

## **Pride and Propaganda: The Failed Gamble of Patriarch Gabriel of Serbia (1881-1950)**

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Patriarch Gabriel (George Dozic) is one of the most compelling figures in recent Serbian and Orthodox history, with all but a handful of Christian people aware of him. While a man of integrity and holiness, his errors in geopolitics cost his nation dearly. These errors were of a political, not a theological, nature.

This brief essay will argue that Patriarch Gabriel's Anglophilism nearly destroyed Serbia. Taken in by London's well-financed propaganda machine, great luminaries such as St. Nikolai Velimilovic and the Patriarch himself believed Britain and the Allies the harbingers of freedom. It is easy to criticize *post facto*, but this is the job of the historian. While understandable in light of the Italian support for the Croatian nationalists, it only partially excuses their error. Serbia paid for this mistake with its blood.

The future Patriarch's life was little different from many churchmen of his day. He clearly had a flair for academics and theology, and, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, received his doctorate in divinity in Athens, Greece. Soon, he became attached to Hilandar monastery on Athos, and acted as the official secretary. From there, he was elected to the historic and powerful see of Rasca (Vukovic, 2001).

Unfortunately, this see was wracked by turmoil during World War I. It is precisely this part of Serbia that was occupied by the Magyar forces attached to Vienna, and their hatred of Serbs and Orthodoxy are legendary. Many of the Orthodox people were sent to Hungary proper to their string of concentration camps – these camps have yet to receive any real scholarly treatment in English. The Hungarians flooded Serbia's mines and dismantled her industries, leaving the country broke and crippled, a course which had been Vienna's long standing desire.

He was soon released from captivity after the war, and, when Montenegro became reunified with Serbia, became metropolitan there, as he was a Montenegrin by birth. He was elected Patriarch of All Serbia in 1938. This is another way of saying that Gabriel went from one war to another, from one concentration camp to another, for it was only a few years before the Germans were to invade Serbian lands in "Operation Punishment." The British crated a no-win situation for Yugoslavia. The thesis presented here is not in opposition to Gabriel, but rather the British, whose meddling in the region made Hitler's invasion unavoidable.

Gabriel's great error was to oppose the alliance with the Axis powers before World War II. His motivations remain unclear. Neutrality was impossible. The monstrous Soviet Union was close to Yugoslavia, seeking to absorb her and the rest of Eastern Europe into her Gulag economy. Germany was Serbia's main trading partner and the most prosperous nation in Europe.

Churchill was demanding war with Germany, not neutrality. Hitler wanted nothing of the kind. Patriarch Gabriel's policy was deadly, but this is only in hindsight. London wanted to slaughter Yugoslavs to buy them more time in their war against Germany. Hitler did not want Yugoslav aid, but Churchill wanted their blood – without any assistance. They wanted to use Yugoslavia up while London built its offensive military posture, but offered no aid of any kind.

The Patriarch wrote on the Pact itself:

The Church can not accept this. . . . in the Tripartite [Axis] pact we see the

danger of enslavement as all our traditions are in danger and our national feeling offended. . . . Serbia will not be a slave. Under the leadership of their clergy Serbs fought against the Turks and established their own state, and even today, when we are once again in danger again, the Church wants and needs to lead the fight (*Memoirs*, 1974).

These musings make little sense. Germany enslaved no one. Yugoslavia's economy was doing respectably well only because it was trading briskly with Berlin. The only thing that makes sense out of this is that Berlin and Moscow were allied, but he never mentions the USSR. This did not sit well with Belgrade's main trading partner. The German alliance in the past had assisted Belgrade build its industry and keep the pathologically anti-Serbian Hungarians at bay. However, Serbia was too small of herself to matter much to a great power. This is why Yugoslavia was founded in the first place.

The non-aggression pact signed by Prince Paul was not “slavery.” The Patriarch's hyperbolic and hysterical use of language was motivated by more than politics. This rhetoric is oddly out of place and had no evidence to support it. However, in his defense, Yugoslavia's two main enemies were Italy and Hungary, so seeing Germany as an enemy might be understandable. Italy's investment in Croatian fascism did not make Germany seem like a good bet at the time.

Hitler's approach was moderate and intelligent. Churchill's was bloody and extreme. The former said that while Belgrade's neutrality would be respected, Germany requires Yugoslavian cooperation against the Stalinist empire that consistently threatened all Europe. Hitler was offering to neutralize the hostile designs of Mussolini on Belgrade. Further, Yugoslavia would continue to have a favorable trade alliance with the growing and powerful German economy. The Patriarch's fears, in other words, were addressed and yet, it was ignored.

