

## On the Present Situation in Russia



Schema-Archimandrite Iliy (Nozdrin)

The well-known Optina Elder and confessor of Patriarch Kyrill, Schema-Archimandrite Iliy (Nozdrin), has spoken out about the current political protests against corruption and electoral fraud in Russia. These are being carried out mainly by sworn enemies, the mainly elderly supporters of the Communist Party (the second largest political Party in the Russian Federation) and Western-financed dissidents. As Fr Iliy says, behind these protests by people who are often naïve if outraged by injustice, stand sinister individuals who hate Russia.

This is precisely why the present situation is disturbing, because these groups replicate the selfsame groups who carried out the Revolution of 1917. First, there seized power Western-sponsored, aristocratic groups, who then lost the War, for which so many sacrifices had been made and in which victory had been so close, and reduced the country to chaos through their utter incompetence. Six months later these were usurped by the much better-organised, militant atheist Communists, who were sponsored by more efficient Western groups. Interestingly, the current protests are being welcomed by the same Western groups today. Notably, the dissident descendants of exiled aristocrats who carried out the Russian Revolution in early 1917, are welcoming the protests.

Although it is clear that electoral fraud, like that in Italy and the USA in recent years, did take place, nobody knows on what scale. The fact is that the size of the vote for the largest political party, 'United Russia', would have to be reduced massively in order to reach the small size of the combined vote of the next two parties, the Communists and the Socialists. And even if that had been the case, one can imagine that 'United Russia' would then forge a coalition with the fourth party (similar in size to the Communists and the Socialists). And the fourth party is the nationalist party – no friend of the West. As one of their anti-Western banners in the Moscow

demonstration read: '1612. We kicked out the Polaks!... 1812. We kicked out Napoleon! 2012... It's coming, friends! Power to the millions!' In other words, it is 'someone else' that will be next to go, if these people get to power - and to the nuclear button. In their interfering stupidity, Western political elites always manage to create their own worst nightmares.

In the naïve and media-manipulated West, great prominence has been given to the views of Gorbachov against Putin, but then Gorbachov is probably the most hated man in Russia, who ruined the lives of some 250 million people. Clearly, he does not dare show his face in Russia; he would probably be lynched by the mob. As regards the hypocrisy of the West in this matter, let us be clear: any Western political Party would be happy to have even two thirds of the vote of 'United Russia'. Most Western governments have governed their countries for decades with far less a proportion of the vote than that.

It is clear that Russia's 'bribe culture' (vziatochnia kultura) is today even more corrupt than Soviet Russia, though it must be said that most of the corruption comes from the careerists who were ultra-Communist in the 1980s merely in order to further their careers and then, overnight became ultra-Capitalist when Communism fell. Anything to fill their pockets. However, when we look at corruption in nineteenth century Russia (see Gogol's 'The Government Inspector'), is it actually any worse? And what of the corruption in Greece and Italy, where leaders have also been toppled amid riots and demonstrations against the tens of billions of euros that have disappeared?

As regards regimes which have recently been toppled elsewhere, in Iraq, in Egypt, in Libya, most of the local inhabitants greatly regret the toppled dictators. The only solution to the 100,000 dead, which figure is increasing daily in Iraq, is a new strongman, a new Saddam Hussein. Until then, Iraq, like Egypt and Libya, will be torn apart by Islamic fanatics and their sharia law. As for Syria, the mind trembles at what may follow if the present cruel dictator falls. Certainly, there will be a bloodbath of Christians, as there has already been in Iraq and as is under way in Egypt. People have short memories: there is always worse than now. Perhaps we should follow the golden rule: Do not destroy until you have something better to put in its place. But let Fr Iliy speak:

'We cannot possibly call today an easy time for Russia, but we live freely, we breathe peacefully, we don't live waiting to be picked up by the secret police to take us away to the Gulag, to the killing grounds. It is quite obvious that our life is gradually becoming more stable, more prosperous, throughout Russia people of goodwill are restoring churches and monasteries and even building new ones. We see more and more young people in church, more attention is paid in churches to the way that we bring up our children and there are more and more Orthodox families with many children. People, made strong by the Faith, are the grace-filled ground and foundation which give life to the shoots which in the future will bring forth life a hundredfold and more. Today there are many believers in positions of power and this favours and, we believe, will favour, the development of the full-blooded life of our country'.

And there are those who know what the promise of 'full-blooded life' means. It is what we have been working towards all these forty years and more.