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### The Trinity in History and Society

*The Russian Idea, Polish Messianism, and the Post-Secular Reason*

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VLADIMIR SOLOVIEV STAYED IN Krakow for a few weeks at the turn of 1888 and 1889. He was returning from Paris, where he had formulated his great theocratic and ecumenical program, to Saint Petersburg, where he hoped to realize it; Krakow was at that time the last city before the Russian border. He stopped here to finish a secret memorandum for Tsar Alexander III, by which he believed he would be able to convert him to his own ideas.<sup>1</sup> Soloviev met a few friends in Krakow and discussed with them his philosophy and perhaps his secret plans. Apparently, one of Soloviev's Krakow friends was Professor Stanisław Tarnowski (1837–1917), the great Polish historian, literary critic and conservative politician.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after the visit, Tarnowski published a detailed review of Soloviev's *L'idée Russe* in his journal *Przegląd Polski* to which Soloviev replied soon after in the "Lettre à la Rédaction."<sup>3</sup> A

1. For details of Soloviev's "Krakow affair" see Solovyov, *Vladimir Solovyov*, 350 and Moiseyev, "Tayna krakowskiego dela."

2. Soloviev and Tarnowski met probably on the customary Thursday parties arranged by Count Paweł Popiel (1807–1892) in his house on św. Jana street 20 in Krakow, see Popiel, *Rodzina Popielów*, 66, 73.

3. Tarnowski, "Głos sumienia z Rosyi;" Soloviev, "Lettre à la Rédaction," see also brief Tarnowski's rejoinder "Odpowiedź." The first Russian translation of Soloviev's letter was published in émigré journal *Novyy Zhurnal* by the Krakow scholar Grzegorz Przebinda, see his *Włodzimierz Sołowjow*, 222.

few months later Tarnowski published extensive commentary on Soloviev's new book, *La Russie et l'Église universelle*,<sup>4</sup> which was unfortunately left without answer. Tarnowski's papers was the first serious Polish, and perhaps also first European, reaction to Soloviev's great theocratic writings.

I am not going to analyze here the discussion between Tarnowski and Soloviev, which undoubtedly deserves careful examination. In this paper I would like to develop one quite obvious observation made by Tarnowski. He noticed that Soloviev's ideas were very close to the doctrine of Polish Messianists, particularly Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–59) and August Cieszkowski (1814–94). Tarnowski wrote,

Though it is unfortunately very probable that Mr. Soloviev has never read them, and therefore he found his way of thought without their help, nevertheless these authors have at least priority in order of time; I do not want to discuss whether they have also priority in the depth and the power of thinking.<sup>5</sup>

Afterwards, many other Polish and Russian scholars indicated similarities between the Russian Idea and Polish Messianism. For instances, Marian Zdziechowski compared Soloviev and Andrzej Towiański,<sup>6</sup> Nikolai Berdyaev found similarities between Soloviev and August Cieszkowski<sup>7</sup> and Andrzej Walicki indicated a closeness between Soloviev and Adam Mickiewicz.<sup>8</sup>

I would like to develop Tarnowski's thesis by comparing two works by Krasiński and Soloviev. Krasiński in the unpublished treatise *On the Position of Poland from the Divine and Human Perspective* (1841–1847) tried to reveal the destiny of Poland in the divine plan of Providence. Exactly the same attempt in regard to Russian history was made forty years later by Soloviev in his famous lecture *The Russian Idea* (1888). Soloviev wanted to reveal “not that what nation thinks about itself in time, but that what God thinks about it in eternity,”<sup>9</sup> that is, in Krasiński words, the position of Russia from the Divine perspective. I would like to focus on their insights on

4. Tarnowski, “Wykład idei.”

5. Ibid., 34; Tarnowski suggested that some of the common elements in Polish and Russian thought stem from the common inspiration of German Idealism; I would rather point to a shared Christian tradition and the recent influences of French post-revolutionary religious thought, see Walicki, “Philosophie de l'Histoire,” 189, “Mickiewicz's Paris Lectures,” 75, and *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism*, 239–77.

6. Zdziechowski, *Pesymizm, romantyzm a podstawy chrześcijaństwa*, 414.

7. Berdyaev, *Russian Idea*, 228.

8. Walicki, “Mickiewicz's Paris Lectures,” “Solov'ev's Theocratic Utopia,” and *Russia, Poland, and Universal Regeneration*. For an attempt to analyze the possible influences of Polish Messianism on Soloviev see Strémooukhoff, *Vladimir Soloviev*, 196, 363–4.

