were 'citizens' of the 'City to come', of which God Himself was builder and maker (Hebrews 13.14; cf. 11.10).

In His trial before Pilate, the Lord insists that his power derived from God, the true King and Lawgiver. For "you could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given to you from above" (John 19.11). These words both limit Caesar's power, insofar as it is subject to God's, and strengthen it, by indicating that it has God's seal and blessing in principle. They do not contradict His earlier words: "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18.36) because as Blessed Theophylact writes: "He did not say: It is not in this world and not here. He rules in this world, takes providential care for it and administers everything according to His will. But His Kingdom is 'not of this world', but from above and before the ages, and 'not from here', that is, it is not composed from the earth, although it has power here".<sup>422</sup>

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovič writes: "Let no-one imagine that Christ the Lord does not have imperial power over this world because He says to Pilate: 'My Kingdom is not of this world.' He who possesses the enduring has power also over the transitory. The Lord speaks of His enduring Kingdom, independent of time and of decay, unrighteousness, illusion and death. Some man might say: 'My riches are not on paper, but in gold.' But does he who has gold not have paper also? Is not gold as paper to its owner? The Lord, then, does not say to Pilate that He is not a king, but, on the contrary, says that He is a higher king than all kings, and His Kingdom is greater and stronger and more enduring than all earthly kingdoms. He refers to His pre-eminent Kingdom, on which depend all kingdoms in time and in space..."<sup>423</sup>

The Lord continues: "Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin" (John 19.11). The one who delivered Christ to Pilate was Caiaphas, chief priest of the Jews. For, as is well known (to all except contemporary ecumenist Christians), it was the Jews, His own people, who condemned Christ for blasphemy and demanded His execution at the hands of the Roman authorities in the person of Pontius Pilate. Since Pilate was not interested in the

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<sup>422</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *On John* 18.36.

<sup>423</sup> Velimirovič, *The Prologue from Ochrid*, Birmingham: Lazarica Press, 1986, part III, September 30, pp. 395-396.

charge of blasphemy, the only way in which the Jews could get their way was to accuse Christ of fomenting rebellion against Rome – a hypocritical charge, since it was precisely the Jews, not Christ, who were planning revolution, and in fact rebelled in 66 A.D.<sup>424</sup> Not only did Pilate not believe this accusation: as the Apostle Peter pointed out, he did everything he could to have Christ released (Acts 3.13), giving in only when he feared that the Jews were about to start a riot and denounce him to the emperor in Rome.

Consequently, insofar as Pilate could have used his God-given power to save the Lord from an unjust death, Roman state power appears in this situation as guilty, but also as the potential, if not yet the actual, protector of Christ from His fiercest enemies. In other words, already during the life of Christ, we see the future role of Rome as the guardian of the Body of Christ and “that which restrains” the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.7).

*December 20 / January 2, 2020/21.  
St. Ignatius the Godbearer.*

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<sup>424</sup> Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), "Christ the Savior and the Jewish Revolution", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 35, no. 4, July-August, 1988, pp. 11-31.

## 27. CHARLEMAGNE, THE FATHER OF MODERN EUROPE

For centuries, and in spite of the intermittent expression of papist ideas, the Roman papacy had seen itself as part of the Byzantine Empire. This position was reinforced in a cultural sense during the period of the “Byzantine papacy” of the seventh and early eighth centuries, when most of the Popes were Greek or Syrian in origin, and many eastern monks fled to Rome to escape persecution by Monothelite or Iconoclast emperors. Even when the Emperor Leo deprived the papacy of its lands in Southern Italy and the Balkans, the popes still looked to New Rome as the capital of the Christian *oikoumene*. They still commemorated the eastern emperors at the Liturgy, and still used the emperors’ coinage. East and West still constituted one Christian world...

However, the empire’s position in Italy weakened when, in 727, Ravenna rebelled against the Byzantine prohibition of icons and killed the exarch. Emperor Leo III was not able to respond. And so from this time, confirmation of the election of a new pope was no longer sought from the emperor or his exarch in Ravenna...

The empire still held extensive lands in the south of Italy; but the relationship between the empire and the Roman papacy began to undergo strain when the Lombards penetrated further south into central Italy, creating duchies in Spoleto and Benevento. The Emperor Leo, occupied with his Muslim enemies in the East, could offer the papacy no military support. In desperation, therefore, the pope looked for other defenders, and found them in – *the Franks*...

The first act that “brought the Franks into Italy” was the blessing by Pope Zachariah of a dynastic *coup d’état* in Francia. The last Merovingian rulers were weak and ineffective: real power was concentrated in the hands of their “mayors” or prime ministers. Pope Zachariah – the last of the Greek popes<sup>425</sup> – had already been heavily engaged in the reorganization of the Frankish Church through his legate in Francia, St. Boniface, the English Apostle of Germany. In 750 the Frankish mayor, Peppin III, Charles Martel’s grandson, sent envoys to him to ask “whether it was just for one to reign and for another to rule”. Zachariah took the hint and replied, according to the *Royal Frankish Annals*, “that it would be better for him to be called king who had the power of one than him who remained without royal power”, and then commanded by apostolic authority that Pippin was to be made king, lest order be disturbed.”

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<sup>425</sup> Fr. Andrew Louth writes: “From 680 to 751, or more precisely from the accession of Agatho in 678 until Zacharias’ death in 751 – the popes, with two exceptions, Benedict II and Gregory II, were Greek in background and speakers of Greek, which has led some scholars to speak of a ‘Byzantine captivity’ of the papacy. This is quite misleading: most of the ‘Greek’ popes were southern Italian or Sicilian, where Greek was still the vernacular, and virtually all of them seem to have made their career among the Roman clergy, so, whatever their background, their experience and sympathies would have been thoroughly Roman” (*Greek East and Latin West*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2007, p. 79).



"Whereupon," writes Joseph Canning, "Pippin was elected king of the Franks at Soissons, and in 751 the Frankish bishops participated in the king-making through anointing the new monarch, an innovation in Frankish terms. 'Pippin the most high by the election of all the Franks to the throne of the kingdom, with the consecration by the bishops and the subjection of the lay magnates, together with his queen Bertrada, as the ancient order requires, was raised to the kingdom.'" <sup>426</sup>

The deposition of the last Merovingian Childeric III (who was tonsured, together with his sons), and the establishment of a new king and dynasty in his place, was certainly unusual. It might even be called revolutionary insofar as "regime change", the removing of legitimate dynasties by churchmen and their replacement by upstarts, was not considered the business of churchmen – at least in Orthodox Christendom...

