

TEN POST-SOVIET PARAGRAPHS

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The Cold War isn't thawing; it is burning with a deadly heat. Communism isn't sleeping; it is, as always, plotting, scheming, working, fighting.

Richard Nixon

Communism is the final logic of the dehumanization of man.

Fulton Sheen



On the shores of the Gulf of Finland, Tallinn, the Estonian capital, is set to turn one thousand years old in 2050.

1

A modest area of 45,335 square kilometres makes of Estonia a small country (a little larger than the Netherlands and equivalent to half the size of Portugal), even by European standards, given the fact that Europe is the smallest of all continents. A particularity of Estonia is that Estonian (along with Finnish, Hungarian and Basque) is one of the few languages used in Europe that do not have Indo-European origins. In this case, it stems from Uralic, a language family originated in the region of the Ural Mountains, natural border between Europe and Asia. Human presence has been a reality in Estonia for no less than thirteen thousand years. Estonian paganism flourished unrivalled until the 13th century, when the population (one of

the last to do so on European soil) converted to Catholicism (today a minority in Estonia, not forgetting that more than half of the current Estonian population claims to be “without religion”). In 1940, Estonia suffered the Soviet invasion and occupation, and the following year it was annexed to the Third Reich; in 1944, however, Soviet tentacles once again took hold of Estonia, which only regained its independence in 1991, the year in which the Soviet Octopus fell, and it was not missed – quite the opposite.



The name says it all

2

The same goes for Latvia, Estonia's companion in its misfortune of suffering the Nazi-Soviet ordeal, as I was able to attest during my visit to this museum located in Riga, the Latvian capital. It is known that "The difference between the torture practiced by the Nazi authorities and that practiced by the Communist authorities against political dissidents was as follows: in Nazism, the torturers investigated the life of the tortured person in order to discover if and what he was guilty of; in Communism, the torturers already had the confession ready that they wanted the tortured person to sign. For these and other reasons, the various gulags were called 'Auschwitz without crematoria', as one can read in *The Black Book of Communism*." (Giovanni da Salara. *Inverno comunista*, Benedictus, Rio Bonito [Brazil], 2020).



Riga, the Latvian capital

3

No fewer than 175,000 Latvians (about a third of Latvia's population in 1939) were killed during the Second World War, because of the complicity between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, as set out in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed on 23 August 1939. Despite the colossal losses in terms of human lives, material goods and natural resources, Latvia was reborn after being crushed by the swastika and the hammer and sickle. In today's Riga, the serene elegance of the Art Nouveau style mixes with an extremely lively nightlife.



Vilnius, capital of Lithuania

4

In the late Middle Ages, Lithuania was a country as immense as it was rich and powerful. In the 14th century, its borders stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, so that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became the largest country in Europe. In the following century, Lithuania joined Poland as a single European state. The times of lean cows came at the end of the 18th century, when Russia – already a gigantic Eurasian empire – annexed Lithuania, foreshadowing what the Soviet Union would do during the Second World War, through an agreement signed between Communists and Nazis that would provoke a true Lithuanian genocide – a genocide that our globalized world prefers to overlook.



Vilnius: Museum of Genocide Victims

5

Also a victim (like Latvia and Estonia) of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Lithuania was harshly attacked by the Nazi-Communist alliance, always remembering that “Fascism, Nazism and Communism have all the same source, which is the writings of Karl Marx; it is no coincidence that Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin were allies during the first years of the Second World War.” (Giovanni da Salara. *Inverno comunista*). No less than 190,000 Lithuanian and Polish Jews living in Lithuania were summarily killed in support of the Marxist dogma according to which the “class struggle” is the “motor of history.”



The *Gulag Archipelago*, immortalized in critical historiography by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, gained its plastic version in the work of the Lithuanian artist Jonas Varnas (2001), where the crosses represent Gulags in which Lithuanian prisoners were distributed throughout the immense Soviet territory.

