

The natural consequence of that first spiritual fall was a literal physical one. "And I saw a star falling from heaven unto the earth." Revelation 9:1. But if the general meaning of this downfall is just apostasy, or faithlessness of the most serious kind ever known, then we "Christians" need not, of course, go to founders of non-Christian religions (such as Mohammed), or all the way back to the devil himself, in order to find examples of "fallen stars." The falling away from God is a phenomenon taking place right in our midst. Is not that a tragic fact? Since the awful moment when the great star, the covering cherub in heaven, apostatized and just fell, like a terror-arousing meteor, down, down down --- to the depth of the pit, there has been an increasing multitude of smaller "stars", falling and falling all the time, and notice: this is happening right around us. To anyone of God's children the calamity may happen. We may end our careers of erstwhile shining stars simply as hopelessly fallen stars. Our light may go out and sink into utter obscurity forevermore.

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By permitting the forces of darkness to drive us into this extremity, what we finally achieve is of course not to vindicate the name of God. We shall have no part in taking away the ignominy wickedly heaped upon Him. From the beginning certainly that vindication of the holy name was the glorious task for which every one of us was destined. How could we so completely fail our most meaningful destination? You and I were made stars in order that we might shine. But when our brightness (the reflection of Christ's love in our lives) is suddenly swallowed up by the obscuring shadows of iniquity, the result is inevitable: Our failure to witness in Christ's favor among the listening throngs of fellow creatures who happen to be observing us most closely, is a tragically pitpreparing event of our lives. The pit can be opened at any unexpected moment as a result of that failure on the part of the supremely honored ones, the erstwhile most brightly shining ones.

The shining star that decides to go out in darkness, rather than to go on shining to the glory of God, is, according to all this, in a hopeless position, historically speaking: He is, whether he knows it or not, "given the key of the bottomless pit". That is why a crucial question has to be directed to you and me as well: How far are *we* responsible for the darkening taking place in the minds of *OUR* fellow men today, due to the blinding "smoke" *OUR* inter-human unconcern has caused to arise?

What I so often forget is what God has solemnly informed me about: To any neighbor of mine I am "in the place of God." Genesis 50:19. If I show him nothing but merciless indifference, what will he tend to think? Illogically enough, he immediately proceeds to think: "It is God in heaven who distinguishes Himself

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as all that indifferent." Man, in his hopelessly subjective reasoning, just isn't one bit more clear-sighted or objective-minded than that. He jumps to his rash conclusion: If Christians are "like that" -- then Christ too must be "like that."

Notice this piece of wisdom from the pen of one of the truly learned theologians of the present day:

"It is exploitation that leads a people to anarchy, according to the author of Proverbs. The key that may open the abyss of popular insurrection is the most shameless exploitation ever known in human history. Quite materially this hostile act of one man against another man leads the latter to such a state of downright physical famine and deprivation that a simple lack of life's most elementary necessities will force one social class to the ultimate extreme. It was with a key of this kind the bottomless pit was opened in the case of the Paris Commune in 1789." "The Last Solemn Warning." ("Die Letzte Feierliche Warning.") Unpublished Manuscript by Erich Laufersweiler.

## **25. COULD THE TERM "BOTTOMLESS PIT" HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS IN THREE DIFFERENT CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION?**

Bible expositors sometimes seem to assume that they cannot expect the Oracles of God to have any reliable trend of consistency. For instance it is thought possible that from verse 13 to verse 15 of the 11th chapter of another apocalyptic book, namely Daniel,

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the prophet -- or rather the Spirit directing his vision and his writing -- has suddenly changed His mind entirely about the identity of the "King of the North". Now what about the Book of Revelation? Here the term "Bottomless Pit" (abussos) appears several times (namely in chapters 9, 11, and 17). Would it be asking too much consistency in the vocabulary of an author (in this case also the Author with a capital A) to assume that his term stands for very much the same thing throughout his book?

Now first, what does "abyss" stand for in the Biblical language as a whole? In the Septuagint it is frequently used to translate the Hebrew word *TEHOM*. In Genesis 1:2 that means primeval. The "deep" is here used almost as a sort of proper name. To call it a "primeval sea" may have too much of a resemblance with the vocabulary of pagan myths. The God of the Bible is the God who realistically creates; that is, makes something out of "nothing", as it is popularly described. It appears reasonable to think then, that *TEHOM* in Genesis 1:2 is not essentially different from the *TOHU* of both that same verse and of Job 26:7 ("He hung the earth on nothing.") *TOHU* was the strange "thing" God decided to "hang the earth upon" at its very beginning. So *TOHU* here comes very close to "nothingness." It is just sheer emptiness, or non-existence.

Now what does that imply for the concept of "abussos"? Does it necessarily always have an actively negative sense? No. Genesis 1:2 speaks about events of creation taking place before sin had yet entered our world. So there could be nothing wrong here. In fact, there is bound to be *nothing* where God has not yet introduced *something*. In other words, there

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is no inherent evil in non-existence, as long as God has not, so far, called any creaturely thing into existence. "Chaos", therefore, in such a case, is not at all a negative thing. You could, at worst, characterize it as just zero.

But notice, Biblical ethics does not permit you and me to remain indefinitely at the stage of our personal reasoning about good and evil. We must proceed from that point. And what follows then? Something very serious: The state of nothingness *becomes* definitely negative. When? At the very moment when there is suddenly nothing where God had instituted something. God's ethics, we know, includes the realization of an elementary fact: A creature of His, such as man, has been granted the enormous privilege of what we call freedom of volition. That immediately implies that man is permitted to reject God's gracious gift of creaturely existence. In other words, he is entirely free to choose gliding right back into a state of nothingness. We call that state death. In Romans 10:7 abyssos is used precisely in the sense of the "place" of the dead. And Psalm 71:20 of the LXX translation has "Abussos" in the same sense as man's tragic gliding back into nonentity, a state of affairs which only God could ever redeem.

But let us now also notice another thing: That terrible willful relapse just cannot happen without affecting, a most negative way, the all-significant matter of God's reputation as the perfectly Righteous One, the totally Holy One. Hence obedience becomes also, immediately, a matter indispensable for God's vindication. That is the act of washing perfectly clean again something precious which has been soiled: His holy name. Multitudes of intelligent creatures, however, originally endowed with that freedom to accept life, or reject it, have opted for the rejection. This is the serious thing which has cast a dark shadow over the ethics of God. It has raised strong doubts in many minds about God's goodness and almight, including His ability to know all things, past, present

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and future. (See "*Day of Destiny*", chapter on the "Openness-of-God" theory, as overtly taught by some most influential teachers at Loma Linda University, themselves visibly influenced by Whiteheadian philosophy).