Prince Paul was quite insecure about the Pact and waffled between the two alliances. Such indecision is incomprehensible at the time. There were no grounds for opposing the Tripartite pact. In fact, Gabriel's strange and hyperbolic denunciation of the Axis is partly responsible for the unleashing of the NDH on Serbia. Part of Hitler's plan was to protect Serbia against all enemies so long as she, at a minimum, remained neutral, or, maximum, assisted Germany as she fought Marxism. Serbia won in both cases.

The historical literature on the diplomacy in the late 1930s is myopic and unprofessionally moralizing. It is often forgotten that these small countries were faced with a huge and militarized USSR that wanted to swallow them whole, exporting the Gulag economy into Europe. The US was allied with Moscow from the beginning. Hitler was, in the 1930s, almost universally seen as an Enlightened ruler that had brought Germany from the depression that had engulfed most of the world. He was popular and any connection to him would be equally so.

The Patriarch was motivated in part by the enthusiasm that the non-Orthodox had for the Pact. He thought the Croatian-Italian alliance (that became the NDH) would mean the death for Orthodoxy in the area. Rather than use Hitler as a buffer against the NDH, he unleashed them. The Pact would have brought the NDH and Belgrade into an area of agreement mediated by Germany and would keep the Soviets at bay too. The Patriarch, while a well educated man, should have kept out of politics here. There is some reason to believe British money was, at least in part, behind this sort of senseless hyperbole.

General Dusan Simonovic, soon to lead the coup against Paul, had this position:

Simonovic, in the words of Dragisa Cvetkovic, the Prime Minister, who attended the audience, “stated his position with brutal honesty and clarity. He began with

the fact that the Pact means a military alliance with the mortal enemies of Yugoslavia, and that we will inevitably be thrown into an armed conflict with England, and later perhaps with the USSR. This is a dangerous mistake. Then he expressed his belief that Hitler would do with us the same as he did with Czechoslovakia. The entire Serbian nation will realize the common sense of the coup. That is why so many are alarmed, especially among the lower officers in the military.” (Cvetkovic, 2006)

This is rationalizing something they thought inevitable. English money was always flowing into waffling countries. The west built the USSR and would certainly not protect Central Europe from it. Western economies were briskly trading with the Gulag state and, unlike today, no sanctions existed on this alleged “enemy of the free world.” Cvetkovic was more than likely on the British payroll since his position is so illogical.

The allies had great incentive to take over Belgrade. France was using Yugoslavia to balance Italy while Germany might be delayed in the south by a strong Yugoslavia. As it turns out, the coup plotters had received assurances from the USSR that any German attack on them would be met with Soviet intervention. This reassurance strengthened the resolve of the anti-German faction in Belgrade. Russia's offensive military position at the time of Barbarossa suggested it might have been true.

The views of Serbia and the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, in full communion with one another, could not have been more different. The metropolitan of the Russian synod wrote Hitler in 1938 in the context of his rebuilding the Russian cathedral in Berlin:

We acknowledge God's providence in that, as our churches and shrines are being destroyed in our homeland, the erection of this temple [in Berlin] comes from your work. There are many other signs of this [ie Hitler's providential mission]. We are strengthened in the hope that, as our homeland suffers, the Father will send us a leader, one that will restore our national greatness again as He sent you to the German people.

In addition to the prayers offered constantly for the head of the state, at the end of each Divine Liturgy, the following prayer is also pronounced: “Lord, sanctify those who love the splendor of Your house, You are the ones who reproduce with Your Divine power ...” Today we feel especially deeply that you are included in this prayer. Prayers for you will be exalted not only in this newly built temple and within Germany, but in all Orthodox churches. Because not only the German people remember you with heartfelt love and devotion before the Throne of the Almighty: the best people of all nations desiring peace and justice see you as a leader in the global struggle for peace and truth.

It is common to hear that the great metropolitan only supported Hitler as a hammer against Stalin. These and other writings say otherwise. National Socialism was a movement blessed by God and an instrument of divine providence for the creation of peace and truth in Europe. Anastassy saw the reconstruction of the Berlin cathedral as a metaphor for what Hitler's revolution was doing for Germany. The head of the Russian church under the Reich, Archbishop Seraphim (Lade) said the same numerous times. There was a deep ideological agreement between the Russian national movement and National Socialism. This synod was in communion with Belgrade and no doubt knew of its pro-Allied and pro-Soviet leanings.

