THE REAL FACE OF RUSSIA

ESSAYS AND ARTICLES

EDITED BY
VOLODYMYR BOHDANIUK, B.A., B.Litt.

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THE RUSSIAN HISTORICAL ROOTS OF BOLSHEVISM

by

Professor YURIY BOYKO

UKRAINIAN FREE UNIVERSITY

Life urgently demands from us an explanation of the phenomenon of "Bolshevism", what it consists of, what is its historical basis, and whence it derives its vital force. It is only by outlining the solution of this basic problem that we can decide on the manner in which Bolshevism can be studied in connection with Soviet facts and reality.

When we consider the subject, "The Russian Historical Roots of Bolshevism", we are confronted by a vast amount of material which so far has not been examined in detail by anyone.

West European and American men of learning have only occasionally touched on the subject. Such works as the monograph by Prof. Dr. Roman Smal-Stocki of the University of Milwaukee, entitled *The Nationality Problem of the Soviet Union and Russian Communist Imperialism*, are happy exceptions. Neither have Ukrainian scholars so far achieved much in this respect. Among the writings which deserve mention in this connection are the articles written by D. Donzow, in which there are some excellent observations, and the pamphlet entitled *Stalinism* by M. Sciborskyj.

The Russian element in evidence in the mental make-up of Bolsheism is for the most part tendentious, and obscures rather than elucidates the subject: though it must be admitted that there are one or two interesting cases in which the authors, for some reasons or other, have endeavoured to achieve a certain amount of objectivity.

The outstanding Russian philosophers of the past century and of the beginning of this century who analysed the character of Russian intellectual life, in particular in the revolutionary sector, on numerous occasions foresaw the consequences of this mental attitude on the part of the Russian revolutionaries. Dostoievsky, in particular,

whose powers of discernment and judgment were extremely keen, succeeded in giving his readers an excellent psychological study of the type of Russian revolutionary who was heading towards Bolshevism.[1] Hatred of the revolution whetted Dostoievsky's analytical faculties, and though his Stavrogin, his Shigalyov, and his Verkhovensky manifest certain exaggerated traits he nevertheless succeeded in drawing the attention of his readers to these symptoms, which at that time were still in the course of development. In an excellent manner Dostoievsky depicts the narrow mental attitude of the Russian revolutionary, the precursor of Bolshevism — his fanatical adherence to dogma, to which he would like to adjust the world, his atheist principles, according to which man was to supersede God. In his heroes Dostoievsky shows us the crazy world of Messianism which inspires the revolutionaries.

On reading Dostoievsky we find in his mental complex an intricate web of feelings, experiences, and ideas which leads us directly into the sphere of the peculiar mental make-up of Bolshevism. Dostoievsky foresaw many things which caused him to shudder, and similarly we, too, shudder at his mental vision. He himself, by his own mentality, helps us to understand the phenomenon of Bolshevism. In this respect Dostoievsky paved the way for the Russian author, Merezhkovsky, who, in connection with the attempt on the part of the Bolsheviks to assume power during the December uprising of 1905 in Moscow, undertook to depict the intellectual aspect of Bolshevism in his sketches, entitled *Cad of the Future (Gryadushchiy Kham)* and to forecast the future development of Bolshevism. Indignant at the events of the revolution, Merezhkovsky described Bolshevism as the expression of an unwholesome mental attitude on the part of the Russians, drew attention to the sources of Bolshevism, and interpreted the meaning of the pictures painted by Dostoievsky.[2]

During the turmoil of the revolution, when feelings of sorrow, of having been outraged, of hatred still smouldered in the hearts of the representatives of the social classes hat had left the country, no one paused to consider the future political consequences which this union of Bolshevism and the Russian soul might have. Thus the books written by Berdyayev at that time are now of considerable interest. Berdyayev examined the nature of Bolshevism in his books, *Dostoievsky's Philosophy of the World, The Philosophy of Inequality,* etc.

During the early years of Communism Berdyavev ruthlessly exposed the morbid Russian mind in Bolshevism. In the year 1923 he wrote as follows:

1) F. Dostoievsky, *The Possessed.*
2) D. Merezhkovsky, *Polnoye sobranie sochineniy,* Vol. 13. Moscow, 1914.

> "Only by simple humility and remorse and by stern self-discipline of its mind can the Russian nation attain a new life and a spiritual rebirth. Only in this way can the Russian nation regain its spiritual strength. The renunciation of Messianist aspirations should strengthen the national mission of Russia[3]."

Later, however, Berdyayev was less severe in his criticism and designated Bolshevism as only a partial expression of the Russian soul. This is evident in his work, *The Russian Idea,* which appeared in Paris in 1946. Here Berdyayev sets himself the task of tracing the logic of events in the history of Russia and of examining the ways of intellectual self-fulfilment of the Russian people. A certain amount of attention is devoted to the subject of Bolshevism in every section of the book, and the author mentions — though, it must be admitted, in a biassed way — the potential and dynamic elements in Russian intellectual life of the 19th and 20th centuries which later created Bolshevism. Here Bolshevism appears to be a temporary stage in the historical development of the Russian people which is to be logically surmounted by the development of the Russian mentality.

