

Pitirim A. Sorokin: A Forerunner to Solzhenitsyn

Bryce J. Christensen

ASKED TO NAME A GREAT RUSSIAN CRITIC of modern American culture, many Americans would identify Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Seldom have Americans heard a voice of moral authority comparable to that with which Solzhenitsyn spoke when he delivered his stunning Commencement Address at Harvard in 1978. Americans desperately needed to hear Solzhenitsyn's bold denunciation of the "eroded humanism" which has fostered "the dangerous trend of worshiping man and his material needs." We needed to hear his warning about the evil consequences of Americans' "total emancipation...from the moral heritage of Christian centuries with their great reserves of mercy and sacrifice." We needed to hear his telling indictment of "the ruling and intellectual elites" who lack the courage to oppose the "tilt of freedom toward evil." We needed likewise to hear his diagnosis of our "decline in the arts" and his condemnation of mass media which fill the souls of listeners and viewers with "gossip, nonsense, vain talk" and which adhere to intellectual fashion in a way that denies—as effectively as government censorship—public exposure to many important ideas. But perhaps most of all we needed to hear his challenge to develop "a new level of life, where our physical nature will not be cursed, as in the Middle Ages, but even

more importantly, our spiritual being will not be trampled upon, as in our Modern Era."¹

Progressive intellectuals found little to comfort them in Solzhenitsyn's probing critique of the morally undernourished American culture they had helped create. Yet they could not easily dismiss the views of a man who had demonstrated rare personal courage in his witness against the horrors of Soviet tyranny and who had received the imprimatur of the Nobel jurors for his outstanding contributions to history and literature. Consequently, their strategy has generally been simply to ignore Solzhenitsyn as much as possible and to hope that the brevity of Americans' collective memory will soon relieve them of the difficulty of responding to his criticisms. Sadly, this strategy has succeeded remarkably well. When the media reported in May 1994 that Solzhenitsyn was returning from Vermont to his native Russia,² relatively few young adults recognized the moral stature of the man leaving America or even knew anything about his criticisms of our culture.

The same kind of national amnesia is also slowly obscuring the profound scholarship of another great Russian emigre writer who, like Solzhenitsyn, diagnosed some of the most grievous of the spiritual and moral defects of our national

culture. The profound scholarship we are thus losing is that of Pitirim A. Sorokin. Sorokin, in the view of Duke sociologist Edward A. Tiryakian, deserves recognition as a forerunner to Solzhenitsyn, an earlier "prophet in the wilderness" with a message which "complements" Solzhenitsyn's.³ It is our great misfortune that, like Solzhenitsyn, Sorokin is slipping from American memory.

That Solzhenitsyn deserves recognition as a prophet few would dispute. But he is not the only modern writer to develop the gift of prophecy through the crafting of serious fiction and history. Others—including William Faulkner, Evelyn Waugh, Saul Bellow, Arthur Koestler, Albert Camus, Graham Greene, Robert Conquest, and Walker Percy—have likewise reached the prophetic strain by undertaking similar artistic and narrative tasks. But Sorokin was neither a novelist nor an historian. He was instead a sociologist, and *prophetic* is a word almost never applied to the work of sociologists.

In truth, contemporary sociology appears designed to smother and extinguish moral and spiritual insight. Because moral reasoning and spiritual vision do not fit neatly into the chi-square tests and other elaborate statistical formulae which fill sociological journals, many sociologists simply ignore the moral and spiritual significance of the problems they address. Lacking statistical tests for assessing the moral meaning of social developments (such as the rising incidence of divorce or declining fertility of married women), these sociologists adopt a posture of value-neutral objectivity. Such objectivity inevitably requires the repudiation of qualitative standards necessary for recognizing the person of rare spiritual or artistic gifts or the person of exceptional malignity. Consequently, sociologists level all of humanity into a faceless crowd possessing

discrete political, economic, religious, and familial characteristics to be collected by survey and interview, then converted into a computerized "dataset," and finally dissected and parsed for publication. In the sociologist's solvent of bland numbers, the genius of a Dante and the evil of a Hitler, the sainthood of a Paul and the bestiality of a de Sade melt into anonymity. Should a modern Shakespeare ignore the questions about family history on the front of his survey form and turn it over to write a blank-verse play depicting the tragedy of a father betrayed by his daughters on the back, the sociologist would throw his survey away—after tabulating it with other "unusable responses." As British sociologist Anthony Giddens concedes, many of his colleagues believe that "if you can't count it, it doesn't count."⁴

