

Evgeniy Bubnov

THE RELIGIOUS AND QUASI-RELIGIOUS GENEALOGY OF THE THEOLOGY OF NAZISM

ABSTRACT

The article is dedicated to the understanding of the Nazi anthropology as an element of the quasi-religious concept. Adolf Hitler's racial theory unequivocally rejected the human status of persons not belonging to the Caucasian race, labeling them as *Untermensch* ("under-man"). Such an attitude was due to several prerequisites. However, the core reason is manifested not in the rational sphere. In the twentieth century, concepts of quasi-religions and political religions became widespread due to the reign of two totalitarian ideologies in Eurasia—Nazism and Communism. Numerous scholars emphasized the fact that these ideologies performed religious functions thus occupying an intellectual space at the interface between the religious and the secular. Quasi-religion adherents may be equally fanatic as religious radicals. Questions about whether this similarity is mere coincidence or whether quasi-religions are derivatives from traditional religions and the meaning of this problem today deserve close attention.

Keywords: Nazism, Hitler, racial theory, quasi-religion, political religion, political theology.

INTRODUCTION

Racial theory was central to the ideology of the Third Reich. According to this ideology, the entire history of humanity was envisaged as a fight between "higher" and "lower" races. In this connection Friedrich Nietzsche's novel *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is often mentioned as well as the fact that Adolf Hitler treated the philosopher's works with great esteem. This was demonstrated by the fact that Hitler visited Nietzsche's archive in Weimar more than once and paid a monthly allowance of 300 Reichsmarks to his sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, who in turn, gave Hitler her brother's walking stick and called Benito Mussolini who also rendered financial support to her, the most glorious dis-

ciple of Zarathustra.¹ However, one should not overestimate these mutual signs of courtesy. Nietzsche disapproved of the anti-Semitism of Bernard Förster, Elisabeth's husband, and it even was one of the reasons of conflict between them.² Nazism borrowed what it needed from Nietzsche's heritage—it used the concept of *Übermensch* but ignored his critical remarks of anti-Semitism. Therefore, when speaking of the roots of Nazism, it is necessary to remember that the idea of Superman was integrated into the already shaped worldview.

This paper is concerned with what may be described as the historical roots of the “theology” or “quasi-theology” of Nazism. This paper will discuss the genealogy of Race Theory as a central element in the ideology of the Third Reich. We will show that the prominence of Race Theory in Nazi ideology occurs in a historical context in which the idea of a struggle between so-called “higher” and “lower” races had been repeatedly emphasized in the European history of religious and quasi-religious institutions. We will begin by discussing the history of the various interpretations of the religious or quasi-religious elements in 20th century totalitarian regimes, i.e., Nazism and Communism. This discussion leads us to the question of whether Christianity bears responsibility for the rise of Nazism. We then examine this question by exploring some historical attitudes within the three main divisions of Christianity, Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism on race and slavery. Finally, we will trace the influence of early 20th century occult anthropology on Nazi ideology, particularly its emphasis on the pseudo-scientific theories of that time that separated and elevated the “European race” over all others.

TOTALITARIAN REGIMES AS POLITICAL RELIGIONS

The worldview of Nazism might have been called religious though, this point of view is, certainly, arguable. Some scholars stick to the opinion that the notion of religion, as applicable to Nazism, may be used only to say that Nazism is not more than religion's simulacrum. In other words, this is a pseudo-religion, or quasi-religion. The term “quasi-religion” is known to have been spread through the effort of Paul Tillich. In *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (1963) he wrote:

“The predominant religious name for the content of such concern is God—a god or gods. [...] In secular quasi-religions the ultimate concern is directed

¹ Algermissen, K. 1946. *Nietzsche und das Dritte Reich*. Giesel: Celle, 9.

² One of the first persons to protect Nietzsche was Georges Bataille: Bataille, G. 1985. “Nietzsche and the Fascists.” In: Bataille, G. *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*. Stoekl, A. (Trans.). Lovitt, C. R., D. M. Leslie, Jr. A. G. Stoekl (Eds.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 182–196; 2004. “Nietzsche and National Socialism.” In: idem. *On Nietzsche*. Boone, B. (Trans.). London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 161–164.

towards objects like nation, science, a particular form or stage of society, or a highest ideal of humanity, which are then considered divine.”

Tillich classifies “nationalism with its Fascist radicalization,” “socialism with its Communist radicalization” and “liberal humanism” as quasi-religions.³ However, the generic features and functions of religious institutions in secular movements had also been noticed before Tillich. Bertrand Russell impressed by his trip to the Soviet Russia wrote *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (1920) which stated: “Bolshevism is not merely a political doctrine; it is also a religion, with elaborate dogmas and inspired scriptures. When Lenin wishes to prove some proposition, he does so, if possible, by quoting texts from Marx and Engels.”⁴ Waldemar Gurian in *Bolshevism* (1931) asserts that “Bolshevist-Communist movement [...] must be understood as a social political secular religion.”⁵ In his monograph *Political Religions* (1938) Eric Voegelin, describing the situation in which people’s attitude to the state is similar to the behaviour of a believer, uses the term mentioned in the title of his work for Communism and Nazism, pointing at, in particular, the presence of apocalyptic symbols in the doctrines of these movements.⁶ The concept “political religion” first occurred in Nicolas de Condorcet’s *Five Memoirs on Public Instruction* (1791), which states that if the laws are imposed as a doctrine not to be discussed, this is nothing else but an attempt to create a political religion.⁷

