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VI. SOLOVYOV AND THE HOLY SEE EXPLICATION OF THE IDEA OF CHRISTIAN UNITY AT THE END OF THE 19th CENTURY²

In the face of political rhetoric about Russia being outside of Europe both in the West and in Russia itself, it is all the more necessary to remember that European and Russian culture grew out of the same source: Christianity. Therefore, inter-confessional dialogue between Russian Orthodoxy and the Roman Catholic Church is particularly relevant today. In this context, scholars have focused attention on the Russian philosopher V.I. Solovyov, who has been described as the forerunner of the ecumenical movement. The current article seeks to enrich accounts of Solovyov's thought by shining a spotlight on the context of spiritual thought in Russia in his day. The article also shows how Russian emperors (particularly Alexander III) promoted the idea of a rapprochement with the Holy See. The author argues that these mutual initiatives of the Holy See and the Russian government were the political foundation for V.I. Solovyov's famous theocratic project. The author worked with the funds of Vatican Secret Archive, concerning relationships between Russian government and the Holy See at the end of XIX century (State Secretary fund 247), personal fund of Leo XIII and the Holy See connection's with Slavic religious figures (State Secretary fund 283, 248, 1D).

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Introduction

In Russian culture, the subject of Rome was originally connected with the idea of *translatio imperii*, which gave rise to the idea of Moscow as a Third Rome. For Russian thinkers, the Roman Empire was always more than a simple political body; rather, it was the symbol of a civilized territory that stood against the barbarian world. Peter the Great embraced the civilization of territory as a concept in building the Russian Empire. Inside the empire there were many nations and peoples; thus, to preserve peace and stability within the state, one common supranational idea had to be worked out. The process of creating empire required a special system of values, namely, the idea of a supranational common good. Finding its code is a serious, vital task for the whole culture. For the Roman Empire, initially, such a unifying factor was a legal system. Later, Christianity came to the forefront, championing the equality of all people before God, who has no preference for "neither Hellenes nor Jews".

Moreover, it is necessary to stress that the idea of Christ came to Europe via Rome. The subject of the eternally sacred Rome, which Dante articulated in his work *De Monarchia*, became the intellectual basis for Russian thinkers of the 19th-century in their reflections on the problem of the unity of the Church and the possibilities of building a Christian Empire. From their point of view, the project of a united Christian Empire could not be realized while its spiritual base – the Christian Church in its literal meaning as the universal international Church – was split between East and West.

The first Russian thinker who broached the question of re-joining the Roman Church was P.Ya. Chaadaev in his famous "Philosophical Letters" in the 1830s. In the 1830-1850s a diaspora of Russian émigré Catholics formed in Paris. I.S. Gagarin, author of the work "La Russie sera-t-elle catholique?," donated a significant part of his fortune in order to propagate the union of the Russian Orthodox and the Catholic Churches. On the basis of his personal library, a dedicated Slavic library in Paris was created. The Russian poet, thinker and diplomat F.I. Tiutchev published an article in the journal "Revue des Deux Mondes" entitled "La Papauté et la question romaine". The editors of the journal added the sub-heading "au point de vue de Saint-Pétersbourg", thus underlining that the ideas explained in the article corresponded to the official policy of the Russian Tsar. Tiutchev made critical comments in relation to the Roman Catholic Church, which in his view had forgotten its true destiny and become embroiled in the struggle for earthly power. But Tiutchev did not abandon his hope that in the future the unity of the Church would be realized, on condition that the Western Church returned to the tradition of the Eastern Church. Ecclesiastical unity should become the foundation of a Christian Empire under the aegis of the Russian Tsar. The article finished with a

report of the visit of Tsar Nikolai I to Rome: “Yes, let us be allowed in conclusion to remember one episode connected with the visit of the Russian Emperor in Rome. There, perhaps, they have still not forgotten the universal exultation with which his appearance in the cathedral of Saint Peter was greeted – the appearance of the Orthodox Emperor in Rome after so many centuries of absence! One remembers, perhaps, the electric shock that ran through the crowd when he began to pray at the tomb of the Apostles. This charged emotion was right and just. The kneeling Emperor stood there not alone – together with him, with the bent knee, was all of Russia”³. Here Tiutchev painted a picture of the Russian Tsar as the only Christian monarch in Europe. It was the project to restore the unity of Christian humanity. Later V.I. Solovyov used this idea developing his project of “universal theocracy”. Yet, unlike Tiutchev, who wrote about Russia as the successor of the Eastern Roman Empire (Second Rome) and Constantinople as the center of the Christian Ecumene, Solovyov believed that the center of the union should be the papal Rome. The philosopher thought that Russia could fulfill its historical mission only in union with the Roman Church. The main task of Russia was to rise above the opposition of the West and the East and to show itself as the Third Rome, which would be able to reconcile the first two in itself. The Russian Tsar, and not the Orthodox Church, should take part in the unification of Christian humanity.

Vladimir Solovyov outlined the possible paths towards ecclesiastical unity in his works: “The Great Debate and Christian Politics”, “The History and Future of Theocracy”, “The Russian Idea”, “Russia and The Universal Church”.

Tereza Obolevich, a contemporary expert on Russian thought, has rightly noticed that Vladimir Solovyov is considered the forerunner of the ecumenical movement of the 20th-century. His far-reaching project of unifying the Churches was heatedly discussed during his lifetime and to this day continues to attract the attention of numerous researchers around the world⁴. In the early 20th-century, French Jesuit and rector of Oriental Papal Institute in Rome Michel d’Herbigny wrote the book about Solovyov and called him “the Russian Newman” due to his sympathy for Catholicism⁵. R. Poole has written more recently in a similar manner⁶.

³ Fedor Tiutchev, *La Papauté et la Question Romaine* [Papacy and Roman Question], in RDM. T. 5. 1 janvier, (1850), 133

⁴ Teresa Obolevich *Metafizicheskie osnovaniya ekumenicheskogo projekta Vladimira Solovyova*. [Metaphysical foundations of the ecumenical project of Vladimir Solovyov] In “Bogoslovie. Kul’tura. Obrazovanie,” 18:4 (2014), 576.

