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VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV'S "SIGNPOSTS" ALONG THE ESCHATOLOGICAL PATH TO GODMANHOOD

Genesis of the "New Religious Consciousness in the Soviet Union"

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INTRODUCTION

With the intensity of religious persecution in the Soviet Union increasing, the pressing need arises for greater ecumenical cohesion among believer's groups for survival. Yet, how does one slay an ideological giant of such "Goliathan" proportions as Marxist-Leninist militant atheism? First of all, it helps if one has the same Divine backing as his "Davidic" counterpart. Secondly, one should enlist the philosophical service of one Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900). While he, like his biblical counterpart is relatively small in terms of international renown, his stature and expertise is perfectly capable of delivering a lethal blow to christianity's ideological antagonist. As the Hegelian dialectic of history unfolds, Solovyov's truth emerges as the major philosophic rival to atheist doctrine in this era.¹ His school of thought can justifiably claim influence upon every non-Marxist Russian philosopher of the twentieth century.² With credentials that include, first philosopher-theologian of the 19th century to proclaim the principle of ecumenism,³ fore-runner of the new religious consciousness from the *Bogoiskatyl'stvo* (God-seeking)⁴ to the contemporary "Vekhi" and "Solidarity" movements in the Soviet Union and Poland, Solovyov offers the "new proletariat" of believers a christian manifesto of socio-political activism within the Soviet bloc. His "Iskra" is ignited by the Holy Spirit under the title of Divine Sophia, and his "dictatorship of the proletariat" consists of global christianity which seeks to liberate man from the materialistically based Marxist opiate of the masses. Through his religious philosophy, anthropocentric Russia may "prodigally" be returning to a true theocentric perspective, and the reign of the Antichrist (militant atheism) will disintegrate

before the Pantocrator's culmination of uni-totality into Godmanhood.

While this mystical element is as characteristic of Solovyov's work as his systematic philosophy, this paper will concentrate primarily on the latter of these. Generally, a brief overview of Solovyov's cosmology and socio-political moral philosophy will be summarized and viewed within its contemporary usage in the Soviet Union. Specifically, it will focus upon Solovyov's prophetic prescriptions for resolution of Greco-Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical and socio-political problems and their contemporary development in the Soviet Union.

SOCIO-POLITICAL OVERVIEW OF SOLOVYOV'S UNIVERSAL THEOCRACY

Solovyov's concept relationship between Church and State is the major theme within his works. *Russia and the Universal Church*, are certainly linked to his *Lectures on Godmanhood*. His perspective of the world is theocentric with the historical dialectic contingent upon the spiritual instead of the materialistic base. The endpoint of historical evolution for Solovyov was the eschatological fulfillment of Christ's second coming; the unitotality of the physical with the spiritual. Godmanhood was the term he applied to this culmination of man's active role in God's divine plan. He believed that man's role in the visible realm of the physical world consisted of restoring harmony to the separated factions engaged in the administration of human affairs. These factions stemmed from the schism of 1054 between the Greek Orthodox hierarchy and the Church of Rome which transcended the ecclesiological, temporal, and spiritual spheres of influence.

In 1883, Solovyov perceived the spiritual reality of the church in his conception of the three-fold theocratic power of the high priest, the king and the prophet.⁵ His initial idea of the Universal Church was connected with the concept of theocracy. Because of the universal nature of christianity, the christianization of the world should embrace the whole of social life.⁶

Solovyov believed that the Kingdom of God would be established on earth through the agency of the universal church, and would consist of the:⁷

- a) *Sacerdotal Union* of ecclesiastical hierarchies,
- b) *Royal Union* of temporal rulers and
- c) *Prophetic Union* of the saints.

Solovyov envisioned an alliance between these three visible representatives of God's power. A) the pontiff, as guardian of Divine

Truth, occupied the highest point of Christian priesthood in the visible church, and coordinated its ecclesiastical structure. B) The rulers of each Christian state were subordinate to the spiritual guidance of the first, and were assigned the task of organizing the social and political order according to the truth of religious principle. C) The prophets were bound to God by the hierarchical Church of Jesus Christ, and sent by Him to instill God's Spirit in civil society.⁸ All were subject to observing the three basic conditions for Christian life: 1) recognition of the real and independent existence of God's divine principle in the Church, 2) discernment of human elements when the two disagree in ecclesiastical activities, and 3) continual efforts to eliminate this disharmony so as to effect the Church's conformity to God's will⁹

Within Solovyov's understanding of both Eastern and Western churches, the only division was found in their governmental structure, and everything else was shared in common; they possessed the same faith, same sacrifice, and the same apostolic priesthood. Therefore both must pursue the same goals.¹⁰

SOLOVYOV: THE PROPHET'S PHILOSOPHY

"Outside of the early Church Fathers and Russian saints, Vladimir Solovyov is regarded as the leading figure among Russia's religious philosophers,"¹¹ having attained the status of a prophet among his contemporaries. His prophetic vision of the future was positive and more profound than the apprehensions of ordinary individuals. Once the validity of his prophecy had been verified, it would remain a source of spiritual guidance to later generations.²¹

Solovyov's *Lectures on Godmanhood* and his *Russia and the Universal Church* are of primary importance for a study of his cosmology.¹³ This cosmology has exercised perhaps the greatest influence on subsequent Russian thinkers. Primarily, he states that:

The union of mankind in the Spirit of God is man's highest aim on earth. Redemption and reintegration of creature with Creator depend on collective resurrection.¹⁴

Solovyov emphasizes this point further when he states that Godmanhood is:

All mankind, in all the spheres of its life and activity; all . . . are to be brought into one divine human concordant unity, composing a free theocracy when the christian Church reaches the fullness of Christ.¹⁵

Solovyov supplemented his concept of theocracy by installing the "Free Office of the Prophet," who guides the christian world in the path of the full realization of God's kingdom.¹⁶ This prophet's phil-

osophy was pervaded by socio-political directives related to ethics concerning the question of nationalism.¹⁷ These directives were emphasized in 1898 when Solovyov stated that:

The chief claim of my theory is to establish, in and through the unconditional principle of morality, the complete inner connection between true religion and social politics.¹⁸

Solovyov elucidated his laws of higher idealism through moral philosophy. His contention that idealism was the only possible basis on which a moral imperative could be elevated above material self-interest was responsible for converting many who started out as Marxists.¹⁹

Solovyov's historiocentric concept of humanity's development was usually expressed in the form of Hegelian Dialectic,²⁰ and embodied his concept of Sophia which was grounded historiosophically in cosmological metaphysics.²¹ Therefore, Sophia constituted the substance of the Holy Spirit and was the uniting force of fragmented universal being which would be revealed as the kingdom of God at the end of the historical process.²² It provided mankind with a world law calling for the "solidarity of each with all," and went directly against the individual's egoistic inclination.³²

Solovyov's Truth, therefore, consisting of the universal solidarity that existed eternally in God, has been an integral part of natural man and had been exemplified in principle by Jesus, the Spiritual Man. It remained for human activity to continue the unifying work of the God-Man by contesting the world with its contrary principle of egoism and division. All were one in the Church through the unity of hierarchy, faith and sacraments; all are made one in the christian state through justice and law.²⁴

He believed that man was the natural mediator between God and material being, and that the gradual spiritualization of man would occur through an inner assimilation and development of the Divine Principle constituting mankind's historical process.²⁵ Therefore, the view that man played merely a passive role in the divine plan must be recognized as a crude counterfeit of christianity. This counterfeit christianity was generally connected with denial of all progress and development in the christian religion.²⁶

Religious faith, for Solovyov, was the focal point of all reality,²⁷ and anything else, based merely upon historical evidence, was unworthy of man's dignity.²⁸ He felt that religious faith must be an aware faith (*Soznatye'l'naya vera*) and envisioned the gradual spiritualization (*Odukhotvoren'e*) of the human community which consisted in the true realization of the christian ideal in society.²⁹ Solovyov

had felt that this was the mission of the Orthodox religion and prophetically outlined its implementation in his final apocalyptic work, *A Short Story of the Antichrist*, published in 1900. Here, he gave his verdict on materialism from the deepest spiritual level, opposing both atheistic socialism and indifferent capitalism.³⁰

Solovyov felt that while Russian Orthodoxy would be severed from the embrace of the state, and lose millions of its nominal members, it would regain most of the "Old Believers."³¹ This synthesis would then lead to a purification of the Orthodox faith and free it from nationalism.³²

SOLOVYOV'S COSMOLOGICAL ROLE OF THE CHURCH

It would be impossible to summarize Solovyov's life work outside the context of the Church.³³ Solovyov's emphasis upon the Church's role in the divine plan was perhaps best summarized in his *Justification of the Good*, where he stated that:

Man lives in three different spheres. This world, the Kingdom of God, and the Church which binds them together.³⁴

Without the ecclesiological unity of the universal Church, the union between man and God would be impossible. Therefore Solovyov's emphasis upon the historical perspective of man's separation, which began with the schism of 1054 between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. The event of church disunity negated Christ's promise of its invincibility. Only the hierarchs of the Eastern and Western churches quarreled and separated in 1054, with the Papal legate anathematizing only the Patriarch Michael Cerularius and his followers, and not the eastern churches as a whole. While the Eastern Orthodox Church since that time has not held any ecumenical councils and cannot therefore authorize the division, the Roman Catholic "innovators," according to Solovyov, are formally justified in their development of dogma.³⁵ After the Greek hierarchy had severed themselves from the support of the universal Church, they were at the mercy of the state. Solovyov explained that this was not an accident of history but a logical event robbing any merely national church of its independence and dignity, bringing it under the yoke of temporal power.³⁶ He stated that one major characteristic was common to all autocephalous churches:

Each possesses a clergy that aims at being national and nothing else; a clergy that, whether it likes it or not, must acknowledge the supremacy of the secular government."³⁷

A church forming part of a state, of a "Kingdom of this World," has been false to its mission, and must share the fate of all the

kingdoms of this world. Here he distinguished between the faith of the people and the bureaucracy of the official church.³⁸ The Christian spirit of the masses and the genuine orthodoxy of their faith required freedom from the oppressive supervision of an administration claiming to be ecclesiastical in nature, but which was in fact opposed to the true Church of Christ.³⁹

The leaders of the Russian church could not rely on their religious capital, Moscow, in struggling against the overpowering despotism of the state, for it was no more than a national church which had been subservient to the secular power. Russia inherited caesaropapism from Byzantium; not ecclesiastical freedom. This development took place in Russia since the ninth century.⁴⁰