In Berdyayev's opinion the elements which are opposed to Bolshevism are to be sought in the "realm of the Holy Ghost" among the Russians, in Russian idealism and in Russian orthodoxy. In describing these — in his opinion positive — qualities of the Russian soul Berdyayev is an impressionist, though he rightly comprehends the historical preconditions of Bolshevism and in doing so relies on actual facts.

Towards the end of his life Berdyayev held the opinion that Bolshevism is the expression of Russian Messianism, though in a distorted form. He now regards Messianism as a permanent quality of Russian historical consciousness and Bolshevism as its historical form. This subjective treatment of Bolshevism deprives historical and philosophical writers of their power of discerning the misanthropical nature of the phenomenon concerned. The fact must not be overlooked that Berdyayev remained a Russian imperialist, and for this reason it is futile to look for any indication in his works of the Russian chauvinism of the Bolsheviks.

Berdyayev decided in favour of Bolshevism towards the end of his life, and this is characteristic of the Russian writers who criticize Bolshevism.

In his book, *The Origin of Bolshevism (Proiskhozhdenie bol'shevizma)* published in New York in 1946, the well-known Russian writer, Menshevik F. Dan, quite openly idealises the Kremlin rulers and expresses the conviction that they will help Russia to assert her historical role in the world.

Dan completely fails to understand the true nature of the Soviet regime, as can be seen from his statement to the effect that the

3) N. Berdyayev: *Mirosozertsanie Dostoyevskogo,* p. 194. Prague, 1923.

Stalinist Constitution of 1936 represents a step forward in the direction of democracy. There are certain accurate statements in his book which show the connection between Bolshevism and the fundamenal traits of the Russian mentality, but on the whole the work gives the reader an entirely false impression of Bolshevism. Both Dan and Berdyayev are examples of the intellectual capitulation of Russian emigrants in the face of the present Moscow regime, and for this reason their works cannot be accepted as a basis from which to proceed if one wishes to examine Bolshevism. The only material in their works — and in the case of Berdyayev more so than in the case of Dan — which is likely to be of use to anyone who wishes to examine the misanthropical nature of Russian Sovietism objectively, are certain statements and observations here and there.

Of all the Russian writers who criticize Bolshevism G. Fedotov deserves to be mentioned as the most outstanding. He attacks the idea of Russian imperialism and regrets it as an evil which represents an obstacle to the normal development of the Russian nation. Thanks to his clear-sightedness, Fedotov is in a position to elucidate the connection between Leninist Communist theory and practice and the fundamental factors of Russian history. He makes the following important statement in his work:

> "All the minorities (i. e. national minorities — Y. B.) see in their detachment from Bolshevism their severance from Russia, that has created this Bolshevism. The Russians who advocate a Greater Russia fail to understand this attitude, since they are of the opinion that we are all equally responsible for Bolshevism and that we should all enjoy the fruits of our common errors, even if it is true that the Russian party has absorbed all kinds of revolutionary and predatory elements from all the nations of Russia, though not to an equal extent. The Russians were for the most part the ideologists and founders of the party. Bolshevism established itself in Petersburg and Moscow without a struggle; there was hardly any civil war worth mentioning in Russia proper, whereas the border-countries, on the other hand, put up a fierce resistance against Bolshevism. Some factors in the tradition of Russia proper were more favourable to the growth of Bolshevism than any other soil of the imperium — and these were serfdom, the peasants' communal system of the "Obshchina", and autocracy[4]."

The fact that the above statement was made by a Russian is important. But Fedotov only expresses such and similar thoughts in passing, as it were, without troubling to lay a foundation for them. Although he breaks with the traditions of Russian imperialism, he fails to go the whole length and does not realise the extent to which imperialist tendencies have permeated Russian intellectual life and, in particular, Russian literature, which Fedotov regards as the "Conscience of the World."

On studying those Russian works which deal with the intellectual sources of Bolshevism, we are bound to discover that Russian

[4]) G. Fedotov, *Sud'ba Imperiy*, Novy Zurnal, 1947, XVI. p. 169.

scholars and writers have for the most part elucidated the subject in question in a very imperfect, one-sided, and sometimes tendentious manner.

We are thus confronted by the task in all its complicated entirety. In the course of this short essay, however, we shall only be able to outline the solution of a few important problems pertaining to this extensive subject.

