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Why Markov had requested to be excommunicated from the Russian Orthodox Church?

In February 1912, the eminent Russian mathematician Andrei Andreevich Markov (1856 – 1922) sent his request to the Most Holy Governing Synod of that Church. His request was not granted; the Synod resolved that Markov had *seceded from God's Church*. And, a comment on one of the intermediate internal letters of the Synod stated: excommunication would be *too honourable* for Markov. Emeliakh (1954) documented this episode by fully quoting archival sources.

So why had Markov requested to be excommunicated, and why in February 1912? Markov himself answered my first question, but it is likely almost forgotten and no answer to my second question was ever offered, whereas even the mere fact of his request is barely known, even in Russia.

Markov justified his request: he did not believe in Biblical stories, did not see any essential difference between icons and idols, and, finally, he did not *sympathise with any religion which, like the Orthodoxy, is supported by, and in turn lends its support to fire and sword*.

Tolstoy who died in November 1910 was excommunicated in 1901, and the comment *too honourable* (above) evidently meant: Markov is not Tolstoy. Hardly known is that in 1910, during Tolstoy's last days, the Synod discussed whether Tolstoy should be admitted *to the bosom of the Church* and decided against it. This fact is documented in archival sources and in a tiny anonymous note (1910).

In 1912, that decision of the Synod had been likely remembered, but the question still remains: why did Markov wait more than a year? I think that he was prompted by the notorious blood libel, the Beilis affair, a repetition of sorts of the Dreyfus earlier affair.

Beilis, a humble white-collar employee of a Kiev brickworks, was accused of murdering a boy of a Christian to use his blood (thus completely defying the Jewish law!) as part of a religious ritual. The investigation dragged on for about two years, but then Beilis was acquitted by the jury, by ordinary Russians.

Before and during the trial an anti-Semitic campaign supported from above had been launched. Many public figures had protested whereas Markov sent an open letter to the leader of the extreme right wing in the Duma accusing him of organizing that campaign (Grodzensky 1987, pp. 104 – 105). That same author describes other instances of Markov's struggle against anti-Semitism including his newspaper letter in which he called humiliating a requirement to solve an equation of the tenth degree with grotesque coefficients at an examination of a Jewish entrant to the Kharkov Technological Institute in 1913 (Grodzensky 1987, pp. 102 – 104).

Kirill, the Patriarch of Moscow and all (crass medieval) Russia, not so long ago publicly stated that the Jews are *less worthy*. He certainly

did not justify his statement. And he is known to enjoy earthly life, so I recall the saying (1 Samuel 10:11): *Is Saul also among the prophets?*

An anonymous site *About the Jews* (which now disappeared) had a very, very long list of eminent figures, all of them expressing anti-Semitic feelings. Who could have compiled it? The Russian Orthodox Church or someone sponsored by it. And where is our defender Gorky? Where is Lenin (that rascal and *quadroon*, with a quarter of Jewish blood) who backed Gorky? American presidents? Now be patient! Hidden after that list we find: *Countries which had banished Yids!* The site disappeared? Only because it was not *comme il faut* ...

At the very first opportunity bestial anti-Semitism will splash out on the streets.

In Russia, a pocket communist party is in existence and many Russians are still in awe of Stalin's memory. So much for the so-called genetic memory of a people! But communist ideology is not sufficient and neither is the Western practice of placing an individual way ahead of his state (which signifies the downfall of Europe even apart from its submission to the Muslims). And so, religion had remained as the only possible state ideology. This is why Patriarch Kirill actually governs Russia alongside its mighty president. The Academy of Sciences kowtows to religion and Markov's views about it are anathema. I think that even academicians hardly know about them.

Two proposals had been recently publicly made: to include the Church Slavonic language into the curricula of the secondary school (apparently at the expense of English or natural science or mathematics), and to return to the old, Julian style since the Church and some religious bodies never abandoned it ...

Acknowledgement. My previous publication (1989, p. 340) partly described the excommunication episode, whereas Markov's struggle against anti-Semitism was fully described in my paper (2007, pp. 291 – 292).

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