Within Solovyov's native 19th century Russia, he witnessed related problems of the Raskol (Old Believers schism) and the hostility of the slavophiles toward Roman Catholicism, based on national pride and religious isolation.⁴¹ These conflicts prompted him to seek the definition of religious truth. Solovyov questioned whether this consisted merely of faithfulness to a nation's ancient piety, as in the case of the slavophiles, or whether it rested upon the ecclesiastical authority.⁴²

In 1886, Solovyov argued the supremacy of Church over state in his *History and Future of Theocracy*, written as a rebuttal to the government proclamation placing the ultimate office of spiritual authority with the Czar.⁴³ As if to validate his argument, the state-appointed procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, censored the publication of Solovyov's book. Realizing the humiliating helplessness of the Russian church, Solovyov's works contended that that life of the Eastern church was paralysed by submission to the state. While the condition was first evident in the Byzantine empire, it had not fully renewed itself in Russia. He concluded that the Old Believers, not the official Orthodox, represented the true remaining church in Russia.⁴⁴

After similar encounters with the procurator and the ecclesiastical administration, Solovyov began to see that problems confronting the Orthodox Church and those confronting the Russian state were linked. To resolve them, it would be necessary to lift the divisive "Old Believers" anathemas of 1667 and end church censorship.⁴⁵ In desperation over the Russian church's inability to instigate reform, Solovyov turned toward the west.⁴⁶

Solovyov did not seek to convert his fellow Russian Orthodox to Roman Catholicism, but to make them think about relations with

the western church and the Roman See. He felt that to claim one local tradition as the Universal Christian Truth was to commit the Old Believer error all over again,⁴⁷ and simply stated that:

No argument can dispel the fact that apart from Rome, there only exist national churches, such as the Armenian or Greek church; state churches, such as the Russian or Anglican, or else sects founded by individuals such as the Lutherans, the Calvinists . . ."⁴⁸

The Roman Catholic Church was the only church that was neither a national church nor a state church, nor a sect founded by man. To Solovyov, it was the only church in the world which maintained and asserted the principle of universal social unity against individual egoism and national particularism. In *Russia and the Universal Church*, he emphasized this by stating:

It is the only church that maintains and asserts the freedom of the spiritual power against the absolutism of the state . . . it is the only church against which the gates of hell have not prevailed.⁴⁹

For Solovyov, reunification was not a matter of conquest or capitulation. Instead, he believed that the reunited church would be both greater than and different from its two components.⁵⁰ He predicted that between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic, a combination would emerge in which each preserved its structural integrity, abolishing only enmity and exclusiveness.⁵¹

As far as Solovyov was concerned, the reason why people did not join the Catholic church was because they desired to have, at all cost, a religion apart, distinctly Russian. They wanted a church united with the empire. They did not care for the church in itself, but valued it as the symbol of their exclusive nationalism.⁵²

Solovyov prophetically stated that the Russian nation would reject unity with the church and eventually suppress all religious liberty:

If we were a pagan nation, it would be quite possible for us to crystalize ourselves definitely into such a state.⁵³

His concern for this reunification of christendom encompassed the broadest range of ecclesiastical politics.⁵⁴ Yet, ultimately, he realized that the reconciliation between the Roman and Eastern churches had to wait until the time when the desire for unity would become operative in the hearts and minds of many of their members.⁵⁵ Then, in unity, the clergy and people comprising the Body of Christ would represent "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:23) When this point of reconciliation evolved, the Ecumenical Council inspired by the Holy Spirit would convene and unite both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic in the sacrament of communion. Its

mutually agreed to infallibility would then heal the millenium of the schism.

Solovyov, anticipating this future moment in history, prophetically remained universal in his ecumenical perspective by both word and deed. In word, his correspondence attests to a consistent avoidance of sectarian labeling as evidenced by the following quotes:

I am told that Russian newspapers spread rumors about my conversion to Catholicism, and so on. In truth, I am now still further from taking such a step than before.⁵⁶

I am supposed to be a Catholic, but as a matter of fact, I am more of a Protestant.⁵⁷

I am as far from the narrowness of Rome as from that of Byzantium, or of Augsburg, or of Geneva; the religion of the Holy Spirit which I profess is wider and at the same time fuller in context than all particular religions.⁵⁸

Solovyov regarded Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism as different levels through which man must pass toward the evolution of spiritual rebirth, and attempted to lead Russian thought out of the temptations of socialism to the primacy of christianity.⁵⁹ He saw the major purpose of history as christendom's reunification and consequent divinization of the world.

