

# OCCULT ROOTS OF BOLSHEVISM



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## **BOOKS**

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## The Occult Roots of Bolshevism and their Ramifications

Communism designates a real or targeted state of affairs: the pooling of goods and, as opposed to individualism, the system of community life characterized by such pooling. It also designates a doctrine: the social doctrine which advocates the pooling of goods, the suppression of individual property; the doctrine which advocates absolute equality; the doctrine which advocates an economic and social organization based on the system of collective ownership of the means of production and exchange (socialism as a step towards integral communism). In a special sense, it designates the social organization conceived by Marx as the final stage of social evolution activated by the struggle of the proletariat and having to end in a society without classes, without private property, without exploitation of man by society. 'man, in which goods are distributed to each according to his needs: this is integral communism. As a political, economic and social system, communism has been advocated in the Soviet Union since the 1917 putsch and in a number of other countries following it.

This doctrine did not arise by spontaneous generation in the nineteenth century. It has its roots in ancient religions, in the Judaic religion and in the Christian religion in general and in the Kabbalah in particular (1).

### The racial factor

The most ruthless, if not the most convincing, analyses of Russian national character have been made by the Russians themselves, who are prone to morbid introspection and also exaggeration and often give in to self-deprecation. This is how Peter the Great declared: "We can treat other European peoples like human beings, but mine is cattle." Tchaadayev who was at the head of the revolutionary movement under the reign of Nicholas I and encouraged his fellow citizens to turn to Western Europe described Russia as a superfluous member of the body of humanity. It will therefore not be bad to quote one of the rare Russian psychologists who does not fall into self-flagellation and exaggeration and paints his fellow citizens in colors which produce a certain effect. The Russian man, writes Mr Nikitenko, does not know the law or justice. His morality is the result of his good humor, which, being neither formed nor reinforced by conscious principles, sometimes prompts him to act but is frequently overwhelmed by other more primitive instincts. A Russian can become tiring from stealing, drinking and cheating but, despite everything, there is something about him that captivates you and attracts you [...] It seems to me that this indefinable something is the psychic current, inherent in some representatives of the Russian people, the latent spiritual force which, as the mystics would say, transforms changing moods into fleeting memories of a prenatal state or fleeting forebodings of a wonderful future. For the Russian superior type, whether educated or illiterate, is attracted, at least speculatively, by high ideals and is also

able to aspire to them for a time with superb disregard of consequences, regardless of the road he is following but without method and without perseverance. This often results in situations as tragicomic as that in which the genie found himself who, staring at the stars, stumbled and fell into a bog. The boundaries between the dream world and the reality world, the boundaries between true and false, the dividing line between the sublime and the ridiculous, blur and disappear as the fanatic Russian follows a pumpkin of Halloween in the enchanted land of fantasy "(2). "There is no need to dwell on the absurd incongruities and follies to which the vain efforts of visionaries to bring the ideals of the Millennium down to earth and to dress their daily reality lead them. One need only consider the horrors committed in Petrograd and Odessa after the maximalist revolution, or remember some of the other revolting sights that followed this sinister explosion (3). "

The Russian man still holds both the child and the imperfectly tamed beast. But, if he lacks culture, he has a rich experience and a stoic attitude that has been engraved in picturesque proverbs whose core is submission to Fate and pity for one's neighbor. His language is rich, colorful and violent, but his thoughts are lacking in continuity and his reasoning is logical; he is hesitant. "His actions contradict his words, he is incapable of giving himself the means to achieve his ambitions, his indifference compensates for his lack of consistency. In his relations with his fellows, the Russian often goes through the whole range of behavior, from feminine gentleness to bestial ferocity. His laziness, his apathy, his ignorance, his dishonesty remind "German authors [...] of the Gauchos of Paraguay" (4).

The inability to grasp the exact relationship between words and things "constitutes a Russian characteristic which is hardly distinguishable from the ability of primitive peoples to create myths, which the Anglo-Saxons call false. This is unquestionably a trait of the Northern Slavs. The Russian masses disregard facts, refuse to recognize their finality, and argue that they can be safely dismissed, or even changed. Their imagination is powerful enough to blend them and adjust them to their whims. They are scarcely aware of time, space and causality and even often ignore them in practice (5). So an entire generation of professional revolutionaries spent their time blowing the wind. Bakunin fought all his life with empty sentences for a simple negation.

It is good to remember that the character of the Great Russian which has just been described is that of a people which is the result of a mixture of diverse races and varied from the physiological point of view as well as from the psychic and spiritual point of view. The contradictions that inhabit it and pull it apart only reflect its racial heterogeneity. Now, the greater the racial differences in an ethnic mixture, the more they cause its degeneration, the less stable the character of the ethnic mixture and of the individual, the less cohesion there is. The particular instability of the character of the Great Russian shows to what extent this people is the result of an all-out mixing. "The history of Russia is filled with racial struggles: brown against blond; large skulls against long skulls. The Germano-Scandinavians, the Celts, the Slavs, the Tartars clashed and mixed up in the North and the South (6). "The Russians, far from being pure Slavs, absorbed various indigenous races, nomads [...], which they found in the territory between the Upper Volga and the Oka" (7).

And the descendants of these diverse and disparate elements inherited the main intellectual and moral as well as physical traits of the lower races, their lack of social cohesion, their penchant for anarchy,

their restlessness, intellectual and physical, which manifests itself in criticism. scathing of all social and political structures and by an irresistible passion for wandering ", by the mania not to stay still. In this respect, as in many others, he offers a striking contrast with the Teutonic, who has a pronounced taste for hierarchy, is attached to his place of birth and imbued with a sense of proportion. It was during the Mongol occupation that the Russian people mastered cunning, deceit, machination, corruption and all the tactics used by the weak to defend themselves against the strong "(8). "It was during this period that the princes of Moscow became acquainted with the Tartar state and imbibed its spirit of conquest," its contempt for the organic state. "Ivan III infused these exotic ideas into the community he established. He beheaded all the Boyars who were unbearable to him, considerably reduced the power of this class, incited all of his subjects to kill each other and imposed on a rustic people an absolute monarch under whose orders and whims a body of soldiers ("Ivan III infused these exotic ideas into the community he established. He beheaded all the Boyars who were unbearable to him, considerably reduced the power of this class, incited all of his subjects to kill each other and imposed on a rustic people an absolute monarch under whose orders and whims a body of soldiers ("Ivan III infused these exotic ideas into the community he established. He beheaded all the Boyars who were unbearable to him, considerably reduced the power of this class, incited all of his subjects to kill each other and imposed on a rustic people an absolute monarch under whose orders and whims a body of soldiers (oprichnina ) obeyed by shedding the blood of those who were outlawed by the tyrant "(9). "Even after the triumph of the Bolsheviks [...], the state's relations with the population remained what they were under the Czars and Ivan's Oprichniki became Lenin's Red Guards.

"Peter the Great was undoubtedly a political genius but the material he worked, the mold shaped by his predecessors, the pressure of foreign wars and internal disturbances and the life he led did not allow him to dig deep enough into the ground. policy to lay the foundations for a new structure (10). He contented himself with adapting to the new conditions the type of Asian state he had inherited from his predecessors. That was all. He just invited West Europeans and in particular Germans to form the backbone of the administration he intended to reform, in the same way as, a few centuries earlier, the tribes Slavs had sent an embassy to the Varangians to invite them to bring order to Russia and to govern it."Since that time the Germans have played a predominant role in the Russian administration, in the army and the navy, at the court, in schools and universities, in science and letters, in journalism, in commerce. and industry, everywhere, except in the Church (11). It is true that the Russians held onto them: like the Russians they did not hesitate to cheat the treasury when the opportunity arose, even if they did so with a sense of moderation that the Russian bureaucrat lacked. . However, they served their Russian sovereign with loyalty.like the Russians they did not hesitate to deceive the treasury when the opportunity arose, even if they did so with a sense of moderation which the Russian bureaucrat lacked. However, they served their Russian sovereign with loyalty.like the Russians they did not hesitate to deceive the treasury when the opportunity arose, even if they did so with a sense of moderation which the Russian bureaucrat lacked. However, they served their Russian sovereign with loyalty.

Alexander III was the first Russian autocrat to deviate from the line drawn by Peter the Great. He disliked the Teutons and, indeed, all foreigners. Because Alexander III was a nationalist and considered that no foreigner had the right to worship the trinity which constituted the orthodoxy, the Pan-Slavism

and the autocracy, trinity which would one day allow the Russian people to ascend to the pinnacle. He therefore deprived his German subjects of most of the privileges they had enjoyed until then and forcibly Russified the administration. The Russification of the administration had disastrous results, all the more disastrous since it had been preceded by the promulgation of the act of emancipation of the serfs and the democratization of the army under Alexander II. "The inevitable happened: the autocracy [...] lost power to a myriad of troubled and irresponsible individuals throughout the empire, and the state structure became unstable (12). "

This act freed ethnic forces whose nuclei were formed by the emancipated peasants, the enthusiastic faithful whom they counted among the "intellectuals" and the non-Russian nationalities, who did not hesitate to take part in the agitation against the regime. . "[...] Russian progressives were united with Poles, Jews, Armenians and Muslims. Only the German element continued to fight for Tsarism "(13).

How does the brave de Witte react to the increasingly tangible aggressiveness of non-Russian elements towards Tsarism? He recommended to practice towards them "a policy of generosity" and appealed to "their noblest instincts and their sense of collective interest".

The professional army was replaced by the conscription army on January 1, 1874. The democratic reform of military service introduced the peasant character traits - the feeling of dissatisfaction, the bickering, the taste for satire, the lack of obedience, in a word anarchy - in the army and in the navy. "And with time the effectiveness of the Russian soldier significantly diminished. His generals also seem to have fallen short. [...] The old army of Nicholas I would have stood in the way of a popular revolution. Under Nicholas II, the March explosion would have been quelled, if the military had been opposed. But the peasant army which was sent against the German invaders was not made of the same wood as the warriors who made the name of Russia famous in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They hated war, were eager to return to their fields, and used the first opportunity, when the death penalty was abolished, to throw their guns into the bushes and return to their families. And when their hungry brothers encouraged them to turn their guns against the authorities and fight for the lands that had been long promised to them, they listened to their call... "(14). they listened to their call... "(14). they listened to their call... "(14).

Finally, the industrialization of Russia under Alexander II also contributed to igniting the powder by uprooting the Russian peasant. Until then "the Russian social system was more or less medieval. The land belonged mainly to the great noble families and to the great landowners, on whom the rural populace, who lived off the land, were entirely dependent. Alexander II "emancipated" this rural element, that is to say, he tore it from the land and reduced it to the rank of a mass of nomadic outcasts. A large part of the land was made available to rural communes (the mirs) managed collectively: these lands did not belong to anyone, the workforce was assigned to such and such a task and, basically, it was exploited and less well paid than under the previous regime. Under this regime the peasant was at least attached to a land, that of his lord, he knew that he was working for someone and he was often proud of it. Having become "free" he was more or less transformed into a proletarian, into a simple automatic instrument of work. This was, under Alexander II, the real result of "noble and generous liberal ideas" and, in fact, the reform of this sovereign was greeted by the frenzied applause of

the European democratic press of the time. the reform of this sovereign was greeted by the frenzied applause of the European democratic press of the time. the reform of this sovereign was greeted by the frenzied applause of the European democratic press of the time.

"The situation worsened still under Alexander III. It was this ruler who undertook the artificial and corrupting industrialization of Russia. No attempt was made to profit organically, within the means at our disposal, of Russian natural resources; on the contrary, these resources were made available to foreign capital, which encouraged a mode of production aimed at benefiting only omnipotent capital and enriching a new class of profiteers, while increasingly galvanizing the proletarian opposition. It must be recognized that the tsarist regime did not expressly want to achieve this, but that it was pushed to do so [...] by political considerations. The capital was provided for the most part by France in order to strengthen Russia, now its ally, in the event of another war against Germany and the revenge she was eagerly awaiting. As it depended solely on funds of foreign origin, industry was deprived of the natural foundation of the earth, which nourishes its people and provides them, without intermediaries and without speculation, their means of existence. As a result, neither those who worked nor those who employed them had direct access to the means to live and provide for a living. Relations between men changed. The old relationships [...] were replaced by relationships based solely on money, which ended up being reduced to a pure and simple opposition between those who had an empty stomach and those who had a full stomach. Russian soil had reached such a stage of materialistic degradation that it was ripe like few others for the subversive agitation of Marxist class war ideology, for it was one of the few countries where the process had taken place. was just as rapid and the Russian peasant, like the Russian in general, does not know the middle terms, the wise compromises: he goes from one extreme to the other. Freed from a patriarchal system of rigorous and blind obedience, he can become a perfect anarchist "(15). he can become a perfect anarchist "(15). he can become a perfect anarchist "(15).

A magnifying mirror of the soul race and the Russian spirit race, Grigor Rasputin was born in Pokrovskoye, a small Siberian village located in the swampy region of the Tobolsk province. The inhabitants, for the most part the sons and daughters of prisoners with heavy inheritance, had a bad reputation in the neighboring hamlets and villages; one of them, Grigor's father, was a horse thief. Grigor had not yet entered adult life that he had received the nickname Rasputin, a name that comes from the word *rasputnik* ("Debauched"). He continued to lead a life of debauchery until he was touched by grace at the age of thirty, following an encounter with a father. Russian tradition has it that a saint (Simon) appears to a fisherman to order him to renounce his vices and that the fisherman feels contrition. Rasputin did not fail in tradition. "In Russia, where spontaneous repentance is generally the last stage of crime and religious conversion the last stage of the sinner, the scoundrel who expiates his crimes can count on the charity of the people" (16) as well as on the complacency of the judiciary. . "The doors of many monasteries were open to him, if he had chosen to become a monk, but either because he was aware of his unworthiness or because he was almost illiterate, or because he could not escape the Russian tendency to wander, he chose the painful but varied life of a pilgrim, wandering from village to village, from holy place to holy place, without purse or wallet, barefoot and bareheaded, living on alms and making offerings in the trunk of churches. He visited Jerusalem among others. During the two years he spent preparing for his mission, he was assisted by monks, with whom he was accustomed, like

depressed Russians, to discuss religious problems [...] with enthusiasm, interest and childishness " (17).living on alms and making offerings in the trunk of churches. He visited Jerusalem among others. During the two years he spent preparing for his mission, he was assisted by monks, with whom he was accustomed, like depressed Russians, to discuss religious problems [...] with enthusiasm, interest and childishness " (17).living on alms and making offerings in the trunk of churches. He visited Jerusalem among others. During the two years he spent preparing for his mission, he was assisted by monks, with whom he used, like depressed Russians, to discuss religious problems [...] with enthusiasm, interest and childishness " (17).

"It is easy to smile incredulously at the religious conversion of a vulgar being like Rasputin, who exuded an atmosphere of vice and betrayed a hereditary tendency to crime. In light of his subsequent conduct, one may be tempted to view this apparent improvement as an act of sheer hypocrisy. But this simplistic interpretation of Rasputin's confused motives would testify to an ignorance of the complexity and subtlety of the moral world in general and of Russian psychology in particular. Nowhere are avowable motives, unavowable motives and trivial motives so inextricably entangled as in Russian consciousness, nowhere are the contradictory consequences of action more difficult to assess. The elements of the personality which come into play only at rare critical moments in making the decision which will leave its mark on moral individuality are precisely those which the turmoil of everyday existence does not affect at all. This is why they are not known to the stranger, nor to the friend, nor to the confidant, nor even to the main interested party, until the circumstances put them in motion. The Russian character is a multi-stringed instrument and the notes it makes every day, touched by ordinary life events, express none of the other passionate sounds that a sudden and subtle stimulus is capable of evoking " (18). Peasants like Rasputin E. Dillon informs us that he has known many of them in different parts of the Russian Empire, whose "deepest instincts were those of his people."

"Morbidity and retrospection is a characteristic characteristic of many Russians, and asceticism is the usual consequence. [...] The Russian goes over his mental and material conditions of existence and analyzes his relations with the invisible world of which his religion gives him a glimpse. It is not uncommon for these meditations to disturb timid spirits, distort their piety by pushing them to superstitious terror and criminal practices. But, despite these visions [...], the down-to-earth character of the individual is still present, in a latent form "(19). Rasputin was not a simple hypocrite. At least for a while he submitted to the discipline he advocated. "His pilgrimage and the self-imposed penance earned him the name Starets - a name that is not given to monks or priests but only to lay people who have renounced the world and live only for God and for the salvation of their souls - he sought to add the titles of miracle worker and prophet. Whenever his neighbors asked him a question, he would gaze dreamily into the distance, remain silent for several minutes, and then respond slowly in phrases without a tail or a head, as if emerging from a trance. The good thief was sometimes at one with the cunning charlatan "(20). Whenever his neighbors asked him a question, he would gaze dreamily into the distance, remain silent for several minutes, and then respond slowly in phrases without a tail or a head, as if emerging from a trance. The good thief was sometimes at one with the cunning charlatan "(20). Whenever his neighbors asked him a question, he would gaze dreamily into the distance, remain silent for several



minutes, and then respond slowly in phrases without a tail or a head, as if emerging from a trance. The good thief was sometimes at one with the cunning charlatan "(20).

He himself believed that a great mysticism slumbers in the souls of almost all Russians, that death, disappointment, illness or a sincere word of encouragement can awaken at any time and whose awakening can have serious consequences. This religious temperament explains the number, variety and strange character of Russian sects.

Rasputin naturally leaned for that of the Khlysty. Whether or not he was part of this sect, "the history of religion and psychology teach us that mysticism and sensuality are never very far from each other. As lust was the main source of his own downfall, it is only natural that he came to generalize his experience and teach that it was the one mortal sin against which the true Christian must continually contend. The Khlysty method he proposed was in keeping with his vicious inclinations and reminds me of the answer that an intelligent catechumen once gave to a Catholic priest who asked him what to do to receive the sacrament of penance: " You must first commit a sin, my reverend ". This was exactly the doctrine propagated by Rasputin, who held that salvation can only be achieved by repentance and that in order to repent effectively one must first sin. Like the Khlysty, whose sect resembled his own small congregations, he taught that any act of joint contrition must be preceded by the accomplishment of common sin "(21).

"As the stubborn peasants of Pokrovskoye greeted the stories of Rasputin's wonderful gifts of prophecy, healing and second sight with the skepticism that was part of their upbringing, the hearts of women were touched, their faith gained, their zeal s'ignited. They spoke around them of their new prophet, whose reputation soon spread to villages and towns "(22). He quickly acquired the status of saint among women. "For a very long time, the sect of Rasputin, which never openly broke with the Orthodox Church, was made up almost exclusively of women, most of whom were young, resplendent and attractive".(23) The rising star, however, owed his fortune and fame to a meeting he made during one of his many trips with an Orthodox priest who introduced him to women of high Moscow society. The Bishop of Saratov was one of the two people who then allowed him to have his entries into the imperial court.

To the many disparate elements of which we have seen that the Russian people were made up from the early Middle Ages, we must add the Jews. The Slavs found them in Crimea, where they appear to have been settled since the third century BCE and where they mingled in the seventh century with the Khazars who had fled there after the destruction of their kingdom by Sviatoslav, prince of Kiev. . During the internal wars of Russia, at the end of which Kiev, so weakened that it kept changing masters, ended up falling into the hands of the princes of Lithuania and the Poles, one found Jews in the various camps. "The famous Russian Jewish orientalist Harkavy published important documents which show that there were many Jews among the Cossacks, when they began to organize in the sixteenth century "(24).

"Russian Jews, the majority of them anyway, knew exactly what they wanted; they showed it by their actions; they expressed it clearly. They demanded the abolition of all restrictive laws; they demanded equal rights and they knew "(25) that sooner or later they would obtain their emancipation once the

autocratic and bureaucratic regime was overthrown"; "They knew perfectly well that a republic, or even a constitutional monarchy, could not fail to proclaim the principle of the rights of man and of the citizen", that is to say the emancipation of all the members of the nation without distinction of race or religion "(26). They did all they could to help bring him down. They actively participated in it. "Heroism, wrote a journalist in *La Revue* of January 1906, which the Jews manifested in this gigantic struggle recalls their formidable resistance to the Roman Empire. They showed once again that the spirit of sacrifice, the courage and the ingenuity, which characterized their fight against Titus, did not disappear from the Jewish soul [...]. "" Russia owes a large part of its freedom to the Jews. Without them the Liberals would never have been able to obtain victory "(27). Without them the Liberals would never have been able to obtain victory "(27). Without them the Liberals would never have been able to obtain victory "(27).

In the 1870s and 1880s, young Jews had played a prominent role among the Narodniki. "[...] Jewish workers at the end of the nineteenth century were sensitive to socialism because of their religious origins. The Jewish workers' unions welcomed the socialist doctrine as a revelation, as a messianic vision which had been nourished to some extent by eschatological traditions and universal ideas of Redemption ". Likewise, the theologian and economist Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) "wrote in 1905 that 'atheistic socialism' had the same 'earthly' ideals as Jewish messianism and that they were thus opposed to its 'Christian socialism'" . In 1910 he called socialism a "transposition of Jewish chiliasm" (28). The Bund, or the General Union of Jewish Workers, was founded in 1897. It actively propagated in Yiddish and published numerous pamphlets and a number of newspapers. "The Bund fomented many strikes in Russia: between 1897 and 1900 alone there were 812, in which more than 27,890 men participated. There were two proletariats, the manual and the intellectual, and naturally many Jews belonged to the intellectual proletariat.

"The Jewish Intelligentsia assimilated into the Russian intelligentsia during the 1870s, in the same way that the Jewish proletariat had to make common cause with the Russian proletariat later" (29). His *chutzpah* served as a model for the "pioneers of the Russian Revolution." There was no political organization in the empire that was not under the influence of the Jews or led by them. The Social Democratic Party, the Socialist Revolutionary Party, the Polish Socialist Party, all had Jews among their leaders ". Vyacheslav Plehve (1846-1904), Director of the Tsarist Police, then Minister of the Interior from 1902 until his death, was well placed to know that the struggle for political emancipation in Russia and the Jewish question were practically identical and that 80 percent of revolutionaries in Russia were Jews (30), many of whom were women.

The fact that the Jews enjoyed certain favors during the reign of Alexander II did not prevent them from participating in the revolutionary movement. "I dare, however, to assert most categorically that, even if the Jews had enjoyed equal rights in Russia and had not been subject to emergency laws, they would nevertheless have provided countless recruits to the revolutionary forces. . This ethnic or religious group [...] could not but be an adversary of Tsarism and autocracy "(31). Proof of this is the response of a Bund delegation in 1905 to the question put to it by EJ Dillon whether the Jews were prepared to accept Liberal Witte's proposal to establish a House of Representatives: "No. The Jews will not support Witte. He is not our man. He is only a bureaucrat and no bureaucrat can be a reformer [...] The Jews will owe

their emancipation to force and they will ensure that this force breaks their ties and gives them all their rights. "

For it was for reasons other than political, religious and economic that the Jews of Russia threw themselves into the arms of the Revolution. Their attitude was closely linked to "the revolutionary instinct of the Jew".

"Throughout history the spirit of the Jew has always been revolutionary and subversive [...] It is progressive and evolutionary. Even in the first national establishment it bore a seed [internationalism] which would flourish and bear fruit in the ages to come. So the Jew who desires to go back, who ignores the laws of evolution and progress and the lead that his own race has taken over other nations by throwing back the chains of narrow nationalism in the great march of humanity towards his true goal, which will be achieved when all men are brothers, when there will be no more difference between classes, tribes, nations and peoples, in a word the march towards the great and glorious ideal of a "Confraternity of men" [...], well this Jew is unfaithful to the spirit of Judaism. The Jewish spirit has always longed for justice, truth and equality: these are the fundamental principles of Israel. They were embodied in the cry that resounded in the words of the prophets, which was echoed by the first apostles of Christianity. It was a protest, a revolt against iniquity and inequality. The first Christians were therefore the good Jews - or the good Jews were the first Christians [...] (32).

#### The religious factor

Hasidism is the last great movement of thought within Judaism before its emancipation. It has its roots in Kabbalah (33). Hasidism was born in the 1760s but we can consider that the foundations of this movement had been laid by Rav Israel ben Eliezer (1700-1760), nicknamed Baal Shem Tov, or Besht, whose life and teachings do not are known only from the writings of his disciples and his followers.

The word hasid is generally translated as "love" or "kindness". A hasid is therefore a person who practices love or compassion. In the Book of Jeremiah, Yahweh himself is referred to as a hasid . In other passages of the Bible, people who love Yahweh and are loved by Him are also called hasid . This love is reflected in the fulfillment of the obligations that Yahweh has imposed. The word hasid often appears in conjunction with that of zaddik , a virtuous person. A virtuous person is particularly close to Yahweh. Hasid therefore came to speak of a person who has a special relationship with Yahweh. Under the Hasmoneans, the Jews hostile to the Hellenization of Israel were called Hasidim. In rabbinical Judaism, the word denoted a person who fulfilled his religious obligations in a particularly strict and careful manner: a pious person. In Germany at the end of the twelfth century, a Jewish mystical and ascetic group whose ethics were characterized by humility, extreme altruism, the search, with cynical and stoic overtones, of an absence of passions, the refusal of the physical world and the desire to attain purity of the soul took the name of hassidei ashkenaz . The end of the sixteenth century saw the flourishing in the Land of Israel of "holy associations" of mystical tendency, the members of which aimed to make their

heart the home (shekinah) of Yahweh by continuously focusing on the Torah. Their penitential rites went much further than those required of the ordinary Jew.

The seventeenth century saw a resurgence of interest in the practices and ideals of the Ashkenaz Hassidei in Ashkenazi communities in Poland and Germany, where Torah study, mysticism, prayer, mystical contemplation, and cabalistic practices took often extreme forms (34).

On the contrary, Besht's Hasidism taught that what Yahweh demands of man is not asceticism and mortification, as the Lurianic Kabbalah wanted, nor the in-depth study of halakhic literature (35), such as wanted the Polish Talmudists, but devotion and adherence, union with Him (devekut). The only way to unite with Him is to serve God with joy and to surrender to Him with enthusiasm (hitlavahut). The Hasidics were certainly not the first to regard devekut as a fundamental concept, but where the Cabalists considered it an ideal which could only be achieved by a few virtuous men, the Hasidics were indeed the first to esteem and affirm that it was accessible to all Jews, while conceding that most men can only achieve divine union through the intermediary of the tzaddiq (the "saint", the "pious"), who is a manifestation of God and a link between the Creator and Creation. As G. Scholem has suggested, this extension of the scope of devekut reflects the transformation of Hasidism into a popular movement and its convergence with populism, the politico-social movement that was formed in Russia in the 1860s with the aim of training the whole of the peasantry, the people, in the struggle against Tsarist power.

Among the Jews of Eastern and Central Europe, "from Gaonic times, the title ba'al shem, or "master of the name", designated a master of the practical Kabbalah expert in the art of proposing amulets for various purposes, of invoking angels or demons and of exorcising the evil spirits who had taken possession of the body. human. On the whole, such figures were, in the popular mind, clearly equated with white magic" (36). In this respect, the Besht was no different from other baalei shem.

The world of the Jews of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was saturated with demons, ghosts and evil spirits, which were believed to be able to exert a particularly nefarious influence on the most important events of human existence: birth, marriage and death. Sexual impotence or infertility were interpreted as the effects of witchcraft operations. Magical objects and practices were believed to cast out demons and preserve men from illnesses and accidents which were attributed to their action. They were also believed to have the power to protect them from man-made dangers and misfortunes. Finally, magical devices and objects were used to predict future events. Magical practices were obviously not unique to the Jews. They were common among all the European peoples of the time, among whom they were, however, essentially the work of the peasantry and the lower classes. Among the Jews, on the contrary, the art of magic was very widespread among the literati and the bourgeoisie. Indeed, the magical science was preserved by the learned and rabbinical circles, who ensured it was transmitted from generation to generation and made use of it as needed. The who watched over it from generation to generation and used it as needed. The who watched over it from generation to generation and used it as needed. The baalei shem were authoritative in the art of magic among the vulgar. Although magical practices were common to all Jewish social strata, the baalei shem were considered the most competent to transmit them and put them into practice. Until the beginning of the eighteenth century, most of them served as rabbi, serving as miracle workers only part-time. They then began to specialize in

thaumaturgy, perhaps due to the increasing demand for their services. The books of charms, which they began to publish at the beginning of the eighteenth century, although until then they had contented themselves with giving them their guarantee, constituted for them a second source of income, which did not run dry. The first one. Indeed, the magical processes that they disclosed in the charms books were often so complex that their co-religionists continued to call on them to apply them. The vogue for magic in popular Jewish social strata can be explained by the renewed interest of scholars in cabalistic literature, which had the dual effect of strengthening the authority of demonology and strengthening the belief in magical powers. .

What distinguished Besht from other baalei shem of the time was the mastery with which he associated the use of magical science with prophetic inspiration. He predicted both illnesses and the future and, like Elijah (2 Kings 5:26), he saw at a distance and was able to discover the previous incarnations of a soul (under the influence of the Kabbalah and, in particular, from the Lurianic kabbalah, the belief in reincarnation had steadily grown among the Jews, especially among their elites, during the seventeenth century). He was visited by God, who, when he entered into a trance, spoke through his mouth. At least that's what his disciples reported, who, like Besht himself, saw in his powers a sign of divine providence. In addition, unlike the others baalei shem, Besht had inherited no magical books from his grandfather and, therefore, no reputation, no authority; no guide was even known to him: he therefore had to have become a baal shem under the effect of an interior spiritual process (37). "The Hasidic movement finds its origin in the revelation of Besht, the revelation of its "true nature" (38), which its admirers and followers indicate took place in the northern Carpathians. It was there, according to legend, that, after spending years in the most complete solitude to discover the secret mystical path unknown to the masses, the Besht decided to return to the world.

Russian culture had absorbed a large amount of Jewish influences long before the emergence of Hasidism. If the origin of this influence is lost in antiquity, Jewish biblical elements are easily recognizable in Russian thought from the eleventh century. Religious attitudes, musical traditions and Jewish literary works left their mark in Russia thereafter.

Russian orthodoxy itself contained many elements remarkably similar to Hasidic practice and doctrine. A strong mystical tendency was found in the Orthodox Church. The followers of this tendency believed that the true believer was the receptacle of the divine and that, therefore, one could speak in a certain sense of the deification of man. They believed that union with God, the very essence of religion, was only possible in joy and religious ecstasy. The Russian mystical soul was imbued with the desire for the infinite and for oneness with God. The mystics held that the purpose of human existence was to merge and dissolve into the universal divine soul. They also held that love was the highest value and that it filled and embraced all creatures, including demons.

"Another particularly striking parallel between Hasidism and Orthodoxy is the one between the Tzaddik and the Starets. They achieved notoriety around the same time. The starets was a holy man, usually a monk, whose gifts as a spiritual guide commanded respect among all Russians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He was not linked to the Orthodox hierarchy. If the first starets was a fifteenth-century Russian saint and mystic named Nil Sorski who preached mental asceticism, the starets did not

become important figures in Russian religious life until the eighteenth century, where they extended their powers. activities of monasteries in the lay world. They became doctors of souls and counselors of the little people, who began to make pilgrimages to their monasteries and to regard them as spiritual leaders, confessors and saints inspired by God. In the first half of the nineteenth century, even as Tzaddikism reached its peak in Hasidism, many Renowned starets with status, functions and activities in many ways similar to those of the tzaddikim were at work among the Russians. The devotees chose a starets and submitted entirely to his authority. The believer became completely dependent on his starets. He was giving up his own will and relying totally on his starets, who thus acquired great power and personal influence. His influence was not linked to his function or to his knowledge, it came from his personality alone. He had a positive and optimistic outlook on life. People believed that he held divine omniscience, wisdom, that he was a paragon of humility, kindness and devotion (39). "

#### The religious factor

The Orthodox Church is, since its foundation by the first Metropolitan, Leontius who was sent from Byzantium with a procession of Greek bishops by the Patriarch Nicholas Chrysoverghes (983-996), an exotic product, imported and foreign to Russian idiosyncrasy as to beliefs, rule and ceremonies. It contrasts with the old Armenian Church, which, despite the Greek and Syriac origin of its doctrine and its rites, has always been much closer to the religious tendencies of the Russian people. "The Orthodox Church was never more than a simple museum of liturgical antiquities. Vladimir Soloviev compared it to a box containing an oriental pearl, the luster of which has been softened by a thick layer of Byzantine dust. Its function in the State was always limited to that of a police service in charge of the control [of conscience]. The clergy, with the exception of a few anchorites and a few self-flagellating ascetics, were a body of social parasites, poor, filthy, greedy and ignorant, whose existence alternately aroused the pity and contempt of the flock. uncultivated, of which they set themselves up as shepherds. From the beginning the Russian Church was the repository of petrified forms to which a magical virtue was attributed. No quickening spirit ever animated this rigid organism, for Byzantium could not give what it did not have "(40). From the beginning the Russian Church was the repository of petrified forms to which a magical virtue was attributed. No quickening spirit ever animated this rigid organism, for Byzantium could not give what it did not have "(40). From the beginning the Russian Church was the repository of petrified forms to which a magical virtue was attributed. No quickening spirit ever animated this rigid organism, for Byzantium could not give what it did not have "(40).

