

The Demiurge: The Petrine Revolution and the War Against the Russian Orthodox Church in the 18th Century

Matthew Raphael Johnson

This essay lays out the evidence for a widespread, violent and deliberate destruction of the Orthodox church in Russia throughout the 18th century. It was just as atrocious as the Bolshevik version. The problem seems to be that Orthodox writers become uneasy when reading the lack of canonical status, total lack of legitimacy for the rulers of this era and the level of corruption in church and state that, had it taken place under Stalin, would have been long anathematized as “Sergianism.” Peter the Great’s masonry, by itself, removes any claim to legitimacy as an Orthodox emperor. His slave “wife” was his “successor” and after that farce, the two Annas¹ were merely fronts for a foreign cabal.

Only one ruler in this era, Elizabeth, daughter of Peter I, was in any sense Orthodox, so to argue that there was canonical or political continuity in the Russian empire stretches credulity. So to what extent is either church or state in this era legitimate. If strict standards are to be used in the 20th century, why not the 18th? The reader will draw his own conclusions.

This is a major black spot in the minds of Orthodox royalists and Russian nationalists. Those condemning “Sergianism” are forced to see the same phenomenon here. Those condemning the calendar innovation are forced to reckon with Peter’s radical revision of the Orthodox calendar. Those who believe that the church, when yoked to a state bent on its own destruction, then lacks legitimacy or grace, must come to terms with this identical situation. All that can be said of the Soviet system can be said of the Petrine yoke.

Peter's “New Atlantis”

Peter came to the throne as a self-proclaimed revolutionary. Violently against the ritual and tradition of the Orthodox church and Moscow more generally, little of the massive Russian church remained by the end of the 18th century. Peter was also a materialist, pagan and nihilist. Utility was his only value, and that was defined as service to the state. The state was an end in itself.

St. Athanasius Sakharov summarized the violent persecution of the Orthodox church in Russia by Peter I by stating:

To my great regret, the sad times of Peter was based on the secularization of Holy Russia, considered an ignorant child, and assaulted from the West that penetrated through the window cut by Peter. The Russian people began to look more on the earth than in the heavens and have become further and further alienated from the Christian way of life, and became more forgetful of church rules (Martinenko, 2009, translation mine)

¹ This refers to Anna Ioannovna (d. 1740) and the regent Anna Leopoldovna (d. 1746), the mother of Ivan VI and daughter of “Catherine I.”

Elite boyars close to Peter such as M. Tukachevsky wrote: “You do not understand Peter! He was a giant barbarian. . . he kept the old pagan cult of the gods” (ibid). This view is not extraordinary. Peter I was far worse, since his “drunken synod” was a Satanic institution dedicated on mocking church rituals using alcohol and sex slaves. The Symbolist poet Merezhkovsky, himself a pagan, stated that “[Peter’s] god was not the Christian God, but the ancient pagan version. . . If there was ever a man less like a Christian, it is Peter” (both from Martinenko, 2009).

Peter’s “Unholy Drunken Synod” was a demonic parody of the church, and featured the most notorious drunks and pimps from the Petersburg or the Moscow “German Quarter” and dressed them in clerical robes. This “German Quarter” is often painted by western historians as an island of scientific Enlightenment, but in truth was a hotbed of prostitution, extreme alcoholism, homosexuality and everything you might expect from those unwelcome in their home country. This is where Peter spent his boyhood.

The Secretary for the Austrian embassy in Moscow, Johann-Georg Korb, claimed that Peter’s drinking bouts were a means of execution. Those boyars and clerics that irritated him were forced to drink insanely large amounts of vodka, usually leading to their deaths. Lord Korb’s diary goes further. This was not some frat-boy drinking club: it was a pagan cult. Before each “assembly” of the “Synod” prayers to the god Bacchus were read aloud. Both men and women were normally nude except for the “clergy” and all manner of sexual acts were demanded of the “Orthodox emperor.” This was a serious liturgy, with its own system of “tones,” vestments and chants specific to the day.²

During Lent, he mocked the locals by slaughtering pigs and eating in front of monasteries, often shrieking lewd songs at women passersby (Bashilov, 1957: ch 9). Korb reports in great detail of Peter’s regular clubbing of opponents at his drinking parties. Normally, getting a nobleman so drunk that he would reveal his most intimate secrets was a means of justifying an execution. In all cases, it was carried out by Peter personally, beating the man to death in front of everyone and leaving his corpse to bleed out afterwards (Massie, 270-271).

Peter refused to appoint a new patriarch, but he spent some time electing a rotating patriarch of Bacchus on a regular basis. He banned church processions, yet he developed his own, flaunting nudity in front of all. Peter ordered that midgets and the deformed be shipped to him in Petrograd once his “floating paradise” was completed. He would often smother them himself, or force them to drink to their own deaths. Then he would mutilate their corpse and perform a mock-liturgy for a funeral.

Two notable Orthodox writers who have faced the reality of the Petrine Yoke are Dmitri Savvin and AP Shcheglov. The first more obvious point is that Peter’s “Drunken Synod” was not “child’s play.” There were rituals, vestments, ranks and procedure. It was an arcane sect. Since modern man is totally ignorant of the ancient code of symbolism, much of the reality in history escapes them. That professional, tenured historians are ignorant of this is inexcusable.

While the stories of Ivan IV and his murders are few and far between and almost

2 An excellent but lurid source of all of this – in gory detail – can be found in the travel notes of William Coxe. More specifically, Volume II of his *Travels in Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark* published in 1802. Beginning on page 203, he translates Korb’s diary, written in Latin. It should be noted that earlier writings on Peter by Korb are normally quite positive. It was only upon seeing his behavior first hand that his opinion changed.

exclusively written by foreigners at war with Russia, Peter's debauchery and murder were unanimously spoken of by all involved after his death. The evidence that Ivan "murdered" metropolitan Phillip is non-existent, but that Peter tortured dozens of bishops to death during his pagan liturgies is a matter of public record, both foreign and domestic (for the above, cf Bashilov, 1957: chapters 8-10).

Stalin forced Christians to work on feasts and during all holy seasons. The capitalist states did the same. Peter I began this wretched custom by forcing the nobles of Moscow and Petrograd to work during Bright Week to the point that it was soon forgotten. In fact, there was little about the social life of the church that Peter did not attack or ban.

He banned the ringing of church bells, since they marked the time for the various daily services. It was the old way of keeping time. Peter imported the Enlightenment means of "abstract time" having no relation to natural law. All Christian, that is, traditional Russian, garb was banned from his new city. Worse, beggars that often lined up outside churches and monasteries were sent to prison. Peter's materialist view of the world made him completely disinterested in human life. Peter also radically altered the Russian calendar, starting the years from the birth of Christ rather than from the creation of the world. He also changed the new year date from September to January 1.

Peter mocked the incorrupt bodies of saints and tried to "unmask" them wherever he could. Lenin and Stalin tried to expose the bodies of incorrupt saints to public mockery. Unfortunately, they also took this custom from Peter. Often, Peter himself would blaspheme shrines and ordered hundreds to be destroyed. All monies from candle sales in parishes needed to be turned over to the state. Under Catherine II, all church income went to the state, and the church dignitaries received a small salary in return. The church was banned from selling candles or any other items outside its walls, by the decree of 1708. In march of 1722, all chapels, that is, private shrines, were to be demolished, since these were based on "superstition." This amounted to many thousands of small chapels.

Once Peter abolished the office of patriarch, he forced his synod to ban all rituals outside the church building, including all processions. He massively increased taxes on the sale of icons, and reduced the number of monasteries and monks by less than half. Nearly all monastic property was confiscated. Catherine II and the rule of the German Masons such as Ernst Johann von Biron (d. 1772) before her took the rest, including the property of the parishes.

In 1705, Peter I banned the building of new churches or monasteries. In his new city, churches were nowhere to be found in the initial plans for Petrograd. Hundreds of churches were demolished so that their metals, stone and other materials could be harvested for Peter's building projects. Any monastery of size was forcibly converted to a hospital or military storage facility. This is yet another Bolshevik custom begun by Peter.

As is well known, the majority of Russian bishops after the establishment of his "synod" were in prison. Many were tortured, and those disagreeing with Peter's New Order were drafted into the army – a death sentence for those not used to its rigors. It did not end with Peter, but continued straight through the century and even found echoes under Alexander I. Alexander's successors were generally competent and moral men, but the rot among elite cadres was too far advanced. A Slavophile ruler such as Nicolas II did not speak the same language as the westernized elites such as Witte or Bunge. The church, bereft of property, had no means of fighting back.

Peter's two metropolitans, those who carried out his revolution, the “Patriarch Sergius” of their times, Stepan Yavorsky and Theophan Prokopovytsch, were both deeply initiated into the ancient mysteries. Yavorsky, when considering the icon of St. George that comprises part of the state seal, he argues that it is actually the Russian variant of the Roman war-god Mars, not St. George (Collis, 2012). His veneration of the tormentor of Orthodoxy knew no bounds. In his New Year's sermons (which all were on the same arcane theme as the “victorious Christ” being the same as Peter), he saw Peter as the Tabernacle and the Holy of Holies (Collis, 2012).

Yavorsky saw the Gnostic city – Petrograd – literally built on the bones of thousands of Cossacks and other forced laborers, as “the new Eden,” a “paradise” watered by the four “rivers” of the Baltic Sea, the White Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Caspian. The church was not a part of this. The Petrine state was the new paradise and the restoration of cosmic order.