Indeed, Solovyov exemplified his ecumenical belief most graphically on February 18, 1896, when he received Holy Communion from Father Nicholas Tolstoi, a convert from Orthodoxy to the United Catholic Church and read the Profession of Faith according to the Tridentine Council during the celebration of Mass.⁶⁰ This act was no coincidental or shallow gesture on Solovyov's part, but rather the most profound commitment of faith which he could make. Since the sacraments in general were "universal and wholly divine," they sanctified man's physical as well as his spiritual life, consecrating and bringing back to God the elemental principle of the material world.⁶¹ The implications of his reception of the sacraments therefore, within a church that represented the "unity" of both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic, run as deep as the very source of Divine Wisdom within him. The entirety of his cosmological vision was contained within this act when he stated that:

The Great Sacrament of Eucharist is the universal and divine communion in which man receives the body of Christ corporally and substantially into himself. By its means, all things are made really part of an integral, theandric, spiritual and bodily harmony by being assimilated into the Godhead in Christ, with whom man is united invisibly yet bodily by the Eucharist."⁶²

SOLOVYOV'S THEOCRATIC STATE

Solovyov justified his theocentric perspective of state authority biblically when he stated that:

If there is any delegation of power in the Gospel, it is this; no temporal government received any promise or sanction from Christ.⁶³

Christ revealed to mankind not only the ideal of absolute perfection, but also the way to attain it through progressive christian politics. Solovyov emphasized the fact that while Christ's kingdom was not of this world, one should not infer that it could not "act in the world, gain possession of it, and rule it."⁶⁴ He felt that societies calling themselves christian must either renounce that name, or recognize it as their duty to harmonize all political and social relations with christian principles. If social and political forms of life were far from embodying these principles, then genuine christian politics must undertake the task of perfecting these forms and transmitting them into realities fit for the kingdom of God.

Nationalism in its extreme form destroys a nation, for it makes it an enemy of mankind, and mankind is always stronger than any one nation. Christianity serves the nations, for it helps them to transcend nationalism.⁶⁵

According to Solovyov's christian interpretation, the tendency of the nation-wide to "evil nationalism" was caused by selfishness.

Parallel to the societal objective of christianity was the goal of history, which sought to unify mankind in a duality of faith and society pursuant to reunification with Christ the Creator.⁶⁶ Solovyov stated that running counter to this shared goal was evil nationalism in its extreme forms of western capitalism and eastern socialism. Both distortions were devoid of moral value because their means were based upon the egoism of individuals' nationalism. Solovyov believed that for the true progress of society, these individuals must sacrifice their exclusive wills in order to recognize that of God. Yet, the historical dialectic process was continuously generating new syntheses. Socialism was merely a positive phase of human development, in Solovyov's philosophic schema, which logically led to mankind's acknowledgment of religion as a necessary principle of life.⁶⁷

Solovyov believed that the distortion of nationalism was merely a magnified reflection of the fundamental evil in man's egoistic nature. While the state was everything, society was nothing. However, once the purpose of life was placed above the state, "the living power of society" was liberated and servitude to the state would come to an end.⁶⁸ To Solovyov, the lesson of christianity imbued social organizations with moral solidarity.

In Solovyov's theocratic state, the king was spiritually, not politically, subordinate to the office of high priest⁶⁹ In his introduction to the book, *Russia and the Universal Church*, he described this utopia as consisting of a

... free and Universal Theocracy, the true solidarity of all nations and classes, the application of christianity to public life, the christianity of politics, freedom for all the oppressed, protection for all the weak, social justice and good christian peace.⁷⁰

Following this description, Solovyov pledged his allegiance to the "key-bearer" of Christ who led the pre-schismatic church of the "Greco-Roman world" and Roman-German world."⁷¹ Without the fundamental precondition of reunification between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches being met, political unity would be impossible.⁷² Solovyov offered an entirely new interpretation of Moscow, the "third Rome," to the upcoming generation of neo-slavophiles.⁷³ He predicted that Russia's messianic role in history would consist of inverting Orthodoxy to atheist socialism in the form of Russian nationalism.⁷⁴ The subsequent reconversion process would purify the Russian soul which then would synthesize true christianity, promoting solidarity with western churches pursuant to reestablishing the unity of the Ecumenical Church.⁷⁵

RECENT ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN GRECO-RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY

To validate the prophetic viability of Solovyov's ecclesiastical prescriptions, it is necessary to review contemporary ecumenical advancements between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. One of the clearest reaffirmations of Solovyov's vision occurred at the International inter-religious meeting in Moscow on October 1-2, 1981, when Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Byelorussia stated that:

History gives us examples of growth to perfection; eschatology calls us to meet God, to that point in perfection when, in the words of Apostle Paul, 'God may be all in all' (1, Cor. 15, 28).⁷⁶

Perhaps the most decisive step in this direction occurred with the lifting of anathemas between Rome and Constantinople in 1965. This historical precedent has resulted in both church hierarchies' recent increased involvement in productive dialogues pursuant to mutual concelebration as Brothers in the episcopate.⁷⁷ In a similar gesture, the Moscow Patriarchate lifted the anathema from the Old Believers at the Sobor in 1971, aimed at reconciliation of the "Raskol."⁷⁸ Since the

Russian Orthodox joined the World Council of World Churches (W.C.C.) in 1961, all Orthodox churches directly or indirectly take part in the dialogues.⁷⁹ Their ecumenical involvement was summarized by the Metropolitan when he further stated that:

The source and confirmation of the authority of the Church as the God-Man Union, is the power, received from the Father, and the Authority of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Communion is the supreme seal of this unity which confession in the same Spirit of Apostolic Faith implies.⁸⁰

Ecumenism is then understood to be the pursuit of this faith in the fullest sense to re-establish the broken communion.⁸¹ Therefore, ecumenical practice must first be determined by ecclesiological premises.⁸²

