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RUSSIAN SOCIOPOLITICAL THOUGHT OF THE BEGINNING
OF THE XX CENTURY AND THE LETTER
OF THE TESTAMENT: REVOLUTIONARY MESSIANISM
OF GOD-BUILDERS AND CONSERVATISM OF V. V. ROZANOV

In the article, the inner form and the most important elements of content of the supplement by religion, which has influenced both Marxist revolutionary messianism and anti-messianism of conservative consciousness and conservative social and political thought of the Modernist period. The adversarial relationship of these two philosophical and ideological positions was often interpreted through the lens of the opposition of the Old and the New Testament, of conservative essence of the former and messianistic essence of the latter. As an example of the revolutionary-messianistic logic, the theory of "propaganda" of Russian Marxists God-builders is considered in the article, represented along with an analysis of historical forms of religious consciousness, firstly in the work of A. V. Lunacharsky "Religion and Socialism" (1908), while for an example of historical self-reflection of conservative consciousness we took the criticism of the New Testament and Christianity by V. V. Rozanov.

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The topic of correlation between politics and religion has always been a sufficient problem both for social sciences and for real political practice. There is nothing amazing in this: the very requirement of holding the balance between political expediency and its alter ego, religious dogma, could hardly be ever entirely fulfilled. The history of human communities appears not only an endless chain of testimonies indicating this contradiction, but is essentially constituted by it. The final point of political messianism in this sense would become an end also to religious dogmatism, as inversely the end of religious messianism would testify of the termination of any politics whether particular or universal, directed by the enlightened reason. Starting out from this aporia, in the text below we will make an attempt to clarify the inner form and the most important elements of content of the supplement by religion, which has influenced both Marxist revolutionary messianism and anti-messianism of

conservative consciousness and conservative social and political thought — the political counteractants having collided on the intellectual battlefields in Europe in the second half of the XIX — the first half of the XX centuries. The plot of this conflict — which, without addressing directly the complicated topic of liberal messianism, should be recognized as almost basic — in the political, social-economical, ethical-legal, aesthetic and artistic thought of European Modernism will be disclosed by us through the example of head-on clash of positions of Russian Marxists God-builders and conservative thinkers. As for the latter, we have selected V. V. Rozanov, who was perhaps the most unorthodox, but all the more sincere and profound Russian conservative, so to say, a metaphysician conservative. While in the times the given text is dedicated to, namely the period of Religious and Philosophical Congresses (1901–1903) and in the first years of sessions of Religious and Philosophical Society (1907–1917) he seemed to avoid such conflicts, nevertheless, the more fiercely, although delicately, he took part in this collision as a philosopher essayist and a literary critic¹.

The metaphysical, and nonetheless principally political ground of this controversy has an utterly historical dimension, and that is namely the way it revealed itself during the whole European XIX century to result in the first quarter of XX century in the World War and revolutions, the Russian Revolution being in the first turn as incomparable with no other in its scale. This kind of metaphysics has been originally a *sui generis* type of religious or quasi-religious reflection on the fundamentals of historical nature of human, that is, his destiny, the aggregate movement of the humankind (socialism, Marxism, liberalism) towards happiness, which was differently interpreted, but obligatory within the logic of collective movement and struggle. The conservative part of this dyad used as well to conceptualize itself through various nationalisms and messianisms, that is, as a competition of national states which, in the struggle of nations for palm of victory on the world stage and the lead role in the world, should have inevitably leaned on global historical metanarratives. The most important of them, once not to say the source of the very idea of historical messianism, was Christianity, or, more precisely, its duality, that is, the determinacy of implementing the Christian proclaiming of salvation from sin and corruption in pair with its unavoidably denied source in Judaism. This oppugnancy of Old and New Testaments was itself interpreted in quasi-national way, and that appeared twofold: first, as an opposition to Hebrewdom in its national form, the survivability in this world of sin and in the vale of sorrow without own state and in the domain of alien law, which is adherent to the people of Judaea, and, second, as withstanding the spirit of Hebrewdom,

¹ As known, the metaphysical context of Rozanov's reflections on Christianity and Judaistic monotheism resolved into the openly political one after the Beilis trial (1912–1913), which reflected in the series of his publications of extremely conservative and anti-semitic disposition. On politization of Rozanov's literary activity at that time see: Мюндри 2000: 219–254.

purely earthly particular nature of any human endeavor to the human happiness of his own, not of another.

It would be enough to remind the principal text of the Marxist tradition, which is dedicated to the national issue, to understand the way the issue of nationality has been observed in the European leftist movement in the context of struggle with the dominance of global capital, total exploitation and revision of the “generic essence of the human”. Here is the outcome of famous Marx’ musings in the work “On the Jewish Question”

“Once society has succeeded in abolishing the *empirical* essence of Judaism — huckstering and its preconditions — the Jew will have become *impossible*, because his consciousness no longer has an object, because the subjective basis of Judaism, practical need, has been humanized, and because the conflict between man’s individual-sensuous existence and his species-existence has been abolished. The social emancipation of the Jew is the *emancipation of society from Judaism.*” (Marx 1975a: 174).

