

The American Century has been a disaster for Americans. We lost our republic, local self-government, community stability, and hundreds of thousands of our sons and brothers and fathers. But we are not vanquished. Not yet. A popular pin from

the 1900 presidential campaign of William Jennings Bryan read, "No Foreign Alliance, No Trusts, No Imperialism For U.S." A century later, the pin still fits.

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## The American (Not Christian) Century

by Harold O.J. Brown

In the late 1980's, I predicted that by the end of the century, which is also the end of the millennium, "The Soviet Union, or perhaps by that time, Russia, would be Christian, and the United States would be pagan." The first, hesitant part of that prophecy, Russia, has already been fulfilled. And while Russia has not been transmuted into a Christian nation, Christianity, especially but not only Russian Orthodoxy, already enjoys a status in Russia that is increasingly denied it in the United States.

In the United States, the situation seems to be reversed. At the beginning of the 20th century, Russian Orthodox Christianity was the established religion in Russia; in the United States, there was no "establishment of religion," but the three major faiths, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism, all flourished. Then came the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which officially proclaimed its atheism, expropriated the churches, and persecuted clergy and believers alike with varying degrees of severity. But the Russian churches survived. Orthodoxy, although weakened, persisted, and the registered and unregistered Protestant fellowships grew and flourished—if one can use that word for the situation of believers in an atheistic society. The situation of the churches in early 20th-century America was officially different, but if anything stronger in reality. No church was officially established, but all were held in reverence and enjoyed the benign attention of government and the courts, up to and including the Supreme Court.

America, unlike Russia, suffered no revolution, and the nation emerged not only victorious but triumphant, immensely strengthened and relatively undamaged, from two world wars, and perhaps fatally tempted to the sort of spiritual pride that

goes before a fall. Russia was savagely wounded by World War I, revolution, and civil war, not to mention the organized oppression of a totalitarian system. World War II carried fire and sword to the very borders of Moscow and cost the Soviet Union 20 million lives.

Yet at the end of the century, Christianity in Russia is showing signs of vitality; by no means dominant, it is nonetheless far from dead. At the end of what has been called "The American Century," Christianity in the United States, once culturally and morally dominant, is rapidly being reduced to the level of a barely tolerated eccentricity. G.K. Chesterton once called the United States a nation with the soul of a church. As the American Century reaches its end, the United States may be losing, or may already have lost, that soul.

During a visit to Russia, Professor Ed Tiryakian of Duke University commented on what he called "the occult persecution of Christianity at every level in the United States," including the courts, the legislatures, the universities, and the media. Communist Russia, like the pagan Roman Empire, tried varying degrees of force to stamp out religion; it did not succeed. That was overt persecution. The persecution in the United States is occult—that is, not officially declared and not acknowledged as such—but it is pervasive and omnipresent. Not merely public prayers, but every vestige of Christianity (as well as of other, less numerous religious groups) is driven from public view. The public expression of Christian conviction is coming to be regarded as only slightly less obnoxious, if that, than cigarette smoking.

In America's schools, the Ten Commandments have been pulled down from the walls, lest any student find himself "isolated." And in the halls, students shoot classmates and teachers, and some find themselves dead. *Bonne fin de siècle*, America!

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## The "Suffering Love" of Patriots

by Wayne Allensworth

The Russian writer Valentin Rasputin, himself no lackey of the Soviet regime, once attacked Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

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for having crossed the line where "war against communism became war against . . . Russia." In Rasputin's eyes, the prophetic exile had stained Russia's reputation—not merely that of the communist regime—in his relentless assaults on Soviet power. The line can be a very thin one. At the end of "The American Century," I finally understand how Soviet-era Russian dissi-

dents must have felt when they attacked communism (“Then you favor unjust capitalism!” screamed their inquisitors), criticized the war in Afghanistan (“Support the troops!”), and demanded that the Soviet authorities reopen the closed churches of their historically Orthodox Christian country (“Separation of church and state is the bedrock of our constitution!”). No real patriot ever intends to aid and comfort his homeland’s enemies in either peace or war. But no patriot can stand idly by while his country, her body violated and possessed by the modernist demon (in either its communist or consumerist guise), is made vile and aggressive, as disfigured and offensive to the patriot himself as to the world she now threatens.