He was denounced by the Gnostic Prokopovytsch. All who defended Yavorsky were tortured on the rack. Patriarch Joachim of Moscow condemned both men and rejected their claim to Orthodoxy. Prokopovytsch became enamored with imperial Rome when studying at the Vatican.

Far deeper into the arcane mysteries was the infamous Prokopovytsch. As professor at the Kiev Academy, he promoted a very early doctrine of evolution based on the alchemical idea of the identity of all things. This shows a deep initiation. Peter's “divine mission” was the alchemical transformation of Russia; the “sculpting” of the recalcitrant Russia into the “perfect form.” Theophan uses the pyramid image in nearly all sermons of any political value.

Showing a fairly profound initiation, Theophan speaks of the “Third Temple” being constructed as Petrograd. “David” is used to refer to “Solomon,” a common ruse at the time. Associating the “New Jerusalem” with “New Atlantis” is also evidence of a deeply anti-Christian and Kabbalistic initiation.

The benighted author Robert Colis takes this all literally. The author believes the “Temple” really refers to the Old Testament and that the “New Atlantis” is a traditional Christian phrase. A historian writing on the occult that takes these symbols all literally is either hiding an agenda or an incompetent fool. The author does not unpack the imagery of the Demiurge, the pyramid, alchemical transmutation or the Temple, all of which are common in the arcana. The title of the book speaks of the “esoteric” ideologies around Peter without ever bringing to light that which is “hidden.” Knowing that his readers and colleagues are illiterate in the most basic symbolic language of history, he gets away with this terrible excuse for analysis. The book is either a piece of skillful propaganda or absolutely useless as history.

Prokopovytsch was not shy about his deism. The world, in his view, has God as its creator but to no purpose except to keep itself in being. An extreme nominalist, being is only what man says. Modern science is true not only in its method and results, but also its ontological foundation. The main reason the state must be strong is to force modernity on the ignorant masses. He makes it clear in his later work that there is no “image” of God in man and nothing special about him.

The Destruction of Orthodoxy

While the rebellion of Pugachev is well known, less infamous are the constant and endless uprisings against the Petrine revolution. One, lasting a full year, began in Astrakhan in 1705 and convulsed the southern part of the empire. Without a charismatic leader such as Bulavin or Razin, these are often forgotten. Western historians have no idea how to analyze these

constant rebellions. This period's state of constant convulsion was from the “right” of the political spectrum. Pugachev and many like him were Old Believers, populist, Cossack communitarians. In return, the Cossacks were completely decimated by the time Peter died, and the Sich was wiped out by Catherine II in this same spirit.

In Peter's infamous “Regulations” of 1721, ostensibly to reform the church, priests were instructed to use confession as a means to deliberately entice people to confess sins against the state. They were then to turn over the poor penitent to the police. Peter's men would occasionally pose as penitents so as to test priestly resolve. The number of priests flayed alive in Peter's dungeons is presently only a matter of speculation.

The work of Sergei Efimov details the violence and persecution of Peter against the church. His first wife was a pious woman named Evdokia. Peter's treatment of her is an excellent image of his basic outlook. She was forcibly tonsured when it was rumored that she was in contact with her son, Alexis. Alexis, it was said, opposed Peter's revolution and no expense was spared to find and kill him. Peter would personally torture his own son to death a bit later. Now, since Evdokia was forced to become a nun, Peter was canonically still married to her. Since he was still married, his sham “marriage” to “Catherine I” had no legitimacy.

However, Evdokia had built a “mini-Moscow” at her Pokrov Monastery in Suzdal. It was itself an island of rebellion against Peter, designed to maintain the essential symbols and rituals of Old Moscow. In response, Peter tortured her cell attendant, a Stepan Ghlebov, who maintained Evdokia's innocence until his death. His next cozenage was to find someone willing to testify that she and Ghlebov had an affair. Few would make such a claim, and even Peter's supporters saw his methods of torture as inhuman.

St. Dosifej is an important new martyr to the Petrine yoke. Like so many of them, they are almost entirely unknown. He was the Metropolitan of Rostov who protested Peter's “reforms” and his violent purging of the church. For a time, his closeness to the oligarch Prince Menshkov protected him, but when Peter tried to force bishops to say that Dosifiej and Evdokia were sexually involved, the former was not afraid to complain directly to the Emperor. Many clerics refused this absurd request, and most of them are also unknown new martyrs. St. Dosifej was a former serf and had the unfortunate background of being friends with priest Jakob Alexiev, the confessor to the then exiled tsarevich Alexis.

When Dosifej began accurately describing Peter's motives and policies to his flock, Peter had him broken on the rack, a most intensely painful torture. After most of his bones were broken, he was left in the sun to slowly die of dehydration and exposure. In Peter's very creative methods of torture, this martyr got off easy. Starting in February of 1718, Peter's massive purge of the church began. Peter's frustration at the faithfulness of these priests led to a small army of clergy to be tortured to death in every Russian city. As breaking on the rack was seen as too humane by the Emperor, he developed a new favorite method of murder involving the slow shoving of a long, pointed stake up the anus of his victims in public. Few bishops remained after Peter was finished, as the Satanic emperor was now obsessed that each and every clergyman was plotting with Evdokia and/or Alexis to overthrow him. This was the first purge of the Orthodox clergy in Russian history. Before the Bolsheviks took over, there will be several more.

All told, Peter razed about 75% of all Russian churches. Metropolitan Dimitri Sechenov, after the death of Anna Ivanovna (over whom ruled the Masonic clique of Biron), wrote:

These were bad times when our enemies openly denigrated the dogmas of the

faith, the church, upon which our eternal salvation depends. The theotokos is no help for our salvation and her intercession is not required; the saints of God are not revered; icons of saints are not respected; the banner of the cross is held in disdain; the tradition of the apostles and the holy fathers rejected; good works, called “bribes” for God, are brushed aside; fasting is long gone as is asceticism.

Archbishop Ambrose of St. Petersburg (Yushkevich), in his speech for the birthday of the Empress Elizabeth, says uttered them in 1741, states that after the death of Peter I “many thousands of pious, loyal, honest, innocent Orthodox people lie in stinking dungeons, in prisons, tormented and tortured, starved – innocent blood is constantly shed. . . . iron starved, tortured, tortured, innocent blood flows. . . . The faithful are exterminated. Good Orthodox people are beaten, ruined, and assaulted while atheists rob the state treasury and exploited the people.” Thus, there is a whole choir of new-martyrs to the Petrine Yoke. This list continued to grow as the dark 18th century wore on: Archimandrite Plato exiled to Siberia along with Bishop Abraham. Bishop Markell (Rodyshevsky), the Chudovsky Archimandrite Efimov, Chernigov Bishop Hilarion of Chernigov, Varlaam of Pskov and many others.

The Russian tradition, preserved by the Old Believers, says that the Antichrist will build the “Church of Solomon.” Solomon, the last monarch of a unified Israel, died a pagan and blasphemer. His gaudy temple used forced labor recruited through a census – it was a police state. Why he is depicted as a saint has yet to be explained coherently. All of this Peter did, and his alteration of the calendar showed his attempt to control time itself.

What later became known as “Sergianism” was practiced intensely in Peter's Russia. The control of the church by a secular power is the nature of “Sergianism” and up until Peter, the crown (not the “state”) was not a secular power. This is applied selectively: the Ottoman Turks not only reduced the church in the Balkans and the Near East to a minimum, but required that all sees be bought. All canonical order had collapsed. This, however, is not “Sergianism,” or so we are told.

It is very significant that the Antichrist can only be seen through spiritual eyes. The secular man will not be able to identify him. As always, there is the Antichrist and many previous Antichrists. The latter are rehearsals for the former. The former must be totally global without exception and have the bureaucratic power to control economic life. Given this was not the case in Petrine times, Peter could not have been seen as Antichrist per se.

The growth of state power is essential to the Old Russian idea of Antichrist. Alexis and Peter are a major part of this development. The “state” and “crown” are two different things. The crown is largely a religious entity, reflecting the rule of God the father. The state is the bureaucracy, the instruments of coercion based on a single set of laws (or interests who write the laws). “Central power” was not relevant for Russia prior to this. Outside of national defense, the crown was primarily an icon of piety and a manifestation of the ritualization of all social life; he was a form of symbolic communication.

In the conflict between Nikon and Alexis, the state played the primary role in re-creating this communication and hence, revolutionizing social life. Since moderns have no idea what a “ritual” actually is, the vehement rejection of the new rite by the Old Believers is incomprehensible. Nominalism – the official creed of modernity – cannot grasp any form of symbol or any connection between a word and a referent (let alone language embedded in social life).

The Demiurge: Peter's Revolutionary Idea

In the secular realm, students of history know the gist of Peter's reforms. Serfdom, as it is described by western historians, is the creation of Peter. Slavery was never known among eastern Slavs. In Old Russia, even convicted criminals were never tormented, but worked on manor land to which he had been sentenced and was treated like an ordinary worker. The constantly bankrupt Russian state forced Peter to extract revenue by any means possible. The result was a very new sort of serfdom that had been foreign to Russia.

Peter was forced to massively increase taxes for his endless construction projects. He was the first to popularize vodka, an import brought from Sweden. He established a state monopoly on its production. Russian vodka was sold in state pubs and restaurants. By contrast, under Ivan IV, drinking in Russia was considered a vice and drunks who were convicted of this sin were charged with a heavy fine. Tsar Peter implanted drunkenness among Russians at all social levels, even permitting state advertising while also giving a personal example. The vodka monopoly increased available income more than any other revenue source.