Over time, the rites and liturgical books of the Russian Orthodox Church had moved more or less away from the Greek Orthodox Church. Between 1652 and 1677, reforms were undertaken, under the aegis of the Russian Patriarch Nikon, with the aim of reorganizing the structures and restoring the doctrine and rites of the Russian Orthodox Church. Some, very many, refused this reform and remained faithful to the old rites, thus plunging the Russian Orthodox Church into a schism. Called Raskolnik (schismatics) by their opponents, a name they refuse, they took the name of "old believers".

They believed that the end of the world would take place in 1666, the year in which Sabbatai Levi had fixed the redemption of mankind.

In 1666 the Old Believers were condemned as schismatics and excommunicated by the Council of Moscow.

The split was not the result of a doctrinal divergence alone. "It is certain that the great schism into which the Raskol fell was due in large part to the conflict between the parish clergy and the monastic agents of the absolutist and centralizing government of Moscow" as well as to the growing influence of the Tatars on the Russian government .

The high clergy and the episcopate recruited exclusively monks. Peter the Great attacked the monasteries, raised the age of the novitiate to thirty years, reduced the number of monks by half, forced most of them to work with their hands, refused them paper and ink for them. to prevent him from being described as the Antichrist, subjected them to a thousand indignities; but he did not venture to break with the rule that every bishop should be a monk. As for the parish priests, who had to be married, they had no weight. Strong tensions therefore existed between the high clergy and the low clergy. Even before the appearance of the Old Believers in the middle of the seventeenth century, it often happened that members of the lower clergy refused to obey the orders of their archpriests and tried to evade not only the payment of legal fees but the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan. The lower clergy aspired to independence. The cup was full when Nikon, not content with purifying the liturgy and liturgical books, inundated all towns and villages with taxes. The Old Believers appealed to the Tsar. The Tsar's government sided with the ecclesiastical authorities and severely punished the opposition. The Tsar's government sided with the ecclesiastical authorities and severely punished the opposition. The Tsar's government sided with the ecclesiastical authorities and severely punished the opposition.

Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, all Russian provinces enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy. "In the seventeenth century, the explosion of violence and barbarism which took place in Muscovy was accompanied by the irruption of tsars, tsarines, tsarevichs, princes and petty princes from Kazan, Astrakhan and of Siberia, who offered their services to the Tsar's government and married into the Russian nobility, thus posing as defenders of Russian territory and taking control of the towns of Kasimov, Zvenigorod, Kashir, Serpoukhov, Khotan, Iouriev, many villages and hamlets (41). This is how the proverb was coined at that time: 'Live until Moscow gets its hands on you. Andreev states that the ancestors of most Russian nobles in the Moscow kingdom were Tatar emigrants or European settlers. It was under pressure from the Tatars that the Zemski sobor (The Congress of Russian Land) promulgated in January 1649 the Sobornoye Ulozheniye (the Code of Tsar Alexis), which substituted an autocratic bureaucracy for the communal council of Russian provinces. The Tatars rose to the highest administrative posts and were kept there by the Tatars who were already Russified. The national peculiarities of Russia were completely forgotten, especially since the governing caste, being mainly composed of elements foreign to the Russian genius, had no idea of the character and aspirations of the people they governed. .

The Old Believers were fiercely opposed to both the Tatarization of Russia and the monopoly, closely linked to the centralizing state, that the monks exercised over the Orthodox Church.

The most striking commonalities between the Sabbateans and the Old Believers were their belief in doomsday prophecies, their fascination with cabalistic calculations, their state of ecstatic joy, their near-masochistic acceptance of suffering. The Old Believers made common cause with the Jews and other minorities to survive the persecution they suffered. Sectaries and Jews influenced each other, and Jews played a significant role in the religious turmoil that arose in Russia at the end of the seventeenth century. The Russian sectarians were all convinced that man was able to establish direct links with God outside the established churches. They tried to achieve this collectively through exercises such as hand-to-hand wrestling, alcohol consumption, flogging and even castration. Sectarian movements found their strongest echo in the declining agricultural regions of southern and western Russia.

Jewish mysticism exerted a profound influence on the genesis of the tradition of Russian religious philosophy through the intermediary of Jacob Böhme (1575-1624), whose writings show a close affinity with cabalism. Indeed, like the cabalists, he conceived of God as a force both infinitely transcendent and immanent, the intellectual aspirations, the sexual desires and the social instincts of man as expressions of the "longing" for the lost unity of man. man and God and, like the cabalists, he considered that God himself seeks the Sophia, "the eternal virgin of divine wisdom" and the "principle of eternal femininity", while assimilating the return to God to the realization of androgyny. All this made a great impression on Russian religious thinkers. They were equally shaken by the writings of Johann Arndt (1555-1621), a Lutheran theologian for whom "Kabbalah constitutes a great effort to rediscover the mysteries hidden from the Holy Scriptures. "(" Where the magic ceases, he wrote, the Kabbalah begins and where the Kabbalah ceases, true theology and the prophetic spirit begin "(42) and who was" one of the spiritual masters and fathers of the authors of Rosicrucian manifesto of the seventeenth century "(43). All of Arndt's texts, translated by Todorskii, were prohibited by a decree issued under pressure from the Synod. As it never really came into force, they continued to circulate in the turbulent sectarian circles, which were never really fought in Russia either. a Lutheran theologian for whom "the Kabbalah constitutes a great effort to rediscover the mysteries hidden according to the Holy Scriptures. "(" Where the magic ceases, he wrote, the Kabbalah begins and where the Kabbalah ceases, true theology and the prophetic spirit begin "(42) and who was" one of the spiritual masters and fathers of the authors of Rosicrucian manifesto of the seventeenth century. "(43) All of Arndt's texts, translated by Todorskii, were prohibited by a decree issued under pressure from the Synod. As it never really came into force, they continued to circulate in the turbulent sectarian circles, which were never really fought in Russia either. the Kabbalah begins and where the Kabbalah ends, true theology and the prophetic spirit begin "(42) and who was" one of the spiritual



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Moreover, "These religious movements did not [either] openly fight against orthodoxy, they rather posed as the real guardians of its message, which they considered corrupt. Nevertheless, through their activities, a new religious vision began to take shape in Russia, carrying within it the many problems that the Reformation had left as a legacy in the Western world. It was a religious vision founded on progress and inner research and which disregarded the ritualistic and dogmatic aspects of the institutional Church. Its ideological elements were no different from those preached by the Protestant reformers: the belief in the impending dawn of the millennium and a spirituality strongly influenced by neo-Platonism and mystical pantheism. This was expressed in the concept of creation as an emanation of Sophia, in their desire to leave the earthly world and the earthly Church to live with the "people of God" in an "interior Church", in imitation of Christ. The Russian earthly Church was unwilling to understand or combat this phenomenon (44). "

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a time of religious turmoil and mystical hysteria in Russia. The schism of 1666-1667 created deep enmities between the two rival factions and radicalized the Old Believers. From 1672 to 1691, more than 20,000 of them committed suicide by setting themselves on fire. The dissident sects multiplied. They numbered hundreds of thousands of members and millions of sympathizers (in 1840, an imperial commission estimated their number at 9.3 million) They were frequently seized with convulsions. They had visions, performed miracles, prophesied and predicted the future.

The dissident parish clergy fell into three categories, that of Old Believers, that of "rationalists" and that of mystics.

The "rationalists", whose two most important sects were the Molokans (the Drinkers of milk) and the Dukhobortsy (the Wrestlers of the spirit, who had the particularity of sometimes walking naked in town in imitation of Adam and Eve and to organize orgies at the end of their religious gatherings), rejected the authority of the Church and claimed the freedom to interpret Holy Scripture as they saw fit.

The old believers attached importance to ceremonies; the "rationalists" rejected them and refused all outward forms of worship, the sacraments, icons, holy images and relics.

The mystics were represented by the Khlysty (Flagellants), whose Skoptsy (the Castrés) were a branch; although the mystics appeared in the middle of the seventeenth century, some aspects of their teaching reflected old Christian heresies. They believed in the possibility of direct communication between man and God without the mediation of established churches; they believed in it so much that they adorned themselves with titles such as "Prophet", "Tsar" or "Christ"; the leader of the Flagellants wore that of "Mother of God". They strove to bond with God collectively, through exercises such as hand-to-hand wrestling, drinking, flogging, and castration. The old Russian belief that God lives in the soul of every man and expresses himself through his mouth was reaffirmed with them with new vigor. Members of these sects lived almost in hiding and presented themselves to foreigners as Orthodox Christians.

The main events in the years following the schism were the rebellion at the Solovetsky monastery - which was committed by the Old Believers following the Tsar's refusal to allow them to continue to practice the old rites - and the Streltsy revolt in Moscow, which in many ways resembled that of 1917 and which led to the dispersion of the Old Believers throughout Russia and even to their exile. It was at this time that collective suicides multiplied among the Raskolniks. Twenty thousand cases of self-immolation were recorded from 1666 to 1689. "Let us fight the Antichrist! Was the cry with which the Raskolniks gave themselves courage and declared that they would rather immolate themselves than fall into the hands of the government. Those who, despite everything, preferred to go on living took the lead in the opposition to Peter the Great's reforms, claiming that he was "an agent of Satan" and "a false messiah", since, of course, the old-Believers made their own the Johannine teaching that a mysterious figure holds the power of Satan and must appear at the end of time to wage a supreme struggle against the Church of Christ. In addition, Old Believers, like Russians in general, believed in the Hussite idea that the pope had become the forerunner of the antichrist in the year 1000 and subscribed to the idea that the West Slavs had abjured Roman Catholicism in 1439 at the Council of Florence and that it was therefore up to Moscow to rekindle the torch of Christianity: in Moscow and not to the Czar, because it was understood that all the Czars from 1666 would be incarnations of the antichrist. For the Raskolnik as with the Cathars, the government of kings and princes was a manifestation of Satan's power.

On the death in 1656 of Paul de Kolomna, the only clergyman who had been able to maintain unity in the movement, the Old Believers split into two movements, the Popovtsy - which welcomed defector priests ordained by the Orthodox Church - and the Bezpopovtsy - which did without priests. The Popovtsy founded a few colonies and monasteries in the Don region, and until the second half of the nineteenth century they tried in vain to create their own episcopate. Some firmly believed that there was a real Church somewhere and strove to find it in order to join it. Others were convinced that a true Christian community had survived in Jerusalem. Still others clung to the legend that a church stood beneath an invisible town on the shores of Lake Svetloyar, which would only become visible again at the end of the world. It is difficult to dissociate the birth of radical socialist ideas in Russia from the "spiritual communism" practiced by the various Russian sects. Popular myths for centuries had nourished a widespread belief in the possibility of an earthly communist paradise united by brotherly love and where justice, truth and equality would prevail. At the beginning of the twentieth century, these myths captured the popular imagination and were associated with hopes for revolution.

A small number of Old Believers were allowed to use their old liturgical books again on condition that they returned to communion with the Orthodox Church. Paul I made concessions to the Popovtsy who agreed to join the bosom of Orthodoxy. The persecutions against them resumed under the reign of Nicolas I who was convinced that their communion was not sincere. The Bezpopovtsy took refuge in Siberia, in the Novgorod region. In 1720, the Bezpopovtsy declared that the advent of the antichrist had invalidated the clergy and the divine sacrifice and that, under these circumstances, each Christian became his own priest. The Philipovstys, one of their branches, refused to pay taxes and to have a civil status. The Straniki (the Wanderers), one of the two branches of the Philipovtsy, formed a community similar to the early Church. In general, the Popovtsy, like the Cathars, rejected the world as created by the principle of evil. They pretended to respect the Tsar, the government and the civil laws because they could not help but, in reality, they believed that all authority, being based on ignorance, was inevitably null or unjust and, therefore, they refused to obey it.

At the end of the eighteenth century, some Old Believers, mainly those who lived in the cities, reconciled to some extent with civil society, while the more extreme branches, the Beguny (the Wanderers), remained intransigent. Most Raskolniks held onto their beliefs, as evidenced by the fact that in the nineteenth century the most important and active sects were those which regarded prayers for the Tsar and his family as the worst form of blasphemy. Likewise, the peasants and the poor who participated in the annual meeting of the Popovtsy in Moscow in 1864 refused to pray for the Tsar.

The internal structure of a number of Old Believer communities can be characterized as communist. In the works of the founder of Straniki, the systematic distribution of the people into classes, the division of land, forests and water, the recording of acts, were stigmatized as victories of the antichrist. On his death, one of his disciples established that no Straniki had the right to own property and that he had to give all his property to the community. Another proclaimed that Evtimiy of Tarnovo's maxim that "the words 'mine' and 'thine' are cursed and profane, for God has put all things in common" applied to all goods without exception. On this basis, they demanded strict Communism and a complete renunciation of property rights. Their communitarian ideal led them to believe in the existence of Belovodye, a mythical city in Central Asia whose inhabitants pooled their goods and paid no taxes to any government.

In the many villages they had converted, the Raskolniks dug underground galleries in which they could find refuge in times of danger. The following anecdote gives an idea of the strength of their organization: in 1867, steps were taken to arrest a Raskolnik who had resided for a long time in Moscow, but the Old Believers got wind of this project; their ecclesiastical council had even succeeded in obtaining a copy of the confidential circular which described it in great detail.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Russian government estimated the number of Raskolniki at around ten million.

The Doukhobortsy, the Molokany and the Khlysty predated the Old Believers by several generations. The main characteristic of these three sects was that their revolt was more moral than intellectual. They preached a return to Christ and a break with the Church, which, although she pretended to believe in the gospel, had put it aside since Constantine's so-called conversion. They claimed that the true

Christian faith had gone underground by the fourth century and only reappeared within their congregations. The Doukhobortsy and the Molokanyepresent features that are not unlike the Cathar or Albigensian sects and it is probable that they derive from the Bogomiles and therefore, to a certain extent, from early Christianity and, perhaps, from Gnosticism and Marcionism. Widely diffused in Western Europe under the veneer of Catholicism, it resurfaced thanks to the upheavals of the Reformation; after a latent period among the Slavs, it manifested itself again on the occasion of the Raskolnik movement and the reforms of Peter the Great. Doukhobortsy suddenly appeared in the middle of the eighteenth century. Their fundamental principle was mutual love. They did not know about private property and put all their property in common. They were practicing Communism in its simplest form. They had no leader. All were equal in rights. Although opposed in principle to the monarchy and, for that matter, to any other system of government, they pretended to submit to the constituted authorities. They refused, however, to bear arms and take the oath.

This was also the time when the Ukrainian mystic Gregory Skovoroda (1722-1794) roamed Russia with the Jewish Bible in his knapsack, preaching ideas that bore striking formal similarities to Hasidic and Cabalistic doctrine. The concept of the divine spark, which is at the heart of cabalistic and Hasidic teaching on the relationship between God and the world, played an important role in Skorovoda's thought as well as, more generally, in the doctrine of the Doukhobortsy , which believed that the body is a temporary prison for the spirit and that the latter can only be released through mortification. Likewise, in the cabbalah , the Qlipa "(“ evil “) is a bark that must be removed in order to see the divine light.

In 1865, the Molokanye, the main dissident branch of the Doukhobortsy, published in Russian a work entitled "The Confession of Faith of the Spiritual Christians of the Name of Molokanye", which traces the history of the sect and sets out its doctrine, while highlighting emphasis on the persecution of its members. It is not uninteresting that it was published in Geneva. The Molokanyehave always been classified as a dangerous sect by the Russian government. For them, society and Christ cannot be separated; they are one; this uity rests entirely on the evangelical precepts of love and equality (II Cor., iii, 17): God is a Spirit; where the Spirit is, there is freedom. It follows that the only moral foundation of the Christian life is complete freedom and independence from all laws and all human constraints. The authority of men does not engage those who are inspired by the teaching of Christ. Not recognizing human laws, the Molokanyedo not believe they are morally obliged to pay taxes, nor, of course, to do military service. In the 1830s, there arose several false prophets in their ranks. One of them, who had discovered that Alexandropol was the new Zion, convinced some of the cult members that it was possible to fly to paradise from a summit in the South Caucasus. Provident and methodical, he made canvas wings, equipped with which he soared from the roofs of the houses in his village.

Semen Matveevich Uklein (1733–1809), the guide of the Molokanye, introduced a number of Jewish customs into his sect, influenced in this by one of his lieutenants, Semen Dalmatov. Uklein's followers went so far as to give Mosaic law primacy over Christian doctrine and to assert that Moses prevailed over Jesus Christ. This was exactly the essential point of disagreement between the Gnostics and the future Christian Church in the early days of Christianity.

Around 1820, Maxim Akinthiev, a wealthy peasant who belonged to the sect of Molokanye , founded a dissident sect, whose doctrine and social organization differed only in details from those of the Molokanye.. He called for a return to the communist of the early Church as described in the Book of Acts of the Apostles and planned to establish a community society based on family and village organization. None of its members were to own anything of their own except their children and wife. All the income of its members was pooled and deposited in a common treasury. All the implements of agricultural work were their common property.

The project failed, as had other attempts at communist egalitarian social organization of the Raskolniki .

The Fraternité de la Main Droite, or La Nouvelle de Sion, was founded around 1876 by an artillery captain named Ilin who had been relegated to the Solovets monastery twenty years earlier. His disciples met mainly in the provinces of Perm and the Urals. His main source of inspiration is the Apocalypse. Like the Doukhobortsy, this sect rejects all rites, the invocation of saints, relics and ecclesiastical authority. It is however strongly tinged with Judaism, because it requires the observance of the Sabbath, circumcision and prohibits the consumption of pork. At the same time, Ilin names the Jews the congregation of Satan and especially attacks the Jews of Paris. He eagerly awaits the institution of a New Testament-conformed Judaism and believes that Jehovah will soon appear and that, after separating the good from the wicked, he will gather them together in Judea, into a kingdom that will last a thousand years, "where all will be equal, where there will be no social class, no police, no judges, only saints and ordinary people " .

The principles of the Khlysty have no more relation than those of the Doukhobortsy with the Christology of the great historical Churches. Indeed, the Khlysty hymns are stuffed with terms such as Jehovah Sabaoth, God the Father, God's Son of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Mother of God, a title which was given to Mary at the Council of Ephesus. It is interesting that the Khlysty considered their sect to be much older than their god, Jehovah Sabaoth.

But, among the Khlysty, we breathe a different atmosphere from that of the doctors of divinity of Byzantium, who reshaped the messianic ideal according to the categories of Greco-Semitic philosophy and suppressed as much as possible its pneumatic and prophetic aspects. The origin of the Khlysty doctrine is found in some of the earliest phases of Christian faith, in that form of Christianity known as Adoptionism, in which the Holy Spirit descends from heaven in the form of a dove to take possession of "man born of men " , Jesus of Nazareth who received this honor because he had kept all the precepts of the Law and of the prophets. Like Paul, Adoptionists believed that they were dead and resurrected with their Master and that the Spirit dwelled in them and spoke through their mouths. The Khlysty also shared with them the worship of virginity, which was found in the "Middle Ages" in chivalry and with Dante and, later, throughout Russia, where those who practice it call themselves "Christs" .

At the Khlystys with the Doukhobortsy , a fundamental point of doctrine is that Christ is reincarnated in each individual and that after the death of one of their Christs, the soul of Christ is again embodied in another human body. Among the Khlysty , a Christ was recognized by his sufferings. And the Khlystys could count on the Russian authorities to persecute them. The two main sacraments of the sect were

mortification, suffering which they imposed on themselves or which the Russian government was always ready to inflict upon them, and the reception of the Holy Spirit, which, as in the early Church, manifested them by trance, ecstasy, convulsions and contortions.

For two and a half centuries, the sect, which flourished in monasteries and convents, concealed its rites under the veneer of a devout adherence to the Orthodox Church.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a member of the Khlysty felt that the manners of the sect had relaxed and broke away to found that of the Skoptsy.. Wherever they spread, they formed Korahlya, presided over by Christs, prophets or prophetesses. Their rigorous asceticism and the skill with which they pretended to adhere to orthodoxy led the Russian clergy to think that they were good Christians and allowed the police officers, whom they bribed all the holy day, to pretend they're Orthodox. They did not eat meat and, as with the Cathars, men did not approach or touch women, if they were able, even those of the sect. They religiously renounced meat, asserting, like the Cathars, that it was the fruit of copulation. But they ignored the orthodox rules of fasting and ate eggs, milk and cheese in Lent. In The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians, Leroy-Beaulieu describes the main rite of the Skoptsy thus : "It is not usually on young children that the Skoptsy practice their fundamental rite; it is most often on grown men, while the sacrifice is the hardest and the operation the most dangerous. This bloody initiation sometimes has several degrees: the mutilation is complete or incomplete; according to one or the other case, it bears, among sectarians, the name of royal seal or of second purity. Women do not always escape horrible baptism. For them, mutilation is not compulsory; many, however, upon admission to the 'doves' receive the stigmata of the sect and the royal seal, which is the sign of entry into the number of the pure. At home, the Skoptsy seem to attack rather the faculty of nourishing than the faculty of generating. The young girl's newly formed breast is amputated or disfigured, her breast subjected to a sort of odious tattoo. Sometimes both udders are completely removed. In some women the iron of the fanatics goes further, it attacks more intimate organs, without most often these incisions executed by ignorant hands rendering the unhappy women who suffer them incapable of being mothers. Lawsuits have brought to light these outrages upon human nature. The surgical procedures employed for these detestable ceremonies have been discussed in court. The judges saw old women in their eighties and young girls of fifteen, seventeen, twenty years old all variously deformed by the knife or fanatic scissors. He thereby gives an idea of the race of mind and soul of individuals who belonged to the sect of Skoptsy, because sexual mutilation is a widespread practice among all peoples, except peoples of Indo-European origin.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Russian thought was crossed by three main forces: an esoteric tendency, of which Freemasonry and syncretism of Gnostic origin, of the initiatory type, of the Rosicrucians were the main representatives; a rationalist and atheist tendency: resulting from the fermentation of the components of the philosophy of the Enlightenment and of the Hegelian dialectic which had penetrated into Russia thanks to the reforms of Peter the Great, it was directly at the origin of Marxism; a religious and traditionalist, mystical and Slavophile tendency, whose aspirations were in line with those of the Old Believers and certain "rationalist" and mystical sects; as Chatov in The Demonss, the Slavophiles made themselves the spokespersons of the Russian idea and of the belief in a providential mission of Russia; hostile to Voltairianism, skepticism and atheism which the philosophy of

the Enlightenment and the Hegelian dialectic had propagated in Russia in the eighteenth century, this tendency nonetheless also fed Marxism, as Marx clearly saw it: first phase of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is characterized by the formation of sects. They have their *raison d'être* at a time when the proletariat is not yet sufficiently developed to act as a class ... In short, they represent the infancy of the proletarian movement, as astrology and alchemy are the childhood of science. So that the foundation of the International was possible, the proletariat must have passed this phase (45). "

These different trends were all characterized by the desire to build a new society. In any case, "In the 17th century as in the 19th century, people like *intelligentsia*, all are in search of an ideal kingdom founded on justice, in front of this visible, current kingdom, where injustice rules (46). "

At the end of the nineteenth century Russian aristocratic circles were empaumés by both Freemasonry and the mystical sectarianism (47).

#### The Freemason Factor

From the reign of Ivan III (1440-1505), Grand Prince of Vladimir and Moscow from 1462 to 1505, "all the rulers of Muscovy up to Peter the Great seem to have had, or were accused of having interest in magic, alchemy or astrology, even all three "(48). In 1621, Arthur Dee, the eldest son of the Elizabethan astrologer and occultist, accepted the office of physician from Michael I Romanov (1596-1645), Tsar of Russia (1613 - 1645), on the advice of James I. This appointment came as part of a recruitment program for several dozen scientists and technicians. They were also expected to be experts in alchemy and astrology. During the fourteen years he spent at the imperial court, he devoted himself to alchemy and edited a collection of alchemical texts, *Fasciculus Chemicus*, which he published in Paris in 1621; the camera obscura he made of his laboratory was not exactly to the liking of the Tsar's Chancellor. Nevertheless, he left Russia safe and sound in 1635. Not all the foreign scholars who came there at the time at the Tsar's invitation were not so lucky. A number of them did not survive the wrath of employers disappointed with their talents or succumbed to the blows of a mob who believed they were magicians.

The growing interest of the Czars in the Kabbalah was coupled with a fear, mixed with fascination, of native magic. In 1598, Boris Godunov made those who were in his service take an oath not to cast spells on him. Several people were accused of having subjected him to the action of a spell, either because he really believed it or because it was a convenient method of getting rid of his political opponents. The same oath was demanded of the Moscow population in the seventeenth century by Vasily IV Shuisky (1552-1612), tsar from 1606 to 1610. In pre-modern Russia, the rituals of black magic and protection against black magic were the responsibility of men, while divination was reserved for women; those who did the profession of fortune teller were often also midwives. Apart from the reign of Aleksey Mikhailovich, Tsar from 1646 to 1676, who, like James I, was both interested in the occult sciences and

terrified of black magic, Russia did not experience a real witch hunt, even if denunciations, arrests, trials and executions of witches took place more or less sporadically.

In Russia as elsewhere, the magical and divinatory arts probably date back to the dawn of time and there is no written record. The first books of magic written in Russian that we have come from Byzantium. (49) The composition of a large number of these divinatory texts is attributed to biblical characters. Popular "Christian" inspired magic was based on prayers, spells, lists of good days and bad days, bréchomancy and brontomancy, which are still alive today. By the end of the nineteenth century, the nature and role of magic and divination were probably very similar in the Russian countryside and in rural areas of other European countries.

Two works of Semitic magic, including the *Secretum secretorum* in its Hebrew version, a treatise on the occult on the art of government, the original of which seems to have been written in Arabic, entered the Russian Empire towards the end of the fifteenth century, at the time when Jewish influences were beginning to take hold. to make itself felt there via Poland - the fact that geomancy was prohibited by a law promulgated during the reign of Catherine II shows that the influences in question were not exerted only on the intellectual circles. It was also at the end of the fifteenth century that the Russian peasant strata began to be exposed to magical texts from Western Europe, such as almanacs and folk medicine textbooks, of which Russian translations were not available. ceased to be published regularly until the seventeenth century. The seventeenth century, During which the custom developed to use books as amulets, also saw the publication of many treatises on the interpretation of dreams.

The fact remains that the gulf quickly widened between the practices and ideas imported into Russia by foreign scholars employed by the local aristocracy, who were more or less considered "scientific" and whose dissemination was limited to imperial circles and , on the other hand, popular magic and medicine, which, more or less influenced by the divinatory art of the Byzantine textual tradition, survived in the anthologies published by monks and old believers. However, as one can never be prudent enough, the foreign scholars attached to the imperial court had to make under oath a written declaration that they undertook not to use magical devices to harm the Tsar and his family (50 ).

The study of magic in ancient foreign texts was fragmentary and sporadic until the reign of Peter I (1672-1725), tsar from 1682 until his death. Esotericism, as opposed to popular magic and superstition, began to exert a significant influence on the Russian upper classes following the establishment of Freemasonry in Russia.

"Captain John Phillips of the Grand Lodge of London was appointed Grand Master of Russian Freemasonry in 1731. Ten years later he was replaced in this post by a Scotsman, General James Keith (1696 - 1758 ), who can be considered the true founder of Russian Masonry. Under his leadership, the lodges, most of whose members had until then been English or German, saw the accession of many Russians belonging to high society (51). "In the 1760s," the secret chancellor of [the Empress] Elisabeth already noted that a number of senior officials were Masons, in particular the brothers Zacharie and Ivan Chernyshev, RL Vorontsov, the brothers Pl and II Mélissino, Prince MM Chtcherbatov and the two Panins. Various prominent members of the Galitzine and Troubetskoy families in the guards and the



cadet corps were part of it, as well as some commoners (52)... "Not being in the odor of sanctity with the Empress, Keith ended up entering the service of Frederick II of Prussia, who appointed him governor of Berlin and promoted him to the rank of marshal. After his departure from Russia, Russian Freemasonry soon found a protector in the person of Ivan Ivanovich Chouvalov (1727 - 1797), one of the Empress's trusted men, to whom he never revealed his membership. to the sect.who will appoint him governor of Berlin and promote him to the rank of marshal. After his departure from Russia, Russian Freemasonry soon found a protector in the person of Ivan Ivanovich Chouvalov (1727 - 1797), one of the Empress's trusted men, to whom he never revealed his membership. to the sect.who will appoint him governor of Berlin and promote him to the rank of marshal. After his departure from Russia, Russian Freemasonry soon found a protector in the person of Ivan Ivanovich Chouvalov (1727 - 1797), one of the Empress's trusted men, to whom he never revealed his membership. to the sect.

The enthusiasm that Keith's proselytizing had aroused for Freemasonry in Russian aristocratic circles redoubled during the 1760s, to such an extent that Peter III, Emperor of Russia from January 5 to July 9, 1762, would have donated a house at the lodge À la constance and would have held Masonic conferences in his castle of Oranienbaum. "Around 1775, the grand master of Russian masons was IP Yelagin, director of the theaters and performances of the court and administrator of its property. He had under his authority some fourteen lodges, including some German, English and bilingual (with Russian), which belonged to the mixed observance limited to three degrees: apprentice, journeyman and master. But the desire to thicken the mystery and to multiply the number of degrees imposed itself in Russia as elsewhere. Baron Reichel, who entered the service of Russia in 1770, imported the Zinnendor system from Brunswick and drew many lodges from Yelagin; in 1776 the two groups united under the leadership of Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick.

"Even so, Reichel's system turned out to be too pragmatic, insufficiently ritualized and esoteric to satisfy the followers [...] These disappointed found an answer in the order of the Temple, or in the order of the Rose-Croix. Strictly hierarchical and comprising many ranks, it had been very successful in Sweden, where a friend of the Grand Duke Paul, AB Kourakine had imported it in 1776-1777. It took root in Russia during the passage of Gustave III who brought the most important constitutional documents of masonry. However, all efforts to unite all the Russian lodges into a single system with a single grand master, the Duke of Sudermania, brother of the King of Sweden, failed when Yelagin realized the danger there would be. to let the direction of movement pass into foreign hands,while Nikita Panin, assistant to the grand master, was in charge of the country's external affairs. The two systems therefore remained separate and Prince GP Gagarin, oberprokuror in the senate and friend of Paul [the Grand Duke (1754-1801), son of Catherine II and Peter III], took charge of the Swedish system. Two nephews of Panin, the princes AB Kourakine, and NV Repnine, were part of it at one time and seventeen lodges joined for periods of varying length between 1780 and 1790. But ultimately, the most influential of the Masonic groups was developed in Moscow where, having broken with the Swedish system, he created in 1781 a new "scientific" lodge, "Harmony", of which NI Novikov became a member IG Schwarz being the great inspirer"(53).was the head of the country's foreign affairs. The two systems therefore remained separate and Prince GP Gagarin, oberprokuror in the senate and friend of Paul [the Grand Duke (1754-1801), son of Catherine II and Peter III], took charge of the Swedish system. Two nephews of Panin, the

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IG Schwarz (1751-1784), a transylvanian by birth, arrived in Moscow in 1779 to take up a post of professor of German at the University, "a post which he undoubtedly owed to his relations with Masonry". In 1781, he went "to Germany in order to associate the Russian Freemasons, who until then depended on the Swedish Grand Lodge, with the Rosicrucians of Berlin (directly dependent on Johann Christoph von Wöllner, Minister of Justice and author of the famous edict against Enlightenment thought, Wöllnisches or Preußisches Religionsedikt September 9, 1788). By this confidential action, Schwarz secured one of the most eminent, but secret, positions in the hierarchy of Freemasons in Russia. After his death in February 1784, Baron GJ Schröder became a liaison with Berlin, as did Novikov, [...] who became an effective member of the Rose-Croix in the summer of the same year (54). "(54) As soon as Schwarz returned to Moscow in February 1782," the "Harmony" lodge was reorganized into a

Rosicrucian center, subordinate to Theden and Wöllner. Schwarz himself was given a mandate to recruit masons and direct their activities; he was to send his superior in Prussia an annual report on his new brothers, as well as ten rubles for each recruit. Then at the masonic convention of Wilhelmsbad in 1782, he obtained the recognition of Russia as the eighth province under the authority of the grand master of strict European observance, Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick "(55).