From the very dawn of Seventh-day Adventism as a dynamically forward-marching movement in the world, *Prophecy* has been paramount in waking up slumbering minds and hearts to an intensive awareness of endtime reality. Nothing was ever found more efficient for the purpose of strengthening men's faith in the Word of God than the visible fulfillment of majestically proclaimed prophecies of the Bible. But how could we hope to continue having this mighty approach in our world movement, if no leading men among us feel they can jeopardize their "prestige" within circles of modernist thought in the church by launching a courageous and decisive attack against pagan theories creeping right into our main channels of denominational publication, a philosophy shamelessly stating that God is *not omniscient*; that is, *not able to foretell the future of human beings*? How could the faith of our fathers in Biblical predictions survive in an atmosphere like that?

If you and I have succumbed, as responsible leaders in a community of God's people, to the treasonable desire for popularity among the proud elite of "super-intellectuals" (those trying hard to take over the leadership of denominations today), permitting them to use our best publication channels in order to broadcast their heretical ideas about God, then we must hurry to confess our own felony in so doing. We must not cover up, pretending that there is nothing that needs to be put straight again, nothing that needs to be recanted in a thorough public way.

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To me this seems to be the proper occasion to remind of one more case in which public confession is desperately needed. That is when we have -- wittingly or unwittingly -- made a public declaration which drags the very honor of fellow human beings down into the dirt. Afterwards we are made duly aware of the total (or partial) falseness of the given defamation. Now, if in a case like that, we fail to restore, as far as possible, and in a definitely public manner, the vital honor of the mercilessly maligned ones (the obviously downtrodden ones) -- can we then expect to retain the blessings of God over our lives, as individuals, and as a people?

## 26. THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER OF REVELATION, THE MOST APOCALYPTIC ABYSSOS TEXT OF THEM ALL

Now it should be time to go to the last of the chapters in which the world power of utter "bottomlessness" is described (And this time the description has considerable detail.) I am referring to the 17th chapter. Here the mystic monster suddenly turns up again, namely in verse 7. That happens immediately after the main attention has been focused on harlots and abominations of the earth. The term Babylon invariably applies to a hypocritical, spiritual power, threatening, under the cloak of religion, to blot out from man's life one of its greatest values; the freedom to think and act according to one's deepest personal conscience. In fact, the prophet says:

"I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs (witnesses) of Jesus." **Revelation 17:6.**

That woman is not the beast of the bottomless pit.

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She is *on the top* of the beast. To her the beast is a mere vehicle. She mounts it majestically, like a monstrous rider on a monstrous horse. It was at the moment when the prophet saw her thus mounted that he, if we may use his own words, "wondered with great admiration" (verse 6). In modern English we would say amazement. Why was he so amazed? Well, that woman, all by herself, certainly would have made a sight fantastic enough. But she was *not* "all by herself." She was with the beast. To distinguish between the two, and establish the relationship between them, must be an important task to the expositor. And just here expositors have often failed. What caught the prophet's attention most, as he had his vision, was evidently the woman, the formidable rider. At

least, as the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary very reasonably points out, he does use far more space to describe *her* than to describe the beast (7BC 853). The angel, however, in his explanation, "dwells almost altogether on the beast."

The reason for that may be the following: in this case you could hardly expect to understand essential facts about the rider without first having got to understand essential facts about her mount. The angel does not say that there is no natural reason for John's astonishment. The mystification is natural enough, and now he (the angel) is going to clear it up.

"I will tell thee the mystery of the woman -- and of the beast that carrieth her."  
(**Revelation 17:7.**)

Here it is the strange connection between the

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two that gives the answer. The woman could not do anything of what she does, had it not been for the beast. The beast is her great "base", her sole foundation -- if you can speak about any "foundation" at all where the ground that carries you is as shaky and illusory as this beast will turn out to be, religiously speaking. The beast is the woman's only vehicle. Her "motive power" is wholly there. The ecclesiastical power she represents so truly -- is entirely sustained and supported -- as long as that support lasts -- by a secular one. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the entire "mystery" in each one of the two, and in their being together, is to be understood in terms of the main thing they have in common. They have both hardened their hearts, as this automatically happens, where the trend is to be more and more secular in one's ambitions, more and more greedy for the prestige and the intoxicating power this world can provide -- materially, intellectually and "spiritually."

What has happened to the Church whom the woman represents is this: The secularism (mere worldliness) of the beast has engulfed her. And here secularization means a gradually intensified "politicalization". The end of it is a simple display of material power in a downright Machiavellian sense. Any ever so genuinely ecclesiastical body will inevitably succumb to one fatality: if I am permitted to coin a new term, I may call it *atheistification*:

We should watch out and get to know what OUR foundation as nominal Christians happens to be like. And then, for safety's sake we should compare it to what we ought to know about the beast of the bottomless pit. It definitely is not impossible today

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to know what the actual nature, the actual identity, of that beast happens to be. It has long enough, and thoroughly enough had its hard-beaten trail written down in prophecy and in history as well. We should know by now what a fantastic career that beast has

had, serving as a living vehicle for apostatizing religious denominations.

I would not be surprised if what I have intimated so far, leaves you almost just as incredulous as John the Revelator seemed to be at the first moment when he suddenly stood face to face with an incredible fact. I think I can almost hear you cry out in amazement: "You don't mean to say, do you, that present-day Christians -- maybe entire denominations of an impeccable reputation -- could permit themselves the turpitude of being 'carried around' by a satanic confederacy of political power, in fact, a power as well-known today for its hatred against Jesus Christ as world-famous Marxism happens to be? How could any Christian ally himself with a political movement as far from the faith in God as world Communism, today a simple synonym everywhere for hard-boiled atheism!"

My dear friend, should not Bible readers like you and me, even excelling in a traditional emphasis on prophecy, know at least pretty well what kind of being that "woman" is? She is the great symbol par excellence, applicable to any juncture of world history, of a beautiful-looking but internally purifying religiousness, which is satan's most efficient cooperator right in the believers' own camp. And who is the beast she happens to be riding upon? That should not be one bit more difficult to obtain an absolutely reliable idea about. Let us simply see how the beast is graphically described, not by John, but by an angel who profoundly knows:

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## 27. THE "ENIGMATIC" PART OF THE CHAPTER

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that WAS, and IS NOT, and yet IS (TO BE)." **Revelation 17:8.**

This sounds like a riddle indeed doesn't it? Who can find his way in such a maze of apocalyptic talk? John's accompanying angel tells who can, namely the "mind which hath wisdom." That must be a God-given wisdom, to be sure, but a wisdom given to men, to normal, but GOD-dependent human beings, obviously without any exceptional IQ. God does not lean on exceptional IQs in creatures. He is satisfied entirely with ordinary men's humble willingness to put to action the common-sense type of reason He has granted to them. Of course, that reason must be sanctified by Him, and led by Him. Otherwise any degree of human reasoning, based on any level of a human IQ, is doomed to fail miserably.