In 1939, at a seminar in London, Carl G. Jung said: “We do not know whether Hitler is going to found a new Islam. He is already on the way; he is like Mohammed. The emotion in Germany is Islamic; warlike and Islamic. They are all drunk with wild god.”⁸ Raymond Aron, in his article *The Future of Secular Religions* (1944), discusses Socialism, Communism and Nazism.⁹ Already after the publication of Tillich’s work Robert N. Bellah published the writing *Civil Religion in America* (1967) describing the phenomenon of sacralization of history, symbols, and attributes of the state power in the USA.¹⁰ But

³ Tillich, P. 1963. *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*. New York: Columbia University Press 5, 9.

⁴ Russell, B. 1921. *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*. London: Allen, 8.

⁵ Gurian, W. 1952. *Bolshevism: An Introduction to Soviet Communism*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 5.

⁶ Voegelin, E. 2000. “The Political Religions.” In: *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*. Vol. 5: *Modernity without Restraint*. Columbia, MI: University of Missouri Press, 50–52.

⁷ Condorcet, J.-A.-N. 1847. “Cinq mémoires sur l’instruction publique.” In: *Euvres de Condorcet: Économie politique et politique*. Vol. VII. Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 42.

⁸ Jung, C. G. 1976. “The Symbolic Life. Discussion.” In: *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*. Vol. 18. *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 281.

⁹ Aron, R. 1985. “L’avenir des religions séculières”. In: *Raymond Aron, 1905–1983: Histoire et politique: Textes et témoignages*. Paris: Julliard, 369–383.

¹⁰ Bellah R. N. 1967. “Civil Religion in America” *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 96 (1), 1–21.

Bellah reminds us that the word combination “civil religion” was coined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In his treatise *The Social Contract* (1762) the Enlightenment philosopher describes civil religion as follows: it exists in one country only, everything outside it is wrong, strange, barbaric; it teaches: to serve the state means to serve the God.¹¹

One of the first to speak of the religious nature of the secular movements mentioned by Tillich was Nikolai Berdiaev. In his article *The Religious Foundations of Bolshevism* (1917) he insists that the trend of the political thought should be understood as a religious phenomenon.¹² Berdiaev revisited this thesis several times. In *The Realm of Spirit and the Realm of Caesar* (1951), he writes of the “religious features of Marxism: a strict dogmatic system; division into orthodoxy and heresy; the holy scripture of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin ...”¹³ And Carlton J. H. Hayes, in the essay *Nationalism as a Religion* (1926), declares:

“On his own national god the modern religious nationalist is conscious of dependence. Of His powerful help he feels the need. In Him he recognises the source of his own perfection and happiness. To Him, in a strictly religious sense, he subjects himself. [...] The ritual of modern nationalism is simpler than that of certain other great historic religions, probably because sufficient time has not yet elapsed for its elaboration.”¹⁴

It is noticeable that Hayes, in the second volume of his fundamental study *Political and Social History of Modern Europe* (1921), characterizing the sojourn of Emperor Meiji in Kyoto, uses the notion “quasi-religious” more than four decades before Tillich.¹⁵ Also, Masaharu Anesaki uses the terms “quasi-religion” and “quasi-Buddhism” in 1920’s.¹⁶

So, conditionally, three approaches to the description of phenomena of the same order may be singled out. According to the first one, the movements in question should be referred to as “quasi-religions,” according to the second “secular religions,” and according to the third “religions.” The concept of political religion is often associated with totalitarian regimes (Frederick L. Schuman

¹¹ Rousseau, J.-J. 1962. “The Social Contract.” Hopkins, G. (Trans.). In: *Social Contract; Essays by Locke, Hume, and Rousseau*. New York: Oxford University Press, 301.

¹² Berdiaev, N. 2007. “The Religious Foundations of Bolshevism” [in Russian]. In: *The Fall of the Holy Russian Kingdom: Journalism 1914–1922*. Moscow: Astrel’, 593–599.

¹³ Berdiaev, N. 1953. *The Realm of Spirit and the Realm of Caesar*. Lowrie, D. A. (Trans.). New York: Harper, 136–137.

¹⁴ Hayes, C. J. H. 1926. “Nationalism as a Religion.” In: idem. *Essays on Nationalism*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 104–105, 107.

¹⁵ Hayes, C. J. H. 1921. *A Political and Social History of Modern Europe*. Vol. II. New York: The Macmillan Company, 581.