Be that as it may, Zechariah's successor, Stephen II, a Roman aristocrat, greatly strengthened the links with "the most Christian king of the Franks". He was worried by the activities of the Lombard King Aistulf (749-756), "who," as Janet Nelson writes, "now encroached on what had been the Byzantine exarchate, where local elites and their local officials (*duces*) were carving out estates for themselves. Meanwhile Aistulf demanded a tribute from the Roman duchy itself, putting further pressure on papal coffers. It did not take long for Stephen to become involved in negotiations with the Franks for the protection of Rome and its territory... Pippin's response was all the pope could have wished for. The king sent to Rome two very powerful men whom he specially trusted, Chrodegang of Metz and a leading Frankish aristocrat, Duke Autchar, 'to bring the pope back' with them to Francia." <sup>427</sup>

Stephen crossed the Alps, and on the feast of Epiphany, 752, having received Peppin's promise that he "would restore the exarchate of Ravenna and the rights of the *Res Publica* [the Roman State] by every means possible", anointed the king and his two sons "by Christ's grace kings of the Franks". <sup>428</sup>

Perhaps Peppin's first consecration was deemed to have been illegitimate in that the last Merovingian king, Childeric, was still alive. Or perhaps this second anointing had a deeper significance. Whatever Stephen had this in mind, the anointing came to signify *the re-establishment of the Western Roman Empire*, with its political capital north of the Alps, but its spiritual capital, as always, in Rome. In exchange for the backing of the papacy, the Franks became its official protectors instead of the Eastern emperors, whose subjects the Popes now ceased to be. <sup>429</sup> Moreover, from this time the popes stopped dating their

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<sup>426</sup> Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought 300-1450*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 48.

<sup>427</sup> Nelson, *King and Emperor. A New Life of Charlemagne*, London: Allen Lane, 2019, pp. 72, 73.

<sup>428</sup> *Vita Stephani*, in Nelson, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>429</sup> Norman Davies, *Europe*, London: Pimlico, 1996, pp. 288-290.

documents from the emperor's regnal year, and began to issue their own coins.<sup>430</sup>

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Peppin more than fulfilled his side of the bargain: he defeated the Lombards, restored the pope to Rome. Moreover, he gave to the pope, as Gilmour writes, "territories that had belonged to the exarchate of Ravenna. Known as the Donation of Pepin, the promise was confirmed and magnified (though largely unfulfilled) twenty years later by his son Charlemagne. Yet, as the Frankish kings had no rights in Italy at this time, it could be argued that their donations of former Byzantine land were invalid. An older and higher authority was needed, and thus the *Donation of Constantine* came into being..."<sup>431</sup>

*The Donation of Constantine* was a forgery concocted by someone in the papal chancellery. It alleged that Constantine the Great, in gratitude for his recovery from leprosy, had given his throne to Pope Sylvester and his successors because "it is not right that an earthly emperor should have power in a place where the government of priests and the head of the Christian religion has been established by the heavenly Emperor". For this reason he moved his capital to the New Rome, Constantinople. "And we ordain and decree that he [the Roman Pope] shall have rule as well over the four principal sees, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, as also over the Churches of God in all the world. And the pontiff who for the time being shall preside over the most holy Roman Church shall be the highest and chief of all priests in the whole world, and according to his decision shall all matters be settled."<sup>432</sup>

Of course, there is an inherent contradiction in this theory. If it was St. Constantine who gave the authority to St. Sylvester, then the ultimate authority in the Christian commonwealth rested, not with the pope, but with the Emperor. Centuries later, in 1242, a pamphlet attributed to Pope Innocent IV "corrected" this flaw in the theory of papism by declaring that the Donation was not a gift, but a *restitution*.<sup>433</sup>

The forgery was probably directed against the heretical emperor in Constantinople, providing a justification for the papacy's stealing the exarchate of Ravenna from the emperor in exchange for Leo III's earlier depredations. But in the long term its significance was deeper: it represented a quite new theory of the relationship between the secular and the ecclesiastical powers. For contrary to the doctrine of the "symphony" of the powers of Church and State that prevailed in the East, the theory encapsulated in the *Donation* essentially

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<sup>430</sup> Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple*, London: Phoenix Press, 2002, p. 47.

<sup>431</sup> Gilmour, *The Progress of Italy*, p. 55.

<sup>432</sup> Henry Bettenson and Christopher Maunder, *Documents of the Christian Church*, London: SPCK, 1999, p. 52.

<sup>433</sup> Charles Davis, "The Middle Ages", in Richard Jenkyns (ed.), *The Legacy of Rome*, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 86.

asserted that the head of the Roman Church had a higher authority, not only than any other bishop, but also than the head of the Empire; so that the emperor could only exert his authority as a kind of vassal of the pope...

The *Donation* was proved to be a forgery by Pope Sylvester II in 999. But since Sylvester was a truly Orthodox pope (one of the last), his finding was ignored until the Renaissance. "By that time," continues Gilmour, "the document had served its purpose of justifying the dominion of the papal states, a thick band of territory stretching from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian that kept the Italian peninsula divided until the second half of the nineteenth century. The popes expanded their territories from Rome and its environs – the so-called 'Patrimony of St. Peter' – to include the duchies of Perugia, Spoleto and Benevento, the March of Ancona and finally the Romagna and parts of Emilia. In the process Christ's differentiation between the realms of God and Caesar was forgotten..."<sup>434</sup>

The pope was now not only a religious leader, but also a secular ruler...

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In 768, King Pepin's son, Charles, later known as Charlemagne, ascended the throne. He destroyed the power of the Lombards and vigorously expanded the boundaries of his kingdom from the Elbe to the borders of Byzantine Italy and Hungary. In Western Europe, only the British Isles, Brittany, Scandinavia and most of Spain remained beyond his grasp. He promoted education and art, held twice-yearly Synods of his bishops and nobles, and suppressed heresy - but introduced the heretical *Filioque*. He tried to weld the varied peoples and customs of his realm into a multi-national whole: a new unity of Western Christendom was being forged, with enormous consequences for the future of the world...

The early part of Charlemagne's reign is notorious for his slaughter of hundreds of leaders of the Saxon pagans; he conducted mass-baptisms of the conquered Saxons, "dragging the battalions of forest-worshippers into heavenly kingdoms"<sup>435</sup>, and imposed the death penalty on them if they refused to convert to Christianity. Thus one of the capitularies of Saxony (775-790) reads: "If any one of the race of the Saxons hereafter concealed among them shall have wished to hide himself unbaptized, and shall have scorned to come to baptism and shall have wished to remain a pagan, let him be punished by death." Another Capitulary of 785 declared: "Anyone who, in contempt of Christianity, refuses to respect the holy fast of Lent and eats meat shall be put to death... Any unbaptized Saxon who tries to conceal the fact from his fellows and refuses to accept baptism shall be put to death..."<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Gilmour, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>435</sup> Paulinus of Aquileia, in Nelson, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>436</sup> Jean Comby, *How to Read Church History*, London: SCM Press, 1985, vol. 1, p. 123.

