

**SOVIET  
STUDIES  
ON  
THE  
CHURCH  
AND  
THE  
BELIEVER'S  
RESPONSE  
TO  
ATHEISM**

V O L U M E  
**3**

O F  
**A HISTORY OF  
SOVIET ATHEISM  
IN THEORY AND  
PRACTICE, AND  
THE BELIEVER**

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**DIMITRY V.  
POSPIELOVSKY**

**SOVIET STUDIES ON THE CHURCH AND THE  
BELIEVER'S RESPONSE TO ATHEISM**



*Also by Dimitry V. Pospelovsky*

**A HISTORY OF SOVIET ATHEISM IN THEORY AND  
PRACTICE, AND THE BELIEVER**

**Volume 1: A HISTORY OF MARXIST-LENINIST ATHEISM AND  
SOVIET ANTIRELIGIOUS POLICIES**

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# **Soviet Studies on the Church and the Believer's Response to Atheism**

**Volume 3 of A History of Soviet Atheism in  
Theory and Practice, and the Believer**

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**Let this volume be a modest contribution to the Millennium of Russia's Christianization and to the memory of the countless martyrs for their faith in that millennial century of Russian history.**

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# General Introduction to the Three-Volume Work

Religious belief and the Churches have survived in the Soviet Union in the face of almost seventy years of continuous persecution, unprecedented in history in intensity, although varying in degree and thrust, depending on the external and internal circumstances. According to approximate calculations, given in our book on the history of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Soviets, the toll of Orthodox clergy has been in the region of 40 000 priests, probably as many monks and nuns, and incalculable millions of lay believers. The number of functioning Orthodox churches has been reduced from over 60 000 (this includes parish and monastic churches and institutional chapels) before the revolution to less than 7000 in the late 1970s. Other religions, except perhaps the Baptists, have seen the numbers of their churches and temples reduced by at least the same proportion. And yet in the last decade and a half or so, more and more voices in the Soviet Union have been heard claiming not only religious survival but even revival, primarily of Christianity and Islam. According to all oral evidence, both of Soviet-Russian clergy remaining in the Soviet Union and of recent émigrés, this neophytic phenomenon is almost entirely limited to those under 40 years of age, while their parents mostly remain outside any religion. Hence, whatever the numbers and proportions, the current 'churchification' of the intelligentsia is largely not a carry-over from one generation to the next, nor is it a simple revival of a tradition, because the tradition of the Russian intelligentsia, at least since the 1860s, has been predominantly one of a rather passionate atheism and positivism.<sup>1</sup>

The main purpose of this study is a step-by-step presentation and analysis of the changing styles, strategies and tactics of the

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1. See *Vekhi*, a collection of essays on the Russian intelligentsia by N. A. Berdiaev, S. N. Bulgakov, M. O. Gershenzon, A. S. Izgoev, B. A. Kistiakovsky, P. B. Struve, S. L. Frank (Moscow, 1909; repr.: Frankfurt/M.: Possev, 1967). Also: Jeffrey Brooks, 'Vekhi and the Vekhi Dispute', *Survey*, vol. 19, no. 1 (86) London, Winter 1973.

never-ending Soviet attack on religion and on believers. This will include as detailed and documented an account as possible of the direct persecutions, of which the most massive occurred in the following periods and under the following pretexts:

*February 1918 to late 1920.* A bloody attack on the clergy and active laity was conducted under the pretext of their opposition to communism, their real or alleged sympathy for the Whites, and the resistance of lay believers to the nationalization of all church property in accordance with the Soviet decree of 23 January 1918.

*1921 to 1923.* This wave of arrests of clergy and laity, with executions of some of the most influential and popular church leaders, was officially motivated by their resistance to the confiscation of all church plate of any value, including liturgical vessels.

*1922 to 1926.* Persecution of the traditional Orthodox Church and her faithful clergy and laity for their refusal to join the state-supported Renovationist schism.

*1926 to 1927.* Arrests, exile and imprisonment of masses of bishops, as well as some regular parish clergy faithful to them, for an attempt to elect a patriarch secretly.

*1928 to 1934.* Arrest and liquidation of clergy and lay activists for refusing to accept Metropolitan Sergii's wording of the Declaration of Loyalty to the Soviet State and for breaking administrative connections with him.

*1929 to 1930.* The beginning of mass liquidation of rural parishes and their clergy and lay supporters under the guise of the collectivization and 'dekulakization' campaign.

*1933 to 1934.* Destruction of the remaining monastic communities and the liquidation of monks and nuns, along with many members of the urban and rural clergy, particularly renowned preachers and spiritual fathers.

*1936 to 1939.* Almost total liquidation of religious temples, clergy and active lay believers of all faiths.

*1959 to 1964.* Khrushchev's physical attack on the Church and all other religious faiths, closure and destruction of the majority of the temples reopened during the religiously 'tolerant' era of 1941 to 1957, arrests and deportations of large numbers of clergy and laity – all under the pretext of imminent construction of communism, incompatible with faith in the Supernatural.



These are just highlights of the most massive attacks, which will be accounted for and discussed in greater detail in their proper context.

The other aim of this study is to trace the continuing religious life in the country: how the believers preserve their faith and even multiply their numbers in these conditions; how, if at all, they are affected by this aggressive state atheism and anti-religious propaganda; finally, how and why there is growing movement of adult baptisms and return to the Church after all these years of concerted attack, and this despite the absence of any organized religious education.

Finding sources for this study was a complex and uneven process. There was no problem in locating masses of the officially printed Soviet antireligious propaganda of all categories: from the allegedly scholarly studies of the Soviet 'religiologists' to the primitive attacks on religion in the mass press and, in particular, in the Soviet specialized general circulation antireligious journals, newspapers, brochures and books. The available data on the direct Soviet persecutions of the Church are more difficult to assemble. Only a very small percentage can be obtained from official Soviet publications. Official admissions of persecutions have been made only where they could be blamed on the Church's hostility 'to the young Soviet republic' (the Civil War Years), or on the believers' resistance to the implementation of Soviet laws on the nationalization of church property or confiscation of church valuables (1918 to 1922), or, finally, on Stalin's excesses. But even the gross understatement is the rule. Therefore, most of the material on persecutions comes from testimonies of witnesses, unofficial letters and secret diocesan reports smuggled abroad, the multiple *samizdat* publications of the last two decades (which even include, on occasion, internal secret party documents not meant for print, with open admissions of persecutions) and statements (written and oral) by the émigrés from the Soviet Union of all periods.

Most of the existing Western studies of Soviet atheism limit themselves to the official Soviet sources. Only a small minority of Western scholars, such as Professor Bohdan Bociurkiw, the Rev. Michael Bourdeaux and his co-workers at Keston College, make wide use of *samizdat* in reporting persecutions of religion in the Soviet Union; however, in most cases these relate to the

post-Stalin era. This study uncovers a considerable volume of direct witness and documentation on the persecutions of the 1920s and 1930s, dispersed mostly in masses of Russian émigré publications and archival collections pertaining to the time, and largely forgotten and ignored until now. This author firmly believes that only a combination of the material from the official Soviet literature with the information collected in the above fashion, followed by a systematic study of the persecutions during each separate period of Soviet history in question, will enable the reader to gain a realistic picture of the true horrors and magnitude of the permanent Soviet war against the Church.

As for the life of the Church and the believer under these conditions, their attitudes, and the religious revival of the last decades, here again most of the information comes from *samizdat*<sup>1</sup> from all decades of the Soviet era, as well as from interviews with Russian churchmen and religious intelligentsia, both those who remain in the USSR and recent émigrés. The wartime émigrés and documents of the German occupying forces during the Second World War are also very important sources for the religiosity of the life of the Church from the 1920s to 1940s.

Soviet-Russian fine literature (the *belles-lettres*), particularly of the last decade-and-a-half, has ever more frequently reflected the growing interest in matters spiritual, the Church, and Christian ethics of times past and present. This source has also been tapped for the current study.

The objective Western reader may be bewildered occasionally by the obvious 'disproportion' of credibility rendered by this author on the one hand to the official Soviet data, and on the other, to the unofficial data of *samizdat* and the testimonies of Soviet believers. The 'bias' of this book is to give more credence to the latter and to doubt the former, even to present evidence showing its mendacity whenever possible. There are several reasons for this 'inequity'. First of all, there is the old Russian saying: the one who has not been caught by the hand is

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1. Although the term *samizdat* appeared only in the early 1960s, the Church, the theologians and other church authors have used similar methods for the writing and dissemination of their literature from the early 1920s, after the regime had deprived the Orthodox Church of printing presses, to the present day.

not a thief. The reader will soon see that the official Soviet claims, declarations, the writings of the Soviet 'scientists' of atheism or, as the Soviets call them, 'religiologists', will constantly be 'caught by the hand', mostly by comparing contradictory and mutually exclusive statements and claims made by such authors and institutions in different years, under different circumstances although relating to the same events or periods. Second, the believers, and the dissidents with their *samizdat*, are the parties under attack; they have to weigh carefully every statement they make. They are taking tremendous responsibility for every one of them. One is not likely to make frivolous irresponsible statements when the price for any 'disseminated information' that contradicts the general line of the communist party of the given moment is loss of a job, of the right to receive education, of liberty, and even of life on occasion. Although errors of transmission of information and even errors of judgement may still occur, deliberate misinformation emanating from the religious<sup>1</sup> and *samizdat* circles in general is very unlikely.

The study will be far from exhaustive in its coverage, for the following reasons. First, there is no way to achieve a quantitative analysis or to assess the degree of religious or atheistic penetration in the whole country, categories of believers, etc., our sample of interviewees being too limited in numbers and categories. Second, we have extremely little information on the parallel processes (if there are any on any comparable scale) among the common workers and peasants; further, as our interviewees as well as *samizdat* writings are limited almost exclusively to the intelligentsia, and predominantly to that of Moscow, Leningrad and half a dozen other major cities, we are forced to concentrate our study and analysis predominantly on the Russian Orthodox Church, for this is the Church which most of the neophytic intelligentsia join; and it is her theology, traditions and legacy which are discussed and deliberated in almost all *samizdat* religious and religio-philosophic documents, as well as in the Christian-orientated works of some officially tolerated literary and artistic figures. In addition, although there are plenty of *samizdat* documents of the

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1. This, of course, excludes official public statements by the official spokesmen of the Churches, especially when they are made for the Western media.

unofficial branch of the Baptist Church and of the Pentacostalists coming from the Soviet Union, they are limited to petitions against persecutions, reports on persecutions and imprisonments, collections of prayers and hymnals. Being neither an intellectual nor a theological phenomenon, the sects simply have not provided us with material which could be analyzed, generalized and conceptualized.

Although in the chapters on religious persecutions and antireligious propaganda the study will give brief accounts of attacks on religions other than the Orthodox Church, the concentration is on the Orthodox Church in all parts of the work, whether it is the study of Soviet atheism and its attitudes to the Orthodox Church or of the life of the Church and the believers. The reason is that Orthodoxy is the national and historical Church of the three core peoples of the Soviet Union: the Great Russians (or Muscovites), the Ukrainians (or the Little Russians),<sup>1</sup> and the Belorussians. In contrast to the multireligious scene in North America and to the supranational character of the Roman Church in the traditionally Roman Catholic nations of western Europe, Orthodoxy (using the vernacular and possessing no extra-territorial centralized Church administration) is not only a religion but a way of life, the very cultural matrix of the daily life in the countries where it has become the national Church. Russian literature, art, folk traditions, habits (where they survive), and attitudes have been formed or at least saturated by Orthodoxy from within. Therefore, the atheistic revolt of Marxist Bolshevism had to match Orthodoxy in its totality in order to crush it as the national way of life. Being only institutionally and ideologically antireligious as is Marxism in most other East European states, to allow a broader scope of religious toleration than in the USSR (in all cases except Albania) would not be effective. The attack had to be so total as to shatter the entire national culture in all its aspects. Hence the attempts of contemporary Russian nationalists to reconstruct Russian culture, Russian art, literature, inevitably brings a revival of Orthodoxy, of elements of Orthodox culture. That is why Orthodoxy is so central to any

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1. The terms 'Great' and 'Little' Russians are of Byzantine origin, wherein the core area of a nation was called 'Little' while the zones of its later imperial expansion received the appellation 'Great'.

study of Russian nationalism. In fact this work, along with its predecessor, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), is a rather bulky 'introduction' to a study of Russian nationalism and its relationship to the Orthodox religious revival, which is yet to be written.

This study is historical, hence the philosophy and the philosophical legacy and ideology of Marxist-Leninist atheism are only briefly discussed in a single chapter in the first volume. A philosophically inclined reader interested in a more profound study of the philosophical and ideational roots and concepts of Marxist-Leninist atheism is strongly advised to read James Thrower's *Marxist-Leninists 'Scientific Atheism' and the Study of Religion and Atheism in the USSR*. Dr Thrower's use of inverted commas in the title of his book has the same connotation as this author's preference for the term 'High Brow' Atheism instead of 'Scholarly' or 'Scientific' (see Volume 2 of this study).

# Preface

We must achieve mastery in combating religion.  
(Vladimir Lenin)

What passes for Soviet atheistic scholarship, in contrast to propaganda *per se* which we have already analysed, is beset by insurmountable dilemmas and contradictions.

From its very beginnings even before Karl Marx, communistic socialism calls religion a narcotic, a drug.<sup>1</sup> Marx takes over this concept when he calls religion an opium for the people, in other words again a drug, a fraud.<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Engels treats religion simply as a derivative of material-social forces when he says:

Religious questions today have only a *social* significance. There can be no more talk of religious interests as such. Only theologians can believe that religion is a matter of concern.<sup>3</sup>

But revolutionary Marxism as it is known today is the product of its philosophical redaction by Georgi Plekhanov and its pragmatic redaction by Vladimir Lenin; and both really took over Marx's view of religion as a drug combined with the Engelsian view of it as a product of socio-economic conditions and class struggle, having no independent content or meaning. Plekhanov, in addition, believed that once religion is purged of its 'animastic elements', all that is left will be morality, which predates religion. It was proposed that religion could be eliminated effectively by education, mass circulation of popular books on science including those by Feuerbach, Marx, Engels and the French eighteenth-century philosophes, and the transformation of churches into theatres where religious rituals would be reduced to theatrical presentations.<sup>4</sup> As we know from Volume 1 of this study, Lenin saw a more formidable enemy in religion than Plekhanov, but still it remained for him primarily a drug, a fraud, associated with crime and mental disorder. All these forms of deviant behaviour in their turn were a product of class society. Hence, once a classless socialism was established, religion as well as all crime and need for law would wither away.

If religion has no intrinsic content and value, and is only a fraud, then its interest to scholarship should be marginal. Yet

research institutes, publishing houses, journals and thousands of PhDs and other scholars are engaged in nothing other than a systematic lifetime study of religion and its refutation. But if millions of roubles and man-hours of Soviet scholars are spent on the study of religion, then the subject is worthy of scholarly pursuit, and must be in itself a scholarly discipline, not simply a fraud or opiate. In other words, its study requires an objective, open-ended approach. Yet Soviet scholars are obliged to approach the subject with a predetermined conclusion: whatever they discover about religion and the believers, their conclusion must be negative, it must lead to only one single definition of religion, namely that it is a fraud and a delusion. In these circumstances all Soviet atheistic scholarship becomes nothing but support for the main thesis. This obligatory thesis, the condemnation of religion as fraud and believers as victims of fraud perpetuated by a clergy who are either clever swindlers or fools, has to be made in such a way as to appear as fresh and new as possible. This accounts for the different types of argument, such as tomes of scholarly phrases, with highly selective statistics, field surveys arranged in such a way as to show predictable results. Yet, in comparing these studies for different years and places, one can still see changes in society in relation to religion reflected 'between the lines', as it were. Occasionally rather revealing admissions of Soviet religiologists can be found in some such studies, even if presented in the form of exaggerated statements, made to serve the interest of the official line.

To somehow overcome or at least blur this embarrassment, the emphasis of the Soviet antireligious establishment has been shifting in the course of the last two decades from a negative concept of antireligious struggle to a positive assertive atheism as a wholesome *Weltanschauung* aimed at taking the place of religion, by substitution, performing most of its functions, including rites and rituals.

A textbook, *Foundations of Scientific Atheism*, defines atheism as:

a system of materialistic scientifically based views, rejecting any faith in god (or gods), in supernatural powers and any religion whatsoever . . . Atheism . . . is one of the essential and most important aspects of materialistic philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

Religion in the same book is described as 'a form of social consciousness . . . a perverse, fantastic reflection of reality in the

consciousness of men'.<sup>6</sup> This, of course, is straight out of Engels. All religious philosophy is described as a class philosophy. Hence Plato, for instance, is said to 'represent the interest of the slave-owning aristocracy'. But then it has to be shown that atheism, has always been a major school of thought, wherefore moralists, such as Lao-Tse, and pantheists, such as Spinoza are presented, or rather misrepresented, as atheists. Spinoza's use of the term 'God' to describe nature, we are told, was merely 'a theological pendant to Spinoza's teaching'. The deistic French philosophes are likewise indiscriminately presented as the most important atheistic school prior to Marxism, 'the highest form of atheism'.<sup>7</sup>

With these introductory remarks we propose to the inquisitive reader a survey of the output of Soviet atheistic 'scholarship' divided into chapters according to topics which attract its predominant attention. An even more inquisitive reader is advised to read James Thrower's *Marxist-Leninist 'Scientific Atheism' and the Study of Religion and Atheism in the USSR*, the most thorough book published on the subject; or, the unfortunately unpublished doctoral dissertation by David Aikman, *The Role of Atheism in the Marxist Tradition*, the first thoroughly academic and scholarly study of Marx's links to Satanism, in addition to being a fascinating study of the centrality of atheism to Marxism and socialism as sets of ideas.

The present volume was written partly in Canada and partly in Britain, where the author has had the pleasure of spending his 1986–7 sabbatical leave as a visiting fellow of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, and of Keston College (a centre for the study of religion under communist regimes). To both these institutions the author owes his deep gratitude. The most fundamental last four chapters of the volume would have been incomparably poorer in material and less balanced in analysis had they not profited from the riches of the SSEES library resources and from the unique archival material of Keston College.

I owe particular thanks to the following collaborators of Keston College: Mrs Lorna Forrester, a voluntary (unpaid) typist who gracefully and enthusiastically offered to type the last four chapters; Miss Marite Sapiets for the 'anglicising' and style-editing of my imperfect English writing; and Judy Wilson for making all the arrangements to have the manuscript typed on



time and undertaking the typing herself when a 'last minute' aid was necessary.

My wife Mirjana Pospelovsky and my son Andrew helped with the proofreading, compiling bibliographies and indexes. The translation of the Appendix is also Andrew's work. For the Canadian part of the volume, the Rev. Fr. Steven Kostoff and his wife Deborah did the typing, and Mrs Pamela Hutchins-Orr the style-editing. I owe my deep gratitude to them all.

I have also profited from attending seminars on contemporary and recent Soviet and Russian history at the SSEES and the London School of Economics, from exchanging notes with Professor Geoffrey Hosking of the SSEES and Dr Mervyn Matthews of the University of Surrey, and from the audience responses to the oral presentation of several of the chapters from this volume in the context of the LSE and SSEES seminars and lectures at the London Pushkin Club Forum Centre. My heartfelt thanks are due to them all.

My final thanks are due to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, whose grants have helped me through the sabbatical year abroad (although their expressly sabbatical leave fellowship was denied me) and made it possible to visit library collections in the USA, Britain and France, as well as to undertake an important fact-finding journey to eastern Europe in 1986.

All misjudgements and mistakes are, of course, my own.

DIMITRY V. POSPIELOVSKY

# Instead of an Epilogue

This book is being completed in the latter part of 1987, a transitional period on the eve of 1988 – the year of the implementation of the promised Gorbachev's reforms. In the Church, too, 1988, the year of the millennium of Russian Christianity, is expected to bring some important reforms to be announced at the millennial *Sobor*. Hence, no conclusive epilogue of any kind can be written at the given moment, especially since *glasnost*' is just beginning to be extended to church matters. And that in the face of continuing publication of old-style antireligious propaganda in the mass-circulation atheistic media. With rare exceptions, religious persecutions, even under Stalin, remain unmentionable; while in all other aspects of social policies the whole post-Lenin past (and occasionally even the Lenin era) has often been denounced quite unequivocally.<sup>1</sup> The situation of religious prisoners likewise remains unclear. Despite a promise made in the USA in August 1987 by Kharchev, the CRA chairman, that all religious prisoners would be released for the seventieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution (7 November 1987), this has not happened, as of the end of December 1987.<sup>2</sup> At the same time unofficial reports from the Soviet Union speak about numerous believers continuing to linger on in absolutely inhuman conditions in the so-called 'psycho-prisons', including some Orthodox priests, subject to tortures by neuroleptics.<sup>3</sup> As long as the Soviet Government refuses to admit its use (or abuse) of psychiatry for punitive purposes, it will hardly undertake the release of this category of prisoners, whose numbers may be considerably greater than generally thought, owing to the particular secrecy of these institutions and to the fact that 'patients' are 'buried' there: without definite terms, totally at the mercy of the 'medical' personnel of these 'hospitals'.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Metropolitan Yuvenali, one of the leading officials of the Moscow Patriarchate, stated in an interview in the USA on 25 May 1987 that *glasnost*' has already benefited the daily life of the Church, and has forced Soviet authorities to more strictly observe the existing laws on religion. 'The CRA', he added, 'also plans to undo the

wrong which was done in certain places, and is discussing how this kind of wrong can be overcome and not allowed to happen'.<sup>5</sup> This was followed up some three months later by Kharchev's admissions (also in the USA) that 'there were very many mistakes on the side of the [Soviet] leaders with regard to religion . . . there was a time when we considered there would be no religion in a socialist society.' And on the basis of this presumption, continued Kharchev, the Soviet State engaged in a 'rude . . . administrative struggle with religious organizations'.<sup>6</sup> This, of course, is an euphemistic admission of religious persecutions and also of a recognition at last that the faith did not depend on the 'material base' and that it would not die away in any foreseeable future. This is the first ever open admission of religious persecutions by such a high-ranking Soviet state official.

While the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* officially announced that a new Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church 'that would fully correspond to Church Canons' (implying that the current one imposed by the Soviet State on the Church in 1961 was uncanonical) would be implemented at the Millennial *Sobor* in 1988,<sup>7</sup> unofficially it has been stated that the Government has been rewriting its laws on the Church as well, presumably to correspond with the Church Statutes. According to some reliable inside information, the Church has been striving to win for herself the status of a social organization in Soviet law, with the right to teach religion to willing children and adults and to publish religious literature and periodicals on a broad scale. In fact, this course of development could be deduced from the above Kharchev statement when he stressed that the original Lenin (1918) Decree on the Separation of Church from the State recognized 'the right of the Churches to openly engage in religious propaganda' – a right explicitly denied to religions in all Soviet legislation passed ever since 1929, including the Brezhnev Constitution of 1977. It may likewise be significant that Kharchev chose not to cite the full title of the Decree, namely 'Separation of School from the Church', which explicitly forbids the teaching of religion in all schools, whether state or private, to children as well as to adults. Whereas this statement may have been deliberately addressed at the American public with propaganda aims, and thus not taken seriously, similar statements by Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk on

Moscow Television and by Professor Likhachev in the *Literary Gazette* should be taken more seriously. The very fact of occasional appearance of Russian Church leaders on Soviet television, even if in most cases with rather propagandistic statements, is a completely new phenomenon. In his appearance in July 1987 Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk declared that the practice of registering parents' passports at the time of baptism of their children (or of the baptisants in the cases of adults) was being abolished as illegal, and said that the clergy would organize some forms of religious education classes, 'should this become possible'.<sup>8</sup>

The above-quoted Metropolitan Yuvenali said that the Soviet press has become a great help to the Church, 'carrying stories about local authorities who violate 'believers' rights. While some of the provincial press seems to continue to publish quite violent attacks on religion,<sup>9</sup> such liberal or Gorbachev-reformist publications, however, as the *Literary Gazette*, the illustrated *Ogoniok* (with its weekly circulations of 1.5 million), *Moscow News* and numerous literary monthlies have openly taken up the defence of the right to believe and practise one's faith; explicitly in the former three publications, implicitly in the literary journals, by publishing openly religious poetry of the living as well as deceased contemporary Soviet poets.<sup>10</sup>

*Ogoniok* carried a two-page illustrated report on four Orthodox churches that were being built in the diocese of Krasnodar in northern Caucasus. In all of these cases, under various totally arbitrary pretexts, local party and Soviet organs withdrew the permission to continue the building programme. It was only after the interference of the press that the decisions were reversed, the church building continued, and – this is significant – in each case the local party officials were either removed and new personnel elected, or they received 'severe reprimand'. At least in one of the cases – the major story in the article, about the building of a Nativity and the Mother of God Church – the compromise decision reached eventually by the county CPSU Office, under the pressure of the central press, was that the building could be completed, but without the planned dome. The official reason for the banning of the dome was that the roof would be too weak to carry it. This argument is suspect, however, because earlier in the story it was reported that the main original obstacle was the dome: the argument of the local

Soviet administration being that a beautiful church would be too visible and inviting!<sup>11</sup> According to one inside source, a similar situation had arisen in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, where there are only two functioning Orthodox churches for a population in excess of 1.5 million. With great difficulty the local bishop obtained the permission to enlarge the main church. When the enlargement was completed, doubling the cathedral in size, the city government ordered that it be surrounded by a high wall on all sides, so that it would not be too visible to passers-by. (This practice had a precedent in the Ottoman Empire, where, for instance, the Orthodox population of Sarajevo had to encompass the only tolerated Orthodox church in the city into a brick box so that the Christian church would be neither visible nor audible to Moslems.)

A significant new trait in the above and other similar articles in defence of the believers' and their right to have as many churches as they need to satisfy their religious requirements, is the description of believers as honourable citizens, honest and hard-working, people who had fought heroically in the Second World War and been decorated accordingly.

The *Literary Gazette* and *Moscow News* have been particularly consistent in presenting the believers in the above light and to stress the legal side of their situation, or rather the arbitrariness of the actions against the believers. One story reports the attempt to build an Orthodox church in a village in the distant Chuvash Autonomous Republic. Again, after the building of the foundation, permitted by the local county executive council, the deputy chairman of the council, T. N. Lin'kova, banned further construction under the pretext that it was 1.5m wider on all sides than the wooden cottage which had formerly served as a church and which was anyhow too small. To all believers' protestations she replied: 'Whatever I do, I have the right . . . No one will defend you, believers, because the Church is separated from the State.' But both the local Chuvash newspaper and the *Literary Gazette* came to the believers' rescue. The article was signed by a person writing 'on behalf of the Orthodox Christians and the church council' and entitled 'Believers have been offended.' Significantly, the newspaper comment is an angry remark that although Lin'kova had subsequently lost her job in the local government, she was given a party-administrative position instead of being sacked from responsible jobs altogether.<sup>12</sup>

Another report at last takes the over-protracted grievance of the Orthodox believers of the Ural city of Kirov, where there is only one open church for a population of 400 000 and where the believers have been petitioning for twenty-five years to have a second church (closed under Khrushchev) reopened again. The diocese suffered particularly heavy losses under Khrushchev (as described in volume 2), when of the seventy-five parishes some forty were shut and/or destroyed. The correspondent, Alexander Nezhny, writes that over these twenty-five years more than forty petitions have been addressed both to local government and to Moscow, without avail owing to the particularly militantly antireligious stand of the local government and the local CRA official who did not do his job of supervising 'that [Church–State relations] are in line with the Constitution . . . and seems to watch the harassment with glee'.<sup>13</sup>

But the most significant 1987 publications in defence of the Church have been Nezhny's article on the Zagorsk Trinity – St Sergious Lavra and Likhachev's September interview – both in the *Literary Gazette*. Nezhny's article deserves to be cited in translation at length to give the reader a sense of what is really at stake in the dialogue between the old-school Soviet atheists and the defenders of the Church, and of how much the future of Russia (and of the whole world, inasmuch as the USSR shapes the world destinies) depends on which side will triumph in the Soviet Union:

Here, before my eyes is a shot-hole left by a Polish cannon-ball in the metal door of the Trinity Cathedral in 1608. The sight invites the visitor, as it were, to re-live the Time of Troubles and the 16-months' siege of the Sergius' Monastery. . .

A close look at the reflections of our history and culture imprinted by the Lavra . . . forces you to gradually appreciate that the churches, ramparts and towers . . . are much more than just monuments of architecture. . . . the very centuries-old existence of the Lavra is firstly a witness of the firmness of the foundations of the great creative forces of the national spirit.

These thoughts make it imperative for me to return to the Trinity cathedral, to the relics of Sergius of Radonezh . . .

'In order to understand Russia', wrote [Father] Pavel Florensky, 'it is necessary to understand the Lavra, and to

comprehend the Lavra, it is necessary to deeply study its founder. . .'

And we begin our scrutiny through St. Sergious' vita written by Epifani the Wise, which gives an imprint of the image of the great zealot, a lover of truth and hard worker . . . whose deepest desire was to overcome the hate of the divided world by the force of love . . . But have we got the right to speak about St. Sergius today only in terms of history? . . . Of course, not. Even centuries that have passed have failed to undo the moral example of such power.

There follows an account of the historical figures, often of opposite camps, buried in or associated with the Lavra from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, and of Lavra's direct relationship to all major events of Russian history of these centuries, including the War of 1812:

Let me remark that there are not many places left which, similarly to the Monastery of St. Sergius, are so richly endowed with Russian history, its sorrows and joys, its achievements and falls . . . – all that which is collectively known as Russia's destinies.

Should the Lavra suddenly disappear, we would be deprived of something vitally important inside us . . . And when a fire broke out there last autumn . . . we, all of us, the frequent visitors as well as the rare ones, were terribly concerned. Our worry was not simply over the possible disappearance of some architectural values. More than that it was a worry that an image endlessly dear to us all, even if half-forgotten, would collapse, would be destroyed.

I can sense how certain experts are ready to attack me for a one-sided treatment. Where indeed is the depiction of the monastery as a feudal landholder? Where are the stingy monastery treasures? Where are the luxuries of the Monastery administrators? . . . Well, the matter is not that I am trying to conceal the huge land holdings of the monastery with its 106 000 serfs (of which it was deprived in 1764, by the way). The matter is that we go on emphasizing the negative aspects of life in the monasteries, ignoring the fact that a phenomenon of the magnitude of the Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra . . . cannot be expressed in terms of its material life alone. Because, beside the daily round of life there is also the

Being of the Monastery; there is the moral exploit of Sergius of Radonezh, the helper of the sorrowful of the whole Russian Land. There is the huge patriotic activity of the monastery and there is the famous sermon of Fr. Pavel Florensky, the great scholar and priest, pronounced in the Lavra in March 1906, soon after the collapse of the 1905 Revolution and its replacement by a period of reaction.

There follows a long quotation from the sermon, unequivocally condemning the tsarist government for bloody reprisals. It ends with the following premonitions:

‘O Holy Russia, how do you tolerate the slaughter of your sons! . . . Look out that you don’t find yourself one day in the company of Judas and Cain! Look out, o you Orthodox people, that you don’t become the shame of history!’

. . . With what a bitter passion, with what a lofty pain these words were uttered eighty years ago!

And what about today? There are 123 monks and novices in today’s Lavra. Some are young, others middle-aged, still others, old and very old. People of different walks of life. Archimandrite Kirill [Pavlov], for instance, is a grey-bearded man with brilliant radiant eyes. He has been a monk for thirty-three years . . . although up to then his biography was typical of his generation. A factory worker and student before the war . . . a soldier in the war from the first day to the last . . . Released from the army in 1946 . . . yesterday’s soldier enrolled into the . . . just recently reopened . . . Moscow Seminary, where he found many young men of his kind: in bleached military uniforms with many war decorations.

An unknown facet of our recent past, a phenomenon that has not yet been researched by our literature, opens up to us: some of our countrymen chose a completely different path of re-entry into the peaceful life from the war. Has the war influenced your decision? Fr. Kirill replied, he had had such inclinations before, but the war was unquestionably the direct impetus. . . . It took me some time to get used to the idea that these persons in black garments . . . are first of all my countrymen . . . although they have chosen a different path in life. Of course, their *Weltanschauung* differs from the generally accepted one. But life is so rich, mysterious and broad, that even at the end of the 20th century there is a place in it for a monk.



The Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra is intimately connected with the Moscow theological schools. They are situated within its walls, and every new novice or monk there is a student in either the [undergraduate] seminary or the [graduate] academy. In 1985 the Moscow Theological Academy celebrated its 300th anniversary.

A brief story of the Academy follows, mentioning that it was closed in 1919, restored after the Second World War and reopened in the Lavra again in 1948:

I attended classes, and saw the diligent seminary students in black jackets and black trousers, and the profound-looking academicians, often in monastic robes. I visited the library, the oldest library in Russia, by the way, founded at the time of the founding of the Academy,\* and by the beginning of our century it had over 300 000 books and a thousand invaluable manuscripts of 12th to 19th centuries. In 1919 the Academy was closed, but its library was declared an annex of the Rumiantsev Museum [now known as the Moscow Lenin Library]. It was enriched by the addition of a neighbouring seminary library and the library of the Trinity–St. Sergius Monastery *per se*. nevertheless, the library with the then over 500 000 books and several thousand ancient manuscripts, was liquidated . . . The vast majority of the collections were taken to the former St. Clement Church in Moscow, where they continue to lie without use to the present day. (Some say, in unsuitable conditions resulting in many unredeemable book casualties) . . . Why should such a collection be perishing without use? Would it not have been much better, much more honest, more moral to return the books there whence they have been taken and where they would be in constant demand?

Well, the Hegumen Feofilakt (Moiseev), the librarian, showed me the current Seminary-Academy library, which was started forty years ago from nothing, and today numbers 160 000 volumes. Then I visited the famous Ecclesiastic-Archaeological Collection, created for the primary purpose to teach the seminarians to appreciate the icon. Studying the exhibits, – ancient Greek icons, the Russian ones of the 16th

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\* Incorrect: it was founded in the late fourteenth century and by the late fifteenth century had about 500 MSS, the largest in Muscovy at the time. [D. P.]

century, among which there is the icon of St. Paul which with its fiery power evokes an agonisingly-beautiful sense of a spiritual scald . . . – thoughts passed my mind that all these objects were created in accordance with the laws of beauty, high order and enlightening wisdom, which had given such a long life to the Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra.

This thought returns to one's mind constantly as one wanders from the loftily-lucid silhouette of the Trinity Cathedral, to the airy Church of the Holy Spirit, to the solemnly mighty Dormition Cathedral and the tall 18th century bell-fry, placed with extreme sense of proportions in the middle, bringing the churches of different centuries and styles into harmony with each other.

There follows a loving description of the exhibits of the Zagorsk Art Museum, established by the Soviet State within the walls of the Lavra and made up of Lavra's most precious church artifacts:

But how sad and painful it is to think that a human being had turned the monastic refectory with its church of St. Sergius into a shooting range, had thrown down from the bell fry Russia's biggest bell – almost seven tonnes in weight and which had taken several years to cast – had planned to build a reinforced concrete factory next to the Monastery, had destroyed the graves of K. N. Leont'ev and V. V. Rozanov, at the cemetery adjacent to the Monastery walls . . .

What is it that happens to us from time to time? What sort of blindness covers our eyes? Why is it that a dark passion for destruction wakes up in us, and we begin to vent all the failures, wrongs and privations of our petty lives on some ancient church or other? It is bitterly sad that even today, decades after [the sorrowful above events] there are people who seem to have inherited these trends; who don't think twice before wrecking a 17th century church or who watch indifferently the decaying and falling apart . . . of the marvelous creations of Russian architects.