But how then, does God lead wandering men through the labyrinth of apocalyptic prophecy? Here, as well, He leans heavily on one thing that men often consider as too concrete and this-worldly to be worthy of their attention: simple history; that is, past and accurately verifiable events of human experience. We must not forget the main intention of Biblical prediction. It is not just to satisfy speculative men's curiosity in terms of a sentimental, sensation-craving prying into the secrets of the future. No, its main purpose



is rather to strengthen the believer's faith. Christ said:

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"Now I tell you before it come, that when it come to pass, ye may believe that I am He."  
**John 13:19.**

Now, we do know that militant Marxism, or Communism as a world movement, is a fact of history of the most tremendous significance -- significant not only in terms of world politics, but also in terms of the great fight between good and evil, between God and the God-denying spirit of the evil one. Dogmatic atheism has definitely entered the arena of a world-wide controversy; and its main effort is to disprove the existence of the great I AM, His existence in the world and His existence in the lives of human beings. Therefore, the next question to ask would be this one: Had the great I AM ever predicted the entering upon the scene of that phenomenon of systematic negation in terms of an openly, actively persecuting power, a world-power of non-God philosophy?

We know, in a general way, of course, that the spirit of negation and of ever-smouldering rebellion has been there since Lucifer's fall. He was the first brilliant star falling into apostasy, as we have already pointed out. But the question that we are quite particularly bent on asking at this stage of our inquiry is this one: Did the principle of total rebellion and ultimate God-denial establish itself among human beings in such a way that it became embodied in a definite regime, a world empire, tougher than anything the world had ever seen so far?

We have already partly answered that question. The Great Revolution of 1789 was the beginning of a series of events, something hitherto almost unheard of and apparently new in world history. I say "almost" and "apparently." For we shall soon see that it was not entirely unheard of. It was not entirely new.

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## **28. HOW EARLY DOES DOGMATIC ATHEISM ENTER THE ANNALS OF HUMAN HISTORY?**

Most of the ancient world empires do lean on some kind of religion. Quite publicly they profess some kind of belief in gods and goddesses. It is evidently only the ultimate bitterness of the fight against God in the endtime that seems able to make men sufficiently bold to broadcast the idea of a consistent atheism. That boldness comes to them at the moment when the smoke of the bottomless pit has made them senseless with fury. The very doctrine of God is then some day publicly being declared to constitute a dangerous poison. It is supposed to be hostile to the prosperity of the regime. It is opium for the people. That decides the issue. We are beginning to understand the essence of the fury that arose like a fume from the well of the abyss.

But why do I still suggest the idea then that the modern eruptions of dogmatic godlessness may not, after all, be an entirely new thing?

The foundation for this is simply Biblical. According to Revelation the very beast of the pit is not at all exclusively a modern phenomenon. We must keep to the simple wording of the prophetic message. Let us have it repeated:

"The beast that thou sawest WAS, and IS NOT, and SHALL ascend (AGAIN) out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." **Revelation 17:8 A.**

An alternating trend is clearly indicated here. There is appearance, disappearance, and reappearance. John was clearly told that the phenomenon did not assert itself at the time when the angel was addressing him. But evidently it had existed in past history, and was bound to exist once more in the future.

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What more is revealed about this unique type of a more or less perennial world regime? Let us see. Verse 10 goes on, in traditional fashion, to speak about "kings."

"There are seven kings. Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come. And when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

This is a more familiar type of prophetic formulation. Therefore, it does not strike us as all that difficult to interpret either. It makes good sense to say (See 7B.C.854): Those seven kings, also described as seven heads, seem to represent, rather understandably, seven major political powers through which Satan has sought to destroy the people of God and His work on earth.

Let us, so far, content ourselves with enumerating the first five that are said to have fallen, thus belonging to the past, from John's point of view: 1. Egypt, once on the point of bringing Israel to a total extinction at the Red Sea (Exodus 1:9-30): 2. Assyria under Sennacherib (Isaiah 8:4-8, and 36:1-15; 37:3-37). 3. Babylon during the Captivity (Jeremiah 38:9, 10, and 52:13-15). 4. Persia under Haman (Esther 3:8, 9, 10; 7:4; 9:1-6). 5. Greece under Antiochus Epiphanes 1 (Maccabees 1:20-64).

And now the sixth. John says about it: "One is. In other words, "It exists now." Of course the persecuting worldly power through which Satan intended to destroy God's people at John's time could be no other than the Romans. But what about the seventh, the one "yet to come"? The Papacy has been suggested. But how could the Papacy quite consistently be pointed out as the seventh power (or head, or kingdom)? In

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the first place, the general category of regimes here enumerated, as enemies or persecuting powers, are of a purely SECULAR, that is NON-ECCLESIASTICAL order. In the second place, that seventh king, who at John's time "had not yet come", is



described as destined to "continue a short space." There hardly seems to be any reason truly reasonable for reducing the Papacy - in comparison with the other "kings" - in that way. The harlot riding on the beast, it is true, was not as old as the beast (from the bottomless pit). But what immediately impresses historians about her, as soon as they come to envision her in the grim light of historical persecutions, certainly is NOT that HER reign distinguished itself as rather ephemeral. Those who had the misfortune of suffering under HER persecutions from generation to generation would hardly be tempted to describe the apostate Church in that vein, would they? Evidently, in order to find the "seventh king", we shall have to look for another interpretation.

We have already spoken at some length about the French Revolution, that is the incipient spell of furor on the part of the modern beast, or the beast of the bottomless pit, as it is described in Revelation, the eleventh chapter. What should be so illogical in thinking that the "seventh king" points us directly to France and the relatively modest, or at least relatively short-lasting attempt to "crush the Wretch" that country organized toward the end of the eighteenth century?

In itself that event of dire persecution certainly was not of any particularly long duration. But at the same time it did announce other eruptions of revolutionary magnitude that would soon shake the world, and go on shaking it as it had never been shaken before by any kings of the prophetic dynasty. And notice:

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it was precisely the world of Christendom (our vacillating Western World) that was destined to be shaken in that unprecedented way. The time was ripe for a dogmatic materialism which the "Christian" Occident had hardly ever dreamt of.

It seems sufficient simply to believe what the Spirit of Prophecy says about the beast of the bottomless pit in the 11th chapter of Revelation, in order to know who is the last one of the seven kings. It is revolutionary France as the first modern exponent of a unique and most formidable power. French radical politicians are suddenly seen taking full advantage of the unprecedented oppression now exerted for decades and centuries by nominal Christians against a poverty-stricken laity. Extreme leftist demagogues do not hesitate to "open the shaft of the bottomless pit," that is, a fiery furnace more terror-inspiring than anything history had witnessed up until this moment.