⁵ M. d’Herbigny, *Un Newman russe: Vladimir Soloviev 1853-1900*, (Paris 1909)

⁶ Randall A. Poole *The Greatness of Vladimir Solov’ev: A Review Essay*, in Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue canadienne des slavistes vol. L, No. 1–2, (2008), 349-371

The political context of the idea of Christian Unity: Dialogue between the Pope and the Russian Tsar

It should be noted that, in parallel with Solovyov the Russian government took a course towards rapprochement with the Vatican. Solovyov, in his article “Agreement with Rome and the Moscow newspapers”, analyzed the history of relations between Russia and the Holy See. He also reviewed a number of articles in the Moscow press, in particular, the newspaper “Moskovskie Vedomosti”, which criticized the agreement between Alexander III and the Pope. Solovyov fully supported rapprochement with the Holy See on an official level and also endorsed the Holy See’s initiative of sending permanent representatives to Russia. The philosopher wrote: “While the Pope does not have a permanent mission in St. Petersburg, he has to look at Russia through the eyes of Polish bishops. But this cannot be stopped. Sooner or later two great historical forces - Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Russia - should recognize each other openly face to face”⁷. It shows that the idea of a union of the Pope and the Russian Emperor was not a philosopher’s abstract idea. It had an actual historical and political context⁸.

Following Tiutchev, Solovyov considered the pilgrimage of Nikolai I to the tomb of the Apostle Peter as a symbolic act. The philosopher also wrote that negotiations between the Holy See and the Russian government were a starting point for overcoming the Church division.

Tsar Nikolai I personally initiated his visit to the Vatican during a visit to Italy that he undertook in order to accompany the Empress Alexandra Fedorovna who was restoring her health there. It was an unprecedented occasion of the meeting of the Russian Tsar and the Pope in December 1845.

During the course of the talks, the Tsar repeatedly underlined the primacy of the Pope as the carrier of spiritual power over him as a secular ruler, stressing that he was not in a position to resolve many problems as, unlike the Pope, he was not the head of the Church but only its highest defender.⁹

After this meeting in the summer of 1847 a concord was signed, it was the first example in many centuries of a written agreement between the head of the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Emperor. Both sides were interested in such a rapprochement. The Russian Tsar was motivated by the consideration that the agreement could temporarily appease the rebelliously minded Polish Catholics, while the Pope saw in the Russian Tsar a defender from social revolution that was

⁷ Vladimir Solovyov *Natsional'nyy vopros v Rossii* [National question in Russia], in *Collected works*. In 2 vol. Vol. 1. (Moscow 1989), 179

⁸ Teresa Obolevich *Metafizicheskie osnovaniya ekumenicheskogo projekta Vladimira Solovyova*. [Metaphysical foundations of the ecumenical project of Vladimir Solovyov] In “Bogoslovie. Kul'tura. Obrazovanie,” 18:4 (2014), 576.

⁹ See E. Popov, *Snosheniya Rossii s Rimom (Relations between Russia and Rome)*, Saint Petersburg, 1871, 58

brewing in Western Europe and threatened the authority of the Church. The concord declared the Pope to be the head of Catholics in the Russian Empire and afforded him the right in a special Bull to determine the area and limits of Catholic eparchies within the Empire, which previously had been exclusively the prerogative of the Russian monarch.¹⁰

Moreover, for the Russian Tsar it was a symbolic act that graphically illustrated his course of demonstrating continuity with the Christian Emperors of the Roman Empire and would serve to underline the special position and role of Russia in Europe. The image of Russia as a Christian Empire, her course of defending traditional values was juxtaposed to the liberal-egalitarian West, which in this period was on the brink of revolutionary convulsions. Also, F.I. Tituchev argued in his article “Russia and revolution” that in Europe there were only two active forces: Revolution and Russia.

After the death of Nikolai I during the reign of Alexander II relations between Russia and the Holy See became strained after the Polish uprising of 1863, which threatened the unity of the Russian empire. In response to the actions of various groups of Catholic clergy who engaged in open political subversion, the government took the view that the Catholic Church in Poland was an enemy of the Russian empire¹¹. The Russian philosopher and conservative M.N. Katkov wrote in the journal “Moskovskie vedomosti”: “the Polish uprising is not at all a national uprising; it is not the people but the gentry and the clergy who have rebelled. It is not a struggle for freedom but for power.”¹² For the preservation of order in the empire the government was forced to crush the uprising brutally. The following year in 1864 a system of limited measures was introduced, whereby the Catholic clergy were strictly monitored by the local administration and prevented from shaping the religious or ethical education of young Poles¹³. On 29 December 1866 the Pope in an official speech denounced the policy of the Russian government towards Catholics in Poland and Russia.¹⁴ In retaliation, the Tsar under the pressure of his circle ended the agreement of the concord of 1847. These historical facts illustrate and confirm perfectly the thesis of V.I. Solovoyv that in Russia all views and meanings about Catholic Church was taken in the consideration under the focus of Polish question. It was the hugest obstacle on the way towards Ecclesiastic unity in the Empire.

¹⁰ E. Popov *ibid.*, E. Winter *ibid.*, V.P. Gaiduk *Dialog Rossii s Vatikanom na rubezhe XIX-XX vv. Po novym arkhivnym materialiam*. in *Rossia i Vatikan v kontse XIX-nachale XX veka*, Saint Petersburg: 2003, 100-101.

¹¹ A.Iu. Bedin *P.A. Stolypin i Vatikan*, in “Problemy natsional’noi strategii” №1 (28) 2015, 220

¹² *Moskovskie vedomosti*, № 130, 16 June, 1863.

¹³ See *Vsepoddanneishii otchyot grafa M.N. Murav’eva po upravleniu Severo-Zapadnym kraiem* (1 May 1863 - 17 April 1865). *Russkaya starina*, № 6, 1902, 488, 491, 496.

¹⁴ See *The report of Arinim Bismarck from 14 March, 1866*, DZA, Mezerburg, Rep. 81, Roma IIA, N43, vol. 6.