Mention must above all be made of the fact that Marxism found its first adherents among the Russians, sooner than anywhere else outside Germany. Marx was hardly very pleased at this, and, in fact, he voiced his opinion in this respect with ill-concealed irony.[5] Naturally, he expected his ideas to be adopted in the first place by the "capitalistically mature" nations, where, in his opinion, the problem of the proletarian revolution was the question of the day; for this reason he was considerably surprised at the success which his ideas met with in barbarous Russia and he thus regarded his Russian supporters most warily. They, on the other hand, were full of enthusiasm for him. Annenkov was greatly interested in Marxism; the "Petrashevets" Speshnyov was absorbed by the *Misery of Philosophy* by K. Marx[6], and in his letter to Marx at the end of the 1840's and beginning of the 1850's, Sazonov, the proselyte of Marxism, again and again stresses his devotion to Marx and his ideas, and suggests the joint publication of a journal.[7]

Even in those early days the definitely Russian element in Marxism, which much later comes to the fore in Bolshevism, was evident. Sazonov tended to simplify things; he combines the nihilistic Russian attitude and his Marxist faith; he is most decidedly an anti-individualist, and advocates barbarism as a counterbalance to European civilisation. In his opinion Marxism is destined to play an important part above all in the Orient, among the Slav nations and the nations of Central Asia. He suggests plans for an international federation of the Communists of France, Germany, and Italy, in order to realise "ideas for the future" "almost without a struggle."

At the same time Sazonov supports Herzen's idea of the peculiar historical development of Russia, and the significance of the peasants' communal system, the "Obshchina", which is to serve as the basis for the future social order. He is most enthusiastic about Communist radicalism and compares it with Christianity.

Neither Sazonov nor various later adherents of Marxism received any support from Marx. This fact, however did not deter a number of Russians, during the 1860's and the 1870's, from openly showing

[5]) P. Sakulin, *Russkaya literatura i sotsializm*, I. p. 247. Moscow, 1924.
[6]) P. Sakulin, *op. cit.* p. 254. See also *Iz istorii russkoy filosofii XVIII-XIX vekov, Sbornik statey* (further quoted as *Sbornik)* p. 306. Moscow, 1952.
[7]) P. Sakulin, *op. cit.* p. 270.

their interest in Marxism and declaring themselves to be Marxists.[8] In doing so they endowed Marxism with a definitely Russian element. At first the Russian revolutionary democrats and later the extreme revolutionary elements of the national trend, the so-called "Narodniki" (Populists), were fond of quoting the ideas and even the complete works of Marx and Engels. Chernyshevsky's periodical *Sovremennik* gave Engels' work, *The Position of the Working Class in England*[9], a most enthusiastic reception, and in 1865 the journal *Russkoye Slovo*, published an abbreviated translation by Tkachov of K. Marx's work, *A Criticism of Political Economy*, which, according to a statement by Marx himself, aroused a "storm of enthusiasm" in Russia. But the first Russian adherents of Marxism, or rather its apologists, also Russified it and more or less combined it with revolutionary democratic, and later populist, convictions. This prompted Engels to remark in the conclusion of his essay, "Social Conditions in Russia", that Russia was not yet ready for Marxism. He stresses his belief that the proletarian revolution will first of all spread to the West European countries with a highly developed capitalism and will triumph there, and that it will subsequently be the turn of Russia, where the victory of socialism will be facilitated since

> "part of the population there has already adopted the intellectual results of the capitalistic development and thus, during the revolution, Russia will be able to accomplish the reconstruction of its social system almost at the same time as the West does.[10]"

The energetic fight waged by Marx and Engels against the eclectic combination of Communism and Russian revolutionism delayed the process of the Russification of Marxism, and when, in 1883, the group "Liberation of Labour" ("Osvobozhdenie Truda") declared itself to be social democratic, it first of all, in a polemical manner, opposed all branches of the Populist movement, the "Narodnichestvo", a fact which, of course, did not prevent this group from maintaining a close intellectual contact with Russian revolutionary traditions. For a long time, however, the international character of the social democratic movement was manifested, at least outwardly, the West European intellectual roots of Marxism were stressed and efforts were made to preserve its orthodoxy. For a considerable time the Russian Marxists, and in particular the Bolshevist wing, devoted themselves with fanaticism to the task of fighting to preserve the orthodoxy of Marxism. And it is in this fanatical blind adherence that we see the true Russian national characteristic, the adherence to the letter which was so typical of the Raskolniki of the 17th century.

8) *Sbornik* p. 315. Leningrad, 1951; *Perepiska K. Marksa i F. Engelsa s russkimi politicheskimi deyatelyami*, Izd. 2-oe, 1951.
9) *Sbornik*, p. 302.
10) *Perepiska*, op. cit. p. 291.

This blind adherence was also typical of the Slavophiles. Granovsky describes this characteristic of the Slavophiles as follows:

> "The entire wisdom of humanity was exhausted in the works of the holy fathers of the Greek Church which were written after its severance from the Western Church. We can only learn it; but we cannot add to it. Kireyevsky expresses this in his prose and Khomyakov in his poetry.[11]"

In the works of Marx all wisdom was contained, so his fanatical adherents affirmed, and nothing could be added to it. Plekhanov and later Lenin adhered to this principle enthusiastically. The latter, however, was destined to utter various ideas which are in keeping with Russian characteristics; at first he did this unconsciously and sought to conform to the letter. Later on, both he and Stalin were canonised and raised to the rank of saints, and their ideas adapted to the mentality of their Russian adherents. And although Lenin endeavoured to make his ideas depend on those propounded by Marx and Engels, Bolshevism nevertheless, either consciously or unconsciously, as far as the Russification of Marxism was concerned entered upon the course which Sazonov, Utkin, Tkachov and other early Russian Marxists had prepared for it.