During the construction of St. Petersburg hundreds of thousands of coerced laborers – most from Ukrainian Cossack stock – died of exposure and starvation. These were not convicts, but regular Cossack soldiers ordered to the far north of the country. They were slaves in every possible sense of that term. Those drafted for this project were assured of either death or permanent injury, as conditions were just as bad then as in Stalin's camps. In fact, there is not a single area of policy, from materialism, to westernization, to dictatorship, to industry, to his mania for giant building projects, that was not shared equally by Peter and Stalin.

The only distinction between the two was that Lenin had a greater technical palate available to him. If we control for that important variable, then the slaughters of Peter far outpace that of the first two Bolsheviks. One more obvious result of Peter's agenda was that Russia's population fell drastically. There was a drop in the Russian population of about 2 million. In 1725, the official census put the population of the empire at 16 million, lower than before.

Peter's economy was a disaster. His “industrialization” was either foreign or state owned. He lured foreign investors with the promise of slave labor, since Peter forced serfs to work in the factories which soon looked identical to the camps of the Soviets. Since no Russian would work in these sweatshops and the western skills were not plentiful, serfs were simply thrown into machinery they knew nothing about – with the predictable results.

Describing life in Peter's New Order, Boris Bashilov writes:

The labor regime in Peter's factories and plants differed little from the Bolshevik regime of concentration camps. Workmen toiled from dawn to dusk, sometimes eighteen hours a day. In the mines they worked in waist-deep water living from hand to mouth. Hundreds of people died from malnutrition, overwork, from infectious diseases weekly. Those who protested against the new Order were tortured with the red-hot iron, the whip and shackles. This was Peter's “European paradise.” A foreign visitor described life in these factories, saying that their wages “did not exceed that of a prisoner.” (Bashilov, 1957: ch 19)

Partisans of the Russian monarchy such as Vladimir Moss have marshaled an impressive amount of evidence on both sides of the question of Peter I, and ended up saying the same thing

this writer did in *The Third Rome*: very little. Moss writes:

So Peter was both a forerunner of the Antichrist and the Restrainer against the Antichrist. He did great harm to the Church, but he also effectively defended her against her external enemies, and supported her missionary work in Siberia and the East. And he sincerely believed himself to be, as he once wrote to the Eastern patriarchs, “a devoted son of our Most Beloved Mother the Orthodox Church.” (Moss, 2014: 136)

Moss is quite understandably uncomfortable here. To claim that Peter defended what remained of the church from her enemies implies that Peter was not her greatest enemy. Given the world of his “Drunken synod” and sexual appetites, there is no good reason to believe Peter considered himself a Christian at all. This writer was wrong to give Peter the benefit of the doubt in his *The Third Rome*. Peter seems to get a free pass from the Orthodox because there is a need to maintain the continuity of the Russian royal line. He also gets one from western liberals because Peter was using this level of coercion to bring Russia to “modern civilization.”

Since Moss rejects the Old Belief, he can say that “the consensus of the Church was that Peter was not the Antichrist.” The problem was that Peter and his intimates made no secret about their pagan views and their desire to replace Christianity with materialism and sexual license. Loudly yelling that you're the Anti-Christ while surrounded by naked midgets slowly dying from alcohol poisoning is – for this researcher – very good evidence that Peter was an excellent candidate for the title of “Precursor of the Anti-Christ.”

When Moss writes that the “church” does not believe Peter to be that evil, it is unclear to whom he is referring. It is very possible that some in the 20th century emigration has this view. In the first quarter of the 18th century however, too few hierarchs existed to form a judgment, and the best of them were dead or in exile. To his credit, Moss does speak in depth on Biron and Catherine II later, saying these purges were worse than Peter's, which is possibly true. However, calling Peter an “Orthodox tsar” while reviling the likes of Metropolitan Sergius cannot be reconciled by any logic.

When mainline sources such as Robert Massie speak of Peter's conversion to Masonry in his “Embassy,” Moss' claim begins to stretch credulity. Neither “Metropolitan” Feofan Prokopovytch nor Peter were Christians in any useful sense, and thus, when the purges of the church throughout the 18th century are considered, the Russian church as an institution was reduced to very little, with a substantial exile movement centered on Athos and at the Manjava Monastery in western Ukraine. The 18th century was every bit as violent towards the church as the Bolshevik period.

The Results of the Petrine Revolution

After Peter's death began the most ridiculous page in the history of the Russian people. Those who began to administer his fate, trampled Russia's faith, despised its custom, at every step abused its national dignity. Peter felt that his grandson, the son of Tsarevich Alexei killed them, may oppose reforms grandfather. So he changed the law in advance of succession. Having tortured his own son to death personally, no real successors were present.

However, many of the newly minted “great men,” most public members of the Lodge, feared that the accession of Prince Peter II, who, as the rightful heir, would mean their own

demise and the return of Russia to her roots. They feared that the young prince Peter, having grown up, will be more the adherent of the views of his father more than his grandfather. Moreover, they did not have confidence that they would be able to manipulate him now that their Demiurge was dead. So, as the final mockery to Russia, they proclaimed as the successor of Peter the Great his “wife,” the former sex slave, Catherine I. She was illiterate, totally secular, exclusively carnal, and hence, was the perfect successor to the man that created its foundation. She was the equivalent of the whore placed on the throne of the murdered Archbishop of Paris in the later French Revolution.

Theophan Prokopovytch, lied and said that Peter I would have left a verbal testament (if he could) that the throne should be handed over to Catherine and not the son of Tsarevich Alexei. In no possible ideology can Catherine I ever be considered an empress, a legitimate ruler or even a citizen. She had been violently abused, molested and raped by Peter and his new elites since she was taken in the Prussian campaign years earlier. She was the spoil of war and nothing else.

While it is difficult to prove, the sheer size of the Old Believer movement shows that the majority of Russia was behind only male representative of the dynasty left, the Grand Duke Peter II, son of the deceased Tsarevich Alexei Petrovich. The Craft, represented by Menshikov, Yaguzhinskii, Makarov and Prokopovytch conscious of the terrible danger that threatened them all, and so quickly rallied in the same group in the achievement of a single idea. In the first place, they won over the imperial guard. The garrison troops and others who did not receive salary for 16 months, were paid with interest. Of course, the mockery of Catherine becoming empress was to rub Russia's nose in their powerlessness, but the real power was in the new oligarchy empowered by Peter.

Of course, Catherine I did not speak Russian either. Klyuchevsky, trying to be kind, wrote,

Catherine reigned two years without doing anything or even realizing her position. She led a promiscuous life, accustomed, despite his painful completeness, stay up till five o'clock in the morning on the revels among lovers. As one ambassador wrote, the only thing Catherine does is permit elites from around the world to steal everything in the capital. Catherine spent 6.5 million rubles in the last year of her life without realizing anything (From the Dixon Book, 2001).

Catherine was a victim, and a pathetic one. She died of sexually transmitted diseases of various kinds and extreme alcohol poisoning. Like Anna Ivanovna, she was illiterate. It was a deliberate mockery of Russia from the Lodge and the west. By 1728, Biron had de-nationalized the officer corps, leading to 58% of all officers being non-Russian. Like Ukraine in 2015, Russian assets were stolen, sold at fire-sale prices and taken to Poland or Germany. Fearing a threat to his power, Biron murdered Peter II.

Simultaneously with the attack on the royal power continues the assault on the Orthodox Church. In 1726, the Synod is subject to the Supreme Privy Council, that is, the masonic clique that installed Catherine. The de facto leader of the Synod becomes known Mason, materialist and atheist, again the same Feofan Prokopovytch. In this era, 9 bishops were exiled.

For the actual administration of the country was established “Supreme Privy Council,” which conforms to the model of the Swedish Senate, but is merely the wealthy and well

connected Lodge in Petrograd. There was no ideology except power and the rule of matter. Throughout most of the 18th century, Russia was under foreign rule. Both Biron and Ostermann were upper level masons who despised

At the top the "Privy Council" were the likely suspects of Menshikov and Counts Apraxin, Golovkin and Baron Osterman. To a man, each saw Russia as "backward," was a Mason and generally materialist in their views.

Russian Masonry

In an obscurantist description of Masonry can be found in Florovsky's *Ways of Russian Theology*:

Masonic asceticism embraces quite varied motifs, including a rationalistic indifference of the Stoic variety, as well as ennui with life's vanities, docetic fastidiousness, at times an "outright love for death" ("joy of the grave"), and a genuinely temperate heart. Freemasonry elaborated a complex method of self scrutiny and self-restraint. "To die on the cross of self-abnegation and perish in the fire of purification," as I.V. Lopukhin deigned the goal of the "true freemason." One must struggle with oneself and with dissipation; concentrate one's feelings and thought; sever passionate desires; "instruct the heart"; and "coerce the will." For the root and seat of evil is found precisely within oneself and in one's will. "Apply your- self to nothing so much as to be in spirit, soul and body, utterly with-out "I." And in the struggle with yourself, you must once more avoid all self-will and egoism. Do not seek or choose a cross for yourself, but bear one if and when it is given to you. Do not try to arrange for your salvation as much as hope for it, joyously humbling yourself before the will of God (Florovsky, 1937: ch IV).

This sort of nonsense typifies much work on Masonry. Either the author does not know the distinction between esoteric and exoteric teaching (in which case he's incompetent), or is hiding it (in which case, he can no longer be taken seriously), this is far from the foundation of Masonry. In a possibly deliberate naivete, Florovsky uses terms such as "will" or "I" or "egoism" as if he's speaking to his cab-driver. Florovsky should have known that in masonry, all public expression of doctrinal matter is hidden in double-speak. Terms do not mean what they do in normal speech, and the degree system is in part a way for the "hidden" meanings to unfold.

