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A Possible Filiation Between Alexei Khomiakov and Lev Karsavin

Françoise Lesourd
Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3

Khomiakov exerted a certain influence on Lev Karsavin, one of the leading Russian philosophers of religion of the twentieth century.

Lev Karsavin was born in Saint Petersburg in 1882. His family belonged not to the intelligentsia, but to the artistic milieu: his father was principal dancer at the Mariinsky Theatre, the Saint Petersburg opera house, and his sister Tamara Karsavina became a famous ballerina and went on to dance with Nijinsky[1]. Karsavin himself studied at the Faculty of History and Philology under the distinguished professor Ivan Mikhailovitch Grevs, and was to become one of the most outstanding historians of the Saint Petersburg school, and a specialist on medieval Western spirituality. Karsavin's principal research interests during this period led to two theses: *Essays on Religious Life in Italy in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*[2] (1912) and *The Foundations of Medieval Spirituality* [3](1915).

Although he was hostile to the Bolshevik revolution, he undertook to collaborate loyally with the newly-established Soviet authorities. He participated in the great publishing enterprises initiated by Gorki[4]. Yet he was expelled from the USSR in 1922, along with a swathe of leading Russian intellectuals, and settled in Berlin where, shortly afterwards, he was contacted by the founders of the Eurasianist movement and asked to become the ideologist of this political movement, which aimed to re-establish links with Soviet Russia and develop an alternative

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[1] Karsavina T., *Theatre Street, The reminiscences of Tamara Karsavina*, London, 1948.
[2] *Očerki religioznoj žizni v Italii XII-XIII vekov*, Zapiski istoričeskogo fakul'teta Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta, CXII, SPb., 1912, XVIII.
[3] *Osnovy srednevekovoj religioznosti v XII-XIII vekax*, Pg.,1915 ; repr. SPb., 1997.
[4] For example, he published *Otkrovenija blažennoj Anžely iz Foligno* for the collection "Biblioteka mistikov" (M., izd. G. A. Lemana, 1918) and the treatise *Katoličestvo* (M., Ogni, 1918), for the collection "Mirovye religii" (repr. Tomsk, « Vodolej », 1997).

ideology that could take the place of communism after the end of what they expected to be a short-lived Soviet era.

Karsavin had never accepted his émigré status, but was gradually obliged to recognize that the Soviet regime was probably going to remain in place for a considerable time, and was forced to admit that: "we will probably never go back to Russia." Nevertheless, he reframed Eurasianist ideology, which was set out in several pamphlets, in particular: *The Foundations of Politics*[1] and *A Phenomenology of Revolution*[2], in both of which a Slavophile influence can be felt. In fact, the notion of Eurasia was of little importance to him: it was Russia that really interested him. As he wrote in 1923: "Do they [the Eurasianists] really think that all things 'European' and 'Russian' should be eliminated, and replaced by something that is 'Eurasian' (whatever that might be)?" He goes on: "I am Russian, and I prefer to die along with my Russian fellow countrymen. It is not in times of trial and tribulation that one should renounce one's language and one's country."[3] However, he endorsed the Eurasianist attempt to re-establish links with the new—Soviet—reality of Russia.

In 1926 he moved to Paris, where the core of the movement was based, but left it after little more than a year, not only because of his disagreements with the "right-wing" Eurasianists, who were unwilling to recognize the Soviet authorities, but also because of the opacity of its funding (it was suspected that the movement was financed in part by the Soviet secret services), and above all because he had been invited to take up the chair of world history at the University of Kaunas, the then capital of newly-independent Lithuania. From 1928 on, his destiny was

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[1] "Osnovy politiki", *Evraziiskij vremennik*, V, Paris, 1927, repr. 1992 (Daidžest, Tver).
[2] "Fenomenologija revoljucii", *Evraziiskij vremennik*, V, Paris, 1927, repr. 1992 (Daidžest, Tver)..
[3] « Evropa i Evrazija », *Sovremennye zapiski*, Paris, 1923, XV, N°II, p. 298 ("Čto že, oni dumajut, budto pogibnet i «evropejskoe» i «russkoe», i na smenu pridet kakoe-to «evrazijskoe» […] ? Togda mne, russkomu čeloveku, ix evrazijstva ne nadobno, i ja predpočtu pogibnut' so svoim russkim pravoslavnym narodom. I v minutu tjažkix ispytanij mne ne pristalo otkazyvat'sja ot rodnogo jazyka i rodnogo imeni").