The Russian character with its tendency to universality and its claims to a world revolution was regarded as dangerous by Marx. Whilst Marx dreamt of the world-role which the German workers' movement was to play, Bakunin, who took part in the revolutions in Vienna, Prague and Berlin, in France, Italy, and Spain, and not only became the Red phantom of Russia but also of the whole of Europe, was already opposing his ideas.

For many years Marx's interest was concentrated on his controversy with Bakunin. Incidentally, he also hated Herzen, whom he called a "half-Russian", though he believed that Herzen was a "genuine Muscovite" and ridiculed the latter's remedy for "rejuvenating Europe by means of the whip and an unlimited introduction of Kalmuck blood.[12]" Engels, too, ridiculed Herzen. He affirmed that Herzen resorted to his "Obshchina-Socialism" in order to show up his "sacred" Russia "in a more glaring light" in contrast to the degenerate West, and in order to rejuvenate and reinvigorate this degenerate West, if needs be by armed force. "The Russians possess those things which neither the degenerate French nor English, despite all their efforts, are able to achieve.[13]" Engels scoffs at the Utopian socialist ideas propounded by Herzen.

The attitude of the Bolsheviks, on the one hand, and the attitude of Marx and Engels, on the other hand, towards Herzen are thus contradictory. Lenin regarded Herzen as one of the greatest thinkers of the day and stressed Herzen's interest in the class-warfare of the

11) E. Andreyevich, *Opyt filosofii russkoy mysli*, p. 114. Petersburg, 1909.
12) *Perepiska*, op. cit., p. 293.
13) *Perepiska*, op. cit., pp. 285-286.

proletariat and in the Marxist International, and affirmed that the proletariat could realise the significance of the revolutionary theory from Herzen's example.[14] Lunacharsky regards Herzen's work as a "curative spring" which sparkles in the sun.

> "Herzen — he says — appears to us so full of youth and beauty that he truly is a hundred times more living and a hundred times more in keeping with the fiery background of our revolutionary times than the many corpses of our literature of the fairly recent past.[15]"

The various opinions held by the classicists of Marxism and Bolshevism about Herzen are very interesting, since they show us the Russian characteristic of Bolshevism and the close ties which exist between the latter and Russian cultural traditions.

Neither Lenin nor Lunacharsky object to Herzen's Russian socialist Messianism. Indeed, Lenin himself after a time strikes a Messianist note, though, at first, only softly, as the echo of former national experience, as the belief that the Russian nation is destined to be the champion of the world revolution, after it has broken asunder the weakest link in the chain of world-imperialism.

During the early years of the revolution Lenin still endeavours to remain an orthodox Marxist; he is of the opinion that the revolutionary wave will sweep all Europe after it has passed over Russia, and he believes that the Russian revolution will only be victorious if it joins forces with the victorious German proletariat. But life destroys theories. Bolshevism establishes itself in one sixth of the world. The world revolution is postponed indefinitely, and the longer it is postponed, the more the forecasts made by Marx and Engels, about the vanguard-role of the capitalistically developed countries in the so-called proletarian revolution, appear as Utopian ideas. Since they are aware of this fact the Bolsheviks now open all the sluices which they had so far kept closed, and the waves of the Russian intellectual tradition now inundate Bolshevism and radically change its appearance, which so far had, in any case, manifested genuine Russian traits.

There is a story that Bolshevism did not ally itself with the Russian patriotic idea until the 1930's. Those who affirm this would like to regard Bolshevism as a universal and international phenomenon, and they try to make it appear as though its alliance with Russian patriotism is merely a tactical manœuvre and not the expression of its inmost nature. Such an opinion reveals either complete incompetence or gross tendentiousness. The only truth in such an opinion is that Bolshevism in the past wanted to appear international.

14) V. Lenin, *Pamyati Herzena*, Soc. Izd. 4, XVIII, pp. 9-15.

15) A Lunacharsky, *Aleksandr Ivanovich Herzen*. Sbornik: *Herzen v russkoy kritike*, p. 194. Moscow, 1949.

Berdyayev was quite right when he said of Lenin, "he was a typical Russian with certain Tartar traits.[16]" One of Lenin's closest friends, Zinoviev, wrote as follows after the death of the leader of the October Revolution:

> " He was a Russian, one might say, from top to toe. He was the incarnation of Russia, and he knew it and felt it. Despite his long exile and the many years during which he lived the life of an emigrant, he personified the Russian mind and soul. When he was living in Cracow, about four and half miles away from the Russian frontier, he frequently used to drive to the frontier in order to "breathe Russian air.[17]"

Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, smiled sympathetically at Lenin's yearning for Russia — during his residence in Cracow — and affirms that he became a "terrible nationalist.[18]"

In his essay, *The National Pride of the Great Russians (O natsional'noy gordosti velikorossov)*, Lenin found a formula to combine the international catchword and his nationalism. He is proud of the democratic element in Russian culture and stresses its value, thus ensuring his nationalism, as seen from the point of view of a doctrinarian of the world revolution, a legalised and "progressive" place. This does not however mean that he feels himself in any way bound to observe this formula. When in his work, *What Is To Be Done? (Chto delat'?)*, he mentions the general importance of Russian literature as a whole and is not merely dealing with one of its branches, he maintains his former point of view as regards this literature. He continues to regard Pushkin as his literary idol, even though the democratic branch of literature cannot be ascribed to the latter.

