

perspective, as now it can be, the German classical tradition still has much to teach the world. It may even have something for participants in Chequers seminars. Now that no account of human political life can possibly ignore the supranational economic and institutional order, the prospects for a Catholic Hegelianism have never been so bright.⁵

- 1 J.G. Fichte, 'Alte und neue Welt', *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. I.H. Fichte, (reprinted Berlin, 1971), vol. 7, p. 609.
- 2 J.P. Stern, 'Introduction to the *samizdat* Czech edition', *Hitler: the Führer and the People* (London, 1990), p. xx.
- 3 'A Social Revolution?', Stern, *Hitler*, pp. 149—155.
- 4 It has been a tragic misfortune, but it has not been only that. In the same essay—*What is Enlightenment?*—in which Kant proclaims the absolute distinction in the Prussian state between freedom of thought and obedience in political action he goes on to argue that under such a constitution thought will make further and more daring advances than where a greater degree of political freedom (e.g. in England?) trammels thinkers with a prudential concern for the consequences of their ideas. We may, with hindsight, be as inclined to think him right as be relieved that the Prussian state is no longer with us.
- 5 Francis Fukuyama's article, 'The End of History' (*The National Interest*, Summer, 1989, pp. 3—18), contains too many undefined terms for its argument to be perfectly clear. But it certainly needs modification in two crucial respects: (1) What Fukuyama calls the triumph of the idea of liberalism is actually something rather different, namely, the establishment of a world-wide economic order, a global market, and the financial and communications systems to run it. (2) the 'end of history' has no doubt arrived—given *Hegel's definition of (world-)history* as the process in which one ruling national spirit, embodied in a particular state, is displaced by another; 'history' in that sense, however, has ended only because the definition is no longer adequate. World-history, however, as a genuinely international process, in which a world-wide economic order leads to a world-wide political and cultural order (itself a process completely describable in Hegelian terms) has only just begun (in 1945, perhaps?).

Religion after Ceausescu

Mark Almond

Easter, 1990, was the first time that the greatest Christian festival could be openly celebrated in Romania for forty years. The coincidence of the Orthodox and Western calendars gave especial significance to the celebrations of the Easter Vigil in both Patriarchal and Catholic cathedrals in Bucharest and in churches throughout the capital and elsewhere. Romanian television celebrated the feast as it had Christmas, treating viewers to the incongruous sight of the presenters, all familiar

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faces from the past, surrounded by Easter eggs, intoning throughout the weekend, even before the weather forecast: 'Hristos invitat' (Christ is risen).

Although the joy of the crowds of worshippers able to process freely for the first time at midnight was common to all denominations, disputes about the relationship between Church and State under the Communist regime bedevilled the atmosphere. Shortly before Easter, more than forty leading intellectuals issued a petition calling upon the Patriarch Teoctist to abstain from celebrating the Easter liturgy. Teoctist had already abdicated once before in January after fierce criticisms of his compliant behaviour under Ceausescu and most particularly for his public congratulations to the *Conducator* for his stern measures to repress the 'hooligans' in Timiscara before Christmas. Teoctist's abdication had placed the Orthodox Church in a dilemma, since his natural successor, the Metropolitan Antonius of Sibiu, had distinguished himself still more vigorously than the Patriarch when it came to rendering unto Ceausescu. For instance, Antonius was an indefatigable traveller to the West always ready to deny that the programme of 'systemization' had led to the demolition of churches and monasteries, insisting it had affected only 'redundant' buildings, of which there were apparently at least twenty-four, including some of the most ancient, in Bucharest—all concentrated in the area designated as the new Civic Centre containing Ceausescu's Palace of the People. However, since none of the other bishops could muster sufficient support or survive scrutiny of their relationship with the old order and be accepted as a replacement for the Patriarch, a contrite Teoctist was restored to office in time for Easter. Local wags could not resist suggesting that the Patriarch seemed to be under the impression that it was Judas rather than Jesus who rose again¹.

Ceausescu's rebuilding of Bucharest was undoubtedly intended to undermine the Church. This would be partly achieved by uprooting the faithful and redistributing them to areas of new housing without churches, by demolishing existing churches and monasteries along with the rest of parishes and by overshadowing those church buildings permitted to remain (albeit after being shunted aside) with monstrous new constructions intended to create a 'multi-millennial' memorial to the 'epoch of light'. Whatever formal similarities Ceausescu's demolitions had with the Soviet attack on the Church in the 1920s, the process completely lacked the dynamic of militant atheism so evident in the USSR fifty years ago. Unlike Stalin, Ceausescu did not publicly celebrate the destruction of 'temples of reaction', but preferred to dispose of them discreetly. Certainly there was no minority of enthusiastic members of the 'League of Godless' to cheer on the bulldozers. In fact, in Bucharest the churches were regularly attended throughout the day but, also by contrast with the Soviet experience, there was little public expression of regret at the demolition of places of worship. Enthusiasm was lacking on

both sides.

