

# ***One Hundred Years Later: What is the Effect of Fátima and the Russian Revolution on the Church?***

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**S**ome of Our Lady's Revelations at Fátima (those spoken on 13 July) deal expressly with Russia and her potential tragic influence on the world. These revelations dealing with Russia can be called prophecies, because when they were spoken to the three *pastorinhos*, contemporary Russia's future negative influence could hardly be foreseen. I would like to begin with this angle of "prophecy," since I believe this will add some depth to my presentation.

The word "prophecy" has a popular meaning in today's culture which is different from the specific meaning this word has in Sacred Scripture. Notwithstanding this difference, the revelations of Our Lady at Fátima can be described as "prophetic" according to both the popular meaning and the Sacred Scripture meaning.

The popular meaning of "prophecy" is "announcement of future things." In Sacred Scripture, the meaning of "prophecy" is "announcement on behalf of God." The scriptural meaning predates the popular meaning. It also explains the rise of the popular meaning—for who can really know the future, unless it is God, the Lord of history, the Lord of past, present, and future? If there are announcements that really come from God, they will easily include announcements of future events, since God can move comfortably from past through present to future.

We who believe in the authenticity of Our Lady's apparitions at Fátima are convinced that whatever Our Lady said to the two shepherd girls, 10-year old Lucia and 7-year old Jacinta, and the shepherd boy 9-year old Francisco was said in the name of God, the Lord of history. So her words are "prophecy" in the specific sense of Sacred Scripture. Mary at Fátima was God's spokeswoman!

However, are they “prophecy” also in the popular sense, that is, are they announcements of future things? Her words can be seen as announcement of future things only if what Our Lady said in July 1917 about Russia was not a present reality in the Russia of July 1917. Another question is also relevant: The sufferings Our Lady prophesied at Fátima, did they actually come to pass? This question is justified because Sacred Scripture says that a prophecy is authentic (that is, really spoken on behalf of God) only if what is prophesied comes about (cf. Deut 18:21-22).

Once these two questions (about timing and accuracy) have been answered, it will be clear how Our Lady’s revelations at Fátima and the Russian Revolution still affect the Church today.

To answer these two questions, I will 1) transcribe the words of Our Lady about Russia on 13 July 1917<sup>1</sup>; 2) outline the beginning of the Russian Revolution in 1917<sup>2</sup>; 3) follow up the world influence of the Russian Revolution after 1917<sup>3</sup>; and 4) outline the response of the Catholic Church to Our Lady’s revelations at Fátima.

## 1. What Our Lady Said about Russia on 13 July 2017

The work entitled *Fátima in Lucia’s Own Words. Sister Lucia’s Memoirs*, published in 1976 by the Fátima Postulation Centre for the Cause of the Beatification and Canonization of Jacinta and Francisco, contains Lucia’s handwritten witness about the apparitions of Our Lady at Fátima from 13 May to 13 October 1917.

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<sup>1</sup> The source of my knowledge of Mary’s words at Fátima is *Fátima in Lucia’s Own Words. Sister Lucia’s Memoirs*, ed. Louis Kondor; trans. Dominican Nuns of Perpetual Rosary (Fátima: Postulation Centre, 1976); henceforth, *Lucia’s Memoirs*.

<sup>2</sup> The source of my knowledge of the Russian Revolution is Raphael R. Abramovitch’s *The Soviet Revolution, 1917-1939* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962).

<sup>3</sup> The source of my knowledge of the aftermath of the Soviet Revolution are the following articles in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1st Edition, IV: G. Niemeyer, “Communism, International, I (Ideology and Spread)”; P.S.H. Tang, “Communism, International, II (China, Far East, South Asia)”; J. Karski, “Communism, International, III (Europe)”; “Communism, International, IV (Africa and Near East)”; “Communism, International, V (The Western Hemisphere).”

For our topic, Lucia's handwritten witness about what Our Lady said about Russia on 13 July 1917 is crucial.

Following Lucia's "Fourth Memoir" (November-December 1941)<sup>4</sup>, I shall begin with some of the words Our Lady spoke (and the responses she obtained from the children) during the other apparitions, so that the words of 13 July fall into context.

On 13 May 1917, Our Lady said:

I have come to ask you to come here for six months in succession, on the 13th day, at this same hour. Later on, I will tell you who I am and what I want. Afterwards, I will return here yet a seventh time.<sup>5</sup> (p. 158)

Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the sufferings He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the conversion of sinners?