linked to that of his Lithuanian university; within a few months he was lecturing in Lithuanian, and it was in this language that he wrote his monumental *History of European Culture.*[1]

At the end of the Second World War, when Lithuania became a Soviet satellite, he was encouraged to leave, as it was dangerous for someone forced into exile in 1922 to find himself in Soviet territory again. But he wished "to be re-united with Russia,"[2] and was convinced that the Soviet authorities "had changed"; he therefore decided to stay, but in the course of time, despite his loyal co-operation, he was obliged to give up his position at the university, and was later forced out of his post as director of the Vilnius Museum of Fine Arts. In 1949, he was arrested and incarcerated in the city's prison for a year, during which the first signs of tuberculosis became apparent. He died of the disease in the summer of 1952 in the Abez prison camp (located south of Vorkouta), where he was serving a ten-year sentence[3].

It was more especially after the revolution that the links between his philosophy and Khomiakov's thinking emerged and the importance of the latter's thought for an understanding of Russia's historical destiny in the twentieth century came to be recognized. But in fact, even in Karsavin's youth, when his attention was particularly focused on Bernard of Clairvaux, Abelard, and Saint Francis, etc., he had already published an article (on the papacy) that demonstrated a certain kinship with Khomiakov[4]. Moreover, this closeness was intentional: he claimed (probably wrongly, however) to be related to him through his mother.

This paper, written in 1910, addressed a subject dear to the Slavophiles: the birth of the papacy as an institution and the specificity of the Roman Church. It is a scholarly study, without any obvious polemical intent. But the influence of Khomiakov is clearly perceptible: the "democratic" spirit of the nascent Roman Church is clearly underscored, the "charismata" are seen, at that time, as involving all the faithful, whereas they subsequently went on to become the

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[1] *Europos kultūros istorija*, Humanitarinių mokslų fakulteto Raštai, Kaunas, V. D. Universiteto Humanitarinių mokslų fakultetas, 1931-1936, repr. Vilnius, Vaga, 1991.
[2] Unpublished letter to Elena Skržinskaja, Lietuvos Ypatingasis Archivas, P. 11972 LI, n°16416.
[3] Vaneev A. A., «Dva goda v Abezi», *Minuvšee*, N°6, M., 1992.
[4] «Rimskaja cerkov' i papstvo do poloviny II veka » (*Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveščenija*, XXX, nov. 1910, N°11).

preserve of the few, the "pastors," whose role, moreover, is justified by the importance of the Eucharist in worship. Furthermore, the choice of the word "pastor" ("*presviter*") is significant, as it indicates the type of relationship between the faithful and the leaders of the early church, and is a term often used by Khomiakov.

In this article, the influence of Khomiakov is unexpectedly intertwined with that of Vladimir Soloviev. In his treatise, *The Great Controversy and Christian Politics*,[1] the latter author admits that papal authority could be justified by the part played by different Popes—as guardians of Church doctrine in the struggle against heresy—at a dangerous time, that of Marcion, the Gnostics, etc.

After the 1917 revolution, the influence of Khomiakov took on a new dimension, and he came to be seen as the veritable prophet of the Russian catastrophe. Karsavin's pamphlet *East, West and the Russian Idea*[2] portrays the revolution as a "second period of rampant Westernization"[3] after that of Peter the Great. In this document, Khomiakov's ideas on the Westernization of Russia and its damaging consequences are melded with what is peculiar to Karsavin himself: a particularly profound knowledge of medieval Western spirituality and the concept of a "dualism of religious consciousness" (that is, two contrary orientations: the one directed towards the world and good works, in order to attain salvation, and the other towards contemplation and prayer; the idea of a complete break between God and the world, or that of possible access to the Godhead). This opposition between the two types of spirituality is reminiscent, to a certain extent, of Khomiakov's distinction between what he calls the "Persian" and the "Cushitic" principles[4], which he, however, used to distinguish between two main types of culture. For Karsavin, it is the type of spirituality that defines the type of culture. His understanding of the notion of "faith" is so broad as to be almost synonymous with the concept of "mentality." From Karsavin's

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[1] Solov'ev Vl., *Velikij spor i xristianskaja politika*, 1883 (*Sobr. soč.*, SPb., izd. Prosveščenie, 1911-1914, t. IV).
[2] *Vostok, zapad i russkaja ideja*, Pg., 1922. Repr. : Jastrebitskaja A. L., *Istorik-medievist – Lev Platonovitch Karsavin*, M., INION, 1991.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 105 (« vtoroj ostryj krizis evropejzacii »).
[4] Especially in his *Zapiski o vsemirnoj istorii*, published for the first time in 1860 (in the review *Russkaja Beseda*).