Though lethal in its effects on traditional morality, this sociological "quantophrenia" (Sorokin's term) often serves the purposes of modern political activists quite well. For the impulse to turn statistical scholarship into political activism is as old as the discipline of sociology. "From its very inception," Joshua Glenn admits, "Sociology has been an 'impossible science' torn between the ideals of scientific objectivity and humanistic reform-mindedness."⁵ In truth, this tension is often only apparent: sociology is frequently a fraudulent science in which statistical objectivity serves principally to mask or camouflage its practitioners' political agenda. One recent British survey found that 77 percent of sociologists identify themselves politically as "on the left."⁶ A recent American survey found that 87 percent of sociologists consider themselves "liberals" or "radicals," while only 6 percent call themselves "conservatives."⁷

In *The Decomposition of Sociology* Irving Louis Horowitz laments the "manifest politicization within sociology," concluding that "the identification of social

science with social advocacy has reached...pandemic proportions." "Advocacy," he admits, "has become the very cause of social research. We have taken the chief weakness in the structure of knowledge about society (namely, the propensity to ideological thinking) and turned it into a first principle of the research process." Among the many sociologists now waving the banners of feminism, Marxism, and Third Worldism, the "revolt against cultural tradition" is fast becoming "a new absolutism."⁸ Sociology has thus become a discipline which deploys a scientific and mathematical methodology to push aside traditional moral reasoning and to advance a radical social agenda.

So it is not any wonder that in his speech at Harvard in 1978 Solzhenitsyn identified the modern "concentration on social structures with an allegedly scientific approach" as one of the causes of our cultural malaise. What *is* a wonder, however, is that Sorokin—surrounded by colleagues embarked on projects that were even in his day spiritually desiccating and often politically perverse—somehow developed the mind and voice of a prophet, a legitimate forerunner of Solzhenitsyn! For Sorokin's was a voice that articulated a sobering and astonishingly prescient message, which anticipated some of Solzhenitsyn's criticisms of American culture and of the social sciences.

In American culture, Sorokin repeatedly warned, as in the rest of Western culture, "sensate values," deriving from an ethic which is "invariably utilitarian and hedonistic," were fast displacing "ideational values." The Western world, Sorokin lamented, was thus losing "the supersensory values of the kingdom of God."⁹ The consequent "ethical 'atomism' and nihilism," Sorokin believed, could only mean "the collapse of the whole edifice of sensate culture."¹⁰ Identifying many of the cultural, political,

and social symptoms of this collapse, Sorokin predicted worse to come.

In art, Sorokin decried the emergence of an aesthetic "divorced from religions, morals, and often even from science, philosophy, and other values," an aesthetic which inspired works which were "sensational, passionate, pathetic, sensual, and incessantly new," works produced by "professional artists catering to their patrons and to a passive public."¹¹ "The 'blackout' of culture," he declared, "is the sign of our time." Sorokin further decried the crass use to which contemporary advertisers put art—paintings by Michelangelo and Rembrandt used as images to sell jewelry, concertos by Bach and Beethoven turned into background music to promote perfume and cosmetics—created in more spiritually vibrant eras."¹²

The cultural decay evident in the arts, Sorokin reasoned, was manifesting itself in political developments making Americans "less and less free" as republican and contractual forms of government were "increasingly distorted by the intrusion of coercive or fraudulent simulacra."¹³ He saw people being turned "more and more into puppets manipulated and controlled by the central Power Station of the Leviathan Government."¹⁴ Among the ruling elite Sorokin detected "moral behavior...[which] tend[ed] to be more criminal and submoral than that of the ruled strata."¹⁵ Meanwhile, the American press, which should have exposed and opposed such corrupt elites, repudiated its "moral and social responsibilities," thus turning itself into a source of "irresponsible and unbridled propaganda" and a "means of discrediting and undermining precious values."¹⁶