Conscious heirs of mystical sectarianism, Novikov (1744-1818) and his Brothers had set up "a vast program of concrete initiatives, with a view to a general reform which was to lead to the creation of a new culture and, by therefore, of a new world. All the turmoil and effervescence that had reigned in Russian spirituality for a century converged in this program. Like the activities of the sectarians of the seventeenth century, it goes without saying that those of the circle of Novikov "did not oppose religious institutions. On the contrary, the Church's peculiar position of weakness, the spread of conceptions of Western mysticism since the last century, the eclecticism of Russian culture of the eighteenth century, which was in full rebirth, all this made that the group of Novikov lived its membership of the Rosicrucian movement as the restoration of a vital past, of a classical philosophical and religious heritage. And all this agreed perfectly with the precepts of Russian Orthodoxy and even more to extract from its precepts their most authentic core (56). The Russian Rosicrucians formed the hard core of the Freemasonry nebula, whose teachings and activities prepared the ground for revolution. "Only those who chose to live their faith, to put themselves at the service of God and their fellow men, were admitted into Rosicrucian circles (57). "And all this agreed perfectly with the precepts of Russian Orthodoxy and even more to extract from its precepts their most authentic core (56). The Russian Rosicrucians formed the hard core of the Freemasonry nebula, whose teachings and activities prepared the ground for revolution. "Only those who chose to live their faith, to put themselves at the service of God and their fellows, were admitted into Rosicrucian circles (57). "And all this agreed perfectly with the precepts of Russian Orthodoxy and even more to extract from its precepts their most authentic core (56). The Russian Rosicrucians formed the hard core of the Freemasonry nebula, whose teachings and activities prepared the ground for revolution. "Only those who chose to live their faith, to put themselves at the service of God and their fellow men, were admitted into Rosicrucian circles (57). "were admitted to Rosicrucian circles (57). "were admitted to Rosicrucian circles (57). "

If, as we have seen, the Old Believers and the sectarians were aware of the Jewish mystical doctrines from the end of the seventeenth century and that certain Russian emperors of the time had had vague notions of them from their "doctors". », It was not until the second half of the eighteenth century that they infiltrated all aristocratic circles, thanks to the establishment of the first Masonic lodges around 1750 and the first Rosicrucian lodges around 1780. A Judging by the catalog in Novikov's personal library, who himself compiled the cabalistic writings of Christian cabalists in Western Europe, "Russian Freemasons had access to virtually all sources of Masonic Kabbalah, occult and Christian available at that time "(58). Like Pic de la Mirandole and other Christian cabalists, they perceived the occult sciences in general and the Kabbalah in particular as the deposit of an ancient wisdom which could help them to decipher not only the Old Testament but also the New Testament and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Of all the cabalistic books, this was the *Sefer Yetzira*, which deals with the ten levels or ten powers of emanation or manifestation of the divine defined as the *En-Soph*, the "Endless", the "God-

Immanent" and which is supposed to provide an interpretation mysticism of the Jewish scriptures, which they considered to be the oldest and most important receptacle of Jewish tradition. On the other hand, some hermeneutical methods such as gematria , notaricum and temurah became extremely popular in Masonic circles. In practice, Russian Freemasons refused to use their knowledge of the Kabbalah but, as it was understood that their individual salvation required the improvement of society and, more generally, of humanity, that is - that is to say, through the tikkun , they made it a point of honor to participate in charitable works, to create a national education, to reform mores and to devote themselves to alchemy.

It is in this state of mind and with this heavy explosive baggage that Novikov, a Freemason publisher from St Petersburg who had to shut down due to the drop in sales of the two satirical newspapers he was publishing, arrived in Moscow in 1778, where he had been appointed director of printing at the University of Moscow thanks to the support he had received from his Moscow Brothers. In a matter of months, Novikov and his Rosicrucian collaborators transformed the newspaper of the University of Moscow (Moscow News) into an information vehicle capable of shaping public opinion. It served as a screen for even more subversive activities. "In 1784, members of the sect established a limited company, the Moscow Typographical Society, registered in the police registers, which provided detailed reports of its activities to Prussian Masonic superiors. Novikov had also acquired an underground press which printed works of occult and Rosicrucian literature in Russian translation; at the request of the Prussian officials, I. Lopoukhine also had his own, which produced books on mysticism and alchemy. These productions did not bear any indication of where they were published and were not submitted to the chief of police before printing (59). The typographic society and the underground press operated under the control of the Rose-Croix.

Despite these successes, Novikov understood that he had to surround himself with reliable and devoted men, sure, devoted and, above all, well-off. This is how he approached the Moscow high society, which, satisfied by the editorial line of "Moscow News", opened wide the doors of its salons, where he quickly made the acquaintance of N. Troubetzkoy, grand master of the Reichelian lodge Osiris, whose house had become the meeting place for intellectuals, nobles and academics attracted by Reichel's moral doctrine or by its esoteric aspects. Schwartz, a Transylvanian by birth who arrived in Moscow in 1779 to take up a professorship at the University, was one of them. The three men became friends. In 1781, Osiris had fifty-six members, of very varied social classes and professions, a number of whom held important positions in administration and government (60). Undoubtedly Troubetzkoy, remembering that Reichel had declared to him that, in order to "study true masonry, one needs a secret lodge with very few members", he found that it had too many, since he created soon after the Harmony lodge, to which Novikov joined.

A lodge is an association of Freemasons gathered under the presidency of a venerable; Masonic initiation comprises thirty three grades, of which the first three are that of apprentice, journeyman and master and the last that of Sovereign Grand Inspector General. Obedience is a federal group formed by at least three lodges. Any Freemason can belong to several lodges and even to several obediences at the same time. This was the case with Novikov and Schwarz. They belonged to the supreme council of some of them. The metastatic proliferation of lodges, besides being the consequence of splits which are

themselves only the reflection of the psychic ambivalence and internal conflicts which characterize the personality of any individual attracted by theories such as those of the French -masonry, is a phenomenon inherent in any secret society. Not only is Masonic doctrine fully known only to the highest ranks of a lodge, it is not revealed and exposed to the same extent in all lodges. A lodge of Martinist obedience like The Brothers of the Light, of which the "Unknown" was Schwarz and Novikov represented the executive power, seems to have been in the secret, given that these members were aware of the two main points of the Martinist program. : "2. To develop all the possibilities inherent in man and to reach the top of the summit (sic) of the mountain to which the Nazarene frequently referred; 3. Establish a religion to which all nations can subscribe, so that they are able to act jointly - without however encroaching on each other - and to establish peace, based on freedom of action and cooperation (61). Such a program could only be revealed, detailed and explained to individuals likely to adhere to it without reservation, who were previously handpicked from among the members of the various paramasonic groups that Novikov founded for this purpose from the end of the 1770s. "In November 1779, an 'educational seminar' was founded and attached to the University of Moscow to provide training for teachers; Living on donations from prominent masons under Schwarz's leadership, it initially hosted 6 students who had grown to 30 by 1782, each costing 100 rubles a year. This creation was followed in March 1781 by that of the Society of University Graduates which had two functions: on the one hand, to choose and prepare the materials to be published in periodicals and printing houses, and on the other hand, to cultivate among the members a high moral standard which would eventually lead them to join the Rose-Croix. A special seminar for translators was organized and a house purchased for the two study groups where Schwarz and a German underground press were also housed. The building of Masonic activity was crowned by the creation of the Society of Friends of Sciences of Moscow in 1782, under the patronage of Governor General Zacharie Tchernychev (Mason) and Archbishop Plato. It was to serve as a forum for the intellectual life of the capital, but also subsidize students attending university courses, publish and distribute textbooks. Masonic ideals were disseminated through a number of works at the time, as well as through songs accompanying rites "(62).

He was also crowned with the creation of a literary society. "It was, in short, a philanthropic, cosmopolitan and peaceful association of literate people, with an internal circle of 'Great' nobles on one side, representatives of various social strata (scholars, members of the clergy, merchants, artists. ) on the other, as well as an audience of educated women..."

"Similar on this point to the Société des Amis Savants (which preceded the Typographical Society, the literary society envisaged seems to have been conceived as a link between the secret circles of the Rose-Croix and the public. This is clearly evident in the ordering of the meetings: an internal circle of the "Greats" retires to the room of Schwarz's widow [Schwarz had died in 1784] for secret deliberations, while in an almost public place the guests gather: cultured ladies, scholars of several disciplines, representatives of merchants and artists. We can consider the Moscow literary society as a partial application of the project of a "republic of scholars" [that of Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, German playwright (1751-1792) who was one of the main representatives of the literary movement Sturm und Drang]. Three main tasks are proposed, tasks which are moreover related to Moscow as a

metropolis: "to renew and beautify the churches of this capital"; "To inspire good morals in all the fellow citizens of this enormous city"; "Find solid funds for all possible schools. The ritualized flow of the meetings was in three parts. After having pronounced the solemn vow to ignore any social, cultural and religious inequality between men, we follow "scholarly" conferences on the fine arts, in particular on architecture, and on the improvement of the city in its report. to the inhabitants. This is followed by sermons by seminarians ("the future pastors of the whole nation") in different languages - no doubt as a reminder of Pentecost. Then comes the climax, that is to say - like the great academy competitions - the proclamation of the distinctions and rewards awarded to moral treaties, attributions resulting from a democratic vote: the prize for the best treaty is "awarded to the plurality of voice" ... we find here an emphatic declaration of equality, fraternity, understanding between men - echoes of contemporary events and currents of thought in France and America (we speak of "primitive human rights"), but reviewed through the prism of Freemasonry and Christian mysticism "(63).of fraternity, of understanding between men - echoes of contemporary events and currents of thought in France and America (one evokes "primitive rights of men"), but reviewed through the prism of Freemasonry and Christian mysticism "(63).of fraternity, of understanding between men - echoes of contemporary events and currents of thought in France and America (one evokes "primitive rights of men"), but reviewed through the prism of Freemasonry and Christian mysticism "(63).

On the accession of Catherine II (1729 - 1796), the "empress-philosopher", Russian Freemasons believed that the time had come for them to come out of the semi-clandestinity in which they intrigued and dreamed of regenerating. the human race. By the early 1790s, nearly a hundred lodges existed in Russia and it had even become fashionable to join. Most Orthodox philosophers, scientists, writers, personalities and theologians, in short "The most distinguished people in the empire were affiliated with Freemasonry. "

"Catherine's attitude towards Freemasonry of which so many of her courtiers were a part was at first marked by amused tolerance. But this turned into aversion following the visit to St. Petersburg of Count Cagliostro, a Sicilian charlatan named Giuseppe Balsamo and a pseudo-alchemist rather than a Freemason. The sovereign published in 1780 an anonymous attack on "absurd society" and subsequently mocked Cagliostro under the name of Kalifankjerston in her play *The Impostor* , where she depicts him extorting gold from his victims "(64 ).

On April 21, 1792, Catherine II issued an arrest warrant against Novikov, rightly suspected, following the liquidation of the Typographical Society a few months earlier, of having linked up with Troubetzkoy and Turgenev to persuade the Grand Duke Paul to 'adhere to Freemasonry and continued to publish and sell prohibited books on occultism and Freemasonry. The Brothers of the Light, who, naturally, had nothing to be ashamed of, immediately burned all their archives. Notwithstanding the praise given to him by Plato, a metropolitan of Moscow and allergic to Catherine's policy, Novikov was imprisoned in the Schlüsselburg fortress and sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Catherine II had not yet been brought to the ground until her successor to the throne, Paul I, who was a member of the Brothers of the Light, released Novikov and authorized the Brothers to quietly resume their work and activities, under the cover of philanthropic works.

Paul I died in 1801. Alexander I (1777-1825), "after the war in France, showed religious feelings, imbued with a mysticism which he owed to the influence of Madame de Krudener; he sincerely desired the good of his subjects, and called Martinists in his advice. He entrusted one of them, Prince Galitzin, with the department of worship and that of public education. Galitzin and other Martinists began to move again, they founded government-protected Bible societies; translation of several religious works such as John Stilling, etc. N. Labzin published in Russian a periodical journal, written in a completely mystical sense: *The Messenger of Zion*" (65).

From 1811 to 1815 the lodges reopened in the capital and in the other towns were grouped together. "But the Schroeder system, imported from Germany, which rejected the high Swedish ranks, led to discussions which resulted in the closure of the grand lodge [it had taken the name of the Order of Vladimir] and the formation of two groups in its place: *L'Astrea* and *La Provinciale*. The liberal system of the former attracted all sympathy to her, so much so that in 1822 she had twenty-four lodges under her auspices; while the other brought together only six. The most distinguished people in the empire were affiliated with "Freemasonry". "But the elected Grand Master of *L'Astrea*, General Kushelef, seems to have been afraid of the democratic organization of the institution [...]", so much so that, eighteen months after having been elevated to the post of Grand Master, he pushed the distinction so far as to address to the Tsar a memorandum in which he "exposed the dangers which could result for the State from the existence of a society which proclaimed freedom of thought. "" On August 1, 1822, the Minister of the Interior, Count Victor Pawlovich Kochubei, received a ukase from the emperor, ordering the closure of all lodges. The Minister of the Interior communicated the order to the grandmasters, who obtained permission for the workshops to meet in order to settle accounts and declare the association dissolved" (66).

The Napoleonic wars of 1813-1814 had profound consequences on the development of political ideas in Russia. During their stay in Paris the Russian officers, recruited from among the most educated and the most idealistic members of the nobility, had become familiar with the "Western" civilization and culture. They had been deeply impressed by the difference between the Russian political system and the liberal and democratic institutions of Western Europe. The constitutional government of the countries of Western Europe had dazzled them. They returned home with a mind full of political views that were not yet widely known in Russia. What they saw there disgusted them and made them unhappy. They began to form circles and clubs where they read philosophical and sociological works and debated liberalism. Imbued with their dignity, the young officers were eager to play a leading role in the regeneration of their country. They had helped France to free itself from Napoleon, they had no difficulty in convincing themselves that they were destined to free Russia from Tsarism. Under their influence, a wave of liberalism spread among the Russian youth, who set about making plans for reform and trying to find a way to implement them. Abroad, they had heard of the existence of liberal secret societies: they formed an innumerable quantity of them on Russian soil. These beautiful people were not in hostility with the regime insofar as they believed that the Tsar, whose main adviser was then the liberal M. Speransky, the son of a country priest, had liberal opinions and that he would soon give a constitution to Russia. The Tsar not having slipped on this slope, a certain number of officers stiffened and formed yet another secret society, whose name was for some "The Society of the True and Faithful Sons of the Fatherland",

for others " The League of Virtue "; one found there among others the inevitable Troubetzkoy and Novikov. In the early days the members of this society became attached to the question of the emancipation of the serfs and tried to incite the nobility to speak about it to the tsar. Convinced that the nobility would never consent to such a measure, the League then emphasized the introduction of a constitutional monarchy in Russia. The rules and laws of the League betrayed the influence of Freemasonry. Dissolved in 1818, it was immediately reconstituted under other names and was at the origin of the coup d'état which took place in St-Petersburg on December 14, 1825.

Three years earlier, at the Congress of Verona, Metternich had sent Alexander I a special memoir on secret societies. As Alexander himself had been seduced by the intrigues of the sects so that it was possible to tell him how much he had been their dupe at times, it contains only an overview of their action in contemporary monarchies. , as the Prince of Metternich knew her. Here is an excerpt:

"Of all the evils which afflict the social body today, the one which deserves the attention of governments in particular is the criminal game of sects.

"Among the weak sides of the human mind must be counted the inclination which at all times has drawn it into the vague field of mysticism. There are a crowd of restless minds tormented by the need to create an occupation and whose activity, unable to focus on objects of a definite use, pushes them towards sterile abstractions. Fools of their disordered imagination, fools of anyone who wants to use their mania for perverse projects, these men have constantly been for secret societies like a breeding ground for followers [...]

"[...] Nationality, political limits, everything has disappeared for the sect. It is, without a doubt, in Paris that the steering committee of the radicals of the whole of Europe is established, and each day will contribute more to demonstrate the truth of this fact.

"The faction is on equal terms with all states; Pure monarchies, constitutional monarchies, republics, everything is threatened by the Levellers (67). "

It was wasted effort. After Alexander I had issued a decree prohibiting Freemasonry, it continued its work clandestinely until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At one time, the head of underground Freemasonry was Prince Lansky (1787 - 1862), the Minister of the Interior of the Russian Empire, who became a major proponent of the reforms of Alexander II, Emperor of Russia from 1855 to 1881. A number of those who supported liberal reforms in Russia belonged to esoteric groups



specializing in the study of the Kabbalah. Thus, Sergei Maslov (1793-1879), a high ranking Rosicrucian who was secretary of the Imperial Agricultural Society in Moscow from 1830 to 1860, translated in the 1850s a voluminous work (*Philosophie der Geschichte Oder Über die Tradition*) of the Christian cabalist FJ Molitor (1779-1860), for whom "it is impossible to understand Christianity in its deepest dimension without having first understood Judaism, which is the source of this religion". This declaration was all the better received by the Russian Freemasons as they tried to find a link between orthodoxy and the "real Kabbalah", which they identified with what R. Guénon later called the "primordial tradition", while interest in the Kabbalah and Hasidism grew in the Russian clergy and in Russian religious schools.

Occult beliefs and practices continued to play a predominant role in the imperial court, where, as Robert Warth (68) has shown, Rasputin was preceded by a long line of magi, astrologers and mystics including charlatanism. in no way yielded to charisma, but whose influence on the Tsar and Tsarina was no less important. Rasputin's arrival at court corresponded to the special attention then enjoyed by peasant spirituality and popular superstitions in certain Russian intellectual circles linked to Gogol and to the interest more or less mixed with pity shown by the Tsar and the Tsarina. themselves for everything that glorified instinct, for the irrational, for the little people, the "little ones" (69).

After being made very small due to the repression that befell the secret societies in the decade which had followed the assassination of Alexander II, the Freemason lodges and the esoteric groups resurfaced in favor of the disturbances. political and social policies which agitated the Russian Empire in 1905 and wrested from the Tsar the granting of a constitution and the establishment of a parliament. In the meantime, the interest of the Russians in occultism, spiritualism and oriental mysticism had only redoubled. The Kabbalah continued to attract various local esoteric groups, the most active of which was the one that had formed around Grigorij Ottonovič von Moebes (1868-1934), an occultist who had proclaimed himself Grand Master of the Russian branch of the Order. Martinist and who, unlike the sulphurous Papus (1865-1916), the co-founder of the Martinist Order, had a thorough knowledge of the Kabbalah (Von Moebes and his followers were arrested in 1926 by the GPU, the state police of the USSR).

On the other hand, in the early years of the twentieth century, esoteric circles had gradually opened up to individuals who did not have the same social status as the Freemasons of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A number of them were from the middle class, they were scientists, engineers, artists, lawyers, etc. Politically, they were on the left, of socialist or mystical orientation, even nationalist. Many of them declared themselves anti-Semites. Their hostility towards the Jews did not prevent them from being fervent followers of the Kabbalah, for they felt that this ancient secret knowledge did not belong to the Jews alone, that it was in fact of Egyptian origin and that Moses, whom they considered to be an Egyptian, had only transmitted it to the Aryans through the Jews. This fable had been accredited by the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher (1601-1680), before being peddled in the nineteenth century by Fabre d'Olivet, Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, de Guaita and Schuré, authors who were all very popular. in Russian occult circles. Von List (1848-1919) and the Cistercian monk von Liebenfels (1874-1954) went so far as to speak of an "Aryan Kabbalah" and a "German Kabbalah" (70). Von List (1848-1919) and the Cistercian monk von Liebenfels (1874-1954) went so far as to speak of an "Aryan

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On the eve of the Bolshevik coup d'etat, Russian esotericism had the characteristic of syncretizing popular beliefs and magical practices, which, if they were not peculiar to the Russians, were nonetheless inevitably conditioned by their own. race of the soul, a magma of more or less orthodox, more or less Gnostic religious elements and the teachings of the various occultist currents which, from Freemasonry to the Rose-Croix, from Martinism to Spiritualism via the anthroposophy, had appeared since the seventeenth century in European countries. The millenarianism which was more or less latent in the magma of the orthodox sects then converged with the utopian constructions of the secret societies. Mystics or rationalists, the orthodox sects and the secret societies were all shaped by the general conception of an ideal future society to be built.

Before examining the strong utopian component of the ideas, philosophies and ideologies of all the various and varied forces, allies or antagonists, which were present in nineteenth-century Russia, it is worth dwelling on a Russian intellectual of that time who tried to make the esoteric teachings of the Kabbalah literally orthodox.

#### The Soloviev case

This panorama of the various occult currents that roamed Russian society from top to bottom at the end of the nineteenth century could not be completed without mentioning one of the most ardent and influential divulators of the Kabbalah in this country, namely V. Soloviev (1853-1900), which we will see below that he did not remain deaf to the theories of a true "enlightened". Soloviev was the most important thinker of the "Russian religious renaissance" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His will to build an ideal "Universal Church", the Church which he believed would reconcile opposites, East and West, man and woman, paradise and heaven, led him to both to speculative mysticism and to the traditional practices of Judaism.

In 1875, Soloviev, then professor of history at the University of Moscow, "requested a leave to go to London and study" Indian, Gnostic and medieval philosophy "and, as revealed by his English correspondent," to discover the English occult scene ". Disappointed by what he saw, or at least by what was shown to him, but in no way dejected, he continued his research in the field. "His travel diary is filled with examples of automatic writing, references to alchemical symbols and occult diagrams. Fervently he noted in it: "Kabbalah and Neoplatonism, Böhme and Swedenborg, Schelling and Me. " " Simply. "At that time in his life, he considered the Kabbalah as a secret, occult phenomenon and he was looking for the key to initiation. As he discovered, through the study of convergences with his own intuition of God, he nevertheless came to see in it a mystical doctrine, legitimately correlative of orthodoxy, the truth of which was accessible to all "( 71).

In 1879, Soloviev enrolled in the school of a rabbi named Goetz, with whom he formed a solid friendship. In the process, he began to study the Talmud and quickly became a connoisseur of pre-Christian and Old Testament Jewish thought. In the early 1880s he met many other Jews, who welcomed him as one of their own and made him an honorary member of one of their largest organizations, the Society for the Dissemination of Culture among Jews in Russia. . This is how he defended the Jews in articles and conferences, when, following the assassination of Alexander II by terrorists, they were victims of pogroms (72). His commitment to the Jews stemmed from his conception of history, of his conviction that there was a fraternal continuity between Judaism and Christianity and that Jews and Christians would be reconciled through the conversion of these to Christianity.

In 1896, Soloviev prefaced an article by Baron David Günzburg entitled *La Kabale: la Philosophie mystique des Juifs*, which he arranged to be published in a prestigious journal. The article and preface attempted to establish the theological integrity of the Kabbalah by dissociating it from Freemasonry, Gnosticism, Theosophy, and other esoteric doctrines that fascinated Russians at the time. At the same time, they endeavored to bring to light the similarities between Kabbalah and Orthodoxy by showing that the relationship between God and man, which Soloviev proclaimed was essential for the future of Russia, was at the heart of the two doctrines. "Strangely enough, Soloviev's interest in the Kabbalah arose at a time when the Jewish question was becoming increasingly pressing in the Russian Empire, and his work on Jewish mysticism therefore took on both political and theological significance. Ultimately, Soloviev's writings on the Kabbalah and his repeated use of cabalistic terminology reflect the philosopher's efforts to legitimize Jewish mysticism as a system which, although outside the church [...], could yet inform and can -to reform Russia and the Orthodox Church thanks to its message on the relationship between God and humanity "(73).

Soloviev continued to study the Kabbalah until his death.

### The utopian factor

In Semitic religions, millennialism is the belief that the Messiah will reign on earth for a thousand years before the final judgment. In a restricted sense, it is the collective attitude that dedicates an idea to playing a role of almost divine liberator for humanity or a group, to accomplish an exceptional mission.

A harbinger of the profound influence that millennialism exerted on Marxism in the nineteenth century was the sudden development of the politico-religious theory of "Third Rome" in Russia in the second half of the fifteenth century.

The signing of the Act of Union between the Greek and Roman Churches by Metropolitan Isidore in Florence in 1439 had been seen as a betrayal by the Russians. To this resentment was added, from the fall of Byzantium in 1453, the idea that Russia was the "defender of the true faith". At the end of the fifteenth century in Novgorod, even as the Orthodox awaited the end of the world (as the Orthodox

believed that the world would last 7,000 years, and according to a Byzantine tradition of rabbinical origin, they placed the creation of the world in 5508 BC, they were waiting for it in 1492), another idea arose that Moscow was the successor of ancient Rome and not only of the second Rome, Byzantium. It did not find much echo in the upper echelons of power, which continued to gravitate in the orbit of Byzantium. "From the reign of John III (1460 - 1505) who was married to the niece of the last Byzantine emperor (Zoé-Sophie Paléologue) and who had borrowed from the Eastern Empire its emblem "the Double-headed Eagle", Moscow was became a small Byzantium. The Grand Ducal court was modeled on that of Constantinople. The Kremlin was embellished with magnificent churches and palaces built by Milanese architects. During the reign of Basil III (1503-33) the absolutism of the sovereigns of Moscow was further strengthened and all the forces of the state concentrated on the unification of Russia "(74). Moscow had become a small Byzantium. The Grand Ducal court was modeled on that of Constantinople. The Kremlin was embellished with magnificent churches and palaces built by Milanese architects. During the reign of Basil III (1503-33) the absolutism of the sovereigns of Moscow was further strengthened and all the forces of the state concentrated on the unification of Russia "(74). Moscow had become a small Byzantium. The Grand Ducal court was modeled on that of Constantinople. The Kremlin was embellished with magnificent churches and palaces built by Milanese architects. During the reign of Basil III (1503-33) the absolutism of the sovereigns of Moscow was further strengthened and all the forces of the state concentrated on the unification of Russia "(74).

At the end of the seventeenth century Peter the Great showered the messianic hopes which had been rekindled as a result of Nikon's unconditional adherence to the idea of the "Third Rome". When the empire was proclaimed in 1721, Peter the Great refused the title of Eastern Christian Emperor proposed by the Senate. On the other hand, Pan-Slavism preached by the Croatian Catholic priest Jury Krijanic from the middle of the eighteenth century did not meet with any success in Russia.

It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century to see true messianic and millenarian movements flourish in Russia. In addition to the followers of The News of Zion, discussed above, members of the most messianic branch of the sect of the khlysty "See themselves as elected officials forming" the new people of Israel. " Lubkov was one of the Christs of the khlysty when he proclaimed himself Head of New Israel, king of the 19th century, son of the clear aether who possesses wisdom and power over all the earth. His teaching was accepted in several important centers of the khlysty . Loubkov settled in 1905 in Rostov on the Don which became the center of the communities of New Israel. These existed not only in the south of Russia but also in the West and in Siberia. The only difference between teaching khlysty and Loubkov's is that he considers himself "the only messiah" and denies the possibility of the existence of several Christs at the same time. He composed and printed in 1906 a Catechism of the New Israel Faith which is a mixture of scriptural and patristic texts with fanciful commentaries. From a moral point of view the followers of New Israel preach absolute freedom of relations between the sexes even for the closest relatives "(75).

Condraty Malevanny, "a former schtoundist who proclaimed himself in 1891" Jesus Christ "", soon afterwards founded the Malevantsy sect. His teaching is clearly eschatological. He proclaimed the very near coming of the Last Judgment. God the Father will then announce to the world that he is his envoy and all peoples will worship him. The Malevantsy movement became very important from the years

1889 and took on an anti-social character and epidemic hysteria. After Malevanny's internment in a nursing home, his successor John Lysenko proclaimed himself a "holy spirit" from his predecessor. The Malevantsy profess, like the Khlysty, dualism and reincarnation "(76).

Even as the Tsarist regime fought relentlessly against these sects, Alexander I was captivated by the millennial views that fermented there. The "idea of a mission which he was called to fulfill did not crystallize until 1813 after the campaign in Russia. Admiral Chitchagov writes a history of the war against Napoleon, interspersed with quotes from Holy Scripture. He speaks of the mystical role of the Russian sovereign in the destinies of Europe. Alexander I also found multiple allusions to his future role as arbiter of European affairs in Psalm XCI which was sent to him by an unknown correspondent in Riga, probably by the baroness of Krudener "(77). It was she who suggested that he conclude a "Holy Alliance" with Ferdinand of Austria and Frederick William of Prussia. The "Holy Alliance", whose protocol begins with these words: "In the name of the most holy and indivisible Trinity", "is not a diplomatic treaty but a religious pact one of the most extraordinary monuments by its idealism and its messianic utopianism" (78 ). The act was drawn up in the modest apartment of a friend of the Baroness of Krudener, the Lyonnais Nicolas Bergasse, former disciple of Mesmer and author of a treatise entitled *On the faith of beings and their destiny* .

Alexander I's messianic leanings had serious consequences for Russia. On the one hand, at least until, faced with the failure of his "mission", he had come to his senses and had changed his mind, they led him to be benevolent towards secret societies which, under the leadership of Prince Troubetskoy, fomented the riot of December 26, 1825. On the other hand, they contributed to a reawakening of Russian national consciousness and gave birth to the Russian cultured class the feeling that Russia had a providential mission in Europe, a feeling that only confirmed the hypothesis that the historian Fallmerayer made in 1830 in his *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters* that the Slavic nations were likely to dominate the Latin and Germanic nations in the near future. "The Polish insurrection of 1831 will be the occasion for a patriotic renewal in Russia. The latter will be extolled by Pushkin in his famous poetry "To the calumniators of Russia". He will speak for the first time with precision about the Panslavist theory, which at that time was not widespread in Russia. He wonders if the Slavic streams will all flow into the Russian Sea or if it will exhaust itself. The leader and founder of Orthodox Messianism Alexis Khomiakov wrote about the Polish uprising: "The Slavic Eagles will bow before the North Eagle Russia" "(79).

Russian messianism crystallized in two trends in the 1840s. One was formed under the influence of the political and religious thought of Schelling and other German romantics, which had itself been influenced by Gnosticism (In 1848, Schelling himself confided to prince Odoievski, founder of the first philosophical circle in Russia: "Strange is your Russia, one cannot determine what it is intended for and where it goes but it is intended for something big.") ; the other found its origin in Hegel and the French socialists, whose theses were not themselves entirely devoid of Gnostic components.

For some, Christianity was doomed to play an almost divine liberating role for the Russian people: according to SP Shevyrev (1806-1864), a historian of Russian literature who was deeply influenced by J. Böhme, "It is in Russia above all that we can hope for a development of universal Christianity ". For

others, it was Russia that was doomed to play a role of providential liberator for humanity: Dostoyevsky, in his Speech on Pushkin (1880) affirmed that "The mission of the Russian people is pan-European and universal. Perhaps becoming a true Russian only means becoming the brother of all men, the universal man [...] Our future lies in Universality, not acquired by violence, but by the strength that we will draw from our great ideal: the reunification of all humanity". The two points of view coexisted in Pierre Tchaadaev (1794-1856) who wrote to his friend Tourgueniev in October 1935: "We have [...] the mission of teaching Europe an infinite quantity of things that it does not happen. not to understand on its own. Do not laugh: you know that is my deep conviction. A day will come when we will be the intellectual heart of Europe, as we are already its political heart and our future power based on reason will overtake our current power, based on material strength. This will be the logical result of our long isolation. All great things have come from the desert. A powerful voice resonating on these days in the world will serve in particular to accelerate the fulfillment of our destinies." (Letter to Turgenev, October 1935, "We have [...] the mission to teach Europe an endless amount of things that it cannot understand on its own. Do not laugh: you know that is my deep conviction. A day will come when we will be the intellectual heart of Europe, as we are already its political heart and our future power based on reason will overtake our current power, based on material strength. This will be the logical result of our long isolation. All great things have come from the desert. A powerful voice resonating on these days in the world will serve in particular to accelerate the fulfillment of our destinies." (Letter to Turgenev, October 1935, "We have [...] the mission to teach Europe an endless amount of things that it cannot understand on its own. Do not laugh: you know that is my deep conviction. A day will come when we will be the intellectual heart of Europe, as we are already its political heart and our future power based on reason will overtake our current power, based on material strength. This will be the logical result of our long isolation. All great things have come from the desert. A powerful voice resonating on these days in the world will serve in particular to accelerate the fulfillment of our destinies." (Letter to Turgenev, October 1935, A day will come when we will be the intellectual heart of Europe, as we are already its political heart and our future power based on reason will overtake our current power, based on material strength. This will be the logical result of our long isolation. All great things have come from the desert. A powerful voice resonating on these days in the world will serve in particular to accelerate the fulfillment of our destinies." (Letter to Turgenev, October 1935, A day will come when we will be the intellectual heart of Europe, as we are already its political heart and our future power based on reason will overtake our current power, based on material strength. This will be the logical result of our long isolation. All great things have come from the desert. A powerful voice resonating on these days in the world will serve in particular to accelerate the fulfillment of our destinies." (Letter to Turgenev, October 1935, A powerful voice resonating on these days in the world will serve in particular to accelerate the fulfillment of our destinies." (Letter to Turgenev, October 1935, Works ); two years later, he confided to another of his correspondents: "Russia has an important task to accomplish: to fulfill before other countries all the promises of Christianity because Christianity has remained with us free from all contact with human passions. and earthly interests, because he only prayed and humbled himself imitating his divine Founder and because probably he will receive, because of that, his last and most astonishing inspirations" (Letter to Orlov, 1837, Works , p . 215).