As we see, the Jew is a symbol — in the principally material nature of symbol — of any national disjunction as an initial disjunction between the humans, as well as any other disjunction of them. He is a symbol of “practical need”, to which the “generic existence of human” withstands, that is, an unselfish gift of life, that of love, care and forethought, constituting the base of any human ability for creation, of all that is now called “human capital”. On the other hand, the Jew is the capital itself, a deadly soulless tool of self-reproducing system of accumulation and growth. There is an evident question behind Marx’ statement: how could a people ahistoric in its core, a people in its par excellence confined consanguinity, nourishing this generic essence of human exclusively in itself, exist in history? For in such case this should be a history of ceaseless external pressure, i. e. the pressure of the very history. Or is the history only a slapstick, the repetition of something which has happened beforehand? Then it is a product of illusion, result of that the actor and the one who really sees “what happened in the end” are simply two different persons. In this case prior to including the Hebrewdom as material substance of capital into the dialectic entirety of the historic process in theory, one should piously believe in that this inclusion has already occurred *a priori*. In other words, this inclusion is to have been performed practically by fitting it into metanarrative of what *never occurs a priori*, that is, into that very history, into the narrative, into its initial point, and, consequently, into the final outcome of historical process of existence of humanity.

It is significant that at the opposite side of the political specter Marx is answered by Rozanov’s friend and like-minded one Pr. Pavel Florensky:

“...finally, the question is sole: do we trust the Bible or not. Do we trust apostle Paul or not. Israel has been given promises, it’s a fact. And it is apostle Paul who confirms: “All Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11: 26). *Not* “spiritual” Israel, as the seminaries console themselves, alas, *not* spiritual. <...> And as a matter of fact, whatever way you deal with the case, it’s just the

same in the outcome. The Old Testament bestows and incessantly reiterates the promises of future domination over the world. To whom? — to the *Jews*. And what of the New? — It definitely doesn't say to us, Christians, that this domination is now passing to us, Christians, but just calls to *patiently carry our cross* and promises salvation for that. One Testament contradicts to the other — not, however, because both affirm one and the same, but namely out of that both speak *different things*, and those different things are addressed to *different* persons. So this profound and radical divergence of both Testaments, able to be reconciled with highly soaring of spiritual vision, like it happened with apostle Paul, intolerably cuts and burns our wingless and limp consciousness.” (Флоренский 1914: 209–214).

The expectancies on Russian people's historical mission, as well as those of all nations together, have failed, the domination of the people, which is God's chosen here on Earth (!), is inevitable, while the Christians, ecstasized by Epistles of Paul, are proposed some special compromise, an aspiration for the Kingdom of Heaven². To reformulate Florensky, the “wingless and limp consciousness” of a Christian is tormented by one question: where is any clear conscience of sin, where is grace, where is freedom in all these prophesies? All nations save one are victims of a cheap fraud of the same kind as non-alcoholic beer, somewhere permitted light drugs, outsource mechanisms on labor market and many other things in the modern world.

This interchange of messianism and anti-messianism, leftist revolutionarism and right conservatism is doubtlessly proceeding within the circle of sinful consciousness:

“For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” (Rom. 7: 11–17).

Thus, it was the destiny of Russia (or mission of Germany, England, France etc.) that was questioned both by leftists and right (or vice versa). That means no less than the question of the fate of the world in its whole, of any one, be that the small and large world of people, the universe of culture and life in the idea of its metaphysical completeness. To obtain theoretical definitiveness, we might pass once more the circle of sinful consciousness, and for that we will reformulate the question as follows:

² On relations between Florensky and Rozanov over the Jewish question in details see: Курганов 2000: 59–77.

Will there remain in a society of entirely felicitous people anything shaking this perfection and this entirety, which would strip its impossible by definition under side? This question in itself, as it might seem, has no measure of legitimation, neither scientific, nor legal, nor ethical consistency, but, nevertheless, it is precisely the response to this question that constitutes both science, law and ethics³. Truth, justice, equality in gaining happiness by a proper to each mode of interpreting the Good determine the normative horizon of any collective practice. But it is actual only by the measure of oblivion of this very question. Both individual and collective action becomes possible only once the answer is already given, being negative, while the reflection of this action is possible only in the opposite case: for it is obvious that the world is a valley of sorrow, perdition and oblivion, and, according to the word of Paul, “we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now” (Rom. 8: 22).

Whether we would believe what is called religious cult to be a constructive fetish or a narrative fiction written down in a story having been started by God knows who — this or other way, the creature seeks resolution from suffering, which means, resolution of its own beginning. Therefore — with the fact that no logical consequence is possible here due to that we are dealing only with aftermaths of a still unriddled crime — the creature seeks out for identity, it needs a role, dignity of a character, and only for the reason of that while being it, wearing its mask, it should not be it. Let us quote the *Confession* of M. Gorky (1907 — 1908, the 1908 edition): “It was not God that man sought, but the forgetfulness of sorrow. Misfortune torments man and drives him in all directions. He escapes from himself; he wishes to avoid action; he is afraid to work in harmony with life, and he seeks a quiet corner where he can hide himself” (Gorky 1909: 175).