But Sorokin understood well that America's social malaise was not restricted to its political elites. Writing at a time now caricatured as a period of suffocating domesticity, of Ozzie and Harriet, of Ward and June, Sorokin sensed

the beginning of a socially disastrous decay in family life. He limned this decay in a "mounting curve of extramarital relations, divorce, and desertions, and of premarital sex relations."¹⁷ He detected social illness in "the withering of parental love."¹⁸ And he worried about the growing inclination of couples "to prevent conception" or "if, inadvertently a child is born, ...to get rid of it, sending it to some school or nursery." Sorokin worried further that, with both parents working outside the home, "children are left largely to themselves, enjoying little parental control or guidance."¹⁹ Home was losing its vital functions, becoming "a mere incidental parking place for parents and children."²⁰

As with Solzhenitsyn, Sorokin made his condemnation of modern culture the backdrop for a call for cultural renewal. "Nobody can revive the dying Sensate order," he admitted. But he hoped that a people chastened "by tragedy, suffering, and crucifixion" in the collapse of sensate culture could return "back to reason and to eternal, lasting, universal, and absolute values," by "the best minds of Western society," by "new Saint Pauls, Saint Augustines and great religious and ethical leaders."²¹ The cultural phoenix Sorokin looked for in the ashes of sensate culture was to be a hybrid creature, "a new Integral order" in which the technological advances of the sensate modern world united with the spiritual richness of Ideational traditions.²²

American sociology during the decades in which Sorokin made his career—decades he shared with Carle Zimmerman, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Nisbet—was far less politicized than it is today. Moreover, many of Sorokin's colleagues viewed his work on social mobility and on rural-urban sociology as conforming to, even defining, the standards of the profession.²³ Respect for his work even won Sorokin election as President of the American Sociological Asso-

ciation in 1964. Still, as a true maverick within the profession, he was the only person ever elected president on a write-in ballot.²⁴ There is a delicious irony in the fact that in 1969, the year after his death, a group of radical left-wing sociologists, knowing nothing about Sorokin *except* that he was a non-conformist and outsider, began sporting "Sorokin Lives!" lapel pins. When informed about Sorokin's social and political views, they disposed of their pins with amazing rapidity!²⁵

Nonetheless, despite the respect he received from many within the discipline, Sorokin stood alone in his warnings about the disintegration of Western culture. No other sociologist sounded the alarm or anticipated Solzhenitsyn as he did. Many of his colleagues even ridiculed and mocked him for what they perceived as reactionary and alarmist views.²⁶

The question thus remains: How did Sorokin resist the adverse pressures of his discipline so successfully that he could anticipate many of the prophetic moral pronouncements of Solzhenitsyn? In the first place, Sorokin began his career in circumstances far removed from those of most budding American sociologists. Born on the 21st of January 1889 in an obscure Russian village and orphaned at age ten, Sorokin began his career at the University of St. Petersburg amidst the firestorm of the Russian Revolution. A supporter of Aleksandr Kerensky, Sorokin learned through direct personal experience many of the same bitter lessons Solzhenitsyn was later to learn in the Gulag. He witnessed up-close the violence and treachery of the ideologues who built Lenin's state on a foundation of corpses. Himself subject to the cold, hunger, privation, and danger of early Bolshevik Russia, Sorokin grieved the loss of many friends and colleagues who did not survive the strife which could easily have claimed his life.

As an outspoken critic of the Bolsheviks, a man personally denounced by Lenin and Zinovieff, Sorokin was in fact imprisoned and sentenced to be executed.²⁷ Spared at the last minute by communist officials who thought they could win him over to their cause, he eventually ran afoul of state censors for trying to incorporate chilling documentation of famine in Bolshevik Russia into a broader historical analysis of the linkage between "compulsory statism" and "massive starvation."

The censors seized his manuscript (eventually translated and published in the United States under the title *Hunger as a Factor in Human Affairs*²⁸) and reported Sorokin to their superiors. So it was that, just as their successors would later do with Solzhenitsyn, communist authorities decided in 1922 that the easiest way to handle a troublesome scholar was to exile him. In September of that year, Sorokin was banished from Russia, never to return, and in November 1923 he began his career as a sociologist in the United States. After six productive years at the University of Minnesota, he was invited to organize and serve as the first chairman of a sociology department at Harvard.