In Albert Mackey's foundational analysis³ of the Masonic degrees, *Masonry Defined*, quite a bit of the esoteria comes out. To gradually reveal these hidden meanings to the "cowans" is an old part of the Masonic process. In Mackey's work, the 13th Royal Arch of Solomon features the oath to the "destroyer," the bizarre hybrid of Moloch and Baal under the blasphemous cover of the name "Yahweh." Apparently, Florovsky has not come across the 16th degree, where the Mason must swear that "nature" is eternal and uncreated. In this degree, called the Prince of Jerusalem, the revolutionary struggle is laid bare.

Worse, the 19th degree, that of the Grand Pontiff, Peter the Great is used as a model in all later Russian manuals. It is the fall of Solomon into heresy and the commercialization of Tyre in

3 Mackey's "Masonry Defined" was partly amended in Russia in the 18th century. It remains the definitive statement of the more speculative degrees.

the synthesis of the “philosopher king.” Tyre, of course, is the archetypal “commercial republic” based on oligarchy, materialism and human sacrifice to Moloch. The concept of “tolerance” is introduced here, with one of its arcane definitions being the combination of Baal and Yahweh as the same god. It just so happens that this is also the degree where the infamous oath to Lucifer/Prometheus is made.

The second reference to Peter the Great is at the 22nd degree, the Knight of the Royal Ax – Prince of Lebanon. This is the degree where the ideology of Peter, Cromwell and Napoleon is analyzed in all later 19th century Russian Lodges. It is the creation of a police state once the new order has been established. When the old order has been destroyed and its defenders neutralized, the Craft must now defend their revolution through the creation of a new cadre of police to clamp down on dissent. Their former cries of “freedom” and “expression” are all but gone. They were exoteric terms with a limited shelf-life.

Mackey's work is as close to a full admission of at least some of the hidden meanings of words as this Craft gets. In 18th century masonic journals, the concept of the “Revelation of the Method” is used to denote the gradual revelation of these secrets to the world. Thanks to the work of Michael Hoffman, this term has now gained currency among Christian thinkers. However, Florovsky seems to be inexplicably innocent of this reality.

Unfortunately, Vladimir Moss again departs from his usually critical disposition to make similar claims. Concerning Peter I, Moss fully admits to Peter's Masonic membership while justifying it by saying “Russians, though not uninfluenced by the rationalist side of Masonry, were especially drawn by its mystical side” (Moss, 144). The reality is that there has never been a real distinction between the two, and any scholar of Masonry should know this. Every Lodge has two pillars denoting the duality of all things; the reality and the shadow – both of equal importance and equal reality. The problem is that now for Moss, even membership in a Lodge is insufficient to kick Peter out of the church, but the slightest canonical deviation for modern ecumenism is warrant for a vehement condemnation.

There is no excuse for American historians to ignore Masonry and its ideology anywhere. When large numbers of the nation's elites are sworn to secrecy in this ideology, it is newsworthy. It is of the utmost importance to realize that Masons use words in a different manner than the cowan. Terms like “god,” “sovereign,” “knowledge,” “liberty,” “architecture” or “mathematics” have a technical meaning that it outlined in the major works on the craft, but is usually a matter of verbal instruction. The job of historians is to dig into the meaning of events and the terms used to explain it. It is absurd that they take such groups at their word.

Sulfur refers to the principle that gives “form,” the “agent.” “Salt” is that which is stagnant, fixed in form or type. Earth means the body, empirical science while gold, the master element, is the sun, the uncreated being. “Mercury” is “liberty” while “sulfur” is “equality.” This, along with fraternity, that is, salt, form the primordial three elements. These are not scientific statements nor are they historical ones, it is a symbolic mode of communication. This is absurdly oversimplified, but it serves to make the point that historians, believing “gold” to refer to metal in the alchemical texts of the era, fail in their basic job to receive these important texts critically.⁴

The attacks on the church and its institutionalized oppression are justified in masonic

4 Further analysis of these ideas can be found in the following work, dedicated to continental revolutionary agitation, Jacob, Margaret C. (1991) *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe*. Oxford University Press while, Roberts, Allen E (1985) *Freemasonry in American History*. Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., is about Masonry's American usage.

texts at the 19th degree, mentioned above, one of the most significant of all. The title here is the “Grand Pontiff” though variations exist depending on location. It is the synthesis of Tyre and its absorption of the Hebraic religion of Yahweh. Solomon invited these idols into the temple when he, due to his wife and the pressures of commercial capitalism, unified with Tyre and its commercial agenda. It is the New Order.

It is there where the oath to Prometheus or Lucifer, seen both as a being and the spirit of enlightenment rationalism. While many of the popular attacks on Freemasonry are semi-literate, emotional and incompetent, this does not vitiate the kernel of truth underneath. It is easy to mock these amateurs, but they are doing nothing but filling in the gap left by professional academics fearful of being considered “extremist.”

The Persecution of the Church under Peter's Successors

When Catherine I became seriously ill due to her indulgent lifestyle, the question of the succession became critical. Much like the immediate wake of Peter's death, the imperial throne became a plaything in the hands of Peter's new men. The cadre around the Petrine revolution knew that they were unpopular, and nearly everything will be a matter of police power. Because of this, they realized the greatest threat would be a charismatic leader promising to restore Old Russia.

After Peter II became emperor the power of the Supreme Privy Council increased. The main character is still Prince Menshikov, but other oligarchs such as Princes Golitsyn, Apraxin and Golovkin have immense wealth. Predictably, Peter II falls ill and dies of smallpox very young. The vacant throne is brought under the strict control of the Council and brings in Anna Ioanovna, largely a non-entity, but also the daughter of Ivan V, the brother of Peter the Great. Anne did not reign any more than Catherine I did. The oligarchy held onto power and began to grow in confidence.

Anna Ioannovna did not cease the oppression of the Orthodox Church, the familiar face of Prokopovyitch remains at its “head.” Using the newly created “secret chancellery” he worked to denounce and murder opponent after opponent, leaving the church even a more pathetic cripple than before.

Archbishop Ambrose (Yushkevich) of St. Petersburg in his speech on the birthday of Empress Elizabeth in 1741, stated concerning the state of the church after Peter's death:

Our enemies, under the guise of loyalty to our homeland, destroyed her. Look what the devil has given them as a reward: First, to destroy the faith, the ancient piety. Second, the “eradication of superstition” with obscene comedies and plays, and third, the parade of fakes who all try to appear “spiritual.” They destroyed the monasteries and churches. They are frauds and hypocrites. They cared only for their own cunning and to destroy Russia's foundation.

And it was not an exaggeration: the local authorities mocked Orthodox clergy as they wanted. Bishops, priests and monks were arrested, tortured as criminals for no good reason. Every aspect of their rights or dignity was disregarded. The few synod members left complained that “there is an extreme shortage of clergy, and in many places, no clergy at all.” In Arkhangelsk, Vologda, Novgorod, Pskov and Tver dioceses, the absence of priests led to the closure of 182 churches for that reason alone. This same Synod circular expressed concern that monasticism

may soon disappear completely in Russia. In 1700, about 25,000 monks of all kinds existed in the empire. By the end of the reign of Biron, this number fell to only 7800. Most of these were so elderly that they could not perform necessary work or even attend the services.

The autocracy, created by the sweat and blood of many generations, the historic sanctuary of the people, became the instrument of his oppression. It took away his faith, mocked his national dignity, despised his manners and customs and created unbearable suffering.

Klyuchevskii writes that Peter opened up the “royal dignity” to whomever could take it. Custom and conciliar election were banned. He says “Destroying all royal institutions, his decree eliminated the dynasty's claim to power. Individuals without royal blood could take the throne legally. So the throne was now merely the spoils of war.”

He is arguing that the dynasty was now removed from power though Peter's succession decree, which is certainly true. There is no legality here because Peter is not a legitimate monarch. Masonic membership requires apostasy from Orthodoxy. Peter's apostasy is well known, hence, in no way can he be “tsar of Russia.”

The oligarchy, yet again, this time the dark cult of Menshikov, Yaguzhinsky, Makarov and the faux-cleric Theophan Prokopovytch ensured that the throne would be profaned, reduced to nothing and, at most, their plaything. Paying off the palace guard, they installed “Catherine I” as “monarch.” Russia had no legal tsar and was officially an oligarchy. “Catherine” was not Peter's “widow” since there was no legitimate marriage.

The oligarchy was institutionalized as the “Supreme Privy Council” as if to stress its foreign nature. It contained Menshikov, Count Apraksin, Count Golovkin, Prince Golitsyn and Baron Osterman were the main oligarchs. They sought to permanently destroy the Russian throne by making it their tool. Peter had granted them the formal power, now the oligarchy issued what American historians laughably call a “constitution.” It is a document that says no major decision can be made without the approval of the oligarchy in Petrograd.

“Catherine” died of alcoholism and STDs as expected, and her death had precisely zero effect on political power. The oligarchy had stolen everything – the army and navy were plundered and no longer functioned. Peter II, aged only 14, like Ivan IV, perceived that Russia was at the brink of a planned demolition and disintegration.

Peter stated, “God has called my youth to the office of emperor, and I shall execute this office morally: I will rule with piety and justice; I will support the oppressed and the poor. To all the oppressed I shall listen to their complaints with sympathy. I will not drive them off or ignore them.” This is a clear declaration that he intended to imitate Ivan and destroy the oligarchy or Russia itself will be no more. Peter's faction discovered the plundering of all state offices and the total corruption that was not institutions, since there were no functioning institutions. Peter had been placed under the oligarch's rule though Menshikov, but this precocious youngster was ready to do battle. Peter II conveniently died a short time later. He had been poisoned but the official reason was “smallpox” a disease apparently confined only to him.