³ E. g., one cannot create a counterfactive hypothesis on the basis of this issue, a favorite tool of any functional analysis, especially in sociology and social sciences, because this method allows to methodologically correctly examine the normalized stationary order of social systems, for which objective some functional element of the system is to be ejected out of the system and thus its actual significance for the functioning of the whole would be clarified. This question is constituted in such a way that a scholar should carry out an unthinkable operation within his mind and eject the very whole from the whole. It would have appeared an operation equally ahistoric, but devoid of verification rule due to that its special cannot be represented in other way than as a unity of universal and individual, that is principally inaccessible to be imagined from outside. It is, however, right this kind of operation that Marx performs in his theory of proletariat as a social class, whose generic essence is constituted exclusively in the universal range, which entails that its existence in the system of bourgeois society is programmed through the figure of split consciousness: according to its substance, which is in this sense equal to the conditions of its being, the proletariat has no rights, that is social identity, but, within the frames of the fiction of civil society, these rights (as universal) are at its disposal (Marx K. “To the criticism of Hegel’s philosophy of law. Introduction”). All the followers of Marx, and, certainly, inevitably and with a remarkable amount of misunderstandings, their criticizers (which, although, concerns the followers as well) were determined to somehow keep up with this basically philosophical operation of extraction of whole from the whole.

Here a Protestant sermon of the main fruit of bourgeois individualism, that is, liberal democracy, begins, but it is also here that socialism in all its branches, with Marxism as the first listed, i. e. any messianism, allocates itself: “for the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8: 20–21). So let us take the viewpoint of totally exclusion from the common — of legal and social system, state, global capital; to put it more precisely, let us take the place of the dead letter, even if it is the Scripture (like for Marxists), of the word speaking nothing to nobody, the place of the guilty *creature*, inscribed into the referential circle of the Law, which is always “good”. Then, in the first variant (Marxism), it would be due to that it is the law of the Master (ruling class), while in the second case (right-wing conservatism), it would be due to that we are all sinners and need a “spiritual” guidance, that is, literally: the “feeding” palm of the Master personalizing the Law of this world. We will involve the theory of “propaganda” of Russian Marxists God-builders as an example of the first discourse, and the criticism of the New Testament by V. V. Rozanov for the second one.

1. God-builders

As by the chief theoretician and, doubtlessly, practitioner of God-building⁴, A. V. Lunacharsky, the scientific socialism, the doctrine of Marx, is the fifth, after Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Spinoza’s pantheistic system, and the last great religion, formulated by the Hebrewdom (Lunacharsky, “Religion and Socialism”, Vol. 1 ed. 1908): (Lunacharsky 1908)⁵. This is religion without God, without beginning and without nomos, for it does not en flesh by itself the law of being of the self-secluded communities of chosen ones, nor the theory of estatist regime of functioning of sociability, where everyone is substantially tasked with his own role — but it is the incarnation of His, that is, the very society as itself, or “people” of God-builders, hope. In the *Confession* M. Gorky formulates a vast and piercing image of this idea:

“The people understood that the law *of life* was not that one from a family should be raised and after having fed him on their liberty that they should live by his mind, but that the true law was that all should be raised to one height and that each one should look upon the paths of life with his own

⁴ Certainly, the God-builders were obliged to repent upon the total criticism by V. Lenin in his “Materialism and Empiriocriticism” (Ленин 1909), nevertheless, it is as doubtless that upon the 1917 Revolution, the ideas of the years long head of the People Commissariat of education Lunacharsky have specified the very form of cultural and educational policy of the early Soviet state. On God-builder views of Lunacharsky in details see: Павловский 1980; Stites 1989; Rowley 1999; Boer 2012.

⁵ In Marx’ doctrine (“the fifth religion”), there is “no transcendent representations and none can arise” (Луначарский 1908).

eyes; and the day when the consciousness of the inevitable equality of man arose in the people, that day was the birth of Christ. Many people have tried to realize their dreams of justice by creating one live being, a common lord over all, and more than once various people, urged on by this common thought, have tried to bind it with strong words that it might live forever. And when all these thoughts were mustered in one, a living God arose for them, the beloved child of the people, Jesus Christ.” (Gorky 1909: 219–220).

This people is not simply Russian nation, but the people in general as an open system of fully corporeal imagination, governed by an aspired and finally befallen thought and its understanding, while Christ is not a certain son of God, but a collective Son of His promise within the people, His second advent⁶.

In this messianic aspiration, the bourgeois individualism (= Judaism in Marxist transcription) rubs off itself as a threshold or limit between the fiction of heavenly world and corrupted nature of this world. And this distinction is annihilated in the universal generality of the vivid feeling of the class in the being of which an “accidental character” of its “living conditions”⁷ is fully opened and which “doesn’t claim any *particular right*, for it is not *particular lawlessness*, but *lawlessness in general* that presses upon it” (K. Marx. “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law. Introduction”: Marx 1975b: 186). The “generic essence of human” of Marx in Lunacharsky’s interpretation is “perfection of species”, identity without identity, that is, a kind of identity possible to be represented as a special subject only in the movement of withstanding to the heritage of living conditions, which continue to emphasize the particularity in what is initially universal, that is, determine the form of mastery of one human over another. This displaced and dynamically aspiring to the future identity contends the logic of *sublime* ideal and any detached aesthetical (= ironic) position. The latter appeals to the beauty and artistic ideal as a harmonious construction of combination of parts within the whole, which is proper to the classic aesthetics. The Lunacharsky’s concept “perfection of species” expresses the terminal state of the human nature as it is, a focus of terminal phase of approximation of the history of humankind to this state.

As a matter of fact, it is in the foundation of aesthetics, i. e. life of the very flesh, in the era of the fight of bourgeois-individualistic against proletarian-socialistic worlds that the “basic criterion” of theoretically minimal difference is placed: this basic criterion

“is a concept of maximum of life, great as possible vital power. The principle of unity in diversity or of a full as possible unity with a great as possible abundance of elements expresses essentially the same thing, but, as any “harmonious” principle, it poorly emphasizes the dynamical side

⁶ On Gorky’s “Confession” in the context of critics of religion in writings of Feuerbach and Nietzsche see: Коковин 2019.