An illustration of exercising this ecclesiastical prerogative was taken by Metropolitan Nikodim, President of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of Foreign Church Affairs, who issued the right for Roman Catholics and Old Believers to receive Communion and Extreme Unction from Russian Orthodox priests.⁸³ This Declaration was explained as being a practical matter, considering the shortage of available clergy to attend to the needs of Believers. The Moscow Patriarchate has also indicated that their ecumenical policy is partially governed by genuine religious interests, through their cooperation with other churches. They have affected more substantial developments toward the restoration of eucharistic communion with Rome than any other Orthodox Church.⁸⁴ This is significant when considered in combination with the Roman Catholic Church's issuance of the "Directory," concerning Ecumenical matters, based on the ecclesiology of Vatican II. Officially, this promoted administration of the sacraments of Confession, Communion, and Extreme Unction to Orthodox believers for pastoral reasons.⁸⁵

When the official dialogue began between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches at Patmos and Rhodes in June, 1980, it represented a development significantly promoted by five theological consultations from 1967 to 1980, between representatives of the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches who had met to discuss the church's role in the modern world.⁸⁶ Following the course set by his predecessors, John XXIII and Paul VI, Pope John Paul II's ecumenical thrust has been directed strongly towards conciliation with the Orthodox Church. Through his directives, the Catholic leadership under him have totally abandoned consideration of past abusive "uniat" strategies.⁸⁷

This policy also may be the basis of the refusal of Cardinal Joseph Slipyj's request for authorization of an autocephalous Ukrain-

ian Patriarchate in 1980. Such a separate entity may have had an antagonistic effect on the Orthodox community.⁸⁸ Pope John Paul II proposed instead a workable system of collegiate cooperation between Slipyj and the Ukrainian bishops, resulting in the Ukrainian synod's relief and compliance with the Pope's request, signaling a triumph for both sides and appeasement to Eastern Orthodoxy. All of these developments are important steps to a resolution of the major repercussions stemming from the great schism of 1054. As dialogues between the eastern and western Orthodox Catholic churches progress, the final Ecumenical Council will convene, and foremost on its agenda will be the topic of inter-communion between the divided factions. Once this is officially sanctioned, the ecclesiological goal of religious reunification will be attained.

RECENT SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN GRECO-RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY

In the post-schismatic period, there erupted ecclesiastical nationalism among the Orthodox christian Greeks, Latins, Arabs, Russians, Bulgarians and Romanians.⁸⁹ While this spirit of nationalism was condemned by the church as having a catastrophic effect upon its unity, it grew stronger with time until the 20th century. In the Soviet Union, as faith in the nationalist materialist ideology of Marxist-Leninism recedes, interest in spiritual transcendence is increasing. It appears that Russia's christian heritage is returning to play a major role in its future secular history.⁹⁰

The re-establishment of the Patriarchate by the Council of 1917-18 was viewed by the Russian Church as a symbol of its acquisition of freedom from state interference. However, an increasing number of Orthodox priests, such as Father Gleb Yakunin, deny this and contend that: "Today the Patriarch as head of the Church merely functions within the scope allowed for it by the Soviet State."⁹¹

For all the concessions which the Russian Orthodox church received during and after the Second World War, the Moscow Patriarchate had to pay the price of submission to the atheistic government of the U.S.S.R. and follow its foreign policy. Officially, it is used by the Soviet government in the attainment of its political goals.⁹²

While the Orthodox hierarchy admits its inability to carry out any apostolic work within the Soviet Union, it is ready to assist in spreading Orthodoxy throughout the free world. This self-realization explains why the Church, in 1970 agreed to grant autocephaly (ecclesiastical autonomy) to the American and Japanese Orthodox

churches — two of the largest in developed countries of the free world.⁹³

The Church could not identify herself with existing secular structures, so as to remain faithful to her own true identity.⁹⁴ Therefore, in the 1960's the Church turned to genuine ecumenism despite Khrushchev's persecution, in the realization that salvation must be found within christian unity and solidarity of belief against totalitarian atheism. In particular, theologians, clergy and members of the religious intelligentsia have moved closer to Roman Catholicism.⁹⁵ Unofficial relations and cooperation have been developing, especially among Russian Orthodox clergy and Roman Catholics, both in the U.S.S.R. and abroad.

During this period of reunification, Metropolitan Nikolai delivered an enthusiastic speech for Christian socio-political solidarity at the World Council of Churches meeting in Rhodes, emphasizing that:

We Christians must stand above the political contradictions of our time and give to the divided people an example of unity and peace, brotherhood and love, removing ourselves from all self-sufficient isolationism and unfriendly relations to each other.⁹⁶

Metropolitan Nikolai's heroic witness was testimony to the importance of the Moscow Patriarchate's presence at such peace conferences and ecumenical meetings because of the opportunity offered the Russian Orthodox Church to step out of its international isolation. Its participation in the ecumenical movement is the only real connection that the Russian Orthodox Church has abroad.⁹⁷ One of the most significant developments directly related to this exposure manifested itself last year at the International Inter-Religious Peace Conference, when Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk sent the joint religious declaration to the U.N. General Assembly on Disarmament.⁹⁸

While the Orthodox Church has stated officially that it must work both socially and politically for the well-being of all, it is imperative that she cooperate "unofficially" with other Christians when the state oppresses her right to free expression.⁹⁹ This paradox constitutes the working interface within which believer's activist groups of ever-increasing membership operate in the Soviet Union.