¹⁶ Anesaki, M. 1923. *History of Japanese Religion: With Special Reference to the Social and Moral Life of the Nation*. Rutland–Vermont–Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 19, 266.

called Nazism a totalitarian cult¹⁷ whereas Waldemar Gurian called it a totalitarian religion¹⁸) which is not implied *a priori* when speaking of the civil religion. Scholars classify even some aspects of vegetarianism¹⁹ and conspirology²⁰ as quasi-religious (though, if we bear in mind Hitler's biography, it does not seem strange). Nevertheless, one of the reasons for the differences consists in the fact that each of the authors mentioned plays his own language game.

The Russian religious philosopher Daniil V. Pivovarov considered the terms "civil religion," "secular religion," "quasi-religion" as no more than synonyms of the term "socio-centric religion" that was proposed by him.²¹ In effect, the example of the usage of notions "religion" and "quasi-religion" by Hayes is not hard to supplement: Berdiaev refers to revolutionary consciousness as well as the nihilism characteristic of it as "false-religious" nihilism but hereby it does not imply any theological differentiations; for him false religion is a phenomenon of religious nature.²² Aron calls communism a "pseudo-religion," however, he believes that Shiite Islam and Marxism "belong to the same family."²³ Obviously, the same definition is implied in case of the use of morphologically different notions. Indirect evidence of the partial implicit agreement between the authors above is the succession of the representatives of all the three terminological approaches. Berdiaev influences Tillich who called him "one of the outstanding and most representative thinkers in present Europe."²⁴ Tillich, in turn, influenced Bellah, who named Tillich as one his great teachers.

Therefore, with certain caveats, Nazism and Communism may be called religions. However, between them there exist critical differences. Bolsheviks consistently rejected the religious nature of their movement. Vladimir Lenin condemned Anatoly Lunacharsky and his confederates for the God-Building.²⁵ Alexander Bogdanov, remaining on Marxist positions, having elaborately analyzed *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, concluded that Lenin's speculations

¹⁷ Schuman, F. L. 1939. *Europe on the Eve: the Crises of Diplomacy, 1933–1939*. London: Robert Hale Limited, 521.

¹⁸ Gurian, W. 1952. "Totalitarian Religions." *The Review of Politics* 14 (1), 3–14.

¹⁹ Hamilton, M. 2000. "Eating Ethically: 'Spiritual' and 'Quasi-religious' Aspects of Vegetarianism", *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 15 (1), 65–83.

²⁰ Franks, B., A. Bangerter, M. Bauer. 2013. "Conspiracy Theories as Quasi-religious Mentality: an Integrated Account from Cognitive Science, Social Representations Theory, and Frame Theory." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, 424.

²¹ Pivovarov, D. V. 2015. *Sociocentric Religions* [in Russian]. Yekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo universiteta, 38.

²² Berdiaev, N. 2007. "Spirits of the Russian Revolution" [in Russian]. In: *The Fall of the Holy Russian Kingdom: journalism 1914–1922*. Moscow: Astrel', 784, 788.

²³ Aron, R. 1990. *Memoirs: Fifty Years of Political Reflection*. Holoch, G. (Trans.). New York: Holmes & Meier, 471–472.

²⁴ Tillich, P. 1938. "Nicholas Berdyaev." *Religion in Life*, 7 (3), 407.

²⁵ Lenin, V. I. 1987. *Materialism and Empirio-criticism. Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy*. Moscow: Progress, 64; 1963. "The Faction of Supporters of Otzovism and God-Building" In: *Collected Works*. Vol. XIV. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 29–61.

complied with such criteria of religious thinking as faith, acknowledgement of absolute values and authoritarianism.²⁶ The very accusation of the opponent of the adherence to the religious worldview was an element of criticism for the Bolsheviks. Slavoj Žižek, calling atheism one of the Christian heresies,²⁷ acknowledges Marxism as a successor to Christianity. It is forced to note that this approach is path-breaking.²⁸ And an adherent of the classical Marxism is not obliged to agree to it.

The situation with Nazism is absolutely different. In the essay, *The Doctrine of Fascism*, attributable to Mussolini we read:

“One can not understand many of the practical manifestations of fascism as a party organization, as a system of education, or as a training ground, unless one views it in the light of its general conception of life. And this conception is a spiritual one.”²⁹

It is fully in line with Hitler's words about: “Anyone who understands National Socialism only as a political movement knows virtually nothing about it. It is even more than religion; it is the will to a new creation of man.”³⁰ On February 10, 1933, he delivered the speech containing allusions to the Bible speaking on the resurrection of the German people, comparing himself with the Savior and concluding the speech with the word “Amen.”³¹ Such examples are quite abundant, and the consideration thereof is the subject-matter of many studies.³²

But the appearance of any religion is due to the relevant reasons. Ernst Bloch,³³ and then Walter Benjamin,³⁴ refer to capitalism as a religion. This so-

²⁶ Bogdanov, A. 1910. “Faith and Science” [in Russian]. In: *The Fall of Great Fetishism: The Contemporary Crisis of Ideology*. Moscow: Dorovatovsky and Charushnikov, 144–223.

²⁷ Žižek, S. 2009. “The Fear of Four Words: A Modest Plea for the Hegelian Reading of Christianity.” In: *Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank. The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?* Davis, C. (Ed.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 96–97.