Sorokin brought to his highly visible position at Harvard a profound understanding of the evils lurking in many of the -isms (communism, collectivism, statism, socialism) of modernity. Without this understanding, many of Sorokin's colleagues—including Professor J.L. Gillin, who served as president of the American Sociological Society—succumbed to the deceptions of communist propaganda, seeing in the achievements of the Soviet system a marvelous "triumph over the past."²⁹ Sorokin, however, stood apart from his colleagues not only in his skepticism toward the Soviet Union's identity as a progressive regime but also in his even more profound skepticism toward the concept of

progress itself. For unlike most of his colleagues, Sorokin did not subscribe to the dominant Whig version of history, with its emphasis on those "principles of progress" which yield what Herbert Butterfield identified as "a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present."³⁰

Sorokin realized that while the Whig version of history may serve as a plausible guide to the history of technology and the natural sciences, it cannot be trusted as an interpretation of broader developments in culture. To explain the movement from past to present, an honest mind often needs dark concepts such as decay, apostasy, and corruption—not just the cheery concept of progress. Colleagues who claimed that "nothing important ha[d] been discovered in their fields during all the preceding centuries" and who referred to pre-twentieth centuries only with a condescending "sense of their own superiority over the unscientific old fogies" greatly irritated Sorokin,³¹ whose own work was rich with material drawn from ancient Egyptian, Roman, Greek, Chinese, Hindu, Hebrew, and Christian sources,³² material cited not merely to show the superiority of moderns over premoderns, but often to recover important concepts lost to modern consciousness. Unlike colleagues who cited only contemporary colleagues in their own discipline, Sorokin populated his pages with such grand figures as Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Jeremiah, Apostles John and Paul, Dante, Pascal, Augustine, and Aquinas.³³

Decades before Solzhenitsyn bemoaned modern man's "emancipation ...from the moral heritage of Christian centuries," Sorokin had already recognized the peril of modern intellectual and cultural "amnesia."³⁴ To contemporaries convinced they were moving away from the evils of the past toward a glorious future, Sorokin delivered a warning

that the highly urbanized society of modernity was slipping toward grave "dangers for [its] long and successful existence": namely, "disorganization of the family...progress of irreligiosity...increase of criminality...increase of political instability, disorders, and class strife...increase of 'mechanization' of human thought and thinking processes...a 'de-spiritualization' of human beings and human personalities; and an increase in the 'mechanization' of the arts."³⁵

By refusing to join in the worship of progress fostered by Whig history, Sorokin thus protected himself against two different but related forms of moral blindness: the sterility of objective science and the relativism of progressive politics. Because Whig history has often granted pride of place to science and technology as the engines of progress and the chief means of ameliorating human life, it has conferred a dubious prestige upon the spiritually barren language and formulae of the sciences. When applied to social questions, this sterile language implies a rejection of the moral and spiritual responses to these questions of "prescientific" thinkers and writers.

But Sorokin saw little to admire in the "sham-scientific slang" and "obtuse jargon" of colleagues whose writings were "devoid of elegance, as well as clarity."³⁶ He recognized the real accomplishments of mathematicians and statisticians, yet he concluded that "in spite of the enormous amounts of energy, labor, and funds invested in advanced statistical research [in the social sciences]...its contributions have been so far fairly modest."³⁷ More fundamentally, Sorokin sensed the spiritual sterility of which the jargon and formulae of the social sciences were symptomatic. He decried the "proliferation of various 'debunking' interpretations of man, culture, and values: mechanistic, reflexological, biological, materialistic, organismic, endocrinological,

behavioralistic, etc." "These interpretations," he wrote, "have deprived man and his culture and values of everything divine, spiritual, supermaterialistic, or human. They equate man and his culture and values with atoms, electron-protons, reflex mechanisms, reflex organisms, the libido, and so on."³⁸ Sorokin, who repeatedly quoted the Bible in his writings,³⁹ feared the barrenness of a philosophy lacking any spiritual understanding of man's origin and destiny. A society long governed by such a philosophy must perish.

Sorokin's refusal to "adhere to the canon of objectivity," Arthur K. Davis reports, caused many of his colleagues to "look askance" at his work.⁴⁰ But the disapproval of objectivists bothered Sorokin no more than the complaints of progressives, who regarded him as a reactionary. For he understood that the perdition of a spiritually starved people is only hastened by progressive thinkers who in place of "eternal lasting, universal, and absolute values" offer the "new morality" of a politically expedient relativism. Against increasingly fluid conceptions of sexual morality, marriage, and family life, Sorokin waged a courageous but often lonely war for the eternal truths undergirding conjugal fidelity and familial integrity. In 1956 Sorokin thundered against the "sexual anarchy" which was turning "the traditional 'child of God' created in God's image...into a sexual apparatus powered by sex instinct, preoccupied with sex matters."⁴¹ But his denunciation of sexual license was "ridiculed or ignored by social scientists."⁴² And more than thirty years later when some of Sorokin's most distinguished professional successors reconsidered his warnings, they confessed themselves "unable to demonstrate scientifically the effects of premarital sex on people's mental health, moral integrity, personal happiness, and altruism."⁴³ This is astounding blindness