6

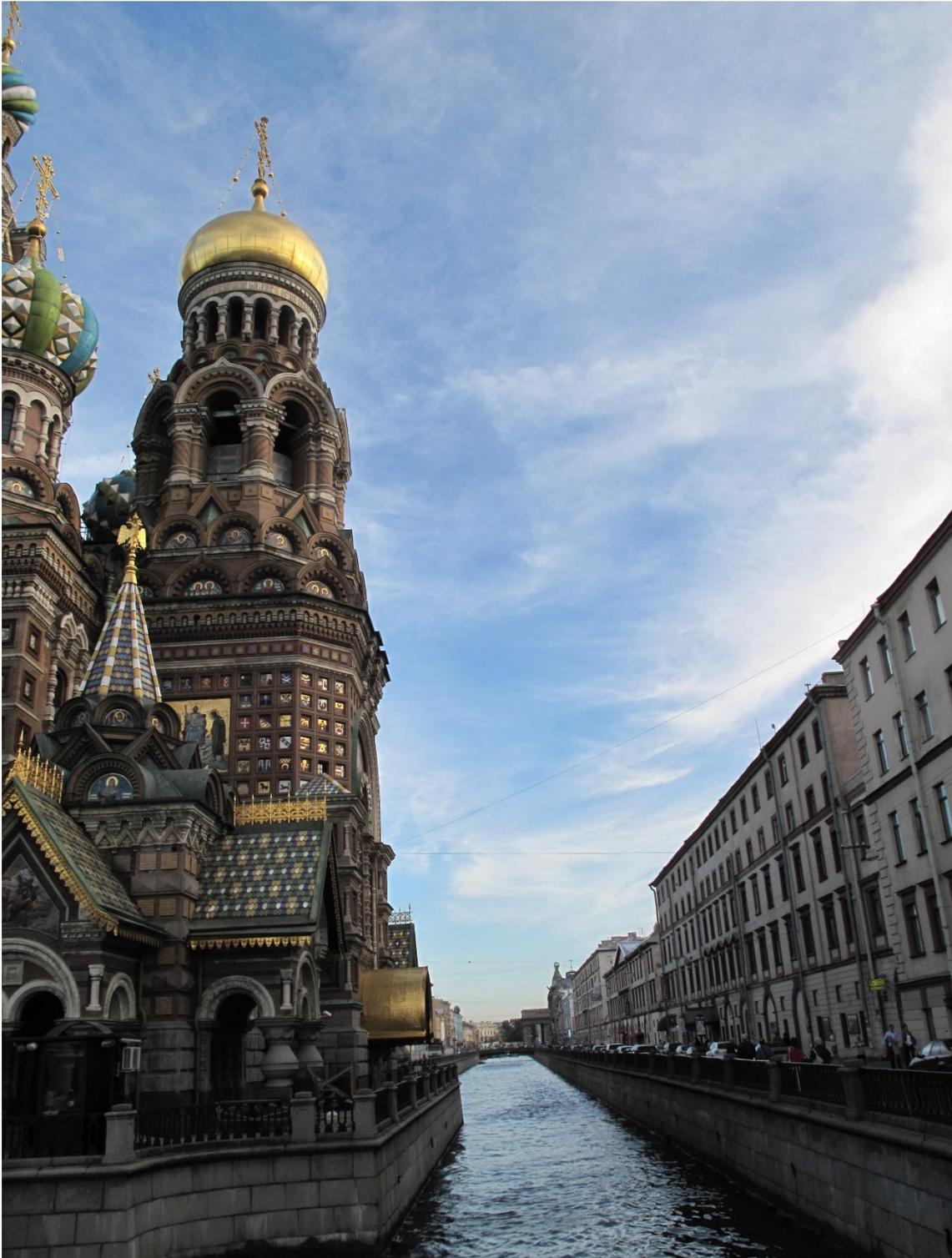
It is Giovanni da Salara who clarifies once again: “It should not to be forgotten that Nazi-Fascism and Communism are practically identical, the only difference being ‘the Fascist ability to make the trains run on time’, as Robert Kaplan points out. The complicity between the two ideologies is so intense that an entire library would not be enough to describe its ramifications, e.g., the strike provoked by the French Communist Party in French munitions factories at the very moment when Hitler, having secured Stalin’s cooperation, was crushing France, without worrying about the Eastern borders of the Third Reich.” (*Inverno comunista*).



