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**TITLE: FROM ANTI-SOCIALISM TO ANTI-SEMITISM:
IGOR SHAFAREVICH**

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE SECTION

"FROM ANTI-SOCIALISM TO ANTI-SEMITISM. IGOR SHAFAREVICH"

Shafarevich (born 1923) is a renowned mathematician who took one of the leading roles in the Russian nationalist movement. He emerged as a dissident activist and ideological writer in the early 1970's, when he, along with Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, became famous as a member of the Soviet intellectual elite standing in opposition to the communist regime. His first book, *Socialism as a Phenomenon of World History* (1977), a comprehensive investigation of socialism as a recurrent social pattern, was one of the most popular samizdat publications. Using ancient and modern historical sources, Shafarevich demonstrates that at the basis of socialism lies an attraction for Nothingness, a desire for the extermination of all positive individual and social differences.

In his next book, *Russophobia* (1978-90), Shafarevich radically changes his point of view. The object of his critique is no longer social homogenization but an anti-national elitist minority, hostile to traditional values, that he calls the "Small People" and opposes to the "Large People," or the nation as a whole. Shafarevich blames these Small People for all destructive tendencies in the history of the 18th-20th centuries, including the French and Russian revolutions. In the 20th century, the role of the Small People is most often played by Jews, whose "Russophobia"--their hatred of everything Russian--became the official policy of the Soviet government, and led to the crimes of communists against the Russian people, such as the suppression of Orthodox Christianity and the devastation of peasant way of life. According to Shafarevich, Jews are profoundly hostile to traditional national values because of their religious self-identification as the chosen people and also as a result of the two millennia of their diasporic existence. He rejects both communism and capitalism as two versions of the same technocratic paradigm and claims allegiance to the values of agrarian civilization. Shafarevich has had significant influence on the neo-Slavophilic and neo-fascist tendencies in post-Soviet ideology, and the term "Russophobia" has become one of the watchwords for xenophobic and anti-Semitic circles in contemporary Russia.

FROM ANTI-SOCIALISM TO ANTI-SEMITISM. IGOR SHAFAREVICH

In the late 1970's, the nationalist movement won another eminent supporter, the mathematician, Igor Shafarevich (born 1923). In the spectrum of neo-Slavophilic thought, Shafarevich occupies the extreme rightist position. A significant theorist in the field of algebra and a privileged Member Correspondent of the Academy of Sciences (since 1958), he originally appeared on the dissident scene as one of the most outspoken proponents of human rights and religious freedoms. However, his position, even in the early 70's, was closer to Solzhenitsyn's cautious conservatism than to Sakharov's liberal Westernism. In fact, he became famous as a contributor to *From under the Rubble* (1974), the collection of articles initiated by Solzhenitsyn, where Shafarevich published fragments of his later book, *Socialism as a Phenomenon of World History* (1977).

This work was the first investigation by a Soviet author to treat socialism not as a specific phenomenon of the 19th and 20th centuries, but as a recurrent social structure, traceable to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Contrary to the traditional view, that socialist states proceeded from socialist teachings as their successful implementation, Shafarevich argues that the reality of socialism embodied in some ancient Near Eastern societies anticipated by at least one thousand years the appearance of socialist theories. Thus, socialist ideology, while claiming to construct a distant future, was in fact a regressive attempt to restore the primitive communality of the past. Such strivings for complete social levelling and elimination of all differences periodically interrupt the progressive historical tendency for psychological individualization and economic privatization that keeps humanity in a state of creative tension. Although its ideological contents may vary from Platonic idealism to Christian milleniarism, or from Confucianism to Marxism, the basic structure of socialism, according to Shafarevich, always remains invariable. The common denominator for the State of Jesuits in Paraguay, Thomas More's "Utopia" and Russian Bolshevism is the suppression of individuality, private property and family bonds in order to promote the absolute negation of social difference.