So there should be no reason for theologians to go into any spiritualistic interpretation of the number of just seven kings. It certainly is not just a "purely symbolic" figure we here have to deal with. Seven does not, here, simply mean completeness. It is not a magic trick of pure generalization, meaning "all" world powers fighting against God, without national distinction. No-no. If that had been correct, then how could "one of the seven," namely the sixth, have been singled out as existing at the author's time, as opposed to the previous five already fallen?

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## 29. HOW CAN A "BEAST" (OR A "KING") MANAGE TO BE COUNTED AS THE SEVENTH AND THE EIGHTH AT THE SAME TIME?

"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." **Revelation 17:11.**

Is there no definiteness about this peculiar beast? What is the specificity of its individual character? Of course, one thing has to be admitted: if the "Beast of the Bottomless Pit" spells Dogmatic Materialism and Militant Atheism, then, in a way, it does indeed adopt a more or less PERENNIAL or UNIVERSAL character.

On the other hand, however, that same beast, in its mature wickedness, actually emerges only closer to the end of our world history, namely in the peculiar Marxism and world-famous Communism of this last century.

This must be an indisputable fact regarding the beast we are trying to obtain an absolutely reliable idea about. In other words, the beast of stubborn God-denial, in its modern appearance, has developed an identity, an individuality it can claim as its own, something pretty unique. In view of that undeniable fact, however, it must have a perfect right, by now then, to claim A NUMBER OF ITS OWN in the mighty dynasty of beastly wickedness in this world, wherever the question of historic persecutions is concerned. It should not be all that surprising then to see the further formulation of the authentic Bible text. The beast of the bottomless pit is simply registered as the EIGHTH KINGDOM. That means the very last head of arch-pagan secular wickedness, bringing the whole series to a final conclusion.

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Still, nevertheless - this is not all that surprising either - the beast retains, inalienably, its full right to be counted among the seven, from which it stands out so conspicuously. How can that "inalienable right" be logically defended? The logic is impeccable. Here we are forced to come back to the plain fact that the shaft of the pit was actually opened on several "minor" occasions, not only AFTER the day of John (in France no less that 3 revolutionary explosions, and certainly, historically seen, not MINOR ones, as many of us might be tempted to rubricate them), but even a long time BEFORE John's day. We must now tackle the Inevitable question of THE BEAST THAT "WAS".

## 30. THE BEAST THAT "WAS"

France was by no means the FIRST country in world history to engage demonstratively in an all-out impious rebellion against the household of God, bold enough to challenge even the sacredness of home and matrimony, the only chance for a new generation to grow up without developing into rogues and inveterate criminals. Oh no, the Great Revolution of 1789 was not the ONLY world event, so far, which dared to announce audaciously what plans satanic godlessness of the most stiff-necked order had in mind to perform in the hotbed of human politics. No-no, way back in antiquity there was a nation

to which historians often pay a minor attention. Not all groups of history students, though, have committed the same error of a simple oversight. In this particular case there are praiseworthy exceptions. In fact, some secular men have not at all been that I am referring, sad to say, to certain

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tyrannical Macchiavellis, administrators of cruel conspiracy, masters in ultramodern politics. In one way it would have been a good thing if you and I had been just as farsighted as they. For to you and me, at the present moment, it is a matter of prime importance to get sight, finally, of the "Communism that WAS".

When the angel from heaven, speaking about the political regime he called "the Seventh" stated briefly: "It is not," that statement may not seem so difficult to explain. For the Roman empire, which was contemporary with the apostle John, however much it could be blamed for evil qualities, yet certainly could not be qualified as a communist regime. It was not even socialist in any modern acceptance of the term. Nor was Rome a kingdom publicly denouncing the BELIEF IN GODS, rather the opposite.

To tell the truth, subjects of that empire were condemned for NOT believing in the gods. The faith in a number of gods and goddesses was, in fact, still an important feature of national life in the Roman world. When Christians were persecuted, one reason given for that persecution was precisely that they were reported to "break down the faith in the gods."

On the other hand, if you ask me, "Was that nation never anywhere close to being submerged by the dictatorship of the proletariat?" - then I have to answer truthfully: They certainly did go through a hectic trial once. At that time they were frightfully close to such a destiny. Rome was actually exposed, toward the end of her reign, to a certain attack which threatened to overthrow everything the "capitalist" type of a traditional Roman held dear and holy.

This was at the critical moment when Spartacus had his day. Spartacus came incredibly close to the destiny-changing event of arriving at a formidable

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revolution which would most likely have transformed Rome from a bourgeois state into a dictatorship of the popular masses.

Who was Spartacus? He was a poor slave who had run away from his master, and was filled with flaming bitterness against the governing classes. He looked upon them as a corrupt bunch of plutocratic scoundrels. So one day he decided to make violent rebellion against the entire established order, nothing less than that. Multitudes of like-minded slaves flocked around him, and a viable army was formed. The Roman "police" forces that had been sent out to meet the rebels, were defeated again and again. The situation was soon a most critical one. In fact, it was not much different from that existing right

after the battle of Cannae. We recall that crisis of an earlier epoch, when Hannibal, the dreaded leader of an invading army, caused the destiny of Rome to tremble in the balance. The Senate of those days solemnly made the laconic announcement: "Hannibal ad portas": That is, "Hannibal at the very gates of Rome."

### 31. AN UNFORTUNATE "LENIN" OF ROMAN ANTIQUITY

Now, some centuries later, thousands of well-equipped Roman soldiers were defeated once more by a handful of desperate outsiders, fighting for their lives, and for a cause they found to be just.

New bands of desperate slaves joined the army of Spartacus. And what gospel do you think that adventurous leader was preaching, since he managed to gather so many volunteers, fighting with such bravery against heavy odds? He preached the gospel of the eventually victorious proletariat, Karl Marx's

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gospel, as it was to be called a millennium and a half later: There is a new day dawning for the righteous cause of the downtrodden ones against the down-treaders, the wicked exploiters. So, proletarians of all lands, unite!

That is the inspiring voice of a strange book of endtime Europe: DAS KOMMUNISTISCHE MANIFEST: Proletarier aller Lander, Vereinigt euch!