The church was a shadow of its former self. There was no canonical order at any level. It was a “papal” sect run by Theophan aimed at its eventual destruction. Bishops came and went in sees for no clear reason and were chosen for political purposes. It was clear that the majority of Russia was Old Believer in one form or another, since the new rite and its form was associated closely with the New Masonic Order.

George (Dashkov), the Bishop of Rostov writes to Catherine that the entire church is uncanonical, materialism has become the official ideology of the church and the remaining monasteries have become “investments” for Prokopovytch and his friends from abroad.

However, Archimandrite Feofilakt of Tver, George and Archimandrite Lev (Yurlova) were agitating for a return to the canonical norm. To prevent this, in 1726 was the destruction of the synod as it became a minor part of the Supreme Privy Council. All revenues were directed to the Council and all property and money was taken from the Church. The church had nothing.

This group sought to restore the Patriarchate as a bare minimum for canonicity. By the middle of the century, the group included one other significant member, Ignatius of Krutitsa, removed due to his rejection of Peter's Masonry and of course, the passion bearer Eudoxia, the tortured former wife of Peter was a strong supporter in the Monastery of St. Nil Sorsky.

Over time, George and Ignatius became the spokesmen for Old Russia against this major assault on the church. Kartashev describes the situation in detail in his Essays on Russian Church history. Theophan removes George and exiles him as a simple monk. The Senate and Privy Council sat in judgment, as they did for all church matters. A purely political appointment to the see of Kazan, Sylvester, was placed in charge of the “hit squad” against Ignatius and George. His primary argument was that the “Orthodox monarch of the Romans” is sacred, and hence criticizing her is forbidden.

For the novice student of Russian history, it should be stated that after Peter, no monarch reigned, but figureheads for the major noble oligarchs. Second, none of the “crowned frauds” of the era were Orthodox in any real sense. A brief ceremony where a cleric smeared oil on the heads of the “crowned sovereign” might have occurred, but these monarchs, except Elizabeth, had the first clue of Russian Orthodox history and doctrine and cared even less about it. Hence, these monarchs had no legitimacy on multiple counts, and that is assuming they actually had power.

This puerile argument is mentioned only because the Russian Orthodox “traditionalists” today continue to accept that these monarchs were legitimate and the situation at the time tolerable canonical. Their later condemnations of the “Sergian” era are darkly comical humorous when seen from this angle. Sergius was the picture of canonical order in contrast to Sylvester and the forces he represented. If Sylvester and Theophan are legitimate, then Sergius is. The masonic, materialist sect that took over Petrograd has the temerity to condemn saintly monks and bishops as “non-Orthodox.”

Using the political hack Sylvester could only be a very brief, temporary expedient. Theophan's pathology was such that any power at all, even if strictly ad hoc and coming from him, was excessive. Sylvester was soon thrown in the same prison as George in 1733.

Proof that the Masonic Privy Council and its offshoots sat in judgment of the Orthodox church can be found in this statement of theirs “condemning” Sylvester. “The Cabinet of Ministers [comprising] Osterman, Cherkassy and Ushakov decided: To remove from the former Bishop of Kazan the episcopal dignity, to deprive him of all authority and reduce him to the rank of a simple monk.”⁵ . However, it was feared that this action will lead to unrest, and an explanation laying out a vague “very important fault” was circulated as the reason for this humiliation.

5 кабинет министры Остерман, Черкасский, Ушаков приговорили: снять с бывшего Казанского архиерея архиерейский сан, лишить его иеромонашества и быть ему простым монахом, дабы от него - Сильвестра впредь предерзостей более не происходило.

George would soon die as a direct result of his torment, making him one of thousands of new martyrs to Russia's dark 18th century. At the time, the “monarch” Anna Ivanovna, the daughter of the possibly retarded Ivan V, was installed on the throne by the oligarchy. Her installation was conveniently met with the death of her German husband and an affair with the masonic leader Lord Biron took place as a symbolic “fertility rite.” More accurately, this era was one of a foreign, occult occupation occasionally known as the Bironovschina. Not a single member of the court circle was Russian and almost all were non-Orthodox. Biron and Ostermann, who sat in judgment of the church, were members of the Lodge and it grew wildly in Russia at this era.

The Secret Office of Investigation was a police unit made up of spies in the pay of Ushakov, Ostermann and Biron. It maintained a strict control of the elite ensuring that no “reactionary” ideas be admitted. Showing the rank incompetence of American historians in this era, it is often used as an example of the “dark, backwards Russian Orthodox monarchy” in Petrograd. History texts often refer to this as the rule of Germans, but, especially among the Old Believer, this was just a code for “Freemason.” It was a Jacobin clique and their reign of terror was no different than the French.⁶

“Anna I” was in fact the creation of noble intrigue. Golitsyn and other oligarchs forced Praskovia Saltykova to marry the ill Ivan V (he died soon after, but sperm was extracted from him somehow), producing Anna. Once of suitable age, she was “invited” to Petrograd by the same Golitsyn who arranged this marriage for that purpose. Not soon enough, “Empress Anna I” died a painful death from a kidney infection in 1740. The oligarchy refused to permit any serious contender to occupy the throne, so an infant, Ivan VI, was placed as a mocking figurehead under yet another figurehead, “Anna II,” disguising Biron as the dictator of the Russian empire.

Continuing the arcane mockery of the Russian throne from Peter, Anna” reign was the rule of Bacchus, with unrestrained sexual license, sexual disease and the extreme waste of money and capital. The state fell to pieces as the oligarchy, working for both the west and Russia, planned to divide up parts of it and sell it off to German and Polish lords. As taxes and labor dues grew sharply, the new westernized oligarchy was siphoning off millions of rubles for themselves and Russia's enemies in the west.

Under the rule of the Lodge, about 20,000 people were sent to the torture chambers. In Moscow, fair trials were the law under Ivan IV and local judges were elected and ruled under customary and canon law. Now, trials were entirely eliminated. There were about 1000 public executions and 30,000 political prosecutions in “Anna's” few years in power. Biron's clique had emptied the treasury and both army and navy were only semi-functional by Elizabeth's time.

Freaks, magic shows, soothsayers, astrologers and “exotic” animals were regular at the “court” of “Anna.” Only the church was banned. No bishops were legitimately elected or consecrated in their sees and all were vetted by the Masonic clique beforehand. Peter's penchant for dwarfs and hunchbacks were arcana. Traditionally, “dwarfs” were “master Masons” and “great builders.” They were also symbols of the average person still “asleep” in the earth searching for mundane gold – they were the cowans. From Peter to Anna, they were a regular feature.

Frederick II made the Lodge a tool of political influence. Baron Heinrich Tschudi was an

6 It always amused me that the Wikipedia entry on Anna comes from a poorly digested version of Alexander Lipski's (1959) “Some Aspects of Russia's Westernization during the Reign of Anna Ioannovna, 1703- 1740” (American Slavic and East European Review, 18(1): 1-11)

important representative of this in Petrograd. Yet again, it was Elizabeth that was the sole exception in this era, being aware of the arcane nature of oligarchic rule in the era. NN Golovin, Ivan Chernyshev, KG Razumovsky and RI Vorontsov were major figures in the lodge, though this did not mean they were merely tools of the Germans. In 1756, according to Oleg Platonov, the most well versed expert in Russian Freemasonry still alive, the Secret Chancellery began reporting on the Masons at the Lodge «Молчаливость» (a term that can be discretion; or a strategic silence) at the behest of Elizabeth.

The results were that, of the highest court elites, about 35 were high level initiates this included members of the Vorontsov, Golitsyn, Trubetskoy, Shcherbatov and Dashkov clans. A. Sumarokov, F. Dmirtiev-Mamonov and PS Svestynov were specifically mentioned. Worse, those close to her such as AG Razumovsky, AP Bestuzhev-Ryumin were also included as was the “Hetman” Kirill Razumovsky. Ominously, Osterman had penetrated the army, a movement that will bear fruit in the Decembrist movement.

Princes Dolugorky and Golytsyn converted to the “Janesnist church” abroad and for Dolugourky, Jacques Zhyube was his assigned confessor. Under the oligarchy, clergy were regularly tortured, purged, murdered, exiled or forced into silence. The case of Archimandrite Theophylact (Lopatinskii), exiled to Siberia after torture in 1738 for refusing to take the Petrine oath that stated “The Emperor, as head of the church. . .” Fearing mass unrest, associates of his, such as Joasaph Majewski and dozens of others were mercilessly tortured, had their legs broken and then exiled so as to gain confessions if there were conspiracies against the New Order. This was the regular course of things at the time. All canonical order was gone. The primary fear? The Old Believers. The primary leader of the purgers: Prokopovyth. He is considered a canonical bishop, but Sergius later on, is not.

The clique demanded as its “constitution” the very re-definition of the political. These are men whose rapacious tyranny is ignored as they are progressive agitators for constitutionalism and the “rule of law.” these are meaningless phrases whose empty words that have meaning only as the process of “historical inevitability” To separate liberalism from Freemasonry is like separating metal from a trumpet.