²⁸ Žižek, S. 2008. *The Fragile Absolute: Or, Why is the Christian Legacy worth Fighting For?* London; New York: Verso, XXIX.

²⁹ Quoted from: Mounier, E. 1938. *A Personalist Manifesto*, translated by monks of St. John's Abbey. London; New York; Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 31–32.

³⁰ Fest, J. C. 1974. *Hitler*. Winston, R., C. Winston (Trans.). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 214.

³¹ Johe, W. 1996. *Hitler in Hamburg: Dokumente zu einem besonderen Verhältnis*. Hamburg: Ergebnisse-Verlag, 41.

³² See, for example: Hutter, M. 1999. *Totalitarismus und säkulare Religionen. Zur Frühgeschichte totalitarismuskritischer Begriffs- und Theoriebildung in Großbritannien*. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag; Vondung, K. 2010. “Debatten den Holocaust und das Deutungskonzept der «politischen Religion»” *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, 40 (1), 9–22; Musiedlak, D. 2010. “Fascisme, religion politique et religion de la politique: Généalogie d'un concept et de ses limites” *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 108 (4), 71–84.

³³ Bloch, E. 1921. *Thomas Münzer als Theologe der Revolution*. München: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 170.

³⁴ Benjamin, W. 1996. “Capitalism as Religion.” In: *Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings (1913–1926)*. Vol. I. Livingstone, R. (Trans.). Bullock, M., M. W. Jennings (Eds.). Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Harvard Press, 288–291.

cial formation, according to Max Weber, owes its existence to Protestantism. Benjamin was convinced that Christianity, in the time of the Reformation, did not encourage the emergence of capitalism, but changed itself into capitalism. Whereas Weber spoke, rather, of the cutting of the umbilical cord:

“Since asceticism undertook to remodel the world and to work out its ideals in the world, material goods have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history. Today the spirit of religious asceticism—whether finally, who knows?—has escaped from the cage. But victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its support no longer.”³⁵

However Benjamin’s polemics with Weber appear to us, in this case, is not important. A part of Judaism gradually became Christianity (for some time Christians had still visited the Temple of Jerusalem), a part of Catholicism became Protestantism, hereby, the preceding links of the chain of the cause-and-effect relations did not disappear but coexisted with the phenomena arising from them. And, obviously, Capitalism is not the only “religion” which could have been spawned by Christianity. In this connection it will not be unwarranted to remember the words of Carl Schmitt: “All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver—but also because of their systematic structure.”³⁶ The question of particular concepts which could have been secularized by the European thought seems rhetorical. Especially, if we account for the fact that St. Augustine who, thanks to Marcus Terentius Varro, was acquainted with the stoics’ *theologia tripartita* which included the notion of *theologia civilis*. In this case, is it not Christianity which is to blame for the appearance of Nazism?

THE QUESTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

In answering the above question, one cannot help mentioning the following facts. In 1215, the IV Lateran Council ruled that Hebrews and Muslims must wear special clothes for the avoidance of mixed marriages.³⁷ In 1496, Pope Alexander VI endorsed the statute of the purity of blood by which the “old Christians” conversos were disqualified. In 1516, Bartolomé de Las Casas,

³⁵ Weber, M. 1950. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Parsons, T. (Trans.). New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 181–182.

³⁶ Schmitt, C. 2005. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Schwab, G. (Trans.). Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 36.

³⁷ Mansi, J. D. 1778. *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova Amplissima Collectio*. Vol. XXII, Venetiis: Antonium Zatta, 1055.

a Dominican monk, proposed exporting slaves from Africa to the New World. It is no surprise then, that Hans Küng, drawing parallels between the canons of the IV Lateran Council and practice of wearing the yellow badge, makes the following conclusion: "After Auschwitz there can be no more excuses, Christendom cannot avoid a clear admission of its guilt."³⁸ And we, by analogy, can state that, among others, it is Bartolomé de Las Casas, who is responsible for the fate of the Rhineland Bastards.

Certainly, the anti-Christian nature of Nazism cannot serve as a counter-argument. A new religion always appears as opposed to the old one. To only focus on the facts already mentioned, we would conceal the real reasons for the genesis of Nazism. We, certainly, should agree with Küng when speaking of the guilt of Christendom, do not mix up Christendom and Christianity. There are three main versions of Christianity: Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism. Let us dwell upon the role of each direction separately.

Orthodoxy. From 1700 to 1917 in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church the institute of Patriarch was abolished. The Church was run by the Chief Procurator of the Synod appointed directly by the Russian Emperor who, therefore, in effect, was the head of the Local Church. So, to a certain extent, all his merits may be attributed to the Church as well. When the Church did not agree with the policy of the state, it always managed to let it know. In the earlier period, this is sadly illustrated by the assassination of Metropolitan Philipp II for his accusations upon the order of Ivan the Terrible.