But what was the destiny kept in store for that major attempt of a crushing onslaught against "capitalist rule" at the time of Roman world leadership? The age of Spartacus just was not mature for a spectacular downfall of the classical type of Western government. The author of the Book of Revelation could with perfect truthfulness say about the beast of the bottomless pit: IT IS NOT. Ancient Rome just was not going to become a Communist dictatorship, in which the state takes over all control. The angel of heaven, in his inspiring visit to a prophet imprisoned in a lonely island out in the sea, had given him a message in which he pronounced his unreserved "Nyet." No-no, Johannes! The real beast of unbridled secularism, and of godless interference on the part of the state into all God-given privacy, is NOT for this land at this time!

Spartacus was forced to give up his superhuman fight against an overpowering enemy. He and his brave soldiers had to suffer the extreme cruelty of the Iron Empire. No sooner was the sedition crushed, than the usual WOE TO THE VANQUISHED was executed. Every single enemy soldier was crucified. The number of those executed slave rebels was so great that there remained no room for one more cross, we are told, along the Via Appia in all its length.

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### 32. WAS ANCIENT HISTORY WITHOUT ANY TRACE OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNISM THEN?

Don't believe it. In some tremendously important ways, antiquity, in the last analysis, had something definite to do with the very origin of Communism in our world. When and where?

Well, what about the NAME of that tragic fellow Spartacus. Still we may not have managed to detach ourselves from everything the concept of "Spartacus" and his lugubrious drama stands for. Spartacus, Spartacus! Does that ring a bell in your mind? Why should a Roman go around with such a curious non-Roman name? This naturally leads us, in the final round, to the historical ground on which ultra-radical Communism was destined to find its ancient European origin: Sparta! Some will say Communism was CREATED in Sparta, or generally speaking in a Grecian environment. Personally I do not like to introduce the concept of "creation" into matters of this order. To me "evolution" is a more appropriate word. Certain things just evolve. There is a weird type of nefarious automatism at work in their coming into existence. Communism is definitely among those things which just evolve.

By the way, that seems to come pretty close to Marx's idea about it also. The emergence of Communism is among the things taking place all by themselves, as it were. It is a matter of inevitable, irrepressible mechanics. I can appreciate that way of looking upon the issue. It reminds me of the general quality inherent in the phenomenon of SIN. Sin does not have any legitimate or reasonable origin. You cannot account for it in terms of a REASON BEHIND. If

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there had been any actual intelligent reason for sin coming into being, there would also have been some kind of excuse for it. But sin is just irrational, absolutely inexcusable.

Nevertheless, that total irrationality, and total inexcusability, does not prevent those irrationsals and inexcusables from having their specific and indisputable places of birth. And we may very well say that Communism's birthplace was a Hellene territory. Don't forget Sparta and the Spartans, please. The fact that Communism, as a newborn baby, grew up in Sparta, is not a negligible fact. No-no!

That fact could not fail to give Communism a definite prestige of the humanistic kind. For in our culture we are immensely proud of so many things for the simple reason that they have had their birth on Greek soil. Did you know that among the many others which are praised as having found their first glorious efflorescence in Greece; we also have to reckon World Communism?

But here one sobering interpolation should be made. Those who think most dreamily about the ancient Grecian lands in our super-romantic circles, do not immediately focus their attention on SPARTA as THE land of glorious origins par excellence, do they? No, most humanists turn their nostalgic eyes toward Athens as the holy city of true humanism

in those incomparable days of an irretrievable past.

But here you should be confronted with a perhaps unexpected question once more:

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### **33. WHICH WAS THE STATE OF GREATER GODLESSNESS IN ANTIQUITY -- ATHENS OR SPARTA?**

Both Pythagoras and Plato -- this is a well-known fact -- in their statements on how individuals and family units should be governed, expressed ideas that are definitely Communistic in terms of modern Communism. The concept of a certain "equality" becomes a loud cry in Athens on many occasions. And many historians seem to be absolutely convinced that DEMOCRACY, the great idea of modern statesmanship, finds its origin in Athenian politics.

Of course, the so-called "Popular Democracies" ("Volksdemokratien") in some territories of present-day Communism would not put much stock in the kind of "democracy" ancient Athens boasted of. They would rather think that most countries of the Western World (the so-called FREE WORLD) are cutting a poor joke when they call even their own inequality system of traditional government a "democracy". For to modern Marxism a Democratic GOVERNMENT is a curious phenomenon indeed. It is "popular" in a new sense of the term. A "popular democracy" is not a government in which the PEOPLE THEMSELVES GOVERN THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. No, not necessarily so. It is a government jealously concerned with the lofty task of governing with an eye single to the BENEFITS OF THE PEOPLE. This is the current philosophy with which Communists today endeavor to reconcile the otherwise rather opposite concepts of a rigid dictatorship on the one hand and the beautiful notion of "people's rule" (democracy) on the other.

And please remember: here the communist idealist is sincerely thinking of the people as an absolutely

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integrating totality, one solid body without any reduction.

Well, what about the Athenian type of democracy then? Could the governing class of the Athens of old justly claim that they were indiscriminately concerned with the perfect well-being of the people as an unbroken whole?

By no means. The whole civilization of Athens was based on the unworthy institution called slavery. Even a plutocratic community in our modern Western World would tend to smile mockingly at those ancient Greeks who could qualify a political system of that inhuman kind as a "people's government". In fact, a numerically quite considerable part of the people were not regarded as "people" at all. They were counted as cattle, or as pieces of merchandise. Slaves were not people.



But let us not be one-sided and unfair to any group. Particularly the evaluation of any given group's godlessness, or godliness, respectively, demands a high degree of fairness and impartiality. What attitude did that new blossoming culture of ancient Greece take toward the reality of GOD?

The Hellenes, seen from the Bible's point of view, must be characterized as pure gentiles. The belief in a God with a capital G was not prominent. Even the gods with a small g did not necessarily mean very much in that prevailingly humanistic culture. Admittedly, in the gradually established Platonic tradition with its intensive spiritualism, philosophically considered, there had always been a great deal of talk about God, even God with a capital G. But for all practical purposes it must be openly confessed: in reality that God there is and remains a miserable nonentity. At the same time another thing too has

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to be admitted. GOD IS spoken about. He is even spoken about with undeniable veneration. Open blasphemy, or downright godlessness is a rare phenomenon in Plato's Athens. The times of the pre-socratic (Ionian) materialists must have been passing into oblivion fairly soon. Irreverent cynics, such as Diogenes, or bold "atheists", such as Democritus, were not fashionable figures at any time.

Of course, the more attentive historical will discover some rather secret phenomena of atheism manifesting themselves. I am now referring precisely to Platonic idealism, the great tradition that was destined to survive and make itself broader than any other spiritual movement in the Western World right up to the present date. Personally, I would not hesitate to point that out as a definitely atheistic trend. But let us hurry to add: This is a pretty lukewarm category of atheism.