The economics of the case is simple. The German Reich had triumphed over the Great Depression, and any economy that attached herself to theirs would do well. In 1940, the percentage of exports bought by Germany topped 50%. The German economy was the strongest in Europe, and therefore, keeping close to her was very important (Mishina, nd).

Worse, the USSR was preparing to attack Germany. Since 1991, archival documents have been uncovered showing – without a doubt – that Hitler's attack was preemptive. The Soviets had massed 2.7 million men on the western frontier in early 1941. This, according to Gen. Peter Grigorenko, could only be for offensive operations. There were not sufficient barracks or training facilities in the west for such a huge force. Therefore, they could only be an attack force and nothing else.

Modern academics, frightened of seeming pro-Hitler, have refused to deal with recent revelations, but the truth is that Stalin was preparing for a massive attack on Germany and northern Europe. Stalin himself wanted an attack on Germany, and Soviet POWs stated that the attack was scheduled for “sometime around July.” Due to the presence of German troops in Bulgaria and Finland, Stalin concluded that war with Germany was inevitable (Suvorov, 1985).

The other thing that bound Prince Paul to Germany was the fear of the Soviet Union. Early on, a German alliance was necessary in part because Germany was far away – too far to be a real threat to independence. If an alliance was to be had, this was the best one. Prince Paul also realized that his predecessor was murdered by a Ustashe agent financed by both Italy and Hungary. Yugoslavia needed a strong protector. All Yugoslav resources, if need be, would be requisitioned in the event of a major war. That would be the case anyway, especially since the only real belligerent would be the USSR (Presseisen, 1960).

This, however, did not sit well with the London banks. The Pact stated in its first article that a New Order in Europe was emerging under German leadership. More practically, that Yugoslavia would have preferential treatment over issues in the Aegean and elsewhere. On the other hand, Yugoslavia's sovereignty would be not threatened by the USSR but totally nullified. Neutrality was not an option in this scenario; it was a luxury. However, only under extreme conditions would Yugoslavia be asked to send troops anywhere. There was no question that, at the time, the German offer was far superior to the British. This provides grounds to begin looking at other causes for the Patriarch's position (Ristović, 2008).

Using their substantial contacts in the military, the government of Prince Paul was overthrown in 1941 by Simonovic, an air force officer, with the assistance of British intelligence. Other military men such as Borivoje Mirkovic, Colonel Dragutin Savic, Colonel Stephen Burazović, General Staff Colonel Miodrag Lazic supported the coup. Simonovic would show his true colors later as a witness against Draza Mihailovic at a “war crimes” kangaroo trial (Presseisen, 1960).

Hitler's plans to invade the USSR were temporarily thwarted in pacifying Yugoslavia so he has to have a friendly government to his rear. Therefore, Operation Punishment was launched on Palm Sunday, 1941. Simonovic fled to Britain as the royal army quickly crumbled. This course of events was inevitable, so rejecting the pact was something like suicide.

The German state blamed Patriarch Gabriel for the violence, since his anti-German policy helped create the conditions for the invasion. St. Nikolai of Ohrid also had a confused policy where he saw Hitler as the threat to Christianity rather than England and the USSR. An extreme Anglophile, Nikolai failed to see the threat of liberalism and its alliance with communism as the enemy. It remains true he loved Dimitrije Ljotic and gave a thrilling eulogy at his funeral a few years later (Ristović, 2008).

The British, in order to drive conservative opinion away from Germany, depicted Hitler as

a pagan hostile to the church. London bankers were, so they were told, a much safer bet. Not possessing the truth, London bankers used imagery and propaganda to manipulate opinion. However, the German invasion and subsequent abuses of power were not thereby justified, just made inevitable.

Yugoslavia was divided up between the Germans, Italians, Croats and the newly mobilized Muslims of Albania and Bosnia, soon to be absorbed into the SS. The results were simply genocidal. Among these occupiers, they exterminated about one-quarter of the Orthodox clergy. About the same percentage of monasteries were destroyed or seriously damaged. Nearly 400 clergymen of various ranks spent time in concentration camps of Croatian, German or Hungarian provenance. Out of nine million Orthodox in the region, just over one million were murdered or killed in the war (Presseisen, 1960).