There are now more religious people in the educated classes of the Soviet Union than ever before in the 20th century.¹⁰⁰ Developments along these lines have resulted in a newly found ecumenical solidarity between Christians of different traditions, who realize the need to unite in the face of persecution. Their needs have precipitated

a resurgence in *Vekhovshchina* (modern correlate to the original *Vekhi* movement), identifying themselves with the trend beginning with Vladimir Solovyov, and leading straight toward Berdyaev, Bulgakov, and to *Vekhi* (Signposts).¹⁰¹ Officially, these members of the intelligentsia have been "misguided," instead of following the "correct" path from Radishchev via Belinsky, Herzen, Chernishevsky and Pisarev to the Marxists as expressed by Lenin.¹⁰²

The new religious consciousness of members of the intelligentsia in the Soviet Union owes its ideology primarily to Vladimir Solovyov. Only through his intervention was the slavophile contribution to Russian philosophy after 1905 made possible.¹⁰³ It allowed for future generations to apply philosophical and religious ideas without falling into rigid nationalistic defensiveness. Solovyov therefore became the bridge over which the liberal Russian intelligentsia were able to pass from "legal Marxism" to the Slavophile Orthodox interpretation.

Solovyov's successors, Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944) and Nicolas Berdyaev (1874-1948), who, like their teacher, were initially adherents of Marxism.¹⁰⁴ They subsequently became converted to Christianity through exposure to Solovyov's moral philosophy and, together, formed a new school of religious philosophy based upon his universalism. Their collaborative publication of related articles produced wide repercussions in Russian society. A major exposition of this socio-political philosophy appeared in the book *Problems of Idealism*, where Berdyaev stated:

Marxism was in itself a crisis of consciousness for intellectuals . . . It contained cultural interests which were alien to earlier Russian intellectuals.¹⁰⁵

Addressing this problem further, both he and Bulgakov, along with P. Struve and S. Frank, published a collection of essays entitled *Signposts (Vekhi)* in 1908-09. In these essays, criticism was leveled against Marxist intellectuals who were negligent in their "religious indifference" and concern for the socio-cultural tradition of their opposition (*narodniki*).¹⁰⁶ The "Vekhi" authors attracted a small group of sympathizers receptive to the enlightened philosophical insights of former Marxists converted to christian idealism. However, support diminished and virtually disappeared as the revolutionary vanguard mobilized forces to elevate class consciousness. Bulgakov, thoroughly convinced that Solovyov's philosophy offered the contemporary consciousness an integral and consistently developed christian world view, decided to become a priest and entered the Moscow Theological Academy. While there, he joined forces with a Father

Pavel Florenski (1882-1943), who also accepted Solovyov's Sophiological view of metaphysics and, together, they formed the "Union of Christian Struggle," which devoted itself to an active and radical renewal of the social order in the spirit of Solovyov's ideas related to "Christian Sociality," a doctrine adopted by Merezhkovski and Berdyaev as well.¹⁰⁷

Despite valiant efforts, these representatives of the new "religious consciousness" could not turn the tide of revolution in 1917. Yet, with it, came the opportunity to re-establish the Moscow Patriarchate following the revolution. Father Bulgakov, at that time, was one of the major proponents of its cause and optimistic in regards to its potential. Both he and Berdyaev founded the journal, *Voprosy Zhizni*. Through this publication, as in the earlier "Vekhi" articles, they tried to direct the ecclesiastical emphasis away from "mystical self-rapture and irresponsible daydreaming," to "heroism and historical realism."¹⁰⁸ These efforts would then, in turn, lead the people back to the true path of christianity.

However, the nationalist sentiment within the Patriarchate was too strong to allow it any degree of autonomy and, in 1923, the frustrated Sergius Bulgakov and Nicolas Berdyaev found themselves in Paris, exiled from their native Russia.¹⁰⁹ Their efforts, however, were not in vain and, in 1925, Bulgakov became dean of the Russian Orthodox Academy at Paris, where he taught and further developed his version of Solovyov's religious philosophy. He became a renowned proponent of the ecumenical movement and participated in the Conferences of Lausanne (1927) and at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937.¹¹⁰

Berdyaev, with the help of the American Y.M.C.A., moved to Berlin in 1924, and then to Paris where he founded a Religio-Philosophical Academy, became editor of the journal "Put," (The Path), and headed the religious publishing house of the Y.M.C.A. Press.¹¹¹ His emphasis upon social and political writing is strongly interwoven with the moralistic and eschatological elements of Solovyov. Before the advent of World War II, his idealistic work reached international fame.

Within the Soviet Union, initially, this movement appeared to be extinct. However, the problems envisioned by the "Vekhi" idealists continued to persist and intensify. If anything, their concerns appear to have a greater chance of being recognized now and in the future than when they had been voiced originally.¹¹² This becomes apparent with the emergence of the "Veche" movement of the early 70's,

which emphasized a neo-slavophile alternative to Marxist-Leninism based upon a "moral-christian" regeneration of Soviet society from within.¹¹³ The leader of the samizdat journal *Veche* was Vladimir Osipov, who associated the cultural renaissance of Orthodoxy with the human rights movement. Its influential ideology had helped to spawn a revival adhered to by such influential thinkers as Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Igor Shafarevich and a priest, Father Gleb Yakunin.¹¹⁴

In 1975, Father Yakunin and a physicist named Lev Regelson wrote an appeal to the World Council of churches, asking to return to the early christian tradition and to defend religious freedom throughout the world.¹¹⁵ The following year, these two, along with Father Dimitri Dudko, Father Zheludkov, and a group of Orthodox laymen, signed an ecumenical appeal with Roman Catholics, Baptists, Adventists and Pentecostals. This appeal, requesting a cessation of religious persecution, was sent in 1976 to the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet.¹¹⁶ This historical event marked the first establishment of a christian ecumenical defense of religious rights in the Soviet Union.