9. Solov'ev, “Russkaya ideya,” 220.

human nature, universal history and social order. It is amazing how close they were to each other in these fundamental issues. Nevertheless they differed gravely in the details of their visions: Krasiński believed that Poland was the only country able to realize Christian principles in social and political life, whereas Soloviev granted that great mission to Russia.

I believe that both the Russian Idea and Polish Messianism have not only historical, but also great contemporary importance. It seems that these two intellectual movements in the same vein undermined the secular dualism so characteristic for modernity, and placed God at the center of human life, history and society. In this, Russian and Polish Christian thinkers anticipated the crucial ideas of Nouvelle Théologie, Second Vatican Council, Radical Orthodoxy, the School of Granada and other recent fashionable currents in Christian post-secular thought.<sup>10</sup> Apparently, they simply went beyond secular reason before it was cool.

## Christ and Human Nature

Christianity offers a straightforward answer to the question of human nature. When Pilate pointed at Jesus and said “Ecce homo” (John 19:5), he actually made the most proper, although merely ostensive definition of man. Indeed, Jesus Christ is the paradigm of man. To be a true man is to imitate Christ. Now, if being a true man involves uniting with God, then religious life is not something external for man, but rather something which realizes human nature. If Divine humanity is the true humanity, then divinization is the true humanization. This is the fundamental principle of Christian anthropology, which overcomes the modern dualism between self-sufficient nature on the one hand and optional supernature on the other, and calls for the positive reintegration of all human reality in Christ.

It seems that this fundamental intuition might be found both in Krasiński and Soloviev. Krasiński starts his treatise by declaring that man is called to “complete its own creation” and to “grow” towards God.<sup>11</sup> The end of this growing is given in Christ, since His life was “the archmastery of life.”<sup>12</sup> More particular, Christ “revealed clearly, convincingly and vividly, by words, but most of all by acts, that the human nature is called to divinization, if only it agrees and freely fits his will to will of God.”<sup>13</sup> Krasiński

10. In the interpretation of the dialectics of secular reason I rely most of all on the brilliant essay by Msgr. Javier Martínez in *Beyond Secular Reason*.

11. Krasiński, “O stanowisku Polski,” 5.

12. *Ibid.*, 8.

13. *Ibid.*

consequently developed that idea. The fulfillment of that calling is the same as the realization of the human nature. Therefore there is no worry about the supposed loss of humanity in divinity. "The more you unite with God, the more you become yourself; since if the result of this uniting was different, you would be not driven toward life, but toward death, and God finally would be your eternal death."<sup>14</sup> It is so because grace does not destroy, but rather perfects nature. Krasiński went on and claimed that divinization is in fact a natural objective of man. In some sense, there is nothing miraculous about it. "Our hitherto mundane nature is a *miracle* of our refractoriness and embroilment, and that what is usually called *miracle* is rather our inner, ultimate and true nature."<sup>15</sup>

The same anthropological principle might be found in Soloviev, although not exactly in the relatively short *Russian idea*, but rather in *Lectures on Divine humanity*, where he gave a more profound anthropological basis for his historiosophical and political constructions. Soloviev, in the same vein as Krasiński, believed that the divinization is the proper object of man and the personal life of each individual men and the history of universal mankind should be a processes of achieving that great goal. Soloviev expressed the fundamental principle of Christocentric anthropology perhaps even in more provocative way: "The human person can unite with the divine principle freely, from within, only because the person is in a certain sense divine, or more precisely, participates in Divinity."<sup>16</sup> In a subsequent passage Soloviev explained in what sense man might be called divine. The human person is divine since it has the capacity to be divinized. "Divinity belongs to human beings and to God, but with one difference: God possess Divinity in eternal actuality, whereas human beings can only attain it, can only have it granted to them, and in the present state there is only possibility, only striving."<sup>17</sup> This possibility is essential for man and its realization is in fact a self-realization. Becoming God does not exclude but rather presupposes and reinforces being a man. Religion is therefore a fulfillment, not an exclusion of human nature.

Religion is the reunification of humanity and the world with the absolute, integral principle. That principle is integral or all-embracing, excluding nothing. Therefore, true reunification with it, true religion, cannot exclude, suppress, or forcibly subject to

14. *Ibid.*, 25

15. *Ibid.*, 28.