For some, messianism took on a theistic form; with others it was part of an atheistic philosophy. Soloviev, for whom messianism resided in the conviction of a people "to be the chosen bearer and the realizer of the historical destinies of humanity" and for whom "it is only the Christian idea (or what is the same messianic thing) of the Kingdom of God, gradually revealing itself in the life of humanity, which gives meaning to history and which defines the true notion of progress" (80), the Russian idea, the mission of Russia consists in realizing the "free theocracy", theandry (the union of humanity with the divinity) by the application of the Trinitarian principle to the social domain. "According to him three forces have ruled the world: the strength of an inhuman God, the strength of humanity without God and the Revelation of a higher world. The people carrying this third divine force must not only be free from any constraint or not be subjective but must rise above particular interests. He must have absolute faith in the positive reality of a higher world and must be submissive to it. These qualities belong, according to Soloviev, to the Russian people. He is worthy of being a witness because the strength he is to reveal to the world is not of this world and wealth and order have no relation to it. He therefore advocates an ideal society which will be theandric... In our world down here this ideal could be realized by the union of the Russian Orthodox Empire and the Roman Pontiff (81). At the same time, an atheist like Bakunin stormed: "From the ocean of blood and fire will emerge in Moscow, high in the sky, the star of the revolution to become the guide of liberated humanity. "" We can therefore speak of a continuity between religious messianisms of very ancient origin, secular-democratic messianism of political inspiration and revolutionary messianism of an apparently more economic and social nature. Between Marxists claiming to be atheists and Christians claiming to be revolutionaries in the very name of their faith, there had to be a common denominator which is nothing other than a form of messianism, underestimated by some. and others and by their adversaries (82). "" We can therefore speak of a continuity between religious messianisms of very ancient origin, secular-democratic messianism of political inspiration and revolutionary messianism of an apparently more economic and social nature. Between Marxists claiming to be atheists and Christians claiming to be revolutionaries in the very name of their faith, there had to be a common denominator which is none other than a form of messianism, underestimated by some. and others and by their adversaries (82). "" We can therefore speak of a continuity between religious messianisms of very ancient origin, secular-democratic messianism of political inspiration and revolutionary messianism of an apparently more economic and social nature. Between Marxists claiming to be atheists and Christians claiming to be revolutionaries in the very name of their faith, there had to be a common denominator which is none other than a form of messianism, underestimated by some. and others and by their adversaries (82). "there had to exist a common denominator which is nothing other than a form of messianism, underestimated moreover by both sides and by their adversaries (82). "there had to exist a common denominator which is nothing other than a form of messianism, underestimated moreover by both sides and by their adversaries (82). "

Moreover, the various currents of Russian messianism of the nineteenth century had two common features: the obsession with freedom, whether it be spiritual freedom for Khomiakov, or political and social freedom for A. Herzen (1812 - 1870). , or finally the freedom from all constraint in Bakunin and the anarchists; the obsessive idealization of the people as "theophoric people" for Dostoyevsky or a people carrying a social ideal for areligious or anti-religious thinkers.

Prégnant in early Christianity, in particular in the Christian communities of Asia, in the Pseudo-Barnabas, Papias, Cérinth, Justin of Nablus, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolyte, Method of Olympus, Jerome, etc., the millenarian ideas remade surface on several occasions, partially in the Catholic Church, with the "philosophy of history" of the Cistercian monk and theologian Joachim de Fiore (V. 1130-1202), the spiritual Franciscans, in a complete manner in the currents resulting from the Reformation or in Christian heretical sects. In these, he gave birth, on the one hand, to a real religious movement based on the belief in the advent of a new reign or kingdom, conceived as a return to the conditions existing at the origin of the time and, on the other hand, to a system of thought challenging the existing social and political order, deemed decadent and corrupt, and awaiting collective redemption by referring to a belief in a lost paradise or the return of a charismatic providential man who would destroy forces hostile to God .

Millennialism has three movements, which are found both in Jewish prophecy ( Book of Zephaniah , Book of Micah ) and in ancient Christianity ( Gospel of Luke , Epistle of James) First, he pronounces a curse against the rich while glorifying the poor, equates wealth and private property with ungodliness while considering poverty a synonym of salvation. Secondly, he denounces the corruption of the existing order and announces its destruction and imminent replacement by a new society in accordance with the will of God, founded on egalitarian principles. Thirdly, he prepares for the advent of the kingdom by founding small religious communities whose organization is based on these egalitarian principles.

Samuel, in whom the Acts of the Apostles see "the first of the prophets" and the Talmud "the teacher of all prophets", founded "schools of prophets" in which ( 1 Samuel, XIX, 20) "there was absolute equality between the members; work was compulsory for all; everything was accomplished in common: home, work, meals. These communities lasted four centuries. But the most accomplished example of community life in Jewish society was, without question, the Essene community, a religious and social community, where goods were pooled ". The first Christian communities, according to the New Testament, practiced the egalitarian precepts given by Jesus Christ and the prophets: "The multitude of those who had adhered to the faith had one heart and one soul; and nobody claimed to be the owner of what he owned, but we put everything in common. It was with great strength that the Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the power of grace was upon them all. None of them was in misery, for all those who owned fields or houses sold them, and they brought the price to put it at the disposal of the Apostles. A share of it was redistributed to each of the brothers as and when needed. Joseph, whom the Apostles had nicknamed Barnabas (which means: the man of comfort), was a Levite from Cyprus. He had land, he sold it and brought the money from it, which he deposited at the feet of the Apostles. "(whom the Apostles had nicknamed Barnabas (which means: the man of comfort), was a Levite from Cyprus. He had a piece of land, he sold it and brought the money from it, which he deposited at the feet of the Apostles. "(whom the Apostles had nicknamed Barnabas (which means: the man of comfort), was a Levite from Cyprus. He had land, he sold it and brought the money from it, which he deposited at the feet of the Apostles. "(Acts of the Apostles 4: 32-37) "The apostles do many amazing and amazing things, and people are amazed at them. All believers are united and they share all they have. They sell their properties and valuables, they divide the money among everyone, and everyone gets what they need. Each day, with one heart, they faithfully meet in the temple. They share



bread in their homes, they eat their food with joy and with a simple heart "( Acts of the Apostles 2, 43-46)

A number of Christian sects tried to revive by force this collectivist ideal in "Middle Ages" and "Renaissance" Europe, such as, for example, the Lollards in England, the Hussites in central Europe. and, as we have seen, the "rationalists" and the mystics in Russia.

Despite the persecution they suffered over the centuries, these millennial sects experienced a revival in nineteenth-century Germany. It should be noted that egalitarianism was fashionable in German high society as well. "W. Weitling, the founder, according to Karl Marx, of European communism, was directly influenced by this fermentation: his utopian socialism will eventually lead to a community experience in the New World: Communia. "

"In 1844, Engels met the French Socialists and Communists. But what does he see? That the French Communists are Christians: "One of their favorite axioms is that: Christianity is communism". Of course Engels does not subscribe to this assertion, but he could only have been deeply struck by the religious atmosphere in which French socialism was developing [...] He noted a double movement in "French Communism": a reference to the past of Christianity (the state of community described in The Acts of the Apostles ), a reference to the future from the text of The Apocalypse on the thousand-year-old kingdom; however, a significant fact, the three reformers cited by Engels (Saint Simon, Fourier, Cabet) are those where these references are patent ". (83) Indeed, Saint-Simon set out to resuscitate primitive Christianity: "This enterprise is of the same nature as that of the founding of Christianity: its direct object is to improve the lot of the last class of society. and for the general purpose of making all men happy [...] "; Babeuf himself exalted his project: "Let us liquidate the hold of private property: on the ruins of the appropriation of the land, let us create a social heritage, that the republic is the sole owner: like a mother, it will provide everyone with its members and in equality: education, food and work. This is only the only rebuilding of Jerusalem "(84). Fourier, on a noticeably less mystical slope, took it into his head to create a new "Church", place of the orgy of a humanity deified and justified in all its desires where morality is no longer opposed to passionate attraction " ; he claimed to be Christianity "of love" and condemned that of "mistrust and fear (85). "As for Cabet, he radically opposed the teaching of Christ to the doctrine of the Church, arguing that" according to Jesus, the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church, Christianity cannot exist without Communism and that no one can call himself a Christian if he is not a communist. And, conversely, Communism is nothing other than true Christianity ".place of the orgy of a deified and justified humanity in all its desires where morality is no longer opposed to passionate attraction " ; he claimed to be Christianity "of love" and condemned that of "mistrust and fear (85). "As for Cabet, he radically opposed the teaching of Christ to the doctrine of the Church, arguing that" according to Jesus, the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church, Christianity cannot exist without Communism and that no one can call himself a Christian if he is not a communist. And, conversely, Communism is nothing other than true Christianity ".place of the orgy of a deified and justified humanity in all its desires where morality is no longer opposed to passionate attraction " ; he claimed to be Christianity "of love" and condemned that of "mistrust and fear (85). "As for Cabet, he radically opposed the teaching of Christ to the doctrine of the Church, arguing that" according to Jesus, the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church, Christianity cannot exist without Communism and that no

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Engels saw that "the history of early Christianity offers curious points of contact with the modern labor movement. Like this one, Christianity was originally the movement of the oppressed. It appeared first of all as the religion of slaves and freedmen, of the poor and deprived of rights, of peoples subjugated or dispersed by Rome. Both Christianity and workers' socialism preach an imminent deliverance from slavery and poverty ". ( Correspondance , Tome IV, Paris, Editions sociales, 1974, p. 148)

"Moses Hess, master of communism from Marx and Engels, saw this communism at the outlet of a holy history of humanity(1837), at the end of which "the new Jerusalem will be founded in the heart of Europe" "(86). Marx "knew perfectly well French and English utopian communism. His friend, Moses Hess, with whom he worked in 1841 at the Rheinische Zeitung, had spent several years in France and known the Saint-Simonians, the Fourierists, the Proudhonians, Buchez and Leroux; two works on French socialism had resulted. Marx was also familiar with Lorenz von Stein's book *Socialisme et communisme* en France published in 1842 [...] Now Hess was also in contact with the German religious communist Weitling whom Engels would say in 1844 that he should be considered as the "founder of German communism ". Certainly Marx will break with Weitling, but an objective examination of the documents and the influences obliges us to recognize that there is, in spite of everything, a certain continuity between the Christian millenarian tradition on the one hand, the utopian communism and the original Marxism on the other. part (87) ".

Born in 1818 into a Jewish family converted to Protestantism out of convenience, Karl Mardochai Levi Marx was baptized at the age of six. His ancestors, on his father's side as well as on his mother's side, had been rabbis as far back as his family tree can be traced. Hirschel, Marx's grandfather, had been a Rabbi of Trier. Hirschel's mother, Eva Moïse Lvov (1753-1823), counted among her ancestors a number of famous rabbis, including Meir Katzenellenbogen, the head of the Talmudic school in Padua. Karl Marx entered college in 1830 and took the graduation exam five years later. This exam included, among other things, a German composition and a religious essay; the first written exercise, the subject of which was "Considerations of a young man having to choose a profession", betrays humanitarian ideas of religious inspiration: "Religion itself," he wrote, "teaches us that the Ideal towards which all tend their effort has sacrificed itself for humanity. Who would dare to deny it? If therefore we have chosen the situation where we can do the maximum for Him, we can never be overwhelmed by the burden again, since the latter will be nothing other than the sacrifices made for the love of all ". The Christian tone of the second, whose subject was "The union of the faithful with Christ according to Saint John XV, 1-4, demonstrated in its foundation and its essence, its absolute necessity and its effects", was even more pronounced: "Thus," he wrote, "union with Christ communicates an elevation of the soul, a comfort in

affliction, a quiet trust, an openness of heart to all that is great and noble, not out of ambition or desire for glory, but for the love of Christ alone. Union with Christ produces a joy which the Epicureans seek in vain in an empty philosophy, which the greatest thinkers vainly pursue in the hidden depths of knowledge. "He added:" By the love with which we love Christ, we direct our hearts at the same time towards our brothers who are intimately linked to us and for whom He gave Himself as a sacrifice (88). "which the greatest thinkers pursue in vain in the hidden depths of knowledge. "He added:" By the love with which we love Christ, we direct our hearts at the same time towards our brothers who are intimately linked to us and for whom He gave Himself as a sacrifice (88). "which the greatest thinkers pursue in vain in the hidden depths of knowledge. "He added:" By the love with which we love Christ, we direct our hearts at the same time towards our brothers who are intimately linked to us and for whom He gave Himself as a sacrifice (88). "

In 1837, after two years of university life, Marx informed his father that a fundamental change had taken place in his thinking. He had turned from romantic poetry to philosophy and, in particular, to Kant, Fichte and Hegel. Over the next two years he became increasingly critical of Christianity, less for philosophical reasons than because he felt that the Prussian state and the Protestant Church were completely disinterested in the welfare of their subjects. He had been reinforced in his humanitarianism by reading Saint-Simon who specifically criticized the Christianity of the time for not having succeeded in improving the condition of the poorest classes. His criticism of religion in general and Christianity in particular became much more explicit in his doctoral thesis, titled "The Difference Between Democritus and Epicurus' Philosophies of Nature". During his exile in Paris, where he began to collaborate with Engels, it was Feuerbach's writings that exercised a decisive influence on his thinking. He then embraced the democratic cause and the idea that only democracy as popular sovereignty could make socialism possible and that, to begin with, only the full emancipation of the proletariat could make democracy possible. "The chimera, the dream, the postulate of Christianity: the sovereignty of man, but of man as a foreign being, different from real man, becomes in democracy a concrete reality, a presence, a secular maxim (89) ". Leaving, it is not surprising that he concluded from this that "Democracy is in a way to all other forms of state what Christianity is to all other religions"; he went so far as to compare Christ to the State: "Just as Christ is the mediator to whom man imputes all his divinity, all his religious perplexity, the State is the mediator to which man transfers all his no. -divinity, all its human spontaneity. "

At that time Marx's thought was still deeply influenced by Hegel (1770-1831) and Feuerbach (1804-1872) and one can say that he was just as much or just as little Christian as Feuerbach, for whom " the "true atheist" "is not the one who denies God, the subject; it is the one for whom the attributes of the divinity such as love, wisdom, justice are nothing. And the negation of the subject is not at all necessarily the negation of attributes. ". "Marx was attached to the essential values of Christianity as human and natural values" (90). The foundation of the democratic state, "is not Christianity, but the human foundation of Christianity. Religion remains the ideal, non-secular consciousness of its members, because it is the ideal form of the degree of human development which is achieved therein (91). Now, the "human background of Christianity" is essentially and historically Semitic.

Whatever criticisms Marx later addressed to Semitic religions and "utopian" socialism, especially in Capital, the fact remains that his doctrine took up a certain number of the leitmotifs of early Christianity:

the condemnation of wealth and individual property, the idealization of the community of goods, the assimilation of the rich to the oppressors and poor to the oppressed, the aspiration for social regeneration and a universal community. He was aware that there were points of contact between certain Judeo-Christian conceptions and his own conceptions, since he wrote that: "the love of neighbor which ancient Christianity preached, which some recognize as the revolution of communism, is one of the sources from which the idea of social reforms arises" (92). When, in the *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung* of September 12, 1847, he declared that "the social principles of Christianity justified ancient slavery and magnified medieval serfdom; they also know, if need be, how to defend the oppression of the proletariat", he added judiciously: "even if they do so with a somewhat sorry expression".

With Marx "The religious hope of millenarianism is not abolished: it is only underlying scientific demonstration and overdetermined by it" (93). Above all, it is dusted off and brought up to date, since it would have been absurd to address the proletariat of the nineteenth century using the same rhetoric that Paul used in his letters to the slaves of the empire. Roman. The substance of the message remains essentially the same. Only the form of speech is essentially different. It is thus that, in the texts of Marx, the "just redeemer", the "suffering servant", the eternal alienated, the eternal oppressed, of Isaiah becomes the "proletariat", destined, like the eternal oppressed, the eternal alienated, to destroy the existing iniquitous order and to build a new society on its ruins. "A figure both messianic and vengeful, he unites, as in Christian millenarianism, elements borrowed from Jewish prophecy and from the apocalypse of John. It is moreover significant that in the first texts of Marx, the proletariat is much less a determined sociological group than a sort of figure of alienated humanity, an ideal-typical figure" (94)? For Marx, only the proletariat can "redeem" (sic) humanity and, as the downfall of present-day humanity is extreme, its redemption - its redemption - would only be obtained through a struggle to the death between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. "Communist ideology [...] owes a lot to an archaic eschatology [...]. In Marx himself, it appears mainly in the form of a conviction that history is a given course, ready to end in age. ultimate, age of "freedom" when men will be delivered once and for all from all subordination and all constraints. This conception of history was widely used and variously exhibited among the philosophers of the 18th and 19th centuries; before Marx, it had been eloquently exposed by Lessing, Schelling and Auguste Comte, for example. Its origin is however much earlier and Lessing, who was the first to give a modernized version, knew that he was taking up a prophetic tradition established by Joachim de Flore [...] Marx is distinguished from his predecessors by his conviction that this "age of freedom" "Would not come into the world peacefully but thanks to an uprising of the proletariat and an expropriation of the bourgeoisie (95) ..." This conception of history was widely used and variously exhibited among the philosophers of the 18th and 19th centuries; before Marx, it had been eloquently exposed by Lessing, Schelling and Auguste Comte, for example. Its origin is however much earlier and Lessing, who was the first to give a modernized version, knew that he was taking up a prophetic tradition established by Joachim de Flore [...] Marx is distinguished from his predecessors by his conviction that this "age of freedom" "Would not come into the world peacefully but thanks to an uprising of the proletariat and an expropriation of the bourgeoisie (95) ..." This conception of history was widely used and variously exhibited among the philosophers of the 18th and 19th centuries; before Marx, it had been eloquently exposed by Lessing, Schelling and Auguste Comte, for example. Its origin is however much earlier and Lessing, who was the first to give a modernized version, knew that he was

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"As in the millennial scenario, there can be salvation only in the total and violent destruction of the old world; strategy of rupture and not of improvement. This gigantic combat between Good and Evil, between the forces of disintegration and the forces of regeneration recalls the soteriological myths: salvation is obtained by a total reversal of the existing state of affairs. The concept of "Revolution" expresses this total reversal, this absolute caesura, this brutal and violent rupture politically expressed by the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat (96). "

In Semitic religions" Satan "is the adversary of God. Summoning of a Desperate(97) is not an atheist or agnostic poem: it is an irreligious poem. He challenges religion, challenges it from the point of view of Semitic religions. Therefore The Invocation of a Desperate One can be considered a satanic poem *stricto sensu* . In Oulanem , (98) a drama of which Marx wrote the first act in 1839 and which

he never completed, Satanism is even more pronounced. The main character of this drama, Oulanem , whose name is an anagram of Manuëlo, first name derived from Emmanuel (Emmanuel is the name that Isaiah had given to the Messiah; it means "God is with us" in Hebrew), passed a pact with the devil. Before dying, he declares:

" Lost. Lost. My time has come.

The clock of time has stopped,

The pygmy house has collapsed.

Soon I will kiss eternity on my breast,

Soon I will utter

horrible curses on humanity . "

And again: "If there is something capable of destroying, I will throw myself into it headlong, even if it means leading the world to ruin. Yes, this world which forms a screen between me and the abyss, I will shatter it into a thousand pieces by dint of curses. It is clear, in view of the determining role played by Marxism and its many epigones in the crisis of the modern white world, that these words were prophetic.

As M. Eliade has masterfully diagnosed, Marx "takes up and prolongs one of the great eschatological myths of the Asian-Mediterranean world, namely: the redemptive role of the Just (the "elected", the "anointed", the "innocent", the "messenger" nowadays the proletariat) whose sufferings are called to change the ontological status of the world. In fact, Marx's classless society and the consequent disappearance of historical tensions find their most exact precedent in the myth about the Golden Age which, according to multiple traditions, characterizes the beginning and the end of history. Marx enriched this venerable myth with a whole Judeo-Christian messianic ideology: on the one hand, the prophetic role and the soteriological function that he grants to the proletariat; on the other, the final struggle between Good and Evil, which can easily be compared to the apocalyptic conflict between Christ and Antichrist, followed by the final victory of the former. It is even significant that Marx takes up the Judeo-Christian eschatological hope of an absolute end to history".

There is not a motif of Marxian doctrine which does not have its counterpart in the millenarian Judeo-Christian theme. "And Marx's genius is undoubtedly to have dressed the old millenarian hope with the prestige of historical and economic science" (99).

A very frequent error is to think that so-called utopian socialism is in this respect the product of a process of secularization of messianism. This is how J. Evola got lost in writing in *"Trasformazioni del Regno"* (La Vita Italiana, 1937) that "It is not the original Jewish messianic idea but its corruption and its materialization that constitutes the true point of reference of the subversive forces which aim to destroy for good our civilization and to exercise satanic domination over all other forces at work on earth". He corrected his point a few years later in *The Myth of Blood* by recognizing that from the start "the" kingdom "which is supposed to have been promised to the Jewish people was not interpreted in a mystical and supernatural sense but as a kingdom vowed to "possess all the riches of the earth". It has been observed that the very way in which the Jewish people conceived of the relationship between man and divinity, a relationship based on a mechanism of service and reward, shows that as commercialism must have formed the essence of Judaism in antiquity. It is well known that in the Law, the Torah, the Messianic idea was already closely linked to earthly goods and riches; however, it is this idea which will then give birth to capitalist speculation and will ultimately lead Israel to use the economy as an instrument of power" ("Il Giudaismo nell'antichità", 1941). The "kingdom of God" was conceived in a materialistic way long before the time of the prophets (Isaiah, 60, 10-12), for example in Deuteronomy 20, 2 Chronicles 1:12, 1 Samuel 2: 32, Genesis 45:20. Originally, the Hebrews expected that the "kingdom of David" would be restored as a "kingdom of this world," by divine intervention, certainly, but by political means. It was only later, in the Diaspora, that, with the hope of the restoration of a Jewish state having faded, the Hebrews came to see it from a religious and mystical point of view rather than politically and concretely. and that the emphasis was placed on the fact that he was to be created by Yahweh and not by His people. The causal link which united the concept of kingdom and

historical reality, contingency, loosened in the Deutero-Isaiah, anonymous work written around 550-540. But it was not broken, for the Jews "never forgot that the source of future hope was faith in the restoration of Israel as a free people among the nations, on this land, in the land of Canaan." A tension [...] therefore persisted in [Jewish] eschatology between the political, particularistic and worldly elements and the transcendent, universalist, religious elements, "an eschatology in which the Gentiles were regarded as a specific historical and political entity and as a manifestation of a mythical, cosmic force hostile to God. Of these two profoundly different conceptions of the kingdom to come, the first "is older and more truly Jewish than the second", which moreover bears witness to direct Zoroastrian influences (100). "The ideal of [Jewish] kingship belonged at the same time to the present and to the future and could be applied at any time to a historical person (101). "

### The populist factor

Russian populism was neither a political party nor a coherent body of doctrine, but a great radical movement. He was born during the great social and intellectual turmoil which followed the death of Nicholas I and the defeat and humiliation of the Crimean War, rose to prominence and gained influence during the 1860s and 1870s, and reached its peak with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. It was never more than a congregation of small independent groups of conspirators, who sometimes acted in concert, sometimes operated in isolation. Although these groups tend to diverge on ends and means, their agreement on the essentials and their political solidarity allow them to be considered as a real movement. Like their predecessors, the Decembrist conspirators in the 1820s and the Herzen and Belinski circles in the 1830s and 1840s, they viewed the government and social structure of their country as an old-fashioned, barbaric, stupid and obnoxious moral and political monster and their lives to its total destruction. Their general ideas were not original. They shared the democratic ideals of the European radicals of their time and further believed that the struggle between social and economic classes was the determining factor in politics; they supported this theory not in its Marxist form (which only reached Russia in the 1870s) but in the form in which it was taught by Proudhon and Herzen and before them by Saint Simon, Fourier and other radicals and socialists French, whose writings had been introduced legally or illegally into Russia for several decades.

The theory that social history was dominated by class struggle, whose core is the notion of oppression of the "have-nots" by the "haves", arose during the Industrial Revolution in the West; and its most characteristic concepts belong to the stage of capitalist economic development. Economic classes, capitalism, fierce competition, the "proletarians" and their "exploiters", the evil power of unproductive finance, the inevitability of increasing centralization and standardization of all human activities, the transformation of men in commodities and the consequent "alienation" of individuals and groups, the degradation of human existence, all of these notions are fully intelligible only in the context of the development of industrialism.

Russia, until the 1850s, was one of the least industrialized states in Europe. An industrial proletariat was indeed formed there, but by the middle of the nineteenth century it did not exceed two or three percent of the population of the empire. That is why the cause of the "oppressed" was still to this date to a large extent that of the agricultural workers, who formed the lowest stratum of the population, the vast majority of whom were serfs. The populists saw them as martyrs whose sufferings they were determined to avenge and as paragons of a simple, uncorrupted virtue, whose social organization (which they widely idealized) was the natural foundation on which Russian society should be rebuilt. The main goals of the populists were social justice and social equality. Most of them were convinced, after Herzen, whose revolutionary propaganda in the 1850s influenced them more than any other doctrine, that the essence of a just and equal society already existed in the Russian peasant commune, the *obshchina*, organized as a collective unit called the *mir*. The *mir* was an organization of collective land ownership. Its decisions were binding on all its members and were the cornerstone on which, according to the populists, a federation of autonomous groups freed from private property for the benefit of collective property and organized according to the theory popularized by the socialist Proudhon could be established. Populist leaders believed that this form of cooperation offered the possibility of building a free and democratic social system in Russia, since it had its origin in the deepest instincts and traditional values of Russian society and all societies: human; and they believed that workers (by that they meant all productive human beings), in town or country, could achieve this system in a much less violent and coercive manner than had been the case in industrial western Europe. This system, since it was the only one to derive naturally from fundamental human needs and from the feeling of justness and the good which existed just as naturally in all men without any exception, would ensure justice, equality and allow the development of human faculties. As a corollary, the populists believed that the development of large-scale centralized industry was not "natural" and would therefore inexorably lead to the degradation and dehumanization of those who were trapped in its tentacles: capitalism was a terrible scourge, destroyer of body and soul; but it was not inevitable. They denied that social or economic progress was necessarily linked to the Industrial Revolution. They maintained that the application of scientific methods and truths to social and individual problems, although it could and often did lead to the development of capitalism, was possible without this fatal sacrifice. They believed that it was possible to improve life through scientific techniques without necessarily destroying the "natural" life of the village or creating a huge, impoverished and anonymous urban proletariat. Capitalism seemed irresistible only because it had not been sufficiently fought. Like their French masters, the Russian socialists felt a particular hatred against the state institution, because at the same time they considered it as a symbol, the consequence and the main source of injustice and inequality, a weapon wielded by the ruling class to defend its own privileges.

The failure of the liberal revolutions which had broken out in the countries of Western Europe in 1848 reinforced their conviction that salvation did not lie in politics or in political parties: it seemed clear to them that the liberal parties and their leaders had neither understood nor made a serious effort to defend the fundamental interests of the "oppressed" populations of their countries. What the vast majority of peasants in Russia or workers in Europe needed was food and clothing. Political rights, voting, parliaments, republican forms were meaningless and useless to half-naked and starving ignorant people; such programs were an insult to their misery.



The populists shared with the Russian nationalist Slavophiles a hatred of the bourgeois social pyramid of the countries of Western Europe, which was accepted with complacency or ardently defended by the conformist Russian bourgeoisie and the Russian bureaucracy that this bourgeoisie admired.

Populists, unlike Slavophiles, did not believe in the uniqueness or fate of the Russian people. They only believed that Russia was a backward nation which had not reached the stage of social and economic development which the Western nations had reached by embarking on the path of unbridled industrialism. Most of them were not supporters of historical determinism; therefore they believed that it was possible for a nation to avoid this fate. They did not see why Russia could not profit from "western" science and "western" technology without paying the appalling price paid by the industrialized countries of Western Europe. They argued that it was possible to avoid the despotism of a centralized economy or centralized government by adopting a federal structure made up of autonomous and socialized units of producers and consumers. They considered it desirable to organize, but that organization was not an end in itself. The ideas of the populists were often vague and there were notable differences between them; but they found common enough ground to constitute a movement in its own right. They thus accepted, in their broad outline, the educational and moral ideas of Rousseau, without adhering to his statolatry; the anti-political conceptions of Saint-Simon, without being in favor of the technocratic centralism he advocated. They shared the idea of conspiracy and violent action preached by Babeuf and his disciple Buonarroti but not their Jacobin authoritarianism. They were alongside Sismondi, Proudhon, Lamennais and the other creators of the notion of the welfare state against laissez-faire and centralism, whether nationalist or socialist, temporary or permanent, preached by Liszt, Mazzini, Lassalle and Marx. They sometimes came close to the positions of the Christian socialists of Western Europe, without however adhering to any religious belief, for, like the encyclopedists of the previous century, they believed in "natural" morality and scientific truth. These were some of the beliefs that were common to them. They were alongside Sismondi, Proudhon, Lamennais and the other creators of the notion of welfare state against laissez-faire and centralism, whether nationalist or socialist, provisional or permanent, preached by Liszt, Mazzini, Lassalle and Marx. They sometimes came close to the positions of the Christian socialists of Western Europe, without however adhering to any religious belief, for, like the encyclopedists of the previous century, they believed in "natural" morality and scientific truth. These were some of the beliefs that were common to them. They were alongside Sismondi, Proudhon, Lamennais and the other creators of the notion of welfare state against laissez-faire and centralism, whether nationalist or socialist, provisional or permanent, preached by Liszt, Mazzini, Lassalle and Marx. They sometimes came close to the positions of the Christian socialists of Western Europe, without however adhering to any religious belief, for, like the encyclopedists of the previous century, they believed in "natural" morality and scientific truth. These were some of the beliefs that were common to them. Lassalle and Marx. They sometimes approached the positions of the Christian socialists of Western Europe, without however adhering to any religious belief, for, like the encyclopedists of the previous century, they believed in "natural" morality and scientific truth. These were some of the beliefs that were common to them.

The first bone of contention among the populists was the attitude towards the peasants, in whose name they pretended to do whatever they did. For some, it was necessary to train specialists to educate ignorant peasants and, eventually, to incite them to resist authority, to revolt and to destroy the established order before the rebels themselves had fully understood the need. or the service of these documents. This was the sight of such different personalities as Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) and Nikolai Speshnev (1821-1882) in the 1840s; it was preached by Nikolai Tchernyshevsky (1828-1889) in the 1850s and was ardently advocated by the Jacobins of "Young Russia" in the 1860s and Piotr Zaitchnevsky (1842-1896), the organizer of the revolutionary student movement in Moscow in those same years; it was preached by the writer and mathematician Pyotr Lavrov (1823-1900) in the 1870s and in the 1880s as well as by his rivals and adversaries, the partisans of organized "professional" terrorism Sergei Netchaev (1847-1882) and Piotr Tkachev (1844- 1886) and their followers, not only the Socialist-Revolutionaries but also the most fanatic Russian Marxists, in particular Lenin and Trotsky. In the brochure he published in 1902 abroad and which remained until 1917 the best known of his writings. Lenin supported the project of training revolutionaries by profession, who would make a profession of the art of the struggle against the political police. Activists, like Tkachev, Netchaev and in a less political sense, Pisarev (1840-1868), whose admirers became known as the nihilists, also anticipated Lenin in their contempt for democratic methods.

From an aristocratic point of view, it has always been understood those who know should lead those who do not know. From the plebeian point of view, those who do not know but believe they know must administer those who do not know and the uneducated masses must be saved by all available means, if necessary against their will, if necessary by cunning, deception or violence: such was naturally the point of view adopted by the most radical populists and which Lenin did not hesitate to adopt.

The second point of contention among the populists was the attitude towards the state. All Russian populists agreed that the state was the embodiment of a system of coercion and inequality and therefore inherently evil; neither justice nor happiness was possible as long as it subsisted. Tkachev clarified that as long as the capitalist enemy had not been completely destroyed, the weapon of coercion, the pistol snatched from his hand by the revolutionaries, should not be thrown at any cost but should be turned against him. In other words, the state machine should not be destroyed but should be used against the counter-revolution that would inevitably occur; it could only be scrapped when the last enemy, as Proudhon had said, would have been liquidated and that humanity would therefore no longer need any instrument of constraint. He was followed in this way by Lenin. Lavrov, who represented the mainstream of populism and reflected all its indecision and confusion, advocated not the immediate and total elimination of the state but its "marginalization". Chernyshevsky, the less anarchist of the populists, saw the state as the organizer and protector of voluntary associations of peasants or workers and found a way to see it as both centralized and decentralized, a guarantee of order and efficiency. , equality and individual freedom. Lavrov, who represented the mainstream of populism and reflected all its indecision and confusion, advocated not the immediate and total elimination of the state but its "marginalization". Chernyshevsky, the less anarchist of the populists, saw the State as the organizer and protector of voluntary associations of peasants or workers and found a way to see it as both centralized and decentralized, a guarantee of order and efficiency. , equality and individual freedom. Lavrov, who

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As divergent as their views on attitude to the state and the peasants were, these thinkers all started with the apocalyptic view that once the reign of evil autocracy, exploitation and inequality would have been consumed in the fire of the revolution, would arise naturally and spontaneously from its ashes a natural, harmonious, just order, which would need only the benevolent advice of enlightened revolutionaries to achieve perfection. This great utopian dream, based on simple faith in regenerated human nature, was a vision that the populists shared with political theorist Godwin and Bakunin, Marx and Lenin. It was based on the pattern of sin, the fall, the resurrection and the road to heaven on earth,whose doors will only open if men find a true path and follow it. It had its roots in the religious imagination of mankind and therefore it is not surprising that it had many features in common with the beliefs of Old Believers and, in general, of most movements. religious dissent for whom, since the great religious schism of the seventeenth century, the Russian state and its rulers, especially Peter the Great, represented Satan's kingdom on earth; these dissident churches provided a large number of potential allies to the populists, whom they endeavored to mobilize, hoping to come into contact with the peasants through them. The first contact between the populists and the Old Believers took place in the 1840s in London,under the leadership of Alexander Herzen (1812 - 1870).

Herzen is considered the father of populism. He was a friend and an admirer of Proudhon. The revolutionary doctrine of this Russian philosopher, writer and political essayist was based on the theory that Russia could avoid capitalism and forge its own future on the socialist and egalitarian foundations of the obshchina . "The people, long regarded with indifference or disdain, were to become an object of veneration, the only virtuous guardians of the eschatological destiny of Russia. Thus Narodnichestvo ("the veneration of the people") was to become an article of faith for the radical intellectual elite, whether it pleased the people or not (102).