Socialism, therefore, thrives on destructive energy, and suggests many parallels with what Shafarevich (after Freud) identifies as the "death instinct." As evidence, he cites the pessimistic views of socialists (Fourier, Sen-Simon, Engels) regarding the inevitable physical demise of Earth and humanity and the "hero complex" peculiar to all revolutionaries--the desire to die for their cause. This inclination for self-destruction is inherent to the human psyche, and socialism is a powerful expression

of this instinctive attraction for Nothingness. "The death of mankind is not only the imaginable result of socialism's triumph, it constitutes the goal of socialism.[...] Socialism is one of the aspects of mankind's striving for self-destruction, for Nothingness, specifically, it is its manifestation in the sphere of social organization."¹ This explains, according to Shafarevich, why those philosophers who incorporate Nothingness deeply into the foundation of Being, such as Heidegger and Sartre, demonstrate a strong proclivity for socialism, in its nationalist or Marxist form. "Understanding socialism as a manifestation of mankind's striving for self-destruction makes comprehensible its hostility to individuality, the attempt to annihilate those forces that maintain and strengthen human personality: religion, culture, family, individual property."²

Shafarevich's book, though rather derivative and rife with long citations, made a strong impression on Russian intellectuals. For the first time socialism was divorced from its specifically Soviet connotations, limited by Marxist--anti-Marxist polemics, and treated as a metaphysical law responsible for the periodic interruption of the "normal" and "progressive" course of history. The author's impartial, scientific approach to a hot social issue, in combination with his staunch loyalty to the ideal of freedom, won him wide public acclaim. Shafarevich's impartiality is demonstrated by his seemingly paradoxical defense of socialism as an option open to a free society. Just as suicide is the proving ground of unrestrained human self-determination, socialism is indispensable as evidence of the collective freedom of humanity. Though socialism leads to the enslavement and self-negation of mankind, it also witnesses that "the freedom of will, given both to man and to mankind, is ABSOLUTE, it embraces freedom in respect to the ultimate question--the choice between life and death."³

Shafarevich's next book, *Russophobia* (1978-1990), though begun immediately after the publication of his first book, seems to be the work of a different author. The entire conception of social dynamics is reversed: the source of destruction is now identified not with the socialist homogenization of society but with an elitist challenge to the traditional values shared by the nation as a whole. Shafarevich borrows his principal ideas from French historian Augustin Cochin (1876-1916) who explained the French Revolution of 1789 as a process of social self-destruction activated by a narrow group of intellectuals, the members of philosophical clubs and Masonic lodges. He called this adversarial elite the "Small People" and opposed it to the "Large People" who constitute the organic basis of a given society. According to Shafarevich, this model, in which the Small People destroy the foundations of

traditional society, recurs through the centuries and may be identified with English Puritans of the 16-17th centuries, with the French Enlightenment of the 18th century, with the movements "Young Germany" and Leftist Hegelianism (which gave rise to Marxism) in Germany during the 1830's-1840's, and with liberals and nihilists in the Russia of the 1860's-70's. The common characteristic of the Small People or "Anti-People" is their spiritual rootlessness and hostility to the organic way of life based on durable religious and moral values.

The focal point of Shafarevich's conception is his identification of the Small People of the 20th century with Jews, whom he blames for the destruction of the Russian Empire. "The most fatal feature of this entire century, which can be explained by an increasing Jewish influence, is the fact that liberal, Westernist or internationalist phraseology often concealed antinational tendencies."⁴ Shafarevich argues that the Soviet regime, with its internationalist claims, was in actuality a Jewish occupation of Russia. He cites as evidence the disproportionately large representation of Jews in Russian revolutionary parties and in the first Soviet governments, their "leading role" in the repressive organs of Cheka, in the ravage of the peasantry under the name of "collectivization," and in the destruction of the Orthodox Christian Church in the name of "scientific atheism." Shafarevich's anti-Semitic arguments, not original by any means, were repeated in the late 1980's by numerous activists of the rising Russian fascism, who later abandoned this intermediary ideologist to refer directly to Nazi propaganda.

According to Shafarevich, the motive for the Jews' destructive obsession is an irrational force that he calls "Russophobia." This word was not a new one, but it was Shafarevich who theorized and popularized it. Russophobia is a hatred of everything Russian, including its history, customs, fashions, its pagan and Christian beliefs. He and his followers blame all failures and crises in contemporary Russian history, from the October Revolution, to the disintegration of the USSR, to the proliferation of post-Soviet democratic reforms, on the pernicious influence of Russophobes, including American Presidents and influential Western businessmen. Within Russia, Shafarevich charges not only intellectuals, such as Amal'rik and Pomerants, but also creative writers of Jewish origin, such as Isaak Babel', Ilya Iif, and Vasily Grossman, with a genetically determined "contempt and squeamishness" toward Russians and other Slavs. "...[T]he ideology of the Small People: an arrogantly-ironical, mocking attitude to everything Russian, even to Russian names; the conception that *'in this country it was always this way and there can be nothing good*, the image of Russia as 'the Country of fools.'⁵