Do not misunderstand me. I do not say that Plato in the West (any more than his "almost contemporary" COMRAD, Buddha, in the East) was a poor atheist. It is those who do not care one whit about the idea of a realistic God, who are the truest atheists. Persons who consume their very lives in a constant rather desperate fight against the idea of a living God, are the most pitiable atheists. Sometimes they must become quite disagreeably aware of their inferior status in the hierarchy of God-deniers.

Let us simply leave behind both Plato's pretty godless idealism and his disputed role as an ancient manufacturer of Communist ideologies. Let us leave Athens as a whole.

You see, it is only when we come to Sparta that something clearly significant can be registered relative to our topic. Now how did Sparta comport herself

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as regards the movement of destiny we are concerned about? There certainly is not too much talk about God in THAT community. You will hardly be disturbed by coming across His name there, either capitalized or in small letters.

"Well," you may object, "but this scarcity of cases in which God is mentioned is still a far cry from the militant atheism, as we have come to know it today through the intensive war waged against God by modern Communist ideologies. What does Spartan politics of old have in common with the world movement of recent Marxism?"

**34. WHEN DID THE SACRED TREASURE OF FAMILY PRIVACY BEGIN TO BE LOOKED UPON AS A DANGEROUS WEAKNESS OF "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY SENTIMENTALITY" BANNED BY THE STATE?**

This is a feature of tremendous importance which ancient Sparta and modern Moscow have had in common. Their respective rigidity in this field is a trait most decisive for the entire revolutionary radicalness and the crude INHUMANITY of any barefaced anti-God campaign, whether in antiquity or in modern times. It tends to appear wherever systematic atheism in its bolder form happens to turn up its ugly face. This is demonstratively contrary to God's plan for His children on earth. It is fatal to the religious spirit. We should know something elementary about all religiousness that is to have a chance of survival. It is a fact known to all diligent Bible readers and applying to all cultures: True religion in man's world is absolutely inseparable from the existence of a certain

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elemental cell, basic for the prosperity of all human communities. That cell is the FAMILY. Even before there was any concrete sanctuary set apart, even including the great "sanctuary in time" called the Sabbath, it so happened, in accordance with the plan of an all-wise God, that there was one paramount institution provided for man: the FAMILY. You will recall from the Genesis account that both Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day of creation week, so actually before one single Sabbath had come around. Worship was, from the beginning, a family affair. The institution of marriage and the institution of holy worship are made to fit each other intimately. Separating the two is an experiment that knows no oasis in the automatically growing desert of human lives today.

So we should know what happens at the moment when the State usurps the autonomous position of arbitrarily infringing upon the fundamental rights of the family. Then worship in the Biblical sense is simply banned. Spiritual growth, as well as the literal bodily growth of the normal child, is a family matter. All development of a viable spiritual atmosphere is a family matter.

Communism in our world -- however far you go back to trace its origin -- is inherently insensitive to this elementary fact. In the history of the Western world, as we all know, radically state-directed patterns have emerged as a sort of political idea.

And now back to antiquity. Has Sparta contributed anything toward the development of such an ideal? Or even a more direct and more comprehensive question: Does the

development of radical communism in our world culture have a heritage that can be traced back to historical facts of the Spartan state? Let

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us go to a leading modern encyclopedia, the German MEYER, and see what it says, in a general way, about COMMUNISM (in its article bearing the heading: "KOMMUNISMUS").

"The communist idea is that there should not exist any private property any longer. In other words, the community of possessions is the ideal. The Spartans had a communist institution."

We have already seen what it is that makes Communism such a serious threat to the Christian religion. Let us restate it in terms as direct and as outspoken as we can. For we certainly could not ever afford to make any secret about this capital question of present-day world affairs. Secular Communism's overhanging threat to the world was, from its first beginnings -- and it still is today -- a relentless DETERMINATION TO MAKE THE STATE SUPREME IN ALL THINGS: Nothing -- Absolutely nothing -- is supposed to be private any longer: Not even the bringing up of your children. The State is the great Super-teacher. "He" possesses all there is to be possessed of pedagogical genius. So "He" alone has the natural qualifications for forming the new generation in accordance with what is most conducive to the common good. Parents are simply assumed to be too sentimental in their attitude toward their children. Leaving the education exclusively to them would breed a corresponding sentimentality in the new generation.

This is a visible fear inherent in the very philosophy of Marxist ideology. An excessive amount of privacy and personal freedom within the narrow circle of

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a human family might foster such trends of original thinking, and original action, that it would seriously hurt the spirit of genuine state fellowship. So rather a COLLECTIVE pattern of Community feeling and Community thought must be inculcated on the child's mind from the most tender age already.

The scene is set for a terror regime without a match in human history; that is, a terror NOT immediately visible to all observers, for this type of terror has a special mechanism available to it. It always operates under a cloak of "ideal fellowship" ("comradeship"). Hence, its dupes hardly notice that their freedom is all the time kept in check by appropriate measures of state discipline.

### **35. NAZISM - A WORTHY MATCH FOR ANY COMMUNISM REGARDING ANY FEATURES OF BOTTOMLESSNESS**

It should not be necessary to mention that Communism is far from unique in this matter of community terror. National Socialism (Fascism) has demonstrated its ability to

compete splendidly with any other spirit of "fellowship" genius, as far as this carefully throughout destruction of the human family is concerned. And who has been the source of inspiration in both systems of modern totalitarian regime? SPARTA, more than any other model in history.

Many students seem to be under the impression that Sparta has had an insignificant place in world history; that is, insignificant in terms of inspiration to subsequent nations. If that depreciation of Sparta is an idea which has happened to you as well, then

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a work by E. Rawson: THE SPARTAN TRADITION IN EUROPEAN THOUGHT, might efficiently take away your erroneous assumption (Oxford University Press, 1969). That book clearly shows what a great admiration some outstanding leaders of the French Revolution had for the education system introduced by Greek societies, and above all by the Spartans. Rabaut, inspired by this historical example, suggested that Sunday "services", according to the new "national Church", be followed, in fine weather, by military and gymnastic competitions. All the children were to be dressed alike. Elders over sixty were to sit and censure their behavior, and a senate elected among them was to give out prizes. (Rawson: op. cit. p. 280).

In somewhat the same vein, Lepeletier complained that the French schools were not egalitarian enough for a republic. In their place he would institute "Maisons d'Education," removing children entirely from their parents' care at the age of five.

Eschasseriaux, another Sparta enthusiast, admonished, in front of the Convention, that the work one had to do was not the work of Moses, but that of Lycurgus ("Ce n'est pas l'oeuvre de Moise que vous avez a faire: C'est celui de Lucurgus").