16. Solovyov, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, 17, translation improved.

17. *Ibid.*, 23

itself any element whatever, any living force in humanity or in its world.<sup>18</sup>

We should not therefore be afraid of religious life in temporality and divinization in eternity. We would not lose anything, but would rather win everything.

## Messianism and Missionism

Jesus Christ revealed the true human nature. This revelation is important not only for individual human life, but also for human communities. We are all called to imitate the life of Christ, both in our personal and social lives. In the case of individual men it leads to personal salvation, while in the case of communities it involves the building of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Both Krasiński and Soloviev were particularly interested in that second historical process. They believed that people are supposed to realize Christian doctrine not only in their private life, but also in public spheres of economics, politics and international affairs. In this they were both genuine Messianists.

The term “Messianism” was originally introduced by Józef Hoene-Wroński, a Polish eccentric mathematician, philosopher and inventor writing in French, who published in 1831 a treatise entitled *Messianisme*.<sup>19</sup> The term was then adopted by Adam Mickiewicz and popularized in his famous Paris lectures in Collège de France (1840–44); Wroński never forgave him for this supposed intellectual theft. The term “Messianism” subsequently started to stand for many quite different views and attitudes, some of which are perhaps expressed more properly by the term “millenarism” (a belief that the world needs universal religious reintegration), others by “Missionism” (a belief on the special mission of some or all nations), and finally by “passionism” (a belief on the special value of collective suffering).<sup>20</sup> “Messianism” eventually became a label for almost all Polish philosophy in the mid-nineteenth century. Jerzy Braun, a Polish writer and scholar, explained the proper meaning of this term in the following way:

Hebrew *Mashiah* is the same as Greek *Christos*, hence “Messianism” means the same as “christianism.” Wroński used that term in the meaning: completed, integral Christianity, penetrating all

18. *Ibid.*, 10

19. Hoene-Wronski, *Messianisme*; Wroński was apparently a prototype of a mysterious Polish master in Balzac’s novel *The Quest of the Absolute* (1834).

20. I proposed an integral theory of Messianism in my “Mesjanizm integralny;” notice that these three components of Polish Messianism correspond roughly to the three offices of Christ, distinguished in Patristic and recalled in contemporary theology.

domains of public life, beginning from philosophy and culture, and ending with state organization, economic order, and international affairs.<sup>21</sup>

Messianism is therefore a tendency towards the full realization of the principles of Christianity in social life. In other words, to the building of the Kingdom of God on Earth. This mundane Kingdom should not, however, be confused with the ultimate salvation. Messianists believed in human progress, but nevertheless realized that its final fulfillment implies a New Earth. To use Eric Voegelin's popular terminology, they certainly immanentized the eschaton, but not so much.<sup>22</sup>

Kraśiński, though he did not call himself a Messianist, stated perfectly clear the fundamental principles of that doctrine. The meaning of history was the gradual transformation of all reality according to revealed principles. He wrote for instance:

The ultimate goal of our earthly history is . . . the universal sacred Kingdom of God on Earth, powered not by our arbitrary will but the human will united with the Divine one; that is, Christian order actualized and realized, concerning not only individual souls, but also all humankind, all rules, laws and institutions, transforming the Earth into one great sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup>

The sense of history was therefore the process of divinization, that is—according to the anthropological principle—humanization of all spheres of human life. Kraśiński spoke about “religionization,”<sup>24</sup> “Christization,”<sup>25</sup> or even “kingdomization”<sup>26</sup> of private, social, state and international life.

Soloviev manifested the same active attitude of a Christian engaged in transforming the whole world. He wrote: “To take part in the life of the universal Church, in developing the great Christian civilization, to take part in this task according to its own power and capacities—this is the true aim, the only true mission of every nation.”<sup>27</sup> The ideal is already given in Christianity; now is the time for its realization in the world.<sup>28</sup> Using the terminology

21. Braun, *Kultura jutra*, 348.

22. Voegelin, *New Science of Politics*.

23. Kraśiński, “O stanowisku Polski,” 29

24. *Ibid.*, 36.

25. *Ibid.*, 17.

26. *Ibid.*, 12–13.

27. Solov'yev, “Russkaya ideya,” 228.

28. *Ibid.*, 239.

of the later *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, the task of each nation and whole humankind is a participation in the divine and human process of realization of Christian ideals on Earth.

