The Night is Dark and Full of Terrors: A History of the Red Priest’s Radical Wing and Their Relation to 23rd Century Radical Russians

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Source: *A Religious and Political History of the Territories*, Chap 10, pp 106-11
Published by: Modern Humanities Research Association (December, 2294)
CHAPTER 10
The Night is Dark and Full of Terrors

“If Karl Marx was a prophet and Josef Stalin a Priest, then Vladimir Lenin was a God”

These are the words inscribed upon the temples dedicated to the Red God across the Galaxy. The political tenants of late 19th and early 20th century communism began to take a religious turn in the early 2030’s. Frustrated with Great Orthodox Reformation and Holy Trinity theology, a group of South Russian academics at Belgorod University began preaching lectures and sermons that returned to the ideologies of the United Soviet Socialist Republic. Exiled by the ruling Nationalist Party, these “Red Priests” fled to the Balkans to further establish their faith. Radical Serbs and Albanians soon set aside their differences to join together with the Belgorod professors. They saw Josef Stalin as the first of their priestly class, seizing the ancient teachings enacted on this Earth by their God-incarnate: Vladimir Lenin.

By 2045, the Red Priests had determined numerous priests and prophets from across the globe and human history. Immanuel Kant, for instance, became to them what Enoch was to 1st century BCE Jews. Some of their more revered figures were Serbian terrorist and zealot Vlad Arkan and Slovakian political reformer Alexander Dubcek. All, they believed, preached the teachings of the faith and were predecessors of their modern religious system. The tenants of the so-called “Red God” were simple in nature and remained unbroken:

1. He is the God of Fire, God of Light, and God of Equality
2. No Man Can Be Greater than Any Other Man besides He or His Prophets
3. The Night is Dark and Full of Terrors and Only He Can Show Us the Way
4. A Bridge that Leads the Flock Astray Must be Burnt
5. Peace is a Lie, There is Only Passion and Through that Passion My Chains Are Broken

It was the interpretation of these tenants that lead to the Great Schism within the ranks of the Red Theologians. The aggressive nature of the fourth and the fifth truths created a splinter
group of individuals to form a militant wing within the faith. Calling themselves the “Sons of Madness” in reference to the greater sins of humanity, they began to engage in numerous global conflicts. Believing themselves to be “burning the bridges which lead the flock astray”, the S.O.M. funded rebel groups in Italy, Russia, Japan, and Peru (“Son of Madness Missionary”, pictured left). On March 23rd, 2051 an explosion in Florence destroyed Il Duomo di Firenze, killing six hundred tourists and four Roman Catholic Cardinals. The S.O.M. claimed responsibility and an international hunt followed soon after. A coalition of Italy, France, and Spain invaded the militarily unprepared Balkan nations which offered amnesty to the rebels. The so-called “Catholic League” bombarded Tirana and Belgrade for three weeks, effectively destroying both metropolises.

Pressured by former Warsaw-Pact nations to end the brutality, the League withdrew its forces and a compromise was agreed upon. Russia would welcome the peaceful branch of the Red Priests, unprosecuted, back into their borders so long as they officially separated themselves from the Sons of Madness. The Catholic League, satisfied with the damage dealt on their Balkan enemies, believed that economic reparations were unnecessary. The newly formed Carpathian Union agreed to welcome their Balkan neighbors into the fold so long as they paid for damages inflicted upon religious sites across the globe. These included Florence and various Shinto shrines of Northern Japan. The S.O.M. recognized their defeat and went into self-imposed exile in East Turkestan and Mongolia. They remained politically insignificant for a century, only popping up temporarily in a short-lived intervention in the Korean Fission Crisis of 2075.
The 22nd Century was a friendly one for the Red Priests. After the horrors of the Eurasian War, many Eastern Europeans began to convert to their beliefs, finding particular validity in the tenants of equality and finding one’s way. By the 2140’s, the majority of persons living North East of the Danube subscribed the Red God. In the Western Hemisphere, it became the third-largest faith in Canada and the established state church in the US states of Oregon and Idaho. Nobel-winning physicists Draco Denisov and Jasper Cooper-Jones who first proposed the science necessary which lead to the creation of the Devany-Walker FTL drives were originally educated at the Karl Marx Seminary for Priests of the Red God in Volgograd. They saw the ability to travel faster than light as a task that only a deity could perform and found divine inspiration in their work. The Viceroy of the Alpha Centauri Trade Federation established the faith’s first extra-galactic temple in 2187. While Western European and South American prosecution of the Red Priests was at an all-time high, the faith became a staple of the 22nd Century.