For those who can see clearly what we have become and can bear to gaze at an America whose image the world over is shaped by CNN’s video clips of the victims of depraved adolescent murderers, their hapless and deracinated parents, and the New World Order’s destruction of Yugoslavia (while soulless bureaucrats chirp their “regrets” over “collateral damage”), the revulsion felt and the desire to explain to any foreigner—or fellow American, for that matter—who will listen that this is not America but a nameless something else is almost overwhelm-

ing. At the end of the American Century, the America we love—and so many long for in silence, as “nostalgia” is deemed “reactionary” and “sentimental”—is preserved only in tiny islands of sanity: a small town where the people still answer the call of church bells (there are a few); the rapidly filling plains, deserts, and mountains of the West, our mythic American landscape; regional accents that somehow persist; and in the island of the patriotic imagination. America, like occupied Russia before her, still lives because a memory of her persists.

At the end of the American Century, the price of global empire has become evident. We are losing our country: Some even advise emigration. To where? The Russian patriot Sergei Bulgakov once wrote that only “suffering love gives one the right to chastise one’s own nation.” American dissidents should remember the example of those Russian exiles who, like Solzhenitsyn, suffered in their loving chastisement of a perverted Russia and have now returned to share her fate. No real life in a foreign land is possible for us, even if the America we have exists only in the soil we stand on and in the piercingly painful memories we possess. As long as we have them, there is hope.

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## New People, New Century

by John Lukacs

During the 19th century, the United States fought five wars, of which it won three, the Indian, the Mexican, and the Spanish-American ones; the War of 1812 was a draw; and then there was the Civil War, the bloodiest war of mankind until that time and the one that proved the grand failure of the American Constitution, even though that had not yet been overweighted by unnecessary amendments. During the 20th century, the United States fought six wars, of which it won three (the two world wars and the so-called Gulf War), drew one in Korea, and lost one in Vietnam. (The present war in Serbia is not yet over.)

One essential difference between the American wars in the two centuries ought to be noted. In the 19th century, the United States won all of its wars alone. In the 20th century, it did not. In both of the world wars, it was dependent on great allies, including Russia. (However, in the Pacific, the United States won its 1941-45 war against Japan practically alone.) On the other hand, the Vietnam War, which the United States fought alone (except, of course, for its South Vietnamese allies), it lost.

One of the odd and perhaps (but only perhaps) promising things in the history of the United States is this country’s enormous vitality. Its recovery after the Civil War—yes, even in the South—was phenomenal. The recovery of the prestige of the United States after the lost war in Vietnam was also remarkable. A decade or so after that sorry defeat, the United States became the *only* superpower of the world, the Russians having given up on the Cold War (which, however, was not a real war at all). These recoveries have had something to do with the enormous

size of the American population. Neither the Civil War (except for portions of the South) nor the Vietnam War involved more than a relatively small segment of the population able (or willing) to bear arms. But then, in both cases, the very composition of the population was also changing—due to mass immigration.

I am coming to this change of the composition of the American people, but meanwhile there is another comparison. During the 19th century, we have the first examples of American inventiveness. The steamboat, the telegraph, the telephone, farm machinery, and electric power were all invented by Americans. During the 20th century, the Americanization of the world has been implemented by the automobile, the airplane, movies, radio, television, space rocketry, atomic power, and computers, of which only one, the first airplane, was made by an American; the rest were invented by Europeans, then perfected and mass-produced by people in the United States. However, for the peoples of the world, these facts were, and are, irrelevant. The 20th century has been marked by the Americanization of the world. This was not so in the 19th century. The emulation and adaptation of institutions and things American were not widespread then. The advance of democracy—or, rather, of parliamentary government—across Europe and even elsewhere was marked by the adaptation of British or Western European institutions, not of American ones. In the 20th century, the opposite has been true. The conscious, or half-conscious, emulation of things American—even by hundreds of millions of split-minded peoples who, on one side of their brains (and mouths) profess to hate America—has been worldwide.

It is unreasonable to attribute all of this to American material power. The industrial age in America has been remarkably

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