Appreciation of beauty, penetration into its sources, search for the primary truth of the Russian architecture – this is what the Lavra communicates to us. We like to repeat after Dostoevsky that beauty will save the world. . . . the sense of these prophetic words must be that the salvation will come to

the world when it will find itself at the *final facet* of the precipice. Then perhaps, in the very last moment a vision of beauty will illumine the world and prevent its fall and destruction. And the Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra, one of the most brightly shining incarnations of beauty, doesn't it by its very being sow in all of us a hope in the coming enlightenment of the mankind?

There follows another detailed description of some of the religious artifacts in the Zagorsk Art Museum donated to the Monastery in the period 1600–1800 by famous historical figures, descriptions of their beauty and history. Then the author blasts the Soviet Ministry of Culture for stealing the precious space from the overcrowded museum to store unwanted secular art of Soviet artists. He protests that the Lavra is not a warehouse, and that all its space should be handed over to the Monastery and the Art Museum. Then Nezhny describes the threatening ill-repair in which the Lavra finds itself owing to neglect between the wars when it was in the hands of the Soviet Government and the impossibility for the Church in the past to hire real professionals to do the repair work in the post-war years. The Church was forced to rely on semi-legal labour, writes Nezhny, implying that as an institution deprived of the legal-person status the Church could not sign contracts with state agencies. There is water under the foundations of one cathedral, underground cavity and void under another. The Lavra is in dire need for very complicated and highly professional restoration works. And at last a team of the country's top archaeologists, mineralogists, geologists and architects has offered its services to the Lavra.

The author concludes: It is about time that all those on whom depends the destiny of the Trinity–St. Sergius Monastery, this priceless treasure of our land, remember the following once and for all: the Lavra belongs not to the Church, not to the provincial department of the Ministry of Culture, not even to the Council of Ministers of the USSR – it belongs to Russia, because it embodies within itself Russia' spirit, her history, her culture.<sup>14</sup>

Likhachev, the Chairman of the Soviet Culture Fund, analysed letters which he and the *Literary Gazette* received from the

readers in response to his earlier interview. Many readers wrote that in the past 'the Church fought against the evil, she possessed the necessary experience of moral education, and that to which [Likhachev] has been appealing was contained in the religious ethics'.

Likhachev took advantage of such letters to deliver a whole soliloquy on the positive moral and educational role of the Church in Russia's history and culture, stressing also the Church's resistance to tyranny (citing the martyr, Metropolitan Filipp, versus Ivan the Terrible), as well as the monasteries' work in practical genetics and horticulture, developing, for instance, 300 different varieties of apples, and achieving wonders of gardening in the Artic island-monastery of Solovki. In contrast, he stresses, contemporary Soviet pseudo-scientists have ruined Russia's ecology.

Citing these illustrations, Likhachev moves to attack atheistic propaganda, calling it 'ignorant, . . . not only ignorant of Church history, but of history as a whole . . . ignorant of culture, [particularly] of the culture of democracy'. Then he took up the cause of the contemporary Church, as if expanding on the above-cited Metropolitan Filaret's TV interview:

When speaking on the contemporary Church we must stress, particularly now on the eve of the Millennium of Russia's Baptism, that we stand for the complete separation of Church from the State. Our state must be truly non-religious. It ought not to interfere in the affairs of the Church. . . . This is what the Council for Religious Affairs should guarantee! Alas, in the very recent past the CRA did interfere, and very actively so, in the life of the Church. And why should there be limits imposed on the Church's right to publish books in the quantities needed by the believers, such as: the Bible, church calendars, works of the holy fathers, and other ecclesiastic literature.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to the assertive tone of the pro-Church articles of the above type, many of the antireligious articles in the general press (we are not speaking of the publications of the professional antireligious establishment) in 1987 were almost defensive in tone and style. One *Pravda* article complained that antireligious activists in Uzbekistan (Central Asia) are being harassed by local Communist Party officials for publishing anti-Muslim articles in

the local press. 'An atheist is being persecuted', complains *Pravda*, 'when the number of unregistered mosques and unofficial clergy is growing in the republic.'<sup>16</sup>

Ligachev, the ideological party chief, second only to Gorbachev in the Politbureau, who had attacked Soviet writers in 1986 for praising Christian moral values, has been much more cautious in his antireligious attacks in 1987. In one of his appearances in public he complained only that some have read too much in *perestroika*, preaching ideological pluralism; and he vouched not to allow it, ever.<sup>17</sup>

On another occasion a party ideologist appealed to tolerance, praised the rehabilitation of the formerly banned authors and artists and their publication in the Soviet press, even if they were ideologically alien to communism. But then, implicitly admitting the rise of interest in religion, he appealed to a qualitatively different antireligious propaganda, a propaganda based on thorough study of religion, a propaganda that would be directed against the essence of religious teachings, not against those who have made use of religion in one way or another.<sup>18</sup>

This is a transitional period. It is too early to predict any outcome, and hence no conclusive epilogue, no summing up, can be made at this point and time in history. All that has been attempted here was to point to some contradictory and interesting directions to be watched.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For instance, A. I. Strel'iani, one of the editors of *Novyi mir*, the most prestigious Soviet literary monthly, stated in his address to the Moscow University Komsomol Activists on 15 May 1987: 'For 70 years we have engaged in spreading monstrous falsehoods.' 'Nasha tsel' – sposobstvovat' prosvetitel'stvu i glasnosti', *Russkaia mysl*, 7 August 1987, p. 5.
2. Michael Rowe, 'Significant Claims by CRA Chairman', *Keston News Service*, 10 September 1987, p. 23.
3. One of such prisoners of a psycho-prisons for many years has been Fr. Iosif Rinkevich. See 'On provel v zakliuchenii 29 let', *R. mysl'* 11 September 1987, p. 6.
4. Stepanov, 'Kak "lechat" patsientov v Volgogradskoi spetspsikhbol'nitse', *R. mysl'*, 7 August 1987, p. 7.
5. Tracy Early, 'Metropolitan Juvenaly Comments on "Glasnost" and the Church', *The Orthodox Church*, August 1987, p. 3.
6. Rowe, 'Significant Claims'.

7. A.M., 'Zasedanie iubileinoi komissii', *ZhMP*, no. 3, March 1987, p. 14.
8. 'Vladyka Filaret vystupaet po moskovskomu televideniiu', *R. mysl*, 11 September 1987, p. 6.
9. For instance, militantly atheistic articles in *Sovetskaia Moldavia* in July 1987. One of the articles, by the way, admitted that at least in one district of Moldavia people had heard in 1986 fifteen times as many church sermons as lectures on atheism, and that unofficial Orthodox house churches were flourishing and the Russian Orthodox Church's income was growing. 'Need to Combat Religion in Moldavia', *KNS*, 10 September 1987, p. 6.
10. See, for instance, *Novy mir*, no. 4, April 1987: Sergei Petrov's poems, pp. 3–6; Semen Lipkin's, pp. 45–9; Nikolai Triapkin's, pp. 52–6. The reader might raise his/her eyebrows here in bewilderment: since when can the press in a totalitarian state, monopolistically controlled by one and the same ideological-ruling establishment, be divided into 'dogmatic' and 'liberal'? Well, one of the editors of *Novy mir* (*New World*), in response to a question whether a multi-party system would be possible in the USSR, replied that the CPSU has already become a cover word for two diverse political parties. Whether this would last is another question; and the speaker himself was very sceptical on that account. But as long as such a split within the Party, on the subject of reforms and overall democratization, prevails, the periodicals will likewise be similarly divided. See Streliany, as n. 1 above.
11. 'Esli rassudit' po-liudski', *Ogoniok*, no. 13 (March) 1987, pp. 30–1.
12. S. G. Anan'ev, 'Obideli veruiushchikh', *Litgaz.*, 15 July 1987.
13. Alexandr Nezhny, *Moscow News*, no. 33, 16 August 1987, as reported in *KNS*, 10 September 1987, p. 21.
14. Nezhny, 'Veka istorii i chudo krasoty', *Litgaz.* 2 September 1987, p. 12. His shorter article on the same subject appeared two months earlier in *Moscow News*.
15. 'Ot pokaianii k deistviiu', *Litgaz.*, 9 September 1987, p. 2.
16. V. Artemenko and G. Yakovlev, 'Zvonok iz obkoma', *Pravda*, 6 September 1987.
17. 'Perekhodit' k konkretnym delam', *Pravda*, 27 August 1987.
18. 'Ishchite istinu', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 25 August 1987, p. 2.

# **Part I**

## **The Soviet Antireligious 'Ecclesiology'**

# 1 History and the Church, and the Church in History

## THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE PROBLEM OF THE HISTORICITY OF CHRIST

It is probably legitimate to begin a review of Soviet antireligious scholarship with Lunacharsky. As we have seen before, Lunacharsky's views on the church, religion and the Scriptures underwent many changes. He began as a 'godbuilder' with much sympathy for the moral teachings of the Scriptures and for the person of Jesus, but ended with a categorical rejection of both. This metamorphosis was caused by several factors: Lenin's condemnation of the 'Godbuilding' school of thought in Russian Marxism and Lenin's party discipline precluding intellectual dissent of the members; failure of the Church to die, which required a more total rejection of Christian teachings as hostile to and incompatible with Marxist communism; and as a consequence of and response to the Church's vitality, the growing persecutions, which as important an ideological authority as Lunacharsky was now required to justify.

But in his 1918 lectures on the history of religion to the participants in the first conference-seminar of the instructors of political education in Petersburg, he showed a rather tolerant and sympathetic attitude to the person of Jesus and to Christianity as a school of moral teachings. He did not even insist on the traditional Marxist view of Jesus as a mythical personality.

The early Church, according to Lunacharsky (and classical Marxism) was an expression of the poor, the oppressed, and exploited. The Christ of the Primitive Church, said Lunacharsky, was a God-like man, a son of Mary believed to have been born of God's Spirit, who came to redeem the suffering, through whom alone God could be cognized, and who would soon come again to judge the living and the dead and to found and rule an ideal kingdom *on earth* as its divine king. In the meanwhile the oppressed were to be patient and accept their



sufferings like their Teacher had done, wherefore they would be compensated and redeemed.

It was the coming of the aristocracy, the scholars and the intelligentsia in general in the later centuries into the Church, which corrupted her teachings by adapting them to the social status of the rich, and introducing abstract and sophisticated philosophical concepts into Christian theology. These became incomprehensible to the general uneducated flock, while causing constant confusion and arguments among the learned. This resulted in mutual accusations of heresies, excommunications, religious wars, and eventually burning at the stake, on the one hand; and on the other, repeated sectarian revolts of the lower classes who were trying to turn Christianity back to a few simple truths and turn its ideology against the exploiters. The Marxist polemic, however, used Lunacharsky's views to misrepresent the rest of Christianity's history as an almost constant bloodletting, the perpetrators of which were the lords of the Church and crowned allies. In contrast, when Lunacharsky talks of anti-Church heresis and sects, and their rebellions, there is no mention of any massacres perpetrated by them.

Although Lunacharsky was, and remains, undoubtedly one of the most erudite Soviet 'religiologists', his attitude to the factual detail in religious history was that of a sloppy amateur. For instance, explaining the ideas of Bogomilism, a Balkan heresy of Manichaean origins, he said the Bogomils saw the Devil as a just anti-God, while God, although loving, was weaker than the Devil, and therefore they chose to serve the Devil who would triumph. In fact, however, the Bogomils believed there had been a prolonged struggle between God and the Devil, and that man was created by both: the body was the Devil's, and would therefore return to dust; the soul was God's and would be taken back by God after death. In the end, God would triumph.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, his assessment of the Old Believers as a revolt against the oppression of the weak by the powerful can support the Marxist doctrine of class struggle, but has nothing to do with historical truth. Although Lunacharsky still remains in the humanistic tradition when he says that the real strength of Christianity is not in the dogmas but in the 'Christian ethics, its teachings on love and peace . . . these are the democratic traits of Christianity', his Marxist prejudice keeps him from recognizing the simple piety of peasant pilgrims for what it is. Instead, he labels all believers bigots.

After a very sympathetic scrutiny of all major heresies, including the various Protestant movements, seeing them all as expressions of class struggle (the peasants, the worker-artisans, the petit-bourgeois against the aristocracy and the Papacy – depending on the time and phenomena) and as predecessors of a socialism of sorts, Lunacharsky concludes that whereas they were all progressive in their time, the present socialism needs no Church. ‘Christianity is . . . hostile to modern socialism, because it [Christianity] dictates passiveness and patience.’<sup>2</sup>

Once Lunacharsky subjected himself to Lenin’s order, the Marxist mythological school of Christology, going back to Feuerbach, became a dogma. But the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the scholarship emanating from it, forced the Soviet atheistic establishment to reluctantly lift the ban from the subject of the historicity of Christ. We are suddenly, if belatedly, informed that there are two schools of Soviet atheistic biblists: those who believe in the historicity of Christ, and those who adhere to the belief that the Jesus story is mythological; and that both schools were represented at the 1967 conference on ‘The Contemporary State and Problems of Biblical Criticism’, convoked by the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU).<sup>3</sup>

S. A. Tokarev, a leading Soviet ethnographer and historian, as early as 1956 implicitly criticised Soviet religiology for abstract dogmatic generalisations instead of engaging in genuine scholarly research, and explicitly called on them to engage in thorough studies in comparative religion and the origins of religions, which could not be satisfactorily explained as simple borrowings from concepts and idea preceding them. Both then and in an even more ‘provocative’ article twenty-three years later, Tokarev has held on to the basic Marxist premise that religion is a reflection of social relations and ‘the form of religion is rooted . . . in the material conditions of life of the people who produced it and which have been reflected in it’. Yet he broadened the possibilities for Soviet religiological studies and directed them towards studying individual religions on their own terms (of course, always circumscribed by the Marxist dogmatics). Indeed, in his later article on the subject Tokarev implicitly dares to question the Marxist premise of direct reflection of material relations and levels of achieved culture in religions, when he points out that ‘religions of ancient states

which had reached approximately the same levels of common historical development, and fulfilled the same socio-ideological function, differed from each other radically in terms of their ideational content'. And he contrasts the ideas of Judaism, Buddhism, Greece, Rome, Egypt and Iran, to illustrate the point. Moreover, juxtaposing the basic religious world view (religious apologetics) and the atheistic alternative (rejection of the religious world view), he leaves no alternative to the reader but to conclude that both premises are based on faith.

Having stated that religions must be seen and studied as primarily autonomous entities, having an originator, a founder at their beginning, Tokarev opened the way for Soviet religiologists to accept Jesus as a historical figure and to question the Feuerbachian–Marxian dogma of the 'myth of Christ'. Tokarev himself in his 1979 article prefers to play it safe by modestly admitting: 'we do not even know for sure whether such a person [as Christ] existed'. Still, this is a far cry from the previous dogmatic Marxist-Leninist denial of the historicity of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

The first full-sized book by a certain M. M. Kublanov arguing the possibility of the historical existence of Jesus, but remaining noncommittal in its conclusions, appeared in 1964.<sup>5</sup> The challenge then was picked up by A. Kazhdan, a leading Soviet Byzantinologist who had been publishing serious and impartial studies on the Dead Sea Scrolls since the 1950s. In his 1966 article he confesses that he himself had been a believer in the mythological school. Kublanov's book and his own research convinced him that there are many arguments in favour of Christ's historicity. He cites parallels between the evangelical person of Jesus and the figure of the Teacher in the scrolls of the Essenes, analyses the writings of Roman and Jewish hostile authors about Christians and about Jesus and the unprecedented directness of Jesus' sermons in the Gospels, and comes to a very cautious conclusion that it is more likely than not that Jesus was a historical person. He reveals an interesting detail which reflects on Marxist scholarship: the whole massive tradition of Marxist religiologists' assertion that Christianity was born in Asia Minor, not in Palestine, is based on the mistranslation of a single sentence in the writings of Friedrich Engels. So much for scholarly research and independent investigation in Marxist religiology. The fact that Kazhdan's article is preceded by a

supportive introduction by Academician S. D. Skazkin, one of the most authoritative Soviet establishment scholars, and followed by an enthusiastic epilogue by another author, indicates two things: first, that Kazhdan needed the support and authority of these two persons to get such an unorthodox thesis published, and, second, that Kazhdan had many allies among Soviet scholars who saw some hope for less dogmatism in the official guidelines for Soviet scholars, once the subject became permissible.<sup>6</sup>

It is this recognition of the 'possibility of historical existence' of Christ, probably necessitated by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and their exposition in the Soviet press by such scholars as Kazhdan, that also forced a revision of the Joseph Flavius testimony. Up until the 1960s it was dogmatically asserted that the reference to Jesus and His resurrection in the writings of that Jewish historian of the first century AD had been a fraudulent insertion by a fourth-century Christian apologist, hence the allegedly striking difference in style.<sup>7</sup> It was similarly alleged and repeated from one Soviet atheistic brochure to another that the city of Nazareth had not existed in the first century, or at least in its early part, and thus Jesus could not have come from Nazareth. But the above conference had to agree that the name of this town appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls in relation to the Essenes of Qumran. Joseph Flavius had to be re-read in view of the fact that he had written about St John the Baptist, and his description of him fitted perfectly into the Qumran sect's image. There is apparently no question of stylistic divergence in the account of St John. Why should Flavius then have remained silent on Jesus? Apparently the answer of some Soviet neo-biblists is that being a Jew, Flavius' original description of Jesus was blasphemous in the eyes of the later Christian scribes who rewrote him. Therefore they expurgated the original story, replacing it by one which describes Jesus as the Son of God who rose from the dead after the crucifixion. One of them, I. Svetsitskaia, cites the latest Western biblical scholarship, according to which the citation from Flavius regarding Jesus appearing in the writings of Agapius, a mediaeval Arabic Christian writer, was taken from a Syrian translation of Flavius, not from the Greek one, of which the author apparently was not aware. In contrast to the extant Greek copies of Flavius which, illogically for that Judaic author, described Jesus as Son of God,

the Agapius version merely calls Him a righteous person who had been crucified by Pilate, but his disciples believed in Him as Messiah and claimed that He had risen from the dead. The Agapius version is consistent with Origen's reproaches to Flavius for failing to recognize Jesus as Messiah. The Soviet author, I. Svetsitskaia, is thereby led to conclude that both direct and indirect historical evidence confirms the historicity of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Svetsitskaia's writings also underwent a considerable evolution in the last decade, reflecting either the sincerity and genuineness of her own scholarship, her conversion, or simply a slightly more tolerant intellectual climate in Soviet religiology, permitting such evolution. A very important breakthrough in making parts of the Scriptures accessible to the average Soviet reader was the publication of a Russian translation of the Polish atheistic religiologist Zenon Kosidowski's *Tales of the Evangelists*, and the appearance of many excerpts from it in the mass-circulation *Science and Religion* (*NiR* in its Russian acronym) in 1977. Kosidowski supports the historicity of Christ, and through a biblical analysis concludes that Mark had personally known Jesus, but then accuses Flavius of being a liar who had built up Christ into a divinity (thus he accepts the Greek version of Flavius' writings as genuine). Svetsitskaia defends Flavius as a historian who commanded great prestige among his contemporaries. But then, perhaps in fear of being suspected of believing in the historicity of Christ, she creates a fantastic story that the Gospel account is built on a real episode with Christ's prototype; while the figure of Christ himself is legendary.<sup>9</sup>

Thus in 1977 she still tried to play it safe between the mythological and historical schools of Christology. But in the above 1985 contributions on the 'Beginnings of Christianity' she takes the historicity of Christ and of the city of Nazareth not only for granted, but presents data to prove:

in the first half of the 1st century AD a wandering preacher from Nazareth appealed to repentance and purification in the face of the coming of God's judgement. He appealed to the broadest possible (both from the social and ethnic points of view) spheres of population. . . . The disciples believed he was the Messiah, which must have been the main pretext for his condemnation by the synhedryn and by the Romans, because in the eyes of believing Jews, Messiah was to become the king of Israel.

In this surprisingly accurate account the author also rejects the false visions of the contemporary Marxist 'liberation theologians' and the early Lunacharsky's visions of Christ as a revolutionary. She stresses that Christ's appeal was to the personal perfection of man, not to a radical social revolutionary action; and sees in this one of the secrets of Christianity's meteoric spread throughout the empire.<sup>10</sup>

The recognition of the historicity of Christ and of the New Testament geography (Nazareth) is the most crucial turnabout in Soviet religiology of any time. However, it is ideologically so embarrassing – since it contradicts all Marxist classics including Marx, Engels and Lenin (as well as Feuerbach, Marx's atheistic inspiration) – that this school of thought continues to receive the minimum of publicity in Soviet publications; and the typical antireligious diatribe or lecture of today continues to propagate the mythological dogma rejecting Jesus as a historical person.<sup>11</sup>

## RUSSIAN HISTORY AND THE CHURCH

The general Soviet historiography went through different stages of interpreting the role of the Church in history in general and in Russian history in particular. In the 1920s and early 'thirties the primitive Pokrovsky school of socio-economic determination prevailed. This was replaced by the 1937 Bakhrushin revision approving the cultural contribution of the Conversion of Russia. After 1956 and particularly in the 1980s works began to appear on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' theological debates, some of which are almost totally free of Marxist clichés.<sup>12</sup> But the historiographical works published under the auspices of the League of the Militant Godless (SVB in its Russian acronym), *Znanie*, or expressly for the 'lecture use by the propagandists of scientific atheism',<sup>13</sup> remain within the Marxist stereotypes and clichés set out in Lunacharsky's work: religion, theological schools and their controversies being interpreted as a class struggle phenomena; excesses, cruelties and brutalities in Church history are made to appear as nothing but bloody horrors. Sects are presented as a class struggle antithesis to the Church establishment and thus interpreted as historically progressive, corresponding to the role of the bourgeoisie and workers in secular history.<sup>14</sup>

These clichés mar even the best works on Russian religious history ever produced under the auspices of the Soviet professional atheistic establishment, such as Professor N. M. Nikol'sky's *History of the Russian Church*, I. P. Voronitsyn's *History of Atheism*, or the compendium under N. A. Smirnov's editorship, *Church in the History of Russia*.<sup>15</sup>

Nicol'sky does not always toe the line, for example: he contradicts the mass antireligious propaganda line which has attacked the Orthodox Church as a ruling Church of the tsarist times, oppressing others. Nicol'sky shows how the tsarist state oppressed the Church especially after Peter the Great, and gives an objective factual account of her prolonged resistance to this enslavement by the state throughout the eighteenth century, losing the last vestiges of autonomy by the time of Nicholas I, remaining but a terrorized tool of the state bureaucracy thereafter. Logically this should have taken the burden of responsibility for the tsarist religious policies and suppression of other faiths off the shoulders of the Orthodox Church. But Nicol'sky fails to see any other motives in the Church's attempts at opposition but those of material gain, greed and political power; thus invariably painting all Orthodox upper clergy as money-grubbers and social parasites.

As could be expected, he concentrates on the sectarian movements in Russian Church history. Particularly interesting is his detailed review of all the variants of Old Believers, and the various Russian eschatological sects emanating from the priestless branches of the Old Believers (Khlysty, Molokans, Castrators, Dukhobors, etc.). By reducing each of them to a superstructure over a certain 'base' of material production, needs for accumulation of capital and class struggle, Nicol'sky destroys his credibility as a scholar. On the Old Believers, who broke away from the main-line Orthodox Church, refusing to accept the seventeenth-century reforms of the ritual, seeing them as an insult to the national traditions of spirituality,<sup>16</sup> we read in Nicol'sky that theirs was 'a bourgeois ideology'; whereas, in fact, at the time of the schism there were princes and boyars, as well as masses of peasants, merchants, urban craftsmen, and of course both married and monastic clergy of all kinds in its ranks. By the end of the century they were running out of priests, especially after the death of their last bishops, and therefore began to split into several sects, some accepting clerical deserters from the

official Church, others making do without clergy, drifting towards lay evangelism and eschatologism. All these phenomena Nikol'sky tries to explain in terms of class differentiation. Some sects, according to him, arose out of commercial capitalism, others out of and with the development of production capitalism, still others were a social protest of bonded serfs expressed in terms of a religious utopia. Finally, the late nineteenth-century sects, Nikol'sky claims, were a grievance of the emancipated peasants frustrated with the results of the emancipation, transferring their dissatisfaction onto the official church. In actual fact, the evolution of the majority of streams of Old Believers in the direction of more tolerance towards the official Church, abandoning the theory that the tsars were 'antichrists', building up a regular hierarchical Old Ritualist Church and in many cases joining the official Orthodox Church on the condition of retaining the Old Ritual, or even without such conditions, is more convincingly explainable in terms of the spread of secular education and of the achievement of a higher theological culture by the second- and third-generation merchants and urban petit-bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century. These better-educated merchants were paying more attention to the fact of the common theology shared by both branches of Orthodoxy than to the minor differences in the ritual.

The Old Belief and the various sects deriving from it played a role very similar to Calvinism in the development of Russian commercial and industrial capitalism. But whereas a Tawney or a Weber would have analyzed the phenomenon in terms of the ideas and human relations emanating from the religion, and leading to the birth and development of capitalism, Nikol'sky arbitrarily, without producing any logically convincing evidence, claims the reverse: that the changing socio-economic and class conditions produced religions. In fact, in many cases the factual evidence he presents not only does not confirm his thesis, but glaringly shows its untenability. For instance, while claiming that the Castrators' sect was the product of a nascent capitalist base, he shows that its founder was a peasant, while among its most ardent early converts were two aristocratic courtiers, and even Alexander I was a sympathiser. What have these got to do with capitalists?<sup>17</sup> The Protestant reformation in the West is treated in the same way. 'Luther is a product of his epoch' sums up one author of this Marxist materialist-determinist interpreta-



tion of the history of religious movements and ideas.<sup>18</sup>

Similar ideological dogmatism mars the otherwise very informative and thorough compilation of the history of unorthodox and heretical thoughts and ideas in Russian history by Voronitsyn, improperly labelled *History of Atheism*. It is not improbable that the author used this title in order to have the book published, because it contains a very 'unorthodox' thesis from the point of view of Soviet atheist propaganda, namely, that however many heresies and intellectual rebellions against the ruling Church there may have been in Russia, none of them, not even Russian Voltairians, were real atheists.<sup>19</sup> The first genuine Russian atheists, according to the author, appeared among the Decembrists in the 1820s.<sup>20</sup>

Yet, when discussing the very interesting eighteenth-century iconoclast Dmitri Tveretinov, who accepted only the Bible and adored the Lutherans, Voronitsyn quite arbitrarily concludes that all this 'camouflaged an embryonic materialistic thought'.<sup>21</sup> Why should scriptural evangelism and Lutheranism be veiled forms of materialism? This remains unexplained, just like his arbitrary use of such labels as 'spiritual executioners', 'ignor-amuses', 'bigots', 'obscurantists', when speaking of the Orthodox Christians. Otherwise, this book, along with Nikol'sky's, is far above the writings of most of their contemporaries or of subsequent generations of church historians publishing under the auspices of the atheistic establishment.<sup>22</sup>

Among the more respectable post-Stalin church history studies published by the 'scientific atheism' establishment, is the previously mentioned *Church in the History of Russia*, and the contributions of such Soviet scholars, external to the atheistic establishment but occasionally contributing to their publications, as the late A. Zimin and I. U. Budovnits, N. Kazakova, R. G. Skrynnikov.<sup>23</sup> Among the *atheistic establishment* historians, only A. I. Klibanov and A. P. Kazhdan (who later emigrated to the USA and is currently the chief Byzantinist at the Dumbarton Oaks Institute, Washington, D.C.) rose to the level of genuine scholarship.<sup>24</sup> But even their contributions are never free from the already familiar stereotypes.

N. S. Gordienko, probably one of the chief policy-makers of contemporary Soviet religiologists, in a programmatic statement for Soviet religiology on how to treat the history and 'ideology' of the Russian Orthodox Church, says: 'The Russian Orthodox

Church continues . . . to influence a certain section of Soviet people.' One of the points of influence, according to him, is 'the thesis of [*narodnost*'] of the Russian Orthodox Church, of her organic tie with the nation' through Russia's history. It is the duty of Soviet religiologists to 'unmask' this 'myth', to show the Church as going against the interests of the nation throughout history.<sup>25</sup>

In his own book dedicated to the forthcoming Millenium of Russia's Christianization, Gordienko tries to minimize the importance of the event by arguing, first, that there was a sufficiently developed culture and literacy among the Eastern Slavs prior to their Christianization. He gives no convincing illustrations of the former, while citing only one or two cases of the finding of some inscriptions of the pre-Christian Russian era and having no answer to the question why the pre-Christian writing totally disappeared and left no real documents. Other historians have pointed out that there had been a Russian diocese on the North Caucasian coast since the ninth century and a growing minority of Christians in Kiev itself. These Christians may have acted as court scribes. In other words, literacy still came from the Christian Byzantium and via Christianization. Gordienko prefers to remain silent on this point.

Second, in order to minimize the importance of 988 as the official year of Kiev's conversion, he accepts the theory that there had been an earlier adoption of Christianity at the end of the ninth century by the princes of Kiev, Askol'd and Dir, thus implicitly confirming the above thesis on the origins of literacy in Russia. According to this theory, the city reverted back to paganism under Prince Oleg who had murdered the above princes. This theory, of course, does not help Gordienko to minimize the role of the Church in Russia's culture. It helps him, however, to stress the resistance of the nation to the conversion. He devotes much space to the Christian-Pagan syncretism (*duoeverie*) and stresses that it took the Church several centuries to convert the whole country, as evidence that the imposition of Orthodox Christianity upon the Russian people was unnatural and compulsory. Throughout the book there is an implicit and explicit rehabilitation of paganism as a religion of creativity and happiness, as the source of Russian dances, legends, fairy-tales, ballads, and therefore the alleged source of Russian culture and

the national spirit. In contrast, the Orthodox Church is pictured (factually correct in many instances) as suppressing this national culture, this national creativity, in her struggle against paganism.<sup>26</sup> Gordienko's concern that the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church in its publications and sermons depicts her role in history as fighting 'the darkness of pagan superstitions' and replacing it with the light of Christian culture of love and freedom, may also be caused by the fear that the believers would draw parallels between that paganism and Marxism as neo-paganism.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, had there been a true dialogue between the Christians and Marxists in the Soviet press and had the Church been allowed a widely circulating and readily available media, the Marxist critique of the over-idealistic presentation of the Conversion and of 'Holy Russia' could have stimulated a healthy dialogue resulting in a more objective and balanced Church historiography.<sup>28</sup> In the present situation of the enforced isolation of the Church on the one hand and monopoly of dogmatic Marxism on the other, both sides suffer. Whatever factual accuracy there may have been in such writings as that of Gordienko, their credibility is badly undermined by a conclusion that the importance of Russia's conversion lay 'in the historical significance of the transition of ancient Rus' from a pre-class society to a class society'.<sup>29</sup>

The other important battleground of Marxists and Christians lies in the interpretation of the role of the Church during the Mongol Yoke. When treating the Russian clergy under the Tatars, the antireligious line requires that evidence be presented testifying to the lack of patriotism of the churchmen, their readiness to sell the country to the Mongol khans for privileges granted to the Church. This picture is achieved by a careful selection of evidence: Soviet 'religiologists' write about those bishops whose behaviour could be interpreted in this way, and suppress all information that would lead to the opposite conclusion. This pre-programmed purpose is better illustrated by discussing the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries, when the feuding and disunited Russian principalities lay prostrate, too weak to resist the Tatars, and when the wisest policy was to remain loyal and obedient, as the eventual rise of Moscow, which had pursued these policies most consistently, would prove. It becomes more difficult to defend the same thesis when treating the history of the late fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries; but even here a selective presentation of some facts and suppression of others will minimize the role of the Church in the Russian unification process and in its eventual overthrow of the Tatar Yoke.<sup>30</sup> Approaching the 600th anniversary of the Kulikovo Field Battle, where the Russians under Prince Dimitry Donskoy had for the first time dealt a major defeat to the Tatars in 1380, the antireligious establishment were obliged to minimize the positive role of the Church there. The point is that according to the contemporary written sources, before the battle Dimitry went on a pilgrimage to the nationally revered St Sergius of Radonezh, who eventually gave him the blessing for the battle and even supplied him with two monks, former warriors, Peresvet and Osliaha. Both of them fell in a duel with two Mongol warriors preceding the general battle. Moreover, St Sergius had played an important role in raising the prestige of the Moscow prince and personally appealing to other princes to recognize Moscow's authority. The period is marked by the great stature of St Alexii, the exceptionally enlightened metropolitan-polyglot of Moscow, who had acted as regent in Dimitry's minority and his chief adviser throughout his reign. He was also a close friend of St Sergius and had begged him, to no avail, to accept the metropolitanate of Moscow upon his (Alexii's) death.

Now, Alexandr Shamara, a *NiR* historian, incensed by a growing cult of St Sergius among some modern Soviet writers, and yet unable totally to deny Sergius's role, tried to minimize it by shifting the emphasis. He dwells on the terror of the Mongol-Tatar Yoke and their frequent devastating raids, but passes over in silence the fact that many a Russian prince with his troops participated in some of these raids, directing them against his rivals. In this, Shamara stresses the sufferings of the nation, the revolts of the Russian people, and the appeasing role of the Church as evidence of the latter's sell-out to the Tatars for the privileges they had given to the Church. The Church's attitude to the Yoke as a punishment from God is presented as further evidence that the Church was not with the nation but against it. The role of M. Alexii in strengthening Moscow and in unifying Russia around it is never mentioned. Sergius's efforts in the same direction are mentioned almost parenthetically, Prince Dimitry's cowardly abandonment of Moscow on the appearance of the new Tatar hordes on 1382 is presented as an act of

strategic manoeuvre, but M. Kiprian's (Alexii's heir) departure from Moscow after Dimitry is depicted as cowardly treason. The fact that Sergius had refused the metropolitan's cowl is ignored, in order to subsequently mar Sergius's reputation by insinuating the possibility of his participation in the suspiciously sudden death of Dimitry's candidate to the metropolitanate, which eventually brought Kiprian back to Moscow as its metropolitan. Not a word is said about Kiprian's role in bringing learned monks to Moscow, and activating a large volume of translations, thus effecting the Russo-Byzantine hesychastic Pre-renaissance on Russian soil. The great figure of Sergius is finally reduced to its Marxist 'proportions': 'It was not Sergius who created the [Trinity-St Sergius] Lavra [of Zagorsk], but the Lavra . . . created the cult of Sergius.'<sup>31</sup>

A very thorough and interesting comparative study of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' Russian theological tracts on education, knowledge and the autonomy of the human person, and their historical background – one emanating from a heretical author, another from the Orthodox Church – suddenly concludes with an arbitrary statement not supported by any evidence in the article: 'The demand for social freedom, class struggle, the affirmation of new norms of national life – such were the causes which made the late fifteenth-century theory of the independence [of the human person] typical.' This is followed by citations from Marx and Engels, quite irrelevant to the Russian context.<sup>32</sup>

Kazakova stands out as probably a unique contrast (both within and without the atheistic establishment), when she begins her study on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' Orthodox monastic movement of Non-possessors by stating her disagreement with the dominant Soviet interpretations of the preachers of monastic poverty and dedication to prayer as spokesmen of prince-and-boyars or of the service gentry's socio-economic and power interests. She reverses the priorities by clearly delineating the purely religious, theological and moral origins and motives of this school of thought, admitting only that these simply coincided with the interests 'of all the secular strata of feudal classes'.<sup>33</sup>

One of the fairest studies of the early history of the Orthodox Church in the context of the Byzantine social, political and intellectual traditions, is in Kazhdan's contribution to the *Church*

*in the History of Russia*. But even there iconoclasm is interpreted as an attempt by the emperors to take possession of the property of the Church in the conditions of the temporary impoverishment of the Byzantine Empire in the eighth century. Is not the author speaking from the vantage point of the twentieth century, when ancient icons indeed fetch astronomical prices? Similarly, he claims (without any logical or factual substantiation) that the real reason for the failure to re-unify the Eastern and Western Churches in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries was the opposition of the monastics, 'not wanting to lose their privileges'. But why should they lose their privileges because of appeasement between the Roman Pope and the Patriarchs? True, he says the Orthodox monasteries (especially in Byzantium) had never enjoyed immunities or such great wealth as the Roman Catholic ones.<sup>34</sup> But then he should have explained that such a fear of loss of privileges could apply only to the Roman monastics. Even then this would hardly have been the case, because the issues involved related to the prerogatives of the pope and some other purely theological controversies, not to the internal life of each local Church.