On the political level relations between Russia and the Holy See entered into a malaise and it seemed that the rapprochement that intellectual circles long hoped for was not destined to be realised. All this changed in 1878 with the appointment in February of Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci as Pope Leo XIII. In 1878 the tenth Russo-Turkish war was finished. The new Pope had to pursue a course of strengthening the influence of the Catholic Church in the new independent in the Balkans (Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania and in the future Bulgaria). In this the Pope needed to enter into a dialogue with Russia because Russia had played the decisive role in liberating these peoples and therefore had tremendous moral authority in the newly liberated states. The new Pope in the year of his election duly appealed to Alexander II with the proposal to restore official relations between Russia and the Vatican¹⁵.

On 30 September 1880 the Pope published the so-called Slavic encyclical “Grande Munus,” in which he expressed his love for the Slavic nations, wrote of the outstanding connection of the Slavic peoples and the Roman Church and proclaimed Cyril and Methodius saints of the Catholic Church. Leo XIII commemorated Cyril and Methodius, the brothers who introduced the Cyrillic alphabet in the 9th century. In a flattering description of their activity, he noted that “through their presence and more especially through their labours,” the Slavic people “have seen the light of the Gospel and have been led from their barbarian ways to a humane and civilized culture.”¹⁶

After the assassination of Alexander II by the *narodniks* in 1881, the Pope immediately established personal contact with Alexander III when he expressed his condolences over his father’s murder. Alexander III not without pleasure received the complements of the pontificate and concluded that the Roman Church was an ideal ally in the strengthening of order and a stable and just world in Europe¹⁷. The Pope’s policy towards Russia was one factor that led him to promote Cardinal Mariano Rampolla, who on 2 June 1887 was appointed to the post of state secretary of the Vatican. In Russian cultural and diplomatic circles Rampolla was viewed as the most likely figure for

¹⁵ See E. Winter Ibid., 321

¹⁶ Grande Munus Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on SS. Cyril and Methodius URL:// http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_30091880_grande-munus.html (accessed on 12.03.2018).

¹⁷ ASV Segr.Stato Spoglio Leone XIII b.1 fasc.6 ff. 7-8

A la Saintete le Pape Leon XIII

Tres Saint Pere – Je charge mon Ambassadeur a Vienne M.d’Oubril de se rendre aupres de Votre Saintete afin de Lui porter l’expression de mes sentiments dans les circonstances solennelles, mais profondement douloureuses, ou je suis appele a monter sur le Trone de mes Ancetres. Ces sentiments sont ceux de la veneration que mon Pere bien-aime avait vouee a Votre Saintete et dont il m’a leque l’heritage. La lettre que Vous m’avez adresse a cette occasion et qui contient tant de temoignages d’affectueuse Sympathie, m’a vivement touche. Elle me fait esperer que je rencontrerai de la part de Votre Saintete les memes dispositions amicales. Jamais l’union de toutes les Eglis et de tous les Etats n’a ete plus necessaire afin de realiser le voeu exprime par Votre Saintete de voir les peuples abandonner les errements funestes qui sont cause du malaise social et retourner aux saints lois de l’Evangile. Car c’est la societe chretienne toute entiere qui est menacee et, sous ce rapport, la mort affreuse du Pere bien-aime et du Souverain martyr que je pleure avec toute la nation russe, est pour le monde entier un bien grave avertissement.

S. Peterbourg. Le 20 Mars 1881 Alexandre

supporting dialogue between Russia and the Holy See.¹⁸ Later the secretary of the Russian mission in the Vatican S.D. Sazonov wrote about cardinal Rampolla as a politician who “possessed a spirit of justice and reconciliation, which he unchangingly demonstrated towards Russia”.¹⁹ Etienne Fouilloux in his book “Les catholiques et l'unité chrétienne du XIX au XX siècle” noticed that Rampolla’s appointment, and also a letter of 19 February 1888 from Alexander III to Leo XIII congratulating him on fifty years of entering holy orders, was the prelude to a new stage of negotiations, which resulted in the appointment of an official representative of the Russian Empire in the Vatican²⁰. In his letter, the Tsar wrote that he completely shared the opinion of the pontificate about the necessity of strengthening the global order and peace, and firmly believed that the Church and the state should unite for the achievement of this goal. The Tsar stressed that representatives of the Roman Catholic Church enjoyed all the freedoms in the framework of the existing laws of the Empire, that personally he would do everything possible in the framework of the restoration of the church hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia, and hoped that the Pope would facilitate in his turn the removal of anti-governmental moods among the Catholic clergy. The letter also mentioned the Tsar’s desire to establish relations of partnership between the Russian government and the Holy See.²¹ Leo XIII in his letter wrote that a most propitious time had come for the consolidation of relations of partnership. The Pope also underlined that he was convinced that the Tsar would aid the expansion of the freedom of worship of Roman Catholics in the Russian Empire. The pontificate also re-assured the Tsar that he would in his turn support him as the secular ruler of the Catholics.²² Later Leo XIII published his address to Polish bishops, which called on them to co-

¹⁸ See Gaiduk, *Rossiya i Vatikan*, ibid., 101.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See E. Fouilloux *Les catholiques et l'unité chrétienne du XIX au XX siècle*, Paris, 1982, 518

²¹ ASV Segr. Stato anno 1888, rubr.247, fasc. 1, ff.117.