The Germans were generally opposed to the creation of the NDH and could not trust even Italy to control the unstable situation that regime created. The rebellion the NDH created forced Germany to redirect even more of its men to stabilize Serbia. The German police reported to Himmler:

Increased activity of the bands is chiefly due to atrocities carried out by Ustaše units in Croatia against the Orthodox population. The Ustaše committed their deeds in a bestial manner not only against males of conscript age, but especially against helpless old people, women and children. The number of the Orthodox that the Croats have massacred and sadistically tortured to death is about three hundred thousand (Quoted from Phayer, 2000).

This was not German policy. Hitler again and again sought the maintenance of a strong and united Yugoslavia for obvious strategic reasons. The Italians too abandoned the Ustasha. Hitler simply wanted a united Yugoslavia that would cause no trouble. The Serbian state created by the occupation authorities had the copper and lead the German army needed. The Danube was another important strategic resource the Germans had now occupied. The worst part of it all was that Germany now had its invasion of the USSR delayed, meaning that the German forces lost precious warm weather months. This ensured the Red victory and the rise of Tito.

Patriarch Gabriel never gave a single, solid reason for refusing the Axis. He referred to the possibility of the destruction of the church, yet Hitler did nothing of the kind anywhere else in Europe. He spoke vaguely about “traditions of the church” without making any solid references or connecting them to the Pact. For such an educated man, this is suspicious.

It is very possible that, since the USSR and Germany were ostensibly allies, the Pact was seen as a capitulation to these two huge states. Yet, to think that this was anything more than a temporary ruse was inexcusable. Further, the Patriarch does mention the Italian hatred for Yugoslavia. He reasoned that since Rome and Berlin were allies, allying with Germany was the same as siding with Italy. This was also far from true and he knew that Berlin would tame anti-Serbian elements in Yugoslavia and without. The truth is that the genocide of the NDH, the invasion of the Germans, and the eventual dominance of Tito resulted from the refusal of Yugoslavia to sign the Pact with Germany.

Against Gabriel's erroneous position stood the words of the great Metropolitan Anastassy of the Russian church. He wrote to Hitler in 1938:

We know from reliable sources that true believing Russian people, suffering under the yoke of [communist] slavery and awaiting their deliverer, are constantly

raising their prayers to God that He will save you, lead you, and give you his all-powerful help. Your accomplishments for the German people and the greatness of the German Empire make you an exemplary model worthy of imitation as well as a model of how one should love his people and nation; how a leader should stand for his ethnic customs and their eternal values. For even these latter [ethnic customs, that is, nationalism] find their sanctification and perpetuation in our Church.

Ethnic values make up the honor and glory of every nation and therefore find a place in the Eternal Kingdom of God. We never forget the words of the Holy Scripture that the kings of the earth will bring the glory and honor of their people to the Heavenly City of God (Rev 21: 24,26). Thus, the creation of this temple [in Berlin] strengthens our faith in your historical mission. . . May He give you, your country, your Government and army health, prosperity and all good things for many years (Gribanovsky, 1938).

The Ukrainian Autocephalous Church said very much the same, as did most Orthodox bishops outside of the USSR. There was no reason to think otherwise. The problem was that few realized how close the western world and the USSR had become.

British intelligence was backing the whole disaster. The Special Operations unit of the MI6 was made up of George Taylor, Hugh Dalton and the embassy staff, including the British ambassador in Belgrade, Ronald Campbell, who co-operated with them. At the same time, Beria sent agent Colonel Zubov to coordinate with the English. The final ingredient was Jack Donovan from the American OSS. Liberal and communist – as always – were firmly bound together.

George Taylor himself spent at least 100,000 pounds sterling in bribes. Taylor came with these orders from the London banks:

Turn over the sky and the earth that our friends in the Yugoslav General Staff have implemented a plan to block the Danube;  
Complete preparations for the uprising in Romania;  
Organize sabotage groups in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania, which would be ready to take effect if their country is occupied;  
Continue the well-established work in Yugoslavia to encourage Yugoslav opposition parties to put pressure on the government in favor of our country  
(Quoted from Mishina, nd).

British money was liberally thrown around and many around the Patriarch were bribed. There is no evidence Gabriel was personally, however. After the invasion, the synod of the Serbian Church met in July of 1941 and pledged, for the good of the church, to respect the laws of the occupiers and do what was necessary to maintain order. It was this pledge that permitted Tito later to accuse the church of “collaboration” with the Germans, a claim backed up by President Truman and Gen. Eisenhower in America.