Generally, the closer the historical times are, the more they are misinterpreted and ideologically slanted by Soviet historians. We have already cited a number of illustrations from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But one of the most painful issues for Marxist-Soviet historiography, particularly now with the rise of nationalism in the Soviet Union and the ensuing nationalistic attraction to the national Church, is precisely the relationship of the Church and the nation through history. Soviet historians are obliged to 'prove' that the Church has always been cosmopolitan, uninterested in the fate of the nation as long as she kept her material privileges. We have already seen how this is treated in relation to the Tatar conquest of Russia. Another tricky question is how to deal with the Time of Troubles, when Patriarch Germogen's appeals to the nation to rise against the Polish occupiers of Moscow were not only instrumental in unifying the national forces behind the rebellion of Minin and Pozharsky, but also cost him his life (he was starved to death in prison by his Polish captors). The only thing that Soviet authors can pull out of historical backwaters to blacken even the image of Germogen, who has become particularly popular in today's Christian circles in the USSR as a symbol of

the Church's resistance to tyranny, is to show that prior to the Polish invasion Germogen had sided with the party inviting the son of the Polish king to be crowned as the tsar of Russia on condition of his conversion to Orthodoxy. This invitation of a foreign prince, a practice which was absolutely normal in the history of European monarchies both in the seventeenth century and up to modern times, was caused by the extinction of the native dynasty and the subsequent dynastic crisis. It is presented by Soviet antireligious historians as evidence of treason and lack of patriotism in the Church leadership. Germogen's later martyrdom is falsely interpreted as having been forced upon him by events and by the rise of the nation. At least one of the most 'authoritative' religiologists even uses Patriarch Nikon's correspondence with a Ukrainian Cossack hetman in the mid-seventeenth century as evidence of that church leader's treasonous behaviour.<sup>35</sup> This is in sharp contrast to Second World War propaganda when the Church was used to arouse patriotic enthusiasm for the defence of the country. Then the Church and her historical leaders were presented as patriots and heroes of the struggle for national unity.

Facts and direct lies, fused together in an unrecognizable mixture, become the rule when we come to the most recent events. And one of the tools of the atheistic pseudo-scholars is character assassination. Fr. I. Vostorgov, the famous pre-revolutionary missionary, scholar and an exceptionally charismatic pastor, becomes 'an infamous alcoholic and a lecher' in the writings of Grekulov, a leading Soviet atheistic 'scholar'. The author neither mentions Vostorgov's brutal murder by the CheKa nor his saintly and heroic behaviour at the scene of execution.<sup>36</sup>

A more recent study of the same period presents a much more balanced picture. Its author, N. P. Krasnikov, shows that there were two schools of thought in the Church on the eve of the revolution: that the progressives were gaining the upper hand around 1917 (just as in 1905–7); that in February 1917 the Synod refused to adopt and pass a resolution condemning the revolution, proposed by the Synod's Over-Procurator. Fr. Vostorgov's statement that the Church will be a natural partner of the Provincial Government in aiming towards 'the preservation of peace, order and calm in the social and state life', is cited without any sneers or namecalling. The author's analysis of the

state of the Church leadership in 1917 and of her Pre-Conciliar Commission shows the prevalence of reform-minded elements. His correct conclusion that the emotions and direction of the Church were overturned by the Bolshevik *coup d'état* of 7 November 1917, from liberalism and reformism to conservatism and centralization, is stated in such terms that the reader may (also correctly) conclude that the effect of the Bolshevik victory was reactionary and counter-revolutionary in more than one way. Naturally, all these sober lines are preceded by presenting the Church as primarily a reactionary establishment, only forced into reformism by the force of events, not by any intrinsic motives. However, the author, coming to the issue of the Renovationists, criticizes such Soviet writers on the subject as A. A. Shishkin for reducing the movement to a class expression of the new bourgeoisie and private entrepreneurs of the New Economic Policy (NEP) years, eager to coexist with the Soviet regime in the hope that it was abandoning Marxism and returning to a permanent form of partial capitalism. Krasnikov argues that the moving factor in the Renovationists' policies was the need to adapt to the pro-Soviet orientation of the working masses.<sup>37</sup> Why is it, then, that the Renovationist churches stood empty while the working masses packed the traditional Patriarchal churches?<sup>38</sup> This question remains untouched and unanswered in Soviet writings, for obvious reasons.

Authors writing about the history of the Ukrainian Uniate (Eastern Rite Roman Catholic) Church and its bloody abolition by the Soviets in 1946–9, suppress all information that would reveal to the reader that force and terror were used, and that the majority of the Uniate clergy who refused to merge with the Orthodox Church were prevented from participating in the Lvov Unification *Sobor* of 1946. In their 'pursuit of truth' they do not even bother to make ends meet. Thus in one of such 'scholarly' books we read that there were at least 2500 Uniate priests for 2373 parishes in the Western Ukraine. It is stated that the majority of the clergy supported unification with the Orthodox Church. But a few pages later this 'majority' becomes a total of 997 priests (out of at least 2500). There is no mention of the fact that those delegates of parishes who were against the merger were prevented from attending the unification Council (*Sobor*) in Lvov and were replaced by hand-picked representatives made up of the pro-merger elements. Similarly, Uniate



leaders are labelled collaborators, and foreign agents. In a 1982 publication a connection is made linking the Unia to the separatist and nationalistic 'Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church' suppressed by the Soviets in the early 1930s, and from there to the Stalin-invented mythical 'Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine' (SVU) with its fabricated show trial and subsequent executions and incarceration of innocent leading members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. There is not a word that on the territory of the USSR at any rate the 'organization' never existed to start with.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the credibility gap of the Soviet professional-atheistic historiography becomes just too great to merit the term of 'scholarship'. But even foremost Soviet historians outside the atheistic establishment, when they write for expressly atheistic publications produce works inferior to their own general level of scholarship. This is caused by the following factors. First, such writings are a part of the ideological 'social command' and are the price paid for publication of their more scholarly major works. Second, such a 'social command' includes a predetermination of the conclusion, of the main thesis of the work (much more than in the regular scholarly publications). Whatever the topic, the author must ridicule, negatively label and condemn the state Church, all religious ideas, the clergy (particularly the leaders of the Church) and the historical role of the Church, irrespective of the logic of the facts and events discussed.

## 2 Theology and Religious Teachings in the View of Soviet Atheism

For us morals are subordinate to the class struggle of the proletariat.

(Lenin, at the 3rd Komsomol Congress, 1920)

### SOCIAL AND MORAL THEOLOGY

The social teachings and practices of religion have drawn more attention from Marxist authors than any other aspect of theology. Marxism claims to be the total science of society and cannot tolerate the religious challenge, particularly in such fields as personal and social ethics, man's relation to society and man's responsibility to God as a member of human society.

Even the so-called 'scholarly' Soviet authors on the subject (particularly the early ones, who had still cherished the belief that with their help religion would soon die) have been shockingly primitive, being circumscribed in their methodology by the dogmas of class relations and economic determinism. Even I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, an Old Bolshevik theorist and ideologist, acclaimed as a leading thinker and philosopher, in one of his writings turned Patriarch Tikhon, a son of a humble village psalmist, into a leading landowner and capitalist. These terms could not even have been used metaphorically in relation to the patriarch: Patriarch Tikhon could hope to gain nothing, because the Church was deprived of all property by the Soviets.<sup>1</sup> Simply, the church would have to be branded 'capitalist' in order to fit into a Marxist mold of thought. Another author maintains that the tradition of celibacy, binding for all Roman Catholic clergy and the episcopal clergy of the Orthodox Church, was canonically imposed for economic reasons: so that the wealth of the Church would not wither away in wills and endowments to children.<sup>2</sup>

A similar treatment is accorded by the atheistic 'scholarship' for Islam. *Miuridism*, a monastic-like ascetic-militant movement among the Suni Moslems of Bukhara and the Caucasian Chechens, is stated in an article in the allegedly scholarly *Antireligioznik* to have been an institution cultivated and used by the *sheikhs* (national-religious leaders) 'in order to convert the masses into a mute and unquestionably subservient mob'. This was the epoch in Soviet historiography when the Russian colonial expansion of the previous century was still being condemned. But the article makes the religious leaders of the Chechens of the time of the Russian conquest of the Caucasus almost into allies of the conquerors. Allegedly 'the kulak-mullah elements . . . were suppressing the revolutionary emotions and actions of the Chechen masses by means of religious fetters precluding their evolution to the level of class consciousness' which would have turned the masses against the Chechen leaders, 'diverting them [instead] against *all* Russians'. The *miurid* commandments, which include the obligation 'to tie one's heart to one of the true sheikhs who had humiliated his body most of his life', are interpreted in a context of class exploitation. Then a parallel is manoeuvred into the Soviet era, when the Chechen resistance to collectivization and their religious conservatism are again interpreted as the work of the religious 'kulaks' concerned over their material privileges.<sup>3</sup>

Although Soviet historiography would soon undergo rather drastic changes in methodology and interpretation of the issues of Russian imperialism, as far as social theology, the study and interpretation of the social role of religion in society, is concerned, the Marxist 'class struggle' interpretation has remained. Within it, however, some authors have achieved relative sophistication, while others retain a dogmatic narrowness similar to their pre-war predecessors.

Tokarev, a leading Soviet philosopher in the study of religions, claims that in the context of the Marxist interpretation of religion as '*a form of social consciousness, . . . i.e. a form of "ideological" relations between people*', its main subject-matter is predominantly not man's relation to God' but '*relations between human beings à-propos* [their] notions about God'. All religions, according to him, arose as strictly ethnic class phenomena to regulate class relations and keep the lower classes under the control of the ruling ones. Hence, from the beginning, religions

have been segregationist in character. This, originally ethnical and/or class-segregationist, character has been carried over into the so-called world religions, taking the form of religious exclusiveness – that is, self segregation of members of one religion in relation to members of others. The world religions themselves, according to Tokarev, are a product of the inter-mixing of nations and their religions in the multi-national Roman Empire and the subsequent similar imperial expansions, in which again religions served as means of defence against losing one's identity in these empires. His conclusion, therefore, is that religions should be studied primarily in the context of ethnography.<sup>4</sup>

This approach could lead to two conclusions: one, virtual abandonment of active antireligious attack; two, abolition or at least considerable curtailment of the atheistic religiological establishment. Both would be intolerable to the latter as well as to the militant antireligious tradition of Soviet Marxism. Consequently Tokarev was attacked. Even though his opponents' arguments were further from the basic Marxist class-approach logic than his, they characterized the role, function and essence of religion in society much more accurately than Tokarev did. 'The essence of religion', says one critic, 'is faith in the power of the Supernatural, . . . in one that dominates over each concrete human person in his daily life . . . There is no religion where such a belief is absent. Thus, deism, for instance, is not a religion.'<sup>5</sup>

Another critic begins by citing Feuerbach's claim that religious notions are not a simple 'groundless concoction, but a peculiar reflection of a terrestrial basis', then builds up his argument for the seriousness and importance of religion by citing Tolstoy and Dostoevsky with their literary personages. In the process he draws such a sympathetic picture of Jesus, 'God-man, God-sacrifice, God-sufferer', cites Tolstoy's words that 'the religious question is the most important question for every man . . . because . . . it answers the question what is the sense of life', that the article becomes practically an apologia for Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

Much attention is understandably being paid by the atheists to the criticism of Christian ethics. A typical writer on this topic is N. I. Martynenko. He is particularly unhappy with Christian teachings on the imperfection and sinfulness of man irrespective of the social conditions and stages of the evolution of human

society. He points to their incompatibility with Marxist teachings of the dependence of man's morals on social relations, and therefore, Martynenko alleges, Christian moral teachings are socially harmful. Like many other Marxist ideologists, Martynenko condemns Christ's concept of unlimited love for the enemy, because 'the Christian teaching on love . . . serves the interests of the exploiting classes'; it is incompatible with the class struggle and the (Marxist) class morality. Even more harmful is Christ's appeal not to condemn others and to see the greatest sinner in oneself. Confusing the condemnation of man with that of his acts, Martynenko concludes that Christian ethics are immoral because they do not allow judgement to be passed on unethical deeds. Continuing the theme of morals and love, Martynenko quotes the Gospel at length on Christ's forgiveness of the woman caught in adultery, and concludes that adultery is a by-product of class societies with private enterprise and a commercial attitude to marriage, whereby people marry out of calculations, not love. Under communism, allegedly, there would be no adultery or crime because considerations of material gain would disappear. It is interesting that Martynenko speaks of the family in this context as of solid institution of the future communist society, ignoring Marx's original claims that it would disappear under communism. And finally he condemns Christianity for reminding people constantly of the inevitability of death. This, combined with the appeal to the Christians to treat this life only as a self-preparation for the Life-to-come, allegedly, emotionally and intellectually tears people out of the process of life-building in a socio-political sense.<sup>7</sup> His concern with the Christian death-memory illustrates the vulnerability of the materialist philosophy precisely on this point: its inability to respond to the question of the sense of life, progress and activity if death inevitably prevails, not only in relation to human beings but to all nature and the Universe itself, if it is nothing but matter and if all matter is subject to decay and decomposition. In 1927, Orthodox bishops imprisoned in the Arctic Solovki camps in their letter to the Soviet Government stressed the distinction between the Christian vision of life and of Creation as meaningful and the Marxist concept of accidentality of life and Creation without sense or purpose. Consequently it is the atheists who are terrified of death, a manifestation of which Solzhenitsyn found in the constant attempt of Soviet culture to extirpate the

memory of death, hence the barbaric destruction of cemeteries, and the emphatic and artificial optimism of official culture and art.<sup>8</sup>

## CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM

In the 1960s it began to dawn upon the propagandists of atheism that fifty years after the coming of the Bolsheviki to power the phenomenon of religion cannot be explained anymore as only a survival of the pre-Soviet past. This has led some authors to blame everything on the subversive activities of the capitalistic West and of Russian émigré centres.<sup>9</sup> Others, on a more scholarly note, undertook the study of the teachings of the Church under the Soviet regime. The motto of the latter approach is: 'The Church has survived as a school of thought and is capable of attracting the young generations, because she has succeeded in cunningly adapting her teachings to socialism.' Hence studies of Orthodox theology in the atheist press concentrate on the subject of evolution and change and on socialistic elements in the Church's teachings.<sup>10</sup>

Soviet authors trace the roots of this current of thought in Orthodox theology to the major Russian religious thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Dostoevsky, Vladimir Solov'ev, V. Ekzempliarsky of the Kiev Theological Academy, P. Florensky, Berdiaev, S. Bulgakov, and others. Bulgakov's work in particular they see as 'the theoretical source for the religious liberalism of the First Russian Revolution and for the Renovatism of the 1920s, now inclined in the ideological arsenal of the Orthodox Church'.<sup>11</sup> Bulgakov could not remain a Marxist for long, according to Soviet Marxists, because he always placed the logic of Kant above that of Marx and checked the latter's theories against Kant's logic. This methodology led him eventually back into the embraces of the Church and to contraposing Marxism by his own 'Integral Christian *Weltanschauung*' consisting of Christian philosophy, Christian political economy, and Christian socialism. Soviet historiography sees the 'limitations' of his socialism in his rejection of violent class war, and in his claim that Marxist socialism was a prisoner of capitalism because it believed that the mere abolition of material private property would make people

happy and that happiness and freedom depended entirely on material conditions. The authors see in these attitudes to materialism and to the use of force the main limitations of any form of Christian socialism and of its incompatibility with a Marxist social system; and they point to an organic link from these ideas of Bulgakov and Ekzempliersky's urgings that the Orthodox Church involve herself more actively in social work, to the attempts to form Christian-socialist parties with the blessings of Patriarch Tikhon during the 1917–18 Revolution, and finally to the Renovationist Schism itself.<sup>12</sup>

Soviet authors stress the failure of the Christian-socialist parties in revolutionary Russia. What they pass over in silence is that it was the Soviet Government which banned them; while one of the founders of the Moscow-based *Christian-Social Workers' Party*, Fedor Shilkin, a factory worker and formerly one of the leading members of the Zubatov Moscow workers' movement,<sup>13</sup> was tried in 1918 under charges of black-marketing which were as typical as they were fraudulent in most cases in those days. Had these parties been allowed to survive, their message of social justice, social welfare combined with the Christian idea of inter-class social harmony,<sup>14</sup> would probably have become a viable alternative to the violence and terror of Bolshevism once the nation had had its fill of these. The next link in this chain of Christian socialism was the Renovationist Movement, which failed according to Soviet authors because of its 'haste in carrying out church reforms, its alienation from the main mass of believers, etc'. What the 'etc.' conceals is the morals and political self-discrediting of the Renovationist leaders by reason of their active collaboration with the Secret Police (GPU at the time).<sup>15</sup>

Analysing the moral and social theology of the Patriarchal Orthodox Church, Soviet authors correctly note that at first Metropolitan Sergii borrowed only the ideas of complete and *positive* civic loyalty to the Soviet régime from the Renovationists (in place of the earlier neutral loyalty). The late Kurochkin, one of the most perspicacious of Soviet religiologists, stresses the conservative character of the theology of the Sergiite Church well into the 1950s, when the appearance on the scene of young theologians and bishops marks a watershed. The elder clergy and theologians, many of whom had gone through a bitter struggle against the Renovationists, had come out of it with a

resentment against attempts to marry Christianity and Marxism. The younger ones, having had none of that experience and being products of Soviet education, began to stress the proximity of socialist ideas of social justice with those of moral Christianity, very much along the same lines as the Renovationist leaders had done.<sup>16</sup> There are ample quotations in Kurochkin's book from public statements or articles in the official *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (ZhMP, in its Russian acronym) of the following character:

There is no grief but only happiness for the Church in the fact that the secular reigning power is bringing into life many of those ethical principles, which the Church has always and invariably preached (Patriarch Alexii).<sup>17</sup>

Christians should not ignore such great events as the October Revolution . . . and the fact that there are many countries building a new social system.<sup>18</sup>

There are many similar quotations from the late Metropolitan Nikodim, Prof. Zabolotsky, and somewhat more cautious ones, from Prof.-Archpriest V. Borovoy. Kurochkin emphatically asserts that this is not only a tactical manoeuvre on the part of the theologians but a re-establishment of links with the social Christianity of Soloviev, Ekzempliersky and others, temporarily broken by the conservative reaction to the discredited Renovationism; but also an essential content of the contemporary theology of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>19</sup>

Another Soviet religiologist, V. A. Cherniak, takes Kurochkin to task for this apologetic approach to the Russian Orthodox Church. He argues that the contemporary line can at best be a direction (*napravlenie*), not content. The latter will always remain hostile to Marxism.<sup>20</sup> It seems that Cherniak is closer to the truth. First, the pro-communist quotations cited by Kurochkin belong to representatives of the old generation of bishops (Patr. Alexii, Metr. Nikolai Yarushevich, Metr. Pimen, now Patriarch) almost as often as the representatives of the younger generation (Metr. Nikodim, Borovoy, Zabolotsky, Voronov), contrary to his claim that they represent the views of the Soviet educated generation of believers. Second, all the pro-communist quotations are taken from official statements and publications, whereas the only two unpublished (*samizdat*)



treatises on the subject that Kurochkin quotes present quite a different trend of thought:

Having first discussed . . . social Christianity, the theologian then writes: 'Christ-the-Saviour came upon our sinful Earth not with a social programme of reforming the external world, but with the message of God's Kingdom, to build the internal world and to renovate the human soul.'

A 1957 *samizdat* treatise, *Religion and Science*, 'criticizes Western Churches for their extreme modernism and secularism'. On this document Kurochkin writes that its views closely reflect those of the Church leadership.<sup>21</sup> It is known for a fact that under Soviet conditions it is the uncensored *samizdat* which much more accurately reveals the genuine ideas and view of the authors than officially published statements. Moreover, Kurochkin himself remarks, regarding Borovoi's praise of Ekzempliersky as 'the Orthodox theologian of revolution and development', that the latter, defending Christian socialism in Russia, 'always protests against the revolutionary methods of changing the state and social foundations of life and passionately defends . . . the principle of inviolability of private property'.<sup>22</sup>

Most churchmen's public statements and published writings cited by Soviet religiologists as illustrations of what they call 'Communist Christianity' avoid any praise of Marxism *per se* and welcome in the communist doctrines only that which they see as borrowings from Christ's teachings. For example:

The process of building of God's Kingdom has engulfed the whole humanity to some extent. . . . The Christian principles of freedom, equality, fraternity, justice have begun to be realized through different means: by education and legislation, by evolution and revolution, religiously and without religion.<sup>23</sup>

In a more recent study Kurochkin himself distinguishes between the New Left Christianity of the West and the Christian-Socialist trend in Russian Orthodoxy. Whereas the former lumps together Marxism and Christianity, even the most outspoken Russian Orthodox modernists stress 'the incompatibility of the philosophic-conceptual foundations of Communism and Christianity', accepting only 'a rapprochement, and identification of their socio-ethical principles, such as peace, freedom,

equality, fraternity of peoples, respect for the human person. The Orthodox Church accepts some forms of modernization, but, in contrast to the West, does not waver on the question of a personal God'.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, at least one Soviet author concedes that the Orthodox attitude to the Scriptures as wholly God-inspired (*Bogodukhnovennye*) is more successful in preserving the integrity of faith than the Roman Catholic and Protestant attempts to split the Scriptures into the God-inspired and the purely human parts, because, as the Orthodox theologians argue, this differentiated approach opens the way to an eventual purging of God out of the Scriptures altogether.<sup>25</sup>

It may be of interest that Soviet religiologists have noticed a socio-theological contribution of the 1971 *Sobor* which elected Pimen as Patriarch and discussed some theological issues. They claim that one of the peculiarities of the post-Sobor developments has been an attempt

to go beyond Church borders, that is into the World . . . visible in the pan-Christian movement for peace and for the unification of Churches . . . The theologians . . . began to insist more positively that it was necessary to see the Will of God in the historical process, that because of God's participation . . . and his pre-guidance the world and humanity were developing not in a fatalistic way.

Metropolitan Nikodim stressed that although Christian Churches should participate in these social struggles, they should not preoccupy themselves with these to the extent that they 'tear man away from the divine, completely preoccupy his soul, overshadow his religious feelings'.<sup>26</sup>

Reflecting, probably, on a number of petitions to the *Sobor* and other unpublished tracts of Russian Orthodox thinkers criticizing the modernist socially oriented theological trend (epitomized in the figure of the late Metr. Nikodim), another religiologist says:

the evolution of contemporary Orthodoxy is a complex and controversial process concealing in itself a possibility of alienation of the institution of the Church from the believers, of a Church schism in fact.<sup>27</sup>

This warning, perhaps, reflects the hopes of at least a faction in Soviet atheism, and certainly an existing anxiety of many an

Orthodox Christian. The hope for the latter would lie in the above limits set by Nikodim himself and confirmed in the writings of Soviet atheists. Whatever the differences between their individual interpretations of the modernist trends in Orthodoxy, they all come to the conclusion that the Communist ideology is incompatible with any of them, because they all maintain:

- (1) primacy of the Church's social teachings – at best they concede that Marxists have adopted their social concepts from Christianity, but interpreted them secularly;<sup>28</sup>
- (2) the primacy of matters spiritual and of the inner kingdom of God for a Christian, over and above all social and societal values;
- (3) the primacy of the aim of preparing oneself for the World to come, hence a view of this life as subordinate to the above final purpose.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore,

however much the contemporary religious ideologists may try to approximate the positions of Christianity and Communism in the question of sense and value of life, incompatibility of the religious and the communist concepts will remain self-evident,

says one author; and another agrees: 'We must decisively criticize those versions according to which the contemporary modernized religion has allegedly become a religion of progress, a peculiar aid in the struggle for the ideas of socialism and communism.'<sup>30</sup>

In general, Soviet authors perceive a change in the theological trends in the Russian Orthodox Church after the 1971 *Sobor* to more conservatism, greater emphasis on the emotional instead of an intellectual perception of God, more emphasis on the lives of saints, the miracles attributed to them, and on general traditionalism. Gordienko sees three stages in the evolution of Orthodox theology in Russia since the revolution. The period from 1917 to the late 1950s he characterises as a period of 'formation of the contemporary Orthodoxy', marked by the schisms of the 1920s and struggle against them and, as a reaction to the Renovationists, a turn of the Patriarchal Church to particular conservatism in theology and ritual. The 1960s in his

view (the era of Metropolitan Nikodim who died in 1978) was marked by particular reformism 'as if returning the Moscow Patriarchate to the reformism of the Renovationists'. It was during these years that much emphasis was placed on 'the modernisation of . . . the socio-ethical conceptions of Russian Orthodoxy', and some liturgical reforms, including the replacement of Church Slavonic by the spoken Russian in parts of the liturgy. This 'revolutionary' period ended with the 1971 *Sobor*. Although Gordienko does not mention the above petitions criticizing Nikodim's theological modernism as one of the causes of the de-emphasising of 'the modernist tendencies' at the *Sobor* and after it, he allows that the Church hierarchy showed concern lest this reformism undermined the believers' faith in Orthodoxy as a faith of unchangeable eternal truths, and that 'some modernist religious ideologists were losing touch with the main masses of believers whose mentality moves too slowly to appreciate the necessity and canonical permissiveness of their "pastors"'. The reformist statements of the current era are couched in much more traditional terms, with constant references to the Church Fathers and to the pre-revolutionary theologians. In this process, continues Gordienko, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian 'reactionary' theologians are being rehabilitated and presented as great authorities. He sees this as an intolerable restoration and popularisation of authorities actively hostile to socialism. Contemporary theology and sermons re-emphasise mystical experiences and their superiority for the Christian believer over the limited faculties of human reason, incapable of rationally comprehending the mystery of God, and concepts of eternity. He points out that in their justification for the retention of all the rituals of the liturgical cycle, including such as the spitting on the devil during baptism, intellectually quite incomprehensible, the contemporary theologians like to refer to the authority 'of P. Florensky, that well known priest and mystic'. Typically, Gordienko says nothing about why Florensky should be seen as an authority, suppressing the information that he was one of the greatest twentieth-century mathematicians, physicists, and pioneers in electronics.<sup>31</sup>

There were, of course, other reasons for the changes in emphases, the major one being the election of Pimen, a highly conservative and intellectually limited person, as the patriarch,

and the subsequent weakening of the positions of M. Nikodim and other theological modernists. But the change also reflected the general moods in the country. Khrushchev's destalinisation and limited 'liberalisation' of the social and cultural life in the country (despite the religious persecutions) created a mood of hope without the necessity to overthrow the basic socialist system. By the early 1970s these hopes withered away, and with them the new-renovationist ideas among the theologians of the immediate post-Stalin generation (Nikodim, Borovoy, Zabolotsky, etc.) of a Marxist-Christian conversion, if such hopes were cherished sincerely, and had not merely been an externalist manifestation of loyalty to the regime as a defence mechanism of the Church. These suspicions are kindled, *inter alia*, by the popularity of such tracts as the *samizdat* opus, *Foundations of the Christian Faith in Miracles* by a certain priest Viktor Muratov (produced in the very central Holy Trinity-St Sergius Lavra in 1957), with very traditional treatment of miracles, allegedly shunned by the new theologians of the late 1950s and the 1960s.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, *ZhMP* is full of official pronouncements praising the Soviet social system to the present day, and claiming similarity of the social goals of Christianity and those of Marxism. Is it not more likely that from the 1950s to the 1980s two theologies have coexisted side by side: a genuine theology (which in Orthodoxy is inseparable from worship) of and for the faithful, and a 'horizontal theology' (a term used widely in the Russian Church, coined by the late M. Nikodim) for ecumenical and peace congresses as a survival façade? No doubt there is some validity in Gordienko's periodisation, but it is limited to some changes in emphases and moods only.

Even Soviet authors seem to recognize this when they make the point that, in contrast to the so-called 'communistic Christianity' in the West (of the US Methodist bishop Brown, the British 'Red Dean' Hewlett Johnson, etc.), Orthodox theologians, however close they might come to accepting some socialist ideas, have always distinguished between the world of Christianity and the world of materialistic Marxism. To stress this, Soviet authors repeatedly quote the following statement of the late Patriarch Alexii:

The Christian religion and communism are totally different categories. By the Heavenly inner law the Christian religion divinely builds the internal and external lives of men. The

state has its rules, and by means of an external law keeps up the social life of the nation. Therefore to talk of compatibility or incompatibility of the Christian religion with any form of state organization is to compare and confuse things which are incompatible.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, they like to contrast Lenin's words, 'Equality is an empty phrase . . . if it does not include annihilation of classes',<sup>34</sup> with the preaching of inter-class harmony by social Christianity. In the eyes of Marxist writers, 'the appeals of Christian preachers also performed a certain class function in the exploitative society . . . the appeal is to work for the exploiters in the name of better life in the other world'.<sup>35</sup>

## EXEGETICS

Since August 1973, *NiR* has been publishing articles on major Christian holy days.<sup>36</sup> Although the purpose is to induce the believer to distrust the Church's teachings related to each feast-day, by claiming contradictions in the relevant Scriptures and pointing to alleged historical precedents of such commemorations in the heathen past as evidence of a legendary rather than factual origin of the feast, these articles give the reader much factual information on the given feast and its sources in the Scriptures as well. In fact, much of the material could be useful to believers who, owing to the shortage of Bibles, particularly in the provinces, often assemble their manuals of biblical readings by clipping scriptptural excerpts and quotations from atheistic journals (without the comments) and pasting them together.<sup>37</sup>

The Western 'death of God' theology provoked considerable interest in Soviet religiology, which saw and prsented the subject as another confirmation of the validity of the treatment of the Scriptures as collections of myths and legends and of Christ as a legendary figure. Quite legitimately, Soviet atheists question the validity of a theology which says that a Christian must not necessarily believe what is written in the Gospels. Soviet authors treat such theories as evidence of a deep crisis in Christianity, reflecting a conflict between the loss of genuine faith, owing to the incompatibility of the Scriptures with science, and the necessity to salvage Chrsitianity at any cost in order to 'rescue capitalism'. Similarly, in a pseudo-scholarly article on Baptist

theology on the meaning of life, the Baptist faith is called 'one of the bourgeois varieties of Christianity'. Contradicting this pejorative description, the author in the same article criticizes other Soviet religiologists who insult Baptists and their genuine beliefs by wrongly accusing them of moral hypocrisy and swindle 'to cover the truly ulterior motives of the religion'. The author then analyses the Baptist teaching on living in the world yet remaining not of this world, and their rejection of monasticism as escapism while at the same time affirming an internal spiritual asceticism and moral steadfastness in the midst of the fallen world. For the starting-point of his analysis, however, the author takes the writings of Ivan Prokhanov, a founder and leader of Russian Evangelists-Pentecostals. Obviously ignorant of the difference between the Pentecostal Evangelism and Baptism, our Soviet author calls him a Baptist preacher.<sup>38</sup> Such is the degree of ignorance of even the officially most authoritative Soviet religiologists. Enjoying their monopolistic position, Soviet authors throw around stereotypical labels calling religion a bourgeois swindle. Genuine quests and doubts of Western and non-Soviet Russian scholars (such as P. B. Braitwait, R. Bultman, K. Jaspers, K. Barth, N. Berdiaev) in Soviet writings become 'manoeuvres' to be closely watched and unmasked.<sup>39</sup> This is hardly an approach conducive to any scholarly dialogue, nor is it capable of convincing anyone. And then they ask rhetorical questions: 'How is it possible that such an ideal [religious, Christian, Baptist] is able to influence our contemporaries?'<sup>40</sup>

## HUMANISM VERSUS CHRISTIANITY

This is another favourite subject of Soviet religiology, the aim being to convince the reader that the teachings of Jesus contradict general notions of humanism, and that Christian teachings are so contradictory on the subject of relations of man to man as to indicate that Jesus had never existed as a single and definitive person. On the one hand, man is taught to abandon his closest relatives for the sake of Christ (St Luke); on the other, he is to love his enemies. Soviet authors find this all-embracing love that does not distinguish between good and evil people or friend and foe, antihuman, because it 'excludes all sense of hate, any form of resistance to force'. Quoting the Russian

eighteenth-century bishop and saint, Dimitry of Rostov, 'Honouring the image of God, you must honour man without regard for his faults; and honouring man you do justice to God's image in him', a Soviet author typically concludes:

Propaganda of all-embracing love in a class society drowns the protest of the exploited against the exploiters, serves the aim of strengthening social oppression, and blocks active struggle of the masses for the revolutionary reconstruction of society.

Hence, Christianity is anti-humanitarian in contrast to Marxism with its teaching of social antagonism and class struggle.<sup>41</sup>

In this logic, preaching limitless love and forgiveness becomes anti-human, while bloody revolutions, civil wars, and terrorism are expressions of love for humanity, fully in accord with Proudhon's 'I love humanity but I spit on man'.



### 3 Religion and Science

Interrelationship between science and religion is probably the most sensitive and most emotionally laden subject in the whole volume of Soviet atheism's spoken and written output. Its aim is to prove that these are incompatible, that only science and the scientific method are true and pursue the truth, and that therefore the essential nature of religious faith is obscurantism and ignorance. Had militant atheism been able to prove these theses this would not only have been a decisive victory for 'scientific' atheism in the eyes of the vast majority of the Soviet public, but would have also considerably raised the prestige and pretences of Marxism itself by virtue of its claims to being a *scientific* social doctrine, and atheistic in addition.

Soviet literature focusing on the attempt to prove the anti-scientific and hence anti-progressive, obscurantist, intellectually reactionary character of religion, is immense in volume and, even on the 'high-brow' level, emotionally highly charged.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, in attacking religious thought it attributes to the latter the same intensity in pursuing the subject of the interrelationship of science and religion, only in reverse:

for religion the question of relationship to the sciences has grown into the question of its life or death; because today in order to rescue religion, its non-contradiction, its incompatibility with science must be 'proved' above all.

The author of the above quote then points out the varying positions of science and religion throughout history. There were times when the all-powerful religion was in overt hostility to empirical sciences and therefore scientists were forced to camouflage their scientific discoveries in theologically acceptable terms, claiming no contradictions between religious doctrines and their findings. 'Now, in the age of scientific-technical progress, religion . . . tries to refute its contraposition to science, representing itself as an ally of scientific progress'.<sup>2</sup>

Almost every Soviet work on the subject points to the burning at the stake of Jordano Bruno and to the scientific discoveries from Copernicus to Charles Darwin as 'proofs' of the antiscientific character of religion, and its retrograde role in history. It is

stressed that both the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox official establishments at first opposed the modern natural sciences, use of human corpses for medical purposes (as blasphemy) and Darwinian theories of evolution.<sup>3</sup>

Ever since the sixteenth century, says one text, the medieval religious picture of the world has been gradually disintegrating in the face of the offensive of the human reason and its product, the natural sciences and empirical scholarship. Religion, after offering rearguard battles, has been constantly forced to adapt itself to new conditions, give *ex-post-facto* explanations, and find new niches for itself in the scientifically changing world view. A relatively accurate depiction of the different reactions and ways of adaptation of the three main branches of Christianity – Roman Catholicism, Luteheranism, and Orthodoxy – can be found in Soviet writings on the subject.