"Yes, we are willing," [the children answered.]

Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort.

Pray the Rosary every day, in order to obtain peace for the world, and the end of the war. (p. 158)

On 13 June 1917, Our Lady said to Lucia:

I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon [to Heaven]. But you are to stay here some time longer. Jesus wishes to make use of you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.

"Am I to stay here alone?" [Lucia asked.]

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<sup>4</sup> *Lucia's Memoirs*, p. 114, note 23: "It could not be said that Lucia's 'prophecies' were *post eventum* simply because her superiors released her manuscripts for publication only after the events which had been announced in them. These manuscripts were, in fact, already composed prior to the events taking place." These manuscripts are dated 1936, 1937, 1941, and 1942 (cf. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Edition, V, "Fátima," p. 644).

<sup>5</sup> *Lucia's Memoirs*, p. 187, note 12 explains: "This 'seventh time' refers to the 16th of June, 1921, on the eve of Lucia's departure for Vilar de Oporto. The Apparition in question had a personal message for Lucia, which she did not consider necessary to relate here."

No, my daughter. Are you suffering a great deal? Don't lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God. (p. 161)

On 13 July 1917,<sup>6</sup> when Our Lady spoke about Russia, she said:

Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially whenever you make some sacrifice: "O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary." (p. 162)

You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI.<sup>7</sup> When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God<sup>8</sup> that he is about to punish the world for its crimes, by

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<sup>6</sup> About what Our Lady said on 13 July, Lucia gives an almost identical witness in both her "Third Memoir" (August-September 1941) and "Fourth Memoir." In the "Third Memoir," Lucia describes the words of Our Lady as 'one secret in three parts': the first part of the secret is the vision of hell, the second part of the secret is the prophecy about Russia, the third part was withheld by Lucia from publication but was entrusted to the Holy See. This third part was read by Pope St. John XXIII in 1959, Pope Blessed Paul VI in 1965, and Pope St. John Paul II in July 1981, following the attempt on his life on 13 May that year.

<sup>7</sup> When it was objected to Lucia that WWII had begun in 1939 during the pontificate of Pope Pius XII, not during the pontificate of Pope Pius XI, Lucia replied: "in fact the war began with the occupation of Austria in 1938" (*Lucia's Memoirs*, p. 113, note 8). I think no good historian would take exception to that, but certainly not I, the son of a father who was born Austrian.

<sup>8</sup> *Lucia's Memoirs*, p. 114, note 9 explains: "Lucia presumed that the 'extraordinary' *aurora borealis* during the night of 25th to 26th of January, 1938, was the sign given by God to announce the imminence of war."

means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father.

*To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world. In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved; etc. Do not tell this to anybody. Francisco, yes, you may tell him.*

When you pray the Rosary, say after each mystery: “O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.” (p. 162-163)

Here we may add Lucia’s written witness about the third part of Our Lady’s secret revelation, entrusted by Lucia to the Holy See and published in May 2000 by order of Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his third visit to Fátima: “It described martyrdom and suffering, including a man ‘clothed in white’ who ‘falls to the ground apparently dead, under a burst of gunfire.’”<sup>9</sup>

On 19 August 1917 [the children had been abducted on 13 August by the mayor who wanted to force the secret from them],

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<sup>9</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Edition, V, “Fátima,” p. 644 (with some modification in italics): “The failed attempt on Pope John Paul’s life occurred in 1981 on May 13, the anniversary of the first apparition. After recovering from the gunshot wounds, John Paul had one of the bullets put into the crown of Our Lady’s statue. [As Cardinal Angelo Sodano stated: “it appeared evident to His Holiness that it was a motherly hand which guided the *bullets’ path*, enabling the Pope to halt at the threshold of death.”] The beatification of Jacinta and Francisco Marto, May 13, 2000 was the occasion for Pope John Paul’s third visit to the Fátima shrine.

Our Lady said: “I want you to continue going to the Cova da Iria on the 13th, and to continue praying the Rosary every day. In the last month, I will perform a miracle so that all may believe....Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell, because there are none to sacrifice themselves and to pray for them.” (pp. 166-167)

On 13 September 1917, Our Lady said: “Continue to pray the Rosary in order to obtain the end of the war.” (p. 168)

On 13 October 1917, Our Lady said: “I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honour. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes... Do not offend the Lord our God any more, because He is already so much offended.” (p. 168)

So, the above are Our Lady’s words as reported by Lucia, in particular what Lucia calls the “July secret” that includes Our Lady’s words about Russia. The message of Our Lady is simple and clear: the prayer and sacrifice of faithful people can obtain the conversion of persons and nations that need such conversion to avoid causing unspeakable harm to themselves and to humanity as a whole.