In the hands of the Bolsheviks internationalism became the most skilled and the most modern tool of nationalism. Even in the first decade of our century the Bolsheviks made use of internationalist principles for their own national Russian interests, inasmuch as they condemned the formation of separate organisations of the proletariat of the subjugated nations in their national social democratic groups (as for instance the Jewish and the Ukrainian groups). The proclamation of the right "to national self-determination inclusive of separation", though, incidentally, it was stressed at the same time that it was not advisable to make use of this right since it would not be in the interests of the national unity of the workers, was a most cunning method to preserve the fundamental structure of the Russian imperium.

These skilful and astute tactics, however, are not an invention on the part of the Bolsheviks, but are already in evidence in Herzen's works which were written during the 1860's.

16) N. Berdyayev, *Russkaya ideya*, p. 250. Paris, 1946.

17) G. Zinoviev, *V. I. Lenin*, p. 159. Leningrad, 1925

18) N. Krupskaya, *Vospominaniya o Lenine*, p. 107. Moscow, 1931.

There can be no doubt about the fact that during the early years of the Soviet regime the international catchword was widespread and played a much more important part in Bolshevist phraseology than it did later on. But even in those days there was striking enough proof of the Russian imperialist consciousness of the Bolsheviks. In those days that staunch Ukrainian Bolshevik and national Communist, Skrypnyk, despite the fact that he possessed considerable authority in party circles, fought in vain for the incorporation of the Kuban territory and the ethnographical Ukrainian districts of the province of Kursk into the Ukrainian Soviet Republic; in those days Gorky, after his return to the Soviet Union from Capri, seized the opportunity to defame the Ukrainian language publicly when he affirmed that it was useless to translate his works into Ukrainian since everyone could understand them in Russian. The Ukrainian writer Slisarenko showed considerable courage in venturing to object to Gorky's attitude; in fact, his protest later cost him his life.

In those days the author of the well-known book *Cement* — Fedor Gladkov — expressed his definitely imperialistic views during his visit to the "Vanguard" commune in Zaporizhya in Ukraine, as follows:

> "Why revive the pre-Peter period?" he said, "why galvanise the Ukrainian language, which is already covered with dust? All this only delays the progress of socialist construction. The Ukrainian writers are endeavouring to compete with the Russian writers, but all they do is to imitate them.[19]"

And finally, those were the days in which Brashnyov's novel, *In the Smoke of Bonfires (V dymu kostrov)*, which described conditions during the civil war of 1919, appeared in Moscow in the series of publications entitled, "Library of Proletarian Writers." In this novel Ukraine is represented as a libertine, as a hotbed of counter-revolutionary movements whose members become most enthusiastic about the re-writing of signboards in the Ukrainian language, and, in a paroxysm of hate, the author depicts scenes showing the Russians taking revenge on the Ukrainians.

We are of the opinion that these few examples suffice to show that Bolshevism has never detached itself from its Russian nationalism and that its international catchwords have been nothing but a kind of mimicry.

Those who regard the internationalism of the Bolsheviks solely as mimicry, however, have failed to comprehend it completely. Their internationalism is allied to Russian Messianism, and herein lie the fundamental causes of the Russian element in Bolshevism. Messianism, the historical mission of the Russian nation in the world, is the fundamental trait of the Russian mentality throughout the centuries and finds its fulfilment in Bolshevism. In the year 1909 the Russian

19) The monthly, *Zhyttya i Revolutsiya*, 1929, II p. 95.

historian and philosopher, Andreyevich, declared that it is a permanent and mental characteristic of the Russian to regard themselves as social beings of a "higher type", to believe that they will be the first to realise the ideal of equality and brotherhood, that they will do so sooner, better, and more easily than other nations, and to maintain that Russian life offers all the necessary preconditions to enable them to realise this ideal.[20] In 1923 Nicolas Berdyayev wrote as follows in his book *Dostoievsky's Philosophy of the World:*

