

Soviets brag: Moscow is the Third Rome, seat of world empire

by Konstantin George and Luba George

“Rome fell and we are standing. We are Rome.” These words, proclaiming the theme of Moscow as “the Third and Final Rome,” and the destiny of “Holy Russia” to rule over “all Christians,” were published in the July 1988 edition of the Soviet monthly *Novy Mir*, which is read by the entire Russian intelligentsia. The article, titled “Byzantium and Russia: Two Types of Spirituality,” appeared just weeks after the June Moscow celebrations of the Russian millennium, the anniversary of the Christianization of Kievan Rus.

This extraordinary article documents what *EIR* has long maintained, contrary to the delusions of most Western sovietologists: that the Soviet Union is governed, not by the Marxists per se, but by a tripartite regime of the Communist Party, the military, and the Russian Orthodox Church—united under the banner of Russian chauvinist “blood and soil” ideology, with its aggressive dream of world empire.

The article, written by S.S. Averintsev, is the first in a series. Its themes are that Moscow is the only legitimate successor to Imperial Rome and Constantinople (Byzantium), and that the concepts of Moscow as Rome and “Holy Russia” are unified—so that being a Russian nationalist believer in the mission of “Holy Russia” means being a Muscovite “Roman,” and vice versa.

This article was commissioned at the Politburo level, indeed from the Gorbachov household itself. *Novy Mir*’s chief editor is Sergei Zalygin, a Russian nationalist writer of the genre called the “Village Prose” school, and a member of the Board of Raisa Gorbachova’s Soviet Culture Fund.

Byzantium’s child

Novy Mir began by praising two millennia, the Russian one being celebrated this year, and the millennium of Byzantium’s existence as the new, “Eurasian” Roman Empire.

“Byzantium,” Averintsev writes, “this is an entire millennium: from the period of its establishment in the 4th-6th centuries to the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks, May 29, 1453. The Russian Christian tradition is also millennial, whose calendar significance we are now celebrating. One millennium—next to another millennium. . . . The thousand-year anniversary event is consequentially of partic-

ular importance for Russian culture, and especially for the livelihood of all Russia—it is a national celebration. For me, as a Russian, it is *my* celebration; at the same time I can’t help feeling an intellectual and emotional reaction as well as being elated that because of the strengthening of the position of healthy thinking, our society is allowed to celebrate the event not only in the confines of church walls, but outside these limits. At the celebration [the June celebration of the Russian millennium—ed.] there was not only an absence of empty conventionality, but there was a more internal conformity to the spiritual pulse which allows us to speak of a true celebration.”

Novy Mir introduces this millennial theme of the link between Byzantium and Russia, to make the point that the *Eastern Empires*, in comparison to relatively short-lived Western Empires, are of the “Thousand Year Reich” class. Or, long after Western Empires collapse, Eastern Empires survive and thrive.

Averintsev writes: “The Roman Empire was divided (in 395 A.D.) into a Western Empire with the seat in Rome (at times in Ravenna or other cities) and the Eastern Empire with the capital in Constantinople (New Rome). The Western Empire ended its existence in the year 476 A.D., but the Eastern Empire continued to exist for another thousand years. Roughly over a hundred years after its fall, Western scholars, not liking it, nicknamed it Byzantine . . . the Byzantines themselves never called themselves either Byzantine or Greeks, they called themselves Romans. From the standpoint of uninterrupted continuity of rule, they had every right on this score, which even their enemies could not disclaim. . . . In general, the barbarians, the young nations of Europe, warring with Rome, and subsequently with the New Rome, did not think of disclaiming its exclusivity on the question of legitimacy [as did the Roman Empire]. They related to it with deep respect as well as with deep envy.”

The Russian reader is then informed that periodically attempts are launched from the West to challenge the legitimacy of the Eastern Empire as Rome’s only successor:

“From time to time operations were launched to usurp this legitimacy. Karl the Great [Charlemagne], the King of

the Franks, was crowned on Christmas Day 800 in the city of Rome as Roman Emperor by the hands of the Bishop of Rome [Orthodox terminology for the Pope]; it didn't even enter his head to declare himself, let's say, a Frankish or German Emperor. Of course, in Constantinople, the imperial title of Karl and all his heirs was taken as a scandalous act of usurpation."