The unanimity of Krasieński and Soloviev is strikingly manifested in their interpretation of Matthew 22:21. Soloviev noticed in 1889, in his *Russia and the Universal Church*, that

the precept “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” is constantly quoted to sanction an order of things which gives Caesar all and God nothing. The saying “My Kingdom is not of this world” is always being used to justify and confirm the paganism of our social life, as though Christian society were destined to belong to this world and not to the Kingdom of Christ. On the other hand, the saying ‘All power is given Me in Heaven and Earth’ is never quoted.”<sup>29</sup>

In the same spirit Krasieński proposed in the foreword to his great poem *Predawn*, published in 1843, a surprising interpretation of Christ’s dictum:

These words contain all the future movement of humankind. Since everything belongs to God, therefore the division between God’s and Caesar’s domains is only temporary and must gradually decrease. Things that yesterday was counted as Caesar’s, today must be counted as God’s, until the City of Caesar would be nothing, and Kingdom of God would be everything.<sup>30</sup>

I distinguish, following Nikolai Berdyaev and Andrzej Walicki, Messianism and Missionism. Messianism says about the great task of the universal religious regeneration of the world, whereas Missionism simply states that at least some nations have specific missions in the universal history. This mission might be a part of a great messianic task, but not necessary.<sup>31</sup> Russian Slavophiles, for instance, were Missionists, but not Messianists, whereas Hoene-Wroński was Messianist, but not Missionist.

Both Krasieński and Soloviev were at once Messianists and Missionists. They believed that nations are not contingent cultural constructions, but organic spiritual communities and both defined nations as “organs”

29. Soloviev, *Russia and the Universal Church*, 8.

30. Krasieński, *Pisma literackie*, 148–9; for a religious interpretation of this poem see Sokulski “*Przedświt* jako tekst profetyczny.”

31. Berdyaev, “Aleksey Stepanovich Khomyakov,” 171; Walicki, *Slavophile Controversy*, 81.

of humankind.<sup>32</sup> The national missions were therefore thought by them as parts of the great messianic task of all humankind. Ultimately every nation was called to serve every other one. However, they differed in many aspects of their visions. First of all, Krasieński believed that Poles would play a crucial role in the messianic process, whereas Soloviev hoped it would be Russia. Secondly, Krasieński had the tendency to recognize Poles as the chosen nation, whereas Soloviev thought about the mission of Russia in a much more pragmatic way. “God can handle without Russia,” he wrote.<sup>33</sup> Some Polish late Messianists even suggested that after the revolution, the abandoned Russian mission had returned to Poland.<sup>34</sup> Thirdly, they held opposing views on the relationships between Jews and Christians; Krasieński was convinced that the Jews were no longer the chosen nation, whereas Soloviev was much more faithful to the idea. Finally, Krasieński denied any positive role of Russia in history, whereas Soloviev was generous enough to admit the great spiritual achievements of Poland. To be honest, Krasieński was one of the fiercest Polish Russophobes. He even wrote secret memoranda to Pope Pius IX and Napoleon III in which he warned them and encourage them to take action against Russia. Unfortunately, his most horrifying vision of the alliance between Russian Empire and Communism turned out to be not a prejudice, but a prophecy.<sup>35</sup>

## The Trinity in History and Society

The founding act of modernity was the separation of religion on the one hand and the world on the other. In effect, the religion became an isolated sphere with no real consequences in other spheres of life. The result of this separation was probably best expressed by Immanuel Kant in the famous dictum: “The doctrine of the Trinity, taken literally—he wrote—has no practical relevance at all.”<sup>36</sup> It seems significant that both Krasieński and Soloviev, on the contrary, considered the Trinity as the model of quite practical issues. Their treatises are based on the analogy between the Trinity and

32. Krasieński, “O stanowisku Polski,” 12–3; Solov’ev, “Russkaya ideya,” 220.

33. Soloviev, “Lettre á la Rédaction,” 182.

34. Jankowski, *Idea Rosyjska Solowjewa*, 24–9.

35. For the details of Krasieński’s hard-shell vision of Russia see Nowak, “Rosja i rewolucja,” and Fiećko, *Rosja Krasieńskiego* and *Krasieński przeciw Mickiewiczowi*. It is worth noting that the differences between Krasieński and Soloviev largely coincide with the differences between Krasieński and Mickiewicz, see Fiećko, *Krasieński przeciw Mickiewiczowi*. It proves that some types of Polish Messianism other than Krasieński’s were even closer to the Russian Idea.

36. Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, 264.



the human reality, though the first saw the Trinity mostly as a pattern of historical development, whereas the latter made it primarily a paradigm of political relationships.