⁷ See: “The German Ideology”: Marx, Engels 1976: 78.

of what is regarded positive⁸. Besides, the criterion of maximum of life, with intromission into the biological and social substance of this ideal (for it is both a criterion and an ideal) is a highly social principle and coincides with the principle of perfection of species (the one which was proclaimed by Marx as well)” (Луначарский 1908).

The positive conditionality of scientific knowledge and omnifarious values never loses contact with the reality of being of the special social groups wherein they originate as constructive illusions allowing to substantiate the right to dominance in the social struggle and expressing the material basics of this dominance, that is, the ownership relations for means of production and productive forces of society. These estatist interests in the era of capital, within the bourgeois formation, are historically objectified in the class possessing the universal theory of social process, as well as the power of universal worldview, which is not yet constituted into a scientific value-ideal. Lunacharsky attempts to scientifically formulate such value-ideal and display its universal “attractivity” in the “Religion and socialism”, having set a task of formulating the universal aesthetics of the human “species”. For the proletariat “due to that the future is on its side, is not interested in self-deceptions and deception of others, it dares to face the reality and thus its ideal will be most scientific and close to the reality” (Луначарский 1908). Empiriocriticism with its molecular, emergent subject reaches the knowledge only in practical verity of self-recognized flesh. The authentic subject of such action can be only collective and only self-consistent, for its consciousness may be generated through a breakdown of the living conditions, which simultaneously dominate over its body and mind. This subject directly comes across the conditionality, non-verity of its being, that is, deception and therefore it has no need to lie to himself and others.

The prophesy on the future of this class is not figure of speech, but a *contingency*, the ruthless necessity of which — for it is a fruit of choice from the possibilities not to be already canceled — discloses itself only in lamentations and torment of those having not yet accepted this universality and opposing it. This is a prophesy on humankind liberated from the fetter of resentment view constituted by social differentiations and legitimated in a quasi-estatist hierarchy of bourgeois individualistic society of profiteers and, respectively, from being a sinful substance, being in the sin. The word of such prophesy is similar to the procession of incarnated God (Jesus Christ from the cited passage of Gorky’s *Confession*), who does not warn its “people” through the word of prophets on the following punishment for sins and oblivion of the testament embodied in the Law as a normative condition of preserving the being of the “people”, but asserts a full-fledged necessary truth: this prophesy

⁸ It should be noted that the given principle is a foundation of organic definition of culture in all the forms of conservative theories of civilizations: for ex., it is a central, once not unique, notional concept organizing the space of notion and an aesthetic principle of rhetoric construction of text adopted by K. N. Leontiev and N. Y. Danilevsky. All Russian conservatives admired it and, of course, Rozanov did not avoid its charm.

is not on a contingent condition, but on an irrevocable and at the same time aspired salvation of the humankind. The struggle for implementing the scientifically (theoretically) asserted necessity of this salvation is itself a necessary consequence of the latter, since it is the necessity of the very suffering flesh of enslaved (alienated from its substance in the capitalist form of exploitation of labor), but already freed in the spirit, class. This spirit is the “Capital”. As Lunacharsky announces not without a share of humbled proselytism:

“The task of Marx and Engels was to shed light on the reality from the view angle of necessity, that is, scientific cognition. The task of evaluation was quite justly supposed by them as a secondary one, maybe even of the third degree. But the plenitude of human relation to the world is gained only when its processes are not only cognized but also evaluated. The human is a cognizant and evaluating being, it is only cognition and evaluation that action issues from. Even if the task of defining the basics and specificity of new proletarian world-evaluation and clarify its place in the range of other world-evaluations in the past and present is sufficiently less important than the task of substantiating the scientific proletarian world view — hence no conclusion shall follow that it is of little importance” (Луначарский 1908).

So Lunacharsky takes upon himself the burden of formulating this evaluation, that is, in Gorky’s words, “while being submitted to the pressure of people’s thought, to shackle it with tough words in order that it lives forever”. For the thirst of justice and the thirst of power are two forces guiding the humankind, as well as in the Kabbalistic tradition the spiritual aspiration for justice is supported by Satanic fire of the unconsciously aspiring to extend its living space flesh. Lunacharsky constructs a whole historical systematics of prophesy, where the figure of prophet is in focus. Marx, this

“last prophet who emerged from the bosom of Israel, with all his enmity to moneymakers, justified them historically while having esteemed the tower of Babel of the culture, from which his remote predecessors used to indignantly avert. The construction was painful. The blood of ones and the turpitude and ferocity of others are impressed on the stones. Even now the construction is hard. But there’s no way beyond this construction.” (Луначарский 1908).

The prophet tells of that the here and now has already drawn near, of the sin of apostasy from the letter of the Law and proclaims the force of retaliation for the sinners and the bliss of promise of the true way for the righteous: here in this place, in the place of the Law, there is the true knowledge of the human flesh, that is, of historical necessity inherent in development of economical forces of society. And now these forces are such, as Marx proclaims, that they testify of a clear possibility of gaining the eternal, not embarrassed by discord, unity of spiritual and carnal fire, of unconscious power and justice of retribution of good to those situated on the height of historical ideal, aspiring in the end to the final point of development of possibilities inherent to it.