Saint Petersburg

7

Here we are in Russia, the homeland of Communism and the main republic of the extinct Soviet Union, the first version, in the form of a country, of the best of all possible worlds raved about by Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao, Fidel Castro, Pol Pot et alii. A giant located “where Europe begins to slide into Asia, Russia is an essential and fascinating destination for anyone who wants to see another side of the European continent in all its strange and mysterious glory” (John Lee et al. *Europe on a Shoestring*, Victoria [Australia], Lonely Planet, 2005). The same book refers to Saint Petersburg, the former capital of Russia, founded by Peter the Great in 1703, as “quite simply one of the most enchanting and impressive cities on Earth” – a sentence with which I, having visited Saint Petersburg in 2011, do not disagree.

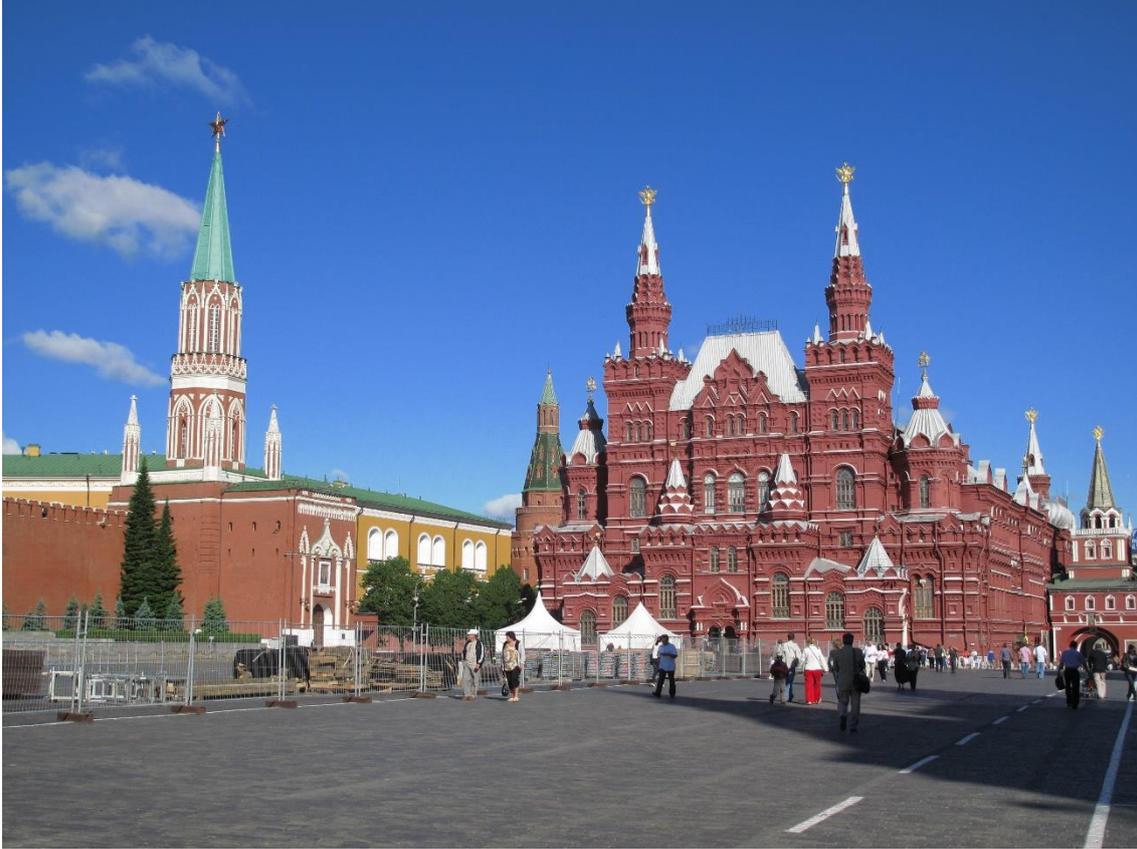


Saint Petersburg

8

Saint Petersburg is the burial place of the Muscovite Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky (1821-1881), one of the greatest writers of all time; some of his main characters lived there, e.g., Raskolnikov, Porfiry Petrovich, Razumikhin, Sonya, Luzhin, and Nastasya. Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (1906-1975), one of the leading classical music composers of the 20th century, was born in St. Petersburg. Indeed, “thought and imagination precede words and actions; one should just read Dostoevsky to realize that that crowd of paranoids and psychopaths in general, abstract beings from a fictional Russia in the second half of the 19th century, became

flesh-and-blood characters in the early years of the 20th century. It is also interesting to note that, in post-Soviet Russia, as Steven Lee Myers makes clear, “democracy took root in sterile soil, and its growth was impeded” (Giovanni da Salara. *Arab Winter: Islam, the Crusades and the End of Times*).



Kremlin (in Russian, “fortress inside a city”)

9

Inhabited since the 2nd century BC, the Kremlin area was, in the Middle Ages, the home of princes and the seat of Russian art and, in many ways, of Russian culture itself. In the 16th century, the Kremlin became the residence of the czars, a position it kept until the 18th century, when the court moved to the then newly founded city of Saint Petersburg. In 1918, the Kremlin once again became the seat of the Russian government, no longer under the sceptre of Tsarism, but