perspective, as can be seen in *East, West and the Russian Idea,* Russia occupies an intermediate position: for him, its type of religiosity is "Eastern," but he conceives it as belonging within an overall European framework. Both thinkers attach fundamental importance to the question of the *filioque*. But whereas Khomiakov simply considered the matter as a "crime" perpetrated by the West against its Eastern brothers, Karsavin emphasizes the consequences of this change in dogma upon people's worldview. The insertion of the *filioque* introduces into the Trinity a sort of second unit, comprising the Father and the Son. It reduces the part played by the Holy Spirit and renders impossible "the manifestation of God within the created world"[1], because of the sharp break thus introduced.

The Russian catastrophe, he continues, is due to the imposition of a foreign, Western, ideal of exclusively earthly happiness, involving "both the refusal of an inaccessible heavenly life, and an ideal of empirical prosperity presented as an absolute," on a country whose religious consciousness was of a different (passive, contemplative) type. Yet Russia, he writes, needs to carry through to its conclusion the trial imposed upon it in order to realize its full potential and truly become itself through the demise of the old world (the old regime). Karsavin's ontology can be summed up, therefore, in the expression: "Life through death."

Some time later, however, his closeness to Khomiakov was explicitly manifested when Eurasian Book Publishers in Berlin republished the latter's essay, "The Church is One," with a preface by Karsavin entitled "On the Church."

Judging by the title, one might expect Khomiakov's essay to target Western Christian confessions, considered as heretical, and cut off from the ecumenical Church. On first sight, this in fact seems to be a incorrect impression: Khomiakov speaks of the oneness of the church visible and invisible, and the grace which reaches out to all men, at all times.

In Khomiakov's *Collected Works*, its full title is: "A Catechetical Exposition of the Teaching of the Church." At first sight then, it is simply a catechism. It may appear strange, to

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[1] *Vostok, zapad i russkaja ideja*, *op. cit*., p. 108 ("javlenie božestva v tvarnom").

Western eyes, that a secular author should write a "catechism." Yet in Russia, on the other hand, it represented a major innovation. I refer readers here to the article by Antonella Cavazza[1], in which she admirably demonstrates the novel character of this initiative (a point of which Westerners would otherwise be unaware). This typically Russian tradition—the elaboration of theology by secular authors—which Karsavin, moreover, went on to continue, may strike us as surprising. But there was none other.

As is well known, the Orthodox Church confined itself exclusively to Holy Scripture and the first seven ecumenical councils. Exegesis was not allowed, and there was no other text. The very first catechism, produced by Peter Mohila in the early eighteenth century, remained largely unknown. That of Metropolitan Philaret appeared shortly before Khomiakov's essay.

Khomiakov set out the fundamental truths of faith in straightforward contemporary language. This corresponded to a pressing need, as certain accounts evince. However, his essay was regarded with suspicion by the religious authorities, who were apprehensive about even a simple presentation of the truths of faith, when produced outside the Church, whereas Khomiakov himself considered that he had helped the Russian Church by filling a gap. For, by refusing to accept a modern formulation of the truths of faith, it was depriving itself of a means of countering the influence of the Western churches.

The essay consists firstly of a systematic presentation of the principal religious truths: religious life is grounded in Holy Scripture, good works, and tradition; their authenticity flows from the person of Christ, who is the foundation of doctrine as a whole; religious truths cannot be rationally demonstrated; the creed, which occupies a central place, sets out mysteries that are inaccessible to reason. Next come the enumeration and explanation of the theological virtues and all the sacraments, and then the essay deals with the Last Judgment, and the Resurrection, just as in an ordinary catechism. It offers an answer to a frequently asked question on the value of the

[1] Cavazza A., « Sur les sources de l'essai d'A. S. Khomiakov "L'Église est une" », *Slavica Occitania*, Toulouse, 41, 2015, p. 177-189.

sacraments administered by unworthy priests: the value of such sacraments is not lost as, in each instance, the rite is performed by the whole church.

But in fact, we very quickly discover there is a polemical intention hidden beneath each point dealt with in the presentation. The Church as a unified body possesses the truth, whereas an individual person may fall into error. The Church "cannot acknowledge that any particular private individual or bishop or patriarch or their successors are immune from succumbing to error in doctrine and that they are protected from error by some special grace"[1]. Clearly Khomiakov's target is papal infallibility.