Tracing the evolution of Protestant theology and religious philosophy, Soviet authors emphasize the evolution of its most liberal and theologically heretical forms, namely the writings of D. F. Straus, B. Bauer, A. Harnack, and E. Troeltsch. The combined effort of these authors 'deprived' Jesus of His divinity, the Bible of its miracles, and Christianity of its uniqueness.<sup>4</sup> Then a number of German, English, French and early Soviet authors are cited as convincing advocates of the school denying the historicity of Jesus.<sup>5</sup> The orthodox trends in Protestant theology, that of S. Kjerkegard and A. Ritschl for instance, or Baptist fundamentalism are only mentioned and their arguments not presented.

Soviet religiologists pay more attention to the science-theology dichotomy in the Roman Catholic interpretation, probably owing to its greater proximity to Orthodox theology and hence more likelihood of its influence on the Russian mind. The other reasons may be relatively strong Roman Catholic Church in Lithuania, the growing Uniate underground in Western Ukraine, and the proximity of Poland and the attractiveness of its religious steadfastness to Russian Christians. It is pointed out that like the Orthodox, the Roman Catholic Church in our time maintains that there are no real contradictions between science and religion, but that the languages of the two are different. There is a harmony of faith and reason; the natural sciences are the sphere of empirical reason and experiment, while theology is the sphere of reason guided by faith and God's revelation to

man. But a Soviet religiologist remains unconvinced. He cites Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* of 25 May 1979, which says that 'the Truth of Revelation must be studied also in connection with the scientific acquisitions of the current century'. But the Soviet author's conclusion is that as long as the supreme authority for the theologians remains God's revelation and not pragmatic experiment, they will remain obscurantists engaging in 'verbal demagogy'.<sup>6</sup>

Soviet authors point out that Roman Catholic theology makes wide use of the Thomistic application of Aristotelian rationalism as its instrument in defending theological postulates, and of Aristotelian metaphysics to demonstrate that theology is also a science.<sup>7</sup> This leads many Soviet authors 'to exaggerate the time-serving trends of religion', in the words of a Soviet religiologist V. A. Cherniak, who continues: 'some assert that religions have almost rejected all mysticism, faith in miracles, etc.' in their attempts 'to identify themselves with the most progressive views'.<sup>8</sup>

Cherniak and others among the more sophisticated Soviet authors emphasize that, often in contrast to the above Roman Catholic trends, the Orthodox theologians are less concerned with the apparent contradictions between science and religion by stressing the differences between the languages and spheres of the two. Orthodox theology accepts the existence of insurmountable paradoxes in the mystery of existence and creation. 'Orthodoxy categorically disagrees with the Roman Catholic thesis that the Deity can be proved and to a certain degree cognized by logical means . . . Speculation on God can take place only after His perception by faith'.<sup>9</sup> Its theology of the Godhead is apophatic, that is to say negative, according to which we can only name elements and phenomena which do not pertain to God, while the essence of God is beyond human understanding. At the same time, human reason and scholarship are not ruled out by Orthodox theology which proclaims a theory that 'subjective development of the doctrines . . . give greater precision to their meaning, using the newest achievements of science and the contemporary scientific and philosophic lexicon'. In these endeavours science and religion 'move together toward the Godhead'.<sup>10</sup>

In the words of a contemporary Soviet-Russian theologian

repeatedly cited in Soviet atheistic texts:

Religion does not contradict science and cannot contradict. The Christian faith is based on the Holy Bible; science, on the study of nature. Bible and nature are two books, both written by God so that man can read them. Being works of the same Author, they cannot contradict each other. Whenever such contradictions are found, this happens because man misreads one or the other book, or both of them.<sup>11</sup>

Science, Orthodox theologians say, deals with the external aspects of knowledge, theology and faith with the internal cognizance.

Unable or unwilling to grasp the principles of paradox and the humble acceptance by the Christian (albeit a scientist or a theologian) of the limits of human intellect, Soviet religiologists' conclusions about the faith–science dichotomy, label theology as a swindle aiming at the diversion of the ordinary believers from learning to mystical obscurantism, a cover-up for intellectual bankruptcy, and as time-server for class interests.<sup>12</sup> The latter argument, however, at least when discussing theology in the contemporary Soviet Union, is now more often merely hinted at rather explicitly, for which class can religion serve in an allegedly classless society seventy years after the revolution?

To convince the reader of the inconsistency of Christian theology, or more correctly, philosophy, a sermon by the late Metropolitan Nikolai (Yarushevich) is quoted, where he said that some of the Old Testament forefathers had directly 'conversed with God face to face'. 'In such a case,' concludes our Soviet religiologist, 'God is matter, just like all human beings; and His existence is limited in time and space.'<sup>13</sup> But he ignores that it is only materialistic philosophy which sees humans as belonging to the material world alone. Likewise, he ignores the concept of the transfigured body (of the post-Resurrection Jesus, for instance), not limited by space, time or dimension.

Having depicted Orthodox theology as something very primitive and inconsistent, Soviet authors are unable to explain the phenomena of such twentieth-century theologians who had totally dedicated themselves to God as the priest-martyr Pavel Florensky, the great mathematician, physicist and musicologist, or the great economist and former Marxist Fr. Sergii Bulgakov.

In dismay, Florensky's words are cited that 'it is necessary to overcome the rationalistic reason' in order to accept the notion of Trinity. And he said:

I believe despite the groanings and moanings of the rational reason, I believe precisely because in the very hostility of the rational reason to my faith I perceive a token of something new, something unheard of, something supreme.

'This "new"', comments a Soviet author wryly, 'turned out to be the pre-Copernicus . . . geocentrism.' In his magistical *The Pillar and the Assertion of Truth*, Florensky argued that in the context of the theory of relativity the question of what moves around what loses its essential importance: Hence there is room for both geocentric and heliocentric world views.<sup>14</sup>

Unable to comprehend such dualism (as well as the theory of relativity, which had not been fully legitimized in the Soviet Union until the mid-1960s) the Soviet author simply drops these citations, and switches over to the praises of the allegedly intellectually liberating effect of the Russian revolutionary process and of the Bolshevik revolution. In contrast, genuine scholars will not let the matter of Florensky and his ideas rest at that. Using the saving formula of citing Lenin's words, that intelligent idealism is closer to dialectical materialism than foolish metaphysical materialism', one author says that one such intelligent idealist was 'the unique Russian religious thinker Florensky . . . who pioneered the application of the then novel science of topology to the analysis of the problem of space-time in microcosm'. The 'liberating effect of the Bolshevik revolution' was such that not only was Florensky martyred in a Soviet concentration camp (which no Soviet author mentions), but to the present day his crucial post-revolutionary 'mature scientific investigations remain unpublished'. The author requests their publication, at least in order to assure for the Soviet Union a world-recognized priority in these fields of scientific discoveries.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, perhaps the most discomfoting fact for Soviet atheism is the phenomenon of religious believers and even clergymen among some of the greatest Russian scholars of the Soviet era. The most famous among them were Fr. Florensky and Archbishop Luka Voyno-Yasenetsky, perhaps Soviet Union's greatest surgeon, Professor and founder of the Tashkent

Faculty of Medicine, winner of Stalin's Prize for medicine and a martyr, having paid with eleven years of prison, tortures and horrible exile in the Arctic for his faith. The fame and legends about that 'miraculous healer', as his medical feats have often been interpreted by the common people,<sup>16</sup> are such that Soviet periodicals from time to time return to the subject of his personality and of the interrelationship of science and faith. Unable to deny that as a priest Voino-Yasenetsky was a true believer 'despite' being a scientist, they try to take comfort in repeatedly interviewing his four children, all medical scholars, demonstrating them as atheists. Meanwhile, they use their testimonies to undermine the general notion that the great Russian-Soviet eye surgeon, Professor Filatov, a younger contemporary of Voino-Yasenetsky, was also a practising Christian. One of the Archbishop's sons (Voino-Yasenetsky took monastic vows after the death of his wife), Professor Valentin Voino-Yasenetsky, a former pupil of Filatov, merely stated he never saw Filatov pray (as if he would do so publicly), and claims that Filatov frequented a church because of his love for the choral singing there, not out of any religious convictions.<sup>17</sup> Hardly a convincing argument or evidence of Filatov's alleged atheism.

Nor does this solve the problem of scientists who believe in God, whether within or without the USSR. Occasionally Soviet authors venture into this dangerous field. One tract admits that Albert Einstein said 'that the faith in God as the reasonable creator—arranger helped Kepler, Newton and others'. He, Arthur Compton and many other modern scientists insisted that a faith in God as the supreme reason is more rational than any other explanation of the world, and that 'science degenerates into a fruitless empiricism there where a religious faith is absent'.<sup>18</sup> Soviet authors admit that this faith is an insoluble paradox (from their materialistic point of view, of course) and that this faith of the scientists has nothing to do with a traditional religion. And then they declare that despite all the above statements Einstein was . . . an atheist 'like Spinoza' (but Spinoza was a pantheist – D. P.) and that science achieves progress only when it uses atheistic methodology. In contrast to the above quotation from Einstein, a Soviet text on science and atheism claims that religion and faith have only harmed scientific discoveries. But then, contradicting that assertion, it is admitted that the use of such terms as 'God' and 'faith' did not harm the

work of Newton, Shepley, Max Plank, and others. After all these contradictions a 'solution' if found: before Marx atheism was not scientific. Now 'Marxist atheism has become scientific *per se*'. Therefore, allegedly, now only atheistic postulates and methodology serve progress and truth in science.<sup>19</sup>

Let the charitable reader find logic and consistency in such 'scholarship' if he so wishes.

Gabinsky, in his *Theology and the Miracle*, gives a fairly accurate factual account of the attitudes of modern theology to the interrelationship of science and miracles. Its conclusions and interpretations of these concepts is another matter. Among its targets of attack are the positivists and agnostics, who allegedly give grounds to the theologians to present world science and its achievements as very limited in scope and possibilities 'in the face of God's revelation'.<sup>20</sup>

As an illustration of the use of positivism by theologians, Gabinsky, refers to the German Catholic theologian H. Schaefer, who argues that similarly to theology, science deals not only with the unknown but with the unknowable; therefore, in Schaefer's words, 'the formal differences between natural sciences and theology are greatly exaggerated'. Thus nature and natural sciences are also a form of revelation to man. This, according to Gabinsky, leads Schaefer to 'an agnostic-positivistic concept' that the starting-point for the sciences is 'not the objective reality (nature), but the revelation; because even as in the natural sciences it is not the objects which are given us but only their perceptions, in theology the given is not God, but the Holy Script'. But the use of positivism, says Gabinsky, has to stop here, because otherwise it would lead to the doubting of the very existence of the supernatural and to an indifference to religious postulates.<sup>21</sup>

Gabinsky contrasts this with the existentialism of Orthodox theology as expressed by S. Bulgakov, who stresses the difference of language, criteria, and spheres of applicability between science and religion – therefore their automatic juxtaposition is irrelevant:

scientific propositions correspond to the interest of cognizance, definitions of doctrine . . . are primarily of a religio-practical character, and they only secondarily gain a gnostic meaning. Thus it could be said that the epistemological nature

of the multiplication table is quite different from the Chalcedon dogma

of the two natures of Christ. Yet this does not diminish the truth contained in both of them. 'Religion', says Bulgakov in contrast to the Roman Catholic Schaefer, 'begins not with theology but with an existential experience of God [*bogozhitie*].'<sup>22</sup>

Both Gabinsky and Cherniak argue that although Orthodox theologians reject agnosticism in words, in practice they are agnostics when they criticize those heretics who 'pretend to attain a complete knowledge of the truth by means of our fallen reason', and also when they say that 'the essence of God is incomprehensible', surpassing all reason.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, argues Gabinsky, although Bulgakov's and other Orthodox theologians' concepts are traceable to the gnostic tradition of the Eastern Church Fathers, separating the sphere of the spiritual cognizance and experience from the sphere of empirical scientific learning, in the final analysis the gnostic and agnostic approaches meet. (The use of these terms by Gabinsky is quite arbitrary and inaccurate, because for instance, the Orthodox apophatic theology is agnostic in that it denies the possibility of man to define God, to comprehend Him, but not in the sense of doubting God's existence). Both preach limits of science and stress its periodic errors and its inability to grasp the eternal and the endless. He quotes another contemporary German Protestant theologian, M. Reding's statement that with every new scientific discovery a new inexplicable phenomena is found beyond it, and new questions arise. Gabinsky's response is that in contrast to theology, which *a priori* states that there are limits to man's cognizance of God's creation, 'science insists on the limitlessness of the cognition of the world because of the latter's endlessness both in width and in depth'. But is he not repeating the very postulate which he wants to disprove, only in different words? What is the difference between stating that there are limits to our knowledge of the creation, and saying that the creation has no limits, is endless, and therefore we shall never reach its end, for there is no end? And, naturally, he does not even try to explain 'scientifically' what eternity or endlessness is, or how it can be comprehended by the human mind. Nothing is left to him but to dogmatically assert, referring to the authority of Karl Marx, that all human perceptions are reflections of



reality, only the theological perceptions are a perverted reflection.<sup>24</sup>

Both Cherniak and Gabinsky, as well as most other Soviet authors writing on the subject, analyse contemporary theologians' explanations of the miracle in a modern idiom and in juxtaposition to science. Cherniak cites the already mentioned (Chapter 2) unpublished dissertation *Foundations of the Christian Belief in Miracles*, defended at one of the Soviet Orthodox seminaries (probably circulating in *samizdat*) by Fr. V. Muratov. God, says Fr. Muratov, works through the natural and the supernatural phenomena. The former expresses itself in the laws given by the Creator to nature – for example, the laws of gravitation, and of conservation of energy, among others. The supernatural providence is God's direct impact on the life of the world, which expresses itself in what we call miracles; 'a miracle is the discovery of the Supreme Origin, God, overcoming the forces of the lower origin'.<sup>25</sup> Gabinsky, however, feels much more comfortable attacking the eighteenth-century materialists for their belief in accidents in history which allowed the advanced theologians of the time to interpret 'miracle' 'as the religious pseudonym for accident'. He is much less comfortable with the use of the theory of relativity as a rationale for miracles. He is forced to admit, however, that the Einsteinian physics and Plankian mechanics have restored accidentality into the world of science, 'replacing the strict determinism' of the past; and that this gives 'the impression that the restoration of accidentality . . . leads toward a religious *Weltanschauung*'.

At first, Gabinsky accuses theologians of a 'sophistic substitution of probability by relativity and of authenticity by absoluteness', but then attacks a published and scientifically established Soviet mathematical linguist and information theorist, Yu. Shreider. Incredibly, Shreider asserted that the very existence of our world is a miracle, because 'physically, a world of total chaos without even elementary particles with a noticeable time span is a much higher probability' than the world we have. Thus, Shreider concludes (in a Soviet publication!), 'an atheist must not fear the idea of a miracle anymore'. Quite correctly perhaps, Gabinsky sees the latter remark as a camouflage for Shreider's genuine desire 'to find some points of contact between religion and science via the miracle'.<sup>26</sup>

*Problems of Philosophy*, the official organ of the Academy of

Sciences Institute of Philosophy and of Soviet Philosophic Association which at its establishment pledged to struggle against religion, publishes its share of articles on the science and religion issue on a scholarly level above that of the professional-atheistic establishment. N. S. Muradei, the author of one of such contributions concentrates on the 'Problem of the Rational and the Irrational: Antiquity and the Middle Ages'. According to him the belief in the omnipotence of God reduced nature to a subordinate status, depriving it of independence and thus of sufficient importance to merit any serious scholarly attention. In the Middle Ages the 'problem of the rational and the irrational' became a 'contraposition of faith and knowledge, will and rationality, God's revelation and human reason'.

Although the whole thrust of this article, originally a Soviet contribution to an international conference, is to prove that only the triumph of atheism opened the road to the freedom of scientific enquiry, the Soviet philosopher cites St Thomas Aquinas and Pierre Abelard, both believers and leading religious thinkers, as major promoters of free intellectual enquiry, of the autonomy of reason, which 'being a part of the Spirit of God is capable of appreciating divine truths' and therefore has the right of enquiry even into 'the revelations themselves'. Although the triumph of atheism should have, at least in the Soviet Union, solved the problem of the rational versus irrational by proving the latter to be the domain of obscurantism, if the Soviet philosopher's argument were brought to its logical conclusion, the article admits that the irrational remains a highly topical and still insoluble problem in our own time. In contrast to Einstein and Shreider and even to Muradei's own reference to Abelard and Aquinas, he sees faith not as a source and incentive for scientific enquiry but as a barrier to the latter.<sup>27</sup>

On a more popular level, Soviet religiologists have been apparently under a growing pressure from their readers and audiences to explain the phenomena of telepathy of ESP (Extra Sensory Perception). *Science and Religion* had to devote quite a number of articles to the subject. Generally the existence of the phenomena was recognized affirmatively, but 'there is much that is still unclear in this problem'. One author admits that the failure to satisfactorily explain the phenomena in materialistic terms leads some to believe that they are a form of miracle, drawing such people towards 'faith, religion, mysticism'. And he

cites the case of the famous psychiatrist Karl Jung as having thus 'succumbed' to religion. Soviet writers try to convince their readers that these have nothing to do with miracles, but simply belong to categories of transmission of information over distance by means which remain as yet undiscovered by scientists, similar to the transmission of sounds and images by electronic waves, unknown to the scientists a century ago. To convince the reader that telepathy belongs to the world of matter and does not disprove materialism, one of the authors uses the illustration that a 'thinking brain' weighs more than a brain unburdened by heavy thoughts. Thinking processes attract more blood, cause development of electric processes. His conclusion is: 'Consequently, although thought in itself is not a material phenomenon, it has a material base.'<sup>28</sup> A logically thinking reader will raise his eyebrows here: doesn't the illustration the Soviet author gives demonstrate that the world of the mind has material consequences (much thinking makes the brain heavier, rather than a heavier brain leads to much thinking), rather than a material base? Nevertheless, Marxism insists that matter can only be the base, not the consequence; hence, it must be the base. This argument does not say much for the freedom of investigation and of scientific conclusions provided by Marxist atheism.

Indeed, Marxists feel very much ill at ease with the collapse of 'strict determinism' in modern sciences, as illustrated above. It is in this vein that Gabinsky attacks a religious interpretation of the famous words of the Danish nuclear physicist Nils Bohr (not daring to attack Bohr directly), that only mad theories may eventually prove to be scientifically correct. Gabinsky avoids the subject that a theory that is so much ahead of its time (that is of the needs of material production at the given moment) as to sound mad, is totally incompatible not only with any form of materialistic determinism, but also with the Marxist thesis that scientific discoveries and intellectual progress in general are determined by economic needs and are derivatives of the needs of manual labour. He relegates the appearance of such mad theories only to some hypothetical 'critical situations'.

Thus, unwillingly and only implicitly, Soviet authors are led to admit that modern scientists and modern theologians are not necessarily worlds apart, especially when each uses his own language and is intellectually completely honest. The more sophisticated Cherniak admits that the great twentieth-century

Orthodox scientist and theologian, Florensky, 'especially thoroughly demonstrated the importance of the inner religious experience and presented the most refined defence of religion against scientific criticism'.<sup>29</sup>

Another strong point of 'religious blackmail', according to Cherniak, is the argument that science, when left to itself, knows no moral limiting factors regarding the protection of the human being and human life from its experiments and the possible deadly application of its discoveries. He cites numerous theologians, arguing that only ethics based on a religious *Weltanschauung* possess such moral limitations. Cherniak's only counter-arguments are an attack on the alleged low morality, selfishness and intellectual limitations of many members of the clergy.<sup>30</sup>

Interestingly, Cherniak tends to see the main strength of religion in our present time not in its attempts to adapt to the modern world, but in its mystical theology.

Gabinsky is more simplistic. He attacks religious thinkers for their alleged dogmatism, but then demonstrates his own 'breadth' of mind and 'scholarship' by referring to the authority of Engels after having discussed Einstein and the theory of relativity.<sup>31</sup> But it was the adoption of the Engelsian tradition (his *Dialectics of Nature*) and the application of Marx's materialistic determinism to the natural sciences in the Soviet Union which led to the condemnation of the theory of relativity, of quantum mechanics and of modern genetics as reactionary, bourgeois, clerical-idealistic and racialist-fascist (genetics) theories up until the 1960s, much to the detriment of Soviet scientific progress. Obviously Soviet scientists are limited by the dogmatism of which they accuse others.

## 4 Church and Culture

Culture is: A way of fulfilment of existence. A way of assimilation to the world. A distinctive mechanism singling out a given community of people from the outside world. Incarnation of positive results of human activity.

(Definitions of culture proposed at the 1981 Azov philosophical seminar on 'Culture and Religion')

'Scientific atheism' which claims to possess scientifically explicit explanations and definitions for every concept and phenomenon, especially for such a fundamental one as culture and culture's relation to religion, has proved incapable of evolving a unified conception of culture after seventy years of Marxism's intellectual near-monopoly in the Soviet Union. The above seminar has demonstrated that the simplistic original Marxist description of all cultural phenomena as a superstructure on the materialist base, satisfies no one today, and is unable to explain the tenacity of the pre-Marxist and non-Marxist culture, especially the religious-Christian-based culture in the Soviet Union.

However, such reflections and diversification of opinion as illustrated in the above quotations may be tolerated at conferences of specialists, but the regime prefers to rely for its practical atheistic policies on such opportunistic 'yes-men' as 'our old friend' Oleshchuk, who in the pre-war years had called for the destruction of churches, but in the 1960s just as readily praised the late Lunacharsky for his fight against their destruction and for his attempted resignation from the post of Commissar for Education as early as November 1917, in protest against 'the mass destruction of cultural monuments, including ancient churches'.<sup>1</sup>

On the theoretical level, the question of the relationship between culture and religion is an insoluble problem for Marxist atheism. On the one hand, Soviet authors constantly attack the Church for claiming for herself a primary role in the formation of the national culture, at least in the fields of literature, art, music, architecture, and historiography (historical chronicle writing). On the other, they cannot deny the treasures of iconography and ecclesiastical architecture, or that the first

Russian historiographers and philosophers of history were monks. Then there is of course the problem of how to define the term 'culture'. There is the great culture of the arts, in a broad sense of the word. There is the material, applied culture which consistent Marxists regard as primary to and causative of the artistic culture. And then there is the culture of daily life, the behavioural culture of human beings, primarily their habitual morality and life ethics.

The era of consistent Marxism in Soviet philosophy, historiography and religiology was the era of Pokrovsky, roughly in the first thirty years of our century. Characteristically, M. N. Pokrovsky, in his 600-page *Russian History in a Most Condensed Form*, devotes not quite a paragraph to the Christianization of Russia, without even giving the date. According to him:

the higher classes . . . contemptuous of the old Slavonic religious rituals and Slavonic shamans . . ., began to acquire, along with Greek silk cloth and jewels, also Greek rituals and Greek shamans, i.e. priests.<sup>2</sup>

The rehabilitation of the conversion of Russia as a cultural event in the official Soviet historiography came in 1937 when the historian S. Bakhrushin condemned not only Pokrovsky but also the whole historiographic school of economic materialism, including the official Soviet church historians N. M. Nikol'sky, N. A. Rozhkov and others, for failing to see the positive cultural contribution of Christianity to Russia, owing to their 'non-Marxist' primitively materialistic dogmatism. Deservedly he accuses them of a nihilistic attitude to culture and to the role of the Church in history and national life.<sup>3</sup> To satisfy the Marxists, he first enumerates the material benefits that came from the adoption of Christianity from Byzantium. For instance the fasts that came along with the Church necessitated the introduction into and cultivation in Russia of all sorts of vegetables from Greece, including cucumbers, melons, beetroot, beans. Such arts and crafts as masonry, making of bricks, cement, architecture, to name but a few, likewise came from Byzantium; not to mention visual art (iconography) and literature. Turning to these more spiritual aspects of the arts and culture, Bakhrushin emphasizes their high standards by pointing out that one of Russia's greatest late-nineteenth-century artists, Vasnetsov, tried in vain to emulate the Kievan eleventh-century St Sophia

Cathedral frescoes in his frescoes at the modern St Vladimir Cathedral in the same city, failing to even approach the great original. Then he points out that despite the formal split between Western and Eastern Christianity in 1054, Orthodox Russia, on her conversion and thanks to it, was fully accepted as one of the major nations of the family of Christian Europe. Thus, owing to Christianity Russia entered the civilized world and became a part of that civilization.<sup>4</sup>

Henceforward this became the official historiographic line on the conversion of Russia, at least among academic historians. Generally, this interpretation of the Russian culture and of the positive role of the Byzantine cultural influence remains the rule among serious scholars to the present day. Suffice it to name the most distinguished among them, for example, Lev Gumilev, D. Likhachev, Averintsev, Kazakova. In contrast to the antireligious preference for the allegedly happy and optimistic paganism of the pre-Christian Russians, Professor Likhachev writes that paganism was dominated by 'a fear of the might of nature, hostile to man and dominating over him'. In the words of Likhachev, 'Christianity brought a sense of the wisdom of creation, a sense that nature is not hostile to man and is therefore beautiful.'

*A Science & Religion (NiR)*, author categorically disagrees with the view, according to which the Conversion had a cataclysmic effect on the *Weltanschauung* of the Old Russian, and 'a sense of the beauty of nature was conditioned by the replacement of paganism by Christianity'.<sup>5</sup> With the approach of the *Millennium* (the anniversary of a thousand years of Christianity in Russia) the agenda of the atheists even includes partial rehabilitation of a neo-Pokrovskian nihilism, reflected for instance in the reprinting of Nikolsky's *History of the Russian Church* in 100 000 copies, and the publication of Korzun's and Gordienko's similarly nihilistic 'histories' of the Conversion and its consequences.<sup>6</sup> Anything and everything is used that can denigrate the Church or minimize her role in Russia's history and culture. Even culturally nihilistic attacks on iconography reminiscent of the pre-war years, have reappeared from time to time. Especially attacked are private icon-collectors and restorers, under the excuse that they cannot assure as good a protection and restoration as the State, nor would their collections be opened for others to see. This contradicts Soviet printed admissions that

masses of ancient icons had indeed been destroyed after the mass closure of churches in the pre-war years.<sup>7</sup> By whom if not by the State? But Elfimov, one of the leading Soviet religiologists, goes so far as to advocate mass destruction of icons; because respect and preservation of icons cannot be separated from a religious attitude to them, as 'survivals' of the faith. Ironically, this echoes an almost doctrinally Orthodox theological vision of the mystical power of the icon; that which a Russian religious philosopher, Trubetskoy, called 'theology in colour'.<sup>8</sup>

On the more popular level, that line is reflected in the *NiR*'s systematic attacks on Soloukhin, Likhachev, the outstanding Soviet Byzantinologist S. S. Averintsev, and a number of art historians, museum guides and general authors for ascribing a leading role to the Church and the monastic fathers and elders in the development of Russian culture. A three-part article allegedly unmasking the true face of the monastic elderhood (*starchestvo*) in the Orthodox tradition in general and in Russia in particular, was constructed in such a way as to expose Soviet authors as being of the same mind as pre-revolutionary 'bourgeois-clerical' writers. Each article concentrates its attack on one or two Soviet authors, citing their relevant articles or books. But then all the other citations are from pre-revolutionary ecclesiastical authors; thus demonstrating the identity of thought and reasoning between these Soviet 'turn-coats' and their 'tsarist mentors'.<sup>9</sup> Averintsev is taken to task for saying that:

the rich literature of the elders' precepts and self-observations, replaced scientific psychology for the mediaeval man, gave him a sense of profundity hidden underneath the shallowness of man's behaviour, and gave a psychological dimension to art and poetry.<sup>10</sup>

This is bad enough, in the view of *NiR*. And it retorts by reminding Averintsev that the message transmitted by the religious-ascetic literature was that of a religious *Weltanschauung* (bad in itself), which 'helped to corrupt [the perception of] the real phenomena even in the Middle Ages'. But the sin of Soloukhin is much greater, because he dares to speak in the same positive terms about the monastic elders of nineteenth-century Russia. He 'appeals to our contemporaries to learn of the wisdom of the Russian monastic elders', particularly those of



the Optina Hermitage (*Pustyn'*), to which most leading Russian writers had made pilgrimages, and of which many, including Dostoevsky, Gogol', Kireevsky and dozens of others, were spiritual children (disciples). Soloukhin calls the Optina Monastery 'a cup, a mirror, a book, wherefrom Russian writers drank, into which they looked, which they read'.<sup>11</sup>

The 'trouble' is that Soloukhin and Averintsev are not just isolated dissonant voices. The *NiR* authors cite many other Soviet authors, praising the great cultural impact and legacy of monastic authors, elders, iconographers, and pastors. To render such contemporary heretics harmless, *NiR* tries to present the elders as uncouth, rude, crude, using vile language and even physical violence, preaching total passivity, acceptance of fate, self-degrading humility, guilt-feelings leading to mental disorders, and a death-wish. In their excursion into the Russian Middle Ages the *NiR* authors identify the enlightened but cruel Archbishop of Novgorod Gennadii, who kept as his learned advisor a German Dominican monk, and under the latter's influence favoured burning heretics at the stake, along with the monastic elders. In fact, he was the opponent of the Trans-Volga elders, and his followers persecuted them for teaching tolerance and love for the erring brothers. *NiR*, of course, does not mention this, but maintains that the elder's teaching of humility had the purpose of keeping the population down and helping its exploitation by the ruling classes. It cannot deny, however, that there was a close relationship between the most influential Russian nineteenth-century writers and thinkers and the Optina elders. It grudgingly admits that 'it was not without Dostoevsky's influence' that the contemporary Soviet authors have formed such a positive opinion of the monks and of their contribution to Russian culture. The dichotomy between Dostoevsky's positive depiction of the Optina elders based on his direct experience of them, and *NiR*'s negative depiction based merely on Soviet obligatory propaganda clichés, is a dichotomy the authors try to resolve by a sudden unexpected assertion that Dostoevsky's real attitude to the institution of elderhood was that of revulsion. They claim, for instance, that Dostoevsky depicts the Great Inquisitor and the Elder Zosima as two sides of the same coin. The decomposition of Zosima's body in the coffin is interpreted by the authors as another sign of Dostoevsky's protest against the institution of elders.<sup>12</sup>

Trying to negate the positive cultural role of the elders and monasteries in general, the authors conceal the fact of their barbaric destruction by the Soviets, the fact that the Optina monks were imprisoned, exiled and killed as described in the previous volume of this study; and the monastery was reduced to a ruin in the 1920s. In contrast to Soviet barbarism, the monks had built monasteries and painted the icons and frescoes which are now displayed as masterpieces of architecture and art – that is, those of them which had survived Soviet destruction. So, who is the real promoter of culture, and who its destroyer?

The ‘creeping’ positive reassessment of religion as the cradle, guardian and carrier of culture in general and of Russian national culture, and hence of the national cultural identity in particular, has become of such concern to the atheistic establishment that at the end of 1981 a special philosophical seminar on the subject ‘Culture and Religion’ was convened in Azov (south Russia). The *NiR* report on the seminar summed up the main concerns of that seminar as:

- (1) ‘Attraction of Soviet citizens to the cognition of the past, of the history of the spiritual development is rising very rapidly.’
- (2) ‘The contemporary religious ideologists have been intensively propagandizing the thought that true culture is not only unthinkable outside religion, but that the latter is its basis.’

A long citation follows from a 1981 *ZhMP* article by a contemporary Soviet Russian monk, laying out and explicating the thesis that the culture of the Russian state ‘was being formed “upon the single beneficial base” of the religio-ascetic works’ of the Eastern Church Fathers.<sup>13</sup>

The obvious aim of the seminar was to disprove these assertions. And, indeed, a number of speakers are cited – well-known religiolgists from the professional atheistic establishment among them – who dwelt on the classical Marxist thesis that the core of every culture ‘is linked to a materialistic attitude to the world’. According to them, free thinking and theomachism are primary driving forces of culture. ‘Theomachism . . . has from time immemorial reflected tendencies of innovative thought . . . A struggle against gods within a certain ethnic group is . . . a struggle against traditionalism, narrow tribalism,

against the idea that the world was created by gods.' The speakers apparently did not explain how a climate of destruction of traditions can contribute to the development of culture, which, as we know, is a sum total of an unbroken continuity and evolution of traditions and values of a given society. Instead, the seminar speakers approved by *NiR* (G. Gabinsky in this case) spoke about rationalism as another fundamental element of culture, because only rationalism knows no limits to the intellect and its free anxiety. Marxism, according to them, 'is the legitimate heir of rationalism'.<sup>14</sup>

But the report admits that even among the thirty-three speakers at this seminar of Soviet philosophers specialising in atheism and religion, there were considerable disagreements. The disagreements on how to define culture have already been presented at the head of this chapter. But the seminar revealed also:

disagreements . . . on the question of the character of the influence of religion on culture. A majority of the speakers defined this influence as having had a negative effect on the development of culture. But there were heard also positive assessments of religion as a factor conducive to cultural progress.

It is interesting that at least one Philosopher, V. Karpushin, used a Marxist-Hegelian historicist method of analysis to deduce that the influence of religion on culture has been a positive one. Since the position of religion has been steady and long-lasting throughout history and it remains 'prevalent in our days', he argued, therefore 'to say that religion is an impediment is equivalent to saying that culture is an impediment'. In other words, Karpushin identified culture with religion.

Other speakers stressed the universalist character of religions, opening up horizons beyond tribal boundaries and thus introducing people to the concepts of universality of the human community, a universal attitude to the world. Some even warned that the process of secularization 'in the bourgeois society' is destroying the 'integrity of human consciousness, which V. Slepakov identified with religion'. Thereby, Slepakov said, there is a disintegration 'of the cultural integrity of the person'. In his view, 'departure from religion into the sphere of the secular, non-religious world leads to a retreat from culture'. The report

stresses that Slepakov's thesis, according to which religion helps the inheritance of socio-culture, coincides with ideas currently fashionable among 'the bourgeois sociologists of religion'. Yet, these views were also echoed by other speakers. At least one of them was analysing the phenomenon of sainthood in relation to religion and atheism. Although the speaker tried to remain on safe ground by claiming that the atheistic ideals 'offer real means for the formation of a highly moral personality', she (E. Zolotukhina) stated that 'without an idea of God moral control becomes difficult in our society'. And the journal takes her to task for 'somewhat exaggerating the degree of influence of religion on social morals'. But the very fact of discussing sainthood as a model of behaviour, at a conference of allegedly committed atheists, not only contradicts the whole *NiR* campaign against the saints and monastic elders, discussed above, but in fact corroborates the views of a certain Loshchits, attacked in the very opening paragraphs of the above report.