The article then takes up the question of the other challenge mounted against Byzantium, that of the Southern Slavic empires (the First Bulgarian Empire of the 9th and 10th centuries; the Second Bulgarian Empire of the 12th and 13th centuries; the Serbian Empire of the late 13th and early 14th Centuries). Here *Novy Mir* gives a factual account, stressing that the issue was ensuring "proper rule through *one and only one Orthodox power . . . there can be no other.*"

This section is most revealing, as it states, using the Bulgarian Empire as a precursor of Muscovy, that Bulgaria was justified, as a *Slavic* empire, in claiming a Slavic succession to Rome. (It was in the 9th century, during the First Bulgarian Empire, that the term "Czar" or "Caesar" was introduced for a Slavic emperor, and not in Muscovy.)

"The well-known saying, the idea of the Third, Slavic Rome as an alternative to Constantinople, was clear to all—the epistles of Pskov *Staretz* [holy man] Filofei [the Pskov monk, who in the early 1500s proclaimed the doctrine of the Third Rome—ed.]—that ' . . . two Romes fell, but the Third stands, and the Fourth there shall not be. . . ' was nothing new. It was developing earlier, as seen in the South Slavic writings in which a Byzantine chronicler recounted the demise of the Western Empire in 476. In sum: 'And so, all that has happened to the old Rome—but our Rome is flourishing, growing, reigning and uniting'; also in the Bulgarian translation, which was completed in the 13th century, these words were illustriously replaced with ' . . . the old Rome [Constantinople] is undergoing decay, however, our New Empire is growing and becoming stronger.' The new Empire was evident to all: Trnovo became the capital of the new Bulgarian Empire."

This section concludes by stressing that since both Bulgaria and Serbia fell to the Ottomans even before Constantinople did, that fact ended their historical claims to a Roman succession. This now brings us to Moscow and "Holy Russia."

The 'chosen people' and world conquest

The reader is now told that with the fall of Constantinople, the Russians become "the chosen people" and Moscow becomes not only Rome reincarnated, but "the new Jerusalem," the only legitimate seat of both secular and ecclesiastical authority. With the emergence of Moscow, the "inevitable" transfer of the Roman Empire to a Slavic realm has occurred: "Rome fell, but we are standing and we are Rome. On this point everyone agreed—the Byzantine Chronicler, his Bulgarian translator, and our *Staretz* Filofei."

Filofei is then quoted: "All of Christianity will in the end be united into one realm under our rule."

This is presented as the mission of "Holy Russia." It is emphasized that "Holy Russia is not an ethnic concept," confined to the domains of the Russians, but "a geographical concept," embracing "the geographical unity of all of Orthodoxy." "Orthodoxy," to Moscow, is defined not only in terms of populations who are Orthodox, but encompasses the ecclesiastical boundaries of the various Eastern Orthodox Patriarchates.

This alone is an expansionist declaration of monumental proportions. *Novy Mir* is calling for nothing less than for Holy Russia to add to its colonies most of Yugoslavia, all of Greece and Albania, parts of Turkey, including the strategic Turkish Straits, Syria, the Levant and Israel, and other regions of the Near East.

But the expansionist aspirations of Muscovy—church and state—don't stop at the gates of Constantinople (Istanbul), the shores of the Adriatic, or the Near East. *Novy Mir* issues a death sentence against the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II, stating Holy Russia's mission as ensuring that "all the Christians shall be under one rule." In another swipe at the Polish Pontiff, Catholic Poland and Lithuania are singled out as having historically exemplified the Western "enemies" of "Holy Russia" along its western frontier.

Last, but not least, the article minces no words in saying that the intended territorial expansion to subject all of Christian Europe to Russian rule will mean the end of Western culture, as Europe disappears as a cultural identity. Europe will dissolve into a western extension of a Muscovy-ruled "Eurasia."

"Constantinople lies on the frontiers of Europe . . . it is not a European city, nor can you call it an Asian city. . . . This capital could not be called other than Eurasian."

Like Byzantium, the Russian Empire is Eurasian: "After Ivan IV [the Terrible] defeated the Tatar Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan [in the mid-1500s], Russia became more and more a Eurasian realm, in a new way, but not less than Byzantium."

And with this, comes the final declaration of war on Western civilization, stressing Russia's centuries' long fight against the West, "how Russia differentiated itself from the Catholic West," Alexander Nevsky's victory over the Teutonic Knights in 1238-40, Moscow's leadership in rejecting and overturning the short-lived unity achieved by the Catholic and Orthodox Churches at the Council of Florence in 1439 A.D., and finally, denouncing the "decision of compromise between the Greeks and the Latins."

Russia's goal is nothing less than "the creation of a unified, one Eurasian landmass, not for the Russian people, but for the Orthodox faith." In this, the official state operatives of the Soviet Culture Fund and the Gorbachov family have joined hands with the Russian Orthodox advocates of the Third Rome.