Tres Saint Pere ; J'ai recu avec une vive satisfaction la lettre de Votre Saintete est suis heureux de voir que les sentimnets qu Elle m'exprime repondent a ceux dont je suis anime envers Sa personne. Je partage entierement Votre opinion sur la necessite de raffermir partout l'ordre et la paix. Je crois fermement que l'Eglise et l'Etat devraient d'unir dans ce but, afin orie leur autorite respective se prete un muntuel concours. Le Culte Catholique Romain jouit dans mes Etats de toute la liberte compatible avec les bois de L'Empire. – J'ai fait tout ce opei dependait de moi pour satisfaire aux besoins religieux de mes sujets appartenant a cette communion, en favorisant le retablissement de la hierarchie ecclesiastique, Je serais pret a developper ces bons germes, si tout les membres du Clerge Catholique Romain se montraient penetres des vues elevees de Votre Saintete et ne se laissaient parfois inspirer par des considerations politiques de nature a saper l'autorite de l'Etat – Je compte d'ailleurs sur l'esprit eclaire. C'est avec une vive satisfaction que je verrais se retablir les relations amicales qui existaient entre mon Gouvernement et le Saint-Siege, si ces relations peuvent contribuer au but ofui, autant qu'a Votre Saintete, me tient a coeur. – Gentilhomme de la Chamber Isvolsky, que je charge de Vous porter cette lettre, est au courant de mes vues et pourra s'en expliquer avec le Cardinal Secretaire d'Etat – Je prie votre Saintete de recevoir l'assurance de ma haute veneration. St. Peterbourg le 16 Fevrier 1888 Alexandre

²² ASV Segr. Stato anno 1888, ibid., ff. 104-106.

A Sa Majeste Alexandre III Empereur de toutes les russies

Majeste, Le gracieux telegramme, par lequel il a plu a Votre Majeste Due si les conditions religieuses ou' se trouvent, pour le present, les sujets catholiques de Votre Majeste de Nous trasmettre ses compliments et ses felicitations a l'occasion de Notre jubile' sacerdotal, Nous a ete particulierement agreable. Aussi, apres avoir immediatement fait parvenir, par la meme voie, a votre Majeste l'expression de Notre reconnaissance desirons – Nous aujourd'hui la lui exprimer encore plus manifestement par la presente. De mem que par l'acte susdit Votre Majeste a voulu Nous donner une preuve de ses sentiments d'amitie, que Nous accuillons toujours favorablement, ainsi Nous plait il de lui attester de nouveau la haute estime et les dispositions amicales, que, depuis longtemps Nous professons Nous-meme envers Votre Auguste Personne. Ce qui Nous invile a Nous onvrir ainsi une nouvelle fois a Votre Majeste, et a lui faire part du constant desir et projet que Nous nourrissons de favoriser partout l'ordre et la paix, et de preter tout Notre con cours pour procurer le bonheur des peuples et des gouvernements, c'est de voir le rincipe d'autorite universellement combatte, et la societe

operate with the authorities of the Russian Empire and support the monarchy. Thus, all formal barriers to the establishment of official relations between Russia and the Vatican were removed. In May 1888 an agreement was signed and A.P. Izvolsky became the first resident ambassador of the Russian Empire in the Holy See.

The seriousness of the Pope's interest in a rapprochement with Russia framed the discussions of the intellectual elite in Russia about the perspectives of inter-confessional dialogue. Modern researcher and archivist Laura Pettinaroli noticed that the last quarter of the nineteenth century is marked by renewed Catholic interest in Russia. This interest had deep intellectual roots and it is also was the result of a strictly religious tension of seeking Christian unity²³.

The Holy See and the ecumenical project of Vladimir Solovyov

The most significant intervention on questions of inter-faith dialogue was that of the philosopher Vladimir Solovyov who outlined the possibilities and character of the reunification of the Churches in a number of influential works on theocratic themes. Laura Pettinaroli wrote that Solovyov considered his country as a new missionary front in a context of the global expansion of Catholicism²⁴. After all, for ten years, Solovyov was passionately consumed by the idea of uniting the Churches. He dreamed that it would lead to a Christian renaissance that would spread throughout Europe. Novalis called Europe *Corpus Cristianum*, noting that the emergence of European culture took place in the horizon of the higher – Christian values. This idea of German romanticism became fundamental for V.I. Solovyov. The philosopher was convinced that the separation of Church is the greatest sin against the greatest virtue – love. Also Solovyov was convinced that harmony in Europe required not only the spiritual unification of the two Christian churches, but also the creation of a single European "universal theocracy", a political body led by the Russian Emperor and the Pope.

In 1883 in the journal *Rus'* a number of Solovyov's articles were published under the title "The Great Debate and Christian Politics". In this work Solovyov formulated the principles of his project and the first theses in challenging the Christian West and the Christian East, which could only be

de plus en plus travaillee et mince par des doctrines seductrices et perverses. Due si les conditions religieuses ou se trouvent pour le present, les sujets catholiques de Votre Majeste, Nous preoccupent beaucoup, a cause des obstacles qu'on oppose au libre exercice de leur religion, les bienveillantis dispositions dont Votre Majeste veut bien Nous dire qu'elle est animee sur ce point, ouvrent Notre Coeur a l'esperance de voir, selon Nos voeux, une amelioration s'accomplir dans ses vastes domaines, quant a' la situation de l'Eglise catholique. Nous attendons ce jour, pour Notre part, avec anxiete, mais aussi avec la plus grande confiance en la magnanimité de Votre Majeste, dont la haute intelligence aura compris sans peine combien, de part et d'autre, il serait avantageux de retablir les anciennes et amicales relations, que existaient antrefois entre la Russie et le Saint Siege, et qui Nous unissent et lient a plusieurs autres Etats. Sur ce Nous prions Votre Majeste d'agreer les voeux ardents que Nous faisons monter vers le Tres-Haut, pour qu'il daigne con Server longuement et couvrir d'une speciale protection Votre Auguste Personne ainsi que toute la Famille Imperiale et la fasse prosperer de plus en plus avec les peuples soumis a son sceptre puissant. Du Vatican, le 28 Janvier 1888

²³ See L. Pettinaroli *La politique russe du Saint-Siège (1905-1939)*, Ecole française de Rome, 2015, 76

²⁴ Laura Pettinaroli *ibidem*, 76

rationality overcome through the reunification of the Churches. The main conclusion of the work was the statement that neither the historical West, nor the historical East, had any long-term prospects before the moment of their re-unification. Initially, the philosopher defined his project as the “divine-human sacred-secular union”. In practice Solovyov entered into a polemic against the internal Church policy of K.P. Pobedonostsev. Solovyov considered Pobedonostsev’s efforts to found a national religion to be the first steps on the path to a crisis not only of the Empire, but also of Christianity. He did not accept the Chief Prosecutor’s assumption that Russia needed its own religion, its own Russian Church, an Imperial Church. For Solovyov a Russian Church isolated from the universal Catholic Church was in itself valueless and represented merely the attribute and “sanction of exclusive nationalism”. Accordingly, for Solovyov the idea of “a Christian state” that would adopt “a Christian policy” took centre stage. The Christian truth, in Solovyov’s view, the unchanging existence of nations and the rights of nationalities maintains. The philosopher noted in his work “The Russian Idea” that the negative attitude to the Catholic Church is an indication of the Orthodox Church’s fear before her Catholic essence, her universalness.