Within six months, the "Christian Committee for the Defense of Believer's Rights in the U.S.S.R." (VSKHSON) was founded by Orthodox christians and led by Father Yakunin. This organization was formed because of the Orthodox church's flawed hierarchal structure, which does not allow for defense of its members' civil rights. The Christian Committee's Founding Declaration states:

At present, the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church and the leaders of other religious organizations do not concern themselves with the defense of Believers' Rights, for a variety of reasons. In such circumstances, the Christian Community has to make the legal defense of Believers its own concern.¹¹⁷

The ecumenical nature in which they operate has made itself heard outside of the U.S.S.R. as well. In 1978, the Christian Committee wrote a letter to Ecumenical Patriarch Demitrios, appealing for aid to the Russian Orthodox church since its bishops had failed to defend Christians. Their request stated that:

If the forces of ecumenical Orthodoxy, and its free voice do not come to the aid of the captive Russian Church, then only divine intervention will be able to help us.¹¹⁸

Following this appeal, the Committee addressed three documents to the Pope, expressing hope that the world establish good relations with the Russian Orthodox church in full understanding of its relationship with the state.¹¹⁹ Subsequently, these efforts have won the support of the Roman Catholic church as well as other denominations, who

credit them with heading a "highly practical ecumenical venture."¹²⁰ Its effectiveness has spread beyond the immediate borders of the U.S.S.R. and, along with the Polish Solidarity movement, has served as a prototype for similar groups' formation in Soviet bloc countries. Following their example, in 1978 "The Catholic Committee for Defense of Believers' Rights" arose in Lithuania, along with the "Christian Committee for Defense of Religious Freedom" and "Freedom of Conscience," in Romania.¹²¹ While these committees inspire more socio-political involvement on the part of believers, they deny having any political aspirations and remain loyal to Soviet laws.

Christianity within the Soviet Union constitutes a powerful social base representing millions of Believers.¹²² This fact intimidates authorities, who are afraid of drawing the broad strata of believers into a protest movement against religious oppression. Father Yakunin referred to this potential in his report to the Christian Committee on August 15, 1979, when he stated that:

An awakening and growth of religious consciousness is happening in Russia today. Those who even yesterday were atheist are drawn to religion and are moving toward religion. Primarily, the intelligentsia and the youth are turning to God.¹²³

Within this report, considered to be the most important of all the Christian Committee documents, is contained perhaps the clearest contemporary representation of Solovyov's socio-political implications of ecclesiological involvement. In reference to his section dealing with church hierarchy, Father Yakunin, speaking for the Christian Committee and its affiliate members stated that:

We are ready to accept any other hierarchy, if the Moscow Patriarchate will not come to us. Let it be anyone, so long as they bring us veneration of God and the light of Orthodox truth.¹²⁴

The majority of this paper consists of well-documented evidence verifying the virtually complete submission of the Russian Orthodox church to the Soviet state. Father Yakunin paid the price of imprisonment for releasing this statement and related activities in November, 1979, as did Father Dudko on January 15, 1980.¹²⁵ During the leaders' incarceration, however, Father Vasili Fonchenkov, who joined the Committee in May of 1979, and Father Nikolai Gainov, who joined in November of 1979, have assumed administrative positions for the Committee. Upon joining, Father Fonchenkov indicated that the Moscow Patriarchate had never condemned the activities of the Christian Committee. It appears up to the present time that he has continued involvement with the organization, along with an unimpeded lecturing position at the Moscow Theological School¹²⁶

The eschatological role of every christian was prophetically announced by Solovyov at the end of the 19th century, and repeated by Berdyaev and his followers who foresaw the inevitability of Russia's transformation. Both predicted that its Nationalist Socialism would result in a religious reconversion to Christian socialism and inspire a corresponding renaissance in the West.¹²⁷ Approaching the end of the 20th century, this same eschatological message was echoed by Father Dudko before his imprisonment in 1980:

The resurrection of Russia depends on our (i.e., all Christians) solidarity. Remember that if Russia isn't reconverted, a new Golgotha will shroud the whole world. Either the resurrection, or the ruin of us all: not only Russia, but all the world, is faced with this choice.¹²⁸

CONCLUSION

Vladimir Solovyov's cosmology and christian moral philosophy has a powerful appeal to opponents who choose to enlist his services in subduing the ideological "Goliath" of Marxist-Leninist atheism. The resurgence of Solovyov's "Vekhi" movement in the U.S.S.R. today is testimony to his prophetic vision of the historical dialectic progress evolving beyond materialistically-based nationalism. Marxist-Leninist socialism has served its role as antithesis to the Eastern Orthodox nationalism and generated a synthesis of universal christian socialism. This new "proletariat" of the religious renaissance is composed of the upcoming generation of Soviet youth and members of intelligentsia. Their manifesto seeks to liberate humanity from the materialistically-based Marxist nationalist "opiate of the masses," and strives in the socio-political sphere to end religious oppression by the State. Solovyov asserts that "Essence precedes Existence," thereby standing Marx on his head and righting Hegel back onto his feet.