Loshchits calls the early Russian literature – mostly the Lives of Saints, moral-religious orations and similar Church-related writings – 'The One which Searched after Truth'. He praises Saint Michael, prince of Chernigov, and his boyar Theodore for their death in defence of their Orthodox faith at the court of the Tatar Khan, stressing their refusal to venerate pagan idols (this could be a hint at the required praise of the false gods of Marxism–Leninism). Loshchits points out that the translations into modern Russian of old Russian literature, filled with Christian homilies and lives of saints, lately published in the Soviet Union, become best-sellers and immediately disappear into the black-market because of the high demand for them. He even advocates the restoration of Church Slavonic in Soviet schools in order that the mass reader could read that literature in the original. It would instil a sense of pan-Slavonic unity and historical identity, enrich the spoken Russian language, and raise morals in the contemporary generation, argues Loshchits.<sup>15</sup>

Such unqualified praise for a Church-dominated culture is intolerable, in the opinion of the monthly *Science and Religion* (*NiR*). So much more embarrassing it must have been to have these opinions echoed publicly in the seminar; as a result, the report's authors reluctantly 'revealed that the [Soviet] scholars engaged in the problems of atheism and culturology did not always understand each other'.<sup>16</sup>

Judging by the coincidence of some names mentioned in the above report with the names of several writers in a 1982 issue of *Problems of Scientific Atheism* (VopNAt in its Russian acronym), and the similarity of the subjects of their articles, it is probable that at least some of these articles, if not all, are a selection of presentations at the Azov seminar. But only 'traditional' Soviet religiologists (such as Ugrinovich, Gabinsky, Pishchik, Antonova, Shamara, Emeliakh, Klibanov) could publish in the miscellany. Their opponents had to content themselves with being only occasionally critically cited in the articles of the 'orthodox' authors. Nevertheless, the more sophisticated writings in the *Problems of Scientific Atheism* are less aggressively negative to religion and its role in culture, than those regularly appearing in *NiR*, addressed to the masses.

The key article in the issue of *VopNAt* in question belongs to Ugrinovich, who is not mentioned among the speakers at the Azov symposium. He begins almost apologetically by stating that although 'a Marxist theory of culture has in latter years been quite fruitfully developed, . . . Soviet atheistic science has so far made little use of that research'. The need for a Marxist theory of culture is dictated by 'the growth in the latter decades of a mass interest in the history of culture of the peoples of the USSR',<sup>17</sup> and by the fact that:

our ideological enemies quite actively propagate the thesis that religion is the basis and the source of the whole spiritual culture of mankind, that loss of religion means the loss of cultural and moral values, a degradation of the human person.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, the 'non-orthodox' speakers at the Azov seminar, as well as Loshchits, Soloukhin, Averintsev and their like, are being identified with 'our ideological enemies' from the high platform of the religiological organ of the CPSU Central Committee (!).

Giving another Marxist definition of culture, namely that it is 'a dialectical unity of two mutually linked processes: objectification and de-objectification', Ugrinovich refutes the primitive–nihilistic negation of religion as a phenomenon of the cultural sphere. He says:

the exclusion of religion from the cultural sphere is not only theoretically unfounded, but is also harmful to atheistic

education. A metaphysical contraposition of religion to culture is incapable of explaining the interpenetration of religion and art, religion and philosophy in the Age of Feudalism.<sup>19</sup>

'Religion,' Ugrinovich emphasizes, 'belongs in its essence to the sphere of spiritual culture.'<sup>20</sup>

But then he attacks the 'harmful' effects of religion on the history and evolution of culture. Citing what Bakhtin calls 'the culture of laughter of the Western mediaevality' as well as Russian *skomorokh* dances, songs and theatrics, Ugrinovich stresses that their origins were pre-Christian and that the established Church opposed and even persecuted this culture. He even cites a seventeenth-century Russian religio-moral tract, according to which laughter corrupts the body and drives virtue away because it 'does not remember death'. What Ugrinovich ignores is that quite comparable in its negativism was the definition of laughter given by Hobbes, the seventeenth-century British materialist and atheist. Ugrinovich's aim is to convince the reader that Christianity was not the source of culture, but that the Church was a universal institution in the Middle Ages performing many non-religious functions. It is in the performance of these functions that the Church played the role of transmitter of culture, passing the inheritance on from one generation to the next. Therefore he repeats the official Soviet line that Russia's culture began to form prior to the official Conversion in 988 – for example, the ruins of a stone palace built in Kiev no later than the first decades of the tenth century. In the ruins, artistic ceramic and frescoes of high calibre have been discovered. But what does this prove? Ugrinovich conveniently ignores the theory upheld by many contemporary Soviet historians that the Princes Askold and Dir, who ruled Kiev then, were Christians, that there was at least a partial conversion of Kiev to Christianity at that time, followed by a pagan reversal under Oleg and Igor'. If so, then the palace was most likely built by Greek masters brought in with the Greek clergy in this earlier wave. The same could have been true regarding the allegedly existing writing prior to the later official conversion. After all, a Russian Orthodox Diocese was established in north-western Caucasus by St Cyril in the ninth century.

All this information is absent in Ugrinovich's article. But having criticized the extreme nihilism of some Soviet atheistic authors, he now finds himself duty-bound to attack a Soviet art

historian, V. Bychkov, for his assertion that only Christianity, having inscribed on its banners the image of the Godman (capital G in the original) suffering for others, consciously raised a voice for the first time in the history of culture in defence of the weak, oppressed, suffering man. . . Christianity took a close look at man, at every concrete man, no matter how low he stood in terms of the social ladder, through the eyes of god [small g this time], who became man, in order to give man the possibility to become god. It is in the context of this position that man becomes the highest value in the world, and 'humaneness', the highest and inseparable property of man as well as of human culture.<sup>21</sup>

Ugrinovich sets the tone for the whole miscellany. Other authors merely develop particular individual themes in the context of Ugrinovich's 'middle course'. Thus, Antonova discusses the interrelationship of music and religion. In her interpretation the Church mobilized music as a means of mass propaganda (agitation), wherefore religious music evolves as a form of rhythm-word-intonation, in which the music is subordinate to the word and its meaning. Once the reverse begins to prevail in music, namely the aesthetic beauty of harmony and emotionalism, the Church becomes an inhibiting factor in the evolution of music instead of being its promoter earlier. It is thus that in the seventeenth century secular and religious music begin to be separated and the Church ceases to be a positive, constructive factor in the development of music. Interestingly, Antonova accuses the Church of a narrowly pragmatic, applied approach to music, recognizing no art for art's sake.<sup>22</sup> But is there not a parallel here (and a much more cruel one in terms of persecutions of artists) with the Marxist states and their dogma of socialist realism?

The theme of continuity and historicism of culture receives its particular attention in the miscellany. Both the nihilists and apologists of religious culture are repeatedly taken to task, particularly Lev Gumilev, the historian, philosopher of history and ethnographer with his theories of 'passionary forces' raising nations in certain periods to great endeavours, and of energies which are inherited by the generations following such deeds. For example, the passion of the Russians at the Kulikovo Battle of 1380 who had fallen defeating the Tatars, was inherited as

energy by the generations of the fifteenth century; hence the tremendous activity in building up the Russian state in that century. Obviously Marxist materialists feel very uncomfortable with such mystical concepts, where the 'energies' thesis is too disquietingly reminiscent of the Hesychastic teaching on God's energies in man's creativity expounded by St Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

The underlying purpose of the volume of *VopNA* in question is to convince the reader of the progressively declining role and function of religion in human culture as the latter progressed in all its aspects. As long as the socio-political infrastructures of states and societies were weak, fragmented, primitive, and the Church was a universal institution performing very many functions besides those of worship – literacy, education, welfare, art, and so forth – the Church was a promoter of culture precisely through these secular functions which it performed. As human societies and states became better organized, their structures more sophisticated and their secular institutions stronger, the secular culture bypassed the Church which was against change and new ideas, and the Church changed from a promoter to a hindrance in the evolution of culture.

Consequently, the articles dealing with the post-seventeenth-century era try to prove that modern culture and the Church have always been in antagonistic conflict with each other. Authors even try to impress upon the reader that Russian literature was progressively atheistic. But they can find only three writers to illustrate this thesis: the emigré revolutionary socialist Alexander Herzen, who was far from being a first-rate Russian literary figure; Gleb Uspensky, who would have been long forgotten as a writer had it not been for his populist radicalism; and Alexander Blok, the only really great poet among the three. But in regard to him the Soviet author only manages to prove that Blok was in opposition to the Church establishment, not that he was an atheist.<sup>24</sup>

One of the concluding articles, 'The Atheistic Traditions of Soviet Culture', is remarkable not so much by what it says as by what it leaves unsaid. It sets out to disprove the arguments of 'various philosophising theologians' who in post-revolutionary Russia predicted 'that without religious traditions spiritual culture cannot develop, and that the secularisation of culture in Russia will, allegedly, bring about a collapse of Russian cultural



creativity'. The article associates these predictions in particular with a universalist genius Fr. Pavel Florensky (see Chapter 3), the philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev, and the Free Academy of Spiritual Culture which they and their associates established in Moscow in 1919.<sup>25</sup> What is left unsaid is that two years later the Academy was forcibly closed by Lenin because of its popularity; Berdiaev and several hundred other leading Russian non-Marxist scholars were arrested and expelled to western Europe in 1922, and Florensky ended his days in a concentration camp in the USSR. Moreover, trying to prove how wrong these predictions were and how fertile has been the secular atheistic atmosphere for the development of an atheistic spiritual culture, the author mentions Mayakovsky, Shostakovich and a couple of other figures with world fame – all of the older generation, all products of Russian pre-revolutionary culture. But he neglects to mention the great physical annihilation of art, literature, and artists and writers in the 1930–40s (including Mayakovsky's suicide in 1930, for that matter), as well as the fact that some of the greatest writers of the Soviet era – M. Bulgakov, B. Pasternak, A. Solzhenitsyn – have been believers, and that none of their works can fit into the concept of 'atheistic culture'.

So much for the flourishing of atheistic spiritual culture in a Marxist atheistic society. Indeed, how can a national culture develop and flourish in a system which, according to Vladimir Lenin, repeated again and again in Soviet official writings to the present day, denies the existence of such a phenomenon as a national culture, replacing it by the concept of class culture? According to this latter theory every nation has two cultures: the culture of the exploiters and the culture of the exploited.<sup>26</sup>

This would seem to deny the existence of an inherited national culture and imply that an interest in one's national culture and history (the growth of which was admitted by Ugrinovich) leads to the rejection of Marxist–Leninist opposition to it. Evidence for this can be seen in the chorus of the Soviet establishment's attack on those writers preoccupied with the re-discovery and popularization of Russia's cultural heritage, in particular that of Old Russia when culture was inseparable from the Church.

# 5 Church and Politics (Church and Anticommunism)

. . . it is not enough to fight religion by scholarship alone . . .  
Our aim is to liquidate every church, every form of religion.  
(*Rabochaia Moskva*, September 1922)

It is in the area of Church and politics, in accusing religious activities of having a subversive character, that the difference between Soviet 'scholarly' atheism and atheism for the masses becomes most negligible. Any attempt by the clergy and faithful laity to achieve the status of a legally autonomous institution for the Church, to organize autonomous associations of the faithful to aid the disenfranchised Church, to engage in Christian self-education, has always been attacked as 'counter-revolutionary', as acts of militant clericalism aimed at undermining the Soviet state, from the earliest days of the existence of even the allegedly 'sophisticated' antireligious press.<sup>1</sup>

Lunarcharsky, the Commissar for Public Enlightenment, ostensibly a refined intellectual among the Bolsheviks, declares religion *a priori* 'one of the greatest forces of reaction', whose 'political teeth' have not been crushed 'by the mere declarative separation of Church and State'. The road to 'a genuinely socialistic, truly scientific, that is a naturally atheistic-materialistic culture' lies via 'the destruction of all forms of religious beliefs'. He warns against trusting a temporary non-political façade that a Church may adopt for the sake of survival under socialism, for underneath the façade will always remain a hidden sting of poison against socialism, merely camouflaged for a while.<sup>2</sup>

When with collectivization the all-out attack on religion began, then not only the mass-circulation press (as illustrated in Volume II, Chapters 2 and 3), but also the 'sophisticated' theoretical journal of the Marxist philosophers, *Under the Banner of Marxism*, led a campaign of primitive slander against religions. The Evangelical and Baptist sectarians, in particular, were being attacked for alleged deliberate wrecking of collective farms and

their harvests. This was done to rationalise the total liquidation by the state of the multiple, and mostly economically flourishing, sectarian agricultural communes formerly permitted by the Soviet state. At the same time those groups of Orthodox Christians who had refused to accept Metropolitan Sergii's 1927 Declaration of Loyalty, as well as the nationalist Ukrainian Autocephalist Church, were bluntly accused of 'arrogant and open counter-revolutionary and fascist . . . work', without any explanation of what it consisted:

the unquestionable link of our church people [Orthodox] and sectarians with foreign countries reduces religious organizations to political agents and the political apparatus of class groupings hostile to the proletariat . . . and also of the world bourgeoisie.<sup>3</sup>

These unsubstantiated accusations were made to rationalise the physical liquidation of the above splinter groups in the Orthodox Church by the state in those years, and the general terror unleashed against the Orthodox and Sectarian Churches. As Church and State were officially separated it would have been embarrassing to admit that a Church was persecuted because she refused to take out state registration or because she did not want to subscribe to a declaration praising the Soviet State, and to admit there were any persecutions for faith in the USSR. But once the Churches are accused of fascism and of being agents of the world bourgeoisie, then the persecutions become self-explanatory in terms of the Marxist class struggle and in terms of defending the first socialist state against the enemy encirclement by hostile bourgeois states. Hence, the allegations of subversive and international spy networks under the guise of religious associations became widespread in the Soviet press, both for the masses and for the intellectuals. This led to mass arrests, prison sentences and even executions of large numbers of clergy and religious activists. The Soviet propaganda apparatus even artificially linked the so-called 'Industrial Party' and the Church.<sup>4</sup> The trial of top Soviet technical scientists, scholars and engineers, accused of forming an 'Industrial Party' aimed at wrecking the Five Year Plan, took place in 1930. In fact, this party never existed. It was a scapegoat invented in order to give a plausible explanation for the failure of the Soviet industry to achieve absolutely unrealistic first Five

Year Plan goals set by Stalin against the better advice of technical specialists and economists. In the course of Khrushchev's later destalinisation it was recognized that such a party had never existed and that it was a framed-up fraudulent show trial of innocent people.

Yet an author in the 'sophisticated' *Problems of the History of Religion and Atheism (VopIRAt)* repeats the 1930s allegations in all seriousness. She justifies the forced liquidation of the sectarian co-operatives during the collectivisation era by alleging that they 'had nothing in common with the socialist co-operation', instead of admitting that Soviet collective farms in fact have nothing in common with the principles of free co-operation, being compulsory, leaving the 'co-operators' neither the right to withdraw their share of land and property nor even the right to decide what to sow, how to use the communal land and what proportion of the profits to divide among the members. Moreover, the author nonchalantly relies on the 'authority' of a typically slanderous 1935 antireligious publication to accuse the Baptists of 'rural sabotage . . . burning of a collective farm mechanical workshop, pilfering of animal feed resulting in the death of half of the cattle'. The absurdity of the claims is underscored when the notoriously abstinent Baptists are labelled 'thieves and alcoholics'. The supposedly scholarly piece of 'research' is full of such pearls, concluding with the statement: 'Leaders of sects acted against all measures of the Party and the State.' This contradicts her later admission that as early as 1926 'the Baptists recognized the Soviet power, and their all-union congress resolutions stressed loyalty' to the Soviet state.<sup>5</sup>

As discussed earlier, much has been written on the so-called political evolution of the Russian Orthodox Church in her attitude towards the Soviet regime. In all of these writings it is claimed that before the revolution the Church had commanded extreme power and wealth (neither was the case<sup>6</sup>), and that therefore the revolution brought her colossal losses; hence her actively anti-Soviet posture from the first days of the Bolshevik victory.<sup>7</sup> The Patriarch Tikhon is blamed for anathematizing Lenin's government in 1918. It is stressed that in the territories occupied by the Whites, congresses of bishops, priests and laity adopted resolutions in support of the anti-Bolshevik struggle. All this is true. But not a word is said about the reasons for that position, about the Bolshevik Red Terror from the very first

days of Lenin's *coup d'état*, about the murders of clergy and monastics by the Red Guards, and many other atrocities.

Moving on to the 1920s, Soviet authors discuss the gradual adoption of the position of civic loyalty to the Soviet power by Patriarch Tikhon and his heirs, as well as the pro-Soviet schismatic Renovationists of all kinds. Finally, dealing with the post-Second War era, they stress that not only is the Church loyal to the Soviet State but that her theologians also try to adapt their theology to socialism, and show the similarity between the social goals of communism and Christianity.

There is, however, a considerable difference in the treatment of this evolution of the official position of the Church, depending on whether the Soviet analyses were written in the era of Khrushchev's attack on the Church (1958–64), or since that time. In the former writings, as a general rule, no credibility is given to that evolution. It is stated that these changes were forced upon the Church, allegedly, by the need to keep the flock within the Church. It is claimed that the bulk of Soviet believers are so devoted to the Soviet socialist aims that they would leave the Church *en masse* had she remained disloyal and not embraced the social goals of the state.<sup>8</sup> Again, the real cause, namely that of terrorist retribution by the Soviet state, is never mentioned.

Works published after Khrushchev's holocaust, in contrast, treat the evolution as a genuine one, although the ideational incompatibility of materialistic communism and Christianity is never ignored in these treatments as well. The other difference lies in what is stressed when the Second World War era behaviour of the Church is discussed. The publications of the Khrushchev years stress the alleged anti-Soviet behaviour of the clergy and its collaboration with the enemy during the war. The post-Khrushchev publications place the stress on the 'patriotic' behaviour of the clergy, dismissing the anti-Soviet behaviour one as exceptional rather than general. Approaching the Millenium, once again the alleged anti-patriotic behaviour of the Church through history, including the Second World War years, is emphasized more frequently.

The thesis that the evolution of the Church's attitude to the Soviet régime has been forced by events, by the realities, and by the attitudes of the flock towards the Soviet state remains intact in Soviet writings. To emphasize how devoted Soviet believers

are to the Soviet state, references are made to sociological surveys of believers. The genuineness of their findings remains doubtful, however, owing to lack of anonymity, revealed by the citing of the names of respondents:

The Soviet power, 'said A. T. Tarasov, a believer from the [Pskov Province] village of Karamyshevo', is the closest one and the only dear one to me. . . . For such a fatherland any of our people will stand up like a mountain.

It is such loyal attitudes of the believers, write Soviet authors, that has forced the new generation of Russian–Soviet clergy and theologians to rethink their attitudes to the socialist experiment. The result of this is 'communist Christianity' which claims affinity to the social ends of Christianity and communism. These theologians then reinterpret the past of the Russian Orthodox Church in terms of having always been a progressive social force in Russian culture. Soviet authors dispute this and attack it for misleading Soviet citizens as to the genuine nature of the Church which is, in their view, reactionary by definition. Even under the guise of 'communist Christianity' the Orthodox Church remains other-worldly oriented, treating the problems of this world as secondary, and rejecting materialism as a philosophy of life. Hence struggle against religion and its influence over the hearts and minds of Soviet citizens remains a necessity for the régime, even though:

the majority of the Orthodox clergy sincerely support the socialist state and social system. This position is determined by new historical conditions of the existence of the Church.<sup>9</sup>

This evolution of main-line Orthodoxy is contrasted with the vocal critics of the subservience of the official Church establishment to the Soviet régime, coming from within the Church in Russia, such as the late Archbishop Ermogen, 'who stood up for clerico-bourgeois norms of relations between the religious organization and the socialist world, against the contemporary practice of the State regulation of religious life'.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, the strongly anti-communist sects of the True Orthodox Church (IPTs) and the True Orthodox Christians (IPKh) are traced to those elements within the post-revolutionary Orthodox Church who had not accepted Metropolitan Sergii's 1927 Declaration of Loyalty to the Soviets. Once again, even the 'scholarly' Soviet

studies of the IPTs and IPKh mix facts and myths originating from the framed trials of the 1930s and 1940s. The blame for these sects they place squarely on Patriarch Tikhon who, allegedly according to 'archival documents', once instructed a priest that his duty was 'to educate the flock in the spirit of insubordination to the Soviet State'. Since the Patriarch officially adopted a policy of loyal neutrality to and recognition of the Soviet State as early as 1919, it is very unlikely that he would have instructed a priest in the above manner after that date. Since the source gives no information on the date, it is more likely that the 'archival documents' are materials of 'confessions' extracted by the GPU or NKVD!<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the failure to give details and background of the subject about which some of the leading Soviet religiologists write in their supposedly scholarly academic review, is striking. In the article under discussion, one of the most spiritually influential Moscow priests of the late 1920s and early 1930s (a future victim of Soviet terror), Sergei Mechev, who had based his parish life on spiritual fraternities and sororities which had nothing to do with politics, is accused of having organised underground monarchist groups. Then the author, Mitrokhin, gives wrong first names of Metropolitan Iosif (not F.) Petrovykh and Bishop Alexii (not Alexander) Bui, whom he calls the leading initiators of the IPTs. It is known that their opposition to M. Sergii was caused only by the extreme terms of his Declaration of Loyalty and what they saw as betrayal of the martyrs in the Declaration's denial of Soviet persecutions for their religious convictions. Otherwise, both Bishop Alexii Bui and M. Iosif Petrovykh accepted the principle of civic loyalty to the Soviet State.<sup>12</sup> Yet Mitrokhin declares that in 1930 the activists of these religious groups were 'convicted for anti-Soviet activity'. Once the author is caught lying and using the trials of the 1930s as undisputed evidence (concealing that both these above bishops were shot in concentration camps), the rest of his information becomes highly suspect; especially when it is first stated that 'at the end of 1932 the Buievite organization ceased to exist', and a few lines later it is admitted that the IPTs reappeared in 1946–52 in the same Tambov region where it had been said to disappear in 1932. These, according to Mitrokhin, remained strongly anti-Soviet and monarchist in orientation and represented the last splinters of the original Tikhonite Church.<sup>13</sup>

Nikol'skaia's study in the same issue of the periodical is somewhat more informative or at least more cohesive. The revival of the IPTs and IPKh she attributes to 1944–7, 'when in the Tambov Province in accordance with the requests of believing collective farmers, churches began to function in many settlements where they had earlier been closed' (she thus indirectly admits the persecution of the Church, at least prior to 1944). The IPTs and IPKh were those believers who refused to recognize the validity of the state-approved clergy in the reopened churches; the IPTs were anti-Sergiites. According to her, these were entirely individual farmers who had refused to join collective farms, making a living off private plots averaging a little over one acre per household, supplementing their income by shoe-repairing and similar handicrafts. Contrary to official Soviet statistics which claim an almost 100 per cent involvement of peasants in collectivization, Nikol'skaia states that 10 to 15 per cent of all Tambov peasants had not joined collective farms by the mid-1940s. She labels the whole movement as anti-socialist and anti-Soviet, which allegedly took advantage of Hitler's war against the USSR. Yet, contradicting this, she attributes their greatest activity to 1945–7, that is to say the immediate post-war period, a period of the greatest frustration of the population with Stalin's retrenchment and restoration of the 1930s system which was taking place despite the victory and despite the war-time rumour campaign disseminated from the Kremlin promising that the régime would be more liberal and peasants would have the right to quit collective farms after the war.<sup>14</sup> Although Nikol'skaia does not mention this, her high figure of 10 to 15 per cent for private farmers most probably represents the anti-*kolkhoz* movement of the time. Being forced to squeeze the religious schism into the Marxist economic framework, she equates the IPTs–IPKh movement with the opposition to collectivization, although the two may have gone hand in hand as a multi-faceted anti-Stalinism and a refusal to accept the Church which was forced to sing hosannahs to Stalin. Nikol'skaia, moreover, attributes acts of anti-Soviet sabotage, burning of probably official houses in collective farms (although she says 'houses of collective farmers') and even murders of Soviet officials, to IPKh members in 1949–50. They preach that the Soviet system is satanic. According to her, the most extreme and systematic anti-Soviets among the IPKh



developed into the sect of 'Silencers', who shut themselves into their houses, block windows, refuse to work on the collective farms or to accept any goods from either the collective farms or from the state stores. The state, 'according to the request of the community', confiscates their children and places them in boarding schools, at least since the late 1950s; this, of course, coincides with Khrushchev's general onslaught on all forms of religious life in the country. This 'coincidence' makes Nikol'skaia's allegations of their sabotage activities suspect: why suddenly such measures in 1958–9, if their main activities had belonged to the mid-1940s and, according to her, by the late 1950s they were already a spent force?<sup>15</sup>

But the most hostile and least truthful treatment is given to the Russian émigré churches and religious activities, to the Ukrainian Uniates (Byzantine rite Roman Catholics), both in the Soviet Union and in the *diaspora*, as well as to religious broadcasts from the West beamed at the Soviet Union and various organizations in the West engaged in transporting religious literature to Soviet believers. All these activities are treated by the Soviet propaganda on all levels as ideological subversion of the highest magnitude. Without directly admitting a growth of religious believers in their country, Soviet authors at least concede:

a stabilisation in the make-up and even activation of individual religious communities. Empirical studies indicate . . . a certain revitalisation of religiosity . . . in certain areas and strata of population. . . . Many religious organisations . . . have succeeded in halting . . . the process of aging and feminisation of the communities.

These communities, it is admitted, strengthen themselves by the support 'of church associated groups of religiously oriented intelligentsia'.<sup>16</sup>

This enhancement of 'religious moods' in the country is often blamed on the 'ideological subversion' of foreign religious broadcasts, the smuggling of allegedly anti-Soviet propaganda under the guise of religious literature; and it is stated that:

lately the ideological enemies gamble on the problems of the peoples of our country. They try to represent them as closely linked to the allegedly progressive historio-cultural mission of

religion, magnifying by all means possible the role of the church and individual clerics in history.

Therefore 'it is important for atheistic work to overcome the historically formed links between the religious and the national, constantly supported by bourgeois and clerical ideologists'.<sup>17</sup> Much attention, in this context, is given to the Uniate Church, its organic links to Ukrainian separatist nationalism, and the Uniate propaganda from abroad revitalizing both. To counter the Uniate revival, Soviet propaganda represents Uniatism invariably as a wholesale betrayal to the Nazis during the war and as a support base for the ideologically fascist Banderite movement in the Western Ukraine in the 1930s, presenting the issue in such a way as to give the reader the impression that there was no other West Ukrainian nationalism but the Fascist-Banderist one, and that therefore the Uniate Church was a faithful servant of Fascism before, during and after the war.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in relation to Russian Orthodoxy and attempts of Russian Orthodox groups abroad to help the Orthodox revival in the USSR, such religio-cultural organizations as the Russian Student Christian Movement (RSKhD) and its tri-annual Messenger of the Russian Christian Movement (VRKhD) are interwoven with the political anti-communist National Alliance of Russian Solidarists (NTS) and with the politically oriented monarchist 'Russian Church Abroad', which in fact has always opposed the Russian Student Christian Movement because of its apoliticism and religious ecumensim. All of these organizations and the Western Bible Crusades for Russia are lumped together by Soviet propaganda as spearheads of the CIA.<sup>19</sup>

The image of the Roman Catholic Church in Soviet writings, however, has lately undergone considerable change, from that of a bastion of militant anticommunism, to a force, which although by its ideology is as reactionary as any other religious organization, yet still plays a progressive role in the Third World in as much as its clerics side with the urban guerrillas, support workers' strikes, condemn capitalism and subscribe to some Marxist socio-economic doctrines in the 'theology of liberation'. Even Vatican spokesmen are approvingly stated to have partially affirmed Marxism. In one case it is the editor of Vatican's *La Civiltà cattolica* saying that in our negative attitude to the contradictions of capitalism 'we are largely indebted to Karl

Marx's critical analysis of capitalism'; or 'The Church cannot ignore Marxism, because the very atmosphere we breathe is saturated with elements of Marxism'. In another, Pope John-Paul II's criticism of poverty and oppression in Latin America, his criticism of capitalism, and his call for social justice in the context of 'Roman Catholic social solidarity', are cited with approval.<sup>20</sup>

But at the same time the reader is warned that this does not mean that the whole Roman Catholic Church, or the Vatican with its present Pope in particular, have laid their anticommunist arms down. One of the chief enemies is the Vatican radio, broadcasting in thirty-four languages 'religious programmes often interwoven with anticommunism'. Faithful to Marxist materialism, the authors are obliged to show a materialistic origin of the Vatican's anticommunist ideology. So we are told:

The Vatican financial empire has for long been linked in the closest possible way to the American monopolistic capital.

Therefore, allegedly, the most numerous and influential element in the Vatican today is the American clergy, bringing with it obviously American political influence.

Pope John-Paul II is taken to task for having attacked 'liberation theology' and for having intensified 'the ideological counter-offensive of Roman Catholicism, placing the problem of man in the centre of the ideological struggle against Marxism-Leninism and all other non Christian ideologies'. The Pope and his contemporary Vatican policies and declarations are criticised for including in their blanket attacks on materialism (Marxist as well as capitalist) as evil. In particular the Pope is criticised for stating that 'Materialism in any form is a source of the degradation of man and of suppression of social life' and for asserting that 'atheism leads to totalitarianism: "It is futile to think that totalitarianism can be overcome purely politically, ignoring and rejecting religion."' <sup>21</sup> In conclusion, as proof of the Pope's hostility, it is stated that in his address to a conference on 'Evangelisation and Atheism', 'John Paul II . . . treated the Marxist atheism as the chief and most fundamental enemy'.<sup>22</sup>

The general line of this attitude to the Roman Catholic Church is that in 'the national liberation struggles' in predominantly Roman Catholic countries of the Third World, it is legitimate for communists to enter into co-operation and

collaboration with the 'progressive' elements in the Roman Catholic Church, those subscribing to the 'liberation theology'; that, because of the faithfulness to Rome of most Roman Catholics, it is unnecessary to irritate them by blatant propaganda against John Paul II and the Vatican. It is even possible to show a posture of guarded partial approval of the 'progressive' elements in the Pope's and the Vatican media's statements, while in the long run working towards a split within the Church and eventual subordination of its 'Renovationist' wing to communist policies and communist control, as with some of the clergy in Latin America in general, Nicaragua and Cuba in particular.

What awaits such 'progressive' and 'renovationist' elements under Marxist socialism in the long run becomes clear from the illustration of the fate of the Russian Church reformism and the Renovationist movement and schism within the Russian Orthodox Church of the 1920s. Even such an official Soviet religiological authority as N. P. Krasnikov admits that these reformist elements could have triumphed over the traditionalist ones within the Orthodox Church and particularly in her leadership, had it not been for the Bolshevik victory in November 1917. It was the fear of the theomachistic Bolsheviks that caused 'a sharp move to the right' at the 1917–18 constituent *Sobor* (national council) of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>23</sup> As to the subsequent split of the pro-socialist and socially pro-Marxist 'Renovationists' from the main line Orthodox Church, they were later (in the 1930s and early 1940s) crushed by the Bolshevik terror just as mercilessly as the conservative main-line Church had been a decade earlier. Once the Soviet government ceased to need the services of the 'progressive' Christians, their movement and their very Church organisation were simply annihilated.<sup>24</sup>

## 6 Atheism: Issues, Problems and Self-Criticism

Only those remain atheists in life who either have no problem in living with any inconsistency, any lack of logic; or those who do not treasure Man in man, treating humans with the same contempt as any animal.

(Professor A. Vvedensky)

Taking advantage of the more relaxed atmosphere of the New Economic Policy forced upon Lenin by the catastrophic political and economic conditions precipitated by his 'War Communism', non-Marxist scholars (social scientists, philosophers) began to form free philosophic academies with courses of public lectures and non-Marxist periodicals. One such publication was *The Thought (Mysl')*, and one of its most prolific contributors on the subject of religion and atheism was Professor A. Vvedensky (not to be confused with the renovationist leader-priest A. Vvedensky).

Vvedensky's main thesis was that neither the existence, nor the absence of God can ever be proved scientifically. Both convictions are a matter of faith, personal intimate experiences and psychology. Atheism is just another religion, another faith, which has been with us, along with the faith in God, for at least 2500 years, ever since the days of the Greek sophists. Marxists, he argues, have neither invented atheism, nor made it in any way more convincing than ever. Instead, Marxist atheists engage in unsubstantiable speculations on 'how the faith in god had first appeared', and in savouring cases of unscrupulous behaviour of individual clergymen as alleged evidence that religion exists for personal gain and for sucking money from the masses. Using the arguments and evidence of the laws of nature, writes Vvedensky, one can prove anything except the very fact 'of the existence of the world or nature. . . . it is true, all natural phenomena can be explained without God's interference, by means of the laws of nature alone; all, except one: the existence

of nature itself and of its laws.' In other words, materialistic atheism is a monistic *Weltanschauung* denying the possibility of seeing the material world from another vantage point, from beyond the material world, without which 'nature' cannot be objectified, and in its absolutisation by the materialist as a cause of all things, it acquires the properties of a God. This does not solve the miracle of life, the miracle of nature. That which we call natural phenomena are 'phenomena which God creates before us regularly; miracles are phenomena which God creates only once, in exceptional circumstances'.

Although neither faith in God nor in His absence can be proved scientifically, continues Vvedensky, faith in God is based on very strong personal mystical experiences backed also by strong and often compelling traditions of national cultures. Atheism, a faith in nothingness, possesses neither. Denying the eternity of human life, its attitude to man becomes the same as to any animal; hence exploitation of man becomes morally as justified as exploitation of a horse. 'In the atheist's world-view everything is dead, everything is soulless.' Therefore, concluded Vvedensky, no matter how active and aggressive atheism may become, it will not be able to kill faith in God; faith in God will survive side-by-side with atheism as it has throughout human history.<sup>1</sup>

How did triumphant atheism respond to this challenge? At first, it responded by launching a special philosophical monthly of the 'militant materialists': *Under the Banner of Marxism*. Its third (March 1922) issue contained Lenin's 'philosophical testament', 'On the Meaning of Militant Materialism', which called on Soviet Marxist philosophers to close ranks for a concerted and co-ordinated attack on the idealists and religions who were raising their heads again. Apparently this was soon deemed to be insufficient. It was in this very year, 1922, that the free philosophical journals, associations, and academies were liquidated by the state and their chief participants-lectors mostly arrested and expelled abroad. But their writings were neither forgotten nor ignored. From that time to the present, Soviet atheistic publications try to respond to Vvedensky's and similar challenges, without however permitting a dialogue, or allowing the reader or listener to hear a complete argument, from the other side, but only in adulterated précis by atheistic writers. While declaring that this 'idealistic' and 'methaphysical' philoso-

phy was the product of a pitifully defeated and helpless bourgeoisie, Soviet authors conceal the fact of their expulsion from the USSR and the government's dissolution of their publications and institutions.<sup>2</sup>

A careful review of the multitude of Soviet surveys on the history of Soviet atheism will, however, reveal the prophetic accuracy of Vvedensky's words that atheism is intellectually powerless against religion. An obvious illustration of this are the laws of 1929 banning all expressions of religious life, let alone open dialogues with atheists, outside the church walls. The other expression of the incompetence of 'scientific atheism' is the amount of time spent by the atheist press in self-criticism, that is in criticizing atheistic publications and methods for failing to achieve the required results. A study of these 'self-critical' publications will reveal a periodic recurrence of the same themes, and return to cycles of the approaches attacked and approaches approved.