Remnants of the Sons of Madness remained quiet until the Great Steppes War. Declaring himself the Great Khan of Mongolia, Dorji Zlobin rallied his Red Lieutenants and invaded south in 2159. Other factions of the S.O.M in East Turkestan and China stood in their way as strife within the radical wing was at an all-time high. For three years the international community remained out of the conflict, believing it to be a domestic issue. When Dorji Khan laid waste to his opposition and destroyed Longnan in the process, intervention was deemed necessary in an emergency meeting of leading Western powers. Europeans, uniting once again as the spiritual successors to the 2051 Catholic League, invaded China via halo-jump on July 6th, 2153. After a handful of skirmishes and air-raids, a four week campaign across Inner-Mongolia devastated the Khan’s forces. Finding himself out-numbed 10-1, Dorji Khan called for his men to submit
themselves to the Red God via death by fire rather than die at the hands of infidels. Thirty-thousand men perished before the Khan’s traitorous Lieutenant, Igor Arkan slew his master and assumed the mantle for himself. After having fled to the Ulaanbatu Shipyard, only a miniscule number of survivors escaped Earth before finding refuge in the Kuiper Belt.

The Moderate wing of the Red Priests remained neutral in the conflict though some members played a role in the 2153 Invasion as non-combatant personnel. As space colonialism grew, so did followers of the Red God. It soon became the most fervent and prevalent religion outside the asteroid belt. The moons of Jupiter, Saturn, and newly explored systems were conquered by the exploratory servants of the Red Priests. Those former Sons of Madness who fled with Igor Arkan adopted a new system of governance. Of the priestly class, two there should be; no more, no less. One to embody power, the other to crave it. To them, the idea of “every student of the Red God is a priest and shall be an equal in each other’s eye” was foolhardy. Only through the Rule of Two, a Master and Apprentice, could the faith best be served. In sticking with the language of his master, Arkan named himself Igor Khan, the Lord of Light (pictured left). All those who followed him were styled as Red Acolytes – a class of warrior theologians who conquered outlying systems and moons. Slain by his own apprentice prior to 2180, Igor Khan established a cycle which would last for decades and was shrouded in secrecy.

While the Great Interplanetary War was not the offspring of Red Theology, it certainly played a part. With the outbreak of violence in 2248, Red Acolytes infiltrated both factions and
slew many moderate Red Priests who they saw as traitors of the faith. Furthermore, countless Atheist strongholds and Abrahamic missionaries were burned to the ground in the name of Lenin and the Lord of Light. Contrary to popular belief, the Red Army of Callisto was not in fact related to the Red Acolytes. Those who fought in it were mere Red Priests who thought their faith should be united against a tyrannical Coalition. When these brutalities were finally noticed by the Earth Colonial Coalition, internal investigations began. In 2265, colonial leaders discovered that alleged Khan of the Red Brother, Ivan Karenina, was in fact a puppet figure head. On August 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2266, evidence was discovered which revealed Colonial Minister of War, John Mosley, to be the real leader of the organization. In one of the more famous trials of the past century, Mosley (\textit{pictured above right}) was charged for crimes against humanity. Following the verdict he was paraded through the streets of Paris and burned alive at the stake. The ironic twist of fate set off a chain reaction. Colonial Coalition outlawed all belief in the Red God. On Earth and within the inner galaxy, temples were set ablaze. The Committee on Red Acolyte Prosecution, formed in 2268, murdered thousands of innocent people, hoping to frighten away the real terrorists. Many Red Priests abandoned their faith, fearing state prosecution attempting to wean out the real threat. Once a thriving religion, the Red Faith was wiped from the popular slate. While Euro-Russian colonists would later petition the government to investigate the Committee for possible War Crimes after the war, requests were largely ignored.

As a professor of history and religious studies, I was hired by Lunar University in 2284 as a research fellow. It was part of a public effort to better enlighten the populous on the Red
Faith. Following Mosley’s execution in 2267, no Red Master or Apprentice has revealed him/herself. While most politicians and academics believed the Red Accolytes have disappeared, certain signs lead me to believe pockets still exist in the Procyon system. Furthermore, the nature in which the second wave of Tau Ceti expeditions mysteriously disappeared gives rise to further question. And, even if the radical wing of the Red Faith has indeed been vanquished, Red Missionaries of the moderate sector have been spotted within the Milky Way. Politically radical Russians living beyond the Asteroid Belt have claimed responsibility. When I presented my report to Delta-3 intelligence, they shrugged off my warnings. Given this age of peace following a terrible war, they said, it is best to let sleeping dogs lie. They informed me that they were keeping tabs on a Master Fyodor Tarasov, who was preaching a more peaceful version of the Faith. While this view of neutrality may disagree with my own values, there is not much more I can do. I hope that this paper serves its purpose. There is a clear connection between late 23rd century terrorism and the fragmented Red Priests. While I may have failed to influence those in power, I hope my readers will find success where I did not.

About the Author:

Reginald Fawcett was born in New Manchester, Luna to Phoebe and Francis Fawcett. A brilliant student, Fawcett had his education financed by the Government Communications Headquarters. He received a PhD in Political History from King’s College Mars at the age of 20. He was awarded the Ascot Mathews Medal for Socio-Political Commentary in 2281. Fawcett served as a research fellow at his Alma Mater, Harvard, and Lunar University before working full time as Associate Security Advisor to Earth President Luca Roland, Jr. He now lives with his beautiful wife Cynthia and two daughters in Hoboken, New Jersey.