## **2. The Russian Revolution of February 1917 and the Marxist-Leninist Revolution of October 1917**

Raphael R. Abramovitch, the author of *The Soviet Revolution, 1917-1939* (published in England in 1962), is a Marxist of Jewish origin who took part personally in both the Russian Revolution of February 1917 and the Marxist-Leninist Revolution of October 1917.<sup>10</sup> The timing of Our Lady’s apparitions at Fátima falls neatly *after* the beginning of the Russian Revolution in February 1917 and *before* the beginning of the Soviet Revolution in October 1917.

Knowing how the February Revolution developed into the Marxist-Leninist Revolution in October 1917 helps us perceive the “prophetic” nature of Our Lady’s words about Russia spoken on 13

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<sup>10</sup> Both Revolutions can be called “Soviet Revolutions” (“Soviet” is the Russian word for “Council”); the Councils of Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants played an important part in both Revolutions.

July 1917. Our Lady said that Russia “will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated.” This is a prophecy of Marxist-Leninist Russia, not of the Russian Revolution as such. In July 1917 the Russian Revolution was not yet the Marxist-Leninist Revolution of 24-25 October (according to the Gregorian Calendar; according to the Julian Calendar, then still in use in Russia, it was 6-7 November).<sup>11</sup> Instead, it was a revolution inspired by humanitarianism and concern with human rights that are characteristic of modernity.

To help the reader distinguish between the February Revolution and the October Revolution in the Russia of 1917, let me summarize Raphael Abramovitch’s record of how the February 1917 Revolution of the Russian People turned into the Marxist-Leninist Revolution of October 1917.

Still under Czarist rule, the years 1907-1914 saw Russia developing as a modern state with difficulty, but effectively and decisively (pp. 1-6). Then, World War I broke out in 1914. Without World War I, it is possible that Russia would have developed like so many other European nations: “If there was a single cause for the Russian Revolution of 1917, it was undoubtedly the First World War” (p. 1).<sup>12</sup> Spurred by hunger and unemployment caused by the war, the February Revolution began with a popular peaceful demonstration on Sunday 26 February: “When a mass meeting spontaneously developed, similar to those held in the outlying districts the two preceding days, the training unit of the Volynsky Regiment was ordered to disperse it. Suddenly, without warning, shots were fired. Some of the soldiers fired above the heads of the crowd, but others fired into it, and the panic-stricken people were horrified to see the dead and wounded on the pavement. The crowd dispersed, but the [imperial] government’s victory was a Pyrrhic one. The bloodshed outraged not only the civilian population; the

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<sup>11</sup> Depending on whether one uses the Gregorian Calendar or the Julian Calendar, the Marxist-Leninist Revolution in Russia is called the October Revolution (Gregorian Calendar) or the November Revolution (Julian Calendar).

<sup>12</sup> This is the first sentence of the Prologue of Abramovitch’s book.

soldiers of the Volynsky Regiment itself were shaken by the behavior of their training group. Early next morning (February 27), small groups of soldiers stood about the regimental barracks discussing the incident. When the commanding officer of the training group appeared, accompanied by a subaltern, the soldiers shot them both, to shouts of 'Hurrah!' The Volynsky Regiment then went over to the people. It left the barracks in full battle order and marched to the Liteyny Bridge to 'relieve' the Moscow Regiment on duty there.... Petrograd was now in the hands of the soldiers and workers.... The issue had been decided by the soldiers' support of the revolution." (p. 13-14)

Begun as a reaction to a flagrant violation of human rights by the imperial army, the Revolution continued to hold high the ideal of respect for human rights, both personal and national: "A declaration of war aims was issued by the [provisional revolutionary] government on March 27 (April 9), and published the following day. It was addressed, not to foreign governments, but to the citizens of Russia." It said: "Relying on the will of our free people, in close unity with our Allies, to solve the problem of the war and its termination, the Provisional Government wishes to declare officially that the ultimate aim of free Russia is neither to dominate other nations, nor to seize other nations' possessions, nor to annex foreign territory, but to establish a lasting peace based on the self-determination of nations." (p. 36) Demonstrators on April 19 (May 2) carried banners inscribed: "Peace without annexations or indemnities!" (p. 37)

The Provisional Government declared a general amnesty for imprisoned and deported revolutionaries. In mid-April Lenin returned to Russia from Switzerland and Trotsky returned from the United States. They began to get involved personally in the revolution. Lenin was the leader of the self-styled Marxist *Bolshevik* (meaning Majority) Party, to distinguish it from the more moderate Marxist *Menshevik* (meaning Minority) Party (of which Raphael Abramovitch was an active member).