given the contemporary epidemics of AIDS and other venereal diseases, the shocking rise in illegitimacy, and the skyrocketing levels of child poverty, juvenile delinquency, academic failure, and adolescent suicide—all linked to family dissolution.⁴⁴ “Sorokin! thou shouldst be living at this hour,” indeed.

Contemporary sociologists, who talk glibly of “alternative” conceptions of the family,⁴⁵ and even attack colleagues who dare to suggest that recent trends in family life constitute reason “for alarm,”⁴⁶ look like moral and intellectual midgets compared to Sorokin, who in 1948 already understood that for society to be renewed, “marriage and the family must be restored to their place of dignity among the greatest values in human life, not to be trifled with. As a socially sanctioned union of husband and wife, of parents and children, the family is to be radically differentiated from all unsanctioned sex association.”⁴⁷ Contemporary sociologists may wax enthusiastic about therapeutic, educational, economic, or political surrogates for the family,⁴⁸ but Sorokin realized that the family is unmatched in “inculcating deep sympathy, compassion, and loyalty,” and that the search for satisfactory surrogates is folly. “No other agency,” he wrote, “can perform this function as well as the average good family.”⁴⁹

Our morally and socially befuddled age could benefit tremendously from a rediscovery of the wisdom of Pitirim Sorokin, Solzhenitsyn’s improbable predecessor. Nonetheless, those who would reclaim his work should recognize that, although prescient and valuable in many respects, it does betray certain weaknesses. First, despite the relish with which Sorokin lampooned colleagues for their abominable writing style, it cannot be said that Sorokin himself completely escaped contagion. Anyone who can write of the need for an “adequate analysis of the componential structure” of one

theory⁵⁰ or of “a limited extensity of interaction” within another⁵¹ is someone who has—alas!—learned to write like a sociologist. Indeed, Sorokin’s most felicitous writing may perhaps be found in his *Leaves from a Russian Diary*, an early autobiographical work written not for his professional colleagues but for general readers. And although Sorokin’s concern for and responsiveness to literature and the arts is refreshing in a sociologist, it must be conceded that his literary and aesthetic analysis (especially his statistical tabulations of “Ideational,” “Materialistic,” and “Mixed” works) is crude and unsatisfying.⁵²

Aside from his lapses in style and in aesthetic subtlety, however, Sorokin appears deficient in more fundamental ways, particularly in his attitudes toward religion and cultural renewal. Few sociologists have ever taken religion more seriously or have acknowledged more fully the cultural centrality of religion than Sorokin. Still, some of Sorokin’s pronouncements leave the reader with the uncomfortable feeling that he viewed “cult and ritual...theology and dogmas” not as matters of truth or falsehood but as matters of social health or illness.⁵³ No doubt true religion does foster social health, but those who cherish it chiefly for that reason make a great mistake. Reason to suppose that Sorokin made that mistake may be found in the suspiciously eclectic way in which he spoke of “God, Brahman, Tao, etc. as an Infinite Manifold”⁵⁴ and in the ease with which he could slide the name of Jesus between the names of the merely mortal Aristotle and Mohammed in a list of “great moral innovators and altruists.”⁵⁵

Lamentably, we must even acknowledge that at times Sorokin apparently regarded religion as no more than a set of socially necessary moral dicta decked with inspiring theological phrases which wise men can “create or recreate” at will.⁵⁶ Despite his stout resistance to

moral relativism, it appears that Sorokin succumbed to theological relativism. Thus, although we may confer the title prophet on Sorokin in recognition of the prescience and the soundness of many of his social and cultural pronouncements, we must not suppose that he deserves that title in the full and weighty sense that it carries when applied to an Isaiah, a Jeremiah, an Ezekiel, and other men who have in truth spoken for the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Perhaps the inadequacy of his religious thinking explains why Sorokin— anxious to see cultural life and renewal beyond the horrifying demise of sensate culture—was willing to recognize some rather poorly qualified intellectuals as the bearers of such life and renewal. In some of his later writings, the sobriety with which he acknowledged that only “new Saint Pauls, Saint Augustines and great religious and ethical leaders” could effect genuine cultural renewal gave way to a perilous willingness to entrust “distinguished bodies of scientists” and “distinguished religious, philosophical, artistic, and literary organizations” with