The most influential figure of the new generation of the radical intellectual elite was undoubtedly that of Nikolai Tchernyshevsky (1828-1889). Born into a family of priests, Chernyshevsky transposed populism to the political level; "His political convictions were affected by the asceticism, the tenacity and the abnegation of the function of priest to which he intended but which he renounced. The ideal of the religious ministry that an ecclesiastic exercises with his parishioners was transmuted in him into a desire to serve the whole people in the social and political sphere [...] Disappointed by both the results of the emancipation of the serfs and by the aristocratizing socialism of Herzen,he convinced himself that only a revolution from below could lastingly improve the lot of the peasants and that in the meantime the duty of intellectuals was to disseminate socialist conceptions among the people and to show what a society based on the cooperative "(103).

By the age of eighteen he had come to the conclusion that his country had to start from scratch. Like Tchaadayevev and, to a lesser extent, Bakunin and Herzen, he showed great Christian humility towards Western Europe, arguing that Russia's past had little value in concluding that a clean slate was necessary. of his country's history, in order to create something truly new and valuable on a socialist basis. He often doubted his courage and steadfastness and he often doubted it with reason, since, having believed that the only force capable of achieving true equality was the dictatorship, he turned around and placed all his hopes in lowest layers. The only thing he never doubted was that he was destined to follow in Herzen's footsteps and exert great revolutionary influence on his time. The idea of a union between all branches of the intelligentsia had been circulating for some time and Tchernikhovsky set about making it a reality. Under his leadership, the literary newspaper *Sovremennik* became the focal point for the dissemination of populist ideas and, in the absence of any centralized revolutionary organization, it served as a transmission belt for the disparate circles of ambitious young radicals that had arisen as a result of Alexander's reforms. II. the literary newspaper *Sovremennik* became the focal point for the dissemination of populist ideas and, in the absence of any centralized revolutionary organization, it served as a transmission belt for the disparate circles of ambitious young radicals that had arisen as a result of the reforms of Alexander II.

Tchernikhovsky published a didactic novel in *Sovremennik* in 1862 and 1863: *What to do?*, whose subtitle was "A story about new men".

The hero of the novel is a man for whom the problems of life are not resolved by the affirmation of personal freedom but by the accomplishment of the task incumbent upon him and his absolute opposition to despotism; a man who is "one with the cause which [to him] is a necessity, which fills [his] existence, which [he] takes the place of private life"; an ordinary and banal individual, meticulous and impassive, the antithesis of the romantic revolutionaries portrayed by Turgenev: Rakhmetov is the prototype of the "new man", an expression that the former seminarian Chernikhovsky obviously borrowed from Paul of Tarsus. From a racial point of view, it is particularly interesting that Rakhmetov, "a fanatic character, but religiously fanatic", borrows its features from oriental ascetics and that "part of its strength derives from its Tatar ancestry". Like so many other Russian aristocrats, he comes from a noble Russified Tatar family (104).

Rakhmetov "wandered through Russia like the valiant of the bylines and above all he read book V of the Works Isaac Newton, that is to say, Newton's interpretation of the Apocalypse, he studies eschatology like later the terrorist Doudkine de Biely. In addition he took the strap of the hauler of the Volga, the "bourlak", he became a giant of the people, a Nikituchka, from the day when "he decided to acquire physical strength". He does not waste a minute either for secondary things or for secondary beings. His first nickname is Nikitushka Lomovoj, which refers to his aura of legendary valiant. But his second nickname is "the Rigorist", which refers to his figure of ascetic: he remains four days to read without sleeping, he sleeps on a bed of nails, he is surprised with his back and his linen completely bloody. "

"" Invisible "to ordinary men, the hero of What to do?, through these exercises of mortification of the flesh, offers men a message of edification not entirely revealed. It is to John the Baptist that, according to the evangelist Luke, the people ask the question: What to do? John has just said to the people: "Brood of vipers, who has shown you the way to escape the coming wrath? Produce therefore fruits which testify to your conversion [...] For I say it to you, stones that behold God can raise children up to Abraham. Already even the ax is ready to attack the roots of trees ". And the people then ask the question: What must we do? This somber threatening atmosphere of the Judgment colors the whole didactic novel of Russian atheism 105). "

Religious elements abound there. They are even more numerous in the drafts.

Rakhmetov served as a model for activists of the next three generations. "Who, wrote the Marxist G. Plekhanov in 1890, has not read and re-read this famous book? Who has not undergone its attraction and its beneficial influence, who has not been purified, improved, strengthened, emboldened? Who, having read this novel, has not reflected on his own life, has not submitted his own aspirations and inclinations to a rigorous examination? We drew moral strength and faith in a better future. "" He excited my brother [Alexander Ulyanov. He was executed in 1887 for his participation in the assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander III], he filled me with enthusiasm myself, he plowed me from top to bottom ", says Lenin of this utopian novel, from which he resumed the title for his famous manifesto. In her Memoirs, Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, wrote that "not only had [he] read it but often reread it". What impressed the future leader of the Russian revolution at Chernyshevsky was that "[he] not only demonstrated the need for any intelligent and truly honest man to become a revolutionary, but also showed - even more importantly - what a revolutionary should resemble, what should be its principles, how it should achieve its goals, what methods and means it should use to achieve them "(106).but also showed - even more important - what a revolutionary should look like, what his principles should be, how he should achieve his goals, what methods and means he should use to achieve them "(106).but also showed - even more important - what a revolutionary should look like, what his principles should be, how he should achieve his goals, what methods and means he should use to achieve them "(106).

Despite the importance that some populists placed on economic or sociological issues, the basic approach, tone and perspective of most populists was moral and at times truly religious. These men believed in socialism not because they considered it inevitable, nor because they considered it effective, nor even because they regarded it as the only reasonable doctrine, but because they found it right. Populists proclaimed themselves atheists, but socialist and orthodox values merged in their minds.

Dobrolyubov, like Tchernikhovsky, came from a family of priests. Tchernikhovsky often said of him that he was the only man who was really close to him. Chernikhovsky provided the framework in which populist feelings and desires were born and laid the political foundations on which Dobrolyubov's revolutionary enthusiasm rested. This was the first fruit of populist ideas. He was the first to demonstrate the influence they could have on young men and to show how they could awaken in them

an overwhelming desire to follow and carry them in their personal and political life. With him the era which had begun with the examination of conscience of a young Bakunin reverent towards the Hegelian Idea ended. Then began the period in which the love of the people translated into the ambition to become a peasant or a worker. The aspiration to equality gave birth to "communes" of students; their aversion to the hierarchical Russian society led the young revolutionaries to break with the surrounding world. Dobrolyubov was the man who awakened those indeterminate energies which were soon to be channeled into the revolutionary movement.

The answer to the question posed by Tchernikhovsky's novel indeed lay in student "communes" (groups of young men living together and sharing all their property) and in production cooperatives through which they thought they could get in touch with the city population; their ultimate goal was to transform Russia into a federation of village municipalities and industrial cooperatives; the New Testament and historical studies of Russian Gnostic communities were on their reading list. These "communes" in fact became the hotbeds of all the populist conspiracies of the 1860s. The leader of that of St. Petersburg spoke of the creation of "a universal religion". He compared his circle to an "order of Knights" and welcomed into its ranks members of the Gnostic sect of "The Virility of God", which taught that each individual is potentially destined to become a god.

Dobrolyubov, of course, could not hope that all the intellectual elite, all the educated classes, would accept his extremism. His preaching soon caused a rupture between the great mass of "right-thinking" and the few who had to sacrifice everything to "action".

Afanas'y Shchapov (1830-1876) followed the opposite path: he did not start from the desire to enlighten and educate the masses in order to then try to know them, to become their equal and to guide them. He started from the people themselves, their traditions, their political and religious habits, and tried to gauge their traditional institutions and social life against the state, "Western" culture and the intellectual elite.

Shchapov was Siberian. His ancestors fled to Siberia at the beginning of the seventeenth century to escape the persecution of the Raskol. They had been deacons and sacristans from generation to generation. Shchapov himself, like Tchernikhovsky, was educated at the seminary. He was thus predisposed to writing the history of Raskol, which was then the subject of a rediscovery. The first fruit of his studies was *The Schism of the Old Believers*, a long work published in 1858 which constitutes a study of the social and political significance of dissident sects and their development and differentiation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His thesis is that the schism of the old believers had been the result of a process of crystallization of religion in formalism under the influence of a "bookish and Judaic spirit" and that this formalism served to express a "clerical democratic ideology".

The criticisms of which *The Schism of the Old Believers* in *Sovremennik* influenced him deeply and made him reconsider the central argument of his book. He lost interest in studying the development of religious expression that had been adopted in the past by the resistance movement to the state, to focus on the structural and social elements of this opposition.

Despite these criticisms, the immediate editorial success of *The Schism of the Old Believers* was such that Shchapov was appointed professor to be appointed to the chair of history at the Kazan Academy of Theology, where he had studied. He began his course with an address which marked the end of the first phase of his studies and made him the spokesperson for a new populist tendency, *narodnost* (whose most satisfactory translation is perhaps "ethnicity") and regionalism. He immediately became very popular with students because of his seditious speech. He was arrested for this reason by order of Alexander II and taken to St-Petersburg. Under pressure from public opinion, he was released by the Tsar. When he was released from prison, he found a job: at the Ministry of the Interior [...]. He resumed and deepened in the Russian capital the political and historical research he had started in Kazan in 1859. He reconsidered the question of Raskol and wrote a little book to show that a regionalist or, as he often says, "federal" vision of Russian history made this religious phenomenon much more understandable. The Raskol had represented a protest against the state because it had fought for the defense of "lands" against centralization. Its character was democratic because it had made it possible to defend the traditional organizations of the Russian people, of which it had become the mythical, religious personification of force. Raskol thus represented the only culture of the peasants; the sects had succeeded in adapting to the ways of life of the people. The Raskol was the backbone not only of the "resistance" but also of the peasant revolts.

By the opposition that it establishes between popular institutions and the State; through its calls for an assembly that would give expression to the traditional structure of the Russian people; by his praise of the most extreme aspects of the antithesis between state and society, Shchapov paved the way for revolutionary populism and Bakunin.

In 1862, however, Tchernikhovsky finally convinced Shchapov that what was really important was not the traditional forms but "the economic well-being of all classes". More importantly, no institutional change could lead to economic improvement. The traditional institutions of the Russian people were backward and closely tied to customs and prejudices that hindered rapid economic development. Chernyshevsky himself had not seen clearly enough that the root of all evil lay in the lack of scientific knowledge. The situation in Russia could only change after she had assimilated modern technical knowledge. The duty of the intelligentsia was to make this understood to the people.

Shchapov died in Irkutsk in 1876 without having succeeded in making the people understand it.

Prior to the nineteenth century, the Russian insurrectionary tradition claimed the Pugachevshchina (the war of the Russian peasants) and the palace revolutions instigated by the soldiers of the Imperial Guard regiment during the eighteenth century. However, none of these sporadic convulsions really sought to challenge the principle of autocracy or the social relations of the day. In many ways, the failure of the Decembrist coup d'état of 1825 only accentuated the cut that already existed between a cultivated elite acquired to the philosophy of the Enlightenment and to nationalist and Slavophile ideas and a poor peasantry attached to its traditions. . Despite this divide, or because of the romantic idealization of the peasantry that developed within the intelligentsia as it grew deeper, the latter began to criticize Tsarism on behalf of the people and thus merged in the late 1840s with other forces, intellectual, occult or social, which were more or less openly opposed to this political regime. Idealist, Hegelian and liberal

until then, she showed a growing interest in the more immediate political and social realities of the time and, more generally, growing sympathies for socialism. As, on the one hand, her refusal to serve the Tsar separated her more and more from the mainstream of the Russian nobility and, on the other hand, her cultural eclecticism and education isolated her from the peasantry, the intelligentsia radical came to form a layer of declassified.occult or social, which were more or less openly opposed to this political regime. Idealist, Hegelian and liberal until then, she showed a growing interest in the more immediate political and social realities of the time and, more generally, growing sympathies for socialism. As, on the one hand, her refusal to serve the Tsar separated her more and more from the mainstream of the Russian nobility and, on the other hand, her cultural eclecticism and education isolated her from the peasantry, the intelligentsia radical came to form a layer of declassified.occult or social, which were more or less openly opposed to this political regime. Idealist, Hegelian and liberal until then, she showed a growing interest in the more immediate political and social realities of the time and, more generally, growing sympathies for socialism. As, on the one hand, her refusal to serve the Tsar separated her more and more from the mainstream of the Russian nobility and, on the other hand, her cultural eclecticism and education isolated her from the peasantry, the intelligentsia radical came to form a layer of declassified.sympathies more and more marked for socialism. As, on the one hand, her refusal to serve the Tsar separated her more and more from the mainstream of the Russian nobility and, on the other hand, her cultural eclecticism and her education isolated her from the peasantry, the intelligentsia radical came to form a layer of declassified.sympathies more and more marked for socialism. As, on the one hand, her refusal to serve the Tsar separated her more and more from the mainstream of the Russian nobility and, on the other hand, her cultural eclecticism and education isolated her from the peasantry, the intelligentsia radical came to form a layer of declassified.

So the intelligentsia, most of whose members were of noble or bourgeois origin until the mid-1860s, soon received the reinforcement of young revolutionary activists of low Raznochintsy extraction, including Determinism, Positivism and Utilitarianism soon overwhelmed the idealistic pathos of their elders. This new revolutionary spirit was reflected in a clandestine tract which was put into circulation in the summer of 1862 by Young Russia, a terrorist organization related to Young Italy and Young Germany, whose objective was the murder of the imperial family and the social leveling.

This leaflet, titled "To the Young Generation", differed significantly from other contemporary publications of this genre. He particularly stressed the need to destroy existing political and social relations in Russia and raised the problem of relations with the people more energetically than it had been elsewhere. This extremism and desire for action succeeded in formulating with clarity the fundamental problems of the relationship between the revolutionary elite and the masses. It was all the work of a nineteen-year-old young man, PG Zaitchnevsky (1842 - 1896) and a small group of his fellow students. By the age of nineteen he had read some classics of "Western" socialism and some history books and had been in contact with the peasants who had suffered from the reforms. These experiences were enough to convert him to Jacobinism and to convince him to try to apply the lessons of Barbes to the contemporary situation in Russia. Denounced for his extreme views, he was arrested and jailed with other conspirators from his group in St. Petersburg, where his cell quickly turned into a small club where students met to chat.



The manifesto began as follows: "Russia is entering the revolutionary stage of its existence". It was no longer simply an expression of growing distrust of the Russian government machine. It was already an expression of absolute faith in a new force. The revolution was latent in the order of things; no medium term was possible; there was no longer any room for reforms or palliatives. Two groups, two "parties", faced each other: that of the emperor, made up of the wealthy and ruling classes, as liberal as their ideas were; and the party of the "people" in permanent revolt against the authorities, even if this revolt could be open or concealed, according to the circumstances. From this state of affairs could only emerge "A revolution, a bloody and ruthless revolution, a revolution which must radically transform all the foundations of present-day society and exterminate all the partisans of the existing order [...] We do not fear this revolution, although we know that rivers of blood will flow and that perhaps even innocent victims will perish".

To achieve this, Young Russia intended to rely primarily on the Raskolniki and the "people", that is, the peasants, whom she urged to violently oppose the act of emancipation of the serfs promulgated a few months earlier, not because it did not satisfy the interests of the peasants but because it put Russia on the path of capitalism and at the same time threatened to destroy the community foundation on which the dream rested populist of a socialist Arcadia. It also relied heavily on the military, whose officers were increasingly critical of the court.

Populism and Jacobinism took on a new dimension in the revolutionary movement of the 1860s. "Young Russia" simply proposed a ruthless political method to implement a program that was common to all populists: collective ownership of land with the stake. in place of redistribution mechanisms controlled by village assemblies. The goal of this Jacobinism was not, in fact, democracy but peasant socialism. And it was this characteristic - this specific element of Russian Jacobinism, which a contemporary Russian historian called a "childhood disease" - that manifested itself early in this manifesto. By advocating the seizure of power by a subversive and highly disciplined revolutionary elite, The establishment of a ruthless dictatorship and the transformation of social, economic and political life, Zaitchnevski, the founder of this organization of conspirators, sowed the seeds of a distinctively Russian form of Jacobinism in the fertile soil of Narodnichestvo (the ideology and the Raznochintsy movement).

If Sovremennik's populism had survived the waves of arrests that hit revolutionary circles in the early 1860s and continued the tradition of Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, it had given up all hope of a complete transformation of Russia in the short term. . Sovremennik had tended to put all his trust in the "people" and the "peasant". In opposition to this attitude, men appeared on the scene who reaffirmed the essential role that a "critical elite" could play, which they opposed to the passive crowd, incapable of revolt. Thus was born nihilism.

From a political point of view, nihilism was at the very origin of the current which led to Russian Bakuninism as well as Tkachev's Jacobinism. Some, emphasizing the rejection of any constraint, arrived at anarchism; the others, insisting on the political function of an enlightened and determined minority, arrived at Jacobinism and the theory of a revolutionary elite.

From a moral point of view, Russian nihilism did not imply pessimism and disenchantment but, on the contrary, the will to overcome bitter disappointment and the desire to "follow through on its ideas, its commitments." This had an important consequence in the field of politics. The nihilists relied only on themselves. They paid no attention to the ruling classes or even to the myth of the "people" and "peasants"; "Personal empowerment" (that is, the formation of independent, critical people) was more important than social empowerment. They identified this emancipation with the dissemination of technical and scientific knowledge. To accomplish this educational task it was essential to form a class capable of conceiving its own existence from the point of view of modern science and of renouncing sentimentality and romanticism.

From a philosophical point of view, Russian nihilism cannot be understood as the negation of all belief, because "For the Russian atheist unbelief is a faith, a more active, more religious faith, in the etymological sense of the term, than current religious faith" (107). It is not for nothing that Chekhov makes the main character of his novel say En Chemin say (1886): "Russian life represents an uninterrupted series of outbursts of faith and as to unbelief or negation, well, if you want to know, it is not tasted at all. If the Russian man does not believe in God, it only means that he believes in something else "Likharev adds:" I will tell you something about myself. My soul has been endowed with an amazing ability to believe, for half of my life I have been - God protect me! - enrolled in the ranks of atheists and nihilists, but there has not been a single hour in my life that I did not believe. On the other hand, it is particularly interesting to note that he considers himself a slave of the sciences, just as the faithful, in the Semitic religions, particularly in Christianity and in Islam, sees himself as a slave of God. He engages in scientific activity as one enters into religion. It will be recalled that at the same time the Catholic writer P. Claudel made himself the champion of modern techniques, which, according to him, were neither more nor less than the instrument of Providence.

J. Kristeva is thus perfectly "entitled to ask whether the structure of nihilism is not secretly intrinsic to orthodox mysticism", insofar as nihilism and orthodox mysticism are characterized both by passivity (in the etymological meaning of the word: "confused, in disorder") and sentimentality, superstitious in orthodoxy, cynical in nihilism. Mystical exaltation "will be transferred to the nihilist movement, to atheist and communist currents as well, so that these apparently liberating and critical ideologies are transformed into de facto religious ideologies, in the sense that they are based on belonging. affective non-critical of subjects who claim it" (108). Rest, if the nihilists pushed an aspect of the thought of Herzen and Chernyshevsky to its extreme by erecting "egoism" in theory and by exalting economic calculation and utilitarian coldness, their "egoism" and their "realism" did not prevent them. to adhere in a romantic manner to the egalitarian spirit of the revolutionary movements of 1848 and to trumpet their hatred of the bourgeoisie. It is much easier to call to give up sentimentality than to actually give it up. It is even sentimental to call for giving up sentimentality. their "egoism" and their "realism" did not prevent them from adhering in a romantic manner to the egalitarian spirit of the revolutionary movements of 1848 and from trumpeting their hatred of the bourgeoisie. It is much easier to call to give up sentimentality than to actually give it up. It is even sentimental to call for giving up sentimentality. their "egoism" and their "realism" did not prevent them from adhering in a romantic manner to the egalitarian spirit of the revolutionary movements of 1848 and from trumpeting their

hatred of the bourgeoisie. It is much easier to call to give up sentimentality than to actually give it up. It is even sentimental to call for giving up sentimentality.

The movement personified by Nikolai Ichutin (1840 - 1879) was the most important and significant revolutionary organization after the self-dissolution of the first Zemlya i Volya (Land and Freedom), an underground society of a few dozen young intellectuals, students and officers opposed to both the state and the liberalism that had prevailed in the mid-1860s. He was both a socialist and a terrorist, and because of the way he combined these two elements, he constituted the first core typically and purely populist.

Ichutin was the first true incarnation of the revolutionary portrayed in "What to Do?" "There were three great men in the world," he said, "Jesus Christ, Paul the Apostle and Chernyshevsky." Ichutin's group quickly became powerful and influential. It consisted of his old school and university comrades, young students excluded from the university because of their subversive activities and, in particular, of their involvement in the movement "Towards the People". Some of them sacrificed their property and their careers for their cause. Self-sacrifice was actually the dominant idea of the group. Most of its members devoted themselves to the creation of cooperative associations or mutual benefit societies among workers, craftsmen and students, in accordance with the principles established by Chernyshevsky in "What to do?". Ichutin was of course not the first to try to create savings cooperatives for revolutionary purposes; but he was the first to introduce particularly Machiavellian ideas into this type of project. He was completely indifferent to the means that would be employed to build the future socialist society he called for. The tsar's murder was to be the shock that would bring about a social revolution or at least force the government to make substantial concessions to the peasants.

Around the small group of "new men" inspired by these ideas gradually formed a revolutionary organization which reflected this extremist psychology. It consisted of about ten students, who were often extremely poor. Some of them were of peasant origin, but most were the sons of country priests whose way of life resembled that of the peasant masses. In 1885 they founded a secret society which they called "The Organization", within which an even more secret cell was formed which took the name of "Hell" and whose objective was terrorism and, more specifically, the assassination of the tsar. Ichutin boasted that "Hell" was only the Russian branch of a European revolutionary committee whose avowed aim was to exterminate all monarchs. One of the members of "L'Enfer" took action on April 4, 1866.

The shot fired by Karakozov at Alexander II abruptly ended the collaboration between the emperor and the liberal intelligentsia in the direction of the reforms, a collaboration which had made possible the emancipation of the serfs and certain changes in the local administration and justice. And the period of what is traditionally called the "White Terror" began then. Muravev, who in 1863 had crushed the Polish rebellion in blood, was put in charge of the Ministry of the Interior. He organized a system of repression which aimed to eradicate the revolutionary forces by striking down the intellectual tendencies which had given birth to them. Between 1866 and 1868 not a single group in Russia could engage in clandestine activities or make its ideas known by giving a more general meaning to its internal debates. But that does not mean that underground groups ceased to emerge from the fertile ground of

student gatherings or that the state of mind which had manifested itself in "The Organization" of Ichutin did not continue to spread underground. .

All sources agree that the peasants supported the Tsarist regime. The attempted assassination of the Tsar only showed the strength of the bond that existed between the monarchy and the working and peasant classes. This link could not be exploited to incite violence against the nobility, as the revolutionaries had hoped. An abyss still separated them from the people.

At the beginning of the 1860s, intense revolutionary experiences fueled by the feverish reading of works from Western Europe and the hasty application of their theories to the situation of the peasants of the Volga basin gave birth to Kazan as in Moscow to a typically Russian phenomenon, the movement *Khozdenie v narod* ("To the people"). The students called it "the apostolate" and the word expressed well the atmosphere of religious enthusiasm which inspired them. The first "apostolic" pilgrimages that we know of date from March 1863. They were inspired by a student named Ivan Yakovlevich Orlov. Like so many of his comrades, he was Siberian; like so many of his fellow conspirators, he was the son of a priest.

When, in 1870, the cycle of reform finally came to an end, and with it the phase of conspiracies based on confidence in peasant resistance, the *Khozdenie v narod* movement began again. It was made up of several groups. The most important of these groups was the Ruble Society, which was founded in 1867 by Hermann Lopatin (1845-1918) and Felix Volkhovsky (1846-1914) with the aim of "better understanding the enigmatic sphinx called" the people ". »», As one of its founders put it. Having learned the lessons of the Tsar's failed assassination attempt, they set out to establish a link between the intelligentsia and the people not through terrorism and conspiracy but through patient and thorough preaching. Lopatin became one of the most active revolutionaries of the 1870s and 1880s, the friend of Marx and Engels and the translator of part of Capital.

*Khozdenie v narod* was a resounding failure, a complete fiasco. The ardent hopes of the young radicals had vanished when they came into contact with a gruff peasantry, at best indifferent, at worst openly contemptuous of their unsuccessful efforts to forge revolutionary consciousness in them through propaganda and agitation. Confronted with the abyss which separated *Narodnichestvo* and *Narod*, its idyllic beliefs and a prosaic reality, the radical intelligentsia was languishing, when in 1877 the trial of the members of *Khozdenie v narod* who had been arrested three years earlier gave it a welcome and timely publicity stunt.

On the failure of this movement as well as on all pre-revolutionary times we have first-hand testimony from Emile Dillon, correspondent for the Daily Telegraph in Russia from 1887 to 1914 and friend of Russian politician Sergei Witte: "In the 1870s the two main groups which advocated a revolution were eager to lean on the emancipated peasants and to energize them. But they had no knowledge of the people, whose soul was, according to a Russian proverb, a dark forest. They therefore agreed that the best solution to achieve their ends was to immerse themselves in the peasantry, to live the unenviable life of the plowman and to actively interest him in the upheaval which would lead to the Millennium. As a result, men and women from all over the intelligentsia came to swell the ranks of these apostles and,

sometimes with self-sacrifice, sometimes with complacency, without restraint, without discipline and without consistency, they began to lead the life of dire misery and deprivation to which the moujik has long been accustomed and which he drowns in debauchery and turpitude. The worship of the people, which they hoped to indoctrinate and inspire, was the new religion that intellectuals preached and sometimes strove to practice. They viewed the nation as a mystical body, much like Roman Catholics viewed their Church; but they went further than the Catholics and worshiped the object of their veneration, sacrificed their well-being there and in some cases died for this object. Yet they were aggressive atheists, atheists who indiscriminately borrowed their dogmatic negation from foreign authors. Their goal was unattainable, their efforts followed no guidelines, their dogmas were not inspiring enough to support them, their conduct was contrary to the principles of morality and ethics, they had no conscience and no sense of duty; but they imagined they could harness the divinity they had created to their chariot and lead it to a marvelous Utopia. Anyone who did not agree with them was cursed, and even those who did not quite agree with them were excommunicated. For there were no despots more intolerant than them (109). "Anyone who did not agree with them was cursed, and even those who did not quite agree with them were excommunicated. For there were no despots more intolerant than them (109). "Anyone who did not agree with them was cursed, and even those who did not quite agree with them were excommunicated. For there were no despots more intolerant than them (109). "

Ichutin was the last populist revolutionary to base his activities on the great hope that the countryside would reject the government's policies towards the peasants.

The revolutionary ferment which inspired Ichutin and his group was embodied in all its violence in Sergei Netchaïev (1847 - 1882). He developed the feelings and ideas of "Hell" with a cruelty which was unmatched among the revolutionaries of the 1860s, but which is reminiscent of the exhortation of Vissarion Bielinski (1811 - 1848) (110) not to hesitate to cut off heads in the name of the love of humanity and the happiness of the greatest number.

"One of the agents who contributed the most to preparing the politico-social cataclysm [of 1917] was the University and the ragged licentious and libellists who met there" (111). Most of them were peasants.

Let's open a parenthesis here: if we mean by University an institution of higher education, the jami'ah, which spread to the eastern part of the Abbasid Empire as early as the tenth century, was the first example of such an institution. The University of al Karaouine, founded in Fez in 859 by Fatima al-Fihri, is recognized as being the oldest university in the world. The first colleges and universities in Europe were influenced in many ways by the madrasas that existed at the time in Islamic Spain and the emirate of Sicily, not to mention that the Crusaders had the opportunity to study the structure and operation in the Middle East. Of Semitic origin, the University is particularly suited to the demands of a Semitic youth brought up in accordance with certain traditions and imbued with certain beliefs. Transplanted to our continent, it gave no good. In the "Middle Ages" it made legal experts and, from the eighteenth century, parasites like bureaucrats and, under democratic conditions, parasites like technocrats; worse, its leaders gave birth to and played a major role in the propagation of the quintessentially modern

superstition of "study" and "diploma". In Russia as in Western Europe, it was, along with the Church, the only institution which allowed the "social rise" of the lowest strata of the population and, by repercussion, the progressive submersion of aristocratic principles. by the purely materialist values of the plebs and the bourgeoisie. This submersion began earlier in Russia as peasants already formed the bulk of the student contingent in Russia in the early decades of the nineteenth century."Endowed with an extraordinary receptivity, a hypercritical mentality, an immense desire to learn everything joined to an insurmountable laziness and a constant inconstancy, the student of peasant origin regarded science with fear, took for granted "Western" theories and ideas and referred to them to judge the institutions and doctrines of his own country. Driven by a passion for the abstract, he adored science, or rather "Western" pseudoscience, which he understood more easily, as a member of a tribe living on the shores of Lake Baikal worships his fetish. He had neither the material, nor the training, nor even the capacities for synthesis and constructive work (112). "from an immense desire to learn everything, together with an insurmountable laziness and constant inconstancy, the student of peasant origin regarded science with fear, took "Western" theories and ideas at face value and referred to them as judge the institutions and doctrines of one's own country. Driven by a passion for the abstract, he adored science, or rather "Western" pseudoscience, which he understood more easily, as a member of a tribe living on the shores of Lake Baikal worships his fetish. He had neither the material, nor the training, nor even the capacities for synthesis and constructive work (112). "from an immense desire to learn everything, together with an insurmountable laziness and constant inconstancy, the student of peasant origin regarded science with fear, took "Western" theories and ideas at face value and referred to them as judge the institutions and doctrines of one's own country. Driven by a passion for the abstract, he adored science, or rather "western" pseudoscience, which he understood more easily, as a member of a tribe living on the shores of Lake Baikal worships his fetish. He had neither the material, nor the training, nor even the capacities for synthesis and constructive work (112). "took 'western' theories and ideas at face value and referred to them to judge the institutions and doctrines of his own country. Driven by a passion for the abstract, he adored science, or rather "western" pseudoscience, which he understood more easily, as a member of a tribe living on the shores of Lake Baikal worships his fetish. He had neither the material, nor the training, nor even the capacities for synthesis and constructive work (112). "took 'western' theories and ideas at face value and referred to them to judge the institutions and doctrines of his own country. Driven by a passion for the abstract, he adored science, or rather "western" pseudoscience, which he understood more easily, as a member of a tribe living on the shores of Lake Baikal worships his fetish. He had neither the material, nor the training, nor even the capacities for synthesis and constructive work (112). "nor even the capacities for synthesis and constructive work (112). "nor even the capacities for synthesis and constructive work (112). "

Nechayev was eager to learn about and influence the student body. He had already read a lot, especially on politics. At the time he was particularly interested in the French revolution and Babeuf. He got in touch with a group of anarchists who were inspired by The Conspiracy for Equality, known as Babeufde Buonarroti and befriended Tkachev. Eventually he joined a sort of underground committee that had been formed to lead the various student movements along revolutionary lines. He had clarified some of his political ideas and was already stubbornly trying to put them into practice. He was convinced that the peasant revolt was not only very near but that its exact date could be predicted. The revolt, he

thought, was certain and so he drew up his plans in a Program of Revolutionary Action, which he wrote in collaboration with Tkachev. The program reflected the ideas of their faction, which had emerged abruptly between 1868 and 1869 and whose purpose was to control the student movement and use it for broader purposes. The existing order could not continue. And so it was possible and even essential to create an organization to hasten its end. The "union" and the "insurrection" were the two fundamental points of this program. The revolution seemed to them a "historical law". But in order to prepare for the revolution it was essential to create the greatest number of "revolutionary prototypes" and to develop in society the consciousness of a final and inevitable revolution. The desire to act on the psychological level (the "revolutionary prototypes"), the belief that the revolution obeys a historical law, the need to create an organization, these were the foundations of the movement of Nechayev and Tkachev. Their faith in an immediate revolution was to be theorized by Bakunin, who had been deeply impressed by Netchayev's personality and who made him the "prototype of the revolutionary" par excellence in the poem he dedicated to him in 1869. They wrote together *The Revolutionary Catechism*, a brochure published anonymously, the content of which expressed feelings and ideas which had been formed in the revolutionary movement since Ichutin, in an implacable style which gave them exceptional strength.

*The Revolutionary Catechism* is presented as a series of practical advice on the technique of conspiracy and the operating rules of a clandestine association engaged in a fierce struggle with the surrounding world. The sense of dedication, discipline and class consciousness flowed naturally from the situation in which the revolutionaries found themselves. But, in *The Catechism of the Revolutionary*, each of these rules is taken to its extreme: fidelity becomes absolute, fanatic devotion; the desire to accomplish a goal results in the denial of everything unrelated to it, hatred and the will to destroy. This ruthlessness provides a source of energy which constitutes the historical novelty of this document. He was violent enough to include even the Machiavellian ideas of Ichutin. The tactical advice on how to use others and oneself to make the cause triumph is expressed with such an overwhelming passion for the supreme end that in a thousand different aspects it is reminiscent of the doctrine "omnia munda le mundis" ("To those whom faith hath purified all is pure", Luke 11:41).