As the royal government under Peter fled to London, the Patriarch refused to leave, instead remaining with his flock even under the worst of circumstances. The Serbian clergy under the occupation were divided in their loyalties. It is clear that the upper clergy supported the royal government in exile, and they were militarily supported in this by Colonel, soon promoted to General, Draza Mihailovic, leader of the largest of the Cetnik units during the guerrilla war against German occupation. The lower clergy either supported the royals, or the smaller

nationalist groups, either Cetnik or fascist, operating around Serbia. A tiny handful supported Tito and the partisans, for at least they were unified.

The Germans, for their part, had several motivations in their occupation of Yugoslavia. The military high command merely wanted a pacified Yugoslavia to be kept under control so Stalin could be defeated. This is why this same high command clearly exposed and condemned the excesses of the NDH in that it was counterproductive for a peaceful and pliant Yugoslavia. The genocide of the NDH was not in German interests.

Others were motivated by the racial theories of Heinrich Himmler, where the Slavs were merely a half-Mongol slave race existing to serve the needs of a Greater Germany after the war. Others were interested in the mobilization of pro-German elements in the Balkans, such as the Croats and Muslims of Bosnia, as well as the Albanians.

During this time, Patriarch Gabriel, as reported in official Reich documents, was the head of the anti-German movement in Serbia, symbolically, at least, as he was in prison at a monastery in Montenegro. In effect, he was fighting for the USSR. His person was considered the true symbol of anti-German resistance, and, as such, he was blamed by the Germans for the resistance of the Cetniks. The full report on Gabriel is found under the heading of a Dr. Gerstenmeier, dated September 14, 1941, and was sent to von Ribbentrop's foreign ministry (Ristović, 2008).

This piece of evidence proves that it was the Patriarch, rather than the royal government in exile, that was the spur to resistance. It is also worth noting that it was this report where many of the crimes of the Croat Catholics were detailed and officially logged into the records of the German foreign ministry. This report too, permitted the German high command to demand that the atrocities be alleviated so as not to hinder the war effort against Stalin. To the extent Hitler's invasion was delayed, the greater the risk Stalin would unleash his forces against central Europe.

Well known Serbian writer Vojislav Dosevic writes:

A few weeks [after the invasion], Patriarch Gabriel was taken as a prisoner of war by the Germans. He was brought to Sarajevo to stand trial before a military tribunal for alleged "war crimes." The Patriarch's personal secretary, who was also imprisoned, reported later that the Patriarch continued to maintain his dignity, fully consistent with his character. The secretary reports that the Patriarch often gave his accusers the opposite of what they wanted and that he often remained silent, even when he was physically assaulted in the courtroom. After using every cruel trick imaginable, the accusers realized that they had failed miserably in their attempt to force the Patriarch to acquiesce in their demands. The Germans confined the Patriarch to the Vojlovica monastery (quoted from Opasic, 2011).

In September 1944, the Gestapo arrived at Vojlovica. They transported the Patriarch and the well-known Bishop Nikolai to the concentration camp at Dachau, where they remained until the end of the war. Certainly, no head of the church of any other country, nor other bishop of Nikolai's renown, was imprisoned at such a place.

Dachau was described by Himmler himself as "a camp for political criminals." Which, therefore, makes some sense out of why the Serbian resisters were sent there. Dachau was not a death camp, per se, but a forced labor camp where about 30,000 died of malnutrition or disease once the war was lost and supply lines were destroyed. It also was the prison camp where "religious" criminals, wither Orthodox from Serbia and Romania, as well as Catholics from Poland, were interred, and forced into labor service for the Reich. In fact, there was a separate barracks for "religious criminals." It is common to claim that he was "tortured" in these camps.

He was not. His *Memoirs* make clear he was treated humanely.

As the war came to a close, the hapless Peter II gave this pathetic speech on Radio London:

In these fateful and great days of Yugoslavia, when the victorious armies of the Soviet Union stand on our borders on the one hand, and the British and American armies, on the other hand, in the days of our freedom is at hand, as morning dawns, I invite all Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to unite and join the National Liberation Army Marshal Tito (Karadžević, 1944).

This is the absurdity Patriarch Gabriel stood for and, as far as anyone knows, never recanted. The church and the king pretended Yugoslav freedom had dawned because the USSR fought for it. Of course, this was the plan all along and why – as always – the British, USSR and the USA paid handsomely for politicians to endorse this absurdity. Laughably, Peter was sent packing a year or so later, pretending to be “shocked” by the communists dislike of royalty.