the task of *appointing* “Scientists, Saints, and Sages” who could spiritually inspire and (through a “World Federal Government”) politically reshape the world.⁵⁷ As we contemplate the ideological corruption of many of our scientific, artistic, literary, philosophical, and even religious organizations, we recognize how dangerous Sorokin’s proposal is. But we may also see how hard it is, without faith in the transcendent God of eternity, to resist the temptation to reach out for a hopelessly premature earthly solution to our moral and social problems.

It must finally be said of Sorokin that his diagnosis of our cultural malaise is far more reliable than his prescription for its cure. But Americans still very much need to hear that diagnosis. Despite his inadequacies, Sorokin offers much to our benighted era, both as a brave fighter for truth in his own right and as a noble forerunner of an even greater fighter for truth, Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Wider recognition of the contributions of both Russian sages would do much to restore sanity, honesty, and hope to our intellectual life.

1. *A World Split Apart: Commencement Address Delivered at Harvard University, June 8, 1978* (New York, 1978), 11, 21, 49-53. 2. See Susan Smallheer, *Rutland [Vermont] Herald*, 26 May 1994, 1, 6. 3. “Sociology’s Dostoyevski,” *The World and I*, September 1988, 569-581. 4. Giddens quoted in Joshua Glenn, “Sociology on the Skids,” *Utne Reader*, November-December 1995, 28. 5. *Ibid.* 6. *Ibid.* 7. Survey cited in Norval Glenn, “A Plea for Objective Assessment of the Notion of Family Decline,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55 (1993), 543. 8. *The Decomposition of Sociology* (New York, 1993), 25, 183. 9. *The Basic Trends of Our Time* (New Haven, 1964), 18. 10. *The Crisis of Our Age: The Social and Cultural Outlook* (New York, 1942), 195, 202. 11. *The Basic Trends of Our Time*, 21, 22. 12. *Social and Cultural Dynamics: A Study of Change in Major Systems of Art, Truth, Ethics, Law, and Social Relationships*, rev. and abridged ed. (1957; rpt. New Brunswick, 1985), 695, 701. 13. Pitirim A. Sorokin and Walter A. Lunden, *Power and Morality: Who Shall Guard the Guardians?* (Boston, 1959), 138. 14. *Man and Society in Calamity* (New

York, 1986), 315. 15. *A Long Journey: The Autobiography of Pitirim A. Sorokin* (New Haven, 1963), 299. 16. *The Crisis of Our Age*, 198. 17. *The Reconstruction of Humanity* (Boston, 1948), 145, 146. 18. *The American Sexual Revolution* (Boston, 1956), 12. 19. *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, 146. 20. *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, 700. 21. *Ibid.*, 701-702. 22. “Western Man’s Search for a New Sociocultural Home,” in David Popenoe, ed., *The Urban Industrial Frontier* (New Brunswick, 1969), 163-165. 23. See Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Social Mobility* (New York, 1927); and Pitirim A. Sorokin and Carle C. Zimmerman, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology* (New York, 1929). 24. See Barry V. Johnston, “Pitirim Sorokin and The American Sociological Association: The Politics of a Professional Society,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 23 (1980), 103-122; see also Barry Johnston, “Sorokin and Parsons at Harvard: Institutional Conflict and the Origin of a Hegemonic Tradition,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 22 (1986), 107-127. 25. This episode was recounted by Professor David Popenoe of Rutgers