“The superior ideal for an economical materialist should be a priori an ideal of the most advanced class in the rapidly as possible developing society. Or: the advanced class of an economically flourishing society is a bearer of the most vital, mighty and luminous ideal. The objective state of the proletariat conveys a priori to an economical materialist that it is a bearer of the most vivid, energetic and lucid life ideal, or is obliged to become it, for ‘the being determines the consciousness’” (Луначарский 1908).

The people, that is, the proletariat, is Christ, Marx is his prophet, the second Moses, and the Doomsday is around the corner, thus

“the natural preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the ideological hegemony of the proletariat. Perhaps one could deny the usefulness of that the allies from intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie would join the party of social democrats, but only a blind could deny the importance of vast sympathies to the proletariat and its banner in the milieu of all the advanced people and all the dispossessed. For it is totally evident: while opposing to all, the proletariat will not conquer and hold the dictatorship. That’s why the ideological propaganda of socialism is an important thing. As for a proof of the objectively height of the socialistic ideal (not only for a wage laborer, but also for each active-minded and sensitive, not spoiled by class egoism or prejudices person), it is a direct way to conquer sympathies, the one which often is more correct and leading to the results more solid than parliamentary services of social democracy to different non-proletarian groups in various particular cases” (Луначарский 1908).

Does the revolution need apostles? But strongly in a diverted form of knowledge. According to Lunacharsky, it needs efficient proselytes, “minor prophets” as an addition to the major prophesy of Marx-Moses. And although the dialectical genius did not evidently touched Lunacharsky’s forehead, he nevertheless quite distinctively narrates to us, how does a part, an excluded part, or more strictly not really a part, becomes a whole, for it was the whole from the very beginning, even prior to its being. All the other is slag which fits only but to pave the foundation of construction of a new tower of Babel, since the time to build has finally come. Where, then, is the proper basis of such logic of preservation in the history and scary triumph of a never and by no one timely noticed whole, which excludes any exclusivity of exclusion, that is, not even a personality and right to deed in proper sense, but their very illusion? This question is responded, from the other side of political and metaphysical opposition of messianism and anti-messianism, by Rozanov.

2. Vasily Rozanov

Rozanov responds immediately and sweepingly:

“Once there is no Bible — then ‘the world history is of no need’. It is *right this* that the historians realized not. The heart of the world history, its ineffable warmth and even ineffable fervency, that’s what the Bible is. ‘Job’, ‘Ruth’, ‘Psaltery’ — next to all this the Parthenons and the Capitols are

just an apartment, and an unheated one... No voice is audible: all Demosthenes' and even the more so Ciceros are turned into voiceless ones near the prophets. It's not only for Isaiah, but also for those 'of the minor'. Joel and so on. Well, let us leave it — I'll never finish. What the deal is about: I don't anyway transfer the 'impressions of the Bible' to the 'modern jude', no, quite contrary to that, it's indeed out of the 'modern jude', foolish and naive, but candid (this is all the deal) that I've first unriddled: where really the secret of *the charm* of the Bible lies. The secret: near the Bible all books appear falsehood" (Розанов 1990: 79).

He speaks of the Old Testament, and this certification does not relate to the New Testament, that is, the essence of Christianity in the view of Rozanov⁹.

We will start out from the brief paginal commentaries of Rozanov to some voluminous fragments of two sermons of John Chrysostom from the cycle "Against Jews", which were published by him (*In Iud. hom. 2–3*)¹⁰ (1906, see: Розанов 1995c). With special force, actually passing beyond the limits of printable speech, a form is represented here of the problematization and in a sense omission by which V. V. Rozanov is treating the concepts of Christianity of the New Testament. In the number of works of that period, he constructed a sui generis Utopia of Golden age, having come into being in the spring of creation of the humankind, finding the testimonies thereof primarily in the Old Testament. The primary target of Rozanov's criticism was namely the messianistic essence of the New Testament which he tried to discredit, although, if looking superficially, his narrative is seem to concern vices of the church and institutionalized Christianity. He chose to aim this criticism into John Chrysostom (circa 347–407), a great rhetorician for the Christian tradition, who has in a sense embodied again in his speech the messianic summon of apostle Paul. John Chrysostom is virtually the first commentator of a sort of summary of messianistic activism, the Epistle to Romans, and his homilies "Against Jews" contain a multitude of allusions to and quotations from it.¹¹ Taking this into consideration, we can suppose that the choice of Rozanov was not made accidentally, even if he got acquainted with the writings of John Chrysostom by chance (indeed at that time, the first multivolume complete collected works of John Chrysostom (1898–1906) in Russian translation was just being published at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy).

Rozanov distinguishes three basic motives of the polemics of John Chrysostom with the supporters of Judaism: 1) senselessness of circumcision as signification of the Testament of the "chosen people" with God, i. e. senselessness of the Law as such; 2) senselessness of participation in the ritual feasts

⁹ Let us point out two special works dedicated to Rozanov's relation to the problem of Judaism and Jewish people: Курганов 2000; Мюндри 2000.

¹⁰ The full text of Russian translation of these two homilies, which Rozanov used: Иоанн Златоуст 1895: 651–668.

¹¹ There is one explicated interpretation of this Rozanov's commentary, in fact completely ignoring the realities of the IV century and surreptitiously placing John Chrysostom into the apostolic times: Курганов 2000: 107–119.