The fate of the Swedish courtier Gustav Badin is well known. Not less interesting is Abram Hannibal's life, General-in-chief of the Russian Army, Great-grandfather of the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin. He, the son of an African prince, was captured and sent to the Turkish sultan in Constantinople, however, thanks to the Russian envoy, he happened to arrive in Moscow. Peter the Great became his Godfather.³⁹ Hannibal, having a nobleman's title received serfs at his disposal and became famous for the humane attitude towards them. Emperor Alexander II abolished the Law of Serfdom in Russia, only in 1861, one year before Abraham Lincoln signed the *Emancipation Proclamation*.

The latter event is linked to another noticeable episode. In 1863, at the height of the Civil War in the USA, Russia sent two navy squadrons to New York and San Francisco. The British Parliament solved the problem of slavery in 1833. But the truth consists in the fact that Southern states were the world's largest manufacturer of cotton, on the delivery of which the British textile industry strongly depended on, therefore, Britain and France, recognizing the legitimacy of the Confederation were full of determination to support the South by military

³⁸ Küng, H. 1976. *On Being a Christian*. Quinn, E. (Trans.). Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 169.

³⁹ Blakely, A. 1986. *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 20.

force. In this case, the abolition of slavery was, certainly, out of the question. As Benjamin P. Thomas wrote, “in the first two years of the war, when its outcome was still highly uncertain, the attitude of Russia was a potent factor in preventing Great Britain and France from adopting a policy of aggressive intervention.”⁴⁰

For this reason, the Russian seamen were heartily welcomed which become known from the press of the time.⁴¹ “Our squadron here was received amicably, even to the extreme. [...] You cannot go ashore in the military uniform: you will not look around but you will be looked at. People (even ladies) will come up to express their respect to the Russians and pleasure that they are in New York”⁴²—this is a fragment of the epistolary heritage of mid-shipman Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov who later became a famous composer, author of dozens of spiritual works. In 1883, his psalm *Who Is this King of Glory* was presented during the consecration of the Cathedral of the Christ the Savior in Moscow.

Catholicism. The facts which we until now provided compromise Catholicism only. And we do not intend to seek a pretext for them. Nevertheless, any events need to be considered in this context. Even Küng was forced to recognize that the Nazis’ argumentation was radically different. The attempt to prevent mixed marriages was due not to ethnic but to religious differences. Also, Isabella I of Castile’s confessional policy led to the fact that numerous Hebrews and Muslims who were forced to formally become Catholics covertly continued to profess their religions. That is why the conversos were treated with suspicion, they were not trusted. And all the speculations of the purity of blood were built on this particular fact. Las Casas was not the only or the first Catholic monk to propose importing slaves. However, he was worried by the horrible attitude of the Spaniards to the Indians. Being guided by solely humanitarian ideas, he saw his proposal as a way out of the situation; but when he understood where the implementation of these intentions could lead, he repented and honestly described all the hideous attributes of the slave-trading practice.⁴³

⁴⁰ Thomas, B. P. 1930. *Russo-American Relations 1815–1867*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 129.

⁴¹ For example: “A Russian Fleet Coming into Our Harbor.” 1863. *The New York Times*, Sept. 24, 2; <https://www.nytimes.com/1863/09/24/archives/a-russian-fleet-coming-into-our-harbor-their-arrival.html?searchResultPosition=1>; “Reception of the Russian Naval Officers.” 1863. *The New York Times*, Sept. 29, 4; <https://www.nytimes.com/1863/09/29/archives/reception-of-the-russian-naval-officers.html?searchResultPosition=1>; “The Grand Ball to the Russians.” 1863. *The New York Times*, Nov. 5, 1863, 8;

<https://www.nytimes.com/1863/11/05/archives/the-grand-ball-to-the-russians-previous-splendors-eclipsed-tonight.html>

⁴² Rimsky-Korsakov, N. A. 2008. *From Family Correspondence* [in Russian]. Fialkovsky, V. (Ed.). Saint Petersburg: Compozitor, 75.

⁴³ Las Casas, B. de 1971. *History of the Indies*. Collard, A. M. (Trans., Ed.). New York: Harper & Row, 258f.

More importantly, in 1451 Pope Nicholas V issued a Bull condemning the idea of the blood purity.⁴⁴ The Statute of Alexander VI was related only to the Augustinian order. Moreover, opposite examples can also be provided. For example, Bartolomé de Albornoz, a Franciscan monk, responding to the argument that the Africans displaced to America were therefore saved from paganism, claimed that the freedom of soul cannot be bought by enslaving the body.⁴⁵ All this, even despite the presence of such controversial figure as Pius XII in the annals, says that the Catholic doctrine does not contain any elements encouraging racial discrimination.