Krasiński's treatise, finally titled *On the Position of Poland from the Divine and Human Perspective*, had two alternative working titles: *On the Trinity* and *On the Trinity in God and the Trinity in Man*.<sup>37</sup> That last title reveals the underlying idea of the whole work. The Holy Trinity is the unity of the three fundamental principles of Being, Thinking and Acting or Living, corresponding to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit respectively. According to Krasiński, these three principles manifest also themselves in human reality. Being is reflected in Thought, and the Act is a unity of these two principles. These three elements roughly correspond to the human Body, Soul and Spirit. Krasiński was most interested in applications of these modes in the historical life of nations. Firstly, he believed that nations, as well as persons, have their own Body, that is what they have (historical heritage), Soul, which is what they think (present ideas), and Spirit or what they do (creative activity related to future). Secondly, he maintained that the principles of Being, Thinking and Acting reveal themselves throughout history in the order of time.

As every created whole, the history of humankind must consist on three parts, corresponding firstly to Being, secondly to Thought and its struggle with Being, and thirdly to the reconciliation and unification of the struggling parties into the one Spirit. Only after such dissolution of the Trinity in the time and space humankind will tune up to it and the collective history of the human spirit will be fulfilled.<sup>38</sup>

Accordingly, Krasiński believed that the Antiquity realized the principle of Being, the Middle Ages was the embodiment of the principle of Thought, then we witnessed the struggle between these two principles, and now we are on the threshold of new era of Spirit. One can see this dialectics in the example of the relations between the State and Church: the Romans built the foundations of the State, medieval Christians formulated the ideal of the Church, and now we are supposed to reconcile State with the Church in a higher unity.

Moreover, for Krasiński, historical functions are distributed not only between different ages, but also between different nations. Nowadays, in his view, the Italians, Spaniards and French are still attached to the political principle of Being, the Germanic nations realized the philosophical

37. Krasiński, "O stanowisku Polski," 295–96.

38. *Ibid.*, 32.

principle of Thought, whereas the Slavic peoples are supposed to open a new era of religious Act. The Slavic New Age will “not allow the separation between the law of God in Haven and the human law on Earth, but will instead reconcile in one justice and in one order the Real and the Ideal, the temporal and the spiritual, the state and the church, politics and Christian love, that what is and that what ought to be.”<sup>39</sup> It would be therefore a final age of human history, the realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Krasiński was mainly concerned in looking for traces of the Trinity in history. He believed that the harmonious heavenly pattern realized itself on Earth through dialectics of struggles and reconciliations. Besides this, he also briefly sketched in an extensive note an original political interpretation of the Trinity, investigating the consequences of the schismatic Trinitarian theology for Russian political form. He accused the Orthodox Church of not developing the Trinitarian dogma in its fullness. The lack of the *Filioque* was supposed to be responsible for the most crude features of the Russian regime. What is the meaning of such an undeveloped Trinity?

Eternal Jehovah, the mere omnipotence, causes and makes everything. He generates the Son, which however cannot give anything to his Father. The Son cannot commune with Him as equal . . . Incredible autocracy, boundless *auctoritas paterna*. The government is everything, on earth as it is in Heaven. Government generated everything; he provides everything . . . Such image of the world and the history is inevitable among schismatics, since on earth is as it is in Heaven . . . This is all antichristian. The yoke, loaded on that nation, is contained in the false concept of divine Trinity, which is divine in so far as its persons are perfectly equal and harmonious.<sup>40</sup>

In short, the Orthodox Church, according to Krasiński, due to the lack of *Filioque*, remained too monotheistic and not Trinitarian enough, and mere monotheism, as he suggested long before Peterson’s “Monotheism as a Political Problem,” unavoidably leads to autocracy. The form of theological thinking therefore shapes the form of political institution. The parallel between Krasiński and Peterson is striking.<sup>41</sup>

The political and institutional dimensions of Trinitarian dogma was further developed by Soloviev. He firmly stated that the task of Russia, but also that of every other nation, as well all as the whole humankind, is to

39. *Ibid.*, 54.

40. *Ibid.*, 61.