(in the first turn, Passover) as a continuation of the Law; 3) absurdity of both of these in the light of messianic proclaiming of the New Testament, when all the times “passed” and there is no more benefit of their watch, that is, of the strict and, therefore, immediately built in the temporal order of annual cycle maintenance of all that the Law imposes on the faithful. For John Chrysostom, who, certainly, following the requirements of the topos of discussion, each time addresses to the authority of the word of apostle Paul, all these conclusions are determined by one thought and a single figure of speech, transforming the positive of the Old Testament into a negative of being of the Law beyond the very Testament, i. e. the Law as such. Namely, it is the permanent criticism of being “untimely” of the life which clings to the Law and was established upon it — and because of this, when the New testament of freedom is already proclaimed, becomes a weapon of death within the human who thus again and again comes along embodied God on the way to Golgotha. Besides this statement of John Chrysostom there is another one, already explicitly cited by us above, the verse from the Epistle to Romans where the Law is interpreted as an origin of sin: “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do” (Rom. 7:15). Indeed, this conversion signifies the law of freedom right as a New Testament: the sin is finally localized and, upon the appearance of Sun of Truth, upon the cancellation of sin and death by Christ on Golgotha, “the shadow [that is, the Law, the Old Testament] is already being hidden and becomes inappropriate” (a metaphor constantly repeated by John Chrysostom). It means that the sin is exposed to the light, it is no simply weakness of material nature within us and no fault of purposive practical mind, and so everyone is free in serving the Law or not. The candle of the Old Testament, which gave light in the shadow of the testament itself (closed circulation of the chosen who took possession of their home, Palestine, which, by the words of John, the Passover signifies in the light of the New Testament), is replaced by the light of truth (“upon the Christian Pascha is Heaven”). “The Passover is an image, while the Easter is truth” (Розанов 1995с: 501). A helping hand is offered, but the supporters of Judaism in pride and fear produced by the absence of genuine faith, reject it, hoping to save by own forces, that is, with the aid of well-tried remedy, the Law.

Rozaanov dismisses all the background of John Chrysostom’s affirmations, drawing it like a curtain, and performs his own conversion of the figure of transforming the sense of the Old Testament set by the New Testament in accusing John in that he follows solely the cold rhetorics of dogma in his speeches: 1) circumcision is no yoke (that means, it is not a sign of ambiguousness of sin not detected by the subject, when the positive of the Law becomes an “opportunity” for disunion and life in sin: the Law establishes and justifies the necessity of that the reality of society is penetrated by a structure-forming for him disposition of mastery and slavery), but a “relief”; 2) what are distinctions between the Christian and Jewish feasts, when they are appointed in time,

though Chrysostom denies this connection; 3) the replacement of feasts, which revert to the sources of life and human essence, by ritual worship of Golgotha and death is absurd. Thus in the eloquences of the Christian theologian, according to Rozanov, the times come to fullness and the salvation, which has been proclaimed by the prophets for the chosen people and bestowed to everybody by Christ (by his single-action and not requiring imitation sacrifice), turns into a cruel caricature. The authentic word of Christ, as well as the letter of the Law, is replaced by missionary sermon — it would be a different matter that by the one conducted by word, but right on through by fire and sword: Jerusalem was burnt, the dissenters are murdered, Jews in the beginning, then persons from many other peoples, up to a total extermination. The endless interlocutions of Christ with the disciples did not bring them to reason. Why then — asks Rozanov in the note “Christ is the Judge of the world” (1903) — Christ did not foresee the consequences of the long process of sermons and missionary activities: “why wouldn’t he say firmly and mathematically: “Unto you and those *to walk by your steps*, in all the centuries and countries, I order to act only by words, *not betaking yourself in any measure of suppression and compulsion*”” (Розанов 1994b: 76–77).

Such criticism contains a single basic motive and a single foundation which display the kernel of the Rozanov’s caricature inversion of the figure of relations of the Old and the New Testament, formulated by apostle Paul, whom Rozanov almost never mentions in the writings on the relevant topic.

This motive disposes to social and moral criticism: the dogmatization of the New Testament in the evil of the world leads to division of the Earth and the Heaven; then what was being offered to the pagan gods and, in more authentic way, to God of the Old Testament (where the circumcision is the sign of authenticity), that is, living, “smelling” (whereby one can specify its genuineness) offer, is now being given up to the ministers of religion (the offerings of parishioners demanded by the priesthood), while God is now being granted only words, rhetorics and exceedingly scanty nomenclature of substitutes of earthly (unction and frankincense). This is hypocrisy, since all the sacred action is devoid of both publicity of the sacrifice and esoteric mystery (i. e. it is exposed to everybody). The ministers of Christ’s Church “had preserved what was ‘useful and profitable for us’ and vacated what God has asked for himself” in the regulations for offerings (Розанов 1995c: 496)¹².

It is, however, more important that this motive, manifesting itself in unmasking the hypocrisy, is substantiated both in rhetorical and ontological aspects. Rhetorically, as the testimony of Christ’s route on Earth turns to a confirmation of Christ’s prophesy: “I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

¹² That is the start of Rozanov’s commentaries on John Chrysostom. See a model text, “On adogmatism of the Christianity (1903), two versions of article, created on the basis of presentation on the 18th session of Religious and Philosophical Congresses in 1903: Розанов 1994a; Розанов 1995a; also see “A table of religious and philosophical questions” (1906): Розанов 1995b.