The Revolution was still fundamentally anti-war. "[The Menshevik] Martov argued that 'if the Revolution does not kill the War, the War will kill the Revolution,' and demanded that the Provisional Government take a much firmer attitude toward the

reluctant Allies—and even resort to complete freedom of action if absolutely necessary [to have the war end].” (p. 68) Lenin’s strategic genius got hold of the fundamentally anti-war ethos of the Revolution and turned it to his own advantage in the October Revolution in which the Bolshevik Party took power, notwithstanding the reluctance of the working masses.

“But if most of the workers were hesitant, the soldiers, with their profound hatred of the war, represented an active and determined revolutionary force. And it was on the soldiers, together with the sailors, whom Trotsky called ‘the pride and glory of the revolution,’ that Lenin based his entire strategy. The Bolsheviks had spared no effort to draw workers into the plot.... Yet, at the decisive moment, on the night of October 24-25 (November 6-7), it was almost exclusively army formations that appeared on the scene—according to the official survey published by the Bolsheviks themselves, who were always eager to stress the proletarian character of their movement.” (p. 83) “In brief, the ‘proletarian revolution’ was accomplished while the working masses of the capital stood by passively. The struggle for the ‘world socialist revolution’ was won by war-weary peasant lads in soldiers’ or sailors’ uniforms.” (p. 89)

“The demand for a Constituent Assembly was firmly rooted in the traditions of the Russian revolutionary movement.” (p. 122) “But Lenin and his followers in the Bolshevik Party were concerned above all in retaining full and unqualified power in the hands of their party alone. Their goal was establishment of a dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party for the purpose of achieving integral socialism in Russia and thereby kindling socialist revolution all over the world.” (p. 125)

The above is a sketch of how the high ideals of the February Russian Revolution were smothered by the dictatorial and totalitarian character of the October Marxist-Leninist Revolution. By speaking about Russia as she did at Fátima in July 1917, Our Lady was prophesying the transformation (yet to happen) of the February Russian Revolution into the October Marxist-Leninist Revolution. It means that her words were actually a prophecy in the popular sense. Since her words were proved true in October that year, it also means that her words, having come true, were prophecy

as understood by Sacred Scripture. As we said above, Mary was God's spokeswoman at Fátima!

We recall the words of God uttered by another prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem: "Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.... Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be. Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any....Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none besides me." (Isaiah 41:26; 42:9; 44:7-8; 45:21)<sup>13</sup>

Paradoxically, the birth of atheistic Russia proves the truth of God's existence as the Lord of History on whom the future of human history depends!

### **3. How Russia spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church, the good being martyred, the Holy Father having much to suffer, and various nations being annihilated.**

What are "the errors of Marxist-Leninist Russia"? Let me just mention some of the most glaring ones. The fundamental error is atheism with its consequent materialism; then, the radical negation of the present state of humanity inclusive of its traditional culture, system of values, ethics, religions; followed by radical relativism that justifies any means helpful to attain one's ends;<sup>14</sup> the denial of real freedom to the "retrograde" majority that must accept the leadership of the enlightened Marxist-Leninist minority; the advocacy of deception and violence needed to overthrow the

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<sup>13</sup> All Sacred Scripture quotations are taken from the *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, IV, "Communism, International, I" p. 50: "The counterpart of this future expectation is the total condemnation of the present and its order. For the Communist, human existence is, at present, totally 'false' inhuman, exploiting, hypocritical, unstable, tyrannical. Nothing in it has value, nothing in it is obligatory or binding."

present old state of humanity and creating the new ideal human state.

This last error reminds me that there is something hellish, even devilish, about the whole Marxist-Leninist ideology. If God is the God of Truth and Love, then there is something very sinister about the denial of God. Not for nothing did Our Lady at Fátima mention future Russia immediately after speaking of hell. In the Gospel according to John, Jesus gives us the following profile of the devil: “[The devil] was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44) Being consistently atheistic, Marxism-Leninism is, from the point of view of perennial philosophy, a disastrous ideology, radically prone to deceit and murder.