41. Peterson, “Monotheism.”

“restore on earth a faithful image of divine Trinity.”<sup>42</sup> He explained that the imitation of the Trinity consists of the projection of the relations between divine persons of the Trinity into relations between social institutions on earth. The “realization of social trinity” means that “each of the three organic principles, namely Church, State and Society, remains in absolute freedom and power, neither separating from others, nor devouring or destroying them, but instead accepting its own absolute internal relations with them.”<sup>43</sup> More precisely, Russia and other Christian nations should “subordinate the power of the State (the royal authority of the Son) to authority of universal Church (Father’s priesthood) and provide a proper space for social freedom (acts of the Spirit).”<sup>44</sup>

Soloviev presupposed that the institutions of Church, State and Society in human communities corresponded to the persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the divine Trinity. The Trinity makes the perfect unity, which however does not exclude distinctions of persons and differences in relations between them. It also does not exclude the central position of the Father, who generates the Son and emanates the Spirit. The image of this unity in differences is Jesus Christ, who besides being the Second Person of the Holy Spirit, also united the three messianic offices of King, Priest and Prophet, corresponding to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christology is therefore a mediating element between Trinitarian and political theology. Humankind inherited messianic offices, which are embodied in three distinct institutions of spiritual authority, political government and free social activity, that is Church, State and Society. Using a little bit contemporary terminology, one may say about three spheres of religion, politics and civil society. Since these institutions are, as Soloviev said,<sup>45</sup> instruments of each persons of Holy Trinity, their relations should mirror relations between Father, Son and Spirit.<sup>46</sup>

What are the recommended relations between human institutions? Since Religion corresponds to the Father, it should have a distinguished place in social order and the two other spheres, corresponding to the two

42. Solov'yev, “Russkaya ideya,” 246.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 245.

45. Ibid., 243.

46. A close intuition was developed by Wolfgang Grassl, who adopted the principles of Trinitarian theology for economy. He does not speak, however, about the trinity of Church, State and Society, but rather the spheres of Society, State and Market, which differ in the adopted principles of exchange, see Grassl, “Ekonomia obywatelska,” and Kędzierski, “Ekonomia trynitarna,” Rojek, “Program ekonomii trynitarej;” “Ekonomia, wzajemność i Trójca Święta.”

other divine persons, should be subordinated to it. The power of the Father does not, however, overwhelm the Son, for he is not Cronos devouring his own children, so the power of the Church should not suppress State and Society. And, conversely, the Son willingly accepts the power of the Father, since he is not Zeus looking for the opportunity to devour Cronos, so the State should accept the authority of the Church. Soloviev was painfully aware that the current state of the political order is a caricature of the life of the Holy Trinity. The Father renounces of his son, the son rebels against his father, brothers come together to kill their father and finally murder themselves: the Church gives up its influence on State, the State wants to dominate religion, and social reformers rise up against both Church and the State. Moreover, Soloviev in *A Short Story of the Anti-Christ* described the alliance between Church and State without which elements of free prophecy turn into a caricature of theocracy.<sup>47</sup> The relationships between these three institutions demands urgent hierarchical arrangement, and the pattern of this should be the Holy Trinity. Interestingly enough, it seems that Soloviev's Trinitarian model of theocracy presupposes the principle of Filioque. The prophets, that is "free movers of progressive social movements,"<sup>48</sup> should respect both Church and State. The direct link between the Second and the Third institutions makes the construction more balanced and harmonious. Krasieński and Peterson would perhaps have approved of it.

Krasieński's and Soloviev's provocative reference to the Holy Trinity as a model of historical and social order is perhaps the most conspicuous common feature of their treatises. Tarnowski highlighted precisely that point in his commentary to Soloviev's work. "Triplcity mirroring the Divine Trinity in creation and human history—he wrote—is not a new idea . . . we Poles has seen it in works of Krasieński and Cieszkowski."<sup>49</sup> The Trinitarian analogy is also the most subversive for the dominating modern and secular way of thinking. Though Krasieński's historical visions and Soloviev's political speculations might seem to be too arbitrary, too artificial and too fabulous to be defended in details, nevertheless their general insight that "on earth is as it is in Heaven" is the central idea of pre- and post-secular Christian thought.<sup>50</sup> God is not, as Ludwig Feuerbach thought, a projection of hu-

47. Solovyov, *War, Progress, and the End of History*, 159–94; I owe this interpretation to Janusz Dobieszewski, *Włodzimierz Sołowjow*, 426; for an alternative account see Mrówczyński-Van Allen, *Between the Icon and the Idol*, 97–101.