> "Russian Messianist consciousness is derived from the idea of a "Third Rome", it can be traced throughout the 19th century, and culminates in the works of the great Russian philosophers and writers. This Russian Messianist idea continues to exist until the 19th century, but its tragic fate becomes apparent. Imperialistic Russia had little resemblance to the "Third Rome", for here — to quote Dostoievsky's words — the Church was paralysed and its position was one of degrading dependence on the Tsar. The Russian Messianists now turned to the "Heavenly Jerusalem", since they had no Jerusalem of their own. They hoped that a new kingdom, the millennium of Christ, would be created in Russia.
>
> And then the Russian imperium fell into decay and the revolution followed; the strong fetters which had bound the Russian Church to the Russian State were torn asunder. The Russian nation tried to set up a new kingdom on earth. It substituted the "Third International" for the "Third Rome." But the consciousness of those who realised the Third International likewise manifested peculiar Messianist traits. They imagined that they were carrying the torch of the East which was to light up the path of those people who were living in the "bourgeois" darkness of the West. Such is the fate of the Russian Messianist consciousness, a fate which is apparent not only in the case of the monk, Filotey, but also in the case of Bakunin.[21]"

Berdyayev is quite right when he makes this affirmation. In the course of the 19th century the belief of the Russian people in their divine mission, a belief which continued to exist as an ecclesiastical and religious complex, was secularised and permeated various spheres of Russian intellectual life. Both the extreme reactionaries and the extreme revolutionaries were Messianists. Doomed to an inevitable fate, Messianism was heading for its pathetic manifestations. And, strange to say, even in the highest stage of its national pathos it resorted to catchwords about national self-denial.

This is already apparent in the works of the socialist visionary and mystic, Pechorin, of the 1830's, who writes:

> "How sweet it is to hate one's native country and wait impatiently for its destruction! And to see in the destruction of one's country the dawn which heralds a general rebirth!... I shall burn your twin-eagles and your very foundations and shall do what Herostrates did, but my fame will be even greater![22]"

20) Andreyevich, *Opyt filosofii russkoy mysli*, p. 38.

21) N. Berdyayev, *Mirosozertsanie Dostoyevskogo*, pp. 188-189.

22) P. Sakulin, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

Pechorin only wanted to burn his native country, guarded by the two-headed eagle, so that it should become more famous and that the morning-sun of his country should shine on the whole world.

Surely there is already a hint of the Bolshevist philosophy of the world in his words! The only difference there is lies in the fact that the Bolsheviks are definitely practical-minded and that their Messianism is realistic and calculated to be materially advantageous to the champions of this Messianist consciousness.

In their practical application of this idea the Bolsheviks adopt the idea propounded by Byelinsky, who affirmed that the Russians are the heirs of the world, since, as regards their many-sided characteristics, they adopt all kinds of characteristics from various other nations and combine these.[23] The Bolsheviks are notorious imitators of Pogodin, who was even more practical-minded than Byelinsky, and who, during the 1830's tried to arouse the enthusiasm of the Tsarist regime for his vision of Russia as a world power, and propagated Pan-Slavism as a means of ruling the word. He affirmed that Russia was destined to rule the Slav world, but that it was loath to do so since it was so modest, and added that life, however, demanded that it should do so since it was the greatest Slav nation.

"Hence the miracle that Russia rules one-ninth of the world!" Enormous riches will be found in a Russia which rules the Slav world. Pogodin goes into ecstasies about the future aspect of this power, which, concentrating on one aim and guided by the will of the Russian Tsar, is to confront Europe which has been disintegrated by conflicts.

> "I ask you, is there anyone who is a match for us? Is there anyone whom we cannot force into obedience? Does not the political fate of Europe and hence the fate of the world rest with us, if we wish to determine it?... My heart leaps for joy — oh! Russia, my country! Thou, thou alone, art destined to complete and achieve the progress of mankind![24]"

When we consider the Soviet peace propaganda of today, which is closely connected with the propaganda that the Kremlin star shall shine on the whole world, we are undoubtedly reminded of the Slavophile Khomyakov, who said that the Russian nation was peace-loving, but nevertheless destined to be the ruler.[25] What a striking coincidence of convictions!

The Bolsheviks reject Dostoievsky as a reactionary, and very few ideologists of Bolshevism are acquainted with his works. But in the logical course of national development it was precisely the Bolsheviks who were destined to comprehend and imitate the grim and

23) V. D. Byelinsky, *Sochineniya*, I, 1919, p. 449.
24) A. Pypin, *Panslavizm v yego proshlom i nastoyashchem*, 1913, pp. 87-89.
25) N. Berdyayev, *Russkaya ideya*, p. 49.

misanthropical nature of Dostoievsky's universalism, intuitively and instinctively.

Dostoievsky, the reactionary, who appeared to carry on the evolution idea of his intellectual opposite, Byelinsky, was an out-and-out chauvinist; he hated the various nations and disseminated the idea of the universal mission of the Russians. Russia, he says, has for a whole century been living not for its own interests but for those of Europe. A Russian can only be a genuine Russian if he becomes a European, for it is only then that he fulfils Russia's main task — to reconcile and combine all the nations.

> "Yes, the importance of the Russians is all-European and world-wide", he says. "To be a genuine Russian can mean and does mean... to be the brother of all men, a universal man, as it were."

