

# Moscow the Third Rome? A View from a Russian Orthodox Priest in the Far Abroad

*by Father Andrew*

## Introduction: The Soviet Union and Rus

Many, especially older, Russians are at times nostalgic for the Soviet Union, or rather, for certain aspects of the Soviet Union (certainly not nostalgic for queuing for food). Little wonder they can be nostalgic. The break-up of the Soviet Union by Gorbachov and Yeltsin, carried out largely under American divide and rule supervision, was a treasonous catastrophe. The atheists in charge of the collapse of the Soviet Union, whether Soviet or American, had no concept of 'Rus', the lands of the peoples of historic Rus, wherever the majority Faith was clearly Orthodoxy.

'Rus', that is the Russian Federation, Belarus, most of the Ukraine and half of Kazakhstan, should have remained united, instead of being divided. Also, compared to today's capitalist Russia, Soviet Union had free education and medicine and there was public order and culture. However, what those nostalgic for the social justice and order and culture of the Soviet past do not realize is that education and medicine were largely free under Tsar Nicholas II and order was kept. Everything that was good about the Soviet Union had been inherited from the Russian Empire.

## A Geographical Empire and a Spiritual Empire

All the Soviet Union's catastrophic mistakes came from its genocidal and suicidal atheism, the persecution of the Church and all faiths. The persecution of the spiritual undermined all culture, which is always founded on spiritual belief. As a result, the Soviet elite, like all imperialists in history, like the American elite today, thought that a great empire is always geographical. Of course, it is not – **a great empire is always a spiritual one**. Thus, the Soviet error consisted of confusing the Third International with the Third Rome, trying to build paradise on earth without Christ. The ravages of alcoholism, abortion, corruption, divorce and ecological disaster were only the logical consequences.

Also, as a result of this error of confusing a geographical empire with a spiritual empire, today many people in Eastern Europe hate Russia, 'the evil empire': you only have to visit the Western Ukraine, the Baltic States, Poland, Romania and elsewhere to meet them. And unfortunately these xenophobes hate precisely Russia, confusing it with the Soviet Union. Even worse, some of them hate Russians, not understanding that many Russians, made naïve by their weak faith, suffered from an inferiority complex vis a vis the West. This was why they were among the victims of the mainly foreign Bolsheviks with their alien imported ideology of Marxism, the fantasy of a German rabbi's grandson.

Their confusion of the Soviet Union with Russia is partly understandable because certain negative aspects of the Marxist German Soviet Union were inherited from before, especially from the German Empress Catherine II. She had no understanding of Orthodoxy and of Rus, and so made the mistake of taking into the Empire of Rus the whole Eastern half of Poland, yet, for example, allowing Austria to control and persecute Orthodox in Carpatho-Russia. There followed errors in Finland, the Baltic States and elsewhere. However, none of this was

comparable with the errors of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe from 1939 on. Those errors guaranteed local hatred there.

### **A Real Third Rome?**

Thus, all imperialists throughout history have imagined that a great empire is geographical, and not spiritual. This was the error of the First Rome, with its totalitarian Crusades and Inquisitions which ultimately produced Catholic Fascism in the last century. As for the Second Rome with its Greek racism, we can see its disaster under the US-manipulated Phanariots today. If Moscow is to be the Third Rome, it must therefore first be a Second Jerusalem, a New Jerusalem, as Patriarch Nikon wanted to create on the River Istra in the seventeenth century. **For only the Spiritual is Imperial; the Geographical is merely Imperialist and always ends badly, like the First and Second Romes.**

Therefore, today the Church of Rus has first to be rebuilt. Today the Russian Orthodox Church must show that it is in no way compromised by or practises double standards. It can do this by proving that it wholeheartedly rejects the three heretical isms which have so troubled the peace of the Church for a century: modernism and ecumenism (adopted from Protestantism) and **Eastern** Papism (adopted from Roman Catholicism). And the Russian Orthodox Church cannot reject any of these without first renouncing its membership of the Pan-Protestant World Council of Churches and renouncing what some see as compromises it has made with the Vatican, that is, with **Western** Papism.

The Church has always suffered from the failings of clergy who put their own careers and personalities above Christ. What is needed today is the restoration of parish life, wiped out by atheism after 1917 (and it was often weak before that). This restoration can only be led by pastors, not by careerists. The parish is a family and the financial affairs of parishes must be transparent. As for the monasteries and the episcopate, they do not need intellectuals, wishy-washy diplomats, bureaucrats and 'managers', or the feudal and jealous who dislike married clergy. We need loving pastor-bishops. The episcopate must love, care for and show understanding of priests and deacons, avoiding injustices.

### **Conclusion**

Since signing the Act of Canonical Communion in 2007, the émigré-founded Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, based in New York, has been renewed. Its establishment as the Russian Orthodox Church of the English-speaking world, in the New Worlds of North America and Oceania, as North American Rus and Australian Rus, and perhaps elsewhere, has long been under way. Last year's bold establishment by the Russian Orthodox Church of a long-awaited Western European Exarchate and a South-East Asian Exarchate are also signs that the Russian Orthodox Church has an international mission.

A Rus of the New World, a Western European Rus, helped by the return this November of the Paris Archdiocese to its roots in the Russian Church, and a South-East Asian Rus could all become real. However, the Church inside the lands of Old Rus, especially in the Russian Federation, Belarus and the much-troubled Ukraine, also needs to be rebuilt. Only in this way can the Russian Orthodox Church show that it is at the centre of healthy forces in the wider Orthodox Church, that it fights for the piety and purity of Holy Orthodoxy. Only when Moscow is a spiritual empire will it earn love as a real 'Rome'.