To see how such Marxist-Leninist ideology works out in practice, let us follow some more the account of Raphael R. Abramovitch in *The Soviet Revolution, 1917-1939*. The report shows how Marxist-Leninist Russia, through her relations with Germany, was involved in the outbreak of World War II.

“Lenin had been swept to power in the tide of war-weariness. An end to the war, therefore, was his first imperative.” (p. 132) On February 18 (March 3) 1918 at Brest-Litovsk, Marxist-Leninist Russia signed a separate peace treaty with Germany under very unfavourable terms. The treaty was actually a capitulation of the Russians to the Germans. The terms were so unfavourable that “the Soviet delegation signed the treaty without discussing or even reading the text.” (p. 139)

“In 1920, Germany and Russia, the two largest countries in Europe, found themselves outside the Versailles [Conference] system.... A Germany bent on revenge could regain its armed might only with the help of the Soviet Union, which stood outside the Versailles system. For their part, the Communist rulers of Soviet Russia had never given up their *idée fixe* of a world revolution.” (p. 244)

“The Bolsheviks swore by the world revolution, feverishly shifting their interest from West to East.... Early in 1919, Lenin decided to lay the foundations for a new, third, Communist International [Comintern] which would assume the leadership of

the world's workers under the banner of the Soviets.”<sup>15</sup> (p. 263)  
“After the fiasco of the March 1921 Communist putsch in Germany, the Comintern decided to adopt the tactics of the ‘united front.’” (p. 270)

In 1924 Lenin dies. He was succeeded by Stalin. “On January 31, 1933, Hindenburg entrusted Hitler with the post of Reichschancellor.” (p. 378) If Stalin had kept a diary, he would have marked January 31, 1933 as a red-letter day. For this was not only a day of triumph for Hitler, but also a turning point for Stalin, who had foreseen the course of events in Germany and had doomed the Weimar Republic by ordering the Communists in the Prussian Diet to vote down the Braun-Severing government, thus opening the door for Hitler to become Chancellor.” (p. 380)

On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland. In May 1939, Soviet Russia's discussions with Germany about a possible pact reached a turning point, resulting in what is known as the “Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact”; but actually it was a “Stalin-Hitler Pact.” On “August 10: Schnurre [Chairman of the German Economic Delegation] warns Astakhov that Soviet interests in Poland can be protected only by a German-Soviet agreement concluded before the outbreak of war. The pact was concluded. On August 23, Ribbentrop came to Moscow to sign it. Stalin watched. Now no one doubted that war was merely a matter of days. On September 1, Hitler's troops moved into Poland, and a new era in the history of mankind began.” (p. 447)

That was the last paragraph of the last chapter of Abramovitch's book. But then he adds an “Epilogue: The War and After.” He wrote in this conclusion: “No one who has lived in a totalitarian state and is familiar with its internal functioning can believe that the savagery [of the Russian, or for that matter the Chinese revolution] will ever contribute to the cultural development or well-being of mankind. For totalitarian rule is not so much anticapitalist as it is antihuman.” (p. 455)

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<sup>15</sup> The First International was organized by Karl Marx in 1864, the Second International by European Socialists in 1889 (dissolved in 1916 because of WWI that destroyed its unity).

Abramovitch's summation of the Russian and the Chinese revolution in his final paragraph did not mention how intensely Marxist-Leninists pursued the dream of global revolution in the first half of the 20th-century world.

Marxist-Leninist Russia's contacts with the world began in an extensive way with the Third International in Moscow in 1919. But her contacts with Asia had already begun with China in 1918, with India in 1918, with Mongolia, Korea, and Iran in 1919, proceeding then with Japan in 1922, with Indo-China and the Philippines in 1925, with Malaysia and Indonesia in 1926, with Thailand in the 1930s, and with Burma in 1939.

Marxist-Leninist Russia's contacts with Europe began in 1919 with Sweden, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Greece, and Yugoslavia, in 1920 with France and Great Britain in 1921, with Italy, Spain, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Norway in 1922.

Marxist-Leninist Russia's contacts with the Americas began in 1921 with the USA and Canada, in the 1920s with Chile, in the 1930s with Brazil, and in the 1950s with Cuba, Central America, and the Antilles.