Dostoievsky on numerous occasions stresses this idea of brotherhood and brotherly love for all mankind. But, as Merezhkovsky very aptly remarks, this brotherhood and this brotherly love is very suspicious. In our opinion these insistent brotherly caresses are of the same type as are described by Alexander Blok in *The Scythians:*

> "Are we to blame if your skeleton is crushed by our heavy, tender paws?"

Dostoievsky had a passion for the cultural past of Europe — its piles of ruins. He talked of his love for Europe as though it were a task, and he treated it like a programme which elevated him, on the waves of ecstasy, into realm of the divine mission; but in reality he hated Europe with all his soul, and he believed and hoped that the proletariat would destroy Europe. He was of the opinion that the Germans were a people with no future, and that the French would destroy themselves, and affirmed that "it is futile to mourn for such people."

He was convinced that Europe would be inundated by Russia. In his divided feelings towards Europe, in his preachings about the brotherhood of nations in which he conceals his hatred of these same nations and his predatory greed, Dostoievsky is the precursor of Bolshevism. And yet he has a strange effect on the Bolsheviks, for he reveals the pathology of the nihilism of the Russian revolution, the pathology in which Bolshevism recognises itself.

The revolutionary democrat, Serno-Solovyevich, whom Lenin greatly respected and regarded as one of the precursors of Russian social democracy, was likewise a Messianist. He had visions of Russia conquering the world and becoming supreme, a plan which was to be made possible by rounding up the masses for social and state tasks. And just as the Bolsheviks nowadays draw up Five-Year Plans, in order to "catch up with and overtake" the other nations, so, too, Serno-Solovyovich in the past drew up a twenty-five-year plan which was to ensure Russia the highest position in the world.[26]

26) V. Romanenko, "Filosofskiye vzglyady N. A. Sterno-Solovyevicha" Sbornik: *Iz istorii russkoy filosofii XVIII-XIX vv.* p., 212.

Bolshevism thus reveals various aspects of the Russian Messianist consciousness: on the one hand, many of its monstrosities; on the other hand, the Russian Messianist conciousness which is at the root of the chief Bolshevist menace to mankind.

Another organic defect of the Russian soul is likewise concealed in the totalitarian quality of Bolshevism. Lenin and his successors have merely disclosed and augmented it, and have realised that which had long lain hidden in the Russian nation. It is precisely this same defect which filled Pogodin with enthusiasm in the 1830's and about which he wrote in his report to the Russian government. In his opinion the Russian imperium was the expression of the highest form of harmony; all the various forces form one single mechanism, which can be simply and successfully operated by one hand, namely by the hand of the Tsar, who with a single movement of his hand can start this mechanism and give it a certain direction and a corresponding speed. This mechanism is inspired by one feeling alone.[27] These words reveal the author's enthusiasm for an imaginary perfection of the totalitarian system, which during the 19th century — that is to say in the days of the Tsar — was still not quite attainable, but which eventually became reality under the Bolshevist system with one-man dictatorship and its alarming "unity of thought" of the Russian nation.

Entire generations, both of reactionaries and revolutionaries, have striven to realise this totalitarian system. The Russian intelligentsia always thought in terms of totalitarianism; monkish fanaticism constantly narrowed down and simplified its consciousness.

> "One must never permit foreign ideas", wrote "the Westerniser" Ogaryov, "conviction is not a personal matter, but a general gain.[28]"

The Slavophile Kireyevsky regarded the "Unity of Thought" as the noblest quality of the Russian people:

> "There had always been a large number of monasteries scattered throughout the vast country of Russia", he wrote, "and these served as the source of enlightenment. From here the light of self-confidence and of learning emanated, evenly and uniformly, to various tribes and principalities.[29]"

Byelinsky regarded the totalitarian self-confidence of the Russians as a national fate, and wrote as follows:

> "Life is a mouse-trap and we are the mice. Some of us manage to seize hold of the bait and escape from the trap, but the majority of us perish and have perhaps only smelt at the bait... Let us therefore drink and enjoy ourselves, if we can; today belongs to us, for no one listens to our lamentations! There is only one universe, and we are only silhouttes, the waves of the ocean — there is only one ocean, but there have been many waves, there are and will be many waves in the future.[30]"

27) A. Pypin, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-89.
28) *Iz istorii russkoy fil.* XVIII-XIX v., p. 144.
29) G. Plekhanov, *Sochineniya*, XXIII, p. 190.
30) J. Boyko, "Visarion Byelinskyi i bolshevyzm", *Ukrains'kyi Samostiynyk*, 15. 7. 1952, No. 25 (126), p. 3.

This surely is the origin of the historical consciousness of the Soviet Russian man, who has resigned himself to being a "silhouette" and a "wave of the ocean."

And here we encounter an important characteristic of Russian history, a characteristic which has been in evidence in particular under Bolshevism. The administrative course of development in Russian history and its impersonal aspect had already been emphasised by Klyuchevsky.