Protestantism. A similar ambivalence is observed in the history of Protestantism. Some theologians blamed the ranking of entire nations and races on the doctrine of Predestination which took place in Calvinism. Particularly, some versions of 'Calvinism were able to accommodate the Afrikaner civil religion indeed to undergird it', wrote T. Dunbar Moodie.⁴⁶ Hendrik G. Stoker was a leading Calvinist philosopher of South Africa who completed his doctoral dissertation on under Max Scheler. He spoke in favour of Apartheid and racial segregation in education.⁴⁷ In his speculations on the fate of white Afrikaners we find passages such as these: "Such preservation was not for naught, for God allows nothing to happen for naught. He might have allowed our People to be bastardized with the native tribes as happened with other Europeans. He did not allow it."⁴⁸ On the contrary, Samuel Sewall, as far back as 1700 entered the debates with the apologists of slavery, consistently refuting all their arguments and emphasizing Exodus 21: 16 and Matthew 7: 12 and this proving that if the verse is not withdrawn from the context, the Bible cannot be used to justify segregation.⁴⁹

One can recall Richard R. Reed and Major James R. Crowe, Presbyterians who stood at the origins of the Ku Klux Klan. We can also remember the Abolitionism of John Brown, Deutsche Christen, or Dietrich Bonhoeffer. We can remember the history of appearance of the Southern Baptists or we can remember the activities of Martin Luther King. It is also worth noting that the Southern Baptist Convention renounced racism and apologized to African Americans in 1995. This also became possible because Protestant

⁴⁴ Green, T. 2007. *Inquisition: The Reign of Fear*. New York: Macmillan, 196.

⁴⁵ Bireley, R. 1999. *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450–1700: A Reassessment of the Counter-Reformation*. London: Macmillan Education, 163.

⁴⁶ Moodie, T. D. 1975. *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 66.

⁴⁷ Klaaren, E. M. 1997. "Creation and Apartheid: South African Theology since 1948." In: *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*. Elphick, R., R. Davenport (Eds.). Berkeley: University of California Press, 373.

⁴⁸ Stoker, H. G. 1941. *Die Stryd Om die Ordes. Potchefstroom: Calvyn Jubileum Boekefonds*, 250–251, quoted from Moodie, T. D. 1975, op. cit., 67.

⁴⁹ LaPlante, E. 2008. *Salem Witch Judge: The Life and Repentance of Samuel Sewall*. New York: Harper One, 226–227.

dogmatics do not contain provisions which could serve a serious obstacle for such a deed.

On the Enslaving of Fellow-Countrymen. Not only monarchs' merits but also their sins (except the proper resolution of the abolition of the institution of Patriarchate on which Peter the Great did not consult the Church) may be assigned to the Russian Orthodox Church. For example, the Pale of Settlement, the restriction of the right of residence not covering baptized Jews. Settling the outskirts of the Empire with dissidents is a tradition Russia inherited from Byzantium. But Byzantium practiced it in the Middle Ages when the fires of Inquisition burned in Western Europe, whereas in the Modern Ages such traditions already were anachronism. One also should remember that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which provoked Jewish pogroms were popularized by the Orthodox publicist Sergei Nilus.

If we address the Orthodox Church's earlier history, it is necessary to point out St. John Chrysostom. It was only Martin Luther who wrote about Jews more harshly, albeit he was rather superficially familiarized with Chrysostom's heritage. All this is, no doubt, reprehensible. Moreover, according to the dogmatic doctrine, an Orthodox is not supposed to a priori agree with any judgment of the Church Fathers only by virtue of the believer's confessional affiliation. As we have already remarked, the fact that Jews were prosecuted not because of their ethnicity but because of their religion is no justification. However, it may serve an explanation why the prosecutions mentioned were not prolegomena to the Nazi meta-narrative which annihilated even baptized Jews. The Jewish diaspora lived among Christians for centuries and if Hitler had still become a priest, the Holocaust could have been avoided. Reading Galatians 3:28, we should understand that, just as a free man does not rise to the level of the slave but a slave rises to the level of a free man, it is not a Hebrew who is equalized with a pagan but a pagan is equalized with the Hebrew.

Based on these further speculations of the attitude of Orthodox Christianity toward slavery may be surmised. As in Catholicism and Protestantism there were Orthodox apologists and its critics as well. Two years before the abolition of the law of serfdom in the *Pravoslavnyi Sobesednik*, the magazine of the Kazan Ecclesiastical Academy, published two articles on the subject. In the first one, the historian Afanasy Shchapov, using medieval sources, demonstrates that the Christians of that period constantly accused feudals for the harsh attitude towards serfs.⁵⁰ In the second one, Archimandrite John (Sokolov) used numerous quotations from the Holy Scripture to state the idea that although slavery is evil and the source of evil is sin this does not mean that the abolition of slavery will correct the consequences of the Fall from grace. So while a man must not

⁵⁰ Shchapov, A. P. 1859. "The Voice of the Ancient Russian Church about Improving the Life of Unfree People" [in Russian]. *Pravoslavnyj Sobesednik, Izdavaemyj pri Kazanskoj Duhovnoj Akademii*. Part I. January, 40–76.

forget of the moral improvement it does not mean that Christianity approves of slavery or any despotism relative to the enslaved.⁵¹ In this context also Philemon 1: 16 is considered.