Like Stalin, Ceausescu's regime had taken a close interest in the personnel of the authorised Churches (and naturally showed an even greater concern for the clergy of disapproved denominations). Although the majority of the population which was Orthodox by tradition do not seem to have allowed the State's supervision of the selection of seminarians and its effective control of episcopal elections to diminish its affection for the liturgy, many Orthodox intellectuals felt repelled by the collaboration of the clergy. The poet Mircea Dinescu went so far as to denounce priests with microphones under vestments, relaying confessions to the *Securitate*.

At the beginning of January, 1990, the Front of National Salvation (FSN) annulled the decree of December 1948 which had dissolved the Greek Catholic Church in Romania in imitation of Stalin's suppression of the Uniates in the Soviet Union. The reappearance of the Uniates in Romania has had some of the consequences already familiar in the Western Ukraine: the saddest is the bitter struggle between Orthodox and Uniate over Church property. After 1948, the churches and other buildings of the Uniates in Romania were handed over to the administration of the Orthodox Church (though they remained State property). Now, at parochial level, disputes have arisen between congregations who wish to restore their allegiance to the Pope and the Greek Catholic forms and the clergy, who are naturally Orthodox by conviction. As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the collapse of formal State repression against religious dissidents has encouraged many underground clergy to reemerge. As many as thirteen Uniate bishops survived the four decades of outlawry, and they now seek to minister to perhaps a million faithful, who lack almost all the buildings necessary for institutional worship.

The post-revolutionary State may not intervene directly in religious affairs, but many critics of the FSN believe that it welcomes the internecine squabbling among Christians over property and other unedifying matters. The Orthodox Church has tended to look to the State (i.e., the Front) for support against its rivals and in turn to put its influence at the service of the State. The contrast is made between the indigenous, autocephalous nature of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and its foreign-influenced or controlled competitors.

Nationalism has re-emerged as a powerful but also a profoundly divisive force in Romania since last December. In addition to the split between the Uniates and the Orthodox, in which the loyalty of the Uniates is questioned by (some at least of) the Orthodox, there is the still more explosive question of the minorities, especially the Hungarians. The religious cleavage between Orthodox = Romanian on the one side and Hungarian = non-Orthodox is complete. Sad to add is the profound gulf which separates Hungarian-speaking Catholics from their fellow Romanian Uniates. It is possible to meet Hungarian clergy energetically

engaged in ecumenical activities embracing not only Hungarian-speaking Calvinists and Baptists, but also Magyar Unitarians, who do not even know the names of local Uniate priests. Ecumenical activity can at times seem little more than another form of Hungarian nationalism and therefore it can be in effect a breach in denominational and Christian solidarity.

New church building is already under way in many parts of Romania. The desire for a suitable modern building is understandable, but the deliberate burning down of one old wooden church in the Maramures to make way for a brick replacement will distress not only architectural conservationists. History is often perverse, but it would be tragic if Ceausescu's desire to uproot the Christian heritage of Romania was at least partially accomplished by an all-too-utilitarian approach to the needs of parishioners to celebrate the liturgy in more modern style.

The need for premises suitable both for the liturgy and catechistical work is uppermost in the minds of the Catholic clergy. Forty years of Communism have left a great gap in the religious knowledge of the population. Even practising Christians have been largely confined to the constrained celebration of the liturgy. Evangelical work was strictly forbidden. Lack of experience in proselytising openly presents a great challenge to the clergy. The very fact that millions of Romanians fell outside the limited scope of religious activities before last December means that many who now feel strong religious curiosity do not have an automatic port of call. The arrival of Western Protestant evangelists equipped with multi-media shows is bound to make a striking impression on a population still in the first stages of fascination with the West. The appearance of religious hustlers offering insights into the 'fourth dimension' in return for a consideration is only one aspect of this phenomenon, though the most unhealthy.

Despite the desperate poverty and the growing awareness of the public health crisis (particularly the problems of AIDS and hepatitis B) bequeathed by the Ceausescu, all the Churches have been slow to become involved in such issues, if only because their resources are already thinly spread. Individual clergymen are the focus for the distribution of foreign charitable aid, mainly because of the distrust of State-controlled channels. (This is especially true in the Hungarian areas and German districts, where the Evangelical church is the main conduit of West German aid.)

Probably, it could hardly have been otherwise, but the effect of the Romanian revolution on the Churches has mirrored the general trends within Romanian society. A great deal of vitality has been released but at the same time it has been vitiated by disputes about the past and about individuals' behaviour under Ceausescu. The liberation from totalitarian control has released not only benevolent energies but also long constrained ethnic and religious rivalries. The uncertainty of the political situation has encouraged meddling and distrust. Yet it would be false to

suggest that the overall balance has not been profoundly positive. A terrible pall of suspicion and fear has been lifted. It leaves vestiges behind, but not their cause, so what remains should wither.

- 1 The Patriarch, Teoctist, is by no means alone in facing criticism for his failure to condemn Ceausescu's regime. An international controversy surrounds the Chief Rabbi, Moses Rosen, in office since the beginning of the Communist period, who has defended his public praise of Ceausescu as a necessary cover for the sustaining of the right of a third of a million Romanian Jews to emigrate to Israel.

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