Some have excused the king on the grounds that Saxon paganism was truly barbaric and anti-Christian. Others have pointed out that a few decades later the Byzantine Emperor murdered thousands of Paulician (Manichaean) heretics. Deacon Alcuin of York, Charlemagne's English counsellor, had an economic explanation: "Tithes, so it is said, destroyed the faith of the Saxons", causing them to rebel again and again. Maybe economic oppression had something to do with it. But Alcuin also wrote: "Faith comes from the will, not from compulsion..."

Alcuin, the brightest light of the School of York, had met Charlemagne in 781 "while returning from a visit to Rome, and been recruited to his court. Pagans, he urged the king, should be persuaded, not forced to convert. 'Let peoples newly brought to Christ be nourished in a mild manner, as infants are given milk – for instruct them brutally, and the risk then, their minds being weak, is that they will vomit everything up.' Charlemagne, far from objecting to this advice, appears to have taken it in good spirit. In 796, the policy of forcible baptism was eased; a year later, the laws that governed the conquered Saxons in a milder form. The king, who enjoyed nothing more than discussing theology with Alcuin while soaking with him in a hot bath, had full confidence in his advice. He knew that the Northumbrian's commitment to the creation of a properly Christian people was absolute. Alcuin's conviction that there was no improvement so radical that it might not be achieved by education was precisely why Charlemagne had employed him. 'For without knowledge no one can do good.' Alcuin, schooled in the sternest traditions of Northumbrian scholarship, wished everyone in his patron's empire to share in the fruits of Christian learning. Monasteries, in his opinion, had a greater role to play in the pacification of Saxony than fortresses. It was not only Saxons, though, who caused Alcuin anxiety. Christians in lands from which paganism had been scoured many centuries before still laboured in darkness. How, when they were illiterate, and their priests semi-literate, could they possibly profit from the great inheritance of writings from the ancient past: the Old and New Testaments, the canons of Nicaea and other councils, the teachings of the fathers of the Church? How, without these timeless texts, could they be brought to a proper knowledge of God's purposes and desires? How could they even know what Christianity was? It was not enough to take the light of Christ into the forests of Saxony. It had to be taken into the manors, and farms, and smallholdings of Francia. An entire society needed reform.

"Charlemagne did not duck the challenge. He knew that greatness brought with it great responsibilities. A king who permitted his people to stray, who indulged their mistakes, who failed to guide them, would be sure to answer for it before the throne of God. Charlemagne, declaring in 768 his ambition to see his subjects 'apply themselves to a good life', cited as his model a king from the Old Testament, Josiah, who had discovered in the Temple a copy of the law given to Moses. 'For we read how the saintly Josiah, by visitation, correction and admonition, strove the recall the kingdom which God had given him to the worship of the true God. But Charlemagne could not, as Josiah had done, cite a written covenant. His subjects were not, as Josiah's had been, governed by

the law given to Moses. Different peoples across his empire had different legal systems - nor, provided only that these codes did not subvert Frankish supremacy, did Charlemagne object. The one law that he wished his subjects to obey, the one law that existed to guide all the Christian people, could not be contained in a single book. Only on their hearts could it be written. Yet this imposed on Charlemagne a ferocious obligation: for how could God's law possibly be written on the hearts of the Christian people if they were not properly Christian? Without education, they were doomed; without education, they could not be brought to Christ. *Correctio*, Charlemagne termed his mission: the schooling of his subjects in the authentic knowledge of God.

“‘May those who copy the pronouncements of the holy law and the hallowed sayings of the fathers sit here’. Such was the prayer that Alcuin, following his appointment as abbot of Tours in 797, ordered to be inscribed over the room where monks would toil daily at their great task of writing. Under his leadership, the monastery became a powerhouse of penmanship. Its particular focus was the production of single-volume collections of scripture. Edited by Alcuin himself, these were written to be as use-friendly as possible. No longer did words run into one another. Capital letters were deployed to signal the start of new sentences. For the first time, a single stroke like a lightning flash was introduced to indicate doubt: the question mark. Each compendium of scripture, so one monk declared, was a library beyond compare... The sheer number of editions produced at Tours was prodigious. Large-format, easy to read, and distributed widely across Charlemagne's empire, they gave to the various people across the Latin West something new: a shared sense of God's word as a source of revelation that might be framed within one single set of covers.

“Yet Alcuin and his colleagues were not content that scripture and the great inheritance of Christian learning be made available merely to the literate. Familiar as they were with the shrunken settlements that huddled within even the most imposing Roman city walls, they knew that there could be no true *correction* without reaching deep into the countryside. The entire span of the Latin West, from its ancient heartlands to its newest, rawest marches, needed to function as a great honeycomb of dioceses. Even the meanest peasant scratching a living beside the darkest wood had to be provided with ready access to Christian instruction. This was why, every time Saxon rebels burned down a church, the Frankish authorities would hurry to rebuild it. It was why as well, under the stern and tutelary gaze of Charlemagne, the project of *correction* had as a particular focus the education of the priesthood. This was a topic on which Boniface, only a generation previously, had expressed robust views. Frankish priests, he had charged, ‘spend their lives in debauchery, adultery, and every kind of filth.’ Some were barely distinguishable from serfs: ordained at the behest of their lords, they were more practised in holding the leashes of hunting dogs or the reins of a lady's horse than in teaching the word of God. That, as ever more instructions flowed from Charlemagne's court, was now starting to change. Everyone in the empire, as the king ordained, was to know the Creed. So too were they to learn the words which Christ himself,

asked by his disciples how they should pray, had taught: the Lord's Prayer. Small books written specifically to serve the needs of rural priests began to appear in ever-increasing numbers. Battered, scruffy and well-thumbed, these guides were the index of an innovative experiment in mass education. Charlemagne's death in 814 did nothing to slow it. Four decades on, the archbishop of Rheims could urge the priests under charge to know all forty of Gregory the Great's homilies, and expect to be obeyed. One was jailed for having forgotten 'everything that he had learned'. Ignorance had literally become a crime..."<sup>437</sup>

The result, as Peter Heather writes, was "a total transformation of the Church of Western, Latin Christendom... Charlemagne used his religious authority to define a mass Christian piety which was to apply to everyone within his empire."<sup>438</sup>