Thus a 'high brow' atheist theoretical publication of 1929 cites Lenin's instruction: 'the press ought to be an organizer of broad masses as well as an agitator'. The author's conclusion is that the 'antireligious press does not in the least fulfil this instruction of Vladimir Il'ich. It does not lead . . . the masses, shows no initiative.' Turning to individual atheist periodicals, the author concludes that the popular ones fail to appeal to the working-class reader, the 'intellectual' ones publish material quite irrelevant to the needs and realities of the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> This is echoed by the Komsomol daily which says that members of the Communist youth movement (Komsomol) 'are not interested in antireligious literature . . . engage in no antireligious work. Komsomol activists keep repeating: "There is no god, there is no god." but are incapable of proving it.'<sup>4</sup>

Another presumably intellectual article sheds light on the causes of such inertia in antireligious work, in a discussion of the enforced transformation of schools from non-religious to anti-religious education. Teachers give antireligious lectures, join the League of Militant Godless, then it is discovered that they are practising religious believers.<sup>5</sup> This indicates that the latter 'voluntary society' was not that voluntary; and obviously secret believers among its members were not conducive to particular antireligious militancy, to say the least. The same, apparently, applied to the world of literature and the arts in general, from

the complaint of lack of talented artistic and literary antireligious work has been constant in the Soviet press from the 1920s to the present day. One author declares in despair that as far as atheistic literary works are concerned, 'the situation was hopeless in 1929 in terms of quality, and such it remains to the present day'.<sup>6</sup>

Twenty-five years later the same complaints of inertia, boring routine and even corruption in the Soviet antireligious propaganda could be found in the Soviet media at all levels. Here is a description of a typical antireligious lecture by a visiting speaker:

About 300 collective farmers were gathered to hear . . . the lecture by Comrade Gadiuchka (ironically the name means viper, a poisonous snake), a member of the Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge [*Znanie*]. The lecturer opened up his folder and without once looking at the audience, began to read. Thirty minutes went by. The lecturer continued to read his text monotonously without once raising his head. The audience began to move, cough, whisper. The lecturer continued. Not one lively word, not a single fresh thought. Clichés and incomprehensible words. Listeners began to leave the hall quietly.

An hour went by . . . some of the remaining listeners were fast asleep. . . . After an hour and a half only a handful remained in the hall. Having completed his lecture, Comrade Gadiuchka threw a quick look at the empty hall, put away his notes and said to the *kolkhoz* chairman: 'Well . . . you haven't taught your *kolkhozniks* to appreciate a highly qualified lecture.' 'Yes, this is true', answered the shocked chairman and wrote in the lecturer's way bill that the lecture was highly qualified, that an audience of three hundred people listened with interest.

The corruption, however, does not stop with the above lie. The article fails to mention that the lecturer received a fat honorarium – all lectures by *Znanie* lecturers are generously rewarded in accordance with a centrally fixed tariff.<sup>7</sup>

As late as 1958 Soviet authors continued to complain about the dearth of fundamental atheistic studies on religions, and their origins and history, leading them eventually to republish N. M. Nikol'sky's 1930 *History of the Russian Church* in 1983 with a remark by the editors that it remains 'as before, the only Marxist



monographic work on the history of the Russian Church',<sup>8</sup> It was reprinted despite Nikol'sky's recognition of Christ as a historical figure.<sup>9</sup> And this brings us to the issue of attacks and counter-attacks within the Marxist antireligious establishment over the years, ranging from the god-building tendencies of Lunacharsky to Veresaev, their condemnations and their revival in the last two decades under other names, and to the conflict between the 'mechanicists' and the so-called 'dialectical materialists'.

This debate between the 'mechanicists' and the 'dialecticians' was the main theoretical bone of contention among Soviet philosophers in the area of atheism in the 1920s and early 1930s, that is to say for as long as any debates were still tolerated. The 'Mechanicists' argued that the progress and dissemination of knowledge of the natural sciences would supersede the necessity for both antireligious struggle and even a separate Marxist philosophy. It was alleged that modern natural sciences are in themselves a living proof of materialism and atheism.<sup>10</sup> Their opponents, in turn, accused them of ignoring *dialectical* materialism, and won the CPSU Central Committee definitely to their side by the end of 1930. The Committee attacked the editors and the regular authors of *Under the Banner of Marxism* (*PZM* henceforth) for having failed to fulfil Lenin's will to make the journal a banner of militant atheism:

In nine years of its existence the journal published only twelve articles, reviews, notes . . . devoted to subjects spoken of by Lenin . . . The journal has not become an organ of militant atheism. it is not engaged in the propaganda of atheism, elaboration of the problems of the antireligious movement, analysis of the class content and the most vile counterrevolutionary role played today by the Church.<sup>11</sup>

But what is the difference between dialectical materialism and materialism? The former is supposed to be a dynamic-militant philosophy of action, recognizing no static forms and platforms, in contrast to regular materialism. M. Shakhnovich, a leading antireligious philosopher, cites the following illustration of the method of dialectical materialism.

Long before the First World War, when publishing Lunacharsky's 'Rebirth of the Orthodox Church' in his émigré journal *Vpered*, Lenin edited Lunacharsky's words that a proleta-

rian who showed a tolerant attitude towards religion would not be tolerated in the party, to a much more ambivalent: 'We shall not allow an indifferent attitude to such nonsense as social-democrats-Christians.' The reason was that a revolutionary factory worker in Moscow was appealing for an armed rebellion by somehow using texts from the Scriptures. 'It would have been wrong to push a worker away from the party' because, whatever language he used, 'he was aiding our revolution', concludes Shakhnovich in this illustration of a truly dialectical approach to matters. In contrast, in 1919, when he was in power, Lenin took a categorical position: 'I am for the expulsion of party members who observe religious rites.'<sup>12</sup> In other words, what the Marxists call dialectics, would in any other language spell plain opportunism thinly camouflaged by quasi-philosophical phraseology.

Indeed, after all the wrath, fury and purges of heretical non-dialectical Marxist philosophers and natural scientists, we read in one Soviet author of the 1960s that the original leaders of Marxism – Marx, Engels, and their disciples A. Babel, P. Lafargue, F. Mering – were 'mechanicists' in their approach to religion, expecting 'that religion would wither away on its own with time, without any particular struggle against it'. As he goes on to praise Yaroslavsky and his method of antireligious attack, it is obvious that in the writer's view the classics had erred, and it took Lenin and his followers to 'see the light' and make a proper attack on religion.<sup>13</sup>

'The distinguishing trait of the Marxist-Leninist *Weltanschauung*' in the words of one Soviet authority, 'is the subordination of scholarship to the aims of the class struggle of the proletariat.' This, in Marxist-Leninist jargon, distinguishes the method of dialectical materialism from all the others (to use the Soviet jargon: mechanicists, materialistic metaphysicists, bourgeois materialists and idealists).<sup>14</sup> Good examples of the application of this remarkably 'flexible' method can be found, for instance, in the fact that while in the 1930s N. M. Nikol'sky and Lunacharsky were severely criticised (the former for the defence of the historicity of Christ) as materialistic idealists, in the 1970s–80s their books have been republished (except for Lunacharsky's writings on 'godbuilding') practically without any critical comments, as foremost antireligious authorities. or take the official *Antireligious Textbook's* following description of agricultural collectivisation, allegedly illustrating the Marxist 'dialec-

tical law . . . of transition of quantity into quality'. The quotation is from Stalin:

An ordinary summation of peasants' tools in collective farms . . . resulted in the increase of land under cultivation by thirty, forty and fifty percent. How to explain this terrific success? Simply, peasants who had been powerless in the conditions of individual work, have turned into a mightiest power, having added their tools together and merged into a collective farm.<sup>15</sup>

This was at the height of the state-organized famine on the farms and when it was already obvious to the naked eye that collectivization was an economic failure. In fact, some contemporary Soviet religiologists have recognized that at least in the 1930s 'some' antireligious writings were untruthful. The historian Zybkovets, citing the huge quantities of antireligious publications of the time and juxtaposing them with Yaroslavsky's 1937 admission that, by this time one-third of all rural dwellers and two-thirds of the urban ones were atheists, then admits:

It would have been a disservice to truth to paint our atheistic movement of the thirties as a continuous success. In reality . . . beginning with 1930 the League of Militant Godless shows a tendency to exaggerate its success and to engage in wishful thinking. . . .

The all-union conference on the scientific co-ordination of atheistic work, which took place in November 1939, demonstrated the sorry state in which that work was . . .

A decline set in from 1938 . . . by 1940 the LMG membership declined almost by a half.

Moreover, Zybkovets once again unwittingly confirms Vvedensky's prophecy. On the one hand, he points to the concerted and massive 'mass atheistic movement' initiated 'from the very first days of the October Revolution', which as a 'spontaneous movement . . . was directed more against the dominant Orthodox Church than against religion *per se*'. On the other hand, he states that the years of NEP 'were characterized by a decline in the antireligious movement and activation of religious organisations'. He even cites statistics for the increase of parishes between 1921 and 1925 in the Russian Republic: 9 per cent increase in the number of Orthodox parishes, 19 per cent for

Moslems, 10 per cent for Jews, and 13 per cent for the Evangelicals.<sup>16</sup> This was rather too swift a turn-about for a 'spontaneous' atheistic movement, particularly since the growth simply coincided with the lessening of direct persecutions. The other inconsistency is that he has nothing but praise for the new expansion and intensification of antireligious campaigns of the late 1920s, particularly for the 1929 Second LMG Congress and its decisions, but then he casts doubt on all LMG's subsequent claims.

He admits that there was a religious revival during the Second World War accompanied by the reopening of many formerly closed churches; this again throws doubt on mass participation in the antireligious campaigns of the 1930s. Why should the same masses so soon after having closed the churches petition the state to permit their reopening?

But then we see that this was just a loosening in the state policies, necessitated by the uncertainty of the war and the need to court popularity. Zybkovets does not spell this out, but he says that as soon as victory was certain the CPSU Central Committee adopted a resolution in 1944 'On the Organization of the Propaganda of Scientific Enlightenment', that is, on intensifying antireligious policies once again.

To somehow boost the Soviet anteistic achievement, Zybkovets falsifies the religious situation on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution. He claims there was a great religious upsurge during the First World War (mechanically transferring the situation of the Second World War to 1915–16), when in fact there was a growing religious decline which came with the growing unpopularity of the First War, when with the help of the revolutionaries the patriotic Orthodox clergy was blamed for supporting the war. It was with the first mass disappointment with the Bolshevik promises and, at the same time, the disillusionment of the intelligentsia with its socialist-radical ideals, that a return to the Church, particularly among the intelligentsia, began around 1920–21.

But Zybkovets has to prove that Soviet atheism has always been successful (except in the 1930s which it is legitimate to criticize owing to Khrushchev's destalinization) and that it continues to enjoy mass support. Therefore considerable successes (without any figures, to be on the safe side) are attributed to the two 1954 CPSU CC resolutions on improvement and

intensification of atheist work although they contradicted each other. The article concludes with the line that Marxist atheism is not just a negation but a system of positive values, and that in order for it to become a route to the building of communism, promised by the XXII CPSU Congress (1961), it has to be accompanied by the formation and assimilation of new Soviet-communist rituals; a subject we have already discussed in Volume 1 of the present study.<sup>17</sup>

Similar to the times of Lunacharsky's 'godbuilding' and Veresaev's appeals for an established system of rituals of communism, contemporary atheist lecturers and authors (particularly after taking stock of Khrushchev's onslaught) recognize that antireligious lectures and dreary clubs and state offices with bureaucratic registrations of weddings or births are no substitute for religious rites. Since the mid-1960s special commissions on the development of new socialistic rites have been set up and conferences devoted to the subject have taken place.<sup>18</sup> Some authors claim great success for these rites, allegedly tearing the ground from underneath the feet of the churches. Others continue to admit the insufficient attractiveness of these rites.<sup>19</sup> But the term 'godbuilding' and its attempt to create a Marxist humanistic religious cult that would have at least a certain integrity and inner consistency within it, remain taboo. In fact, along with masses of articles and books discussing the necessity of cult-like rites – marking such events as name-giving to a baby, marriage ceremony, secular funeral rites, rites of adulthood, of induction into the armed forces, of harvest conclusion, and so forth – along with an active and repetitious advocacy of these, publications appear which continue to condemn Lunacharsky's 'godbuilding'. It is forbidden because 'Lenin considered the infatuation with godbuilding and appeals to a "socialist religion" a supreme vulgarity'. And that is the whole argument. The 'sin' of Lunacharsky was that he demonstrated that atheism is a form of religion and that man needs religion with all its rituals. Religion should be changed from a faith in the Supernatural to that of communism and of building a paradise on earth. Otherwise, wrote Lunacharsky, Marxist atheistic materialism leads either to a suicidal pessimism or to a reckless hedonism: have fun and be merry as long as life lasts; or, in the formulation of the priests: 'You deprive the worker of God, and he will take to the bottle.'<sup>20</sup> Modern Soviet religiologists, writing about him

much more respectfully that in the 1930s, reproach Lunacharsky for having dared to question the validity of Marxism as a philosophy and for 'attributing to it an intrinsic religiosity':

Under the term 'religion' Lunacharsky understood 'such a type of thought regarding the world and such appreciation of the world which psychologically solves the contrast between the laws of life and the laws of nature'.

Religion in their view 'links . . . the human person with collectivity and through the latter, with the cosmic whole'.<sup>21</sup>

That is all very well, but then Soviet religiologists begin to discuss atheism, denying that it is merely a negation of God's existence. Atheism, they say, is a set of positive convictions, which must include an 'emotional-sensual element':

Specifically atheistic senses are the sum total of life-defining emotional-sensual phenomena, psychological orientations of the human person, which accompany the process of true self assertion of the essential existence of man and the rejection of a religious *Weltanschauung*. These senses give life a value-orientation character.

Later the same author speaks about atheism as 'a specific psychological state of the person'.<sup>22</sup>

If we purge the above and similar discussions on atheism of all their monstrously superfluous verbosity, we end up with a confirmation of Vvedensky's assertion with which we began this chapter, namely that both faith in God and atheism belong to the sphere of psychology, personal convictions, belief, not to the sphere of scientific proofs either way; that is, the contemporary Soviet religiological attempts to define atheism as a value-oriented positive doctrine is essentially a return to 'godbuilding', but without specifically stating it. Lunacharsky and his friends were more honest when they admitted that without a religious faith, materialism-atheism is a suicidally pessimistic doctrine, incapable of inspiring the masses, making no sense of progress and of a future-orientation. (It is quite another matter whether the 'godbuilders' would have ever been able to solve the dilemma of pessimism by substituting a humanistic cult of communism for traditional Christianity with its faith in the eternity of personal life.) Quite inconsistently and unconvincingly our Soviet 'atheologists', instead, assure us that atheism is

full of 'life-asserting' energy, dedication to humanity, to the people of the present and the future. it 'forms in man a sense of personal dignity and greatness', stimulating him to creativity, to the achievement of 'great feats'.<sup>23</sup> Should not one be reminded of Vvedensky's words that the materialist, denying spirituality, fails to differentiate between man and any other animal, degrades the status of man to that of any creature that can be used and exploited for personal benefit? The reality of human relations and rights in Marxist states seems to bear out Vvedensky's words rather than those of Soviet 'atheologists'. When, however, the latter descend from their clouds of abstract arguments to earth, they complain that there is little evidence of such 'positive and assertive' atheism. Surveys of working youth and of students show that around 50 per cent are quite indifferent to antireligious propaganda or see no harm in religion or any usefulness in antireligious struggle. The authors are worried by:

conciliatory and indifferent attitudes of certain groups of young people towards religious convictions of those around them. . . . Atheism of some young people is just on the level of a private opinion. . . . There are few young people among the propagandists of atheism . . . only some ten to twelve per cent are under thirty years of age.

They continue to address the issue as if all believers were semi-literates and as if religion was limited only to the most backward and uneducated elements, which is not true, remark some Soviet religiologists, including the late Kurochkin, as cited earlier.<sup>24</sup>

Yet the best recommendation for the effectiveness of 'scientific' atheism in the already cited work on the philosophy of atheism, is hate: indifference to religion is not enough. 'What is required is hate towards religion.' Thus the whole 'sophisticated' discussion on 'life-asserting' atheism is not only logically muddled. It is irrelevant to the actual Soviet reality and ends up in admission of the helplessness of its arguments, replacing them by an appeal to active hate, to destruction, not creation.<sup>25</sup> So much for science.<sup>26</sup>

## **Part II**

# **The Road from Doubt to Faith**



# 7 Philosophical Searches for the Meaning of Life\*

Soviet ideology holds that Marxism constitutes the master science whose basic philosophical premises should guide all scientific research and be applicable to the natural as well as to the social sciences, to art, and any scholarship whatsoever. Given this view of marxism as the all-pervading integrative science, it was predictable that the rehabilitation of genetics and related sciences would have immediate consequences for the whole state of Marxist philosophy in the Soviet Union. In the natural sciences the conflict over the concept of two sciences, a Marxist and a bourgeois one, was a battle that appeared to have dealt a fatal blow to the science of genetics in Russia and which cost the lives of many brilliant scientists. The discoveries of twentieth-century physics – the theory of relativity, quantum mechanics – cast doubt on the Marxist view of the primacy of matter in the universe. Under Stalin these theories were officially rejected and declared to be ‘bourgeois metaphysical idealism’, and even ‘fascist racialism’, because of the genetic bars on inherited traits.

When the Soviet Union was almost entirely engaged in applied engineering (the build-up of basic industries in the 1930s and reconstructing them after the devastation of the war), it could still afford, to some extent, to theorize on this issue of two sciences. But in the 1950s and 1960s when proper scientific education of the growing ranks of engineers and scientists became an absolute necessity in order to keep up with the dictates of the scientific revolution, the Soviet Union was forced to recognize openly the theories of Mendel and Vavilov. This brought an end to the theory of two sciences – in itself an important factor in the development and popularisation among the Soviet intelligentsia of the idea of the convergence of the socialist and capitalist systems as a whole.

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\* This is an expanded and updated version of this author’s ‘The Search for the Meaning of Life in the Soviet Union’, *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, vol. 18, nos. 2 & 3 (1974), pp. 69–95.

Now, how was the recognition of one single universal science, irrespective of world ideological differences, going to reflect on the official ideology and philosophy? How could Marxism be reconciled with nuclear- and astro-physics and with the theory of relativity when it is based on a monistic and undialectical interpretation that views the entire universe, both animate and inanimate, as one *matter* (material) cognizable by the five senses? How could the Marxist theory that science and human thought are determined by economic needs and by labour be reconciled with the key role of science and intellect of our time? How was it to be reconciled with the disinterested behaviour of great scientists and intellectuals and with the non-recognition and non-acceptance of their discoveries, theories, and ideas by contemporary labourers, politicians, and administrators? How could their ideas and discoveries be reconciled with Marxism when they clearly preceded the visible economic needs and labour processes? Some Soviet scientists and philosophers tried to overcome the difficulty regarding cognition of the world by the senses, by claiming that modern sophisticated equipment was but an extension of the senses, just as spectacles are an extension of human sight.<sup>1</sup> But how, for instance, can telepathy be explained in these terms? Many experiments and telepathy tests have been conducted recently by Soviet scientists, although its existence remains wholly unexplained in philosophic Marxist terms.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of whether material production precedes thought-processes or vice-versa produced a very interesting and still unresolved discussion in the Soviet philosophical press. On the whole, Soviet-Marxist philosophers have come to the conclusion that the Marxist doctrine of primacy of labour and economic production has only limited application. One philosopher argued:

it would be wrong to think that material production will always remain the basis of spiritual production [i.e. intellectual work – D.P.]. In the sphere of spiritual production necessity loses its external alienated character, and in this freedom from external social necessity lies the enchanting beauty of scientific and artistic activity. And the greater the results of spiritual production, the freer they will be from compelling social necessity . . . Spiritual work has always been and remains universal, being the expression of human community.<sup>3</sup>

The author thus took the position that intellectual creativity is not preceded or circumscribed by economic necessity or class interests, and discoveries made within one class structure are fully inherited and developed within other class structures. Furthermore, by stating that spiritual (i.e. cultural, intellectual, scientific) activity and values are universal, he attached greater value to them, while the material and economic ones may be limited to a definite class and class structure.

As if replying to this article, Bonifatii Kedrov, one of the leading conservative Soviet philosophers, mildly criticized Engels's thesis 'that the demands of applied technology contribute much more to scientific progress than a dozen universities'. He admitted that this thesis has lost part of its validity today, and concluded that it would be wrong on the basis of occasional misjudgements found in the Marxist classics either to reassess or question the essential theses of Marxism. Kedrov then appealed for the use of the dialectical approach to reconcile Marx and Engels with the realities of today, for although 'science and technology have changed places . . . this is not identical to transposal of cause and effect'.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, Kedrov admitted indirectly the priority of theory and intellect, and, in the final analysis, of intuition over practical work or material production.<sup>5</sup> Even more significant than Kedrov's was the statement in *Komsomolskaia pravda* by A. M. Rumiantsev that 'individual propositions of Marxist-Leninist science may prove in the new conditions to be unacceptable or insufficiently exact'.<sup>6</sup> Finally, in an editorial article, *Voprosy filosofii* recognized that the thinking process precedes labour: 'The direction and character of the development of technology in many respects is determined by the progress of science.'<sup>7</sup>

Once it is accepted, in whatever oblique way, that labour and economics are not necessarily the stimuli of scientific research and of human thought in general, then irrational, metaphysical and other materialistically inexplicable sources of human thought-processes, such as the intuitive origin of thought and science, have to be recognized. Consequently, the term 'intuition' must be brought back into the philosophic and scientific lexicon, including such terms as meta-science, meta-mathematics, and meta-logics. *Meta-physics* still remains a taboo which can be applied only as a critical-pejorative term appropriate for 'bourgeois philosophizing'.<sup>8</sup>

One Soviet scholar stated that:

intuition is one of the mighty bases for scientific technological forecasting . . . the sole source of information, forestalling by the content of its information that which is contained in the ordinary scientific information.<sup>9</sup>

This is a logical structure which should have been branded by orthodox Marxists as 'clerical idealism': first comes intuition which is formulated into a theory, either in the scientist's mind or on paper, and then transformed into experiments and experimental models. These are finally applied to actual technological processes and to labour. Labour then becomes the final effect, or at best a junior partner and not the cause of thinking.

Attempts, however, have been made to wed dialectical materialism with modern science and intuitivism, by stating that Marxism is neither rationalism nor irrationalism but dialectical rationalism which presupposes and accepts the existence of both elements in the natural phenomena. According to the late P. Kopnin, a leading Marxist philosopher with some revisionist tendencies for which he fell into disfavour shortly before his death in 1970s, imperfections in nature and negative side-effects of the rational acts of man, are irrational 'regularities of life'. But then the author had to admit obliquely that such an explanation would hardly satisfy many modern scientists. Due to the uncertainties and lack of definitive answers in modern science, as he himself was forced to acknowledge, the contemporary scientific revolution has given a new impetus to irrationalism and intuitivism. He liberally quoted from Henri Bergson and Nikolai Lossky, leading twentieth-century intuitivist philosophers, showing that intuitivism leads directly to the belief in God. His only argument against it is a re-statement of the Marxist contention, badly compromised as discussed above, that labour precedes thought.<sup>10</sup> This demonstrates the stultifying limitations of the closed circle of Marxist philosophizing.

The recognition of intuition and of the primary importance of a social and economic indeterminism in the thinking process of an individual, opened up the whole issue of historical determinism and the alienation of man. In the course of the discussion of the interrelationship of science and philosophy, physicists pointed to the 'quantum-mechanical indeterminism'

and claimed that this indeterminism was not limited to quantum mechanics but was applicable to other phenomena as well, where the realm of the accidental plays a much greater role than previously claimed (by the Marxists).<sup>11</sup>

If, on the other hand, scientists and other intellectuals can be intellectually ahead of their society, if their work is not conditioned by society, then this can be applied in a greater or lesser degree to any human being. The alienation perhaps is not entirely determined by social conditions, as claimed originally by Marx. Leading non-Soviet Marxist revisionists have maintained for some time that Marx's theory of alienation of the individual from society in an organized state applies not only to 'capitalism', but also to the socialist states with their huge state bureaucracies. The issue was partly recognized by some Soviet philosophers, one of whom stated: 'the alienation of man is not eliminated by the mere appearance of socialism'.<sup>12</sup> It was recognized that much could be learned from 'bourgeois' philosophy, since 'the main subjects [of philosophy] remain the basic problems of existence, the relationship between the human subject and the objective world . . . [and thus] cannot be reduced to class interests'.<sup>13</sup> The revival of interest in the young Marx in the revisionist circles of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and to a lesser degree in Hungary and Poland, and also in the ranks of some Marxist philosophers of the West, was no doubt inspired by the fear of Stalinism and the attempt to save the face of communism by finding ammunition against Stalinism in the early Hegelian, idealistic Marx. In the Soviet Union the discussion of the causes and reasons for the 'cult of personality' was not allowed to develop that far . . . However, the fact that all the ills of Stalinism were blamed, in a most un-Marxist fashion, on one person, may have led paradoxically to a sharpening of interest in the human person in Soviet philosophic and sociological writing and in literature.

Among this type of writing could be mentioned a sympathetic analysis of anthropocentric theories, which are recognized as legitimate attempts to solve the philosophical problems of progress and development.<sup>14</sup> Somewhat similar problems were raised by I. F. Kariakin's penetrating analysis of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. In contrast to Marxism, the author recognized the existence of 'absolute' evil, of evil acts which cannot be justified by any noble aims. He believes Dostoevsky's central message was an assertion of the existence of such

unjustifiable evil; and not the social theme of material poverty usually ascribed to him by official Soviet critics. Dostoevsky's other message, according to Kariakin, was a protest against an 'arithmetical' approach to the human being. In every human being, Kariakin wrote, 'should be seen the eternity of a new unrepeatable world'; Whereas the 'arithmetical' logic runs: '*One hundred is more than one*, this thought masks another one . . . only I am *greater than a hundred, a thousand, more than a million*. Therefore, [I] am allowed everything.' It is against this logic that Dostoevsky protested, according to Kariakin.<sup>15</sup> The parallel between this logic and that of any totalitarian dictatorship could hardly escape this author or his readers.

The problem of the individual and society, and hence of the social sciences in general, is one of the central ideological problems of the Soviet Union. But its full-fledged discussion in the official press is detrimentally circumscribed by the multiple ideological taboos. At least one author, a Hindologist and social philosopher, Grigorii Pomerants, borrowing the idea of the role of festivities and carnivals in human culture from the great Russian (Soviet) philosopher M. Bakhtin, believes that the source of alienation of man lies in the disappearance of the feast from human life (holiday, fiesta, carnival) and its replacement with the priority of work and action. Alienation is the sense of separation from the Universe; the loss of a sense of wholeness and integrity, and the division and compartmentalization of life into separate and mutually alienated sequences of activities: work, entertainment, consumption of food, and even perhaps a few hours for the church. Essentially it is the subordination to time, and hence the loss of a sense of contact with eternity. Only in the fullness of reliving a religious-mystical holiday-feast does man lose the limiting effect of time on his life and experiences a mystic oneness with eternity, with the creation, with the universe.<sup>16</sup> 'Time becomes foremost only when a loss of the living sense of eternity is experienced.' Pomerants adds that without an hour in church, Christmas, as the feast of carols of joy, becomes senseless. He thereby points out that toleration and observance of holiday traditions while at the same time depriving them of their essential mystical religious content, will not really make man happy or save him from the typical sense of boredom of the modern secularized human being which is the real essence of alienation.<sup>17</sup> Only in the fullness of the genuine

religious holiday is there a timeless fusion of the tragic, the serious-mystical, the joyful happiness of festivity, and the carnival. In their fusion is the wholeness of being and existence. Liturgy is the full expression of this undivided culture, writes Pomerants, and 'Masses deprived of [religious] holidays turn into savages.'<sup>18</sup>

He sees this full immersion in timeless holiday-making, uniting man with the universe, among the Africans and in many aspects of Buddhism. In the Christian world, as already pointed out, he sees the liturgy (and the ikon) and the carnivals associated with the religious holidays as the essentials of the same sense of man's timeless unity with the universe. With the disappearance of the carnival in the North European (and particularly, North American) secularizing Protestant tradition, he discerns the way towards that atomization and artificial limitation of man which in modern times led to the phenomenon of alienation. Pomerants's interpretation of alienation goes a long way from Marx; so far, indeed, that its discussion could not be continued in the pages of the official press.

No other intellectually original or revealing issues have been raised in the printed philosophic works touching on the problem of alienation of man.

## SCIENCE AND CONVERGENCE

The moral issues of science and of the socio-ethical responsibilities of scientists have also been discussed in the press. One of the most striking essays on this subject was written by a professor in the field of cybernetics, Iu. Shreider. His thesis is that science can be and too often is turned into a religion, to which everything can be sacrificed. He draws on the moral authorities of the Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin and the Russian Orthodox priest Professor P. Florensky, the Gospels, and Thomas Aquinas, to develop his thesis. He writes that a scientist should be limited in his experiments by an ethic deriving from love of humanity and the concept that the human being is not a means but an end in itself. There are values higher than rationality. From the purely rational point of view, writes Shreider, it would be justifiable for a doctor to use the heart of an imbecile to resurrect a scholar, but from the moral point of view this is

murder. If rationality is accepted as the criterion, then there will be no end to the perpetration of crimes against humanity. In other words, he places the unrationalizable spiritual basis of life, morality, and human and social relations at the basis of things. In one place, Shreider refers approvingly to de Chardin in the following terms:

it was precisely his [de Chardin's] attempt to approach from modern scientific positions the theory of the single converging evolutionary development of the Universe, where there is no more room for thermal death and destruction, but only an optimistic picture of an intelligent development of the World, that brought him posthumous fame.<sup>19</sup>

Note the reference to convergence, here receiving a metaphysical context: convergence in Eternity, convergence in God. This is the context in which de Chardin used the term, and Shreider makes this obvious in his statement as well. The same subject of the necessity to subordinate science to human ethics in order that it serve humanity was raised by another scholar, Academician M. Volkenshtein, who stressed that the language of the scientists living under different ideological systems is the same, believes that in science the convergence concept is a *fait accompli*, because the interests of the scientists of both worlds are the same.

Volkenshtein refers to the 'imperialists' in his warnings when he says that 'the enemies of humanity' can make use of science and this would be catastrophic to humanity. But to the Soviet reader his message is obvious, particularly when in conclusion he writes: 'The slowness of the liquidation of the routine of school and university education . . . the dogmatism of some philosophers' hinders the bringing together of science and the humanities into one 'Science of man' and one culture of man.<sup>20</sup>

A major complaint of Soviet philosophers that has been forced to the pages of *samizdat* by the censorship, is the paralyzing effects of isolation and lack of free flow of information in Soviet scholarship in general and in Soviet philosophy in particular. Reports on the International Philosophic Congress in Vienna in 1968 were full of such complaints. Even in Marxism, it was stated, Western philosophers have done more original and thorough work than the Soviets. Questions of Marxist and non-Marxist humanism, and the correlation between the class and the all-human elements in various doctrines



are being analyzed in our country extremely hesitantly, in a most general way, particularly the analysis and assessment of contemporary social movements and ideological doctrines.

A report criticized the Soviet philosophers' simplistic explanation of the existing differences among Marxist philosophers by:

evil deeds of some individuals or . . . by 'not understanding', a 'superficial approach', etc. . . . Without a thorough elaboration of these problems our critical arguments directed against the devotees of 'many Marxisms' will not emerge from the framework of moralizing orations and threatening preaching.

Obviously such ideological polyphony could not be tolerated for long by the party line, particularly after the suppression of Czechoslovakia. And a clamp-down began, although judging by the contents of *Problems of Philosophy* (*Voprosy filosofii*) in 1972 and 1973, it was to some extent spared the general fate. Its contents still remain varied and debates can be found on the interrelationship of modern science and philosophy, etc. But because they are couched in such wholly, quasi-professional jargon and style, the issues, debates and these defended remain outside the realm of a lay reader. Hence, the journal seems to fit the description cited above in connection with science: *Problems of Philosophy* (*Vopfil* in its Russian acronym) for a few scientists, the unified undebatable party line for the masses (including the rank-and-file educated people).

On 27 November 1969 a directive was worked out for Soviet philosophers by the USSR Academy of Sciences Presidium. It called on the philosophers to strictly adhere to the official philosophy and to bring modern scientific discoveries into the ideological line by explaining them in terms of dialectical materialism, and to concentrate also on 'criticism of the modern bourgeois philosophy'.<sup>21</sup>

## THE CREATION OF THE 'PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF THE USSR' AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

To implement the above 1969 directive, 'The Philosophical Society of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' was formed in

December 1971. It may be of interest that the word *truth* was never mentioned at the Soviet Philosophers' Congress which established this society, whereas it is usually considered that the aim of philosophy is the pursuit of truth. Instead, it was declared that the aim of the Society is:

a broader attraction of Soviet philosophers to the oral and printed propaganda of the Marxist-Leninist Weltanschauung

...

Soviet philosophers must carry on the struggle against the tolerant revisionist tendencies toward religion, and against all concessions to the religious Weltanschauung.<sup>22</sup>

Among the 'rights' of Soviet philosophers the statute mentions the right:

to participate in the creative discussions of topical problems of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and scientific communism.

But the duty of the members is:

to actively participate in the development of topical problems of philosophy and of scientific communism, to take part in the propaganda of the achievements of Soviet philosophy, to carry on the struggle against bourgeois ideology, the revisionist pervasions and dogmatic interpretations of Marxism-Leninism.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time a violent campaign against all theories of convergence, of the 'washing away' of differences between various ideologies in an age of the uniformizing scientific revolution, was further intensified in the Soviet press. This included the chief philosophic journal (*Vopfil*), which in 1972 had the following new sections added to it: 'Social Contradictions of Capitalism and the Ideational Struggle', 'On the Dialectics of Social Processes', 'Criticism of Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophy and Sociology'. Although the press did not dare mention that many Soviet intellectuals were in favour of convergence, it was clear to many readers that attacks on the 'renegades' R. Garaudy or E. Fischer, the leading Western Marxist-revisionists expelled respectively from the French and the Austrian communist parties, were actually directed at the liberal Russian intelligentsia, who have caused greater concern to the Soviet ideologues than the non-Soviet writers.<sup>24</sup>

In general it would be accurate to say that the post-1971 *Vopfil* became even more impersonal in the profile of its articles, a journal of predominantly institutional 'production' philosophy. The rubrics are there, including the rubric of 'Scientific Atheism', which disappears from the journal in 1977, is brought back with one single and very stereotypical article for the whole year of 1981, and then disappears again. The rubrics have to be filled, with certain approximate statistical 'weights' per subject. Philosophers dealing with the required subject are requested to produce printable material on their themes, which are then 'co-ordinated', edited, censored, thrashed out, so as to become totally stereotypical and repetitious in form and in content, losing all or almost all traces of individual authorship. Thus, in most cases if you have read one article in, say, five years on 'dialectical materialism and the revolutionary process', you've read them all. Nevertheless, even during this dreary latter decade and a half some interesting material did break through even in *Vopfil.*, usually in the back part of the journal dealing with such still ideologically controversial subjects as philosophical problems of physics and biology,<sup>25</sup> philosophy of art, and other subjects that cannot be easily compressed into the clichés of dialectical materialism, touch on the spiritual, and yet have to be, if even minimally, represented in a journal which purports to deal with all aspects of philosophy. In most cases even these articles are too abstract and oblique to leave a lasting impression on at least the non-professional reader.<sup>26</sup> Most of them evade the mystique of the free and pioneering human person as a creator; such ideas, as we have seen, did find their way onto the pages of *Vopfil.* in the 1960s.