For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” (Math. 10: 34–35). Rozanov implies the dogmatical division of Christianity and the adogmatical one, which accompanies the former, in the form of variety of heresies, in a formal way reminding the heretic separation of the people from itself in the structure of the entirety of the bourgeois society, which the God-builders spoke of. The mentioned confirmation is indeed that of the “prophesy”, that is, once we follow Rozanov — who, by his own words, from all the Gospel books felt the spirit (“smell”) of the Old Testament only in the book of Revelation (Розанов 1995d: 312) — the instructions with which God addresses to the human, opens his eyes to non-observance of the Law by threat and by promise through the prophets. But it is also true that, for Rozanov, Christ expresses, or to put it more strictly, embodies the figure of prophet in full strength due to that it is he who is the enfleshed content of the prophesy, the messiah, for “his word was deed” and over that he needed not to menace the humans, and he came to affirm the indisruptably necessary truths, as well as the “people” of Gorky and Lunacharsky, or more precisely, the propagandists of its, i. e. the people, idea. They evidently had no need to affirm anything themselves through a deed. For also “Christ did not use violence for the reason that his word was equal to deed, it was in its way already violence; thus he did not engage means which he himself needed not, but inevitable for a human and therefore admitted for him” (Розанов 1994b: 78)¹³. To imitate Christ means not to prophesy on the destiny of the people stuck in lawlessness, but to gain domination over the world using others.

To say otherwise, Rozanov appeals not to the general evidence in the view of the public of that the priesthood is depraved and hypocritical, and thus in the whole exposing a bad pattern to the Christian people. He appeals even not to the fact of nonobviousness of any *testimony* for the third person, which is evident by default, but to its impossibility. This chiasm, already “blasphemous”, neglects the figure of apostle as such¹⁴, that is, the figure of word of the New Testament (a community of those recalling what is impossible to recall and what is by default nonobvious until human has “these eyes”), in favor of the truth of revelation of shame (nudity) given to Adam and Eva from the Genesis, that is the revelation of this “third person”, which is obligatory to be excluded from communication.

Respectively, the ontological basis is as follows: God is the one who sees lies as it is a declination from the Law, while the truth is an exclusive and entire revelation to each other of two tied by the deed of generation of similar to themselves, coupling the nexus of times in happiness and oblivion and caring just for that it wouldn’t interrupt in the posterity, that is for the very poster-

¹³ See also: Шелковая 2017.

¹⁴ See a short but quite informative explanation of distinction between the apostle of the New Testament and the prophet in the Old Testament tradition: Agamben 2005, 59–62.

ity (husband and wife, the circumcision consolidates this temporal ties in the eternity of communication with God and extends to the whole genus, the Jewish people).¹⁵ We should then add also, to signify another inversion: once following the proposed logic, God does not see in a sense this couple, for all this is not included into the verses of Testament; He detects only its violations, and only then manifests himself this or other way. This chiasm is not a mere appeal to that the ontological denial of shame in the marriage is more valid in its consequences that anything other (Rozanov speaks of a special kind of chastity of true marriage and copulation), for, as an exception from other practices, where the shame is a warrant of tightness of social tie (though hardly discerned out of the viewpoint of the same third person from hypocrisy), this denial of shame supports them in the most substantial, in the very birth and in the impulse of the parents to retain the new members of society in the being. The problem is that we are scarcely able to discern the Creator from this third-party seducer (by recognition of good and evil in which the human finally becomes similar to God) any other way but by what is in the text of the Scriptures. It is just twice that God appears there in the first episode of description of human existence in community. First, when he marks the tree of knowledge by his ban, and secondly, when he summons his creature having hid itself of shame into the light while being aware that the ban has been violated and there is a need for him to interfere.

This indiscernibility and this disgrace, which were fixed in the first narrative on human being together and asunder, are inevitable, once we drop off from memory the fact that along with the revelation of happiness (“relief” in Rozanov’s transcription), coming at the same time with abolition from the shame as the belonging to the Old Testament, according to Rozanov, explication of sin (expulsion of the third by God), the frailty of the very effort to be happy, which accompanies the sense of happiness, is also revealed. In the same text, “Something from the mist of ‘images’ and ‘semblances’”, following his own analytics of shame, Rozanov mentions the “tunics of skin” from the book of Genesis, into which the flesh of the first human couple, who did right then, prior to expulsion from the Paradise, recognize their nudity, was vested. He prefers not to focus directly on this but the mention is symbolic, because in the Kabbalistic tradition, which has been thoroughly studied by Rozanov, they had been sewn out of the skin of the Snake. Rozanov prefers to use euphemism and continues his writing by an apologia of chastity of depicting the naked female flesh in the high art of European painting (Розанов 1995d: 311–312)¹⁶.

¹⁵ See the crucial Rozanov’s writing on the topic of shame: “Something from the mist of ‘images’ and ‘semblances’” (1901) (Розанов 1995d, especially p. 307–311). Here we lay open its main provisions in critical form. For the most detailed discussion of the problem of Rozanov’s understanding of the circumcision as an archetypal sacrifice see: Курганов 2000: 123–128.

¹⁶ On Rozanov’s attempt of creating a concept of transcendence of gender as a compromise between the Christian dualism and Jewish monism, see: Мюндри 2000: 206–218.