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Charlemagne's empire was seen by many as a resurrection of the Western Roman Empire. Thus the marble steps leading up to his throne came from temples in Rome.<sup>439</sup> According to Alcuin, Charlemagne, like King David, combined the functions of royal leadership and priestly teaching in order to guide his people to salvation.<sup>440</sup> And as early as 775 the Englishman Cathwulf wrote to Charlemagne, comparing him to the Father, and the bishop to the Son: "Always remember, my king, with fear and love for God your King, that you are in His place to look after and rule over all His members and to give account on judgement day even for yourself. And a bishop is in second place: he is only in Christ's place. Ponder, therefore, within yourself how diligently to establish God's law over the people of God."<sup>441</sup>

Charlemagne dominated the Church in his empire. As D.E. Luscombe writes, "Among the principal tasks of a Carolingian monarch were the convening of church councils, the nomination of bishops, the maintenance of clerical discipline and public morality, and the promulgation of sound religious doctrine. Carolingian monarchy was theocratic; it intervened extensively in church affairs..."<sup>442</sup>

If only Charlemagne had always "promulgated sound religious doctrine'. But, as we shall see, that was not always so. And so, at the very moment that the Seventh Ecumenical Council was decreeing the proper spheres of Church

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<sup>437</sup> Tom Holland, *Dominion*, London: Abacus, 2019, pp. 193-196.

<sup>438</sup> Peter Heather, *The Restoration of Rome*, London: Pan Books, 2013, pp. 336, 345.

<sup>439</sup> Jack Watkins, "Charlemagne: Part 1 of 2", *Catholic Life*, December, 2008, p. 43.

<sup>440</sup> Canning, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>441</sup> Canning, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>442</sup> Luscombe, "Introduction: the Formation of Political Thought in the West", *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350 - c. 1450*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 166.

and State in the East, Caesaropapism was threatening to undermine that decree by re-establishing itself in the West...

But Carolingian caesaropapism had its good points. Thus it created the beginnings of what we would now call the welfare state: "In March 779," writes Nelson, "a special assembly was convened to deal with a serious famine... The Bishops' Capitulary, recently re-dated to 778, along with the Herstal Capitulary, established relief measures 'for the starving poor'. These measures were to be activated by St. John's Day 24 June, usually the beginning of the harvest season. The bishops set up arrangements for fasting and alms-giving to be provided by clergy, abbots and abbesses, and laity of different ranks and at different social levels, reaching down to that of local priests and local people. Counts, for instance, were divided into three categories: stronger, middling and lesser. The middling were 'moderately well-off office-holders'. That meant that they were responsible for alms to the value of 120 pennies (half a silver pound). Fasting and alms-giving went hand in hand: those who fasted contributed the food they didn't eat for the relief of the starving. Scripture said, 'As water extinguishes fire, so alms-giving extinguishes sin' (Ecclus. 3.30). Such a major relief operation was apparently not beyond the means of this regime, or at any rate beyond aspirations driven by Charles..."<sup>443</sup>

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By the 790s Charlemagne was already not just a king, but a *de facto* emperor, and in 794 the Lombard Archbishop Paulinus of Aquileia called him "king and priest" ... But the resurrection of the Western Empire needed a special *de jure* sanction that only the Church could give. The opportunity to gain this came with the election of a new Eastern emperor, Irene, who, being a woman, was not considered a real ruler according to Frankish law, and of a new Pope, Leo III.

Leo was no supporter of the "king-priest" idea. Thus when, in 796, Eadbert Praen, an English priest, assumed the crown of the sub-kingdom of Kent for himself, he was immediately rejected by the Archbishop of Canterbury and later anathematized by Leo. Such a priest-king, he wrote, was like Julian the Apostate...<sup>444</sup>

Nevertheless, Leo needed the support of Charlemagne; and to that end he was prepared to flatter him in his caesaropapist ambitions...

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<sup>443</sup> Nelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>444</sup> A.W. Haddan & W. Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1869, 1964, vol. III, p. 524. Charlemagne's ideas of the relationship of Church and State were also traditional. Thus "in his response to Leo's announcement of his election as pope in 795, he affirmed that, while it was the duty of the earthly ruler to defend the Church and promote the faith, it was the duty of the pope and his clergy, like Moses, to lift up hands in prayer for the realm and for victory over its enemies." Cf. Louth, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

For “even though his election had been unanimous,” writes Holland, “Leo had enemies: for the papal office, which until recently had brought its holder only bills and overdrafts, was now capable of exciting the envious cupidity of the Roman aristocracy. On 25 April, as the heir of St. Peter rode in splendid procession to Mass, he was set upon by a gang of heavies. Bundled off into a monastery, Leo succeeded in escaping before his enemies, as had been their intention, could blind him and cut out his tongue. Lacking any other recourse, he resolved upon the desperate expedient of fleeing to the King of the Franks. The journey was a long and perilous one – for Charlemagne, that summer, was in Saxony, on the very outer reaches of Christendom. Wild rumours preceded the Pope, grisly reports that he had indeed been mutilated. When he finally arrived in the presence of Charlemagne, and it was discovered... that he still had his eyes and tongue, Leo solemnly asserted that they had been restored to him by St. Peter, sure evidence of the apostle’s outrage at the affront to his vicar. And then, embracing ‘the King, the father of Europe’, Leo summoned Charlemagne to his duty: to stir himself in defence of the Pope, ‘chief pastor of the world’, and to march on Rome.

“And to Rome the king duly came. Not in any hurry, however, and certainly not so as to suggest that he was doing his suppliant’s bidding. Indeed, for the fugitive Pope, humiliation had followed upon humiliation. His enemies, arriving in Charlemagne’s presence only days after Leo, had publicly accused him of a series of extravagant sexual abuses. Commissioners, sent by Charlemagne to escort the Pope back to Rome and investigate the charges against him, drew up a report so damning that Alcuin preferred to burn it rather than be sullied by keeping it in his possession. When Charlemagne himself, in the early winter of 800, more than a year after Leo’s arrival in Saxony, finally approached the gates of Rome, the Pope humbly rode out to greet him twelve miles from the city. Even the ancient emperors had only required their servants to ride out six.

“But Leo, a born fighter, was still resolved to salvage something from the wreckage. Blackened though his name had certainly been, he remained the Pope, St. Peter’s heir, the holder of an office that had been instituted of Christ Himself. It was not lightly to be given to any mortal, not even Charlemagne, to sit in judgement on Rome’s bishop. In token of this, when the proceedings against Leo formally opened on 1 December, they did so, not within the ancient limits of the city, but in the Vatican, on the far side of the Tiber, in implicit acknowledgement of the rights of the Pope, and the Pope alone, to rule in Rome. Papal officials, displaying their accustomed talent for uncovering ancient documents just when they were most needed, presented to Charlemagne papers which appeared conclusively to prove that their master could in fact only be judged by God. Charlemagne, accepting this submission, duly pronounced the Pope acquitted. Leo, placing his hand on a copy of the New Testament, then swore a flamboyant oath that he had been innocent all along.