OCCULT ANTHROPOLOGY

We can agree with Nietzsche that Christianity is the morality of slaves, in the sense that it is consistently, in all its aspects opposed to the idea of “Superman.” Moreover, it is opposed to the Nazi reception of this idea diluted with anti-Semitism and racial hatred. If Christianity, like Nietzsche’s philosophy, are just material used by Nazism for its purposes, the religious nature of the latter should be sought for not in the Abrahamic religions. At least, in Nietzsche’s eyes, Buddhism by far surpasses Christianity. It is commonly known, however, that the Oriental mysticism in the West was popularized by the adherents of occultism and theosophy and the Hitler’s world view is well studied.⁵²

Let us refer to just one of the numerous facts quoted by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. Esoterics and theosophy magazine *Ostara* was published in Vienna when Hitler lived there. Joseph Greiner, the main surviving witness to Hitler’s life in Vienna after 1908, claimed to be friends with Hitler in a men’s hostel on Meldemann Strasse in Vienna-Brigittenau, where Hitler lived from February 1910 until his departure for Munich in May 1913. He recalled that Hitler had a significant collection of *Ostara*—in a stack about 25 centimeters thick, there should have been at least fifty numbers. When the scholar was shown copies of the first *Ostara* episode, Greiner said he remembered the characteristic comet pattern on the covers of the earliest issues.⁵³

“The periodical manifesto informed its readers that the *Ostara* was the first and only ‘racial-economic’ magazine, which intended to apply anthropological findings practically, in order to combat scientifically the revolt of the inferiors and to protect the noble European race.”⁵⁴

In the issue for July 1908, the theosophical conception of race and a programme for the restoration of Aryan authority in the world were published. Quoted occult sources were texts by Annie Besant, Blavatsky’s successor as

⁵¹ Sokolov, J., archimandrite. 1859. “A Word about the Liberation of the Peasants on the Day of the Accession to the Throne of His Majesty Sovereign Emperor Alexander Nikolaevich. February, 19” [in Russian]. *Pravoslavnyj Sobesednik, Izdavaemyj pri Kazanskoj Duhovnoj Akademii*. Part I. March, 334–355.

⁵² The most important works are mentioned here: Staudenmaier, Peter. 2013. “Nazi Perceptions of Esotericism: The Occult as Fascination and Menace.” In: *The Threat and Allure of the Magical*. Manthripragada, A. (Ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 25–58.

⁵³ Goodrick-Clarke, N. 2004. *The Occult Roots of Nazism: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890–1935*. New York: I. B. Tauris & Co., 195–196.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

leader of the international Theosophical Society at London, and Rudolf Steiner, the Secretary General of its German branch in Berlin.⁵⁵

Before addressing directly to the works by the founder of the Theosophical Society, Helena Blavatsky, let us refer to the work by Annie Besant. Differentiating between exoteric and esoteric doctrines and, consequently, the religion of a priest and religion of a mystic, Besant describes the latter as “the lonely dweller on the mountain-side, climbing in advance of his race.”⁵⁶ Therefore, cases of the evolution of species, racial differences, and spiritual elitism are interconnected. It may seem nothing more but the speculation on the resonant topic. The exhaustive answer to the Swamping argument by Fleeming Jenkin was not widely known but it did not impede the popularity of the Darwin’s theory. However, Darwin’s speculations on the human origin contain the well-known argument badly matching the syllogisms of the adherents of the racial segregation. Proceeding from the fact that he does not see critical differences between the mental faculties of the representatives of different races, Darwin concludes that all of them belong to one species and originate from a common ancestor.⁵⁷

Therefore, the evolution Darwin speaks about and the evolution theosophers speak about are two absolutely different processes. In *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky writes of “inferior Races, of which there are still some analogs left—as the Australians (now fast dying out) and some African and Oceanic tribes ... Karmic development of these Monads had not yet fitted them to occupy the forms of men destined for incarnation in higher intellectual Races.”⁵⁸ This quotation, in combination with Besant’s words is extremely important for the understanding of the genesis of the Nazi beliefs. It says that theosophy resting on the Oriental occultism takes the idea of superiority of one people over the other from the idea of reincarnation just like it is used for the separation into Varna and the explanation of privileges Mahasiddha. According to Blavatsky, “Races of men differ in spiritual gifts as in color, stature, or any other external quality.”⁵⁹ “Crossing,” as it is called, of Europeans with Tasmanian women—i.e., the representatives of a race, whose progenitors were a “soulless” and mindless monster and a real human, though still as mindless a man—brought on sterility. This, not only as a consequence of a physiological law but also as a decree of Karmic evolution in the question of further survival of the abnormal race.”⁶⁰ But, “Happily for the human race the ‘Elect Race’ had already become the vehi-

⁵⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, N. 2004, op. cit., 101.

⁵⁶ Besant, A. 1910. “Mysticism” [in Russian]. *Vestnik Teosofii*, 12, 40.

⁵⁷ Darwin, C. 1871. *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Vol. I. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 225.

⁵⁸ Blavatsky, H. P. 1917. *The Secret Doctrine, the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*. Vol. II. Point Loma: The Aryan Theosophical Press, 162.

⁵⁹ Blavatsky, H. P. 1891. *Isis Unveiled: A Master-key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*. Vol. II. New York: J. W. Bouton, 588.