These “Conditions” placed on the laughable illegitimate “Anna” are absurd on their face, since it was the oligarchy that installed her in the first place. This is a alchemical ritual to radically alter how “citizens” (which at the time, was exclusive to themselves) speak to the monarch. The former speak down to the latter. Since the hoi poloi are ignorant and require war, dislocation and chaos to slowly indoctrinate, “citizenship” and “the people” refer only to them. This, when the English parliament said it was “The People,” it meant this in a technical sense. The ritual was to legitimize the shift from subservience to a monarch to the (hidden) rule over him (or her, in this case).

Most importantly, property is sacrosanct and taxes can only be passed by the oligarchy. The rest of the “conditions” are meaningless. States require money and hence, the other “conditions” make no sense if money is not available: only that demand matters and it is the formal transfer of sovereignty from a parody of the crown to the oligarchy. In a more arcane way, the sexual perversion of Catherine was the “earth” within which Peter planted his seed. They are now reaping the harvest.

The oligarchy demanded that they alone can decide who is a member of their clan: what constitutes a “peer” and hence, who can judge their cases. Of the eight conditions, all are either about who gets to have the “noble” title or that all money is in the hands of the oligarchy.

Ultimately, the monarch is nothing but a machine that serves them, while, given its illegitimacy and outrageous behavior, will slowly separate the crown from the “land.” The deceit is that the oligarchy will speak of the crown as if it is separate from them. Like the typical Anglo-American historian speaking about “Anna's policies” at the time, the monarchy is still popularly seen as the “Orthodox crown of Monomakh.” With them in control, the immorality and foibles of the crown will reflect on the traditional Muscovite tsardom, not the oligarchy. All is smoke and mirrors.

Anna, the creation of the oligarchy, “tore up” the conditions as if she had a reflective “change of heart” in between a midget wedding and shooting a defenseless animal. Minds do not get changed and revolutions do not occur overnight: alchemy, essential in masonry, Newton and the Medici in Florence, is a process of deliberate creation, destruction and deliberate re-creation. The Medicis and Newton, essential for modernity, were both deeply involved in the arcane of alchemy and knew this intimately.

The process by which a society is changed from “lead” to “gold” requires time and a highly choreographed set of rituals to process the group mind. Less esoteric is the fact that the republican system that Russia was ruled by from the death of Peter to the coup of Elizabeth was, like all republics, radically unstable. Prokopovytch feared the faction of Golytsyn was too powerful and told Anna to tear up the “conditions” he helped write.

This was the ritual beginning to a mass purge of Russian society. Strangely kept a secret even in detailed English language histories of Russia, Ostermann and his ilk plundered the treasury again, destroyed the army and navy (usually by selling and diverting supplies), stripped gold from churches and monasteries and purged the church (again). Since Anna had been told to rip[up the conditions, it is easy for the tenured to quickly conclude that “Muscovite autocracy” reared its reactionary head. In truth, it was an important act for the constitutional republic that had existed in Russia since Peter's death.

Biron and the Masonic clique order Theophan to purge the synod of all politically unreliable elements. Those hostile to the New Order were exiled or murdered: Lev of Voronezh, George of Rostov, and Ignatius, Bishop Leo of Kolomna and Ignatius (Razin). Theophylact was tortured so badly he was paralyzed. The cause was a libelous letter allegedly written by the martyr about Prokopovytch. Of course, it is absurd that Theophylact would sign his death warrant by writing such a thing, but it was what Biron needed. The letter in question stated, among other things, that Theophan advocated all manner of cannibalism and adultery, since only in sin can god's mercy abound. Sounding like many of the accusations made against Gregory Rasputin centuries later, there is no reason at all to believe these accusations – while partly accurate – came from anywhere but Petrograd or the hand of Theophan himself. Biron made all church appointments. In their stead were promoted Joachim of Suzdal, Leonid of Krutitsa and Pitrim of Novgorod.

On occasion, “Protestant” is used in place of “Masonic.” this is a deliberate means either of deceiving the reader or avoiding the issue. “Protestantism” as a theology was never the issue. In the language of the day, “Protestantism” was connected with masonry, rationalism and revolution. Hence, the use of the term can be misleading. “Protestant” is “to protest,” that is, to become a revolutionary.

The state-sponsored terror against the Orthodox clergy, by 1740, the dioceses of Pskov, Novgorod, Arkhangelsk, Vologda and Tver saw 182 churches totally idle, with 60 cathedrals without clergy. About 638 churches were destroyed or left without priests in Novgorod. Local

authorities destroyed the priesthood once their lands were taken. Monks, by decree, could only be taken from widowed priests and retired soldiers. Any violation led to the confiscation of the remainder of the bishop's property. At the start of the 18th century, Russia had about 25,000 monastics. By the end of "Anna's reign" there were about 12,000. Most of these were incapable of services of any kind. Metropolitan Dmitri (Sechenov) stated that public ignorance of Orthodoxy had reached a critical state, with many not knowing how to cross themselves or what an icon was.

The Empress Elizabeth

The reign of Elizabeth (1741-1761) was a popular favorite. The peasantry and the townsmen loved her as a nationalist and populist. She received her traits from close contact with the people. Even the crown princess, she expressed her sympathy for Moscow and the Russian way of life. With local youth she listened to the old Russian songs and sought to revive Moscow and thus, revive the country.

Over the 20 years of Elizabeth's reign Russia rested from her former adversity. Elizabeth was a true Orthodox woman. She was genuinely pious and generously donated her own fortune to restore the destroyed temples. She consecrated Russia to the icon of The Sign.

Ambrose Yushkevich, Bishop of Vologda and Archbishop of Novgorod. Feofilakt Lopatinskii were released from prison. Many hierarchs returned from exile. Russian nationals were alone given precedence and rank. She restored lands to the church and hence, her independence. Unfortunately, she maintained the pressure on the Old Ritual, which was her sole error.

The 18th century, with the exception of Empress Elizabeth, was a lengthy period of persecution for the Russian Orthodox Church. Only two Russian monarchs are honored in Western historiography with the title of "Great," Peter and Catherine. One of the most significant things they have in common is the overt persecution of the church. In 1764, a decree from Catherine closed about 50% of Russia's monasteries.

Pushkin remarks in his "Notes on Russian History" that

Catherine assaulted the clergy. . . . depriving it of independent status and limiting monastery revenues; this dealt a severe blow to our national education because the seminary (which depended on the monastery) was destroyed. . . . Many villages have no priests. Enforced poverty and ignorance serves to humiliate them and deprives them of the very possibility of any significance among the people.

Russian theology comes under the dominion of Catholic and Protestant influence, and a dangerous gap develops between the empire's theology and the patristic consensus. Freemasonry in Russia flourished under Catherine and belonging to the lodges became an indicator of one's "sophistication" and education. In his imitation of the West the nobility began speaking French, severing the final tie with the population. Religiously, linguistically, culturally and racially the Germanic-Masonic nobility of the Russian empire was a class to itself. In 1762 this class was liberated from compulsory public service, which meant it lost its only justification to dominate the serfs. Serfdom passed into slavery for private peasants.

When Elizabeth took over and ended the Germanic, Masonic oligarchy in 1741, the country was in chaos. There was no order in government or church. Monasteries and parishes

were legally destroyed and financially ruined. All church property was confiscated. All church appointments were made by occultists and non-Orthodox persons. The army and navy were non-functional and no money was reaching their barracks. Morale was not low, it was non-existent.

When Elizabeth became Empress, she issued a three-week amnesty since the prisons and exile locations were overflowing. The torture chambers were going 24-hours a day without any regard to law, order or common sense. She ordered the security services to, in effect, stand down. Metropolitan Ambrose Yushkevich fully admitted the total lack of canonical order or legitimacy in the Synodal system under the pathological Prokopovytch. Her second order of business, unsurprisingly, was to ban the Jews from taking usury. The Jews were expelled from Russia.

She forgave all back taxes and in 1744, the death penalty was abolished. She spent a fortune on almshouses dealing with the wreckage of the national economy under the Lodge. She reformed the church and created a new sense of militancy. The administration was reformed and a new corps of police was assigned to check corruption. The Senate and local administration refused this new order and took every possible excuse to refuse to put it into practice. Her census revealed that only 20% of the lower level administrators were from noble families. She sought to empower serfs against their masters by permitting them to report any deviation from Orthodox practice. However, any policies of this era, given the anarchy of the previous period as well as the corruption that had become a daily part of life, was only partly enforced. Given the misrule of Biron, new surveys needed to be completed to ensure the right people were owning land. Theft, fraud and violence were the order of the day under Ostermann and company, so the local strongmen needed to be investigated.

The Masonic clique ruined and ravaged the country. Oligarchy, mostly foreign, with ties to Jewish international bankers and Masonic lodges locally and in the west, had liquidated and taken all that could be stolen. The economy was in a shambles as contracts were not enforced. Hence, “feudalism” in the worst sense was dominant. Taxes were high and occasionally collected with great force. No investments were possible at a time of total uncertainty. The population was falling and public health was nonexistent. No one believed the Petrograd monarchy to be legitimate, but the foreign rulers of Russia were determined to use it to steal as much as possible. The future of Russia was in serious doubt as her national sovereignty was a dim memory. Elizabeth therefore, saved Russia from catastrophe.

Catherine II and St. Arseny

Elizabeth was an anomaly. Morals had fallen to nothing and, like Josiah of Judah, all her reforms were immediately dashed at her death. Unfortunately, the oligarchy found their new champion in other illegitimate foreigner, Peter III and then his strong, dominant wife, Catherine II.

The destruction of the church can largely be explained as an outgrowth of the economy. It is no coincidence that these policies develop simultaneously with banking and, critically, the abolition of internal tariffs. Catherine presided over a fully integrated Russian economy that favored speculators. Not only was the property of the church in doubt, but having insider knowledge could lead to a huge income. The first banks also were founded in this era as the elite financiers of the nobility. It should come as no surprise that paper currency was introduced and immediately debased.