“And now, having triumphed over his enemies in Rome, he prepared to snatch an even more dramatic victory from the jaws of all his travails. Two days after the Pope’s acquittal, Charlemagne attended Christmas Mass in the shrine of St. Peter in the Vatican. He did so humbly, without any insignia of royalty, praying on his knees. As he rose, however, Leo stepped forward into the golden light cast by the altar candles, and placed a crown on his bare head. Simultaneously, the whole cathedral echoed to the ecstatic cries of the congregation, who hailed the Frankish king as ‘Augustus’ – the honorific of the ancient Caesars. Leo, never knowingly less than dramatic, then prostrated himself before Charlemagne’s feet, head down, arms outstretched. By venerable tradition, such obeisance had properly been performed only for one man: the emperor in Constantinople.

“But now, following the events of that momentous Christmas Day, the West once again had an emperor of its own.

“And it was the Pope, and no one else, who had granted him his crown...”<sup>445</sup>

Now Charlemagne’s biographer Einhard claims that he would never have entered the church if he had known what the Pope was intending to do. But can we believe this? Does it not appear that the events leading up to the coronation were carefully stage-managed by the two men, each of whom possessed something that only the other could give?<sup>446</sup>

However, John Julius Norwich disagrees: “Charles had never shown the faintest interest in claiming imperial status, and for the rest of his life continued to style himself *Rex Francorum et Longobardorum* – King of the Franks and Lombards. Nor, above all, did he wish to owe any obligation to the Pope; there is every reason to believe that he was in fact extremely angry when he found such an obligation thrust upon him. Leo, on the other hand, was creating an all-important precedent. By crowning Charles as he did, he was emphasizing that both the empire and Charles at its head were his creation. The world could make no mistake: it was to the Pope, and to the Pope only, that the emperor owed his title.”<sup>447</sup>

The Byzantines at first treated Charlemagne as yet another impudent usurper; for, as a chronicler of Salerno put it, “The men about the court of Charles the Great called him Emperor because he wore a precious crown upon his head. But in truth, no one should be called Emperor save the man who presides over the Roman – that is, the Constantinopolitan kingdom.”<sup>448</sup> As Russell Chamberlin writes: “The Byzantines derided the coronation of Charlemagne. To them he was simply another barbarian general with ideas

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<sup>445</sup> Holland, *Millennium*, London: Abacus Books, 2009, pp. 30-32.

<sup>446</sup> Peter Heather, *The Restoration of Rome*, London: Pan Books, 2013, chapter 5.

<sup>447</sup> Norwich, *France. A History from Gaul to De Gaulle*, London: John Murray, 2018, p. 13.

<sup>448</sup> Richard Chamberlin, *Charlemagne, Emperor of the Western World*, London: Grafton books, 1986, p. 52.

above his station. Indeed, he took care never to style himself *Imperator Romanorum*. His jurists, dredging through the detritus of empire, came up with a title which met with his approval: *Romanum gubernans imperium* 'Governing the Roman Empire'. Thus the resounding title of this first of the post-fall-of-Rome Western Emperors was 'Charles, Most Serene Augustus, crowned by God, great and merciful Emperor, governing the Roman Empire and by the mercy of God, King of the Lombards and the Franks'."<sup>449</sup>

Alcuin even supported the idea that Charlemagne was greater than both the Pope in Rome and the Emperor in Constantinople: "There have hitherto been three persons of greatest eminence in the world, namely the Pope, who rules the see of St. Peter, the chief of apostles, as his successor...; the second is the Emperor who holds sway over the second Rome...; the third is the throne on which our Lord Jesus Christ has placed you to rule over our Christian people, with greater power, clearer insight and more exalted royalty than the aforementioned dignitaries. On you alone the whole safety of the churches of Christ depends."<sup>450</sup>

Moreover, whereas previously Alcuin had followed the convention of calling Constantinople the second Rome, now the second Rome was Charlemagne's capital, Aachen: "Most worthy Charles, my voice is too small for your works, king, love and jewel of the Franks, head of the world, the summit of Europe, caring father and hero, Augustus! You yourself can command cities: see how the Second Rome, new in its flowering and mighty extent, rises and grows; with the domes which crown its walls, it touches the stars!"<sup>451</sup>

And yet the ultimate winner from Charlemagne's coronation was probably not the emperor, but the Pope. Judith Herrin writes that his "acclamation as *imperator et augustus* only partly answered Alcuin's proposals for a grander title and did not please the Frankish theologians. They did not consider that the Bishop of Rome had any right to bestow an imperial title and thus assume a crucial role in the ceremony. The Franks did not conceive of Roman ecclesiastical authority as something overarching which covered the whole of Charles's territories. Within northern Europe, papal authority was hedged by the claims of many archbishops to an equal power...

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<sup>449</sup> Chamberlin, "The Ideal of Unity", *History Today*, vol. 53 (11), November, 2003, p. 57. And yet in 812 the legates of Emperor Michael I saluted Charles in Aachen with the title "emperor". So from 812, as A. Vasiliev says, "there were two Roman emperors, in spite of the fact that in theory there was still only one Roman empire" (*A History of the Byzantine Emperor*, p. 268). There is an interesting parallel to this in the theory of the One Christian Empire in contemporary China. Thus when the Chinese empire actually split between the Khitans and the Sung in 1004, "to preserve the myth of indivisibility the relationship between the two emperors was henceforth expressed in the language of a fictional blood relationship" ("China in the year 1000", *History for All*, vol. 2, issue 6, December / January, 2000, p. 37).

<sup>450</sup> Alcuin, in Stephen Allott, *Alcuin of York*, York: Sessions Book Trust, 1974, p. 111.

<sup>451</sup> Alcuin, in Wil van den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 148.

"Of the three powers involved in the coronation event of 800, the Roman pontiff emerges as the clear winner in the triangular contest over imperial authority. By seizing the initiative and crowning Charles in his own way, Pope Leo claimed the superior authority to anoint an imperial ruler of the West, which established an important precedent...