The ideas of Solovyov attracted the attention of the Roman Catholic clergy, above all Josip Juraj Strossmayer (a Croatian bishop who the Vatican considered a pan-Slavist and Russophile)²⁵. The bishop stood for the autonomy of Slavic states within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and for the unification of southern Slav nations in a single federation and was the leader of the “People’s Party.” Strossmayer wished to bring together the Eastern and Western churches. Thanks to his efforts, a concord between the Vatican and Montenegro was signed. He also actively sought improved relations with Russia. In 1883 he wrote to the famous Croatian canon and scholar Franjo Raški “I’m publicly trying to demonstrate that between us (both churches) there is not the slightest dogmatic difference; I have in this respect convinced even the Holy See... We should remain what we are; the only thing we should endeavor to accomplish is to form a single moral and juridical body in which nobody should lose anything dear to him; on the contrary, from this mutual contact we shall enrich what we already have”²⁶. The idea of Strossmayer fully overlapped with the views of Solovyov. In 1884 Strossmayer’s close friend Raški travelled to Russia and was inspired by Solovyov’s ideas, which he reported back to the bishop. Strossmayer then wrote to Solovyov with his blessing for promoting the union of the churches and invited him to his residence in Diakovo²⁷. Solovyov wrote an enthusiastic letter back to Strossmayer in which he noted: “From this union the fates of Russia, the Slavic nations, and the whole world depend. We, Russians, the Orthodox and

²⁵ Ante Kadic *Vladimir Soloviev and Bishop Strossmayer*, in *American Slavic and East European Review*, Volume 20, Issue 2 April (1961), 164.

²⁶ As quoted in Ante Kadic (see above, n.30), 167.

²⁷ Konstantin Mochulsky *Vladimir Solovyov: zhizn i uchenie* YMCA Press, (Paris 1936), 134.

the entire East can do nothing until we have redeemed the sin of splitting the Church, until we have given our due to the highest church authority”²⁸. Solovyov marked the letter with the words: “Moscow. On the day of the divine conception of the Virgin Mother, 1885.”²⁹ He promised to travel to Zagreb in order to discuss “common great deed of the union of the Churches”³⁰.

Solovyov did indeed visit Zagreb and there published the first volume of his work “The History and Future of Theocracy” in 1887. Solovyov called this book “my theocratic Leviathan”; here, he set out the principal demands essential for ecclesiastical unity:

1. Only the Roman Church is *mater et magistra omnium ecclesiarum*.
2. The difference between the authority of the Pope, as the successor of Apostle Peter, the shepherd and unblemished teacher of the Catholic Church, and his administrative authority, as the Patriarch of the West.
3. In the event of the restoration of the unity of the Church, the Russian Church should keep its rituals, autonomy of organization and administration as a matter of course.³¹

Solovyov was convinced that there was an obvious benefit for all parties: Rome would acquire a true defender in the shape of the Russian Tsar and also a faithful flock in the shape of the pious Russian people. Solovyov wrote that the Russian Empire, united in its absolutism, only represented the threat of struggle and endless wars. However, should it wish to serve the Universal Church and the task of social organization, it could introduce into the family of nations peace and glory, and that such a union was therefore necessary. In the summer of 1888, in Paris, Solovyov wrote the first two books of his work “Russia and The Universal Church”; in November, he wrote a long preface in Zagreb. The book was published in Paris in French in 1889.

The Russian philosopher S.L. Frank pointed out that “his (Solovyov’s, EB) pro-Catholic feelings were at their peak when he wrote it. The book passionately attacks Slavophile doctrine and the

²⁸ Vl.S. Solovyov *Letters* (ed. E.L. Radlov), in 4 Vol. Vol.3. (Saint Petersburg 1908–1923), 115

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Vladimir Solovyov distinguished “papstvo” and “papizm” as two different concepts, which he dedicated a whole chapter to in his work “The Great Argument and Christian Politics.” The philosopher defined the true papacy (*papstvo*), which represented one of the three authorities of universal theocracy, and the impure current of “papism” (*papizm*), the use of papal authority in the search for political domination and the management of the world with earthly means. Solovyov believed that the latter “offended” the papacy because it subordinated the Pope’s office to state power, and thus frustrated all attempts at the unification of the Eastern and Western Churches. He fundamentally disagreed with the view that the spiritual leadership of the Church in its relations with the state should involve the affiliation of the Pope to the ruling hierarchy of secular power. The Pope is the highest clerical authority, not a secular ruler, while the state in Solovyov’s view is a free member of the theocracy, not a part of the papal authority. The eternal city of Rome should never be associated with papism.

subordination of the Church to the state in Byzantium and Russia; the ambitious Byzantine church and state are named in full measure as responsible for the split in the Church.”³²