The few breakthroughs betraying a searching personality of the author behind them, have occurred in some articles on the history of religio-philosophic thought, on the philosophy of art and literature. An article on Tolstoy's ethics, on the one hand stresses Tolstoy's faith in the reason and his belief that reason 'impregnated with existential intentions' cannot be ethically neutral; on the other, criticises positivism with its 'worshipping' of science. The latter may be read as a camouflaged criticism of Marxism and its pretence at scientism as a claim to hold a monopoly of answers to all social problems. The author quotes without any criticism Fr. P. Florensky's condemnation of Tolstoyanism:

a faith based on reason is the worst of all forms of godlessness . . . the faith with proofs of rational argument, in Tolstoy's formula, 'I want to understand in such a way that every inexplicable position would appear to me as a necessity of reason' [such a faith] is a monstrous product of human egotism, striving to subordinate even God to itself.<sup>27</sup>

This presentation is a healthy change from the usual Soviet blanket and unexplained condemnations of the Church as an obscurantist reactionary body for the excommunication of Leo Tolstoy.

On occasion there appear interesting and quite genuine philosophical articles and discussions on the 'language' of arts, literature, aesthetics, asserting a hierarchy of values quite incompatible with Marxism and its thesis of the material base and the spiritual life as a mere superstructure. Here, probably, the most outstanding and 'personalized' article in recent years was authored by A. V. Rubstov, whose main thesis is that the metaphoric and 'inexact' language of the arts not only differs from that of the sciences and academic scholarship in general, but is more 'accurate' in the long term more universal, and carries a message of much greater impact to the individual reader or viewer, as well as for humanity as such; where 'clarity and extreme severity of language lead to intellectual cramps' and can be understood only in a clearly defined context. The author polemicises with the materialistic theorists of the language of art, for example A. Potebnia and W. Humboldt, and cites as his authorities such non-Marxist Russian philosophers who had been persecuted and banned by the Soviets as M. M. Bakhtin, A. F. Losev, and Osip Mandel'shtam, the poet-martyr of Stalin's terror, who wrote:

The live word does not stand for objects. Instead it freely chooses, as if for cohabitation, one or the other object-significance, . . . a dear body. And the word wanders freely around the object, like the soul around a forsaken but not forgotten body.

Religious implications in the above quotation from the Christian poet are quite obvious. Rubstov's main point is that the language and concepts of the scientific and the artistic spheres are not mutually exclusive contradictions, but are in a hierarchical relationship with each other. The imagery-filled metaphoric

languages of the arts are much more universal and timeless, and hence carry a greater, broader and more universal truth, even if their details may be 'scientifically' inaccurate. Clearly, this line of argument is just as applicable to the language of religion, to the Scriptures and to the use of parables by Jesus. All these are commonly attacked in Soviet antireligious publications precisely for the 'sins' which Rubstov turns into virtues in relation to arts.<sup>28</sup>

Ironically, criticism of the worshipping of science and of the scientific mind is a recurring theme in Soviet philosophical publications. G. Ia. Strel'tsova, one of the more original (less stereotypical) authors, succeeds in publishing two quite interesting articles on Pascal in *Vopfil.*; in both favourably contraposing him to Descartes and to the whole Renaissance tradition of deification of reason and science. She shows that the thoroughly Christian thinker Pascal, who believed in wisdom of the heart, and in its superiority over the intellect (reason) and of its incomprehensibility to the latter, turned out to be a greater and more prolific mathematician and scientist than the rationalistic and deistic Descartes. Although she completes her 1979 article by calling Pascal 'a victim . . . of the Christian religion', her 'explanation' of the ways that had led him on to the thoroughly Christian path has a very contemporary ring to an attentive Soviet reader:

The playing up to one's nature [in the sense of flesh – D. P.], in Pascal's view, encloses man in a [shell of] self-love, which like a root produces the vices of . . . vanity, preoccupation with self-entertainment, fraudulence, hypocrisy, escape into oneself, greediness in the use of material goods, corrupting all human relations . . . and morals.

This is a clear shot at materialism and materialistic philosophies and their fruits, including, of course, Marxism. But then she adds that it was the growth of absolutism in Pascal's time in which he saw all these corrupting elements 'undermining his moral ideals' that led him to see the only alternative to the secular society in Christianity. Let the Pascal experts agree or disagree on this Strel'tsova assertion, but a thinking Soviet reader will see a parallel between the reference to corrupt absolutism and the Soviet totalitarian system, and between Pascal's turn to Christianity and a similar tendency among Soviet intellectuals. Moreover, there is even a direct shot at the

foundations of Marxism (the Hegelian-Marxist system) in the article, when the author stressed that that Pascal who of all his contemporaries left the most important contribution to science and thought, 'exciting the questing humanity to the present day',

was a conscious enemy of any philosophy *expressed in the form of a system* [emphasis supplied – D. P.]. Only some 200 years later there will appear philosophers . . . who will pronounce with a challenge that philosophy . . . must be unsystematic if it wants to be closer to man and his existence (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, the contemporary existentialists).<sup>29</sup>

An interesting breakthrough occurred in Gorbachev's first year (not unlike the two to three immediate post-Khrushchev 'liberal' years of partial *interregnum*), when *Voprosy filosofii* managed to publish nineteen closely printed pages of the Russian nineteenth-century philosopher Peter Chaadaev's largely God-orientated aphorisms, which had been prepared for print in the 1930s, were in the final galley form in the late 1940s, but have not seen the light of day until now. The few selected quotations from these aphorisms explain why it took nearly fifty years for them to appear in the Soviet press, but do not quite explain why they have finally been published. As if putting the dots over the i's in Rubtsov's article, we read in Chaadaev's aphorisms:

Religion is the cognition of God. Science is the cognition of the universe . . . religion teaches how to cognize God in His essence; science [teaches how to cognize Him] in His acts. Thus both eventually lead to God.

And yet there are some people in our time who see nothing more than a myth in Christ's religion . . . from the very first century Christianity rises to the heights of the contemporary society, becomes the creed of the most outstanding intellects. . . . Some things can be comprehended only by faith, i.e. a faith must precede their perception. . . .

. . . the human mind accepted some truths as objects of faith in all ages, as *a priori* truths, . . . without which no act of reason could be imagined. . . . Faith stands in the beginning and in the end of the road, traversed by the human reason. . . . Man believes he knows; having gained know-

ledge, he believes again. He always proceeds from a belief in order to return to a belief.

In aphorism 194, Chaadaev interprets the creation of man as 'the *infinite reason*' taking 'the form of a finite one embodied in man [where] it naturally had to . . . retain the properties of its former existence'. Therefore, Chaadaev concludes, 'Man's origin is not in a two-legged animal as the materialists imagine.'<sup>30</sup>

Reading this, and the introductory article on Chaadaev by a Soviet philosopher, praising the religious philosopher as a great mind and very influential in Russian thought,<sup>31</sup> the Soviet reader will have very mixed ideas – to put it mildly – on the whole corpus of the Marxist-Leninist philosophy with its intolerant and contemptuous treatment of theology and religious philosophy. Should that reader search for a philosophically explained and expressed connection between art and religion, or perhaps more accurately, the organic link between literary creativity and a sense of the Absolute, he will find these in the Moscow University lecturers and articles of Sergei Averintsev, one of the most erudite of the contemporary Soviet-Russian philosophers and Byzantinologists. Averintsev was the leading author of the entries on the liturgy, Eucharist, theology, Orthodoxy, etc., in the Soviet Philosophical Encyclopedia, a miracle of sorts owing to the accuracy and theological purity with which the articles were not only written but published. The intellectual honesty of that Encyclopedia itself, with its crucial Fifth Volume in 1970, may have been one of the causes of the tightening of the philosophers' leashes, in 1971. Averintsev's writings take the historicity of Christ and the Scriptures as a given without any doubt, and assert the merits of state based on Christian values over a materialistic one. He discusses the organic connection between God-manhood (incarnation) and art (via the icon), the spiritual origins of freedom, the hierarchical concept of the person originating from the Creator, and similar ideas totally incompatible with the official ideology.<sup>32</sup>

The question whether all such philosophers (and obviously, what breaks through the censorial nets onto the pages of official publications is only a tip of an iceberg) are practising Christians is beyond the objective of this investigation. But that they have led many to find their faith in the Absolute, or at least away from dialectical materialism, this is beyond doubt, and that is what

they have periodically been accused of by the establishment writers, as has been shown in preceding chapters.

It is in response to this type of 'offensive' that the Establishment begins to practically mythologise dialectical materialism into nothing less than a state religion. Just 'listen' to this:

In order to be true to dialectics, it is not enough to use it, it is necessary first of all to serve it. We must not only allow it a place in our arsenal of instruments, but we must devote to it our very aspirations, with their utmost beginnings and ends, with their uncompleted prospects of eternal formations. We must devote to it [dialectics] not only the periphery but also the very core of our essence. We must give up to it our whole lives . . . to be born again in it.

Just replace the word 'dialectics' with 'God', and you have a born-again fundamentalist preaching. But let us continue with this official academic Soviet text on dialectics:

Then [after our rebirth in it] the dialectics will become the one and undivided logic of our real life, the standard of our life and of its intrinsic moral efforts, calling us always to 'the absolute movement of formation'.<sup>33</sup>

It is yet to be seen whether this call to worship the dialectics will bear any fruit. In the meanwhile, let us cast a glance at the philosophic tendencies in *samizdat* which, being the only uncensored media in the USSR, should more accurately represent the genuine thinking processes, trends, and quests in the country.

## PHILOSOPHIC STUDIES IN *SAMIZDAT*

The experience of such apocalyptic calamities of our century as Marxism-Leninism, Hitlerism and other totalitarian regimes in all their lethal forms, and the control of power by tiny groups manipulating the masses, has shaken (in the USSR at least) the foundations of such popular nineteenth century philosophic concepts as rationalism, historical determinism, or the belief in the existence of some objective laws governing social processes. At the same time, such concepts as personalism and the belief that personalities and small elites are actually the moving and determining agents of history, have largely replaced the



concepts of collectivism, populism, historicism, etc.

In *samizdat* works, the study of the human personality and the motivation of its acts and its role in history has gone on unperturbed. Even a Marxist historiosopher like Roy Medvedev felt compelled to concentrate on the study of Stalin's personality when looking for clues regarding his rule of terror, and – this is both ironical and revealing – ended up criticizing bourgeois historians for having associated Stalin's crimes too closely with the Soviet social system.<sup>34</sup>

A much deeper insight into the role and importance of the human person *vis-à-vis* the masses, history, and God, is found in the works of Solzhenitsyn, who finds it necessary to enter for that purpose into direct dialogue with Leo Tolstoy, a determinist and a collectivist.<sup>35</sup>

Interest in the irrational begins in many *samizdat* philosophically inclined writers with the study of Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>36</sup> The growth of interest in Nietzsche is reminiscent of the era of the Russian religio-philosophic renaissance of the early twentieth century, when Nietzscheanism had a tremendous influence on the Russian intellectuals who were beginning to turn away from nineteenth-century naturalism, materialism, and the determinism of Hegel and Marx. Noting the irrational behaviour of the masses in the course of the 1905 Revolution, these intellectuals were beginning to become aware of the existence and power of the irrational in human behaviour.<sup>37</sup> What caused the interest was Nietzsche's emphasis on the irrational; his concepts of the importance of the individual human person, elitism, and the importance of human passions and emotions. It is in these elements of Nietzsche that some Russian Christian philosophers saw his closeness to Christianity, despite his own violent atheism. The road of uncensored Russian thinkers today, as far as it is possible to judge from the few *samizdat* philosophical works that are available in the West, is very similar to the thinkers of the immediate pre-revolutionary period. In fact, the frequency with which the names of these thinkers are mentioned in *samizdat* works is astounding, as none of their writings have been published in the USSR since 1922 when most of the authors fled or were exiled to Western Europe.<sup>38</sup>

In the philosophical studies of man – one of the central themes of Russia's free philosophy today – there is a return to the traditional Russian anthropocentrism: a pessimistic existen-

tialist concept of man's loneliness and alienation from society and from other men.<sup>39</sup>

One *samizdat* writer, in a fascinating article on the Russian intelligentsia and culture, shows this terrible loneliness and forsakenness of the modern Russian *intelligent* whenever his interests go deeper than a career and his daily needs. The author argues that the contemporary *intelligent* has lost all the values of his pre-revolutionary confrère as described in the *Singposts* collection. The pre-revolutionary *intelligent* was predominantly an ascetically inclined atheist, whose atheism had all the attributes of a religion upside-down. He deified science and everything scientific; and optimistically believed in the common people and in progress. Non-material culture he considered a secondary value. To use the famous dictum ascribed to Pisarev, 'Boots are loftier than Shakespeare', the author considers in juxtaposition that the modern Russian *intelligent* is a better connoisseur of arts and culture, and values them higher than boots, although in practical terms he is much more interested in personal material comfort than his predecessor. He is not an atheist either, for he is rather indifferent to religion. But he respects the Church as an institution which played an historical role and whose places of prayer have an architectural aesthetic value. He has no belief in science and his non-belief in God is pragmatic: after having lived through the horrors of the twentieth century, he believes that had there been a God, He would not have tolerated all this. Equally, after the same experiences, he does not any more believe in all-saving progress and in a forthcoming social bliss. And along with these he has also lost belief in 'the mighty human reason' and in rationality as the guiding force of life. It is in this tendency towards irrationalism of the modern Russian *intelligent* that the author sees some hope for a true spiritual and religious revival of the Russian intelligentsia, but that hope, according to him, is still far from its realization. Thus far the contemporary *intelligent* very often has settled for a 'dual consciousness'. He begins to tend towards some forms of abstract spiritualism (with Oriental admixtures) which would not be too much in the way of his cynical pragmatism in daily life. Here he lacks all clear ethical concepts. His tradition goes back to Dostoevsky's: 'If there is no God then

everything is permissible.' In real life he has come now through bitter experience to the conclusion that decency is better than indecency, for it is safer to have a decent neighbour. But the absolute imperatives of evil and virtue are still foreign to the average *intelligent*. Everything remains relative. He joins the Communist Party under the pretext that the more decent people that join it the better will the party become; but having joined it he subordinates himself to its discipline and supports resolutions condemning acts of civil courage. And the author sees the dilemma in this: having lost Christianity man loses the concept of the absolute value of Freedom and Virtue, replacing these with relativities and with the concept of necessity, which is 'the tragedy of the voluntary *rejection of freedom*'. From this arises a whole series of illustrations based on a relative concept of profit for each given moment, i.e. on necessity. The post-revolutionary intelligentsia has been constructing one such illusory 'necessity' after another; each time subsequently having to pay with its own blood for each successive illusion. It began with the illusion of 1920 that the Soviet régime was transforming itself in a way similar to the post-revolutionary French republic of the Directory. After a series of illusions regarding the industrialisation it built for itself the illusion of the 1960s that a new technological de-ideologized society was being constructed in which the leaders were going to listen to advice of the intelligentsia and accept its reformist suggestions. Only a return to recognition of the non-relativity of the notions of good and evil and of freedom as absolute, unreducible Christian values, is seen by the author as a way to salvation both for Russia and for mankind at large.<sup>40</sup>

Similar ills are recognized by another writer, who confesses his own personal dichotomy: 'What horror! I don't believe in God, but I live and I think as if I did believe!' In another place he writes: 'The religion of our time is atheism. Here sects are, apparently, also possible (on the basis of political teachings).' But then he confirms the tragic result of atheism: 'Having lost God, man has become impoverished.' Speaking of modern man, he says 'the majority of men have not matured for either religion or atheism', and recognizes that 'the finite senses of man cannot grasp the infinite'. And, after a hundred pages of self-immolating arguments with God and with himself, he sighs:

'No, modern man, even when he wants to believe, cannot believe.' And then: 'Oh Lord, look at my tears . . . Look, how Thy Son is suffering, whom Thou hast given to the power of death.'<sup>41</sup>

By far not all Soviet philosophers are suffering from such a halfway position. Many philosophical essays indicate an achieved conviction, a return to Christianity as an accomplished fact.

A general comment is appropriate here. In the 1950s, philosophically inclined young men were largely preoccupied with the study of Lenin, Marx and other Marxist thinkers. Consequently, in the mid 1960s, several groups of them were sentenced to prison for studying Marx too attentively and making conclusions critical of the existing socio-political order.<sup>42</sup> Toward the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s more and more philosophical writings began to circulate which demonstrated the authors' growing or even complete estrangement from Marx and Marxism. In some cases a poor knowledge, or total inner rejection, of the whole system of dialectics – from Hegel on – was shown. For some of these authors, philosophy means Kant, Schopenhauer, Spengler, Vladimir Solov'ev, S. Frank, N. Berdiaev, P. Florensky – even Sigmund Freud. As one author writes: 'The work which Freud fulfilled was a . . . ministry of cleansing the hypocritical puristic stables.' He claims Freud also purged the hypocritical establishment of the official Church and dealt a death blow to the rationalistic illusions by revealing the world of the subconscious, and dreams and their role in human lives, thereby 'rehabilitating' mysticism.<sup>43</sup>

This idealized view of Freud is not shared by the more accomplished and more systematical Christian thinkers, however. One of them, recognizing Freud's great contribution in demonstrating the importance of the unconscious and subconscious spheres in human behaviour, i.e., the irrational in man, sees Freudism as 'one of the most ominous phenomena of our time'. Similarly to Christianity, it 'explores the dark sinfulness in the human soul'; but in contrast to Christianity,

it wholly accepts and justifies it. Even the possibility of such an acceptance and justification are a victory for the original sin. The most hopeless form of illness is when the afflicted person considers himself to be healthy and mistakes the symptoms of ailment for traits of good health.

The author believes that the only hope for a person fallen into a slough of moral dirt and degradation is in realising it for being what it is and having pangs of conscience wrought by Christian concepts of good and evil, i.e., having a glimmer 'of striving towards an ideal of purity and sanctity', while Freudian agnosticism and relativism denies the soul.<sup>44</sup>

Pomerants, on the other hand, applies the concepts of the conscious and the subconscious and their interplay to his theory of culture and man's evolution. The man of the patriarchal rural culture, he says, bore an almost unquestionable inherited subconscious religion, where all ethical concepts were accepted as a matter of course. The upheavals of the last one hundred years – with their replacement of the deeply rooted predominantly rural culture of subconscious ethics by a rootless, atheistic, science-idolizing proletariat and similar professional classes – badly damaged, if not destroyed, this hereditary ethical structure. He calls the new intelligentsia of today a renaissance put on its head, for where the early theologians and philosophers were preoccupied with sciences, now it is the mathematicians who study religion and other ethical questions. With its awareness of the impasse of materialism, the new intelligentsia is consciously reviving, accepting, and propagating that which had been accepted subconsciously, by tradition, or out of superstitious fear in the past. Whereas much of the traditional religion was a religion 'of necessity' (or habit), now the reviving religion in Russia is a religion of freedom: freely and consciously sought and found. In this, Pomerants sees hope for the future.<sup>45</sup>

From the purely philosophic point of view, the most professional work in the area of transcendental orientation seems to be *Practical Metaphysics*. Its pseudonymous author writes that the last man to learn religion at school in his family was his grandfather. Yet he shows not only a religious belief but also a logical justification thereof. For him, metaphysics (that which lies beyond physics or matter) is the essence and the basis of everything living. He develops a theory that games, for children as well as for adults, are always aimed toward freedom and a sense of completing an act of free will. The satisfaction is derived from the process of achieving and not in the completed act of achievement. The more difficult the process, the greater the satisfaction, regardless of the rationality of the act (for example, the satisfaction in sports for the sake of sport). In other words, the degree of improbability of achievement or of victory is

directly proportional to the degree of satisfaction, although there are limitations both ways. Finally, in order that the game is satisfactory, it must be free and its partners' decision to participate must also be free-willed. This is the basis of his argument for the primacy of freedom and human will for all acts, and for the priority of spontaneity over rationality and/or command. On the other hand, only freedom is connected with responsibility. A criminal basically has to be free to be made responsible for his crime. A soldier killing people in action is normally never considered a murderer, for he has no free will: he is under command.

Analyzing Schopenhauer's hierarchical scale of values, the author of *Practical Metaphysics* concludes that the only acceptable (and unique) criterion for considering man superior to other forms of creation (and relatively, other forms of creation in relation to their inferiors) is the degree of will and its applicability in each creature. Therefore: 'Will is objectivised in nature on different levels of freedom.' On this basis, he claims, all creatures have a certain degree of freedom of their own, ascending from the lowest forms up to man, and then from him to God, the Absolute Freedom and the only source of Freedom and Will. 'Suffering . . . is always the sign of discovery by our will of the limitation of its freedom, i.e. of recognition of its freedom; every expansion of these limits is inseparably tied with satisfaction, happiness, bliss.' He considers this sense and will for freedom to be the sense of the 'Kingdom of God within you' (Luke, 17.21). For this, man searches by striving for freedom under the most unlikely situations, often with very little hope of achievement, while risking the loss of what he has. This cannot be explained in rational terms, yet this is the basis of all creativity and progress in life and this urge for freedom can only be grasped metaphysically.<sup>46</sup>

At the beginning of this discussion it was said that the approach to the problem of man and of his loneliness in many *samizdat* writings is purely existentialist. In view of the rising volume of religious, mainly Christian, philosophic writings in *samizdat*, this ought to be restated with more precision: those authors who see any hope in man and for man, see it in Christian-existentialist terms.

## RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY *PER SE*

Where the subject is centred on the Transcendental, *samizdat* often 'continues' and develops the issues only obliquely discussed or just touched upon in the official philosophical publications. This parallelism helps us to see and verify what are the subjects of greatest genuine concern to the contemporary Russian/Soviet thinker-philosopher.

Thus, where Averintsev, Rubstov, Losev and even Bakhtin almost only by implication point to the intimate relationship of art and aesthetics with the Transcendental through a hierarchy of values based on a notion of the Absolute, *samizdat* authors develop the theme fully and explicitly.

Evgeni Barabanov, a prolific religious philosopher, art historian and a Christian neophyte, views the incarnation of Jesus as the rehabilitation of matter, replacing the dualism of the ancient philosophers who edified either the physical body or the spirit, by a harmony of the spiritual and the material. The first-century Judaic philosopher, Philon of Alexandria, who had greatly influenced the Christian thought of the day, stated that the world is a great achievement of art, therefore the Creator is a great artist, an 'Architect . . . with a perfect wisdom'. The theme of beauty in nature as God's creation was further developed by the third-century Christian thinker, Tertullian, who argued that contempt for the earth could not be justified, because 'the hands of the Artist of the universe touched it'. Since the Christian concept of beauty originates with the beauty of creation, i.e. with the concept of God as the source and creator of beauty, beauty becomes inseparable from goodness, virtue. Hence Christianity distinguishes beauty as goodness ('Beauty will save the world', in Dostoevsky's words), which is devoid of self-interest, self-gratification and desire for possession; and beauty linked to self-interest, passion, possessiveness (again in Dostoevsky: 'Beauty is that frightening and mysterious thing, in which all contradictions coexist, where the devil is fighting God, and the hearts of men are the battlefield').<sup>47</sup> The latter is a dark, ruinous beauty.

In contrast, 'the Church Fathers when speaking about God use the words "light" and "beauty" as synonyms. Hence, the symbolism of light is one of the foundation-forming elements of mediaeval art.' Barabanov cites the use of 'night', 'darkness' in the Scriptures for evil, sinfulness, evil-doing; including St John's

Gospel, where Judas goes into the night to betray Christ.<sup>48</sup> Hence the symbolism of white vestments, candles, the white in the icons of Resurrection, and the term *illuminati* for the new converts.<sup>49</sup>

Thence Barabanov leads his reader to the role of the eye, of vision in the Scriptures. The eye which contemplates the Creator in The Book of Job is that which alone dispels all his doubts. The word and the image are inseparable in the Bible.<sup>50</sup> St John Chrysostomos speaks about the eye that sees also the invisible. The original meaning of the word *theoria* (theory), so frequently used in the writings of the Church Fathers, is 'vision', 'visual contemplation', 'observation', 'visual admiration'. Admiration of the beauty of the World-Art created by the Great Artist. In the words of St Gregory the Theologian, 'to observe the world is to use one's vision as a guide to the invisible, cognising God from the beauty and organisation of the visible'. Thus, stresses Barabanov, in the value system of a Christian, beauty and aesthetics are purposeful, not abstractions in themselves.<sup>51</sup> What follows in his essay is that in a religious structure of values, beauty and aesthetics have a definite starting-point and thus a standard of evaluation, a standard for distinguishing real art from artistic racket.

This is the theme of another highly qualified essay on aesthetics, by a certain Boris Mikhailov, obviously a very erudite philosopher of art. In many ways he is more severe than Barabanov. He attacks aestheticism (not aesthetics) as a quasi-religion of sorts, a 'result of the Renaissance reductionism of Christianity', which 'touches on the fundamental issues of existence and tries to respond to them in its own way'. He sees aestheticism as a dominant *Weltanschauung* determining the life patterns of masses of people: thirst for fun and entertainment finding a justification in the concepts of free art, unrestrained by any standards, concepts, values. In that sense, modern art, breaking with all conventions, becomes a natural ally of revolutionary socialism, destruction of culture, tradition, spirituality, organic views of life and the mystery of creation. In the final analysis, this leads to the destruction of culture (as originating from a *cult*). Mikhailov points out that all traditional art originated from a vertical holding a horizontal bloc or boulder on top of it. This is the table of sacrifice, a symbol of unity in worship, of communion of the world. Modern art overthrew this



canon on which all artistic creativity and the life of the world expressed by it was based. Thus the modernists expelled the universalistic out of the arts. He quotes Russian revolutionary artists of the early twentieth century declaring the end of individualism in art (Larionov), which would hence have a purely technological character aiding the process of inhabiting space (Tatlin). Malevich replaces the above sacrificial basic artistic form by his black square, 'that blinding hellish cavity of the universe', and declares that art will be the companion of the revolutionary 'vanguard of destruction'. Mikhailov sees a parallel between this 'abstract' art and social utopiae: both are unrealistic and unrealisable. 'The crucial point in utopianism is the replacement of God's plan by human projects, raising to the height of an ideal that which cannot even exist.' The kinship of socialism and aestheticism, in Mikhailov's view, is in their common negation of the created world and of God. In short, both are an *Ersatz*, a fraud. In Mikhailov's view, it was no coincidence that one of the greatest of the Russian modernist artists and a theorist of that new school of revolutionary aestheticism, Malevich, wrote:

The new art is already . . . transforming itself into a party organisation . . . art is entering into a unified bond with communism. . . . In the logical construction of communism the Church ought to be shut immediately, similarly to private commerce . . . the family must be destroyed. . . . It is thus that we shall attain a de-objectivised world, purified from all old forms.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, where Barbanov merely traces the sources and lines of direction of Christian aesthetics, Mikhailov warns against the substitution of beauty by aestheticism as a doctrine of 'liberated' art accompanying the socialist utopia, denying and destroying that very incarnate matter on which have been based the last two millenia of art and culture in the Christian world.

Analysis of socialism as a philosophy of evil and destruction, can be found in *samizdat* 'think-pieces'. The Academician Igor' Shafarevich, world-renowned mathematician and religious thinker, points out that:

man can appeal to God only as a person and in this appeal perceives himself as a person commensurable with the person

of God. . . . The main forces aiding the development of individuality are religion, morals, a sense of personal participation in history, responsibility for the destiny of mankind. Socialism is hostile to them . . . the economic and social demands of socialism are but *means* for the achievement of its fundamental *aim*: the *destruction of individuality*. . . . Precisely therefore socialist ideology and religion rule each other out.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, argues Shafarevich, socialism aims at the destruction of private property, family, religion, as elements distinguishing individuals and asserting value orientations outside the levelling-out of collectivism. Shafarevich disagrees with Marx's concept of historical evolution according to which socialism, is a product of the industrial society, arguing that the collectivistic-socialist teachings and societies have existed as an alternative to and parallel with more individualistic cultures throughout history. As intellectual, scientific and spiritual progress has always been the work of great individuals (scientists, religious teachers, prophets, artists, writers, etc.), a doctrine that negates the individual and tries to subordinate it to a collective is anti-progressive and leads to stagnation. Since societies cannot stand still, just like a human organism, and can only either develop or wither away, socialism in the final analysis leads to death of societies and of mankind, at first a spiritual death (demoralisation, disillusionment, pessimism, cynicism) and eventually physical. As God is the Creator and Life-giver, socialism, destroying life, is anti-God, a force of the anti-Christ.<sup>54</sup>

In view of the above, Boris Paramonov's analysis of 'The Cult of Personality as a secret of Marxian Anthropology' sounds like a paradox and a rejection of Shafarevich's theory. In fact, it is not. This former Leningrad University professor of philosophy sees Marxism as a 'reductionist heresy' which throws God out of man's hierarchy of values, and in its utopian aim 'reduces the Heaven down to the earth' turning the leader, the interpreter of Marxism, the 'builder' of that earthly Heaven, 'into a god', an infallible being in command of the dialectics and of the road to 'perfect society'. In this he sees the 'unconscious religiosity of Marxism' and the logical procession of bloody personality cults (official Soviet euphemism for Stalin's terror). In the hierarchy of this system 'socialist realism is wider than art; it is a style of socialist life, dedicated to the creation of socialist myths'.<sup>55</sup>

From this interrelationship of Marxist socialism and the arts, unofficial Soviet religio-philosophic thinkers lead us to its relationship to history and the historico-cultural legacy of mankind in general.

The young but very perceptive 'historiosopher' Vadim Borisov paradoxically sees the professedly historicist Marxism as anti-historical and nihilistic. He sees revolutions as pagan revolts against history; the latter being the natural progression of the realization of interrelationship between the Creator and His chief creature, man. In as much as Marxism preaches and practises destructive revolutions, it is militantly antihistorical. It is no coincidence that once in power the Marxist regime in the USSR at first discontinued the teaching of history in schools. Later, as their aims appeared to move further from their realization (particularly the one of the World Revolution), Marxist regimes were forced to reintroduce some history, but in such a twisted and corrupted form as to present everything preceding the Marxist revolution as hopelessly decadent, evil, necessitating a Marxist 'liberation'. The historical

memory, rejected and persecuted, has survived somewhat in the Church, that citadel of 'memory eternal', in the oral tradition of some families, in the . . . sorrowful Russian poetry of the twentieth century.

And he sees the absolute need for the restoration of true historical memory (which includes Russia's spiritual culture and heritage) as equivalent to the rediscovery of the historical *future*'.<sup>56</sup>

This urge to rediscover the pre-Marxist past, the non-Marxist Russian intellectual, cultural and spiritual legacy (the latter being inseparable from the study of the Orthodox Church, her history and teachings as the core of the autochthonous Russian culture) is clearly evident in official Soviet writing as well. It leads many contemporary Soviet-Russian philosophers to the study of such phenomena of Russian thought as the Slavophiles (with their 'rehabilitation' of the writings of the early Church Fathers), the early twentieth-century Russian religio-philosophic renaissance, its immediate predecessor Vladimir Solov'ev, and, of course, Dostoevsky, to name but a few. We have seen the expression of interest in most of these topics already in the officially published Soviet thinkers. So much more explicit are

studies on these subjects appearing through *samizdat*. There are references to Dostoevsky in most of the works we have cited. It is clear (in fact, it is known) that the rediscovery of Dostoevsky since the late 1950s (when large editions of his works began to be published after an interval of some twenty-five years or more) has led the Soviet reading public away from Marxism, and, many of them, to God. Some find affinity with the Marmeladov (in *Crime and Punishment*) vision of God calling upon the fallen at the Last Judgement:

‘Come forward, ye drunks and weaklings’ . . . And He will hand out justice to all, will forgive all, the good ones and the bad ones, the wise and the meek. . . . Then we shall understand everything, and all will understand.<sup>57</sup>

Similar to the state of mind, soul and external life of a Soviet citizen, ‘Dostoevsky’s faith was a faith on the Golgotha, not that of humanism . . . a faith of repentance and love in the midst of “invisible warfare” of doubts and temptations.’<sup>58</sup>

Citing M. Bakhtin’s definition of Dostoevsky as ‘the great artist of an idea’, another author stresses that ‘the nature of these ideas was neither abstract, nor rationalistic, but existential, personalist’. As a personalist, Dostoevsky is preoccupied with that aspect of man’s individuality in which the universal is reflected and exposed. His subject is the soul of man where, according to Dostoevsky’s fundamental conviction, ‘the devil is struggling with God, and man’s heart is the battlefield’. Dostoevsky concentrates on man’s behaviour in extreme situations; precisely where this battle is most visible. Hence his aesthetics are subordinate to ethics, in which there is room for repentance and spiritual resurrection, and thus for supreme beauty, even in the most ugly situations: Sonia, the prostitute, becomes a miniscule reflection of Sophia-the-Wisdom-of-God (hence the name, a diminutive of Sophia). It is through that prostitute that God resurrects Raskolnikov, the murderer, by way of his suffering, humiliation, repentance, and, in the final analysis, love, love for the fallen Sonia, in whom his soul distinguishes a great beauty, spiritual beauty that is.

In our *samizdat* author’s view, the main ethico-philosophical lessons of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* (which he sees as crucial to the understanding of Dostoevsky’s philosophy) can be summed up thus:

[1] Man may not under any pretext violate 'God's truth, Earth's law', i.e. the truth of God-manhood: that not even the life of the most base of human beings may be sacrificed for the sake of even the loftiest of ideas . . . Any attempt . . . to fight with evil inevitably leads to the dissemination of evil. . . . [2] Then Dostoevsky demonstrates the indestructibility of the metaphysical foundations of the human soul . . . indestructibility of the voice of the conscience in man, however repressed. . . . Even after the greatest crime God's spark remains within man, he can rise again . . . Raskolnikov's story reminds us that even a deadly sin can be atoned for through repentance and appeal to Christ.<sup>59</sup>

Obviously, such conclusions are totally incompatible with Marxism; they are even beyond the comprehension of a Marxian mind. Hence the attacks in the Soviet media on Christian teachings as immoral, because they preach love even for one's enemy and forgiveness of a criminal who had never atoned for his criminal life by any good deeds even, but simply appealed for forgiveness to Jesus while dying on a cross.

Thus, in the extreme situation of living in a professedly Marxist society, reading of Dostoevsky poses an existential question of 'either/or': either through Dostoevsky, with Christ and freedom of the human person as an image of God and thus creating history with God, or with Marx and its determinism denying freedom of thought and action. The path of personalism leads away, not only from Marx, but also from the Hegelian determinism and its concept of freedom as 'realized necessity'. This is the very reverse of freedom, writes Alexandr Soprovsky, and, naturally, turns to the existentialist tradition of Kierkegaard, Lev Shestov, Dostoevsky, according to whom freedom is the existential autonomy of the human person, of its uniqueness and hence its responsibility for its own acts and 'for each other' (in Dostoevsky's words). Seeing their own predicament of being circumscribed by a 'system', those Soviet thinkers who dare to break out of that system mentally and spiritually are attracted by the very opposite of systematic thought. Hence the particular attraction of Lev Shestov, who 'contraposes creativity to cognition, faith to reason'. In the words of a *samizdat* philosopher, 'intellectual observation gives birth to systems, while the revelation opens up images of faith'. He quotes Shestov's vision of the

basis of human freedom and creativity in the Book of Genesis' passage, on man (Adam) giving names to animals: 'God has given man the creative gift of the *sovereign right* to give names. This, according to Shestov, is a unique freedom, freedom of the good.' Moreover, the whole concept of prayer means that a believer has the right and possibility to 'change God's decision'. Thus the power of prayer is a source of man's freedom and of man's ability to create in which he obtains freedom. This freedom has nothing to do with necessity. Hence Shestov totally rejects historical determinism, and also questions any logical sense in history. In the words of Shestov, 'a cheap candle burned down Moscow, but haven't Rasputin and Lenin, themselves nothing more than single cheap candles, burned down the whole of Russia?'