"Later Charles would insist on crowning his own son Louis as emperor, without papal intervention. He thus designated his successor and, in due course, Louis inherited his father's authority. But the notion that a western ruler could not be a real emperor without a papal coronation and acclamation in ancient Rome grew out of the ceremonial devised by Leo III in 800."<sup>452</sup>

Fr. Andrew Louth confirms that the real winner was the Pope: "The *Constitutio Romana* sought to establish a bond between the Frankish Empire and the Republic of St. Peter, but it was a very different relationship from that which had formerly held between the pope and the Byzantine emperor. The Frankish emperor undertook to protect the legitimacy of the electoral process, but claimed no right, as the Byzantine emperor had done, to confirm the election itself. What we see here, in inchoate form, is a way of protecting the legitimacy and independence of the pope..."<sup>453</sup>

In later years Charlemagne drew back from the confrontation with Constantinople that his assumption of the title of "Emperor of the Romans" had threatened. He dropped the phrase "of the Romans" while retaining the title "Emperor". And he dropped his idea of attacking the Byzantine province of Sicily.<sup>454</sup> Then, after the death of the Empress Irene in 802, he sought to be reconciled with the Byzantines. And with some success: as he later wrote to the Byzantine Emperor Michael (811-13), Christ had deigned to establish peace between the eastern and western empires.

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However, what was done could not be undone: through the coronation of the year 800, the foundations were laid both for the growth of papal power in the West and for a disastrous attempt by Charlemagne to change the teaching of the Church. As long as the Eastern Emperors had been iconoclast, while Charlemagne remained Orthodox, he could have had some - albeit insufficient - justification for claiming the leadership of the Christian world. But after the Seventh Council restored the veneration of icons in 787, the Eastern Empire had returned to Orthodoxy - and the Western quasi-emperor fell into heresy...

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<sup>452</sup> Herrin, op. cit., pp. 124, 128.

<sup>453</sup> Louth, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>454</sup> Instead, according to the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes, he proposed marriage to the Byzantine Empress Irene "to unite the Eastern provinces". Nelson (op. cit., p. 370) considers this "beyond the bounds of credibility", while Herrin (op. cit., pp. 117-118) considers it more likely that Irene made the proposal.

The process seems to have begun with a personal snub: no Frankish bishop had been invited to the Seventh Ecumenical Council. As a result, writes Nelson, "Charles broke off the betrothal [between his daughter Rotrud and the Empress Irene's son Constantine] in 787, at Capua. (There is no evidence that he brought Rotrud to Italy with him in 786/7, as he had in 781.) Charles's motives, probably mixed, included revenge for Eirene's ecumenical snub. No Frank was at Nicaea to hear the decrees read out in Greek. A Latin translation was made on [Pope] Hadrian's orders, but it was seriously flawed because the translator was not bilingual, and worked from glossaries. The consequence was that Charles commissioned a searing critique of the official conciliar text, which in his mind confirmed his own standing as a qualified religious arbiter."<sup>455</sup>

Charlemagne's rejection of the Acts of the Seventh Council has been ascribed to a mistranslation of the Greek *proskynesis* by the Latin *adoratio*. As Louth writes: "The Frankish court received a Latin version of the decrees of Nicaea II in which a central point was misrepresented: instead of an assertion that icons are not venerated with the worship owed to God, the Latin version seems to have asserted exactly the opposite, that icons are indeed venerated with the worship due to God alone. There is certainly scope for misunderstanding here, especially when dealing with a translated text, for the distinction that the iconodules had painstakingly drawn between a form of veneration expressing honour [*proskynesis*] and a form of veneration expressing worship [*latreia*] has no natural lexical equivalent [in Latin]."<sup>456</sup>

The British, too, were misled by the mistranslation. When, in 792, Charlemagne sent the *Acts* of the Seventh Council in this inaccurate translation to the kings and bishops of Britain, it was supposed that the Fathers of the Council had asserted, in the words of Symeon of Durham, "that icons are to be adored [i.e. worshipped], which is altogether condemned by the Church of God"; and Alcuin, though personally unconvinced, brought back to the continent the negative opinion of the British Church.<sup>457</sup>

However, we may suspect (without having any firm evidence to assert this confidently) that Charlemagne, having been offended by the snub to the Franks, was actually looking for an excuse to reject the Eastern Empire as idol-worshipping and heterodox and put himself forward as the one true and Orthodox Christian Emperor...

Be that as it may, it was not the Eastern, but the Western emperor, who now fell into heresy. For In 794 he convened a large council at Frankfurt which, without consulting the Pope, condemned both the iconoclast council of 754 and the Seventh Ecumenical Council as *ineptissimae Synodi*, "most stupid

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<sup>455</sup> Nelson, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>456</sup> Louth, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

<sup>457</sup> Haddan & Stubbs, op. cit., pp. 468-469.

Councils"<sup>458</sup>, and introduced the *Filioque*, which supposed that the Holy Spirit proceeded both from the Father *and from the Son*, into the Creed.

The *Filioque* was heretical because: (a) it contradicted the explicit words of Christ about the procession of the Spirit from the Father *alone* (John 15.26); (b) it involved a change in the Creed, which was forbidden by the Third Ecumenical Council; and (c) it was objectively false, as destroying the monarchy of the Father and introducing a second principle into the life of the Holy Trinity.<sup>459</sup>

With regard to iconoclasm, Charlemagne found himself at odds with Pope Hadrian, who accepted the Acts of the Seventh Council. However, the pope, out of gratitude for Charlemagne's political services to the papacy, did not emphasize his theological differences with him. Similarly, he did not emphasize his agreement with the Orthodox emperor in Constantinople because he was trying to reverse Leo III's earlier confiscation of the Roman Church's patrimonies in southern Italy and transfer of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of southern Italy, Sicily and Illyria from Rome to Constantinople.

Charlemagne's iconoclasm was not without consequences in the West. Thus in the early ninth century, Bishop Claudius of Turin preached iconoclasm (he was opposed by the Irishman St. Dungalus of Pavia). And although the heresy did not prevail a sharp decline in iconography is evident in the West from this time.<sup>460</sup>

In 808, the introduction of the *Filioque* into the Frankish Creed produced conflict between Frankish and Greek monks in Jerusalem. And within the Frankish camp itself there was opposition: Alcuin rejected the innovation in a letter to the monks of Lyons, and Pope Leo III had the Creed *without the Filioque* inscribed in Greek and Latin on silver shields and placed outside St. Peter's. But Charlemagne did not back down: in a council in Aachen in 809 he decreed that the innovation was a dogma necessary for salvation. It is one of the great ironies of history that the fall of the Roman papacy, so notorious in later ages for its inquisitorial zeal against heresy, should have begun with a lack of zeal to expel a heretic, Charlemagne, from the Church even after he had been exhorted more than once because of his heresy (Titus 3.10). Long past were the

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<sup>458</sup> Constantine Scouteris, "'Never as gods': icons and their veneration", *Sobornost*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 15.

<sup>459</sup> St. Photius the Great, *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, Boston: Studion Publishers, 1983; "The *Filioque*: Truth or Trivia?", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, March 21 / April 3, 1983.