In addition, the European demand for grain and other agricultural products skyrocketed in the second half of the 18th century. Land was at a premium and the elite were not about to let the

church have any of it. Monks were called “unproductive” because they could not be exploited. In southern Russia, land rents went very high, ruining many. As the financial situation in this era was unstable due to huge debts and state bankruptcy, many of the elite also saw land as a firm investment in such times. To smooth out this process, the state subsidizes any member of the nobility who were facing bankruptcy by creating noble banks with low interest rates.

It is clear that land was increasing in value as were the crops grown on it. This is why Russia could boast of a trade surplus with Europe, since much of the grain was exported for higher prices than they could get in the empire. Therefore, consolidation of the country was necessary and a banking system to finance it equally so.

Catherine II appointed as Procurator of the Holy Synod the high ranking mason Melissino from the so called “Lodge of Modesty” in Petrograd. His mission was “. . .to weaken and reduce church posts, destroy the veneration of icons and relics, to ban the bringing of icons to their homes, to reduce the church services to a minimum. . . to eliminate the commemoration of the dead, to permit one to marry more than three times and deny communion to babies.” Later, this bureaucrat was exposed as a Satanist. His successor was P. Chebyshev, an open atheist.

Both under Peter and Catherine, most of the monastic and parish property of the ROC was confiscated and given to foreigners and supporters of the revolutionary order. Peter had reduced the number of monasteries in the empire to 954, while by Catherine II, well over 750 of these had been demolished.

Metropolitan of Rostov St. Arseny Matsievich (1697-1772) was murdered by Catherine II for daring to oppose her confiscation of all church property. He is a true new martyr that is only rarely commemorated. His additions to the Sunday of Orthodoxy condemnations included those who “offend churches and monasteries” and placed them under anathema. St. Arseny was soon “convicted” by a “Synodal tribunal” of Catherine's favorites. As the church had been purged multiple times by that date, the “Synodal” claim to legitimacy could not be justified by any stretch of the canons. When the new bishop took his see, he reported that the Orthodox church is “non-existent” in eastern Ukraine.

St. Arseny was a Ukrainian, educated at the Kiev Academy. Patronized by Elizabeth, Arseny argued constantly for the restoration of the patriarchate and condemned the Petrine revolution. In the world of the two Annas, Arseny made himself unpopular with the Russian elite by refusing to swear fealty to Biron's son. This episode suggests that the German mason was planning to rule Russia directly.

A substantial aspect of St. Arseny's argument was that a pagan-Jewish clique had taken over Russia. He saw Cossack liberties canceled and a violent form of serfdom imposed upon the formerly free people of the region. The saint testified that there were only a handful of clergy in Ukraine when he was appointed to the Rostov diocese in 1742, and the few left were illiterate. Until Catherine, the church of Kiev was independent and only nominally under the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Since the Petrograd takeover, most schools had been shut down and the country was ripe for any sort of sectarian fad that promised “meaning” in a meaningless universe. Ukrainian literacy, usually far higher than Russia, declined substantially.

Arseny advocated a Cossack state, a decentralized federation of Orthodox communities on the model of *sobornapravna*. When Catherine redrew the borders of Russia's dioceses to coincide with her new governorships, the saint protested even more loudly. While not an Old Believer, he did praise their political and economic organization. These newly appointed governors were almost parodies of corruption. His experience in both Toblosk and Rostov

showed that these were Catherine's favorites, completely secular and without the slightest ability or knowledge about their new position.

In Rostov, the governor was Ivan Goritsky who admitted taking bribes and never bothered making a budget. Public positions were based on closeness to the empress or Goritsky personally, leading to total incompetence. Without law or government, the old Polish oligarchy had been reconstituted. St. Arseny stepped over the line when he excommunicated landlords who charged interest, took peasant property or otherwise behaved like the ruling clique in Petrograd. When Arseny began excommunicating many court favorites and refusing their relatives Christian burial, the martyr knew what was coming.

Yet, no fear stopped this saint. Arseny began doing something that sent shivers up the spine of every oligarch on planet earth: he began a substantial research program as to the legal claims of the landowners in eastern Ukraine. Needless to say, most of the land had been gained by force and fraud, and worse, under the regime of both Jewish and Polish usury that destroyed the best of the peasantry.

Part of what Arseny discovered was that the oligarchy needed the crown to legitimize their claims to property ownership. Once that was accomplished, the clergy were kicked out of their estates and all monastic and parish property was forcibly sold on the growing speculative land market. Exasperated and threatened daily, St. Arseny called the entire regime “Pharaonic,” a term meaning pagan and oppressive. In 1764, church property ownership was made illegal. No one was shocked when Emilian Pugachev took matters into his own hands in 1773. Few could argue with him, his Old Believer agenda and his desire to see the Cossack system reestablished made him popular. Once the “German atheist whore” was overthrown, peace would return to Russia. Since St. Arseny had excommunicated all of these property seizures, Pugachev had a solid canonical claim to neutralize these parasites.

Contrary to many Russian researchers, the linguistic differences between Ukraine and Russia were such that translators were often needed in the scope of this historical work. St. Arseny was appointed by Elizabeth for the fact that he was bilingual. Elizabeth had no time for Ukrainians, but the lack of communication among rulers and ruled in Ukraine was problematic. Part of the reason that research into land titles had never been carried out was that most were in Polish. This is also part of the reason for the extreme alienation between Catherine's governors and the common fold: they did not speak the same language; they were foreigners.

Soon after Pugachev, it was St. Arseny's turn to become a martyr. Catherine forced all bishops to turn over all income reports to her. The purged “synod” of the church was comprised of nonentities mostly forgotten. These were Dmitri (Setchenov), metropolitan of Novgorod who received his position exclusively based on his willingness to approve land seizures. Timothy (Shtcherbatsky), the metropolitan of Moscow, promoted by Peter I largely due to his singing voice. The archbishop of St. Petersburg was Gabriel (Kremenetskiy), one of the authors of the destruction of the church in the post-Petrine period. One of the leaders in the campaign against St. Arseny, this arrogant clown took away the staff of the saint and smugly retired to his multi-million ruble fortune and numerous estates.

The Archbishop of Krutitsy was a Gideon (Krinov), who was marginally better, and known for his generosity and kindness. Upon his death however, his massive, decadent wardrobe and personal fortune were unearthed. He is known primarily for his ability to mingle with the powerful court favorites in Petrograd and, like all the rest, to justify the demolition of Orthodox Russia. The Pskov Archbishop Ambrose (Zertis-Kamensky), was one of the ringleaders of the

persecution of St. Arseny, and, as the martyr predicted, soon died of the Moscow plague. It might be noted however, that he, near the end of his short life, did admit that Peter was a “Satanist” and a “Destroyer of the church.” He was also very wealthy, but in some cases he used his own fortune to rebuild churches and schools his patrons had just demolished. The bishop of Tver was Athanasius (Valkovsky), and is known to history only because he actually wrote the condemnation of Arseny. This political toady claimed that the offense of protesting against church demolition required Arseny's defrocking. Further, it was an “insult her majesty.”

What do all these men have in common? First, they were all and each political appointees, which automatically makes them non-canonical. Second, though monks on paper, each one without exception was personally wealthy. The irony is that much of this money might well have come from secularization of church property. This is compelling given the enthusiasm they showed in condemning St. Arseny.

Third, they all voted against St. Arseny and tried to outdo each other in their rhetoric both condemning the saint and praising the Empress. Finally, these men were used to demolish the church throughout the empire and provide a “hierarchical” justification. They were not only part of the process, but personally profited from it both financially and socially. With the exception of bishop Gideon, most were totally secular figures.

The question then becomes one of proportion. If the bishops in the Soviet union, most of whom were in the same position as these men, are to be reviled and anathematized for “Sergianism,” what of these men? Do they get a free pass? The fact is that they do, and this is a problem. It is rare to hear their victims described as “new martyrs” for the reasons that Moss has already shown us. Usually, writers in this field show a great degree of unease in their refusal to condemn what they would loudly excoriate in a different era, but most religious writers (outside of the Old Rite) end up claiming they are canonically legitimate. The grounds for this are usually quite sparse.

St. Paul of Tobolsk (1705-1770), new Martyr of the Petrine Yoke. He is also a Ukrainian (last name Konyuskevich), like St. Arseny, being born in Polish Ukraine. Taking his Siberian see, he saw what St. Arseny did: total lack of canonical order, arbitrariness of state officials, the total collapse of morality and forcible conversions.

His first rebuke against the Petrine Yoke was his condemnation of the total confiscation decree by Catherine the Great in 1764. All monasteries in the empire now officially had nothing. Yet, the state continued to force the sick, injured, veterans, soldiers, and prisoners on them. St. Paul attacked the Petrine state for confiscating all property because it was from the monasteries' land endowments that the income for the hostels, schools and hospitals were financed. In St. Paul's diocese, there were 16,628 people being served at or by the monasteries.

Furthermore, in St. Paul's travels throughout the empire, he noted that seminaries were not teaching theology, but had been turned into utilitarian schools for state service. As with St. Arseny, he argued that the Old Belief (who were in a majority in his diocese) was a direct result of the Petrine Yoke. The one thing that clergy did not do was evangelize, the one thing not done in seminaries was theology; the world had become inverted.