"The Church," writes Khomiakov, "belongs to the whole world, and not any locality"[2] The fact that "Rome" has become the symbol of ecumenism in the minds of some people should not disguise the fact that Rome is no more than an insignificantly small territory on a terrestrial scale. What is accepted by the Church is that which is "proclaimed by a General Council and common agreement"[3], and not by the will of a single individual (the Pope). In Western cultures, the desire to prove the existence of God is fairly widespread, but this only demonstrates "the pride of reason and unlawful power"[4].

But the worst sin of all consists in adding to the canonical texts. And this, of course, alludes to the *filioque*, which introduces a sort of new dogma into the teaching of the church : "…the addition of the word *filioque* contains some illusory dogma unknown to any of the God-pleased writers, bishops, or apostolic successors in the first centuries of the Church; nor was it spoken by Christ the Savior"[5]. As regards the Eucharist, the Catholic term of "transubstantiation" is not rejected, but the Holy Church "does not ascribe to it the material

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[1] *On spiritual unity, A Slavophile Reader*, Ivan Kireevsky, Alexeï Khomiakov, translated and edited by Boris Jakim and Robert Bird, Lindisfarne Books, 1998, p. 33 ; Xomiakov A., *Izbrannye sočinenija*, N.-Y., Čehov ed., 1955, "Opyt katexizičeskogo izloženija učenija o Cerkvi", p. 210. ("Ona ne možet priznat', čto sie čatnoe lico, ili episkop, ili patriarx, ego preemniki, ne mogli vpast' v ošibku po učeniju i čto oni oxraneny ot zabluždenij kakoj-nibud' osoboj blagodat'ju").
[2] *Ibid.* ("…ona prinadležit vsemu miru, a ne kakoj-nibud' mestnosti").
[3] *Ibid.* ("obščim soborom i obščim soglasiem").
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 38 & 214 ("gordost' razuma i nezakonnoj vlasti").
[5] *Ibid.,* p. 38 & 215 ("… pribavlenie slov *filioque* soderžit kakoj-to mnimyj dogmat, neizvestnyj nikomu iz bogougodnyx pisatelej ili iz episkopov ili apostol'skix preemnikov v pervye veka Cerkvi , ni skazannyj Xristom Spasitelem").

sense attributed to it by the teachers of the churches that have fallen away"[1], as it represents a drift towards magic. Ritual is one of the foundations of the life of the Church, but if the importance attached to it becomes exclusive, it distances man from God: such is the case of the "ritualism" of the Catholic Church. Thus, what might at the outset have appeared to be a simple catechism ultimately turns out to be a polemical essay.

While Karsavin prolongs the tradition of theological elaboration by secular writers, he adds new dimensions, because of the new historical situation. For him—and this is already visible in his earliest historical studies, and even more so towards the end of his life, in his dialogues with Vaneyev—dogma needs to become (or once again become) the object of intellectual attention, in order to respond to the modern-day secularization of culture.

Karsavin's introduction to "The Church is one" is a veritable apologia for Khomiakov. It demonstrates the relevance of his thought just as the Bolshevik revolution was confirming the validity of his vision of the evolution of Russian culture, and the impasse into which it had been drawn by one-sided Occidentalism (Karsavin mentions Khomiakov's curious lightheartedness at the time of the siege of Sebastopol). He points out that Khomiakov had practically no readers in Russia, and suggests that it may be for this reason that he wrote his essays in various foreign languages.

Karsavin underscores the fact that Khomiakov neither refused the idea of progress, nor rejected the contribution of Peter the Great, and he cannot be considered to be a chauvinistic nationalist (on the contrary, he never ceased to emphasize the running sores of life in Russia). Herzen rightly said of the Slavophiles: "The importance of their conception, their truth, and the most essential part of their thinking lies not in Orthodoxy and an exclusive nationalistic mindset, but in those *elements* of Russian life that they have helped to reveal beneath the silt of an artificial

[1] *Ibid.,* p. 42 & 217 ("Ne otvergaet ona i slova *presuščestvlenie*, no ne pripisyvaet emu togo veščestvennogo smysla, kotoryj pripisan emu učiteljami otpadšix cerkvej") .

civilization"[1]. These particular "elements" [*stihii*] has very little to do with the "people," which is a notion invented by the intelligentsia (the "ruling layer of society" which has lost its "organic character," as Karsavin points out in *A Phenomenology of Revolution*[2]).