So John Chrysostom testifies on that the Law does not fully expire along with the abolition of the Old Testament (Rozañov laughs over this incoherence), on that in “this hour” one can save by the Law only what is possible to be saved: the place of the Law, from which John Chrysostom speaks, and it is the place of sin and stupidity of the supporters of Judaism who did not accepted the testament of Christ. But Rozañov is more and more firmly stepping on the road of prophesy (and that of criticism, not only literature, but transcendental, where the freedom is just a long examination of normative limits established by the ever unknown and imperceptible in its features Law) to become forever a witness of a new Apocalypse, that is fulfilment of *another* prophesy, the Revolution, a new God-wrestling and a new God-building.

And here is the final, evidently not original, diagnosis of Rozañov, which proclaims on the already laid foundations of the approximating Apocalypse: the Christianity is a religion of sin and suffering:

“Christ suffered and, ‘imitating him’, we also will suffer... The human is *self-crucifying*: these are *the very* essentials of the Christianity. Once again not holding in attention that the crucifixion of Christ had its sense not as an *example* for the humankind, but a totally concrete and existing only for Christ, executable for his deity task: to eliminate the sin, downgrade to the hell, gain victory over the Devil” (Роζαηοβ 1995d: 314).

“The human is *self-crucifying*”, for “we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now” (Rom. 8: 22). The obviousness of so radically existential interpretation of these apostle Paul’s words, in its own way mesmerizing by discrete and primeval masochism, already for long arises no doubts for anyone, as well as spreading them to all the creation. For example, a recent version of Giorgio Agamben could be represented:

“All the creation has submitted to vanity and frailty, but it’s right due to this that it groans in waiting for salvation (Rom. 8: 20–22). And from the part of the Spirit, these groaning of permanently perishing creature will be corresponded not by a perfectly formulated discourse able to trace and register the perdition, but just by ‘groanings which cannot be uttered’ (Rom. 8: 26)” (Agamben 2005: 41).

We will show another interpretation, closer to Paul’s by the time, of a representative of the same Antioch school of theology whereto John Chrysostom also belonged, namely his younger contemporary Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus (393 — circa 458). The Antioch school was famous for literal interpretation of the Scriptures, and it was a rule for it to precisely mark the fragments, where the very author applies the symbolic, while at the same time prohibiting the commentators to apply the symbolic interpretation at all, demanding them to look at the things, not at their images. Theodoret notes on Rom 8: 22: “For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs [or: yearns] together until now (οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν)”:

“Here the apostle included also the invisible creatures, for he said ‘the whole creation’. But for understanding this place with highest precision, I’ll remind the Gospel dictum, for Lord said that the angels rejoice in the heaven over one sinner who repents (Luc. 15: 7). Once they rejoice over the repenting sinners, then, as evident, they use to be discontented while looking at our unrighteousness” (Феодорит Киррский 2013: 118).

This line does not narrate on bitter testimonies of injustice of merciless laws of nature and history (on groaning and tormented creature) or of their personified incarnations (angels of rationalized theology, including Talmudistic, which has no own free will). It speaks of reasonable, free, immortal beings.

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РУССКАЯ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ МЫСЛЬ НАЧАЛА XX ВЕКА
И БУКВА ЗАВЕТА: РЕВОЛЮЦИОННЫЙ МЕССИАНИЗМ БОГОСТРОИТЕЛЕЙ
И КОНСЕРВАТИЗМ В. В. РОЗАНОВА

Резюме

В статье рассматривается внутренняя форма и важнейшие элементы содержания того дополнения религией, которое испытывает на себе как марксистский революционный мессианизм, так и антимессианизм консервативного сознания и консервативной социальной и политической мысли эпохи Модерна. Противостояние этих двух философских и идеологических позиций зачастую интерпретировалось сквозь призму противоположности Ветхого и Нового завета, консервативной сущности первого и мессианской – второго. Как образец революционно-мессианской логики рассуждения в статье рассматривается теория «пропаганды» русских марксистов-богостроителей, представленная наряду с анализом исторических форм религиозного сознания прежде всего в работе А. В. Луначарского «Религия и социализм» (1908), образцом исторической саморефлексии консервативного сознания служит критика Нового завета и христианства В. В. Розановым.

Ключевые слова: А. В. Луначарский, В. В. Розанов, богостроители, марксизм, консерватизм, мессианизм, Закон, «Послание к Римлянам».

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РУСКА СОЦИЈАЛНО-ПОЛИТИЧКА МИСАО С ПОЧЕТКА XX ВЕКА
И СЛОВО ЗАВЕТА: РЕВОЛУЦИОНАРНО МЕСИЈАНСТВО БОГОГРАДИТЕЉА
И КОНЗЕРВАТИВИЗАМ В. В. РОЗАНОВА

Резиме

У раду се разматра унутрашња форма и најважнији елементи садржаја оне религиозне допуне, коју је претрпело како марксистичко револуционарно месијанство, тако и антимијанство конзервативне свести и конзервативне социјалне и политичке мисли сецесионистичке епохе. Опозиција ових двају философских и идеолошких ставова често се интерпретирала кроз призму супротстављености Старог и Новог завета, конзервативне суштине првог и месијанске другог. У чланку се као образац револуционарно-месијанске логике расуђивања узима у разматрање теорија „пропаганде“ руских марксиста-богоградитеља, приказана упоредо са анализом историјских облика религиозне свести пре свега у раду А. В. Луначарског „Религија и социјализам“ (1908). За образац историјске саморефлексије конзервативне свести узима се критика Новог завета и хришћанства В. В. Розанова.

Кључне речи: А. В. Луначарски, В. В. Розанов, богоградитељи, марксизам, конзервативизам, месијанство, Завет, „Посланица Римљанима“.