Ultimately, the state “granted” the monasteries some land, but only parcels no one else wanted, and in size a tiny fraction of the pre-Petrine monastics. To pass the confiscation law, Catherine simply lied to the bishops, saying that most property would not be confiscated and that they would be put on a state salary. All monies raised from the land sales will go to the church

and her beautification. The synod voted, with the exception of St. Arseny and St. Paul. Why go through all this trouble to give the monasteries the proceeds? State salary means state dependence. Further, the state has no right to church land regardless, so the canons constrained him to not vote in Catherine's favor. The fear of this German monster was too great. His reward for this condemnation was an immediate synodal condemnation with almost no discussion. He was then defrocked and imprisoned at the Fortress of Revel for six years as an example to the other members of the synod.

Once in prison, Catherine sought to appear merciful, an important act in this psychodrama. Catherine can give, she can take away. She asked St. Paul to return to his diocese. Realizing that this is a de facto acceptance of her policy, he refused. Money was offered him, but he refused that as well. Finally, on the condition he be imprisoned at the Kiev-Caves, he was set free. Catherine even there sent him 10,000 rubles, but he refused to touch it.

Part of his condemnation was based on the total lack of financing for the now bankrupt monasteries. The Priestless Old Believers in Siberia were a numerical minority, and that group, being sectarian, attacked and insulted the metropolitan openly and publicly. While the state was charged with the protection of the official religion, both corruption and total lack of will prevented this. Any money coming from Petersburg was usually confiscated by state officials. Bureaucrats in the provinces, often nobles now released from service, loathed the monasteries as a brake on their own enrichment.

Part of the problem was that this government pressure was too much for his delicate nature. He wrote to the empress that he cannot get to Petrograd since seizures were developing. He also suggests that he suffered from what today would be called "anxiety disorder."

The combined weight of both sufferers for the faith made Catherine more hateful than ever. She began to see the church as her opposition on ideological (and not just material) grounds, and, with one exception, the above mentioned Metropolitan Dmitri (Sechenov), would have voted against her if they were permitted. She had long come to the conclusion that a showdown between church and state was inevitable, and she prepared beforehand. She set a goal to subordinate the Church to the state and declared the principle of "respect for religion, but forbid the church's role in the state." Catherine was clear, since the use of the term "state" meant more than politics, it was the whole policy, purpose and organization of the empire.

A few years later, the famed metropolitan condemned the servility of the clergy as "the most difficult vice" to deal with. He wrote "that vice is so powerful that it can cause truth to be made into a lie, but even more so in our time. It is not Wisdom, but cunning, that justifies this policy, and it prevents the church from doing its work. The world is full of darkness." (Quoted from Smolytch, 1999). In his Autobiography, he called synod meetings "government meetings." he then mocked Catherine's language by calling the disposition of church lands "a political issue," that of course, was off-limits to the church.

Catherine had also advocated for a total dictatorship of the bishop in a diocese. Since now diocesan boundaries were re-drawn to follow the country's new "regions" they were expected to act as the religious wing of the governor. All that mattered to her was that peasants swear obedience to a bishop of her choosing. All others were outside the church.

In 1762 Metropolitan Benjamin (Putsek-Grigorovich) of Petrograd spoke out against the decrees on liquidation. He did so at a joint conference of the synod and the senate, fully aware that he will be punished. The first step was to remove him to Kazan, which is in violation of the canons concerning episcopal tenure. The second step was public humiliation, a method used on

numerous new martyrs of this era.

One of the greatest serf-owners in Russia, PS Potemkin, also active in the growing land market, tried to tie St. Paul with the rebellion of Pugachev. He was treated like a convict and mocked openly in the Senate. He showed great courage as this slave trader did everything in his power to liquidate all church institutions to free up their land.

As Paul went to his diocese for the first time, many of the wooden churches had been burned down by either natives of the area or Priestless sectarians. Many of the parishes not burned were closed by Catherine's decree, so Paul, with almost no income, reopened them. In 1760, a group of sectarians immolated themselves. When asked what the purpose was, the leader of the group said "that the church has been betrayed, the church has been destroyed by group of foreign robbers that brought it to ruin. The Old Belief is persecuted and the people suffer misery and hunger. We have gathered many ordinary people and in a few places, these folks led the movement."

So not only had the church in this part of the world abandoned evangelization (as forced conversions were also based on land speculation), but had actively crippled the church in Siberia. It had almost no witness to the pagans and Priestless, and hence, the church and state in Siberia became an enemy. Many Siberian natives remained pagan and the Priestless sect used Siberia as its headquarters.

All told, the church had 910,866 souls dismissed from its care. Many became dissenters or joined gangs like Pugachev's. Tiny salaries were offered to all church officials in lieu of their property. The state saw a huge increase in revenue. The total amount of money allocated to church institution was 403,712 rubles per year, while the treasure received 1.3 million rubles yearly just from peasant dues alone. The church had lost everything while enriching a well connected group of speculators who bought up the property and ran it for both their profit and that of the state.

Of the 400,000 rubles allocated to the almost 200,000 people in clerical orders was a very small amount. No one believed that any of the lands was anything but a giveaway to the aristocracy who had remained loyal to Catherine. Widely considered illegitimate, Catherine spared no expense to buy members of the Senate who represented the greatest magnates in the realm. It was far more them who were feared rather than Catherine personally. The population of the empire was well aware of Catherine's liberality to supporters, and her promises that monies taken will be spent on their own diocese.

Pugachev was the result of the mass intensification of serfdom introduced in this era. Serfdom, in the way the term is used in the west, did not exist prior to Peter. Elizabeth in 1741, as well as Catherine in 1762 rewarded the participants in their coups by giving them large tracts of land. In 1765, the Masonic, secular state allowed the nobility, in its sole discretion, without trial, to send peasants to hard labor. Higher labor dues, labor obligations were raised to 6 days a week, and was met with the cruelty of this new "noble" class empowered by the secular, foreign and non-Orthodox monarch. Many of these newly minted "nobles" were non-Russian.

For Pugachev to claim to be Peter III or anyone else is significant only in that it is a claim that no real monarch exists and hence, an appeal to past royals is needed. The massive size of the rebellion and the immense courage showed by its participants proves without question that the Masonic clique in the 18th century had reduced much of Russia to Gulag status.

In the Summer of 1774, Pugachev appealed to Old Russia:

To all peasants forced to bow before the landlords. . . .liberty and Cossack freedom are yours. No head taxes and no elite ownership of forests and grasslands. All peasants will be released from bondage. Judges are bribe-takers and acquiesce in the high taxes of the regime. The nobles are destroyers of the empire and enemies of the peasants. They will be hanged. You were once the lords of your own land until it was stolen from you. Once the nobles are overthrown, we can lead a calm and peaceful life (loose translation mine).

An excellent example of what the “Russian nobility” had become can be found in the letter of Colonel Ivanov to Pugachev laying out the conditions for his surrender. He writes that those Cossack forces staying loyal to Pugachev have a “woman's stupidity” and remain “at the level of cattle.” He writes: “Who do you serve? Who are you barking at, you filthy dog?”

Unfortunately, his ilk soon got the upper hand, and in true Petrine fashion, Pugachev was tortured to death by Catherine's new “nobles.” Russia had been fundamentally transformed in no less a radical way than after the Civil War. To act like this era is fundamentally different from the Bolshevik revolution is unreasonable and irrational.

Conclusion

This article is not in any way an exhaustive analysis of the religion policy of the Russian crown in the 18th century. Only the highlights are discussed in order to raise the question – what is the canonical standing of any “synod.” The Ecumenical patriarchate excommunicated the entire Kollyvades movement in 1776, and the “lawful synod” under Catherine was the creation of martyrs rather than its victim. To what extent was this motley group of non-entities Catherine cobbled together to condemn a genuine saint a “lawful” synod?

The term sobornost is often used, mostly by people who have no understanding of what it signifies. At one level, it is the understanding that a synod is an abbreviated and truncated “church.” It is not “the church” in any way. It is almost impossible to justify the canonical status of bishops in the Russian 18th century or Greek bishops under the Tourkokratia. This, thank God, is not the “church,” so there is no problem. The church is not “ruled,” but bishops are under the same obligations as any neophyte. The conception of sobornost exist nowhere at present, and is only rarely to be seen in the past. Bishops often think they “rule” the church in the same way that Bill Gates “rules” Microsoft. Nothing can be more false, or more dangerous. The church is one, regardless of the failings or virtues of the hierarchy.

Finally, this paper most of all brought to the fore the uncomfortable question of the Russian tsardom. It is impossible to justify – morally, religiously or legally – the “reigns” of Peter I, Catherine I, the two Annas or even Catherine II. These four people were not Orthodox, knew little about Russia, and spoke Russian only haltingly. If they are “Orthodox emperors” as Vladimir Moss is forced to claim, then so is Abraham Lincoln, since their claims to the Russian throne are identical.

Peter left Russia bankrupt, weak, bloody, terrified and ideologically confused. Millions of Russians had been ground up in endless wars, rebellions, extra-judicial killings, factories, mines, construction projects and Peter's own perverse pleasure. Russia never recovered from this, the patriarchy was not restored until the crown fell, Moscow was never made the capital again and Russia was permanently divided.

The idea of the “good tsar” was gone while the majority of the peasantry went to the Old Belief and its various offshoots. Huge rebellions such as Pugachev and Razin were direct results of this, leading to millions dead and a state without legitimacy. Russian elites had no contact with the people, and were speaking French almost exclusively by 1800. The church had its property taken and its priests less educated than ever before. The precedent had been created that bishops can be moved from see to see, and this was policy consistently until 1917, with the average length of time a bishop stayed at once see under Nicholas II being seven years.

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