<sup>460</sup> However, recognizably Byzantine-style iconography still remained in the West. See, for example the silks given to St. Cuthbert's community by the English King Athelstan, and the frescoes of the tenth-century Spanish church of St. Peter del Bural: [https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fupload.wikimedia.org%2Fwiki%2Fcommons%2Fthumb%2F7%2F75%2FAbsis\\_de\\_Sant\\_Pere\\_del\\_Bural%252C\\_11th\\_c.\\_fresco.jpg](https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fupload.wikimedia.org%2Fwiki%2Fcommons%2Fthumb%2F7%2F75%2FAbsis_de_Sant_Pere_del_Bural%252C_11th_c._fresco.jpg). Rome especially, the home of many iconodule monks from the East, remained strictly Orthodox in its iconography.

days when a bishop like St. Ambrose of Milan could dare to excommunicate an emperor from the Church...

The acts of the Aachen council were taken to Rome for discussion with the pope. "The Frankish experts," writes Nelson, "were determined to keep the *Filioque*; Pope Leo was content that it remain in practice in Francia, but did not want to change the Creed of the Romans and Greeks (and there were many Greeks in Rome). The Franks were chided for not having got authorization for the *Filioque*, but nothing was done to prevent their continuing the tradition they knew... By now, pope and emperor understood each other..."<sup>461</sup>

It was an evil understanding, as between Herod and Pilate... The iconoclast Emperor Leo the Isaurian had undermined the "symphonic" principle of Church-State relations when he had declared that he was "both king and priest". But now Charlemagne was showing himself to be no less of a caesaropapist than Leo by his imposition of heretical innovations on the Church. Indeed, the former champion of Orthodoxy and Romanity against the heretical and despotic iconoclast emperors was now well on the way to becoming the chief enemy of Orthodoxy and Romanity through his heresy and despotism. For he believed, as Fr. John Romanides puts it, "that the East Romans were neither Orthodox nor Roman"<sup>462</sup>!

Another important Carolingian innovation was the replacement of leavened bread by unleavened in the Eucharist. As Fr. Joseph Jungman writes, "In the West, various ordinances appeared from the ninth century on, all demanding the exclusive use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist... Still, the new custom did not come into exclusive vogue until the middle of the eleventh century. Particularly in Rome it was not universally accepted till after the general infiltration of various usages from the North."<sup>463</sup>

This issue had not been among the theological differences that arose between Rome and Constantinople in the 850s. However, it *did* become important two centuries later, when the schism hardened. The Latin innovation

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<sup>461</sup> Nelson, op. cit., p. 453.

<sup>462</sup> J. Romanides, *Franks, Romans, Feudalism and Doctrine*, Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1981, p. 31.

<sup>463</sup> Jungman, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, volume II, pages 33-34. Jungman goes on to say that "the opinion put forward by J. Mabillon, *Dissertatio de pane eucharistia*, in his answer to the Jesuit J. Sirmond, *Disquisitio de azymo*, namely, that in the West it was always the practice to use only unleavened bread, is no longer tenable" [op. cit., page 33]. "The fact that the West changed its practice and began using unleavened bread in the 8th and 9th century -- instead of the traditional leavened bread -- is confirmed by the research of Fr. William O'Shea, who noted that along with various other innovative practices from Northern Europe, the use of unleavened bread began to infiltrate the Roman liturgy at the end of the first millennium: 'Another change introduced into the Roman Rite in France and Germany at the time [i.e., 8th - 9th century] was the use of unleavened bread and of thin white wafers or hosts instead of the loaves of leavened bread used hitherto' [O'Shea, *The Worship of the Church*, page 128]." (Fr. Ambrose Maonaigh, Facebook, July 6, 2016). Cf. V. Moss, "The Bread of the Eucharist", [https://www.academia.edu/13506091/THE\\_BREAD\\_OF\\_THE\\_EUCHARIST](https://www.academia.edu/13506091/THE_BREAD_OF_THE_EUCHARIST).

was seen as damaging the symbolism of Christ's human nature insofar as heaven signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit that makes human nature rise.

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If Charlemagne's empire was meant to be a restoration of the Western Roman Empire, it must be judged to have failed. For it disintegrated after his death and continued to disintegrate in the tenth century...

The main cause of this was undoubtedly God's wrath elicited by his heretical innovations and his challenge to the authority of the Eastern Empire. But there were other causes...

One was that he failed to create the bureaucracy and tax collection systems that were so important in preserving the Roman Empire.<sup>464</sup>

Another related to the fact that the dukes and counts upon whom his administration critically depended expected to be paid in land for the services they rendered, so that the kingdom was stable just so long as it was expanding – that is, until the 810s. For the idea of selfless service to the king as the Lord's anointed had to compete with the idea of the loyalty of a band of warriors to a leader that was conditional on his providing greater success in war and therefore more plunder than anyone else. The state was not yet fully a *res publica*, a public thing, in the Frankish consciousness; it was rather the private demesne of the king and those of his nobles who had earned a part of the spoils through their service to him. True statehood begins only when the state is seen, not as an instrument of power or profit for one or more individuals, or even all the citizens of the state, but as something having a right to exist for its own sake, being established by God.

As Heather writes, "the fruits of expansionary power... were a crucial element in the rise of the Carolingians. It really is one of the most significant statistics of them all that Carolingian armies were in the field for eighty-five out of the ninety years from the accession of Charles Martel to 803/4. The vast majority of these campaigns were aggressive and expansionary, and the

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<sup>464</sup> Heather writes: "Fundamentally, the early Middle Ages saw the emergence of a new smaller type of state structure. With no state-run professional army, no large-scale systematic taxation of agriculture, and no developed central bureaucratic structure, the early medieval state swallowed up a much smaller percentage of GDP than had its Roman predecessor. As far as we can tell, this had nothing to do with right-wing ideologies and everything to do with a basic renegotiation of centre-local relations around the brute fact that landowning elites now owed their ruler actual military service, which put their own very physical bodies on the line. Equally important, all the changes conspired together... to make it much more difficult for early medieval rulers to hold together large geographical areas over the longer term.

"There was also the further, critical difference in the type of economic assets that the ruler of a smaller early medieval state structure had at his disposal. Although late Roman emperors were landowners in their own right, like their Carolingian successors, they drew the majority of their much larger overall income from tax revenues. And tax revenues were entirely renewable..." (op. cit., p. 279)

renewable wealth they liberated – in all its forms – made it possible for four generations of the dynasty to build their regimes without eroding the fixed assets of the royal fisc... In the small-state world of early medieval Europe, expansionary warfare replaced large-scale taxation as the source of renewable wealth that was necessary to maintaining a powerful central authority in anything but the shortest of terms."<sup>465</sup>

In evaluating the Carolingian dynasty, one encounters similar difficulties to those experienced with regard to another powerful and innovative ruler, Peter the Great: on the one hand, respect for the material strengthening of Western Christian civilization, which enabled it both to resist the external assaults of Vikings and Saracens and to increase its internal cultural unity, and on the other, regret at its spiritual weakening, leading to the weakening also of the Roman Papacy and the Eastern Empire.