⁶⁰ Blavatsky, H. P. 1917, op. cit., 196.

cle of incarnation of the (intellectually and spiritually) highest Dhyanis before Humanity had become quite material.”⁶¹ Having been impregnated with such views Hitler placed himself among the race of the elect.

It is strange that Jung who sympathized with occultism compared Hitler with Mohammad. The founder of Islam was forced to fight Mecca, otherwise Mecca would have attacked Medina. Fascist Germany, even after the annexation of Sudetenland was not threatened by anybody. Islam, like Christianity, invites representatives of any races and nations to their ranks. Nazism is the religion of the elect. And its underlying ideas as well-known as they are absurd.

It seems that after everything which took place in the 20th century discrimination should become impossible. Unfortunately, this is not true. Black Lives Matter movement is evidence of it. After the discovery of Mitochondrial Eve (which is not difficult to be aligned both with theism and with atheism) racism can have no serious scientific arguments. Why then do we observe the actions characterizing humankind as a species not from the best side? There are many answers to this question. Some of them are mutually exclusive while others complement each other. Some of explain particular cases and others explain the situation in general. We would like to focus on the aspects which, in our opinion, should be considered critical.

First, there are objective conditions the change of which requires time. Civil unrest in Ferguson occurred when President Barak Obama was in the White House. And in effect, this is rather simple to explain. In his philosophical discourse, Ilya Prigogine used the physical notion “attractor” to describe living nature.⁶² The socio-cultural context in which we now live does not disappear after the declarations of equality. It continues to shape our times and significant effort is necessary to counter it. Not long ago on Swedish Television, the politician Victoria Kawesa said that Russians and Eastern Europeans are not white.⁶³ Which, certainly, cannot but remind us of the One-drop rule. The native of Uganda, feminist, and champion of minorities’ rights did not intend to insult anybody, as can be seen from the position she asserted. The most plausible explanation to this incident consists in the fact that it merely transmitted the stereotypes typical for the region she lives in, i.e., stereotypes upheld by the successors of those who served in SS Volunteer Panzergrenadier Division Nordland.

Suffice it to remember Hitler’s words and everything falls into place:

“The war against Russia will be such that it cannot be conducted in knightly fashion. This struggle is one of ideologies and *racial differences* and will

⁶¹ Ibid., 276.

⁶² Prigogine, I., I. Stengers, 1984. *Order Out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature*. New York: Bantam Books, 122–129.

⁶³ *Fi-ledaren Victoria Kawesa: Ryssar är inte vita*; <https://www.friatider.se/fi-ledaren-victoria-kawesa-ryssar-r-inte-vita>; <https://www.expressen.se/nyheter/har-ryker-politikerna-ihop-i-bara-politik/>

have to be conducted with unprecedented, unmerciful and harshness. All officers will have to rid themselves of obsolete ideologies. I know that the necessity for such means of waging war is beyond comprehension of you generals but. [...] I insist absolutely that my orders be executed without contradiction.”⁶⁴

Fascism seems to have been beaten decades ago but its heritage does not disappear.

Second, ideas create objective conditions. If we are not happy with these conditions, the paradigm should be changed to transform them. When rational arguments demonstrate their inadequacy, racism is fed with irrational prejudices, in effect, religious beliefs. Though Alvin Plantinga insists that it is atheistic views which are irrational,⁶⁵ based on what Žižek says of atheism and Marxism we do not find the reason for discussion here. Some of the religious beliefs mentioned are still supplied by Nazism.

A CLOSING REMARK

September 1, 1939 is considered the beginning of the *Second World War*. But did the states of the “Axis powers” not take any actions before? Let us state just two episodes. The *Second Italo-Ethiopian War* (1935–1936) and *Nanjing Massacre* (1937). As a result of Mussolini troops’ application of chemical weapons about quarter million people died. In total, the volume of poisonous gas imported made about two thirds of all the toxic substances used during the First World War. According to some data, about half a million people died in the *Nanjing Massacre*. Must we not take the events mentioned into account merely because the *Tripartite Pact* was concluded only in 1940? We can argue this approach also uses historical facts, but it is obvious without it that the chronological frameworks of the *Second World War* rely on Eurocentrism absolutely inappropriate for the description of the history of the 20th century. It is such ideological attitudes which shape up our reality. Paraphrasing Jacques Derrida, who paraphrased Marx, we may say that the spectre of Hitler is still wandering in Europe and the New World.

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⁶⁴ Shirer, W. L. 1960. *The Rise and fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 830.

⁶⁵ Plantinga, A. 1993. “Is Naturalism Irrational?” In: idem. *Warrant and Proper Function*. New York: Oxford University Press, 216–238.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR — PhD, Associate professor, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies of Far Eastern Federal University, Sukhanova, Primorskiy Kray, 690091 Vladivostok, Russia. Member of the Russian Society of Philosophy. Main fields of research: epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of religion. Author of numerous papers on philosophy of religion, ethics, philosophy of science.

E-mail: knizniycherv@mail.ru