The result of this extraordinary activism is the chain of human tragedies, often perpetrated against one's own peoples, that marred 20th-century history and that prolonged the violence of World War II (a violence made possible by the Stalin-Hitler pact of mutual non-aggression, as we have seen): the three years of massacres and executions in Spain (1936-1939) in which Chinese Communists were also involved<sup>16</sup> and in which one million Catholic faithful perished; the Cultural Revolution in China; the "Killing Fields" in Cambodia, and the Tiananmen Massacre....Of course, there are other sources of violence in the world of the 20th and 21st centuries. Marxism-Leninism is certainly not the only source. But it is the main source. The total count made by *The Black Book of Communism*, the famous 1997 French study of the victims of Marxism-Leninism, surpasses the total number of victims of World War II.

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<sup>16</sup> As reported by the *South China Morning Post* a few years ago. For the Marxist-Leninist fighters that was, of course, a *war of liberation*.

For old-line Marxist-Leninists, such a count is naturally a call to try to cover up deceptively the real facts. We have only to recall the Tiananmen Massacre of 4 June 1989 to see such astute deception at work. Consider, for instance, the well-orchestrated partial leaking of the *Tiananmen Papers*, whose publication ends up being a clever cover-up of the massacre, much cleverer and effective than Yuan Mu's disclaimers on State television in the summer of 1989.

The horrors of World War II and the violence instigated by Marxism-Leninism are more than sufficient evidence of the truth of Our Lady's prophecy on 13 July 1917 at Fátima. However painful it may be, we have to face the fact that true prophecy announces God's plan for us in history. God's prophetic word creates history. His prophet Amos says: "The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.... Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?"<sup>17</sup> Surely, the Lord does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?" (Am. 1:2; 3:6-8)

Of course, Our Lady's prophecies at Fátima were uttered under a conditional "if": "If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, ..." This conditional "if" will be taken seriously only by those who are certain of the truth of Our Lady's revelations at Fátima. Let us now review the response of the believing Church to Our Lady's revelations regarding Russia.

#### **4. The Response of the Catholic Church to Our Lady's Revelations at Fátima**

I will limit myself to observing how two Popes, Venerable Pius XII and St. John Paul II, were inspired to take prophetic action in response to Our Lady's revelations at Fátima. I will focus on Our Lady's request to consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart with

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<sup>17</sup> "Evil" here, of course, means the physical evil of "misfortune," "disaster," not the moral evil of sin. Only we human beings are responsible for the moral evil of sin.

the promise that this would make Russia convert, and begin an era of peace for the world. These two Popes, so sure of Fátima's truth, can be rightly called the "Popes of Fátima."

Pope Pius XII, what a coincidence! He was consecrated bishop (guess when?) on 13 May, 1917, the day Our Lady appeared for the first time at Fátima!

On October 31, 1942, in the midst of World War II, Pope Pius XII, responding to the requests of the bishops of Portugal, and inspired by the Portuguese mystic Blessed Alexandrina Maria da Costa, consecrated the human race to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The consecration was repeated in Rome on December 8, 1942. The text of the Prayer of Consecration is a heart-rending plea, "in this tragic hour of human history," for the cessation of the atrocities of the war. It asks for the grace of conversion and of preservation from "the spreading flood of neo-paganism." The Prayer, without mentioning Russia by name, hints at her in this endearing way:

Give peace to people separated by error and schism, particularly those who have special devotion to You and among whom there was no home where Your venerable icon was not honoured, though at present it may be hidden in the hope for better days. Bring them back to the One Fold of Christ, under the One True Shepherd.

There are people who have noticed that the last months of 1942 mark a turning point in World War II towards Hitler's final defeat.

Ten years later, on July 7, 1952, with his Apostolic Letter "Sacro vergente anno" addressed to the "Carissimis Russiae Populis," the Pope consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary the Peoples of Russia. Within one year Stalin is dead and, after a protracted power struggle, Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 charted a relatively new course, a course that China's Mao Zi Dong stigmatized as "modern revisionism." Mao held that "the proletarian party and dictatorship are indispensable to the world victory [of Marxism-Leninism] and that to transform them into an

organization of the 'entire people' before the goal is reached is tantamount to helping restore capitalism."<sup>18</sup>

Pope John Paul II, what a coincidence! The failed assassination attempt took place on May 13, 1981, the anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady at Fátima!