Charlemagne was a powerful personality, a talented administrator and a benefactor of the Church before he fell into heresy. His holding together of such a vast and varied dominion was a major achievement, and did in some sense constitute a resurrection of the Western Roman Empire. Like the Romans, as E.H. Gombrich writes, "he never lost sight of his goal: to bring all these various German tribes and duchies together under his rule, and forge them into a single people."<sup>466</sup>

Indeed, so widely accepted was the ideal of "One Faith, One Church, One Empire" that when Charlemagne came to create his western rival to the true Roman Empire, he also spoke of "the Christian people of the Romans" without ethnic differentiation, and tried to introduce a single Roman law for all the constituent nations of his empire. As Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, put it: "There is now neither Gentile nor Jew, Scythian nor Aquitanian, nor Lombard, nor Burgundian, nor Alaman, nor bond, nor free. All are one in Christ... Can it be accepted that, opposed to this unity that is the work of God, there should be an obstacle in the diversity of laws [used] in one and the same country, in one and the same city, and in one and the same house? It constantly happens that of five men walking or sitting side by side, no two have the same territorial law, although at root - on the eternal plan - they belong to Christ."<sup>467</sup>

However, Charlemagne's empire began to crumble quite soon after his death in 814. First, his son Louis the Pious suffered rebellions from his sons Lothar, Pippin and Louis, and in 833 was even briefly deposed by them. The bishops confirmed this decision later by "declaring formally the divine

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<sup>465</sup> Heather, op. cit., pp. 287, 288. Tacitus had written centuries before of the pagan Germans in his *Germania*: "You cannot keep up a great retinue except by war and violence, for it is to the free-handed chief that they look for the war horse, for the murderous and masterful sphere: banquets and a certain rude but lavish outfit take the place of salary. The material for this open-handedness comes from war and foray."

<sup>466</sup> Gombrich, *A Little History of the World*, London: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 123.

<sup>467</sup> Agobard, in R.H.C. Davis, *A History of Medieval Europe*, Harlow: Longman, 1988, p. 147.



judgement that he had been shown to be unfit to govern, and by then degrading him from his rank as ruler and imposing a penance on him.”<sup>468</sup>

On Louis’ death in 840 the empire was divided between his three surviving sons, Lothar, Louis the German and Charles. When Lothar claimed the whole empire, the other two brothers met with their armies at Strasbourg in 842 and swore allegiance to each other and a united front against Lothar. “The oaths and pledges... were given in the vernacular languages of each of the armies, rather than the kings’ own languages or in Latin. Charles speaks to Louis’ army in Old High German, ‘*teudisca lingua*’, and they pledge in the same. Louis and Charles’ army speak in Proto-French, ‘*romana lingua*’. By speaking to their brother’s army in their own language, each oath-taker ensured they were understood and neither could escape being held to their word.

“The Oaths are important, not just for the treaty they forged but for the languages they used: in the Carolingian Empire Latin was the standard language of writing. The Oaths of Strasbourg are the very earliest written evidence of a Romance language to survive and are, therefore, the earliest words to be written in the language that would become French. The Old High German portions are one of the earliest known texts written in the language. Together they give a glimpse of how multilingual the Carolingian Empire was. Louis and Charles were both multilingual and literate.

“Thanks in part to the alliance made that day in Strasbourg the war was brought to an end in August 843 with the Treaty of Verdun. With this treaty the Empire was subdivided: Lothar took the central region around Aachen, with lands stretching down to Italy; Louis the German took East Francia, which was roughly the territory east of the Rhine; and Charles the Bald took West Francia, the western two thirds of what is now France. This subdivision created geographical regions with their own languages, political organisations and identities, which laid the foundations for the shape of western Europe.”<sup>469</sup>

On top of these divisions, the Vikings, who first appeared during Charlemagne’s reign, began to make serious and highly destructive inroads into North-Western Europe. The bell was tolling for the Orthodox West...

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“Although Charlemagne’s empire perished,” writes Norwich, “his idea did not. Henceforth, the western Europeans were almost able to forget about Constantinople. Before 800, there was only one empire in the Christian world – the empire of Augustus, Trajan and Hadrian, which was not a jot less Roman for having had its capital transferred to the Bosphorus. But the Bosphorus was nearly 1500 miles from Paris; the West now had an emperor of its own, on its

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<sup>468</sup> Canning, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>469</sup> “Oaths of Strasbourg Sworn”, *History Today*, February, 2017, p. 8. Cf. Jenkins, op. cit., p. 56.

very doorstep. And that emperor had been crowned by the Pope... After Charlemagne, Europe would never be the same again..."<sup>470</sup>

The longevity of Charlemagne's idea of Western unity was demonstrated in 1978, when President Giscard d'Estaing of France and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt decided to relaunch the European Project by agreeing to work towards the creation of a common currency for the West European region, they met beside the tomb of Charlemagne in his old capital of Aachen. This was appropriate; for, as K.N. Leontiev writes: "It was precisely after the fall of the artificial empire of Charles that the signs which constitute, in their integrity, a picture of a special European culture, a new universal civilization, become clearer and clearer. The future bounds of the most recent western States and particular cultures of Italy, France and Germany also begin to become clearer. The Crusades come closer, as does the flourishing age of knighthood and of German feudalism, which laid the foundations of the exceptional self-respect of the person, "a self-respect which, passing first by means of envy and imitation into the bourgeoisie, produced the democratic revolution and engendered all these modern phrases about the boundless rights of the person, and then, penetrating to the lower levels of western society, made of every simple day-time worker and cobbler an existence corrupted by a nervous feeling of his own worth). Soon after this we hear the first sounds of Romantic poetry. Then Gothic architecture develops, and soon Dante's Catholic epic poem will be created, etc. Papal power grows from this time. And so the reign of Charles the Great (9<sup>th</sup> century) is approximately the watershed after which the West begins more and more to bring its own civilization and its own statehood into prominence. From this century Byzantine civilisation loses from its sphere of influence all the large and well-populated countries of the West. On the other hand, it acquires for its genius the Southern Slavs...., and then... Russia."<sup>471</sup>

*December 22 / January 4, 2020/21.  
Holy Great Martyr Anastasia of Rome.*

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<sup>470</sup> Norwich, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>471</sup> Leontiev, "Vizantinizm i Slavianstvo" ("Byzantinism and Slavism"), in *Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavism), Moscow, 1996, pp. 94-95.