As we have seen, the significant common denominator between the religious nationalist current and the atheist rationalist current which crossed Russian thought at the end of the nineteenth century was the vision, more or less tinged with messianism and millenarianism, of an ideal future society to be built in a revolutionary way on the ruins of an established order deemed iniquitous; as we have also seen, the Russian intelligentsia firmly believed that this ideal society could only be realized under the effect of the revolution; it should also be added that this belief had a desperate and almost suicidal dimension, because "the intelligentsia devoted all its energy to the disintegration of the status quo, believing that any other regime would in any case be more satisfactory and that it was necessary to use force to get rid of the authorities in place" (113). Whatever the outcome and the collateral damage of the revolution, Chernyshevsky in 1861 waited "with passion for the coming revolution, I hope so, even though I am aware that for a long time, perhaps for a very long time, it will not be able to bring anything good, that, perhaps for a long time, only an oppression will emerge even greater than that which we know" (114). This revolutionary romanticism "expresses perfectly the religious fanaticism, the devout fervor which permeated the whole intelligentsia", "Burning spirituality deeply rooted in the national

character and the past of the Russian people" (115). The Russian intelligentsia thus ended "by constituting a sort of revolutionary priesthood, a religious order" "(116).

No one better than the authors of the Revolutionary Catechism expressed this narrowly absolute, rationally mystical, chaotically "totalist" character of revolutionary action, in the robot portrait they drew of the nature of the "new men" announced by the main character. of What to do?and of the structure of the revolutionary organization which they would be doomed to animate and whose "mechanism [...] is kept hidden". For Nechayev, "The revolutionary is a man lost in advance, who has no particular interest, who has no private affairs, who has no feelings, who has no ties. personal, which has no property and which does not even have a name. Everything about him is absorbed by a single interest to the exclusion of all others, by a single thought, by a passion - the revolution ". Likewise, the teaching of the fathers and doctors of the Church "urges, [...] conjures every man to renounce all that he has, to strip himself of his possessions in order to give them and put them in communion with their own. brothers ; and not being able to demand this community in the name of the State, it nonetheless pursues the realization,with incredible fervor. "

There is another important commonality between the teaching and work of the Church and the Catechism of the Revolutionary: the desire to introduce activists throughout society in order to modify it. "The revolutionary can - and often even must - live in society, pretending to be what he is not. The revolutionary must penetrate everywhere, in all the middle and lower classes, in the merchant's shop, in the church, in the offices, in the army, in the literary world, in the secret police and even in the imperial palace. In a similar way, the Church "teaches unceasingly, by practical example even more than by word, absolute community. Through a slow but uninterrupted work of nearly two thousand years, it has made its spirit, tradition, trends and all aspirations penetrate to the heart of humanity, to the very bowels of civil society.It has surrounded this society on all sides with an immense network of institutions which, in the most diverse forms, are already partially preparing and realizing the community within it ". Not only had the Church, in her monasteries, under the name of lay brothers or lay brothers and lay sisters, lay people of both sexes, subject to the regime of the community; not only did it have monastic communities made up entirely of lay people, who worked in various trades; but it attached to the monastic communities an immense multitude of lay people, in the third orders of Francis, Dominic, Augustine and a host of others, had innumerable congregations of simple faithful and lay communities of teachers, schools, universities, scientific, literary, artistic and of all kinds; in addition,since the "Middle Ages" it has never ceased to cover the soil of France and other European countries with agricultural associations living in community of goods, food, work and life. The secular world was thus penetrated, hemmed in, enveloped entirely in the narrow meshes of this immense network which links it to the international community that Judeo-Christianity has never ceased to try to build (117).entirely enveloped in the narrow meshes of this immense network which links it to the international community that Judeo-Christianity has never ceased to try to build (117).entirely enveloped in the narrow meshes of this immense network which links it to the international community that Judeo-Christianity has never ceased to try to build (117).

Infiltration and infiltration are far from having been invented by the Trotskyists.



Having established his model of revolutionary organization, Netchaev set up a network with the aim of provoking a popular uprising which was to coincide with the ninth anniversary of the decree of emancipation of the serfs. However, the people did not move and the Netchayevshchinasank into its own fratricidal plots following this setback, which temporarily marked the populists' renunciation of the Jacobin cult of political conspiracy and its implicit amorality and their return to the social idealism of their early days. The Netchayevshchina was to exert a profound influence on subsequent revolutionary generations, however, with Netchaev taking its place alongside Razin, Pugachev and the Decembrists in the pantheon of Russian revolutionary martyrs.

Besides the peasants and students, the workers were the object of revolutionary proselytism by the populists. It fell to the populist Chaikovsky movement to lay the foundations for the first Russian workers' organization. There had been no real labor movement in the 1860s, only a series of protests, unrest and isolated strikes that had erupted "spontaneously" in line with a Russian tradition that dated back to the eighteenth century. These disturbances were largely a reflection of the difficulties of adapting workers of peasant origin to the new conditions created by the abolition of serfdom in February 1861.

The revolutionary intelligentsia intended to build a bridge between villages and factories. The revolutionary intelligentsia had in previous decades constructed theories on the socialist and collectivist character of the obshchina. The revolutionary intelligentsia presented the obshchina to the workers who came from the countryside as the ideal towards which all their activities should tend. The revolutionary intelligentsia, however, was forced to admit later that it was not easy to get the ideas of the peasants to be accepted by the working classes, for the latter were already beginning to acquire a different mentality which led them to demand something new intellectuals. But for then populism allowed the revolutionary intelligentsia to accomplish its task of mediator. Through members of the revolutionary intelligentsia, the traditions inherited from mir and from obshchina began to breathe new life into the egalitarian and socialist aspirations that the Judeo-Christian roots of orthodoxy had no difficulty in making hatch in the Russian racial breeding ground.

Radicalized by their realization that neither the peasantry nor the working class constituted an insurrectional force as such and that all the paths followed to organize a purely peaceful and propagandist agitation had proved hopeless, a handful of extremist activists embarked on a campaign of political violence. Having reconstituted Zemlya i Volya, they put themselves at the forefront of this campaign. Zemlya i Volya was the first revolutionary group not to bear the name of its founders or inspirers. The Zemlya i Volya of the 1860s had also tried to become a party, although it was made up of a multitude of small, poorly organized groups. On the contrary, the Zemlya i Volya of the 1870s was a revolutionary party in the sense that the term took in the following decades; it was made up of men who were dedicated to the cause and did all they could to bring together and lead all the other revolutionary forces. Many currents joined Zemlya i Volya: the spirit of dedication of the Chaikovskists, the religious sentiment which had inspired the movement "Towards the People", the anarchism of the Jew Rabinovich and the humanism of the Jew Malikov, some of the specific elements of Jacobinism. Russian, etc. All these currents merged in Zemlya i Volya and made it the most powerful organization of the 1870s. All the elements that made up Russian populism worked together in a "professional" way.

The party redefined more genuinely populist ideas about the relationship between a peasant revolution and an urban movement, and adopted with greater skill and on a larger scale the various tactics that had already been tried, such as propaganda, disruption, public demonstrations, strikes and finally terrorism. He sought to reaffirm the principle of an assembly of tight-knit conspirators determined to employ a strategy based on disorganization and terror.

And then, throughout Russia and particularly in the south, the bloody struggle between the authorities and the revolutionaries resumed after what had looked like a temporary halt in the summer and fall of 1878. The situation was now somewhat similar to that which had existed more than ten years earlier in Moscow, when the "resistance" had learned with discontent that Karakozov had decided to shoot the tsar. But this time the regicides who were part of Zemlya i Volya won the support of the hard core of their fellow terrorists. On the morning of April 2, 1879, a few weeks after the Jew Grigory Goldenberg had killed the governor of Kharkov, Prince Kropotkin, the anarchist's cousin, with a pistol shot, Alexander II took his usual walk around the Palais d'winter, when Alexander Solovev fired five revolver shots at him. None of his bullets hit the target. The Tsar fled, stumbled and fell, but was unharmed. Solovev, arrested, imprisoned and tried, was hanged on May 28.

The government's response to the Tsar's assassination attempt was the establishment of a state of emergency and the introduction of repressive measures. In fact, only a small part of the proposed measures were implemented quickly. The commission of inquiry, despite its apparent practical ineffectiveness, nevertheless analyzed the situation well and fixed in broad outline what was to be the government's policy in 1879. "Society" was politically passive: the educated classes remained neutral; the popular classes showed little inclination to support the government without consideration and eyed the properties of the gentry and the state. It was therefore obviously not advisable to call on them. There was only one option left for the government: to fight alone against revolutionary organizations.

Even as it continued to proclaim the populist belief in the narod and the imperative of social revolution and rejected the overtures made to it by an embryonic liberal faction of the Zemstvo movement which sought to exploit revolutionary agitation to focus on the need for constitutional reforms, Zemlya i Volya was venturing into new political terrain. Thus, faced with the inertia of the peasantry and the improbability of an immediate outbreak of an insurrectional crisis, the concept of revolutionary constraint, that is to say the imposition of a social revolution to the people by means of a coup led by a minority of individuals, the vanguard movement of the revolutionary intelligentsia began to gain the esteem and sympathy of the Zemlevoltsy, the members of Zemlya i Volya.

But the emerging conflict between the social ethos of Narodnichestvo and the need for rapid access to political power to prevent the establishment of links between capitalist forces and bourgeois constitutionalism was to bring Zemlya i Volya into a schism between those who were convinced that it was possible to sensitize the peasantry to their cause through education and propaganda and those who advocated political terror. These founded the Chernyi Peredel (Black Breakdown) movement; these, the Narodnaya Volya (The Will of the People), an organization very close to Nechayev which operated from January 1878 to March 1881.

Even the most active fraction of society placed the responsibility for the struggle on the shoulders of the revolutionaries. As the intelligentsia was unable to suggest a program, it could only encourage the populists to terrorism. Until the end of the 1870s terrorism had been a symptom of the increasingly marked political orientation of populist and socialist currents. In *Narodnaya Volya*, he became the symbol of the individual struggle between revolutionaries and the authorities in a social and political situation where neither side had any room for maneuver. The originality and strength of *Narodnaya Volya* were based solely on his attempt to combine an armed underground political struggle with the desire for a social revolution capable of pitting the people against all the ruling classes.

In the eyes of revolutionaries it was now time to translate into politics the fundamental principle of populism, namely that the survival of the *obshchina* had predisposed the Russian people to socialism. The day when the revolutionary power (or even the old state under the pressure of terrorism and the revolutionary activity of the populists) appeals to the people and convokes a constituent assembly which would finally represent the peasants, the vast majority of elected officials would be socialists. The free will of the people would thus be expressed by the election of deputies determined to provoke a "social upheaval", which was not a "despotic utopia" but the very expression of the historical development of all of Russia.

*Narodnaya Volya*, like all previous populist movements, tried to appeal to the intelligentsia and students, hoping to find in them the revolutionary energy and enthusiasm that it had scarcely succeeded in arousing in the educated class. Some young recruits from these circles soon became professional revolutionaries entrusted with delicate missions involving conspiracy and terrorism. But it turned out to be impossible to breathe new life into the student movement or to fabricate strikes and protests. On the other hand, the political point of view of the executive committee of *Narodnaya Volya* allowed its members to enter circles that had not been touched by revolutionary propaganda ten years earlier. It was now the army's turn. Moreover, the economic crisis which hit Russia hard in 1881 highlighted the political character of *Narodnaya Volya*'s activities among the workers. The working classes, in the capital as in the provinces, were aware that the regime was "easily flammable". An uprising in St. Petersburg would give the signal to smaller towns and the countryside. The workers would act because they had met the socialists and had been won over by their promise of new life. In a revolution, their role would be that of an elite. The program worker members of the *Narodnaya Volya*, which was published in 1880, laid the foundations for the organization she intended to set up in the factories. This program, one of the fundamental texts of the executive committee, took as its starting point the socialist and populist ideal that *Narodnaya Volya* shared with *Zemlya i Volya*.

In the fall of 1879 the *Narodnaya Volya* committee adopted terrorism as the supreme goal of all its efforts. With its rigid hierarchical structure based on the principle of "elective centralism" and its pursuit of revolutionary dictatorship in the name of the people, *Narodnaya Volya* reflected an increasingly virulent political tension in the populist movement. As they had come to the conclusion that the Russian state continued to derive its moral and coercive authority from the autocratic institution, the revolutionary strategy of the *Narodovoltsy*, which consisted in creating the conditions for demoralization and paralysis favorable to a coup d'etat, was to crystallize around the regicide.

The Tsar was the victim of two new assassination attempts in the following months. The fifth, March 1, 1881, was the right one. The grenades that were thrown at the Tsar had been invented and manufactured by Nikolai Kibalchich, a pioneer in aerospace research to whom Nikita Krutchev paid homage in April 1961 on the occasion of the Gagarin space flight. Arrested, he and Sofia Perovskaya, a Jewess of noble origin who had fervently participated in the logistical preparations for the attack, were hanged. Gesya Gelfman (or Helfmann), another of the Jewish partisans of "revolutionary free love" who had taken part in the assassination, owed her salvation only to the leniency of the Russian authorities, who, since she was pregnant at the time of the incident, commuted the death sentence to which she had been sentenced to life imprisonment.

Narodnaya Volya's terrorist campaign prevented the adoption of the constitutional reforms proposed by Count Mikhail Loris-Melikov and, by extension, the emergence of a more moderate layer of intellectuals. In addition, the hiatus between the state and the educated classes was to benefit a future revolutionary vanguard which did not take long to learn the lessons which were essential from the tumult of 1878-81, heir to a cell of professional revolutionaries. Deprived of any real popular support. Finally, the industrialization of Russia and its somewhat hesitant steps towards modernization were to provide the framework for dialogue and hybridization between the Russian populist tradition and the pervasive influence of Marxism.

Many populists passionately subscribed to the Marxian critique of capitalist accumulation and its corollary, human exploitation and alienation, and its denunciation of the capitalist "superstructure" and the concomitant bourgeois-constitutional freedoms. However, very few approved of the orthodox interpretation of the Marxian theory of "historical materialism" according to which Russia would be forced, as Western Europe had been, to pass through the capitalist stage before reaching socialism; even fewer adhered to the scientific socialist theory that the liberation of the world could come only from the working class and the proletarianization of the peasant masses could serve the cause of "universal progress" (118). As a result influential populist ideologues such as Tkachev, whose relative adherence to economic materialism and the vision of a strongly centralized vanguard were to earn him the call of the "first Bolshevik", remained deeply attached to their eyes. Marxist criticisms, to a "subjective" and "voluntarist" form of Russian particularism incompatible with Marx's concept of "objective historical process" and therefore "universal". to a "subjective" and "voluntarist" form of Russian particularism incompatible with Marx's concept of "objective historical process" and therefore "universal". to a "subjective" and "voluntarist" form of Russian particularism incompatible with Marx's concept of "objective historical process" and therefore "universal".

Many historians and Marxist scholars have, however, drawn attention to Marx's singularly ambivalent attitude towards Russian populism. In an 1881 letter to Chernyi activist Peredel Vera Zasulich and in his preface to the Russian edition of the Communist Party Manifesto of 1882, Marx significantly revised the disdainful stance he had initially taken towards Narodnichestvo and its attachment to the "rural stupidity" of the village commune, now considering obchtchina as a potentially regenerative and central force in Russia's direct transition to communist development. He thus turned out to be a much less "classic" Marxist than most of his supporters and particularly of the circle of his Russian admirers, who

formulated their own orthodox Marxist critique of populism in Geneva under the tutelage of Georgy Plekhanov (1856-1918), disciple of Chernyshevsky and Bielinsky.

For the exile Plekhanov who aligned himself with Chernyi Peredel at the time of the schism of Zemlya i Volya, the universalist character of Marxist theory and the Marxian synthesis of social revolution and political revolution would make it possible to break the deadlock to which the ideological disunity of the revolutionary movement had led in the 1880s. He considered Marxism as a system complete theoretical and, having unconditionally adhered to its systematic and universalist principles, it had to analyze the Russian situation from a strictly Marxist perspective. Thus, by laying the theoretical and strategic foundations of Russian social democracy, Plekhanov concludes that Russia had to go through the capitalist stage to become socialist. To accelerate the process of capitalist development, to which the autocracy was then an obstacle, the socialist revolution was to be preceded by a bourgeois-democratic revolution. A revolutionary intellectual elite versed in the historical Marxist dialectic was to assume the leadership of a Russian Social Democratic Party capable of guiding the industrial working class in its struggle to overthrow the Tsarist system, thus creating the dynamic conditions favorable to the establishment of a dictatorship of a politically conscious and majority proletariat. thus making it possible to create dynamic conditions favorable to the establishment of a dictatorship of a politically conscious and majority proletariat. thus making it possible to create dynamic conditions favorable to the establishment of a dictatorship of a politically conscious and majority proletariat.

In collaboration with a coterie of emigrants, Plekhanov formed the group for the Emancipation of Labor in 1883, whose main tasks were to translate and disseminate Marxist literature and to convert to Marxism the new generation of the radical intelligentsia and the workers. They took the name of "social democrats". One of their recruits was Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov (1870 - 1924), who soon took the nom de guerre of Lenin (119).

### The Tolstoy case

"The Russian novelists [...], in the absence of any public life, played, for Russia, in the field of fiction to which censorship obliged to resort, a political and social role similar to that of the philosophers of the ten -eight century; they served as spiritual guides, they broadened and deepened the feeling, the need for freedom; there is no literature more revolutionary than Russian literature. Tolstoy is the Slavic Rousseau. Like Rousseau, he made vibrate the most generous sympathies for the oppressed classes, he put them on the pinnacle. He never ceased to be the fervent disciple of Rousseau, father of anarchism and socialism, at the same time as a religious prophet ". However, unlike Rousseau, "Tolstoy is a privileged person who is ashamed of his privileges, he will become a people and serve the cause of the people (120). He will be the embodiment of Russian populism. With time, however, he "ends up losing his confidence in the vocation of the Slavic people, and by transferring it to the Chinese peasants, who, frozen in the age-old custom, so peacefully plow their fields (121)!" "

Like many other populists, he was unstable. "Its story is that of a very excitable mind in times of great excitement. Born in 1828, died in 1910, he spent his youth under the absolutist reign of Nicolas I, he fought in Sebastopol, he witnessed the emancipation of serfs, the assassination of Alexander II and the triumph of the theocratic and police reaction, the growth of terrorist attacks, the Russo-Japanese war and the first popular uprising which heralded the decline of a regime similar to that of Byzantium. These events made a deep impression on Tolstoy's mind, although he always kept aloof from parties. In him, the sagacious observer of human miseries and weaknesses was coupled with an enthusiast endowed with a strong imagination and an ungovernable sensitivity, on which reason, experience had no hold" (122). With him, "Emotion and passion thus become infallible arbiters [...] This intrepid pursuit of the ideal, this hunt for the absolute is usually the prerogative of youthful years; maturity, the trials of life lead to the limitation of desires and hopes. Tolstoy aspires to the infinite with all the more ardor at the approach of middle age, when the first attack of revolutionary fever which is devouring his people today will have seized him (123). "the trials of life lead to the limitation of desires and hopes. Tolstoy aspires to the infinite with all the more ardor at the approach of middle age, when the first attack of revolutionary fever which is devouring his people today will have seized him (123). "the trials of life lead to the limitation of desires and hopes. Tolstoy aspires to the infinite with all the more ardor at the approach of middle age, when the first attack of revolutionary fever which is devouring his people today will have seized him (123)."

Like a number of other populists, he had high aristocratic origins, had a dissipated, tormented youth and had participated in the campaign in the Caucasus and Crimea and had made trips abroad.

Like a good number of other populists, he "had early lost the Orthodox faith, claimed to be a positivist, while retaining the habit of prayer, of examination of conscience; he kept a journal, reproached himself for his faults, his vices, especially sensuality. Proud, obstinate, irritable, he liked to contradict, suspected sincerity in others, and without succeeding in correcting himself, always showed himself to be repentant (124)". This pathological introspection was coupled with a sickly exhibitionism, which, in 1862, led him not simply to confess his "past errors" to the woman he had just married, but to give them to him to read.

Like a number of imbalances who lose faith in childhood, he found it again in middle age. "... As early as 1874, disturbances of conscience began to agitate him. In his novels, concerns about the great problems of life, death and religion emerge. Tolstoy is more and more haunted by it, he searches, moaning. Pascal, Schopenhauer, whose portrait adorns his room, L'Ecclesiaste are his bedside books. Life seems to him an evil and he notices the powerlessness of philosophy to mitigate it. Pilgrims pass on the road, going to venerate the relics of the saints. He envies them and feels them close to his heart (125)". Like Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon sect, he was visited in the woods: "One fine spring day he was alone in the woods; he listened to the sounds of the forest, and God reveals himself to him in this universal blossoming (126)..."

Like a number of those who regain their faith in middle age, far from re-entering the Church, he repudiated her, believing that she had betrayed the Christ message. His moral was that of the Gospels and, consequently, he advocated the cosmopolitan spirit, in Christianity and patriotism (sic), under the

pretext that, according to monogenism, men would be the sons of the same father; he devoted to gemonies what "he considered to be the cause of economic oppression, [...] private property, denounced by Saint Jerome and Proudhon as a theft, by Rousseau as the source of all wars and of the greatest ailments..." (127); as a good humanitarian, he condemned state violence, while finding very mitigating circumstances for those who resorted to it against the state. He repudiated the State like the Church. He had no faith in revolutionaries, while considering revolution to be inevitable. "Thus the violent revolution will inevitably precede the true revolution," that which will replace corrupt Christianity and the regime of domination which results from it, true Christianity, the basis of equality between men and of true freedom, to which all beings aspire. endowed with reason (128) ". Always in perfect harmony with the evangelical salad, he affirmed that "Not only should we not fight our enemies, but we must love those who oppress us, slander us, as the Christian law orders it (129)". It is almost useless to say that he did not follow this precept. "Thus the violent revolution will inevitably precede the true revolution," that which will replace corrupt Christianity and the regime of domination which results from it, true Christianity, the basis of equality between men and of true freedom, to which all beings aspire. endowed with reason (128) ". Always in perfect harmony with the evangelical salad, he affirmed that "Not only should we not fight our enemies, but we must love those who oppress us, slander us, as the Christian law orders it (129)". It is almost useless to say that he did not follow this precept. "Thus the violent revolution will inevitably precede the true revolution," that which will replace corrupt Christianity and the regime of domination which results from it, true Christianity, the basis of equality between men and of true freedom, to which all beings aspire. endowed with reason (128) ". Always in perfect harmony with the evangelical salad, he affirmed that "Not only should we not fight our enemies, but we must love those who oppress us, slander us, as the Christian law orders it (129)". It is almost useless to say that he did not follow this precept. to which all beings endowed with reason aspire (128) ". Always in perfect harmony with the evangelical salad, he affirmed that "Not only should we not fight our enemies, but we must love those who oppress us, slander us, as the Christian law orders it (129)". It is almost useless to say that he did not follow this precept.

He "based his hopes on a transformation of men's hearts, when they would have been shown what is good and what is bad" (130). This confidence, which William James describes for convenience as "naive", "would deliver humanity to the enemy; not to resist evil would be to condemn it to disappear. The entire social order is based on resistance to evil. If society feels hit, instead of turning the other cheek, it retaliates. In spite of Tolstoy and the Quakers, we admit that we must respond to violence with violence, repel invaders, drive out vagrants, lock up thieves, punish murderers. Justice consists in punishing as well as in rewarding "(131).

Tolstoy's religious and social doctrine was nothing new: he only gave it the imprint of his personality. Nothing was then more frequent in Russia, in England, in the United States, than the appearance of sects which separated from the Churches by the interpretation of some passages of the Holy Scriptures. All of Tolstoy's thought is but a paraphrase of the Sermon on the Mount, a return to early Christianity.

In the meantime, "the anarchists laughed at the Christian anarchism of Count Tolstoy. However, they saw in him a precious helper: "The old man rambles, but he is useful to us; he demolishes society (132)". Thus Tolstoy entered the pantheon of those whom Lenin later called "useful idiots." The Bolsheviks were not ungrateful to him: "Never, according to Tchertkof's testimony, had Tolstoy's tracts been so widespread as in the first months of the Provisional Government. Hostile to any political revolution, Tolstoism nevertheless contributed to the social awakening which was to lead to it. After their coup d'etat, the Bolshevik dictators, anxious to win over the peasants, pretended to annex the memory of Tolstoy, who would have abhorred their violence exercised in the most odious military form. They devoted millions of rubles to the dissemination of his works, and charged Maxim Gorky to promote this popular art of which Tolstoy had given the model. The Red Guards protected the home of Yasnaya Polyana [Tolstoy's wife] against gangs of looters. The house and the estate were nationalized (133)... "

It was because Tolstoy had rendered "the service of stimulating, by furious attacks against the old regime, in the name of the Gospel, the revolutionary spirit, and, on the other hand, what doctrine more favorable to despotism than that of non-resistance to crime? "One can, remarks Machiavelli, tyrannize without fear of the men who are more ready to support the insults than to avenge them (134)".

#### Gnostics, mystics and radicals

Many links existed in nineteenth-century Europe and the United States between Gnostics, mystics, occultists, and radical socialists. In the United States, various communities with fundamentally Gnostic and occult doctrines tried to live communist style. Not all. Married to a former colonel in the US army who had become president of a spiritualism association, Victoria Woodhull (1838-1927) was at the time the leading figure of feminism. A promoter of feminist Marxism, spiritualism, free love and cosmology, Woodhull believed that spiritualism represented not only religious inspiration but also a cultural, political and social revolution. She published the first English translation of the Communist Manifesto in her own journal, and unsuccessfully tried to persuade Karl Marx that the goals of spiritualism and communism were the same. She was also the first female stockbroker in New York. A. Besant (1847-1933), president of the Theosophical Society, sister of the Freemason Sir Walter Besant and Freemason herself, participated in the International Congress of Socialist Workers which was held in Paris from July 14 to 20, 1889, where she received a standing ovation (135). took part in the International Congress of Socialist Workers which was held in Paris from July 14 to 20, 1889, where she received an ovation (135). took part in the International Congress of Socialist Workers which was held in Paris from July 14 to 20, 1889, where she received an ovation (135).

The occultists, mystics, occultists and radical socialists constituted what historian James Webb calls "a progressive resistance" united by a common opposition to the established order. Webb writes that "socialists and occultists worked hand in hand".



Dissenting Christian mystics, spiritualists, occultists, and radical socialists often played prominent roles in contemporary political movements for "social justice," "workers' rights," "free union" and "emancipation of women". Nineteenth-century occultists and socialists together called for a new age of universal brotherhood, justice, and peace. They all had a charismatic vision for the future - a radical alternative to the old political, social, economic and religious structures of power. And most often the common enemy they had to face was the "ungodly" alliance of state and church.

#### VI Lenin and the "spiritual resistance"

"Men can participate in a great social movement making history only by representing their action narratively as a battle for a just cause" (136). "[These constructions] I [propose to name them] myths [...] the general strike of the trade unionists and the catastrophic revolution of Marx are myths (137)".

Members of religious sects played an important role in the formation of Bolshevism, the unique mark of revolutionary Marxism created by Lenin. Indeed, the fact that Marxism, in its aggressive veneration of atheism and scientific materialism, viewed religion with contempt as "the opium of the people" did not prevent some Bolshevik leaders from using concepts directly borrowed from occultism and radical Gnosticism. The materialist point of view of communism, the name by which Bolshevism was later known, did not prevent the Russian "spiritual resistance" from giving its precious support to Lenin's revolutionary cause.

One of Lenin's earliest supporters was the radical Russian journalist VA Posse, who published a Marxist newspaper from Geneva called Zhizn(life). Zhizn aimed to gain the support of dissident Russian religious communities, whose fight to overthrow the Tsarist autocracy was gathering momentum. The Posse publishing house received financial support from the Jew VD Bonch-Bruevich, a Marxist revolutionary and, what is more, a specialist in Russian Gnostic sects. Posse succeeds in financing Zhizn through Bonch-Bruevich's connections in the "spiritual resistance" movement of Old Believers and Gnostics.

Zhizn's goal was to reach a large audience of proletarian and peasant readers who would one day form a popular front against the hated Russian government. Lenin soon began to write articles for Zhizn. Lenin appeared to Posse as a sort of mystical sectarian, a Gnostic extremist, whose asceticism was matched only by self-assurance. Bonch-Bruevich and Posse were both impressed by Lenin's zeal to build an effective revolutionary party. Lenin despised religion and showed little interest in Zhizn's religious orientation. Russian Jewish Marxist thinker Plekhanov, one of Lenin's first mentors, openly expressed his hostility to the newspaper's religious leanings. He wrote to Lenin to complain that Zhizn "talks about Christ and religion on almost every page. In public I will call it an organ of Christian socialism".

Zhizn's publisher closed down in 1902 and his business was successfully transferred to Lenin. The very first Bolshevik publishing house was established in 1903 - 1904 by Bonch-Bruevich and Lenin. Both men

saw Russian sectarians as valuable revolutionary allies. As one researcher notes, "Russian religious protest attracted Bolshevism even before this movement had made a name for itself."

Bonch-Bruевич had come to revolutionary Marxism under the influence of the social teachings of the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy. Like Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, he began his revolutionary career by distributing *The Kingdom of God is in you* by Tolstoy, a work imbued with neo-Gnostic themes. In 1899, Bonch-Bruевич left Russia for Canada to live with the Doukhobors, Russian Gnostic Communists whose persecution they suffered because of their refusal to pay taxes and serve in the army had pushed them to exile. Bonch-Bruевич reported on the secret doctrines of the Doukhobors and wrote down their fundamental oral teachings, which they called the "Living Book". On his return to Europe in 1901 Bonch-Bruевич introduced Lenin to the fundamental principles of these Gnostic communists. The Doukhobors, by their radical rejection of Church and State, their denial of the uniqueness of the historical Christ and their disinterest in the Bible in favor of their own secret tradition, were of some interest to the founder of Bolshevism.

In 1904 Bonch-Bruевич, with the support of Lenin, began to publish *Rassvet* (The Dawn), in order to propagate revolutionary Marxism among religious dissidents. Its first editorial attacked all Russian Tsars for their persecution of Old Believers and sectarians and declared that the purpose of the newspaper was to report events that were happening all over the world, "in different parts of our vast motherland. and in the ranks of sectarians and schismatics". *Rassvet* combined communist and apocalyptic themes that were both indisputable and understandable to Russian "spiritual resistance".

In the early years of the twentieth century, Russia had a revolutionary mindset. Bonch-Bruевич wrote that this would soon lead "the awakened people to insurrection". He urged his Communist revolutionaries to use the language of "spiritual resistance" to persuade the masses that the government was "Satan" and that "all men are brothers" in the sight of God. He wrote: "If the sectarian proletariat needs to hear the word 'devil', identify this old concept of a bad principle with capitalism, and identify the word 'Christ', as a concept of eternal good, with happiness. and freedom, with socialism" (137bis).

The Russian people were ripe for Lenin's communism. "Bolshevism," wrote an anti-Communist Russian in 1919, "is a Russian word. But it's not just a word. Because Bolshevism is a typically Russian phenomenon. He is deeply linked to the Russian soul". National Socialist Propaganda Minister Dr Goebbels observed that no tsar had ever understood the Russian people as deeply as Lenin who gave them what they wanted most - land and freedom.

Communists and the occult sciences

"Occult literature can only perplex and impatient those who consult its works for the first time; for he will find there a motley mixture of the excrements of all cultures and occasional fragments of a

philosophy which may be profound, but almost certainly subversive to the equilibrium of the society in which he lives. The occult sciences constitute the set of rejected knowledge: that is to say, a resistance whose fundamental unity is that of Opposition to the Existing Order (138) ”.

A Marxist pamphlet written before 1917 and later reissued by the Soviet government bluntly stated that man is destined to "take possession of the universe and carry his species into distant cosmic regions, to take over the entire solar system. . Human beings will be immortal ". The Jew Anatoly Lounasharsky (1875-1933), the first People's Commissar for Public Education in the newly-formed Soviet state, believed that, since religious belief had been a powerful engine of change in history, Marxists should design the struggle to transform nature through work as their own form of devotion and the spirit of humanity as their God.

Lounacharsky and Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), two close friends of Lenin, were acquainted with the whole of occult thought, including the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner and the theosophy of Helena Blavatsky. These two prominent Bolshevik revolutionaries shared a common interest in ancient mystery cults, religious bigotry, metapsychology, and Gnosticism. Mr. Carlson asserts that Gorky's vision of "a New Nature and a New World, subsequently equated with its socialist expression as a Bright Future, is fundamentally theosophical." Gorky appreciated the writings of the occultists Emanuel Swedenborg and Paracelsus, as well as those of Fabre d'Olivet and Édouard Schuré.

Inspired by images of ancient solar mysteries, Gorky, in *Children of the Sun*, declared: "We the people are the children of the sun, the shining source of life; we are born of the sun and will overcome the dark fear of death. »In *A Confession*, the people became God himself, a creator of miracles, the possessor of the true religious conscience, he became immortal. Gorky envisioned a bright future of work for the love of work and of man as "master of all things". Revealing his knowledge of metapsychology and faith healing, Gorky recounts how an assembled crowd uses their collective energy to heal a paralyzed girl. He was deeply impressed by the research on thought transmission and wrote extensively on "the miraculous power of thought", while expressing the hope that one day reason and science would destroy fear.