At Fátima on May 13, 1982, one year after the attempted assassination, Pope John Paul II recited the "Prayer of Entrustment and Consecration of the Modern World to Our Lady of Fátima," as he inserted one of the bullets that should have killed him into the crown of Our Lady's statue. This entrustment and consecration were renewed on October 16, 1983, in Rome at the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops on Penance and Reconciliation.

On March 25, 1984, in St. Peter's Square in Rome, with the statue of Our Lady of Fátima besides the altar, Pope John Paul II, in union with all the bishops of the world, consecrated "All Individuals and Peoples of the World" to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, using a simplified form of the Prayer used two years ago. I was blessed with the grace of being present at this celebration. How touchingly did the Pope pronounce the Prayer of Entrustment and Consecration. The final part of the Prayer remained unchanged and is worth quoting in full:

In entrusting to you, Oh Mother, the world, all individuals and peoples, we also entrust to you this very consecration of the world, placing it in your motherly Heart.

Immaculate Heart! Help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our modern world and seem to block the paths toward the future!

From famine and war, deliver us!

From nuclear war, from incalculable self-destruction, from every kind of war, deliver us!

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<sup>18</sup> Thus *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, IV, "Communism, International, I" p. 58.

From sins against a meaningful life from its very beginning, deliver us!  
From hatred and from the demeaning of the dignity of the children of God, deliver us!  
From every kind of injustice in the life of society, both national and international, deliver us!  
From readiness to trample on the commandments of God, deliver us!  
From attempts to stifle in human hearts the very truth of God, deliver us!  
From sins against the Holy Spirit, deliver us!  
Accept. O Mother of Christ, this cry laden with the sufferings of all individual human beings, and laden with the sufferings of whole societies.  
Let there be revealed, once more, in the history of the world your infinite power of merciful Love. May it put a stop to evil. May it transform consciences. May your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of Hope.”

The invocations in this final part of the Prayer were not recited, but *shouted* by the Pope. In particular, the invocation “From nuclear war, from incalculable self-destruction, from every kind of war, deliver us!” was shouted in such a loud voice that it made us all think: “The Holy Father is extremely worried about the fate of humanity!” Yes, after all, this is what is at stake between Our Lady of Fátima and Marxism-Leninism: *the salvation of the world or the annihilation of the world.*

We people at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century continue to experience the dramatic struggle between these two forces at work in our world. We may remember the hopes aroused in us by the Jesus-inspired, Gandhi-inspired, Walesa-inspired peaceful revolution of the Tiananmen movement, but cannot forget how this movement was drowned in blood by Marxism-Leninism. We may keep before our eyes the stirring images of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but the sad images of the persistent neo-paganism spawned by atheism and materialism also

keep filling our eyes.<sup>19</sup> Is the fall of Marxism-Leninism in Russia equivalent to Russia's conversion? We don't know. In fact, *atheism and materialism are not the monopoly of Marxism-Leninism*. In some sense, they are all pervasive. Pope Benedict and Pope Francis have been warning us that atheism and materialism can infiltrate even the Church. One thing is clear: the era of peace promised by Our Lady has not yet arrived, the triumph of her Immaculate Heart is still to come. Our Lady's words at Fátima invite us to take a clear stand in this fateful struggle and to ask ourselves whether we ourselves have really received the grace of conversion.

Both Our Lady and Marxism-Leninism speak of self-sacrifice. Our Lady's self-sacrifice is our solidarity with Jesus' Paschal Mystery for the salvation of humanity. The sacrifice of which Marx and Lenin speak is the total dedication to an ideal whose attainment is entrusted, alas, solely to humans who, because of their denial of God, like the people of Nineveh "do not know their right hand from their left." (Jonah 4:11) But there is hope. The people of Nineveh repented. Because of Jesus' Sacred Heart, because of the Immaculate Heart's motherly care, the self-sacrifice of the repentant faithful gives meaning also to the self-sacrifice of so many sincere Marxist-Leninists, bringing it to fruition for the salvation of humanity.

In the world of today, Jesus' first words in the Gospel (Mark 1:15) sound as timely as ever: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel!"

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<sup>19</sup> A contemporary sign of this "neo-paganism" is the tragic problem of abortion. Early Christians distinguished themselves from others by saying: "Others abort, we don't." According to United Nations statistics, every year, in our contemporary world, about 50 million unborn babies are killed. This number is greater than the total number of victims of World War II. Almost one third of these 50 million abortions take place in China that has a little less than one fifth of the world population.