under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat imposed by Lenin, a position that remained after 1991, that is to say, in post-Soviet Russia. It is worth highlighting that “Lenin (1870-1924) – founder of Communism and accomplice of Islam, given that both ideologies fight against the same enemy, which is the Judeo-Christian culture – was, perhaps, not the son of serfs, but rather ‘a privileged aristocrat who never had to earn his living through his own work’, as Benjamin Wiker states. According to this source, the family of Lenin (in fact, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov) was part of the Russian nobility, owned lands and received benefits from the Czar of All the Russias, a title given to the ruler of the Russian Empire from 1721 to 1917 – the year in which the third of the eight children of the couple Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanov and Maria Alexandrovna Blank made Moscow, the former Third Rome, the world capital of Communism, leaving Czar Nicholas II and his family with a fate similar to that of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette during the French Revolution, *cellula mater* of the Bolshevik Revolution: on the night of July 16-17, 1918, the last Romanovs were executed with rifle shots and bayonet blows by ‘representatives of the people’, perhaps in obedience to an express order from Lenin.” (Giovanni da Salara. *Inverno comunista*).



Moscow, capital of the current Russian Federation and the former USSR, the largest and most populous city in Europe.

10

Here we are in Moscow, which, even in the times of Communism, was not completely impervious to Western influence. Currently it is, once again, the protagonist of a war that has everything to become global at any moment. “Expect the worst and you will not be disappointed,” warned Olavo de Carvalho three decades ago (*A Nova Era e a Revolução Cultural: Fritjof Capra & Antonio Gramsci*, São Paulo, Vide Editorial, 2012). Hopefully this illustrious and much-missed Brazilian philosopher was mistaken and that better times will come for the Russians

and the many other peoples who suffered the Soviet ordeal, as well as for the humanity in general of this world whose sins far surpass those of Sodom and Gomorrah. Let us also hope that the number of righteous people among us will be sufficient to appease Divine Justice.



Gogol in Saint Petersburg: this great Russian writer would be considered Ukrainian, considering the current borders.