What gives particular relevance to Khomiakov's ideas is the fact that the end of the First World War revealed the bankruptcy of European values, all across Europe, but more especially in Russia. Indeed, it was precisely because of the catastrophe of the revolution that the country became involved in the common destiny of Europe. It was at this time that certain Russian intellectuals turned away from Europe, and began to look "towards the East." Not so Karsavin, who stressed that, despite everything, Russia is inconceivable outside Europe as a whole.

Karsavin's preface demonstrates not only common thinking with Khomiakov, but also a kinship of sensibility: the latter warns against an abstract understanding of Christianity ("it is not without the body that we shall be resurrected"[3]). Incarnation is the core of the Christian idea, Karsavin underlines, and abstraction is harmful. During this period he even wrote an article entitled: "On the Dangers of Abstract Christianity and How to Overcome It"[4]. More importantly, his attitude towards emigration can also be explained in part by his refusal of abstraction, highlighting a new aspect of the Westernization of Russia, the loss of the concrete: "what is foreign is only concrete in its place of origin, and is only assimilated in an abstract form"[5].

The idea of the Church is inseparable from Khomiakov's idea of *sobornost*, but the latter concept takes us well beyond ecclesial life *stricto sensu*. It is an idea that is very close to Karsavin's

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[1] Herzen A., *Soč.* v 9 tomax, M., 1956, t. 5, *Byloe i Dumy*, IV, chap. 30, p. 133 ("Važnost' ix vozzrenija, ego istina i suščestvennaja čast' vovse ne v pravoslavii i ne v isključitel'noj narodnosti, a v tex *stixijax* russkoj žizni, kotorye oni otkryli pod udobreniem iskusstvennoj civilizacii").
[2] Karsavin L. P., *Fenomenologija revoljucii*, *op. cit.*, p. 19 ("pravjaščij sloj", kotoryj "utračivaet svoj organičeskij xarakter").
[3] *On spiritual unity, A Slavophile Reader…*, *op. cit.*, p. 42 ; "Opyt katexizičeskogo izloženija učenija o Cerkvi", *op. cit.*, (« ne bez tela voskresnem »), p. 218.
[4] « Ob opasnostjax i preodolenii otvlečennogo xristianstva », *Put'*, Paris, 1927, N°6, p. 32-49; repr. *Malye sočinenija*, SPb., Aleteja, 1994, p. 395-413.
[5] *Fenomenologija revoljucii*, *op. cit.*, p. 17 (« Ved' čužoe konkretno liš' u sebja na rodine i osvaivaetsja tol'ko v abstraktnoj forme »)

idea of the "symphonic person," and is linked to his very individual ontology, which comes from Nicholas of Cusa (and his *est/possest* distinction) and Hegel.

The concept of the symphonic person can be briefly summed up as follows: all reality is made up of a multiplicity of collective (symphonic) persons. These represent a sum of potentialities and hence are in retraction. At a given point in time, one of these potentialities separates from this sum of elements in retraction, undergoes a transition from a state of potentiality to one of reality, and is individuated, acquiring certain precise concrete qualities ("kačestvovanie"). Some time later it is, as it were, annihilated: it then goes back towards the center and resumes its status of potentiality. But it does not disappear entirely and can later be realized once more as a new, concrete, individual realization of the higher symphonic person: in sum, a sort of metaphysics of the circle. Its center brings together, in a reduced concentrated form, all the potentialities, and its circumference is made up of the infinite number of their possible realizations. This conception is reminiscent of the well-known Renaissance representation of God: a sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.

The fact that, sooner or later, the person comes back to the center is what Karsavin calls "ontologically necessary death"[1]. But the person in question may also voluntarily give up his individuality for the benefit of others: hence self-sacrifice lies at the center of this fundamentally Christian conception. The complete realization of one's "self" supposes a willing acceptance of death, on behalf of another (a fellow being, or a higher "symphonic person").

In this interpretation, Khomiakov's *sobornost* acquires new, darker characteristics, but at the same time it becomes an organic component of an overall world vision and a whole conception of existence. It is complemented by a philosophy of self-sacrifice that also impinges on the political domain. The type of society to which Karsavin aspires, and which he defines in his writings on Eurasianism, supposes on the part of each individual "constant live

[1] « ontologičeski neobxodimaja smert' », *Filosofija istorii*, Berlin, Obelisk, 1923, repr. SPb., Komplekt, 1993, p. 80.

communication with other like persons"[1]. Communication between people involves self-denial, indeed this is even its main feature (as can be seen, in particular, in his *Poem of Death*). As he writes in *The Foundations of Politics*: "At the root of communication between people lies love, once again empirically expressed by the idea of service for the individual and collective benefit of others, which is ontologically equivalent to the mutual gift of self"[2].