48. Solov'yev, "Russkaya ideya," 243.

49. Tarnowski, "Wykład idei," 34; for Cieszkowski's Trinitarian interpretation of the history see his "Prolegomena to historiosophy;" Cieszkowski and Krasieński were close friends and deeply influenced each other.

50. For more on social implications of Trinitarian dogma see: Volf, "The Trinity Is Our Social Program" and Rojek, "Program ekonomii trynitarnej."

mankind, but on the contrary, humankind is a projection of God. The mission of the Church and the whole of humankind is to make this resemblance in the world more explicit.

## Beyond Secular Reason

In the introduction to this paper I indicated that the glorious revolt against secular reason in the twentieth century started with the *Nouvelle Théologie*, a circle of Catholic theologian with Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Jean Daniélou, Yves Congar and other great figures. This informal group prepared the great event of the Second Vatican Council both intellectually and spiritually. I agree with Monsignor Javier Martínez, archbishop of Granada, that

it would be possible, and perhaps necessary, to show that the deep meaning of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and in fact the very key to understand its teaching, is exactly its attempt to recuperate the Holy Tradition from the marshlands in which the semi-conscious acceptance of liberalism and secular reason has thrown it. The same could be said of the teaching of the post-conciliar popes, especially John Paul II.<sup>51</sup>

I believe that the documents of the Council might be read as a kind of constitution of the new post-secular order. For this reason I would like to briefly recall some its crucial ideas relevant for Polish Messianism and the Russian Idea.

The principle of Christocentric anthropology is explicitly expressed in the famous Paragraph 22 of *Gaudium et Spes*. “Christ . . . in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling.”<sup>52</sup> The Modern order rests on the separation of the domains of the natural and the supernatural, which yields the separation of culture, politics, economy on the one hand, and religion on the other. This separation, as it is well known, leads inevitably to the disappearance of religion.<sup>53</sup> However, if the true human nature is revealed in Christ, then this modern dualism cannot be maintained anymore. Religion is seen now as the completion of man, not as an additional option. As Msgr. Martínez noticed, “this quotation, when taken seriously, makes

51. Martínez, *Beyond Secular Reason*, 96.

52. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22.

53. See Martínez, *Beyond Secular Reason*, 73–85.

it impossible for a Catholic to maintain a liberal position, and goes beyond any secular dualism or fragmentation.”<sup>54</sup>

Next, some crucial ideas of Messianism (in contrast to Missionism) might be easily found in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* in the paragraphs concerning the tasks of lay people. For it is precisely the laity, not the ecclesial hierarchy, who is primary called to transform the world according to Christian principles. “The laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God.”<sup>55</sup> As a result of this effort “all types of temporal affairs” should “continually increase according to Christ.”<sup>56</sup> “The world may be permeated by the spirit of Christ and it may more effectively fulfill its purpose in justice, charity and peace . . . Through the members of the Church, will Christ progressively illumine the whole of human society with His saving light.”<sup>57</sup> What is specifically significant is that the Fathers of the Council recalled the traditional teaching on the three offices of Christ, which was constantly presented in the works of Polish and Russian Messianists. We read that every Christian continues the priestly, the prophetic and the royal functions of Jesus Christ.<sup>58</sup> So, the people of God is the true messianic nation. The lacking element in Council vision is the theology of nation, which could serve as a base for national Missionism.

Finally, one can find in the council constitutions the most radical and subversive idea of the Holy Trinity as a social program, so characteristic for Polish and Russian religious philosophy. “The Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, ‘that all may be one. . . as we are one’ (John 17:21–22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man . . . cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.”<sup>59</sup> The line of reasoning is clear. If Christ is the model of man, then His relations with the Father and Spirit should be the pattern for all human relationships. Anthropological Christocentrism therefore leads to social Trinitarianism.

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council has been developed and deepened by John Paul II, the true Slavic Pope, who fulfilled the prophecies of the Polish poets and went beyond the dreams of Russian philosophers.

54. *Ibid.*, 95–96.

55. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 31.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, no. 36.

58. *Ibid.*, nos. 34–36.

59. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24.