In a mood of downright lyricism he describes the supremely "touching" spirit of Lycurgus, the famous Spartan lawgiver: "See what love, what charm, the genius of Lycurgus has given to those festivals conducted in the open air and `sous le regard de la loi et la vertu' (under the auspices of the law and the virtue)." Here is something for all citizens, whatever their age or their sex. They all enjoy the same blessing, celebrating that `douce egalite, fraternite et partie (sweet equality, brotherhood, and fatherland)."

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A mood of intensive nationalism is here supposed to make up abundantly for the feelings of deep religion. This is a feature of age-old Fascism, important enough to note down. It made itself broad and boisterous in German National Socialism. And it certainly is not unknown in the Communist super-states of today. They are exuberantly nationalistic in spite of all their traditional phrases about pure inter-nationalism.

No matter how sonorously it is being claimed that Fascism and Communism are "Opposite" ideologies, it is rather their remarkable similarities that tend to strike most impressively the Christian who is exposed to their negative effect on his life. The God-

defying intervention of the state in the most sacred matters of family affairs and of personal conscience, this precisely was one of the outstanding traits of Hitler's deep concern about the happiness and vital prosperity of "das dritte Reich."

In this order of ideas it is particularly interesting to the historian of ideas to establish the fact that hardly any other group of modern ideology makers have manifested greater enthusiasm about going into Sparta's history, and imitating the Spartans, than the Nazis did.

To modern German Eugenics maniacs, and other race theorists, Sparta always seemed to have enormous attractions.

"She (Sparta) seemed to fit the Aryan theory, or some versions of it, so well. Her constitution appeared so obviously as the work of a conquering military aristocracy, marking itself off as a caste in numbers of her ruling class. Her laws concerning marriage and children seemed to reveal a striking interest in eugenics

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eugenics -- rashly supposed to amount to a conscious desire for racial purity. Spartan women, like German women since Tacitus's day, were honored in typical Aryan fashion." Rawson: op. cit. p. 336.

Even the fact that Sparta was "uncivilized", compared with the rest of Greece, was somehow made to fit the bill wonderfully. Barbarian youth and savage freshness was constantly assumed to have more to offer than the tired old age of modern civilization. What is heard is the challenging voice of Nietzsche's Superman, rejecting Christian ethics as something degenerate. Beware of the Christian weakness of compassion toward the less fortunate creatures! That compassionate "frenzy" was always suspected of keeping mediocrity alive. Down go the mediocre ones!

Now, what actually characterizes that bombastic new socialism, whether it calls itself "national" or "international," is one thing: it is the angry cry, the boldly plainspoken determination to "crush the Wretch" (écraser Linfame). You remember the furious phrase used by the audacious fighters against God and men at the dramatic reopening of the bottomless pit in modern times. Daniel speaks in plainer terms than anyone else we know about the spirit inherent in that amazing audacity and unparalleled willfulness of titanic man?

"And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall speak marvelous things against the God of Gods, and shall prosper `til the indignation be accomplished: For that which is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above all." **Daniel 11:36.**

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### **36. THE FINAL PHASE: THE REAL BOTTOMLESSNESS COMES TO ITS REAL PIT ON A REAL EARTH PRESENTING ALL THE ASPECTS OF ABYSMAL CHAOS AS THE RESULT OF SIN**

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold of the dragon, the old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, 'til the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season."

**Revelation 20:1-3.**

The author of all revolutions and rebellions, the godless one PAR EXCELLENCE, is finally shut up in the formidable pit of his own making. Satan is finally surrounded, in other words, for a literal period of one thousand years, by that very chaos he has made for himself. It is the literal graveyard made for apostate mankind; that is, for all those millions and millions of men who, during no less than 6000 years, allowed the archenemy to lead them into rebellion against Jesus Christ.

Not one single human being among those rebellious ones is still alive. The devil and his fellow demons have no single soul to tempt any more, or lead astray. That is evidently the sense in which they are literal captives in the dungeon of their own wickedness. They are captives of the chaos they themselves have literally brought about. This is chaos, not only in the sense of simple nothingness, but a thousand times worse than nothingness. Satan has only managed to change

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a once blossoming globe into a chaos of that peculiar negative kind. Lucifer was the first incomparable utopist who decided to have anarchy, simple lawlessness, as the great ideal of his unique political system. In other words, he was the first intelligent creature who stubbornly decided to have NOTHING where the all-wise and perfectly good Creator had planned to have SOMETHING. So for a thousand years from that great eschatological moment on, he will be permitted to enjoy his nothingness in comparative peace and tranquil meditation.

"How Satan's activities will be brought to a halt is clear from the context and from other scriptures, which show that the earth will be utterly depopulated at the second coming of Christ. According to chapter 19:19-21 the wicked are all destroyed in connection with the coming. At the same time the righteous are 'caught up....in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.' **I Thessalonians 4:17" (7BC 878.)**

You still remember, don't you, that silly atheist phrase of a "singing tomorrow." In the vocabulary of those bewildered utopists it was nothing but that same spurious heaven for which the pitiable high priests of a certain "Marxist eschatology" claim to be bound. Is that a real heaven? Certainly not. It is a pseudoheaven of an exclusively human make. It is just a deceitful counterfeit to the Biblical heaven. For just as the radical spiritualism of



the East (for instance, Buddhism) always had its classical Nirvana, which it could lull its dying men into, in a quite similar way even our radical materialism of the West would

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never seem to get along quite smoothly without a "Nirvana" of its own. But remember, Nirvanas are always simply the ultimate nothingness of barren pagan humanism. In the final analysis it reveals itself as simple Hell, the final separation from God. What genuine comfort could there ever be in that? Occidental man, as well as Oriental man, has got exactly what he bargained for -- nothing more, nothing less. He has got NONENTITY -- the pit that was always made without a bottom.

### 37. EPILOGUE

What you have here been reading may have interested you. I mean the way any theory containing some elements of novelty may still interest modern man. That surely does NOT mean that it has, of necessity, shaken you in the depths of your heart. It may, on the contrary, have left you fairly unengaged, undisturbed. So it may surprise you a good deal if I tell you something about the way it has interfered with my life. That has been not only existentially gripping but something rather close to a nightmare.

How could the more or less theoretical vision of the destiny of "other people" -- "other lands" -- affect a mere observer with the traumatic intensity of a nightmare? "You were not personally IN IT, were you?" I think I hear your sophisticated question. I have to answer simply and unsophisticatedly: Some of my closest friends and dearest associates were realistically in it. They were right up to the neck IN IT. They have naturally been rather silent about it. I must now SPEAK FOR THE SILENT ONES. That is my sacred duty as a witness for Jesus Christ. There are still many untold stories about Christians behind

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the iron curtain. Are there some untold stories about Seventh-day Adventists behind the iron curtain? I am referring to nominal Adventists, and to Adventists who went "underground", simply because they insisted on a REFORM, and so were called "REFORMISTS."