In the first part Solovyov demonstrated that true spiritual leadership was absent in the Russian official church, among the Old Believers, and also among the Eastern patriarchies. The Russian Church, despite the third canon law of the 7th Ecumenical Council (Second Council of Nicaea, 787), was run by the secular authority of the Tsar. In the split Solovyov saw the greatest ignorance, an ultra-democratic aspiration and the spirit of rebellion. But a united power was necessary for the earthly Church in order for it to have faultless authority. Solovyov did not accept the position that there was no true Church on earth and in its place instead was only the realm of the Anti-Christ; the philosopher believed that the true Church had survived in the West. In “Russia and The Universal Church” he wrote that the church had always been governed like a monarchy, the head of which was originally the Apostle Peter and then his successors in the shape of the Roman Popes. Solovyov also argued that the Roman Empire was the model of the Christian Church. The centre of the Christian Ecumene was situated, is situated and will continue to be situated precisely in Rome, in the city of Saint Peter. Saint Peter was the stone of the Church of Christ. Solovyov wrote: “The Pope’s Rome became for the whole Christian world what Caesar’s Rome was for the pagan world. As such, the pontificate in Rome is the highest shepherd and teacher of all the Church”³³. The universal Church was perfect in that it based itself on the agreement and unity of its members. But it still needed a unifying and reconciling force, which could defend the postulates of the Church “in the presence of division.” Such power could only be monarchic. From this, Solovyov went on to elucidate upon the three pillars on which his project of “universal theocracy” would rest, namely the power of the first priest, i.e. the Roman Pope, the power of the monarch, i.e. the Russian Tsar, and the power of the philosopher-prophet.

Bishop Strossmayer wrote to Rome about Solovyov’s project and even wanted to organize for him a personal audience with the Pope. The author of the intellectual biography of the philosopher, K. Mochulskii, observed that in his letter to cardinal Rampolla, Strossmayer enclosed a *Pro memoria* note prepared by Solovyov for the occasion and addressed to the Cardinal State Secretary and the Pope.³⁴

³² Semyon Frank *Tri besedy o Vladimire Solovyove* in “Voprosy filosofii,” №6, (2017), 110.

³³ Vladimir Solovyov *Rossiya i Vselenskaya Tserkov’* (translated from the French by G.A. Rachinsky), (Moscow 1911), 250.

³⁴ Konstantin Mochulsky, (see above, n.34); p. 134. N.O. Lossky *History of Russian thought*, (Moscow 1991), 100; Semyon Frank (see above, n.39), 110-112; Sergey. Solovyov *Vladimir Solovyov: Zhizn i tvorcheskaya evoliutsiya* [Vladimir Solovyov: life and creative evolution], (Moscow 1997), 223.

Solovyov himself wrote in a letter to his brother Mikhail and explained that he had spent 18 days in Diakovo, and during all these days he had been preparing an explanatory note about the union of the Churches for the Pope³⁵, which Strossmayer sent to the Vatican³⁶.

It is known for certain that Strossmayer had also dispatched Solovyov's work "The Russian Idea" to Rome. In his cover letter to Cardinal Rampolla, the bishop introduced Solovyov as the main mediator of the idea of uniting the Churches in Russia³⁷.

Solovyov himself wrote to his brother to say that "I have been these days in Diakovo with Strossmayer [...] Strossmayer himself is ill, upset and has aged. With me he has been, as always, exceptionally considerate. He sent the Pope "*L'idea russe*" The Pope said "*Bella idea, ma fuor d'un miracolo é cosa impossibile*". I am very glad that I visited Strossmayer. Probably I will not have the opportunity to see him again."³⁸ These words of the Pope are given by some researchers³⁹ in support of the fact that the Holy See refused to assist Solovyov in realizing his project, recognizing it as impracticable. But it should be noted, that Cardinal Rampolla himself was interested in Solovyov's project and studied the materials about it in the European press. He wrote to the French nuncio on August 15, 1888, and asked him to send the texts of V.I.S. Solovyov about the return of Russia to the bosom of the Catholic Church⁴⁰. Also the cardinal Rampolla also had received a letter from Strossmayer with attachments on "Russia and The Universal Church"⁴¹. In the Cracow paper "Czas" it was pointed out further that the Pope read "Russia and the Universal Church" and an extract from a letter of reply from cardinal Rampolla to bishop Strossmayer was cited. The state secretary wrote: "The Holy Father with pleasure received the book "La Russie et l'Eglise universelle" by V. Solovyov. Having listened to what your Most Reverend Eminence at length and

³⁵ This note was published in Brussel's edition of Solovyov's Letters

³⁶ V.I.S. Solovyov *Letters* (see above, n.33), 103

³⁷ ASV Segr. Stato anno 1897, rubr. 283, fasc.1 ff.44-45

Eminentissime ac Reverendissime S.R.E. Cardinalis Secretarie Status

Honori mihi est mittendi Eminentia Vostra unum exemplar opusculi L'idee russe. Scriptum opusculum ejs per Vladimirus Soloviev illum irsum, quem ego Rome agent expectataris.

³⁸ Vladimir Solovyov *Letters* (see above, n 37), 118-119.

³⁹ Konstantin Mochulsky, (see above, n.34); Sergey. Solovyov Vladimir Solovyov: Zhizn i tvorcheskaya evoliutsiya [Vladimir Solovyov: life and creative evolution], (Moscow 1997), 223. Randall A. Poole The Greatness of Vladimir Solov'ev: A Review Essay, in *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue canadienne des slavistes* vol. L, No. 1-2, (2008), 349-371, Vyacheslav Serbinenko Solovyov (Moscow, 2000), 85

⁴⁰ ASV Segr. Stato anno 1888 rubr. 248 fasc.1 ff. 202-203

15 Agosto 1888 A nunzio Apostolico Parigi 'Si interessa ad procurarmi gli opuscoli pubblicati dal Prof. Wladimiro Solawieff sul ritorno della Russia alla chiesa cattolica, di cui si occupa la stampa. Mi tenga al corrente di quanto concerne questa stampa del movimento du si cronaco propagando in proposito'. Rampolla

Em. Cardinal Rampolla Roma, Parigi 18 agosto 1888. 'Invio opuscoli: Non ho scritto sul movimento daV.E.B., perche qui lo si va venuta puramente academico, e non si ritiene serio l'autore. Nunzio Apostolico'

⁴¹ ASV Segr. Stato anno 1897 rubr.283 fasc.1 f. 144

Eminentissime ac Reverendissime S.R.E. Cardinalis Secretarie Status [illegibly] Quoad Auctorem operis "La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle" auieum meum Vladimirus Sollowiew, ille plene ac perfecte catholicus est non solum interin fide et convictiune Sua; verum etiam exterior Sui confessione et testimonio. Ille frequentis confitetu et comunicat frofitendo Semper fidum catholicum. [illegibly] ecclesiam russicam quamquam factu ab ecclesia universale separata Siv, jure la 'men et positiva falsi [illegibly] pofessione haudquaquam a vera [illegibly] ecclesia separatam esse.'

in detail wrote about this text, his Holiness was astonished at the talent of the author and expressed his most lively desire that the one who recognises the need of church unity, enlightened by the light of the Divine, returned as soon as possible to the fold of Christ. At the moment his Holiness wishes that your Most Reverend Eminence expressed to the author gratitude for the copy that was sent and together with him to deliver a prayer to heaven, let the whole Slavic people return to unity, such that for it, and for the Catholic Church, it would be greatest blessing⁴².