The ideas promoted by Lounasharsky and Gorky came to be known as the "edifice of God", which has been described by one researcher as "a secular regeneration movement with mysterious aspects". The edifice of God implied that a human group, by the concentration of the human energy that it releases, can perform the same miracles that were attributed to supernatural beings. The builders of God regarded early Christianity as an authentic example of the collective edifice of God, with Christ being nothing but the home of collective human energy. "The time will come," writes Gorky, "when all popular wills will merge again at one point. Then an invincible and miraculous power will appear and God will be resurrected ". A few years earlier Fyodor Dostoyevsky had written in *The Possessed* : "God is the synthetic personality of a whole people. "

According to Mikhail Agursky, "For Gorky, the edifice of God was above all a theurgic rite, the creation of the new Nature and the annihilation of the old one and therefore it was one with the Kingdom of the

Spirit . He considered God as the result of collective theurgic work, the result of human unity and the negation of the human ego ”.

Prior to the Bolshevik coup, Lounasharsky's political propaganda relied primarily on words and images borrowed mostly from Gnostics and members of Russian religious sects. In a pamphlet, he urged readers to refuse to pay taxes or serve in the military; he also urged them to form local revolutionary committees, to claim ownership of their land, to overthrow the autocracy and replace it with a socialist "fraternal society". Indeed, Lounacharsky's writings gave as much importance to Christ as to Marx. "Christianity, in all its forms, even the purest and most progressive," he wrote, "is the ideology of the oppressed classes, of the desperate serfs, of those who do not believe in their own strength; Christianity is also a weapon of exploitation ". But Lounasharsky realized that there was also an underground spiritual tradition, whose mysterious language and symbols could be used to mobilize the people for revolutionary purposes.

Lounacharsky's first plays and poems are permeated with occult elements such as references to the "astral spirit", white magic and demonology. He dealt with Gnosticism, the Logos, Pythagoras and the solar cults in a two-volume work entitled Religion and Socialism . In the aftermath of the usurpation of power by his Bolshevik comrades, Lounasharsky wrote an occult-inspired play entitled Vasilisa the Sage . He never completed the "dramatic poem" Mitra the Savior that he had started after the publication of this piece. It is significant that Lounasharsky and the expert on Russian Gnostic sects Bonch-Bruевич were recognized, as we will see below, for having given rise to the "cult of Lenin", which dominated Soviet life after the death of the Lord. Bolshevik leader in 1924.

#### Soviet power and "spiritual resistance"

Following the destruction caused by World War I and the total collapse of Imperial Russia, Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power by force in October 1917. According to a Russian scholar, this plot would probably not have succeeded without the active support of the Russian "spiritual resistance". A fortiori, the Bolsheviks would not have been able "to consolidate their power, if millions of members of Russian sects had not participated in the total destruction caused by the revolution, which took on a mystical character for them. Much like the medieval Gnostic sects of the Anabaptists, Bogomiles, Cathars and Taborites, they considered that the State and the Church were the receptacle of all kinds of evils and that their destruction and their devaluation were a mystical duty ”.

The "spiritual resistance" put its arms all the more spontaneously at the service of the communist cause as communism seemed to grant its wishes. The apocalyptic and messianic themes popularized for centuries by Russian "spiritual resistance" manifested themselves in the Bolshevik revolution and stirred up the aspiration to build a classless, communist society. The dream of a communist paradise created by human hands on earth, a new world completed by technology, social justice and brotherhood, was to be found both in Marx and in Russian "spiritual resistance". It also appeared in occultism in the broad

sense: "[...] occultism was part of a set of ideas which inspired mystical revolutionism, which is based on the belief that great earthly events like revolution reflect a realignment of cosmic forces. The revolution therefore had an eschatological significance. It would lead to "a new heaven and a new earth" populated by a new type of human being and characterized by a new type of society, cemented by love, common ideals and sacrifice.

"Dialectics," Lenin wrote, "is the theory which shows how opposites can and usually are (and become) identical - under what conditions they are identical by converting into each other - why human understanding cannot must not take these opposites for dead, petrified, but for living, conditioned, mobile, converting one into the other ". Several centuries earlier, the Muslim Gnostic Djalâl ad-Dîn Rûmî had indicated: "Apparently opposed things can in fact work together. "

Lenin married the dialectical materialism of Marx to the long tradition of Russian socialism and to the Gnostic, apocalyptic and messianic elements with which it is imbued. Likewise, he reconciled the Marxist cult of science, atheism and technological progress with the Russian conception of justice, truth and dedication to the community. In addition, the Bolshevik leader equated the Marxist call for proletarian internationalism and world revolution with the old Russian notion of universal brotherhood. Violently opposed to all religion, atheistic Bolshevism was largely inspired by "spiritual resistance", becoming, to use the words of one of Lenin's comrades, "the most religious of all religions".

After the Bolshevik coup of 1917

The big losers of Leninism were the esoteric circles and the occultist circles. The big winners - among others - the sectarians and the Gnostics, if only because Lenin promulgated a law exempting members of religious sects from military service.

The most representative group of Russian socialist messianism in 1917 was the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. For this party of romantic revolutionaries, Russia's suffering during the war was analogous to the crucifixion, and the "October Revolution" represented redemption. Russia was to be used to create a new world. The Left Social Revolutionaries entered Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) in November 1917, thus establishing a bridge between the Bolsheviks and the peasantry, of which the Socialist Revolutionaries enjoyed the support. They also entered the Tcheka in large numbers, where they did wonders. The adoption of their agrarian policy by the Bolsheviks strengthened their ties still further. For them, however, no compromise was possible with the "old world"; therefore, they saw in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk a betrayal of world revolution and left Sovnarkom upon signing. Subsequently, they tried to provoke war with Germany through terrorist acts.

RV Ivanov-Razoumnik, the literary editor of the newspaper des Socialistes-Révolutionnaires de Gauche, founded in 1918 a review called *Les Scythes*, to which a group of poets and writers close to the SRG collaborated, such as Blok, Bielyï, Zamiatine, Essenin, etc. Their emblem was a Scythian horseman, a

symbol of their struggle against the West. The magazine was the very illustration of the revolutionary messianic state of mind of the time. Rodine identified Russia with the "Messiah" in his poem *A la Mère Patrie*; Christ is risen, another of his poems, was written the day after the "October Revolution". Blok (1880-1921) and Bielyi (1880-1934), both marked by Soloviev's eschatology, awaited an imminent cosmic struggle against the Antichrist. Interested in Gnosticism, Blok believed he recognized a "spiritual content" in the political and social turmoil of the "October Revolution" and in the bloody civil war that followed. He unveiled what he considered to be this content in his poem *The Twelve*, where a Christ carries the red flag of the revolution; Trotsky called this poem "the most important work of our time". A member of the anthroposophical movement, Bielyi hailed the "1917 Revolution" as the first step in a much larger cultural and spiritual revolution. For Bielyi as for Blok, the "Revolution of 1917" was above all a powerful theurgic instrument. Bielyi saw in theurgy the way to quickly change the world in collaboration with God. Despite the turmoil and carnage, for these Russian occultists, the revolution contributed to a new creation. Two of the most enthusiastic poets of the "Scythians" were Nikolai Klyuev (1887-1937) and Sergei Essenin (1895 - 1925). Their poetry is imbued with esoteric symbols and Russian messianic themes. Essenin, in line with Gnosticism, trumpeted his contempt for the old God of the Church and called Russia the "new Nazareth; he sided with the Red Army and tried to join the Bolshevik party, only to commit suicide in 1925, convinced that dark forces had taken hold of the revolutionary movement. Klyuev compared Lenin to Archpriest Avvakum Petrov (1620-1682), who had led the opposition to Nikon's reforms. The occultist, having felt betrayed by Bolshevism and having made it known, was arrested and died in deportation in 1937. The Gnostic poet and Symbolist Valery Bryusov (1873-1924) who had devoted himself to magic, to occultism and pre-1917 spiritualism asserted that Russia's fate was shaped by mystical forces; he rejoices that the "October Revolution" was part of an "occult plot". He joined the Bolshevik Party in 1920. Many of those directly or indirectly connected with sectarian dissent joined the Communist Party and found employment in various Soviet organizations.

By the early 1920s, Bolshevism had consolidated its hold over much of the former Russian Empire. The Communist Party appeared to be the monolithic embodiment of the popular will. The new Soviet state, with its Marxist-Leninist ideology, became the supreme arbiter of all thought. As part of the modernization of Russia and the construction of a technologically advanced Soviet Union, occult notions were publicly labeled as superstitions and openly ridiculed. All secret societies, including theosophical circles and anthroposophical circles, were dissolved. Freemasonry was virulently condemned and its lodges closed. The main occultists were sent into exile. Members of the Rosicrucian nebula, who were interested in the Kabbalah in theory as in practice, would have suffered persecution in the late 1920s and died in concentration camps in the 1930s. The conditional is in order because, as pointed out K. Burmistrov, "almost everything that we know about them and their doctrines comes from the archives of the Russian secret services" and that "a large part of these archives has not been opened to researchers". On the other hand, the fact that the laboratory which the members of a small Rosicrucian group of a certain Emesh Redivivus set up to practice telepathy and perform experiments with so-called magic objects and drugs was located in the sub floor of a building next to that of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), the Soviet political police, leaves you wondering (139).

Still, "[t]he Bolshevik revolution did not make interest in the occult sciences disappear. Some pre-revolutionary ideas and occult symbols took on a more "scientific" meaning. Mixed with compatible concepts, they quickly spread into Soviet art, literature, thought and science. Soviet political activists who did not believe in the occult sciences used symbols, themes and techniques drawn from these sciences for agitation and propaganda purposes. After undergoing further transformations, they were incorporated into the official culture of Stalin's time "(140).

"Under Stalin, occult themes and techniques, detached from their doctrinal basis, became an integral part of official culture. The occult themes of Soviet literature of the 1920s morphed into the magical or fantastic elements that observers have noted in Socialist Realism. Stalin himself was invested with occult powers "(141). Cabalistic principles and primordial drives took on new forms, more suited to the new reality. Esoteric ideas were clothed in the language of a new era. For example, there were hints of anthroposophy in the thesis of the Jewish Freudo-Marxist psychoanalyst Aron Zalkind (1886–1936) that a new man, with new organs and a new sensibility, was being born. More generally, certain elements of the cabalistic doctrine passed incognito in psychoanalysis and in the various branches of psychology.

At the same time, the goals of members of occult groups changed somewhat due to the scientific discoveries that had accompanied the Bolshevization of the country. They moved from the theoretical study of Kabbalah to its practical applications (kaballah ma'asit). Convinced that their experiments and their cabalistic knowledge would soon be accepted by Soviet science and that, for example, telepathy, the indefinite prolongation of life, the improvement of the human species and even the resurrection would one day be accessible to all humanity, they strove to acquire supernatural powers through practical exercises such as meditation, visualization, ceremonial magic, as well as by scientific means, in most cases as far as can be judged, not for personal gain but out of altruism.

The Russian Jewish intellectual Isai Lezhnev (1891-1955) insisted on the deeply religious character of communism, which was "comparable to atheism only in a narrow theological sense". Affectionately, psychologically, Bolshevism was extremely religious, seeing itself as the sole guardian of absolute truth. Lezhnev discerned in Bolshevism the development of "a new religion" which brought with it a new culture and a new political order. He embraced Marxism-Leninism and hailed Stalin as a manifestation of the "popular spirit".

The Russian Revolution, which gave birth to the superpower known as the Soviet Union, cast a gigantic shadow over the twentieth century. Bolshevism, the materialistic worldview developed by Lenin, left its mark on all aspects of modern thought. However, the roots of Lenin's communism and the Soviet Union go deep into very ancient esoteric doctrines.

Was atheistic Bolshevism, despite its worship of science and materialism, the expression of something non-human? Many in the "spiritual resistance" believed this passionately. The Gnostic poet and Symbolist Valery Bryusov (1873-1924) who joined the Bolshevik party in 1920 had devoted himself to magic, occultism and spiritualism before the revolution. Bryusov claimed that Russia's fate was shaped by mystical forces and that the "October Revolution" was part of the occult plot.

## Cosmism

Another important Russian occultist, the famous artist Nicholas Roerich, considered Lenin and communism to be a cosmic phenomenon. The Soviet regime paid him back.

"At the beginning of the 1980s, the communist power recognized the person of Nicolas Roerich and the importance of his mission (identical to that of the New Age, the themes of the Age of Aquarius, etc.). The official journals - for example the organ of the Central Committee of the CPSU - published the pseudo-yogic and theosophical texts of Roerichian inspiration, by a certain Sidorov, in which it was question of the recognition of the legitimacy of the October Revolution. and the sacralization of Lenin's mission by mahatmas who came from the mythical city of Shambala in Moscow in the 1920s to transmit magical powers to the Bolsheviks "(142). Sviatoslav, one of Roerich's two sons, was received with great fanfare by Mr. Gorbachev at the end of the 1980s, in the midst of perestroika ("Restructuring"). On this occasion, he declared that Roerich was "one of the cultural pillars of Russia". In 1990, the same Gorbachev inaugurated the Roerich center in Moscow, of which he had been one of the promoters. All major Russian cities now have a Roerich center. The perestroika and glasnost ( "openness") were placed under the sign of cosmism. The expression "new mentality" (novoie mychlénýé), which covers the notion of perestroika and that of glasnost , finds its origin in the writings of Fedorov and Vernadsky, the pioneer of a science to which was later given the name ecology.

Nikolai Fedorovich Fedorov (1829-1903) was the founder of Russian cosmism. Fedorov was one of the many illegitimate children of Prince Pavel Ivanovich Gagarin, a surname which appears on the list of Russian surnames of Jewish origin (143). Excluded in 1852 from a high school in Odessa, which at the time housed the largest Jewish community in the entire Russian Empire, following a violent altercation with one of his teachers, he taught history and geography from town to town until 1868. In one of these he befriended N. Peterson, another itinerant teacher (he had been the private teacher of the children of Tolstoy, who used him as a prototype by Simonson in Resurrection), who soon after their meeting joined the anti-Tsarist terrorist circles (he later became a member of Trotsky's guard and, after the Bolshevik coup, he was appointed to the post of commander of the Kremlin, which he occupied until 1935). Peterson, from whom we know that Fedorov began work on his philosophical system as early as 1864, found him a job in a Moscow library. A few months later, he was hired as a cataloguer at the Rumantsyev Library (now Lenin Library), where he worked until his death and where he came into contact with the artistic and intellectual gratin of Russia.

Like Berdiaev and many other Russian thinkers of the time, his thinking was strongly influenced by both Orthodox Christianity and Hegelian philosophy. Like many of them, he had little difficulty in reconciling religion and science within the framework of "active Christianity", since, instead of passively waiting for the millennium, a good Christian had to participate. to the construction of paradise on earth. What differentiated him from them were his views on how to build it. In his eyes, there was only one evil in the world: death. He prophesied that scientific progress could enable "Humanity" to achieve immortality



and even raise the dead. Not without consistency, he added that the universal attainment of immortality would lead to such a large increase in population that "humanity" would have no other alternative but to leave the earth and colonize the cosmos.

Fedorov did not create a movement but he did school. He had a more or less profound influence on the thinking of many contemporary Russian personalities, whether they were literati like F. Dostoyevsky, V. Soloviev, L. Tolstoy, M. Gorky, B. Pasternak, V. Mayakovsky, with whom he corresponded and, later, thinkers of the Russian religious revival (N. Berdiaev, S. Bulgakov, G. Fedorov, V. Ilyine, etc.), intellectuals, physicists, biologists or politicians. One of his closest friends was the orientalist V. Kojevnikov - one of Lenin's collaborators when he was still abroad - who, after his death, published, with N. Peterson, his manuscripts and their interviews with him under the title of *Philosophy of the Common Work*. "Common Work" translates the Greek "liturgy", but its meaning is much broader than that which refers to "mass". It is about the liturgy outside the temple, the "cosmic liturgy", in the manner of Maxim the Confessor or Teilhard de Chardin: in this sense, the entire cosmos must become the arena of a transfiguring mystery, and scholars, philosophers and intellectuals must become its prophets (144). »In *Religion and Socialism* (1908-1911), Lounatcharsky "calls for a monist and proletarian religion. It is a question of supplementing by new myths and rituals the Marxist rationalism which lacks the power of conviction and training. From then on, the Christian symbols are transposed, the Father will be represented by the forces of production, the Son by the proletariat and the Holy Spirit by scientific socialism. Man himself becomes God, but through the collective. Future collectivism will fully realize the divinity of man: humanity will attain supreme knowledge, supreme happiness, omnipotence, universal love and eternal life. "People will be immortal as long as they develop their 'selves' beyond the limits of individualism into a tendency towards community. To build a collectivist society is therefore to build God: hence the name of the movement of "builders of God" "(145).

"In Fedorov's system, despite Christian terminology, God is expletive. By this trait, Fedorov's "projectivism" is in line with the utopias of atheistic and socialist humanism of the nineteenth century, with one fundamental difference, however, that A. is right to highlight: the project of general resurrection and rational domination of natural phenomena finds its starting point in an imperative moral requirement, in a very strong feeling of guilt of the "sons" vis-à-vis the "ancestors". The common work is thus based on a human morality and also constitutes in itself an ethical program intended to "regulate" the relations of men among themselves "(146).

Fedorov found a fervent disciple in the person of a certain Konstantin Edwardovich Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935). Hard of hearing following a scarlet fever contracted at 9 years old, he had to educate himself, no school having opened its doors to him. His readings enabled him to quickly acquire a great knowledge of mathematics, technology and physics. It was at the age of seventeen that Tsiolkovsky, more or less inspired by reading the novels of Jules Verne, dreamed for the first time of travel in space. He then began to think about the problem of the ergonomics of space vehicles. As a teacher, he spent all his free time studying aerial locomotion and so, in an article published in a Russian scientific journal in 1883, he came to propose, in particular, to launch jet spacecraft into space. In 1903, in another article ("The

Exploration of Cosmic Space by Jet Engines"), he published the formula for calculating the minimum orbiting speed - that is, the speed at which a body can stay in orbit without crashing into the body which gravitational attracts it. This formula now bears his name.

However, at the time, few took Tsiolkovsky's work seriously. Few were even those who had the opportunity to read "The Exploration of Cosmic Space by Jet Engines", since the edition of the scientific journal in which it was to appear was confiscated by the Tsarist police. It was finally published eight years later in another Russian scientific publication (147).

The little attention he received from the Russian scientific community before 1917 may explain why he chose to exhibit his ideas and projects in fictionalized form. "He published [...] science fiction novels entitled *On the Moon* (1895), *Dreams of the Earth and Sky* (1895) and *Beyond the Earth* (1920). Tsiolkovsky was as much interested in the philosophy of space as in astronautics and developed during his writings a real work of engineer which proved very useful for the designers of future Russian space programs. But he was especially recognized for his cosmic philosophy. He believed that human occupation of space was inevitable and that this design guided human evolution. The launch of the first manned missions would start a revolutionary phase for humanity, ready to merge with the cosmos. The beginning of space culture would mean the modification of consciousnesses and the realization that the next step for the human species is space, that all productive energies must be directed towards this goal" (148).

The tide turned for him after the Bolsheviks usurped power. In 1918 he was made a member of what would soon be called the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and the following year he received a state pension. "He became... a renowned scientist for his theories of spaceflight and interplanetary travel. He wrote his cosmic philosophy, summed up by the famous formula "the earth is the cradle of humanity and man cannot always remain in his cradle". Indeed, "He did not think only of sending men into space, but of ensuring their survival in this environment and of establishing a space civilization (149) ..."

"His work, consisting of some five hundred articles, influenced many young Russians who found inspiration there to create rockets. His ideas had an international resonance during his lifetime and he contributed to the creation of the global space ideology. He is the epistemic founder of the Russian-European space ideology" (150).

In the 1920s, he co-founded with other "Cosmists" an academy for the study of Fedorov's theories. Among these "Cosmists", there was VI Vernadsky, the founder of biogeochemistry and the inventor of the concept of noosphere, which will then be taken up by Teilhard de Chardin; L. Vassiliev (1891-1966), physiologist, professor and researcher at Leningrad University, who was entrusted with the management of the first Soviet laboratory of parapsychology and whose work on telepathy and remote suggestion paved the way for research say metapsychics. These beautiful people declared with all Slavic gravity that immortality was a "human right". Some of them held very high positions in the Soviet state. It is therefore not surprising that some of Fedorov's ideas were reflected in the economic and agricultural policy of the USSR during the twentieth century, notably in "the conquest of nature by man", the slogan of the revolution. industrial implementation by the Communists within the framework

of the First and Second Five-Year Plan; in the attempts made after World War II to change the climate of Siberia. "The Party, taking up the formula of Bazarov, the nihilist hero of Fathers and Sons of Turgenev, according to which" nature is not a temple, but a workshop, and the role of man is there to work", welcomed the struggle waged against elementary forces and believed that the historical vocation of humanity was to change and shape the aspect of the created world according to the rational views of organized human beings "(151). On the other hand, "The conquerors of nature were linked to the object of their conquest in a thousand ways, they loved it and often thought that there was no real happiness except in its maternal womb. While devoting themselves to building cities and power stations, disciplining rivers and piercing mountains, they readily wondered if supreme wisdom was not to be sought in the purity of the sky and the silence of the forests "(152 ). This contradiction, by accentuating as the technological achievements of those who were victims of it kept them further away from the "maternal womb", could only cause a headlong flight.

Tsiolkovsky's technological evolutionism, which rests on the postulate that the "human species" is "programmed" to have a "cosmic destiny", is neither more nor less than the foundation of "European" space ideology. "The meaning of the history of the species is deciphered by Tsiolkovsky and validated by ESA [European Space Agency] which sets him up as a founding father, making his doctrine the foundation legitimizing space activity in Europe. In working for the cosmic expansion of the species, ESA is based on an episteme with a strong Darwinian connotation. It is, however, an ideological Darwinism in its futuristic dimension. The vision of the future deployed by ESA in the Aurora program is, in many ways, ideological since it stems from marsism, ideology of the conquest of Mars which is found in most spatial environments, and in contemporary mythology (153) ".

Tsiolkovsky's episteme was found in particular in Sergey Korolev, the master builder of the Soviet space program, as well as in K. Ziolkovsky, the father of Russian aeronautics and cosmonautics, who was a member of the spiritualist movement and had visions of entities qualified as extraterrestrials at the end of his life. And, of course, without his work, Gagarin (in short, it's a "family affair") probably wouldn't have been the first man to perform space flight. The cult devoted to Tsiolkovsky in the post-war USSR was such that, in the official press release announcing the creation of Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite on earth, the USSR kept silent on its designers and paid tribute only to himself. Soviet leaders demanded that Sputnik 1 be launched on September 17, 1957, day of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Tsiolkovsky.

Another important representative of the Russian Utopian and Futurist current of thought was the Jew A. Bogdanov (real name Malinovsky) (1873-1927). Former leading figure of Bolshevism, before being removed from power by Lenin because of his epistemology and not, as is often believed, because of his religious conceptions (154), he was, with his brother-in-law Lounacharsky and Gorky, the initiator of the god-builders movement. He also distinguished himself as a scientist and science fiction writer. The Red Star (1908), whose main character, a Russian scientist, philosopher and political activist goes to Mars in the company of a Martian disguised as a human being, presents this planet as an ideal, harmonious, communist, egalitarian society (from the point of view of sexuality), which the Russians hope to bring to the earth. Engineer Menni (1913) tells how the Martians brought communism to their planet. It should

be remembered here that, in the Talmud, in the Kabbalah and in Gnosticism, the angel of Mars, Samael, is assimilated to what is known as "Satan" in the demonology of the Semites (155).

As a scientist, Bogdanov practiced as a physician and was the founder of the Central Institute of Blood Transfusion of the Soviet Union (Moscow, 1926), the first of its kind. "The importance he attached to technology as a means of building an ideal society recalls Fedorov's" philosophy of common work", without however taking into account the latter's idea that religious and spiritual development must support technological progress. Another difference between them is that, even though Bogdanov sends his character to Mars, his only concern was the earth [...] Like Bogdanov, Fedorov and the Cosmists Vernadsky, Tsiolkovsky and Chizhevsky all considered science to be vital to the survival of the world. humanity, but, unlike Bogdanov, they predicted that its survival would come through colonization and domination of a part of the universe larger than the earth "(156). Whether or not Bogdanov was influenced by Fedorov's pseudo-philosophical constructions of immortality, the fact is that his views on blood transfusion show that he never had his feet on the ground. Indeed, he advocated a "physiological collectivism" consisting not only of total blood transfusions between the young and the old, but in a worldwide exchange of blood to merge humanity into one and the same family (156a). the point is that his views on blood transfusion show that he never had his feet on the ground. Indeed, he advocated a "physiological collectivism" consisting not only of total blood transfusions between the young and the old, but in a worldwide exchange of blood to merge humanity into one and the same family (156a).

Kahal, Golem, Ghetto

It is in this context that the decision to mummify Lenin's corpse must be understood, while the progress of science may allow it to be resuscitated. "Marxism-Leninism, whose philosophical foundation is materialism as well as scientific atheism, questioned the survival of the soul after death. This did not prevent him from proclaiming that Lenin was immortal "(157). At least his mummy.

"The idea of mummification came from the executive troika of the Funeral Commission, appointed a week after the funeral, and which was given the task of watching over the body and raising a tomb. This troika was made up of L. Krasin (who played the essential role), his real name Goldgelb, a former criminal who then became a broker; V. Molotov, real name Skryabin; and AS Enukidze (a Georgian). It is significant that later the Funeral Commission was renamed the Commission for the Immortalization of the Memory of VI Ulianov.

"Krasin played a decisive role in the choice of the architect of the mausoleum (AV Shchusev) and in its decoration. It was he who had the idea of a transparent sarcophagus to keep and display Lenin. An

engineer by training, he also took care of the construction of a refrigeration system which, by circulating cold air in the sarcophagus, was to keep the body intact [...] It is probable that Krasin wanted to preserve Lenin's body for its possible eventuality. resurrection. Let us recall that Krasin had been a close companion of Bogdanov in the pre-war period and that he had been part of the Vperyod group where we found all the "builders of God" (158).

In a 1921 speech at the funeral of a man named Lev Yakovlevich Karpov, Krasin said: "I am sure that the time will come when science will be all-powerful, that it will be able to recreate a dead organism. I am sure that the time will come when we will be able to use the vital elements of a person to recreate their physical person. And I am sure that when that time comes, when the liberation of mankind using all the power of science and technology will be able to resuscitate great historical figures. Fedorov could not have said better.

The last three lines of Mayakovsky Komsomolskaya's poem(1924) ("Lenin lived / Lenin lives / Lenin will live") were one of the flagship slogans of Soviet propaganda until the international banks which had put the USSR under financial drip in the 1930s to maintain it economically. alive unilaterally decided in the late 1980s that it was now time for her to collapse.

From 1917 to 1989, from the Bolshevik coup d'état to the formation of the USSR, from Leninization to "de-Stalinization", from the "Cold War" to perestroika, it is necessary to distinguish between what comes from an opportunist and Machiavellian instrumentalization of esoteric concepts and teachings by the Soviet leaders and intelligentsia and what corresponds to an adherence to these concepts and these teachings and to a desire to s 'use them in practice and spread them to brainwash a whole people and build a communist-type society. In this respect too, we must not be fooled by appearances and believe that, because a large number of esotericists and occultists have drawn the wrath of the Soviet regime, because esotericism and the occult were officially mocked and put to oblivion, cabalistic activities and influences would have ceased completely in the USSRThe apparent lack of interest of the Soviet patriarchs in the occult sciences, the almost complete absence of direct references to the occult in their political discourse and in their praxis tends to show the contrary. To begin with, everything that is occult remains by definition concealed and secret and the fact that the KGB archives have only been opened very partially shows no surprise that Russia does not intend to reveal everything about the secret activities of the intelligence service of the former USSR, of which it is itself a product.all that is occult remains by definition concealed and secret and the fact that the archives of the KGB have been opened only very partially shows no surprise that Russia does not intend to reveal everything about the secret activities of the former intelligence service. -URSS, of which it is itself a product.all that is occult remains by definition concealed and secret and the fact that the archives of the KGB were only opened very partially shows no surprise that Russia does not intend to reveal everything about the secret activities of the former intelligence service. -URSS, of which it is itself a product.

In fact, if it may well be that the cult of Lenin, the cult of Stalin or Stalinist Socialist Realism, in some of their aspects, testify to a more or less conscious manipulation of the occult themes and symbols which were well known. of the Russian masses, given the anti-Semitism of a large part of them, it will be readily agreed that, for example, the exhibition of the Star of David on the walls of public buildings in

the early years of the Communist regime and the adoption of the five-pointed star, the pentagram, as the emblem of the Red Army on the proposal of Trotsky (Lev Davidovich Bronstein) (1879-1940), was not the best way to win them over to the cause of communism.

The many crude historical errors, the crazy interpretations, the absurd theses contained in *Le Matin des magiciens*, whose argument also rests on a massive recourse to the most dubious secondary sources, make that any mind endowed with even a little of discrimination can only agree with its authors to qualify it as a story "sometimes legendary and sometimes exact". On the other hand, the first sources on which J. Bergier relied to give birth to *The Secret War of the Occult* show that he was not wrong to assert that the Soviet political police arrested parapsychologists with the same zeal as dissidents, but that, instead of sending parapsychologists to the gulag, they called on them. In 1923, the Russian anthroposophical, theosophical and occultist circles had been shaken by a wave of arrests, a few months before the psychiatrist V. Bechterev (1857 - 1927), a former collaborator of Pavlov, was entrusted with the management of the first laboratory of Russian Parapsychology at Leningrad University. In 1974, arrests were again ordered in these circles and, moreover, parapsychology was outlawed in the USSR, even though the KGB had created its own laboratory for parapsychological research and, more particularly, telepathic within the bio-information section of the scientific and technical inter-union society of radio-technology and electro-communication AS Popov, better known as the Popov group. That research on the paranormal was conducted behind closed doors is obvious; which, on the other hand, would undoubtedly have puzzled the grassroots communists who read in *The 1956 Soviet Encyclopedia* that the phenomena of telepathy were an "idealistic anti-social fiction" is that they were carried out by a regime whose worldview rested entirely on a materialist doctrine.

Elements borrowed from a certain magic and the occult forces which correspond to it succeeded in infiltrating incognito into Russian science, a science with the most naturalistic and atomistic postulates in which they were dressed in concepts, in formulas and in "relations". » Before finding practical applications in all kinds of fields, particularly in the military field, to such an extent that they became unrecognizable; thus, for example, the Jew IM Kogan, president of the group AS Popov, very scientifically defines telepathy as a simple transmission of waves at extremely low frequency.

There are elements which do not allow us to doubt the existence of major and preponderant occult influences in the ideology and in the practice of the Soviet regime.

These influences appear clearly in the methods employed by the Chekists, the members of the political police created in 1917 under the authority of the Pole Felix Dzerzhinsky to fight the "enemies of the people", to "exterminate the parasitic layers" with the aim of "hasten the advent of the classless society" (159). Before seeing what these methods were, some of which are described by Mikhail Voslensky, a former Soviet official, in his book *Nomenklatura* (160), it is useful to know that, according to the Jewish historian Richard Pipes, "three- Fourths of the Tcheka members were Jews, mostly scoundrels incapable of doing anything else, unrelated to the Jewish community but always willing to spare their fellow believers (161). "

Here they are, these methods: "In Kharkov, the victims were scalped. In Voronezh, the victims were locked in barrels, into which nails were then driven, and the barrels were rolled. They were then marked on the forehead with a red pentacle. In Tsaritsyn and Kamychin, the hands of the victims were amputated with a saw. In Poltava and Kremenchug, the victims were impaled. In Odessa, they were roasted alive in ovens or broken into pieces. In Kiev, the victims were laid in coffins that contained a decomposing body and buried alive, to be dug up half an hour later. "

They had nothing particularly original. Indeed, in 1 Chronicles 20: 3it is said: "He brought out the inhabitants, and cut them to pieces with saws, and with iron harrows and axes; he treated all the towns of the children of Ammon in the same way ». In 2 Samuel 12:31 : "He brought out the inhabitants, and placed them under saws, and iron harrows, and iron axes, and made them pass through brick ovens; so he did to all the cities of the children of Ammon. "

The Russian Jewish newspaper Evreyskaya Tribuna wrote in its issue of August 24, 1922 that Lenin had asked the rabbis if they were satisfied with the executions. The article does not, however, specify to which rabbis he asked this question.

The Chabad Hasidic sect was founded in the eighteenth century in Russia by Rabbi Schneur Zalman de Liadi (1745 - 1812). Twice accused of endangering state security through his activities, he was interviewed each time in St. Petersburg and released for lack of evidence.

"Prince Lubomirsky, to whom the town [of Liadi] belonged, and who had been a great friend and admirer of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, offered to rebuild it for his successor. At the same time, he proposed to the latter, in case he preferred it, a town near Liady, the town of Lubavitch, which belonged to his nephew. However disinterested he was, the prince did not lose sight of the great economic advantages which would benefit the city and the neighboring localities if it became the residence of such an illustrious Rabbi, with the regular comings and goings of hundreds of followers on the occasion of Chabbats and festivals. So he was delighted when Rabbi Dov-Ber (1773 - 1827) consented to settle in Lubavitch. And he undertook without delay the construction of the buildings necessary for the installation of the movement and its functioning, offices, as well as a synagogue and a school (162). "

Lubavitch, a small town that is now in Belarus, remained the center of the sect until the First World War. This is how the leaders of the Chabad came to be known as Lubavitcher Rabbis and this branch of Hasidism as Lubavitch Hasidism. Dov Ber chooses the surname of "Schneerson" or "Schneerson".