University at a conference on "The Retreat from Marriage" organized by The Rockford Institute in Rockford, Illinois, in May 1989. **26.** See Theodore Caplow et al., *Middletown Families: Fifty Years of Change and Continuity* (Minneapolis, 1982), 193. **27.** See Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Leaves From a Russian Diary* (New York, 1924), 196-199. **28.** *Hunger as a Factor in Human Affairs*, trans. Elena P. Sorokin (Gainesville, 1975). **29.** See Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba* (1981; rpt. Lanham, 1990), 135, 143. **30.** *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931; rpt. New York, 1965), v. **31.** *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology* (Chicago, 1956), 3, 4. **32.** See Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Sociological Theories of Today* (New York, 1966), 225-226; see also Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, 49-51, 68-224; Sorokin, *Social Mobility*, 47-55, 91-150. **33.** See Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, 119-120, 197-200, 246-258, 265; Sorokin, *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology*, 14, 23, 99, 193, 285; Sorokin, *Sociological Theories of Today*, 52, 90-91, 197, 260, 338. **34.** *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology*, 3-4. **35.** *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, 633. **36.** *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology*, 21-30. **37.** *Sociological Theories of Today*, 107. **38.** *Altruistic*

Love: A Study of American 'Good Neighbors' and Christian Saints, (Boston, 1950), 3. **39.** See *Sociological Theories of Today*, 539; *Altruistic Love*, 61; *Leaves From a Russian Diary*, 219-290. **40.** "Lessons from Sorokin," in *Sociological Theory, Values, and Socio-cultural Change: Essays in Honor of Pitirim A. Sorokin*, ed. Edward A. Tiryakian (London, 1963), 5. **41.** *The American Sexual Revolution*, 17-18. **42.** See *Middletown Families*, 193. **43.** Ibid. **44.** See Bryce J. Christensen, ed., *When Families Fail . . . The Social Cost* (Lanham, 1991). **45.** See John Scanlon, "Families in the 1980's: Time to Refocus Our Thinking," *Journal of Family Issues*, 8 (1987), 354-419. **46.** See, for instance, Judith Stacey, "Good Riddance to The Family: A Response to David Popenoe," *Journal of Marriage and The Family*, 55 (1993), 545-547. **47.** *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, 148. **48.** Jan E. Dizard and Howard Gadlin, *The Minimal Family* (Amherst, 1992). **49.** *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, 148. **50.** *Sociological Theories of Today*, 399. **51.** *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, 439. **52.** Ibid., 68-100. **53.** *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, 154. **54.** Ibid., 156-157. **55.** *Altruistic Love*, 81. **56.** *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, 156. **57.** "Western Man's Search for a New Sociocultural Home," 170-171.

A Joseph de Maistre Revival

T. John Jamieson

Considerations on France, by Joseph de Maistre; translated and edited by Richard A. Lebrun; introduction by Isaiah Berlin, *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. \$49.95/\$16.95 paper.*¹

St. Petersburg Dialogues; Or Conversations on the Temporal Government of Providence, by Joseph de Maistre; translated and edited by Richard A. Lebrun, *Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993. xxxvi + 407 pp. \$55.00.*

The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas, by Isaiah Berlin; edited by Henry Hardy, *New York: Knopf, 1991. 277 pp. \$22.00/\$12.00 paper.*

Joseph de Maistre: An Intellectual Militant, by Richard A. Lebrun, *Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988. xiv + 366 pp. \$49.95.*

Maistre Studies, translated and edited by Richard A. Lebrun, *Lanham MD, New York, and London: University Press of America, 1988. xvii + 299 pp. \$42.75.*

In 1809 John Quincy Adams was American ambassador to the Czar's court at St. Petersburg. Among his fellow ambassa-

dors, the one from the provincial-sounding Kingdom of Sardinia stood out. He was, Adams noted, "a man of sense and vivacity in conversation," as well as a devout Roman Catholic "with all the prejudices of his sect." As a child of the Enlightenment, Adams was shocked that this man held John Locke "in horror" and that he blamed Locke for instigating the materialist philosophy that had corrupted eighteenth-century France.

This reactionary diplomat with abstruse opinions on "innate ideas" and on God as the "place" of souls (as space is the place of bodies) was the renowned Count Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821), who continues to baffle commentators on the history of political thought. However anti-progressive Maistre's opinions seemed to Adams, they were not sectarian prejudices but rationally based convictions. In fact, Maistre has never received the recognition he deserves as a philosophical and political hold-out against modern spiritual deformation, a lone bastion of classical wisdom and orthodox belief.

Even Irving Babbitt depicted Maistre as a mere counter-*philosophe* with "little sense of the inner life," one lacking awareness that Christian social subordination is to be achieved by humility and charity rather than "rigid outer authority."² Babbitt echoed the standard opinions of highly-regarded liberal critics such as Morley and Sainte-Beuve. Indeed, "rigid