Another interesting fact, that in 1894, in the journal “Revue des deux Mondes”, the article of Benedictine Gerard Van Caloun “Rome et la Russie” was published. This article expressed the same thoughts about the practical form of the reunification of the Orthodox Church with Rome, as Solovyov wrote in the *Pro memoria*. It should be noticed, that Van Caloun was the spokesman for the thoughts, tastes and sympathies of Leo XIII⁴³.

K. Mochulski claimed that Strossmayer organised an audience for Solovyov with the Pope in 1888 during his visit to Europe. More recently Ray Ryland second Mochulsky and added that Solovyov received a papal benediction in recognition of his efforts.⁴⁴ Yet Solovyov himself in his letters to his friends and family did not refer to his meeting with the Pope. Neither is there any information about such a meeting in Solovyov’s correspondence with the Russian Jesuits Ivan Martynov or Pavel Pierling with whom the philosopher discussed his proposals for the unification of the Churches in detail.

In terms of the Pope’s reception of Solovyov’s ideas, it is obvious that theocratic project could not arouse the interest of Leo XIII. However, being a practical politician, the Pope understood that it would not be feasible in practice. While Pope Leo XIII received Solovyov’s project pragmatically, he did not abandon his course of rapprochement with Russia and his idea, that the Papacy should become the centre of Christian Unity. Leo XIII also actively supported initiatives of researchers and historians who were studying the mutual relations of Russia and the Holy See, and to this end made sure that they had access to the necessary archive materials. By illustrating the close contacts of Russia and the Vatican in the course of many centuries of history, Leo XIII saw an important justification for dialogue between the two states. The Pope underlined his views in a conversation with cardinal Rampolla, when the latter gave him a copy of a book entitled “La Russie et le Saint Siege.” Its author, Pavel Pierling, was a Russian Catholic priest and Jesuit who in 1877 had become

⁴² Cit. Iuriy Govorukha-Otrok *VI. S. Solovyov i papa*, [Vladimir Solovyov and Pope] in *Russko-pravoslavnaya idea* (compiled A.D. Kaplin), Institut russkoi tsivilizatsii, (Moscow 2015), 354. (first published in *Moskovskie vedomosti* December 28 1889); see also *Czas*. 1889, nr 241 (19 X)

⁴³ See M.N. Gavrilin *Vvedenie k russkoj idee* [Introduction to L’idee russe], (Brussel, 1987), 4

⁴⁴ See *Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov, The Russian Church and the Papacy: An Abridgment of Russia and the Universal Church*, ed. Ray Ryland, San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2001

the director of the Slavic library in Paris.⁴⁵ Pierling was also a close friend of Solovyov and agreed with him on questions related to ecclesiastical unity. His four-volume work was based on archive materials, including those held in the Vatican library. Together with a letter dated 22 April 1896 Pierling via the offices of cardinal Rampolla sent to Pope Leo XIII the first volume of his work and requested permission to receive copies of documents from the Vatican archive from the period of the time of troubles in Russia. Pierling received a letter from Cardinal Rampolla straight away that expressed the gratitude of the Holy Father for his work and communicated the exceptional interest of the Pope in studies of the history of relations between Russia and the Holy See.⁴⁶

Another interesting fact is that in the encyclical “Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae”, subtitled “The Reunion of Christendom” (1894), Leo XIII echoed Vladimir Solovyov’s logic and arguments regarding “the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff” and the necessity of the union of the Churches.⁴⁷ Pope Leo XIII appealed to non-Catholic Christians “to put an end to their dissensions and return again to Unity,” and then went on to say: “First of all, then, we cast an affectionate look upon the East from whence in the beginning came forth the salvation of the world. Yes, and the yearning desire of Our heart bids us conceive and hope that the day is not far distant when the Eastern Churches, so illustrious in their ancient faith and glorious past, will return to the fold they have abandoned. We hope it all the more, that the distance separating them from Us is not so great: nay, with some few exceptions, we agree so entirely on other heads that, in defence of the Catholic Faith, we often have recourse to reasons and testimony borrowed from the teaching, the Rites, and Customs of the East”.⁴⁸ Among the Orthodox nations to whom the Pope appealed, he especially identified the Slavs, undoubtedly with Orthodox Russia in mind. Immediately after encyclical was

⁴⁵ ASV Segr. Stato anno 1896 rubr. 1D fasc.12 p.17

Paris 22/4 1896. A Sua Eminenza il Cardinale Rampolla Roma. Emineza Ardiseo pregare Vostra Eminenza d’offerire a Sua Santita il primo volume del mio lavoro: La Russie et le Saint-Siege. Avendomi l’Archivio Vaticano fornito alcune notizie fin’ora non consente nella storia russa, si puo sperare che cosi saranno dissipati almeno alcune ombre. Su un altro volume avro da parlare del famoso Imperatore Demetrio, il quale fu in corrispondenza con Clemente VIII. Paolo V. Questa storia intricatissima ha di perpetua sorgente d’accuse contra la santa Sede, e si framerebbe di avere sopra di cio un poco piu di luce. Ora vi sou documenti nell’Archivio del Santo-Uffizio i quali potrebbero forse chiarire varii dubbii. Parigi 35 rue de Levus 22 aprile 1896. Scrittore Paolo Pierling