The two above quoted paragraphs of *Gaudium et spes* were his most beloved citations. There are even evidences that the “Trinitarian” no. 24 “probably owes its shape to Wojtyła.”<sup>60</sup> I would like only to recall that the first Encyclical Letter of John Paul II starts with a splendid affirmation that “the Redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is the centre of the universe and of history.”<sup>61</sup> This statement summarizes all the post-secular teaching of the Second Vatican Council and perfectly agrees with both Polish and Russian religious thought. “Again, it is text that, if it is received in an intellectual honest way and is taken seriously, goes ‘beyond secular reason,’ and makes clear the deep incompatibility of the Catholic faith with liberal modes of thinking.”<sup>62</sup>

The remaining great task is the detailed investigation of the possible influences of Polish Messianism and the Russian Idea on contemporary Catholic post-secular teaching. Some authors argued that Henri de Lubac, the founding father of the theological revival in the twentieth century, might be directly influenced by Russian thought.<sup>63</sup> It is worth noting that he was also acquainted with the messianic works of Mickiewicz. Moreover, there is a considerable amount of exciting evidence for direct messianic inspiration in the thought of John Paul II.<sup>64</sup> As far as we know, he was also interested in Russian religious philosophy. The history of the post-secular revolution still awaits its explorers.

Finally, I think that the heritage of Polish Messianism and the Russian Idea should not only be recognized as a surprisingly early expression of post-secular intuition, but also as a source of some inspiration for contemporary post-secular thought. Two points seem to me especially important: Polish and Russian Messianists were much more courageous in thinking about the state than most contemporary Christian thinkers,<sup>65</sup> and they formulated a specific philosophy and a theology of nation, which could be an impulse for a more faithful approach to that issue for contemporary theologians.<sup>66</sup> In

60. Skrzypczak, *Karol Wojtyła na Soborze Watykańskim II*, 109; see also Waldstein, *Three Kinds of Personalism*, 8.

61. John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 1.

62. Martínez, *Beyond Secular Reason*, 96, n. 35.

63. Dell’Asta, *La teologia ortodossa e l’Occidente*; I owe this reference to Artur Mrówczyński-Van Allen.

64. For instance, during World War II, a young Karol Wojtyła was a member of the secret organization Unia, led by declared Messianist Jerzy Braun. For some historical evidences see: Mazur, “Jerzy Braun i mesjanizm Jana Pawła II,” for a more systematic study: Rojek, “Pokolenie;” I am currently working on a detailed Messianistic interpretation of John Paul II’s thought.

65. See for instance Mrówczyński-Van Allen, *Between the Icon and the Idol*.

66. See for instance Pabst and Schneider, “Transfiguring the World,” 16; for an example of positive Polish theology of nation see Bartnik, *Formen der politischen Theologie in Polen*, “Problematyka teologii narodu,” and *Teologia narodu*.

short, I believe that the works of Mickiewicz, Krasiński, and Cieszkowski on the one hand, and Dostoevsky, Soloviev and Florensky on the other, should not be considered as a mere historical curiosity, but as a challenge for contemporary Christian thought.

When Stanisław Tarnowski in 1889 noticed the similarities between the Russian Idea and Polish Messianism, Soloviev had a rather obscure and quite a negative opinion on Polish philosophy. Ten years before meeting in Krakow he wrote to one of his friends: "I have come to know the Polish philosophers to some extent. Their general tone and aspirations are very sympathetic, but, like our Slavophiles, they have no positive content."<sup>67</sup> It seems that the discussion with Tarnowski and others changed his mind, although during the very debate he maintained his critical attitude.<sup>68</sup> Ten years after the Krakow meeting, Soloviev gave a speech in Moscow at a ceremony to the memory of Adam Mickiewicz. He not only praised his poetry, but also declared his acceptance of some of the fundamental principles of Polish Messianism.

As far as I know, along with of some minor errors (like, for instance, the cult of Napoleon), this movement proclaimed some truths of paramount importance, truths which have a legitimate right to recognition in the Christian world—above all, the truth about the continuous growth of Christianity. If the world still exists so many centuries after Christ, it means that something is being prepared in it for our salvation; and taking part in this is our duty, if Christianity is really a religion of divine humanity.<sup>69</sup>

In these words, as Walicki put it, "the greatest religious philosopher of nineteenth century Russia paid homage to Mickiewicz's religious Messianism."<sup>70</sup> I believe that Soloviev could have repeated these words for Krasiński, if only he had known him. I also believe that contemporary Christian post-secular thinkers could pay similar homage to both Polish Messianism and the Russian Idea. If only they knew them.

67. Letter to countess S. A. Tolstoy, April 27, 1877, quoted in Florensky, *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, 240.

68. Soloviev, "Lettre á la Rédaction," 182–83.

69. Solov'yev, "Mitskevich," 211.

70. Walicki, "Mickiewicz's Paris Lectures," 64.



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