This idea is stressed in particular by Andreyevich, in his work, "Characteristic Features in the History of Russian Literature of the 19th Century", where he writes as follows:

> "Russian history has actually never (with the exception of a few rare and striking cases) given a person freedom, either as regards personal work or initiative. "Personality" has always been held in fetters and has been confined within narrow limits, in ignorance, in humble devotion, and in slavish subjugation. Countless numbers have defended the country against the approaching enemy, and conquered and colonised vast territories. In Russian history we see, above all, the tedious and silent work of the masses, who do not count their sacrifices or trouble themselves with thoughts of these sacrifiices, who dig graves for the masses so that other masses can walk over them. It is the eternal repetition of the living bridge, which a well-known artist has depicted: a pit filled with soldiers and the artillery rolls over their heads.[31]"

These significant words were written in the year 1902, and they came true in the Soviet Union during World War II.

In their mechanisation of man and in the manner in which they have misused man for their own aims, the Bolsheviks have gone to even greater lengths than Dostoievsky ever imagined. Those who saw with their own eyes the hordes of emaciated, famished, and confused creatures, who, with the stupidity of locusts, swarmed into Ukraine in the spring 1943, in order to launch an offensive against the Germans — those who saw them, as they pushed forwards, silently and resigned to their fate, only to be mown down by cannon fire as blades of grass are mown down by a scythe — those who saw all this will fully realise the extent to which the Russian totalitarian system has already mechanised men and, in keeping with the Russian tradition, has trained them to abandon their instincts of self-preservation completely. Masses trained in the spirit of totalitarianism and ruled by a psychological complex are a grim and dreadful spectacle, which stands in front of the gateway to the future like a ghost.

In the course of Russian history there have hardly ever been any personalities who manifested an initiative of their own. On the contrary, Russian history has to a very great extent practised despotism. The tyrant is the opposite pole to the amorphous masses, which can only obey a tyrant. A superman, who is omnipotent, rules

31) E. Solovyov (Andreyevich), *Ocherki po istorii russkoy literatury XIX v.*, p. 96. Petersburg, 1902.

the masses. The mysticism of the deification of the people's leader resembles the deification of the Tsar, but it has been more forcibly impressed on the masses.

Paradoxical though it may seem, another factor of Russian historical collectivism is likewise of decisive importance. In former days the Slavophiles announced their distrust of the personal "ego", and they were only prepared to recognise mass-mentality which, in their opinion, was more powerful than individual mentality.

Later on, the "Populists" (Narodniki) exaggerated this idea until it became the deification of the mujik, or simple peasant. To become one of the people was, in the opinion of the active supporters of this idea at that time, to endeavour to find national wisdom. Bolshevism has adopted this tradition of paying homage to mass-mentality to the detriment of individual mentality — with the exception of the dictator, of course!

Bakunin, as though he foresaw future events, affirmed that despotism is most powerful if it is based on a false representation of the people. And this has actually been proved correct in the Soviet democracy.

Space and time do not permit us to describe other truly Russian characteristics of Bolshevism in detail. One of these characteristics is the nihilist attitude which, as far as the Russian thinkers of the 1860's were concerned, "Bazarov", Pisarev, and others, was merely a theory and a manifestation, but has become a grandiose social practice with the Bolsheviks. The enthusiasm shown for the reflexology of the 1920's is merely a continuation of Bazarov's experiments with frogs. The restriction of literature exclusively to "socialist realism" is merely a continuation of the daring utilitarianism manifested by Pisarev, who considered that boots were of more value than Shakespeare's works.

The anti-religious, materialistic attitude of Bolshevism is not merely a continuation of Marx's theory, namely that "Religion" means "Opium for the Masses."

Recent Soviet investigation reveal that some of the conspirators of the Decembrist Revolt had already taken an anti-religious catchword as their motto. The anti-religious attitude of the Russians was frequently accompanied by a form of hysteria which reminded one of the Russian "klikushestvo." And the anti-religious attitude of Byelinsky and Bakunin was of the same nature; a similar type of hysteria was manifested for a time by the Bolsheviks in their religious policy, inasmuch as they allowed the instincts of the fanatical masses, who reviled all that was holy, free play. This fanaticism is re-echoed today in the fact that the Church is only allowed to exist on sufferance by the state.

The Bolshevist philosophy of the world contains various peculiar characteristics of the Russian soul and of Russian historical and psychological experience. Bolshevism can be likened to a magnifying glass which, when it unites various rays of the Russian philosophy of the world in one concentrated beam, is capable of setting the world on fire. Russian self-confidence shows up most perfectly in the prism of Bolshevism and reveals its dangerous and destructive elements. Bolshevism is in fact a manifestation of the Russian mentality, and this mentality in its destructive perfection, represents a terrible danger for the entire world.

Even though certain individual elements of the Russian mentality and of Russian culture may exercise a certain power of attraction on persons of the West, one must not overlook the fact that such bait contains a poison, which can only have the effect of nectar when it is not taken in concentrated doses.

There are, however, other elements in the Russian mentality which lead one to hope that seeds of a kind other than those of Bolshevism may some day flourish on this soil. Russia needs the aid of all the forces of mankind as a whole, in order to purge itself and be restored to health.