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.21 Berd. Padre Secondando con piacere il desiderio espresso mi da S.P. col Suo foglio del 22 aprile ho presentato al santo Padre l’esemplare invariato del primo Volume del suo lavoro ‘La Russie et le Saint Siege’. Sua Santita si e’ degnanta accoglierlo con particolare gradimento e nel commettermi di ringraziarne la P.S. ha mostrato di interessarsi vivamente all’argomento da Lei trattato. Avendo poi anche indicarlo al Santo Padre il desiderio da Lei manifestato di poter aver copia di alcuni documenti conservati nell’Archivio del Santo Uffizio, Sua Santita ha accennato che se la P.S. avesse occasione di fare una breve gita a Roma, la cosa si potrebbe regolare piu facilmente. Mi e’ grado intanto l’espressione della particolare benevolenza con cui sono di S.P. 1 Maggio 1896 Affmo nel Signore.

See also about the researches of P. Pierling in S. Yakovenko *Pavel Pierling (1840-1922), Yevgeniy Shmurlo (1853-1934) i ikh issledovaniya po istorii otnosheniy mezhdu Rossiyey i svyatym Prestolom (XV-XIX vv.)* [Pavel Pierling and Evgeny Shmurlo (1853-1934) and their research on the history of relations between Russia and the Holy See] in *Rossiya i Vatikan v kontse XIX – pervoy treti XX vv.* (Saint Petersburg 2003)

⁴⁷ It was translated into Russian by the Russian theologian Alexandr Pavolovich Lopukhin (1852-1904), who described the text as worthy of the closest scrutiny.

⁴⁸ Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Reunion of Christendom 20 June 1894 URL://<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/113praec.htm> (accessed on 12.03.2018)

published in “Moniteur de Rome” were published several articles, where authors had the mutual idea, that the Union between Russia Empire and the Holy See could become the source of fresh power for Russia. Journal “Les Echos d’Orient” published an article, where the author, discussing Pope’s encyclical, referred to V.I. Solovyov ideas⁴⁹. A.A. Kireev in his article “Analysis of Pope’s encyclical “Praeclara gratulationis testimonia”⁵⁰ critically accepted such position and references to Vladimir Solovyov in papal press. Kireev proceeded from the traditional position of the Slavophiles, elaborated previously by A.S. Khomyakov in “The Church is One” and F.I. Tiutchev in “Russia and the West,” that all Russian Christians longed for union only on condition that the dogmas of the Churches of the seven Universal councils were observed: “the question is about dogma, about what forms the essence of belief. The Pope will take on the duty of protecting us from the state – that is all well and good, but who will defend us from the Pope? From his new heretical dogmas? There can be no doubt about the answer: nobody! The state, the world, enjoying material force, can fulfil various unlawful acts in the sphere of church life, but they are powerless in the sphere of belief where they do not have the right or the possibility to change belief, but the Pope has both the right and the means”⁵¹.

Regarding V.I. Solovyov’s theocratic project, not only the Slavophiles critically perceived the philosopher’s idea of reconciliation with the Catholic West, but also political authorities did not support it⁵². K.P. Pobedonostsev regularly noted that any activity of Solovyov harmed Russia and Orthodoxy, and, therefore, couldn’t be tolerated⁵³. In fact only a small group of Russian Catholics supported Solovyov’s project. The Solovyov’s idea of unification under the authority of the Pope and Russian Tsar did not produce the desired effect. Conservative philosopher and one of the close Solovyov’s friends K.N. Leontiev ironically called it “to bow before the Pope”. Solovyov himself in his letter to the editors of the journal “*Novoe vremya*” on May 14, 1897, noted: “I have never proposed any external official union with Rome, first, because I consider it impossible, and secondly, because I find it undesirable, and thirdly, because there was never any authority to negotiate with it from the powers that be from one side or the other <...> the first practical step towards putting the Church case on a truly Christian soil is an open, comprehensive and fearless discussion of all religious and ecclesiastical issues <...> At present time the correct inner movement of religious thought and feeling is impossible. Without such movement, the spiritual life of society is weakening, in this situation what can the external, formal union of Churches give,

⁴⁹ See about Alexandr Kireev *Collected works*. Part 2, Politics and Polemics (Saint Peterburg 2012), 589

⁵⁰ The article was published in brochure with Russian translation of encyclical “Praeclara gratulationis testimonia”

⁵¹ Alexandr Kireev *ibidem*, 28

⁵² See Vyacheslav Serbinenko *Solovyov* (Moscow, 2000), 82

⁵³ See Vladimir Solovyov *Letters* (see above n. 33), 180

except for an extra nightmare?”⁵⁴. The organization of the Church and European Society as described by Solovyov had a clearly defined utopian character. It is worth adding here that he re-examined his project in his last work “War, Progress, and the End of History: Three Conversations”. But despite its utopianism, his initial optimism regarding the imminent unification of the East and West inspired many generations of Russian thinkers, among them V.V. Ivanov, S.M. Solovyov, S.N. Bulgakov, N.A. Berdyev, E.N. Trubetskoi, S.L. Frank.

In the split of Christianity, Solovyov saw a phenomenon contradicting the will of Christ and the spirit of Christianity. Towards the end of his life, Solovyov was Orthodox in his conviction that Orthodoxy was the purest form of Christianity; he was a Catholic, believing that Rome was the legitimate center of the Christian humanity; and he was a Protestant in his inner freedom in relation to all church institutions. He called this religious attitude “the religion of the Holy Spirit” or “The Universal Religion”. Russian philosopher N.A. Berdyaev wrote: “Vladimir Solovyov, as with Dostoevsky, went beyond historical Christianity, and this is his significance for religion”⁵⁵.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that Solovyov was not a church politician, nor a secular theologian, but a mystic and philosopher. As a Christian humanist, he followed Dante’s example in writing about universal, Christian humanity. According to his intentions, his project of universal theocracy should solve European contradictions. Theocracy, headed by the Pope and a Christian monarch, would revive and make great again all the humanistic ideas of Europe.

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