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, grandson of Shneur Zalman and stepson of Dov Ber, was born in 1789. His grandfather, Admour HaZakane, personally taught him Torah, first the revealed Torah, then the Torah hidden. He succeeded Dov Ber at the head of the sect and was nicknamed Rabbi Tzemaḥ Tzedek, after his published comments on the Mishnah (collection of traditional commentaries on the Written Law (or Pentateuch) and rabbinical decisions, which constitutes the foundation of the Talmud) and Shulhan Arukh (the most authoritative code of Jewish law).

In an attempt to restore Russia after the traumatic episode of Napoleon I's invasion of the empire, Alexander I saw fit to grant advantages to the Jews. The laws governing the "areas of residence"

established by Catherine II in the 1790s in order to assign Jews there and prevent them from migrating from the newly annexed part of Poland to the heart of Russia were relaxed in 1772. C It is in vain that the authorities encouraged the Jews to work in agriculture and to assimilate to the Russians by adopting their way of life.

Nicholas I, the successor of Alexander I, was not so benevolent towards the "Jids", whom he accused of being responsible for the problems of the Russian peasantry and of which "he noted with fear [the] rapid advances in the Russian economy "(163). As he was, however, afflicted with one of those many wholly Christian whims which have always had disastrous consequences for white peoples and which, in fact, never did more than complicate and aggravate the Jewish question, he intended to settle it by obliging the Jews to convert to Christianity and, to do so, with the full approval of the Maskilim, the favorable Jews, contrary to the Hasidic movement, to the emancipation and assimilation of their co-religionists, he made public school compulsory for Jewish children and military service for a small part of them (164).

Rabbi Tzemah Tzedek and the cabalist Rabbi Chaim of Volozin, who, although belonging to two branches of Judaism hostile to each other, made common cause against these measures on two occasions, in 1854 and in 1865, in the name of the whole of the Russian Jewish community, had no difficulty in obtaining its abrogation from Alexander II. The first had hardly any effect, and as for compulsory education for Jewish children, since education was not obligatory for non-Jewish children, it was to be expected that Jewish children would become the most suitable individuals. educated in Russia: this is indeed what happened.

Besides, Alexander II was well disposed towards the Jews. In 1859, first and second guild Jewish merchants were allowed to leave their areas of residence. Two years later, all Jewish graduates were allowed to work in the imperial administration. Spurred on by a handful of Jewish capitalists, leaders of the Haskala, an eighteenth-century Jewish movement strongly influenced by the Enlightenment, he opened the doors of high society to the bourgeoisie, whose main representatives were the barons Ezrel and Horace Günzburg, the founders of the first investment bank in Russia, the Poliakov brothers, railway magnates, the Vissotsky family, queen of tea, the Brodskys, sugar moguls, etc.

"The Jew advances", headlined in 1864 the Novoye Vremiya, a large circulation newspaper from St. Petersburg. In March 1881, the bomb that shredded Alexander II lit the fuse of the revolution. The attack had been prepared in the house of the Jewish Hesia Helfman (165). Numerous pogroms broke out in Russia, Ukraine and Poland. The "Laws of May" which Alexander III had promulgated in 1882 as part of the "Internal Regulations" aimed at combating political protest contained repressive measures against the Jews. "On May 23, 1882, a Jewish delegation, led by Baron Ginzberg [the official representative of the Rothschilds in Russia], visited the new Tsar Alexander III and officially protested against the Laws of May. The Tsar promised a thorough investigation into the issue of the conflict between Jewish and non-Jewish factions in the population of the Empire. On September 3 he delivered the following speech: "For a time the government devoted itself to the Jews, their problems and their relations with the rest of the people of the Empire. He noted the sad living conditions which the conduct of the Jews in financial matters had imposed on the Christian population. During the past twenty years,



Jews have not only interfered in all branches of commerce and business. They have also taken over much of the land by purchase or lease. With a few exceptions, they as one man, devoted their efforts not to enrich or benefit the country, but to frustrate the Russian people with their tricks. The poor suffered particularly from this conduct which provoked the justified protests of the people as well as acts of violence against the Jews. On the one hand, the government was doing its best to suppress this disturbance and deliver the Jews from oppression and massacres; on the other hand, he considered that it was urgent and just to adopt radical measures to put an end to the oppression of the Jews vis-à-vis other inhabitants and to rid the country of their wrongdoings which were, we know well, the origin of the anti-Jewish agitations (166). "" The deputation led by Günzburg, who had made white cabbage, was followed by the intervention of Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn, the fourth Lubavitcher rabbi, who sharply warned the tsar's ministers, who had given him audience, that Jewish international finance would be unleashed against the Russian Empire, if the May Laws were not immediately repealed. They remained in force until 1917.

He wasn't bluffing. "The government had not only enacted the May Laws as an act of retaliation for the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, but also because Russian economists had urgently warned the government that the national economy was in danger of collapse. If we did not take measures to reduce the illegal activities of the Jews. Economists pointed out that Jews made up only 4.2% of the global population but had become so entrenched in the Russian economy that the nation was facing an economic disaster ... The International Bankers imposed economic sanctions against it. The Russian Empire and almost bankrupted the nation. They exercised an embargo on Russian trade and commerce. In 1904, after they dragged the Russian Empire into a disastrous war against Japan, the English Banking House of the Rothschilds repudiated their promises of financial aid and tried to bring the Russian Empire into bankruptcy, while the Kuhn-Loeb & Co of New York granted Japan all the credits it requested (167) ".

Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, the sixth Lubavitcher rabbi, accused of counter-revolutionary activities in 1927, was arrested and imprisoned in Leningrad and sentenced to death. Pardoned at the request of certain Western governments and the Red Cross, he was authorized to leave the USSR for Riga, where he remained from 1928 to 1929. Received by Edgar Hoover at the White House during a trip to the United States. United, he declined the offer made to him by the local members of the sect to settle across the Atlantic. Back in Europe, he took up residence in Warsaw, which he was authorized to leave in 1940 for Riga, from where he flew to the United States, where, in Brooklyn, he created in 1946 the first yeshiva, as well as the first school for girls of the Lubavitcher sect. From its installation in the United States, it was heavily sponsored by all Jewish organizations. Sixty years later, there are over 1,400 Lubavitcher schools around the world. The sect achieved worldwide notoriety, which it would have done well without, when in November 2008 the Chabad center in the city of Bombay was the victim of an act of terrorism.

Milanese by birth and of US nationality, Rabbi Shlomo Dovber Pinchas Lazar was ordained at the Lubavitcher Center in New York in 1987. Two years later, he was in charge of re-establishing the Lubavitch movement throughout Russia, where he was appointed as rabbi of the synagogue in the Moscow residential district of Maryina Roshcha, where he soon made new friends. One of them was the

Jewish diamond dealer, philanthropist and Putinist Lev Avnerovich Levayev, one of the most valuable allies of the Jew Roman Abramovich, one of the favorite oligarchs of the Jew Vladimirovich Shelomov Putin (168), who immediately granted substantial financial assistance to the Russian branch of the Lubavitch sect. Zealous member of the Hasidic movement, Levayev soon after became one of the patrons of a newly created grouping called the Federation of Jewish Communities of the CIS (FEOR). Received on June 12, 2000 in the Kremlin by Putin who had granted him Russian nationality two weeks earlier, Berel Lazar was elected the following day Chief Rabbi of the CIS by an assembly of forty-five Hasidic rabbis. However, there was already a Chief Rabbi of Russia, who was recognized as such by the Russian Jewish Congress and its dominant figure, Vladimir Guzinsky, an opponent of Putin. Never mind: Putin immediately recognized Berel Lazar's FEOR as the only representative body of Russian Jews. On September 18, 2000, the Moscow Jewish Community Center was inaugurated by Putin who, on December 21, celebrated the Hanukkah, the feast of the Maccabees. In January 2001, Berel Lazar was invited to an official dinner at the Kremlin, which, to ensure that the Chief Rabbi could eat kosher, Putin ordered, a first, it seems, in Russian history, that the kitchen was completely hidden (169). They have not left each other since and Berel Lazar never misses an opportunity to salute the Judeomania of his alter ego. He recently declared: "There is none of the requests that have been made to him to help Judaism and the Jewish communities to which he [Putin] has not responded favorably to all requests (170). A partial relief of the "oligarchs" has taken place in the meantime. Of the seven main Jewish financiers and industrialists who had made their way under Yeltsin, Putin spared two, Vladimir Potanin and Mikhail Fridman. In reality, there are proportionately many more Jews among the new than among the old "oligarchs" (171).

Communism is dead and buried as a political and social organization, that is to say in the form in which it rages from 1917 to 1989 - but its spirit - so to speak in the spiritist sense -, which has its roots in chaotic, elementary and inhuman forces which, while by definition cannot be eliminated, can be channeled and controlled, is always active in the form of political, scientific, economic, social and cultural doctrines, in which a trained eye will always be able to detect its presence and action. "Perestroika is actually a movement that was planned from the end of the 1950s. Its description comes from a certain Golitsyn, a senior KGB officer, who moved to the West at the end of the 1960s. We find his writings in reports that were intended for the Secret Service, but also in a public work published before 1985 and the coming to power of Gorbachev. What's he saying ? That perestroika is a revolutionary socialist process inspired by Lenin's new economic policy; that it is intended to restructure (perestroika means restructuring) socialism in the USSR, and not to eradicate it. Above all, it is a question of restructuring the image that Westerners may have of socialism in general "(172).that it is intended to restructure (perestroika means restructuring) socialism in the USSR, and not to eradicate it. Above all, it is a question of restructuring the image that Westerners may have of socialism in general "(172).that it is intended to restructure (perestroika means restructuring) socialism in the USSR, and not to eradicate it. Above all, it is a question of restructuring the image that Westerners may have of socialism in general "(172).

"... It is all the revolutionary themes contained in perestroika that we find at the heart of the ecological policy that is being implemented at the present time. There's no hazard. It will be recalled that Gorbachev, in his writings, explicitly says that ecology is a revolutionary vehicle. Today, Gorbachev is the President of the International Green Cross.

"This [globalist] power obviously seeks to capitalize on both the democratic and the liberal experience - references to liberal elements are plentiful, but considering them within a framework that really has little to do with it. see with liberalism - in order to make a synthesis guided by a truly collectivist objective. This power starts from the principle - liberal! - that all coercion is doomed to failure, and that non-coercive methods, which leave the governed the illusion of freedom, are those which must be used to achieve the desired goal.

"The idea of refusing coercion to appeal only to the feeling of freedom is a fundamental idea used by a large number of thinkers. »

Finally, the cabalistic concept of tikkun olam ("Repairing the world") is precisely at the heart of ecology.

<http://www.hassidout.org/sj/beth-habad/israel/115-jerusalem/31350-poutine-en-visite-au-kotel-avec-le-rav-berel-lazar>

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- (1) For a scholarly introduction to Jewish esotericism, see Georges Vajda, Recent Researches on Jewish Esotericism, II (1954-1962) (first article) , [http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/rhr\\_0035-1423\\_1963\\_num\\_164\\_1\\_7897](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/rhr_0035-1423_1963_num_164_1_7897) .
- (2) Emile J. Dillon, Eclipse of Russia , George H. Doran Company, 1918, p. 11-12.
- (3) Ibid ., P. 13.
- (4) Ibid ., P. 13-14.
- (5) Ibid ., P. 15.
- (6) Le Corbusier, L'Architecture vivante , A. Morancé, 1975, p. 22; see also Leroy-Beaulieu, A., L'Empire des Tsars et les Russes .
- (7) Emile J. Dillon, op. cit., p. 23.
- (8) Ibid ., P. 32.
- (9) Ibid .
- (10) Ibid ., P. 33.
- (11) Ibid ., P. 34.
- (12) Ibid ., P. 38.
- (13) Ibid .
- (14) Ibid ., P. 45.
- (15) Julius Evola, A victim of Israel , <https://evolaasheis.wordpress.com/2016/04/14/une-victime-disrael/> .
- (16) Emile J. Dillon, op. cit ., p. 199.
- (17) Ibid ., P. 204.
- (18) Ibid ., P. 200.
- (19) Ibid ., P. 201.
- (20) Ibid., p. 202.
- (21) Ibid ., P. 203-04.
- (22) Ibid ., P. 204.
- (23) Ibid ., P. 206.

- (24) Angelo Solomon Rappoport, *Pioneers of the Russian Revolution* , New York: Brentano's, 1919, p. 235.
- (25) Ibid ., P. 243.
- (26) Ibid ., P. 254.
- (27) Ibid ., P. 250.
- (28) Duncan P., *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Holy Revolution, Communism and After* , Psychology Press, 2000, p. 52.
- (29) Ibid ., P. 254.
- (30) Ibid ., P. 252.
- (31) Ibid ., P. 254-55.
- (32) Ibid ., P. 256.
- (33) Cf. André Chouraqui, *Jewish thought* , Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, p. 93.
- (34) Moshe Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism: A Quest for the Historical Ba'al Shem Tov* , Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1996, p. 27 and sqq.
- (35) Halak (h) a, halacha (h) (from Hebrew halakh , "to walk"). Legislative part of the Talmud; law, religious rule. "The halachic tradition [...] seeks in the Torah and in the other sources of the tradition applications, practical interpretations, obligatory norms of action, supposed to go back to Moses, to Sinai, and to draw from there their authority and their mandatory value "(Paul Démann, *The Jews: Faith and Destiny* , A. Fayard, 1961, p. 71).
- (36) Gershom Scholem, *La Kabbale, an introduction* , Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998, p. 298.
- (37) Cf. Immanuel Etkes, *The Besht: Magician, Mystic, and Leader* , Brandeis University Press, Waltham, Mass., 2012.
- (38) Moshe Idel, *Ascensions On High In Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders* , Budapest, Central European University Press, Budapest and New York, 2005, p. 148.
- (39) Raphael Patai, *The Jewish Mind* , Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1977, p. 186.
- (40) Emile J. Dillon, op. cit., p. 49.
- (41) Cf. FC Conybeare, *Russian Dissenters*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1921. Most of the discussion in this chapter is taken from this book.
- (42) Ward WR, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* , New York, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 10.

(43) Raffaella Faggionato, *A Rosicrucian Utopia in Eighteenth-Century Russia: The Masonic Circle of NI Novikov*, Springer, Dordrecht, p. 81.

(44) *Ibid.*, P. 82.

(45) K. Marx, F. Engels, *La Commune de 1871*, "Historical and theoretical extensions of the Commune", <http://www.marxists.org/francais/marx/works/00/commune/kmfecom11.htm>.

(46) Nicolas Berdiaev, *The sources and meaning of Russian communism* translated from Russian by A. Nerville, Gallimard, Paris, 1951, p. 14.

(47) One of the figures who built a bridge between sectarian circles and Moscow high society was a certain Ekaterina Filippovna Tatarinova (1783-1856), "the daughter of a German officer in the service of Russia. She married a Russian colonel, Ivan Tatarinov, and accompanied him as the Russian army crossed Europe to defeat Napoleon. In 1813, however, she returned to St Petersburg, separated from her husband and grieved by the death of her young son, and she was living in the Mikhailovsky Palace, where her mother was Tsarevna Maria's nurse. Madame Tatarinova then devoted herself to charitable works and a spiritual quest that led her away from her native Lutheran Church and into close relations with the Khlytsy and Skoptsy before converting to Orthodoxy in 1817. It appeared early on that she had her own personal interpretation of the Orthodox faith, as she proclaimed herself a prophetess and clairvoyant and held meetings in her apartment where she led her followers through scripture readings, hymns, improvised prophecies, and often frenzied dances leading to spiritual exaltation. Among his followers were many important members of government and society, including Golitsyn and the Tsar himself. Until 1822, Madame Tatarinova also received a fairly large pension from the government. That year Alexander ordered the dissolution of all secret societies, but Madame Tatarinova was able to continue her meetings, with the benevolence of high-ranking protectors. After the fall of Golitsyn in 1824, however, she was arrested and banished to the Moscow region. She then formed a colony around herself, which was to last until 1835, when she was again arrested and imprisoned in a convent. In 1847, aged and weakened, she was released and allowed to live in Moscow, where she ended her days in peace". Georges Florovsky, *The Ways of Russian Theology*, translation and notes by Jean-Louis Palierne, L'Âge d'Homme, Lausanne, 2001, p. 170.

(48) WF Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight. An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA, 1999, chap. : "Magic, The Church, The Law", p. 12.

(49) It is interesting to note that in the "Middle Ages" the basileus, to impress the ambassadors deputed to the court by the foreign princes, did not hesitate to use automatons and tricks worthy of the sciences. modern.

(50) WF Ryan F., *ibid.*

(51) Dominique de Nièvre, *A liberal saga in Russia: The Evréinovs, Jews, merchants, nobles (1650-1950)*, L'Harmattan, 2004, p. 182-83.

- (52) Isabel de Madariaga, *La Russie au temps de la Grande Catherine* , Fayard, 1987.
- (53) Ibid .
- (54) Heribert Tommek, "JMR Lenz in Moscow and the project of a 'republic of scholars'. An unpublished text on the opening of a literary society to the Freemasons around 1789 ". *Notebooks of the Russian world* 46/3, 2005 [p. 617-32].
- (55) Ibid.
- (56) Raffaella Faggionato, op. cit . , p. 82.
- (57) Isabel de Madaragia, op. cit .
- (58) Boaz Huss, Marco Pasi and Kocku von Stuckrad (eds.), *Kabbalah and Modernity: Interpretations, Transformations*, Brill, Leiden, 2010, p. 80.
- (59) Isabel de Madaragia, op. cit.
- (60) Cf. Raffaella Faggionato, op. cit.
- (61) R. Swinburne Clymer, *Book of the Rosicrucae*, Beverly Hall Corporation, Vol. 3, 1947, p. 110.
- (62) Isabel de Madariaga, op. cit.
- (63) Heribert Tommek, op. cit., p. 624-25.
- (64) Isabel de Madaragia, op. cit.
- (65) Walerjan Skorobohaty Krasieński (count), *Religious History of the Slavic Peoples*, Joël Cherbuliez, Paris, 1853, p. 281.
- (66) N. Deschamps (RP), *Secret societies and society, or Philosophy of contemporary history*, Vol. 3, Seguin Frères, 1882, p. 112.
- (67) Metternich (Fürst von) CWL, *Memoirs, documents and various writings left by Prince de Metternich, chancellor of court and state: pub. by his son Prince Richard of Metternich, classified and collected by MA de Klinkowström*, Vol. 3, E. Plon, Nourrit et cie, 1881, p. 623 sq.
- (68) Robert Warth, "Before Rasputin: Piety and the Occult at the court of Nicolas II". In *Historian* 47, *Historian* 47, n ° 3, 1985 [p. 323-37].
- (69) Janet Ashton, *God in All Things: The Religious Outlook of Russia's Last Empress* , <http://www.bl.uk/ebli/2006articles/pdf/article4.pdf> .
- (70) Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1997, p. 76.

- (71) Walter G. Moss, "Vladimir Soloviev and the Jews in Russia". In *The Russian Review* 29, n° 2, April 1970 [p. 181-91].
- (72) Ibid., P. 75.
- (73) Ibid.
- (74) Pierre Kovalevski, "Russian Messianism and Millenarianism? ". In *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, n° 5, 1958 [p. 47-70], p. 49.
- (75) Ibid., P. 54.
- (76) Ibid., P. 55.
- (77) Ibid., P. 57.
- (78) Ibid., P. 58.
- (79) Ibid.
- (80) D. Stremmooukhoff, Vladimir Soloviev et son Œuvre Messianique, Strasbourg, Publications Commission of the Faculty of Letters, 1935, p. 115.
- (81) Pierre Kovalevski, op. cit., p. 65.
- (82) Pierre Fougeryollas, Towards new thought: Postphilosophical essay, L'Harmattan, 1994, p. 193.
- (83) Jean-Pierre Sironneau, Secularization and political religions: With a summary in English, Paris, Mouton, 1982 p. 370. Engels wrote these words to the Graeber brothers in April 1839: "I have never been a pietist and I have been a mystic for some time [...] Now I am an honest spiritualist, very liberal towards others..."
- (84) Paul Gourdod, Les Sources maçonniques du socialisme français, 1848-1871, Editions du Rocher, Lonaco, 1998, p. 201.
- (85) Charles Pellarin, Charles Fourier: his life and his theory, 2nd ed., L'Ecole Sociétaire, Paris, 1843, p. 516.
- (86) Alain Durel, L'Empire des choses: quartet pour la fin des temps, L'Harmattan, 2004, p. 236.
- (87) Jean-Pierre Sironneau, op. cit., p. 371.
- (88) "The Union of the Faithful with Christ", The Karl Marx Library, t. V, On Religion. Translated by SK Padover, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, NY, 1974, p. 3-6.
- (89) Cf. Karl Marx, "A propos de la question juive", Gallimard, Bibliothèque de La Pléiade, t. III, Paris, 1982, p. 358-364.



- (90) Id., *Writings Of The Young Marx On Philosophy And Society*, translated by Loyd D. Easton and K. Guddat, Doubleday and Co, Garden City, NY, p. 14.
- (91) Id., *Philosophical Works* translated by J. Molitor, A. Costes, 1946, p. 186.
- (92) *Mega* I.2-441.
- (93) Jean-Pierre Sironneau., *Op. cit.*, p. 380.
- (94) *Ibid.*, P. 377.
- (95) *Ibid.*, P. 373.
- (96) *Ibid.*, P. 378.
- (97) Cf. Karl Marx, *Complete Works*, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de La Pléiade, 1941.
- (98) In Robert Payne (ed.), *The Unknown Karl Marx*, New York University Press, New York, 1971, p. 81-83. The text, redacted, can be found at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1837-pre/verse/verse21.htm> .
- (99) Jean-Pierre Sironneau, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
- (100) Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism* [1954], Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 2005, p. 267.
- (101) *ibid.*, P. 120.
- (102) It is not uninteresting to note that Herzen attributed to the United States of America such a decisive role as that of Russia, a socialist Russia, in the march of humanity. As de Tocqueville remarked in "On Democracy in America", "Today there are two great peoples who, starting from different points, seem to be advancing towards the same goal: they are the Russians and the Anglo-Americans" (Marc Vuilleumier, *Autour d'Alexandre Herzen: unpublished documents*, published by Marc Vuilleumier et al., Librairie Droz, Geneva, 1973, p. 310), which were to take hold of the old continent.
- (103) Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia People and Empire, Harvard University Press 1552-1917*, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, p. 345-46.
- (104) Georges Nivat, *Russia-Europe: the end of the schism: literary and political studies*, L'Âge d'Homme, Lausanne, 1993, p. 182.
- (105) *Ibid.*, P. 182-83.
- (106) Geoffrey Hosking., *Op. cit.*, p. 363.
- (107) Georges Nivat, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

(108) In id., *Them and us: Europe facing its new tears: texts of the conferences and discussions: XXXVles international meetings of Geneva 1997, L'Âge d'Homme, Lausanne, 1998*, p. 134.

(109) Emile J. Dillon, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

(110) Bielinski is considered the first Russian socialist to have introduced French utopian socialism into Russia. "He had an enormous influence on the whole revolutionary current" (Jean Pierre Sironneau, *op. Cit.*, P. 389). In *The Journal*, Dostoyevsky relates that Bielinsky, with whom he had just met, "undertook from the first days, with the most sincere impatience, to convert him to his socialist faith" (Pierrez Pascal, *Dostoevsky, the man and the work*, L'Âge d'Homme, Lausanne, 1970, p. 351).

(111) Szamuely, T., "The Russian Tradition [Alexander Matejko]". In *Review of East-West Comparative Studies*, vol. 9, n° 3, 1978 [p. 223-226], p. 225.

(112) Emile J. Dillon., *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

(113) *Ibid.*

(114) In Lecca A., *History of political ideas: from origins to the twentieth century*, Paris, Ellipses, 1997, p. 419.

(115) Tibor Szamuely, *The Russian Tradition*, Martin Secker and Warburg, London, 1974. Quoted in Jean-Pierre Sironneau, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

(116) Tibor Szamuely, *The Russian Tradition*, Stock, 1976, p. 193.

(117) Dom Hisoard, *Property and the community of goods from antiquity to the present day*, vol. 1, Berche and Tralin, 1869, p. 221.

(118) "The scientific theory of social revolution poses the following postulates: the development of the capitalist regime follows definite laws, according to which capital is concentrated among a number of owners increasingly smaller, while the masses of the population undergo the process of pauperization. On the other hand, the production of foodstuffs is growing faster than their consumption and the major industrial countries are suffering from

more and more insufficient markets, which translates into imperialism. The day must necessarily come when the overproduction of food will become chronic, and the unstable and unorganized capitalist regime will not be able to remedy this evil. Economic anarchy will then lead to social revolution; the enormous masses of the proletariat, who will have passed through the great factories through the school of revolutionary discipline, will easily triumph over a handful of princes of capital. Then the expropriation of the expropriators will take place. The wealth accumulated through the progress of science and the indefatigable labor of hundreds of millions of workers will be socialized and a new era will begin in the history of mankind". (Landau-Aldanov, MA, Lenin, Paris, J. Povolozky, 1920, p. 78-9)

- (119) The developments contained in this chapter are mainly taken from the work of the historian F. Venturi *Il Populismo Russo*, Turin, Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1952 and from P. Wadey's *DESS The Russian Revolutionary Tradition: From Narodnichestvo to Marxism-Leninism*, 2010.
- (120) Jean Bourdeau, *Tolstoy, Lenin and the Russian Revolution*, Alcan, 1921, p. 2-3.
- (121) *Ibid.*, P. 44.
- (122) *Ibid.*, P. 3-4.
- (123) *Ibid.*, P. 4.
- (124) *Ibid.*, P. 5.
- (125) *Ibid.*, P. 9.
- (126) *Ibid.*, P. 11.
- (127) *Ibid.*, P. 35.
- (128) *Ibid.*, P. 42.
- (129) *Ibid.*, P. 54.
- (130) *Ibid.*, P. 41
- (131) *Ibid.*, P. 54.
- (132) In *Ibid.*, P. 58.
- (133) *Ibid.*, P. 59.
- (134) *Ibid.*, P. 60.
- (135) The Times reports on the July 1889 "Possibilist" Congress in Paris , <http://www.marxists.org/history/international/social-democracy/1889/workers-congress.htm> .
- (136) Georges Sorel, in Philippe Nemo and Jean Petitot, *History of liberalism in Europe*, Presses Universitaires de France, 2006, p. 732.
- (137) Georges Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence* [1907], Paris, ed. du Trident, 1987, p. 23.
- (137bis) Jack Conrad, *Fantastic Reality. Marxism and the Politics of Religion*, 3rd ed., Corrected, JC Publications, 2013, p. 412.
- (138) James Webb, *The Occult Underground*, Open Court, 1974, p. 192.
- (139) Cf. Boaz Huss, Marco Pasi and Kocku von Stuckrad (eds.), *Op. cit.*

(140) Later, in the so-called Western countries, the cabalistic concept of Tikkun came to inform fields as diverse as that of psychology - as the healing of the patient came to be inextricably linked in the mind of the psychologist. to the desire to "make the world a better place" - and that of protecting nature (Karen E. Starr, *Repair of the Soul*, Routledge, 2008, p. 2).

(141) Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

(142) Collective, *Eurasia*, Vol. III, n° 4: The return of the third Rome, avataréditions, p. 105. On the subject of the Roerich's links with occultism and secret societies, see Markus Osterrieder, "From Synarchy to Shambhala: The Role of Political Occultism and Social Messianism in the Activities of Nicholas Roerich", in Birgit Menzel, Michael Hagemeister and Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (eds.), *The New Age of Russia Occult and Esoteric Dimensions*, Verlag Otto Sagner, Munich and Berlin, 2012. The opening of the archives as well as the recent publication of the various diaries and personal papers of the Roerichs and of several of their closest collaborators revealed that their ultimate goal - the "Grand Plan" (Velikii Plan) - was to establish a pan-Buddhist country ( Novaia Strana) from Tibet to southern Siberia. This "New Land" was conceived as the manifest and earthly expression of the invisible Kingdom of Shambhala. This perfectly utopian project does more than suggest that the Roerichs and their collaborators were only pawns on the chessboard, that their "Grand Plan" was only the visible part of a much larger plan of which they were not. never kept abreast of details: that of a world state.

(143) See [http://www.bulypulpitgames.com/projects/games/big\\_store/brighton\\_beach\\_names.pdf](http://www.bulypulpitgames.com/projects/games/big_store/brighton_beach_names.pdf) .

(144) JC Polet, *European Literary Heritage*, Vol. 12 - Globalization of Europe (1885-1922), Brussels, Éditions De Boeck Université, 2000, p. 201.

(145) Collectif, *Tisser le lien social*, Paris, Editions of the House of Human Sciences, 2004, p. 318.

(146) Cf. Jean-Claude Lanne and Michael Hagemeister, "Nikolaj Fedorov: Studien zu Leben, Werk und Wirkun". In *Review of Slavic Studies*, t. 62, fasc. 4, 1990 [p. 970-971].

(147) George E. Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin (eds.), *Intersections: Fantasy and Science Fiction*, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, 1987.

(148) Thomas Michaud, *Le Marsisme*, Les Éditions Memoriae, 2008, Paris , p. 105.

(149) *Ibid.*, P. 104.

(150) *Ibid.*

(151) François Laplantine and Massimo Introvigne, *The Magic Challenge*, Vol. 1, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1994, p. 294.

(152) Marc Slonim, *History of Soviet Russian Literature*, L'Âge d'Homme, 1985, Lausanne, p. 95.

(153) Thomas Michaud, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

(154) Tumarkin N., *Lenin Lives !: The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*, Harvard University Press, 1983, p. 22.

(155) Sabine Barin-Gould (Rev.), *Legends of Old Testament characters: from the Talmud and other sources*, Macmillan, London, 1871, p. 3.

(156) George M. Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and His Followers*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2012, p. 186.

(156a) This practice, which falls under the so-called “transhumanism” and dates back to “There is no longer either Jew or Greek, there is no longer either slave or free, there is no longer either man or woman; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians, 3:28), is now widespread under various pretexts: <http://www.contre-info.com/californie-en-quete-dimmortalite-des-tres-riches> -adolescents-get-blood-injected .

(157) W. Awdejew, *Lenins Mumie: okulte und rassische Aspekte*, <http://www.velesova-sloboda.org/misc/awdejew-lenins-mumie.html> .

(158) *Weaving the social bond*, p. 319.

(159) Israel Goldberg, *Prince of Israel: The Diary of Rabbi Yoseph Yits'hak Schneerson de Lubavitch*, L'Harmattan, 2008, p. 144.

(160) In benton L. Bradberry., *The Myth of German Villainy*, Bloomington, IN, AuthorHouse, 2012, p. 103; cf. M. Voslensky, *La Nomenklatura. The Privileged in the USSR* [Nomenklatura, Tiden, Stockholm, 1982], Pierre Belfond, 1980.

(161) “The desire of the Jewish Bolsheviks to conceal their Jewishness and to dissociate themselves from their people sometimes took on grotesque dimensions. For example, Karl Radek (Tobiach Sobelsohn) falsely quoting Heine, to whom he made say that the Jews were a “disease”, whereas he had written that the Jewish religion was a “misfortune”, declared to one of his German friends that he wanted to “exterminate” (“aussroten”) all the Jews. »In Benjamin Frankel, *A Restless Mind: Essays in Honor of Amos Perlmutter*, Franck Cass, London, 1996 p. 265.

(162) Nissan Mindel, *Nissan Rabbi DovBer Chnéouri, The “Intermediate Rabbi”*, [http://www.fr.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1045548/jewish/Rabbi-Dov-Ber-Chnouri-Le-Rabbi-Intermediate.htm](http://www.fr.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1045548/jewish/Rabbi-Dov-Ber-Chnouri-Le-Rabbi-Intermediate.htm) .

(163) M. le Cdt. WG Carr, *Des Pions sur L'échiquier*, Cadillac, Éditions Saint-Rémi, 2002, p. 192.

(164) “The law on conscription, introduced in 1827 by Nicholas I, imposes military service lasting twenty-five years on a proportion of 7% o Russian men over the age of eighteen and over. a duration of thirty-one years for a proportion of 10% o Jewish boys having reached the age of twelve. The six years of preliminary service are intended to ensure the conversion of these Jewish children to Christianity”. Laurence Leitenberg, *The Jewish Population of European Cities. Growth and Distribution, 1750-1930*, International Scientific Publishing House, Berne, p. 18.

(165) M. le Cdt. Carr WG, op. cit., p. 194.

(166) Ibid., P. 195-97.

(167) ibid., P. 197.

(168) Her mother's name was Maria Ivanovna Shelomova.

(169) Cf. Marshall L. Goldman, *The Piratization of Russia: Russian Reform Goes Awry*, Routledge, London, 2003, p. 132.

(170) See [http://www.collive.com/show\\_news.rtx?id=19899&alias=putin-now-has-a-chazakah](http://www.collive.com/show_news.rtx?id=19899&alias=putin-now-has-a-chazakah) .

(171) See

<https://web.archive.org/web/20140814215902/http://martinfrost.ws/htmlfiles/oct2008/russian-business-oligarch.html> ;

<https://web.archive.org/web/20171015110651/http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTINVTCLI/Resources/JUNE7&8PAPERBraguinsky.pdf> .

(172) Cf. Pascal Bernardin, *The Hidden Face of Green Globalism*,

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160306205259/http://euro92.com/edi/biblio/bernardin2.htm> .

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