In his role as prophet, Solovyov served as guide to the christian world in prescribing socio-political directives pursuant to a fuller realization of God's kingdom. His primary aim was to establish through the unconditional principle of morality the complete inner connection between true religion and social politics. This moral philosophy constituted the laws of higher idealism which were responsible for having converted many who started out as Marxists, especially Bulgakov and Berdyaev.

Solovyov saw man as the natural mediator between God and mystical being, who possessed an active religious faith as the focal point of all reality. Throughout his work, he issued a verdict against both socialist and capitalist materialism. Solovyov felt, however, that socialism in its 20th century form would represent a phase in the

historical dialectic leading to a purification of the Orthodox faith and freedom from nationalism.

To Solovyov, the role of the Church consisted of binding this world to the kingdom of God. Unless ecclesiological unity was attained in the Church, political unity would be impossible. Since the schism of 1054, Eastern Orthodoxy had become autocephalous and was subservient to the national power of state authority, rendering it false to its mission. The Russian Orthodox church was one such example of this, having been subjugated to the State-appointed procurator of the Holy Synod. Solovyov realized that the problems confronting the Orthodox church and the Russian state were linked. To resolve them, it would be necessary to lift the anathema of 1667 (raskol) and end church censorship. He felt that the autocephalous Eastern Orthodox churches could then reunite with the universal Roman Catholic Church and constitute an ecclesiological solidarity freed from totalitarian State suppression. This reunification would not be a matter of conversion for either church, but rather a synthesis both greater and different from either component. He predicted that each would emerge through an ecumenical council having retained their structural integrity along with the abolition of exclusiveness.

In the sphere of the State, Solovyov felt that societies calling themselves christian must either renounce that name or accept the responsibility of harmonizing all political and social relations with christian principles. Selfish egoism, in all of its nationalist forms, must be transcended. Its distortion in the world was merely a magnified reflection of the fundamental evil in man's nature. Christianity, alone, was capable of imbuing social organizations with moral solidarity. Ultimately, this would result in "freedom for all the oppressed, protection for all the weak, social justice, and christian peace. Russia's role in history would then consist of purifying christianity of its corruptive humanistic character, and synthesizing a universal church from it.

While the re-establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate occurred in 1917, it was still bound by the State and used by the Soviet government for political goals. Since the Russian church's nationalist character could not identify herself with an atheistic, secular structure, the clergy sought ecclesiastical support and guidance outside of the Orthodox sphere, especially towards Rome on the unofficial level. External exposure at the official level was beneficial also, and has resulted in cooperative peace conferences with the Roman Catholic Church through Pax Christi and other Orthodox churches through

the World Council of Churches (W.C.C.).

Since their membership in the W.C.C. in 1961, all autocephalous Eastern Orthodox have progressed towards greater ecumenical unity. Joint actions by both the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholics have resulted in acceptance of inter-communion within the Soviet Union. The Russian Orthodox Church has also been a leading factor in promoting ecumenical dialogue between other Orthodox churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

Once the sacerdotal union was accomplished, Solovyov sought to establish through the unconditional principle of morality the complete inner connection between true religion and social politics pursuant to a temporal union. His moral philosophy, constituting the laws of higher idealism, was responsible for converting many former Marxists. He supplemented the spiritual base in place of the material one and emphasized religion as the focal point of reality.

Berdyayev, Bulgakov and others were among these first Marxist converts who became the "new prophets" of his moral philosophy and its socio-political implications. Through their influence, and other idealists, the "Vekhi" movement got off the ground but was unable to counter the atheist socialist phase which Solovyov had predicted as inevitable. Together, these disciples founded the prototype of the current religious rights movement in the U.S.S.R., the "Union of Christian Struggle" according to Solovyov's concept of christian socialism. Their efforts initially consisted of trying to redirect the ecclesiastical emphasis away from systical self-rapture to historical realism and its socio-political responsibility.

Despite a period of dormancy, the principles of the "Vekhi" idealists appear to have more chance of success now and in the future than when they had first appeared. The appearance of the "Veche" movement of the 1970s, which emphasized a neo-slavophile alternative to Marxism, was based upon a moral, christian regeneration of Soviet society from within. This human rights movement spawned a revival which was adhered to by writers such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Orthodox priests such as Gleb Yakunin and Dimitri Dudko.

Both Father Yakunin and Father Dudko, along with a group of Orthodox laymen, modern-day representatives of the "Vekhi" movement, have once again implemented Solovyov's socio-political doctrine with much success among the intellectual and new generation of Marxist-indoctrinated youth.

The socio-politically active clergy have assumed their roles as prophets among the Russian people and oppose the state oppression

of religion. Like Solovyov, they have been censored by their socialist nation and acclaimed by the Pope and western christianity. Ultimately, they believe that the world's salvation lies in promoting ecumenical solidarity among the divided members of christianity. Through this ecclesiastical reconciliation between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, they may unite with other groups, such as those in Lithuania, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland in a true solidarity of christian brotherhood. Once this communion of believers is achieved, it only remains for the divine "historical dialectic" to verify the truth of Solovyov's alternate theocentric ideology evolving beyond Marxist materialism.

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