Orthodoxy is particularly well suited to expressing the Christian idea of self-denial, because it is unaffected by the *filioque* heresy, and has kept the primitive tradition intact. It encapsulates Russia's past and its future. But Karsavin's reflections on the essence of Orthodoxy were accompanied by very real pain at the risks to the Russian Orthodox Church during the Soviet era. As the threat to the Russian Orthodox Church increased and the prospect of his being able to return to Russia receded even further, his articles became increasingly polemical. This was doubtless coherent with the spirit of Khomiakov's thinking, but at the same time the polemical aspect of both authors' writings went together—surprisingly—with a desire for dialogue.

Khomiakov's son, Dmitri, once wrote to André Gratieux, the author of a dissertation on his father[3]: "Essentially, nothing is more harmful to a desirable union than when both parties are unable to clearly recognize the differences that separate them; and for this reason, I have always considered my father's theological writings to be not so much polemical as 'irenical,' because in their author's mind their—positive—aim was to clarify respective positions, and not to crush his adversaries."[4]

The same can be said of Karsavin, only more so: his religious positions are hard to define clearly. He was considered to be a staunch defender of Orthodoxy and an enemy of Catholicism (in Lithuania, he had only been very reluctantly accepted by the Catholic hierarchy), yet the

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[1] *Osnovy politiki*, *op. cit.*, p. 24 (« postojannogo i živogo vzaimoobščenija s drugimi takimi že ličnostjami »).
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 25 (« V osnove že vzaimoobščenija ležit ljubov', èmpiričeski vyražaemaja ešče ideeju služenija drugim i celomu, ontologičeski tožestvennaja vzaimootdače »).
[3] Gratieux A., *A. S. Khomiakov et le mouvement slavophile*, Paris, Cerf, 1939.
[4] Dmitri Xomiakov's letter (in french) to André Gratieux, in : Gratieux A., *Le Mouvement slavophile à la veille de la révolution*, Paris, Cerf, 1953, p. 60 (« Rien n'est au fond plus nuisible pour une union désirable que quand les deux partis ne se rendent pas nettement compte de ce qui les sépare ; et pour cette raison j'ai toujours regardé les écrits théologiques de mon père comme beaucoup moins polémiques qu'"iréniques", parce qu'ils avaient dans l'esprit de l'auteur le but positif d'éclaircir la situation réciproque, et non celui de pourfendre les adversaires »).

Orthodox authorities regarded him with suspicion (Semyon Frank wrote of him in a letter that he enjoyed "sowing the seeds of heresy").

On this point, perhaps what was most characteristic of him was his correspondence with Father Wetter. When Gustav Wetter first contacted Karsavin, he was a youthful Jesuit priest planning to write a dissertation on the Orthodox conception of the Trinity. They very soon began discussing the subjects closest to their hearts. Their correspondence[1] offers a unique example of a particularly intense inter-faith dialogue on topics of Christian metaphysics. Initially, Karsavin stated that he had always been "at war" with Catholicism (which is rather surprising when one thinks of his early work, his edition of Angela of Foligno's mystical illuminations in *The Revelation of the Blessed Angela*, or his treatise on *Catholicism*). But at the same time he wrote to Father Wetter: "Catholicism differs from Orthodoxy in that it is a rigorously and precisely formulated system that sets out the limits to individual philosophical reflection. But the metaphysics that I myself defend does not, I fear, fit entirely within the framework of traditional Orthodoxy."[2]

This, then, is where Karsavin's profound kinship with Khomiakov lies; for him, true dialogue is not so much compromise as a deepening of the understanding of one's differences as part of an authentic quest for truth.

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[1] Perepiska A. Vettera s L. Karsavinym, *Simvol*, N°31, Paris, 1994, p. 104-169.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 109 (« …katoličestvo otličaetsja ot pravoslavija kak raz tem, čto javljaetsja strogo i točno vyražennoju sistemoju, kotoraja stavit grani umstvennomu filosofstvovaniju. Mnoju že zaščiščaemaja metafizika, bojus', ne vpolne umeščaetsja i v ramkax tradicionnogo pravoslavija").