Let us not be lulled into fairy tales. About Communists, in most countries where they happen to be in power today, we should know something for a historical fact: Toward Christian patterns of thought, and Christian patterns of behavior, they adopt, quite naturally, an attitude of rigid intolerance.

Now, as you well know, some Christians have the peculiarity of adhering to a radical Biblical tradition. That includes distinguishing sharply between what the Bible regards as COMMON and what it regards as HOLY. We should not be surprised if typically secular minds, brought up in a tradition of pure materialism as their political ideology and cultural heritage, have great difficulty in understanding the fuss some of us are making

about even a specific day we regard as definitely holy. Could you blame them so heavily for that? Even good Christians fail to understand. How can we be so particular about that special day of rest that we refuse to send our children to school, for instance, under any circumstances, on Sabbath day?

We are now, of course, not speaking about such strange Seventh-day Adventist phenomena as "Sabbath School". We are speaking about schools of the ordinary public type, that is, the schools to which people in most communities are simply commanded, by civil law, to send their children.

How could we expect stern politicians of a materialistic mold to UNDERSTAND, and TOLERATE, such a degree of peculiarity in a fellow citizen?

We are here right in the midst of one of the most

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crucial topics of contention, causing no end of problems to Adventists behind the iron curtain. And again, why should we marvel at this? That same refusal on the part of Seventh-day Adventists to send their children to school on Sabbath has caused them to suffer serious hardships (many would not hesitate to say PERSECUTION) even in countries that call themselves Christian, such as Switzerland. There Sabbath-keepers were for a long time forced to pay heavy penalties for withholding their children from going to school on Saturday -- in fact, for some parents with rather restricted financial means, those unrelenting penalties were soon becoming burdens under which they seemed doomed to break down. Still, they went on transgressing the laws of the land, simply in order to avoid the action which they honestly considered to be transgressing the law of God.

Of course in a Communist country such open resistance against the commands of the government will tend to become a far more serious affair. The final choice given to Sabbath-observing Christians is often between letting the children go to school on Sabbath like all others, or having them taken entirely away from the home, to be educated and entirely brought up by institutions of the state. The question parents are then naturally faced with is this crucial one: What will happen to our children's deepest lives at the moment when we leave them to the mercy of atheist educators, instead of remaining under the influence of those who love them most, and have eternal truths with which to feed their souls?

What a shaking question. It hits this writer hard on the head. Once more then an old ethics teacher has been put on the spot. What answer shall I, poor

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fellow, give to this? Shall I capitulate the sooner the better in front of that formidable army of ever present situation ethicists, bombarding me with their constantly repeated threat? What I can hear them saying is, "This time, at least, you shall have to give up

your stubborn principle of a rigid "consistency ethics". You must finally bow down with fear and trembling before the great, merciless master of human lives: THE SITUATION."

Is that true? Can I no more rely on the God of heaven to assume a full responsibility for the strict commandment He Himself has categorically placed before me? Must I make a historic exception "this one time"? Must I take the whole matter into my own hands? Should I do that, simply in order to save my life and that of my loved ones? Must I make up my mind to forget the Sabbath day, rather than remember it, as the commandment tells me?

Is this what you, from now on, expect me to practice myself, and teach my ethics students? Let me admit one thing: To the question coming from those desperate parents in Communist lands today, I have only one answer: Humanly speaking, I see no way out, no meaningful road of acceptable compromise. Does that mean that every avenue of salvation is closed -- for the parents and for their children?

By no means! Not as long as the hot line telephone is still in operation. Am I speaking about the hot line between Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagon?

Of course not. I am not thinking for one moment of a world war emergency telephone line between Moscow and Washington, D. C. I am speaking about the "hot line" between earth and heaven, the vital communication channel between man and God. Neither the secretary

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of the Communist party nor the KGB has any power to decide one tiny bit about one single Sabbath-keeper's life, temporal or eternal. The parents' salvation and the children's salvation is a matter between them and God.

### **38. THE PRESENT NEED OF TELLING SOME UNTOLD STORIES THE CAREFUL WAY THEY SHOULD BE TOLD**

As soon as materially possible I must publish something that is long overdue; namely, my personal experience during several stays in some particularly hard-hit regions behind the iron curtain. That is the story told me by some of my closest friends, and as far as I can judge, most trustworthy witnesses among the Reform movement in Eastern Europe (those present day "Reformists" mentioned above). However, before any such main publication of mine is permitted to see the light of the day, I must make sure that I have weighed and verified the matter in its totality.

There remains a considerable story yet to be told about Seventh-day Adventists behind the iron curtain. Personally, I am accountable for no more than a tiny portion of that story. But it is a portion of tremendous importance for a view of the whole. It is a sacred duty resting upon me to cover that little part with frankness and straightforwardness. For it so happens that I have been favored with greater opportunity to be thoroughly

acquainted with its many phases during a couple of decades than any other Western observer I know about. Still even every bit of this has to be confronted with the testimony of other witnesses, above all that of our officially accepted leading brethren, those in responsible positions on this side of the "Curtain", as well as those on the other side.

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The inspiring part of all this is to see, again and again, how many "conscientious objectors" there really are, in our world, even in times of widespread apostasy. Men of valor just refuse to go along with what they have come to look upon as an unworthy barter trade in the field of sacred spiritual values. So they make up their minds to take all the hardships involved, all the risks to be feared, in GOING UNDERGROUND.

Resolutely, Advent believers, young and old, cast their lot with the despised minority who only manage to survive, materially and spiritually, in the capacity of UNREGISTERED MEMBERS.

Of course, they do know the good intentions of certain church administrators. Every compromise and "temporary adjustment" those leaders make, is simply in order for the church to SURVIVE. But can this realistically be called "survival"? Hardly. In fact, the only thing virtually "salvaged," in a case of such surrender to that kind of agreements with the state, is just the deceptive comfort of retaining a status of legally registered members of this or that Christian denomination. That is nothing but a merely nominal type of survival. It might be called a pure "Church Record Type of Salvation." The Christian martyrs of old would not have put much stock in that category of salvation, would they? Nor would they probably have derived much realistic benefit from it in the high courts above, would they?

But -- like Brother Andrew -- we must learn to understand those also who opt for the lukewarm compromises as the "only way out." Our feelings toward them must not be feelings of anger, or of bitter contempt, but rather feelings of sorrow.

Again and again we must remind ourselves what the peculiar mark is, marking those whom the angel of destruction finds worthy of survival, true survival,

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eternal survival. The only ones spared in the wicket city, as he goes through it with his deadly weapon, are those who SIGH and CRY.

"And the Lord said unto him (sealing angel), Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." (**Ezekial 9:4.**)