Shafarevich is never clear about why Russianness evokes such a negative reaction, but he does attempt to explain why the Jews are the primary catalysts of Russophobic feelings. As a cosmopolitan people devoid of roots in any national culture, their "diasporic" consciousness makes them organically incapable of accepting a traditional, agricultural way of life, consistent with the truth of Nature. "Why did it happen that precisely the descendants of Jewish people proved to be the core of the 'Small People,' to which the fatal role fell in this epoch of crisis in our history? /.../ Here I will indicate only the most evident reason -- almost two millennia of isolation and a suspicious, hostile attitude to the surrounding world."⁶ Furthermore, Shafarevich argues, with numerous citations from the Old Testament, that even before their diasporic period, Jews justified their hatred of other nations religiously, since, according to their messianic beliefs, all non-Jews are inferior to the "chosen people." One of the inconsistencies of Shafarevich's thinking is that he blames Jews for their extreme nationalism, while himself subscribing to the same ideology--on the condition that the "chosen" nation will be his own. This contradiction is characteristic of all brands of nationalism that have an anti-Semitic component.

"Nation" is almost a magic word in Shafarevich's lexicon: "being a member of one's nation makes one a participant in History."⁷ The destruction of national self-identity in Russia entails the loss of life's meaning: men become alcoholics and drug addicts, women abort their children, the people die out. "This is the end towards which 'the Small People' is driving, tirelessly working to destroy everything that supports the existence of the 'the Large People!'"⁸ Thus the task of Russian national self-preservation is the creation of a weapon of spiritual defence against the Small People.

Shafarevich devoted his later writings, small in quantity and journalistic in style, to the critique of liberalism and "Western democracy." He identifies a strange sympathy of "progressive" Western intellectuals, such as Romain Rolland, Bernard Shaw, or Jean-Paul Sartre, with Stalin's regime and explains it by the internal affinities between Western liberalism and Soviet totalitarianism. Both are hostile to traditionalist societies based on organic ties between human productivity and the natural environment. "Like Stalin's system of administrative command, Western technological civilization chose a technocentric ideology in opposition to a cosmocentric one. This is only another way to implement the familiar Utopia of the 'organization' of nature and society on the principle of the 'megamachine,' with maximal exclusion of the human and living element."⁹

This two-pronged attack on both the liberal West and communist Russia was a standard tool of Nazi propaganda but appeared rather new on the Russian intellectual scene, where Soviet communism and Western capitalism were customarily opposed as two absolute polarities. From the nationalist-conservative point of view, communism and capitalism are two versions of the same technocratic paradigm, which was initiated, according to Shafarevich, by the Small Peoples of Europe--Huguenots, Puritans, and Jews--who, as the result of their migration to Germany, America and Russia, undermined the organic conditions of agrarian labor and laid the basis for artificial, capitalist and communist economies. Now that Russia has finished with communism, Shafarevich argues that it would be unwise to walk the path of capitalism leading to the same precipice. "...The West is ill but with another form of the disease from which we want to recover."¹⁰

With all of his criticism, Shafarevich never presents his positive ideal, unless by revealing his overwhelming nostalgia for the past when a peasant lived in harmony with Mother-Earth and followed the patterns of "calendar" culture constituted by a mixture of Christian and pagan rituals. Shafarevich rates highly "village prose," which resurrects the values of agricultural civilization as a model of a stable social structure that preserves the unity of Man and the Universe.

In his conservative views and in his polemics with liberal thinkers, "Russophobes" such as Sinyavsky, Pomerants, Ianov, Amalrik, and Shragin, Shafarevich often follows Solzhenitsyn, but the difference between the two authors is significant. While Solzhenitsyn, like a biblical prophet, summons Russians to repent for their sins, Shafarevich lays the blame on the demonic Small People, who, in his picture, appear to be the only source of the metaphysical and social evil.

¹Shafarevich I.R. *Sotsializm kak iavlenie mirovoi istorii*. Paris, YMCA-PRESS, 1977, 365, 374.

²Ibid., 375.

³Ibid., 382.

⁴Shafarevich I.R. *Russofobiia. Dve dorogi - k odnomu obryvu*. Moscow, Tovarishchestvo russkikh khudozhnikov, 1991, p.75.

⁵Ibid, 90.

⁶Ibid., 82.

⁷Ibid., p.95.

⁸ Ibid., 95.

⁹Ibid., 123.

¹⁰Ibid., 140.