Once released, the Patriarch had to bear the fruits of his labor – the Communists had taken over. His synod of 1947 laid out its issues with the Red state. The USSR was referred to as “brotherly Russia” in synodal documents. The official journal of the Serbian church openly praised the Soviets. After the Germans had been driven out, it stated that “our brothers from Russia” have arrived to deliver Serbia from “alien slavery.” They rhapsodized,

The capital opened wide its doors, its hearts and homes to receive our eagerly awaited brothers, liberators from the great nation of Russia [sic]. Happy is the nation which bears its cross to the end, which is worthy of its savior. Let brotherly love and equal justice for all abide among us (Quoted from Pavlovich, 1989).

Can his position really be from pure naivete? The Russian Synod Abroad must have wept when they learned of the pro-Soviet leanings of the official synod. Serbia was well aware of the crimes of the communists and yet, even before they were occupied by Marxism, maintained these myths without coercion. Furthermore, it cannot be laid at the feet of relief from war, the NDH or Hitler's nasty retaliation policy. It came from the same British cash and led to the overthrow of Prince Paul. The writers of these hysterically sycophantic lines were soon dispatched as the communists eliminated what was left of the Serbian church. The Anglophilism of St. Nikolai Velimilovic and Patriarch Gabriel was a very bad gamble. Because of it, Serbia was almost wiped off the map.

In opposing Hitler, Gabriel made Tito a necessity. Was he unaware of the USSR's policy against Orthodoxy? That the “Patriarch” of Moscow was anything but a puppet of the NKVD is historically laughable. Few deny that outside of Stalinist cults at American universities. Patriarch Gabriel, without any negative intent, had condemned Yugoslavia to Marx. Did he think London would intervene to save Yugoslavia from the communists?

In an irony beyond words, Serbian resistance fighters were referred to as “pro-Nazi” by the Tito regime. This came with the explicit endorsement of the USA. After traveling Europe for some time after the war, in returning to Yugoslavia, the Patriarch reposed on May 7, 1950. His life was one of ascetic struggle, regardless of his views on global politics. Just prior to his death, writing to his friend, Bishop Dionysus in Canada, he says, concerning the Tito government:

From our unfortunate fatherland we hear nothing good, and that which one hears

more clearly is that our people find themselves in a hell, such an one unknown in our history. Only the mercy of God can deliver us from this hopeless situation into which we have been mercilessly thrown (*Memoirs*, 1974).

The Patriarch's own policies partially brought this about. Obviously, he did not intend this. While one can forgive the Patriarch's error, one cannot see past his refusal to recognize the severity of what came after as St. Nikolai did. The rule of Stalin throughout eastern Europe came exclusively from the Allies. The Allies were – and were throughout the “Cold War” – pro-Soviet.

Operation Keelhaul sent thousands of Slavic Orthodox resistance fighters to certain death in the Soviet camps, though the hierarchs who supported the Allies would not admit to this. They had to watch their own Cetniks be sent to Stalin's mercies as the result of their political errors.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, Nikolai and Gabriel refused to believe that the west was pro-Soviet, even after the west happily gave eastern Europe to Stalin. To a very limited extent, their hostility to Germany is understandable given the barrage of British and French propaganda they were subject to. The German-Soviet alliance was also a confusing variable. Finally, the German connection with Italy, the financier of the Ustasha, made the Germans unacceptable. They erred grievously, but this is a political and not a theological matter.

To this day, historians and churchmen cling desperately to the myth that the western world was “anti-communist.” They dismiss all the western investment in the USSR. They dismiss how the USA rebuilt the USSR in their alternative to the Marshall Plan. They dismiss the total lack of sanctions on the country. They dismiss the utter domination of Marxists in western universities. They dismiss the cooperation of the western states and the USSR. All of this they dismiss because the alternative is far too horrid – both sides were the same. Hitler alone, or so it seems, had a “third way” that, for a brief time, brought Germany from a third world cesspool under Versailles into the world's mightiest power in a few years.

Yet, as the west lavished resources on both Tito and Stalin, the Patriarch still refused to see the truth. His error towards Germany might have some excuse, his error towards the USSR does not. While a man of sound theology and unquestionable holiness, his alliance with London was a black mark on his record of epic proportions. He did not take bribes, he was not corrupt. He did what he did for the good of the church as he saw it in a chaotic and unprecedented age. He cannot be blamed for that.

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