Shestov's thought presents a most radical revolt against systematism, determinism, and logic. In this and in his pathos of freedom lies Shestov's (but also Berdiaev's and other Russian religious philosophers') great attraction to a Soviet thinker freeing himself from Marxism today. But, as Soprovsky points out, when it comes to positive values replacing the idols destroyed by Shestov (and even more nihilistically by Nietzsche whom Shestov had admired), Dostoevsky has more to offer. In contrast to Shestov, he sees not only man deriving freedom from God, but also man 'in need of faith in Christ'. And in contrast to Shestov, who saw contradictions in Dostoevsky's path to God and incompatibility between his 'Man from the Underground's search for God and the character of the Elder Zosima, Soprovsky sees, as do the two writers cited earlier, a great harmony at the end of Dostoevsky's Golgothian, torturous, and antinomic road to God. The logic of the 'Man from the Underground' may be a different stage in man's relationship to God than the faith of Zosima, but it 'does not contradict either his [Dostoevsky's] image or his thoughts'.<sup>60</sup>

## CONCLUSION

A careful reading of the four parts of this chapter, we hope, will reveal to the reader a continuity of thought between the genuine existential searchings of Soviet thinkers published in the official press and those expressing themselves through the do-it-

yourself, unofficial (and punishable by long terms of incarceration) *samizdat*. The common line is a rejection of the official ideology, dissatisfaction with those schools of thought which could be seen as leading to the Marxist materialistic stagnation, and a search for alternatives in the sphere of Christian thought, religious philosophy, Christian existentialism, freedom from ideological shackles and utopian doctrines. Of course, there are also genuine positivist and even some Marxist revisionists among both the official and the *samizdat* philosophers. Our purpose is not to argue that they are disappearing, or that the only genuine or 'typical' thought in the contemporary Soviet Union is consciously related to Christianity or any other religious roots. Without an opinion poll and an exhaustive quantitative analysis, in fact, no such conclusions could convincingly be achieved. An analysis of the official philosophical output would be unrepresentative, owing to the ideologically selective censorship precluding the publication of overtly non-Marxist writings and permitting only a fraction of the implicitly anti- or non-Marxist manuscripts ever to be published. A comparison of the official press with *samizdat* in quantitative terms would also be misleading, owing to our ignorance of how many non-Marxist philosophers keep their genuine thoughts either to themselves or in manuscripts held under lock and key in the drawers, for fear of losing their jobs and even the relative freedom they have, should their works begin to circulate in *samizdat*.

The purpose of this chapter is quite different. It is to show that Christianity, Christian thought, Christian religious philosophy in general, a religious vision of the world and of existence, are very much alive in the contemporary Soviet Union, attracting some of the most prolific and questing minds. In other words, contrary to official propaganda, faith in the Transcendental and religious thought are far from being the domain of the old and the ignorant.

The numbers here are immaterial. As Dostoevsky put it shortly before his death:

Yes, of course, there are very few true Christians. But how do you know how many are really needed in order for the Christian ideal in the nation to survive, and along with it, a great hope . . . a great thought.<sup>61</sup>

If one disregards the volumes of tediously repetitious and toally unoriginal Marxist-Leninst dogmatics routinely published in Soviet philosophical symposia and journals, and looks for something reflecting the individual personality of the author, the conclusion is inevitable: an existential search for God is not limited to *samizdat* alone; it has become the general preoccupation of ever-wider circles of the thinking public in the Soviet Union, in the fact of the complete moral and material collapse of the Marxian materialism and its promises.



## 8 Spirituality and Religion in Soviet Literature

History as we now know it began with Christ.

(Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*)

In order to give a complete picture of the growing role of religious themes in the world of Soviet art, this chapter should have included a comparative analysis of painting and sculpture, as most unofficial and semi-official artists in this field, both those in the USSR and those expelled, show a considerable interest in religion. Among the officially recognised artists is Il'ya Glazunov, although his motives are not entirely clear. The cinema should also be discussed, particularly the work of the late Andrei Tarkovsky, who since his almost enforced emigration stated that all his films were related to his search for God. In the theatre, a parallel to Glazunov is the producer Liubimov, who has confirmed that he is a believing Christian. But if we were to do justice to all forms of art in the historical context as we are doing in our overview of literature, this would have to be a volume, not a mere chapter.

This historical overview is therefore limited to visibly religious themes, particularly those of Christianity, in the works of Russian writers of the Soviet period. Writers have traditionally been viewed in Russia as the nation's conscience (or as the symbol of a lost conscience in the case of literary careerists), hence literature has always been most indicative of the spiritual processes at work in the country and at the same time has influenced them greatly.

At least two imbalances will be perceived in this chapter: a proper overview of the 1930s to 1950s is missing, and the analysis of religious themes in the literature of the last two decades concentrates on the God-seeking type of author. In the first instance, the introductory pages on the 1920s are intended merely to set the tone, to some extent to contrast the beginning of the Soviet era with the current situation, as reflected in the religious themes in literature. We also decided to forgo an analysis of religious themes in the 'party line' works of recent

decades – although these too have increased in volume – largely because, in one form or another, they follow the clichés of antireligious propaganda as established in the first decade of the Soviet state, while our aim is to reflect searches, not stereotypes.

## BEFORE THE WAR

As stated in Volume 1, Chapter 2 of this study, the Eleventh Party Congress (1922) ordered the establishment of a publishing house, *Krasnaia nov'* (Red Virgin Soil), and a journal of the same name, for the popularization of Marxism and atheism in literary form. The idea was not a success. The literary works published by *Krasnaia nov'* were far removed from active atheistic propaganda. The *Krasnaia nov'* authors included Valentin Kataev, a non-believer judging by some of his writings, for instance the 1922 short story 'Fire'. In it, the beautiful nineteen-year-old wife of a communist and professional antireligious propagandist, is burnt to death while trying to light up a heating stove with petrol. What is important is the picture Kataev paints of this energetic and dedicated propagandist, a renegade who once took a course in theology. He is unfriendly, has glaring eyes, and his spiritual world is empty. The death of his loved one leaves him in a total void; and in a moment of despair he even rushes into a church, then to the priest who has just delivered a sermon referring to the atheist's tragedy as God's punishment for his blasphemy. The atheist's declarations that nothing really exists, can only destroy, offering the soul nothing but emptiness and senselessness. Kataev's *Embezzlers*, first published in the journal, presents the new Soviet society as grey, dreary, crude and crime-ridden. Leonid Leonov – another *Kr. nov'*, contributor, in fact a Christian – gives a picture of Soviet society very similar to that of Kataev. Some of his Civil War heroes, moreover, turn to crime after the 'establishment' of the Soviet way of life.<sup>1</sup>

As one literary critic observed, the 'new man' portrayed by such Soviet authors as Lavrenev, Zoshchenko, Kataev and Fadeev, to name but a few, becomes just a scoundrel once he is 'liberated' from Christian ethnics and concepts; indifferent to human life and dignity, he kills out of curiosity, blind hatred, or just because he does not like someone's face.<sup>2</sup> A terrifying case in point is Mikhail Zoshchenko's *People* (1924). A populist noble-

man sells his estate. As a 'superfluous man', he distributes the money to unknown relatives rather than to the really needy; he imagines himself persecuted by the police, emigrates, and then returns with enthusiasm to the Soviet Russia of 1921 (i.e. conveniently missing the Civil War). Impractical, useless and therefore unemployed, he eventually deteriorates to the state of an animal: he lives in a dugout in the woods, bellows rather than talks, fights with a dog on equal terms, on all fours, and dreams of a fight with another man in which they bite and chew off each other's bodily parts. A utopia turns out to be a kingdom of beasts.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to this godless world, *Kr. nov'* suddenly published a chronicle of rural life, in which the really positive character is an enlightened priest who co-operates with a local agronomist in giving sermons to the peasants advising and teaching them to use modern scientific methods in farming. Before the revolution this priest had built a good school in the village, obtaining the necessary funds by investing money which the peasants deposited with him because of their distrust of the banks. Despite all his contributions to the peasants' welfare, culture and education, after the revolution the priest is stripped of all his property and is turned practically into a pauper, as he will not press his parishioners for donations. Moreover, he still speaks up on behalf of the peasants, complaining that they are overtaxed by the Soviet regime.<sup>4</sup> In short, nothing came of the idea to make *Krasnaia nov'* into a high-quality atheistic literary journal. Good writers simply ignored antireligious propaganda, and their depiction of the new atheists' world was dreary and pessimistic. Considerably later, Andrei Platonov, particularly in his *Foundation Pit*, reached the rock-bottom of pessimism and hopelessness, showing the senselessness of even the drive for industrialization, symbolized by a foundation pit. While the pit is being dug, and accompanied by the senseless mass killings of *kulaks* and *sub-kulaks*, everybody around it starves to death. At the end, witnessing the death from starvation of an orphan girl who had been an enthusiast of socialism, the central character commented that even this little girl would not see the building completed. The author, a former revolutionary Red Army fighter and Communist Party member, comes to reject totally the concept that the end justifies any means. The novel, had to wait for more than five decades to be published in the USSR.<sup>5</sup>

As to actively militant antireligious propaganda in literature, usually only hack writers contributed to it. As an exception to the rule one could mention a few poems by Vladimir Mayakovsky. But generally antireligious fiction, cinema and theatre never got off the ground in the Soviet Union. The theme could hardly inspire a talented writer, because, as the already mentioned literary critic notes, in contrast to France where atheism has been presented as witty and frivolous, in Russia 'atheism has always been dominated by despair'.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to tragedy, despair does not inspire creativity.

Works on religion could not, of course, have been included in the literary publications of the 1930s except in the form of attack and ridicule. And there was plenty of that in the works of such third-rate writers as A. Serafimovich, Demian Bednyi and Yu. Rubinshtein. Rubinshtein's *San'ka, the Victor* could be cited as an illustration. Working-class, churchgoing Russians inhabit a big block of flats. The men drink and swear; mothers beat their children. All that changes soon after an atheist family with a Jewish mother, Rosa, moves in. Her sons are active members of the Young Pioneers, militant atheists. They are an ideal family. The boys are always ready to offer their help to everybody, and together with their mother they gradually morally re-educate and civilise most of the inhabitants. Only the most fanatical religious believers cannot be convinced. They continue to drink heavily, and one of them kills one of Rosa's sons with a beer-bottle. This convinces the father of the boys that it is not enough to be a non-believer; religion is an evil that has to be combated actively. Just as the sacrifice of the innocent Jesus led Christianity to triumph, so the death of the innocent boy-atheist transforms everybody into atheists. There are two significant secondary themes in the novella. First, the ideal woman is Jewish, and the ideal man is a pilot with a non-Russian first name and patronymic, Eduard Osval'dovich; all the negative characters are Russian – very crude and tactless approach, and coming from a Jewish writer it certainly must have contributed to anti-Semitism. The second theme is the story of an unpopular teacher. The students are pleased when he leaves. He is apparently a secret believer: he often uses the expression 'God only knows', and when asked point blank if God exists, evades an answer by saying the subject is too complicated to be discussed in class. This is a clear reference to the LMG 1929 resolutions

calling for the replacement of non-religious by actively antireligious schools.<sup>7</sup>

Bednyi 'entertained' the public by such poems as these:

A spike-like peasant, poor and thin  
with grey and trembling beard, repeats  
'Here, take, dear Parson,  
Take this chick . . .'

The peasant's clothes  
Are holes and rags,  
A patch in front,  
A patch behind . . .

A peasant woman, old and meek,  
The slave of God is crooked, bent:  
'Here, Father dear,  
Accept this chick.

A score of eggs come with it too.'  
A poor old woman,  
Old and poor.

The preacher's fat and nasty mug  
Consumes the chicken and the eggs.

I do not mind the eggs', he says,  
'I hope that others bring me more'.

And laughter shakes  
His belly fat,  
His belly fat.

Their spirit is in bondage still  
Like moles in mud our peasants crawl;  
And crawl they do,  
And crawl they do.

Let thunder strike and wake them up,  
Let them be wise to see their drones  
To see them all.

To see them all.<sup>8</sup>

Such were the 'Olympian heights' reached by the antireligious poetry of the 1930s. In these very years the great Anna Akhmatova was composing her Christian cycle of poems *Requiem*, which had to wait until 1987 to be published in the USSR. Mikhail Bulgakov was writing his epoch-making religious novel, *The Master and Margarita*, about Jesus and Pontius Pilate, and the adventures of Satan in the Moscow of the

1930s (*sic*), showing the all-conquering power of love as the driving force of creativity, capable of forcing even Satan to do a good deed. In the novel's superb opening lines, Satan, visiting Moscow under the name of Voland, is amused by the self-assured intellectual poverty of two Soviet atheists he meets, a Marxist philosopher and a poet: 'I am a historian', says Voland . . . 'And take note of this: Jesus did exist.' The Marxist philosopher replies: 'We have a different opinion.' 'There is no need for any opinions!. . . He existed, that's all.'<sup>9</sup> Satan knows, of course, what he is talking about, but his Soviet conversationalists do not know Voland is Satan.

### THE 'PIONEERS'

At the time, no one, except his wife, was aware of this novel of Bulgakov's which he was writing and rewriting between 1932 and the year of his death, 1941. The novel first saw the light in 1965 and became an immediate success. Thus, in terms of publication dates (including circulation in copies smuggled from abroad), *Doctor Zhivago*, Akhmatova's *Requiem* and Solzhenitsyn's officially published works all preceded *The Master and Margarita*. But whereas Solzhenitsyn's *Ivan Denisovich* and *Matriona's Home* are Christian in their ethics and philosophy, Bulgakov's often satirical novel also openly ridicules official Soviet atheist dogmas and asserts the historical existence of Christ with such artistic authenticity and conviction, that it probably had an impact on subsequent revision of the categorical Marxist denial of Christ's historicity and the relatively recent official toleration of the historicity school. *The Master and Margarita* is wholly incompatible with the official *a priori* derogatory view of Christianity and its ethical teachings.

The works of Bulgakov and Solzhenitsyn fell on fertile soil. Destalinization which in the long run dealt a mortal blow to Marxist-Leninist ideology in the Soviet Union,<sup>10</sup> led people to turn away from the materialist interpretation of life and to seek alternative answers in the spiritual sphere. The literary depiction of religion began to change. In the late Efim Dorosh's *Rural Diary* very negative remarks appear concerning the senseless destruction of churches and old monasteries. The village priest is represented as an active factor in the infrastructure of the

contemporary Soviet village.<sup>11</sup> Dorosh, like his younger contemporary, the late Vladimir Tendriakov, is an atheist; but in contrast to Tendriakov, he is not interested in the question of how to overcome religion. For Dorosh, religion is primarily art and beauty, but also the legacy of a great culture which links Russia with the rest of civilized Europe in an artistic and ethical union arising out of their common Roman–Byzantine civilization. In the 1960s Dorosh distinguished himself by being the first Communist Party member to write a very positive *vita* of St Sergius of Radonezh, depicting him as a great national, moral and spiritual leader and a learned intellectual of his time. When discussing Andrei Rublev, the iconographer, he draws attention to alleged similarities between his art and that of his Italian contemporary and fellow-monk Beato Angelico. As regards the Church in the contemporary Soviet Union, in describing the contemporary Lavra of Trinity–St Sergius and its splendid church procession, he says: ‘A dual force of art and antiquity gets the better of me when I am in Zagorsk.’ Observing contemporary believers he cites the famous quotation by Marx in its entirety, namely that ‘religion is the sigh of the oppressed, the heart of a heartless world . . . an opiate for the people’, making it sound much more sympathetic to the believer than the emaciated Leninist version ‘opium for the people’ on its own. But just like Tendriakov, he fails to appreciate the essence of religious faith and sees it as such a contrast to our contemporary civilization that ‘the religious sentiment in our time, if sincere, is almost always accompanied by a certain morbidity’.<sup>12</sup> Thus Dorosh unwittingly led his reader back to the original Soviet antireligious propaganda concepts of religion as either a category of crime (a swindle) or a mental illness, rationalising the psychiatric incarceration of believers.

When at the height of Khrushchev’s religious persecutions Tendriakov began to publish his ‘antireligious’ novellas in *Science and Religion*, many of us were appalled, seeing this as kicking a defenceless person lying helplessly on the ground. Nevertheless, even then in the 1960s some people in the Soviet Union claimed that in fact Tendriakov was helping the believers. At the height of arbitrary and brutal persecutions he was demonstrating that faith is not a simple and primitive superstition, but a complex phenomenon which cannot be solved or liquidated by dismissal from work, by ridicule or direct oppres-

sion. As early as 1961, long before professional atheists recognised that Khrushchev's persecutions did not pay and served only to encourage the revival of religion and arouse sympathy towards the oppressed, Tendriakov had predicted this outcome. In his *Extraordinary Event*, a school headmaster warns his colleagues and the district party bureau against the dismissal of a religious teacher of mathematics. As long as he is a teacher he will not openly preach his faith. Once he is dismissed, however, he will become a martyr and in addition, because of his education, will gain authority as a religious figure; freed from the strictures of the job he will become an important rallying point for believers and those in search of faith.

Tendriakov, an atheist, is unable to appreciate fully the real mentality and motivations of a believer. For him, faith remains a sign of weakness, of capitulation before the unknown. Therefore his believers are cowards in one form or another, mediocrities even if intellectuals, and he blames the believers for their duplicity (concealing their faith, failing to defend it publicly, etc.) rather than the state of forcing the believer to lead a double life.

Nevertheless, he is very critical of the hardline atheists who believe only in dismissals, persecutions, and other radical measures against the believers. Again rather prophetically, the daughter of the most intolerant party activist in his *Extraordinary Event* is a religious believer for a short while, but later turns into an empty petite-bourgeoise with no spiritual or cultural interests whatsoever. This becomes, wittingly or unwittingly, a true picture of the *nomenklatura's* generational legacy: materialistic cynics are born of Marxist materialists; once faith in the Marxian promises disappears, the only legacy that remains is materialism, devoid of all moral scruples.

Again, wittingly or unwittingly, the development of Tendriakov's major works reflects the qualitative evolution and spread of religious faith or, at least, of the search for religion. Whereas in his 1959 *Miraculous Icon* the believers are the most simple and backward old peasant women, in his 1961 *Extraordinary Event*, a scandal arises after the discovery of a religious high-school graduate and an Orthodox Christian mathematics teacher; and in his 1969 *Apostolic Journey*, scientists (physicists) allow for the possibility of God as the Creator. One of the characters says: 'interest has grown in the question of creation'.



A young physicist, turned journalist, becomes a believer in God, and his popular-scientific journal receives letters from a retired physics teacher arguing in favour of God's existence.

Either so that he can publish his works or because he genuinely cannot reconcile himself to the possibility that an intellectual can have a full personal belief in God, Tendriakov shows the beliefs of intellectuals as primarily agnostic in nature. They believe in some amorphous creative absolute spirit, some unknown personification of Good and Love, or simply convince themselves that there must be a God, and if there is not, one has to pretend that there is. Nevertheless, through the mouths of his religious intellectuals Tendriakov shows the tragic senselessness of life without God, and indirectly draws a parallel between faith and atheism by pointing out that it is just as impossible to disprove God's existence as to prove it; but that without God life loses all sense, leads only 'to a damp grave . . . you live eventually to feed the worms in the grave'.<sup>13</sup>

Even at the height of Khrushchev's persecutions, Tendriakov proposed – through his positive hero in *The Extraordinary Event* (1961) – that, instead of repressive measures against the believers, open debates should take place in schools (and presumably elsewhere) on the meaning of life, on eternal life, and the role of arts and culture versus the natural sciences. This suggestion is fiercely opposed by the communist diehards in his novellas, and in real life to the present day; whenever such occurrences do take place they are suppressed. Tendriakov portrays the atheistic diehards as real cowards who have no faith in the power of their own convictions, in their power to overcome believers or to cope with them in open competition.

## TOWARDS THE REGENERATION OF CHRISTIAN ART?

'The main problem of the post-totalitarian cultures', as Geoffrey Hosking aptly puts it, 'has been to define the nature of the personal', for which there is no room in Marxist or any other monistic materialism, where 'Man is seen as a creature of matter, wholly explicable . . . in terms of biological or social laws.'<sup>14</sup> In this sense, both Dorosh and Tendriakov are transitional figures. At least where religion is concerned, they follow the official

pattern in trying to explain it in terms of external situations: crises, personal tragedies, loneliness among heartless and indifferent colleagues. Because of their ideological environmentalism they cannot help seeing religion as an anomaly, almost a kind of mental illness, in an officially materialistic society, because it defies the principle that an individual is determined by society and by its educational process. Both Dorosh and Tendriakov, particularly the latter, are preoccupied with the human person, rediscovering human individuality and its crucial importance in tackling social problems. Both see religion as an important factor in the personality. Dorosh, more concerned with history, spiritual culture and art, has a more sympathetic attitude to religion than Tendriakov, but both are external observers of the phenomenon and are outside the Christian *Weltanschauung* as such.

It is with Solzhenitsyn that a Christian revival in Soviet culture begins (or should we call it neo-Russian culture, to distinguish it from Soviet socialist-realism?). There are no religious didactics in Solzhenitsyn's fiction; religious views are identified with fully formed human personalities. He emphasises the centrality of the individual person, who is quite independent of the environment and often completely contradicts it in ethics, behaviour and ideas; the personality is capable of determining the events of history (General von François in *August 1914*, for instance), rather than the reverse. It was this that made the appearance of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* such a revolutionary event in Soviet literature of the day.

As far back as 1953 the Soviet literary critic Vladimir Pomerantsev criticised Soviet authors for lacking the honesty of their convictions. Pomerantsev wrote that the primary condition for the success of a work of art is the sincerity of its creator.<sup>15</sup> Solzhenitsyn was the first Soviet author in many years whose *published* work totally corresponded to this condition. And how could it be otherwise, if values were completely reversed by him? Honesty and integrity do not matter when the *a priori* conditions of a work of art are its correspondence to an ideology, its subordination to an ideological aim, and the priority of collective requirements over the individual. When you replace this by the centrality of human persons, they have to live full lives to be interesting and convincing, i.e. sincere and honest depiction becomes a *sine qua non*; their language has to be colourful, with

personal characteristics, hence the quality of language, style and vocabulary also become crucial. In short, the Marxist 'in the beginning there was work' is replaced by the Christian 'in the beginning there was the Word'. It is this intrinsic reversal of values and conventions that made Grigori Baklanov, then a young and talented writer, exclaim:

Now it has become absolutely clear that we cannot write any more in the same way as we used to . . . a new level of dialogue with the reader has been struck, and . . . much which seemed quite satisfactory only a short while ago has now become outdated . . . the author's name is Solzhenitsyn.<sup>16</sup>

But if the Christian message of *Ivan Denisovich* was 'only' in the value-orientations and attitudes to life of some of its characters and in the method of the writer, and thus was seen only by those 'who had eyes to see', in the later short story, *Matrioma's Home*, it was explicit. It was now clear that the author himself was a convinced Christian. The story portrays life in the *post*-Stalin Soviet collective farm as poverty-stricken and unjust, inhuman in its exploitation of labour, and exceedingly cruel in human relations. The only positive character in the story is a semi-literate old peasant woman, a true Christian saint in her attitude and behaviour towards all those surrounding her, whether relatives or strangers, bosses or equals. Moreover, she is the only one who has a sense of collective responsibility, because she lives by her conscience, not by the rule of 'economic necessity'. Indeed, the original title of the story was 'No Village Can Stand without Its Saint'. It was the editor of *Novy mir*, where the story appeared in 1963, who insisted on changing the title. Nevertheless, the story ends with the words: 'No village can stand without its saint, nor a town, nor the whole world.'

This was too much for the Soviet establishment, especially at the height of Khrushchev's persecution of religion. The diehard critics – according to rumours, with Khrushchev's personal blessing – began a concerted attack on Solzhenitsyn. Solzhenitsyn was a conscious 'blackener' of Soviet reality, they wrote. Why did he choose a backward rather than a progressive farm? How can an illiterate 'superstitious' woman be a positive heroine in a Soviet work of art? . . .<sup>17</sup>

Solzhenitsyn was silenced, at least in the officially published press, was forced to resort to *samizdat* for his later works, and

eventually was expelled abroad (1974). But his 'school' of Christian personalism survived and expanded, at least in the number of writers who followed in his path.

## THE RURALISTS

We have seen that Solzhenitsyn was not by any means the first writer on rural themes. He was preceded by Ovechkin and Dorosh, not to mention the rural-industrial novel (she loves her cow, he loves his tractor, therefore they love each other and live happily ever after, overfulfilling their work norms). Ovechkin was an author who had moved on from the primitive industrial novel. He did raise human problems in agriculture and in rural settings, but production themes still played a central role. Dorosh, as we have seen, goes much further in concentrating on the human being, and even discusses the role of the Church in the past and present of the village, but the individual is still overshadowed by discussions with agricultural officials on norms and harvests.

A transitional figure between Dorosh and Tendriakov, in their externalist treatment of religion, and the post-Solzhenitsyn, intrinsically Christian ruralist prose, is Vladimir Soloukhin; he has undergone a colossal personal evolution from his participation in the attacks on Pasternak in 1958, when he was still a young poet, to an artistic-aesthetic interest in the Church, religious architecture, music and iconography, and, as his latest works seem to indicate, to embracing Christianity as a whole. In one of his latest and most attacked works he says: 'The question is not whether . . . a higher mind exists but whether it . . . has any concern for me.'<sup>18</sup> Throughout this period, however, Soloukhin remains primarily a strong Russian nationalist, and his road to the Church seems to have been through a preoccupation with Russian national culture, and the national heritage, and the Church as a key factor in both. This also helps him to keep up the façade of being merely an Olympian defender of the national cultural heritage without a personal commitment to religion. This thin camouflage does not convince the official diehards, who often attack him, particularly in the pages of *Science and Religion*.<sup>19</sup>

Soloukhin is a poet, a publicist and an essay writer, not a

novelist. Hence his works avoid creating psychological portraits of Christians, or contrasting believers and atheists as human types. This has helped him to remain more or less on the safe side, although, as just mentioned, he has endured considerable attacks, particularly when in his recent *Time to Gather up Stones*, Soloukhin not only criticised the barbaric persecution and destruction of old churches, monasteries and icons, and the cultural nihilism of whole generations resulting therefrom, but also praised a number of monks and whole monastic communities for their moral and cultural contribution. In his 1981 'Pebbles in the Palm' he even dared to state that 'in the Universe there exists a Supreme Reason'.<sup>20</sup>

Time and time again in his work there are either historical sketches of priests, monks and bishops of the past, or glimpses of local priests in the villages of his early childhood or his parents' parish. It is interesting that in contrast to pre-revolutionary Russian literature, in which jokes, irony and mockery at the expense of the clergy were very common, in Soloukhin's sketches priests and other members of the Orthodox clergy are invariably presented in a positive light. They represent a great cultural tradition, have a deep appreciation of Russian history and are collectors of excellent libraries. When the Soviets tried to force Father Ivan, the priest of his native village 'to renounce his priesthood', he categorically refused. He was a highly cultivated, broad-minded person, who had an excellent library. In contrast, the Priest's non-believing heirs are depicted as cultural barbarians.<sup>21</sup>

Soloukhin describes with lamentation and abhorrence the forced closure and destruction of rural churches in his native province of Vladimir under Khrushchev. Along with the closure of the churches their icons were destroyed, while sometimes libraries of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century books in leather bindings were taken off for recycling and sold by the pound. He contrasts this cruel barbarity with the reaction of a nun living near a church undergoing such a pogrom in 1961. She crosses herself and appeals to God: 'O Lord, forgive these unwise ones, for they know not what they do.'<sup>22</sup>

Soloukhin mocks the official Soviet position on iconographers that, despite the Church which imposed her 'narrow canons' severely curbing their artistic possibilities, they managed to produce great works of art. No, writes Soloukhin, it was the very

reverse: it was their deep faith and religious dedication that inspired their artistic creativity and achievement. Both church architecture and iconography, he continues, can be appreciated only in the theological context in which they were created and for the purpose which they were intended to serve.<sup>23</sup>

Only in one work, a short-story-interview with a veteran of the campaign for *dekulakization* and collective-farm creation – a story which he could not publish in the Soviet Union, so that it appeared in the émigré quarterly *Grani* – does Soloukhin come to grips with portraying a psychological type. Petr Petrovich was a man who destroyed innocent lives along with traditional rural life, sowing the seeds of ruin and destruction of a human community, as well as hatred and demoralization, in his path; yet he had learned nothing and knew no pangs of conscience: such was the order of the day, that's all. It is a picture of two people (the author and his interviewee) speaking on different wavelengths, a frightening portrait of the destructive 'builders' of the new society, with no notions of good or evil, only commands, no regard for the human being as a living individual.<sup>24</sup>

It is the ruralist novelists, F. Abramov, V. Shukshin, S. Zalygin, V. Belov, V. Astafiev and Valentin Rasputin who portray the consequences of the work done by these Petr Petroviches. These authors have had enough of faceless collectivism and ideological schemata. Whether practising Christians or not, they are Christian personalists in their style and values. They are preoccupied with the individual personalities of the peasants about whom they are writing, favourably contrasting their often instinctively traditional religiousness and the Christian values by which they live, with the totally amoral, cynical, nihilistic new men and women of the atheist and materialistic Soviet urban civilization.

Hosking makes the point that the first wave of the 'thaw' writers 'lacked any real understanding of the non-Chernyshevskian, non-Marxist currents in the Russian intellectual tradition and any ability to draw upon genuine folk culture'.<sup>25</sup> Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*; the re-publication of Dostoevsky after a virtual twenty-year ban on his works; the appearance of the formerly almost banned works of the Russian–Soviet 'idealistic' (or more correctly, if somewhat camouflaged, religious) philosophers M. Bakhtin and Losev; the reappearance in unofficial circulation of the major pre-

revolutionary religio-philosophic symposia *Problems of Idealism and Landmarks*;<sup>26</sup> and the 'post-thaw' writers of the 1960s and 1970s – all these opened the door to an alternative Russian culture, inseparable from Orthodox Christianity. Solzhenitsyn's rediscovery of folk culture again pointed the way to the Christian attitudes and values of that culture and to the teachings of Christianity which it had assimilated almost instinctively. The preoccupation of such writers as Dorosh or Soloukhin with Russian history, particularly cultural and art history, again pointed in the same direction – that of the Orthodox Church's role in Russian history. As a major unofficial Russian historian and religious thinker, Vadim Borisov, later put it, after the Bolshevik nihilistic purging of history and its later deliberate corruption, true historical memory remained only in the Church, 'that citadel of memory eternal', in his words. With great difficulties, 'undoing . . . the world-view assimilated from school, rejecting the everyday system of values based on the logic of *a priori* perceptions of reality, including historical reality', the post-Marxist generation began to overcome 'its social amnesia, a rare but dangerous disease'.<sup>27</sup> In place of what Borisov calls 'the vacuum of loss of memory', painfully realised with the collapse of the credibility of Marxism-Leninism, they were discovering an alternative Russian culture, much richer and with an incomparably greater historical legacy than the trickle of culture based on Chernyshevsky, Marx and Lenin, a culture now discredited by the calamity of 1917 to which it had led and the moral, cultural and socio-economic collapse of the system it had produced.

The fact that most of the neo-Christian authors (whether practising believers or not) turned to rural themes was also an expression of compassion for those who as a social group (and as an ecological unit: the agricultural soil was impoverished by ecological abuse) had suffered most under the Soviets; in addition it was an expression of the guilt felt by the authors – all of peasant background – for the privileges they had enjoyed at the cost of the suffering of peasants. Needless to say, both compassion and guilt belong to the moral realm of Christianity. The proliferation, in the same years, of excellent studies of old Russian art and literature, authored and/or edited by such great experts as Academician Dmitry Likhachev, opened to current generations the great wealth of the roots of Russian Christian

culture, and led the reader to the countryside in the hope of finding its remnants there. As was to be expected, it had survived better in the villages of northern Russia and Siberia, off the beaten track, whence – not coincidentally – come all the best contemporary ruralist authors.<sup>28</sup>

At an unpublished seminar of Soviet literary critics in 1969, the ruralists were attacked by the Marxists; one of the latter challenged them to give up all camouflage and spell out clearly that they were ‘well on their way to God’. A critic defending and representing the ruralists replied: ‘We are searching for a lost ideal: our young people have failed to find an ideal . . . I don’t know what would have remained of Russia if it were not for Orthodoxy . . . We want to return to sources not in order to stay put there, but to move forward on the basis of their ethics and ideals’; and added, ‘If you want to know, the rural prose came also out of Solzhenitsyn’s *Matriona*’ – thus establishing the ruralists as Solzhenitsyn’s descendants.<sup>29</sup>

It could be argued that perhaps Marxist culture has reached a point of stagnation in the Soviet Union, but didn’t the pre-revolutionary Russian Christian culture also collapse in the calamity of the revolution? The argument is valid for a materialist whose only criterion for assessing a phenomenon is the physical success factor. But for a Rasputin or a Belov the validity of a culture (understood as a hierarchy of values) is recognised in its effect on the behaviour and life-styles of individuals who were raised in that culture and embraced its values. It is precisely in this approach that they reveal themselves as Christian personalists, fully appreciating the meaning of Christ’s words, ‘My Kingdom is not of this world’ – it is for persons who choose to have ears to hear and eyes to see. Belov discovers these persons mostly among the old women of his native north Russia and in the whole way of life of the villages of his childhood before forced collectivization destroyed them. Rasputin finds such characters primarily in very old women, not unlike Solzhenitsyn’s *Matriona*, in his native Siberian villages, as well as among men who have not broken with their rural past. Astafiev, like Abramov and Zalygrin, also began with the old folk or peasants of the old era, but – and this is a ray of hope – has lately found younger God-seekers – semi-urban people who either have strong rural roots or are simply disgusted with official civilisation and



are seeking answers in 'idealistic' philosophy or by 'imbibing' practical ethics, clear concepts of good and evil, from peasant acquaintances and relatives.<sup>30</sup>

Belov is particularly powerful in dealing with the effects of collectivization. In a short story full of religious symbolism, 'There Was no Fire', a traveller comes across a strange village built in the form of a cross, but only the arms of the cross are left, with the centre totally devoid of houses. He asks an old woman if this was the effect of a fire. She says, no, this was the result of collectivization and the war: some were *dekulakized*, others ran away in time, still others were killed in the war. The cross is, in Hosking's apt interpretation, the symbol of the peasants' sufferings; its missing centre 'the tearing out of the heart of the Russian village by collectivization, war and urbanization'.<sup>31</sup>

A longer novel, *The Eve*, portrays the life of a communally strong and morally healthy northern village, probably Belov's own, on the eve of collectivization. Some peasants are better off, others are poorer, none are really wealthy: this is the poor north, not the rich black earth of the south. But the prosperity of the luckier ones causes little envy in those who are poorer, as the latter realise that 'wealth' is the result of very hard work and a puritan way of life. One of them says so to an agitator for collectivization, who tries to drive a wedge into the well-knit village community and to create envy and 'class' antagonism by dividing it according to prosperity levels and founding a committee of the poor. A strong and positive moral force in the village is the priest, a very popular figure. Even a former gentleman-farmer, a progressive nobleman with a degree in agronomy who held Marxist political views before the revolution, has found a place for himself in this post-revolutionary village community, by giving the peasants professional advice as an agronomist and living modestly off a kitchen garden attached to the couple of rooms which he occupies in his former mansion.

The propagandists sent down from Moscow presumably to start a collective farm, consist of a former peasant of the village who was expelled by the village community as a good-for-nothing loafer and drunkard, and an urban (Jewish) fanatic who lives by Marxist theoretical abstractions, totally alien to the rural realities.

Ironically, it is they who destroy the communal spirit, based on Christian ethics and on traditional peasant solidarity, by instigating mutual distrust, arresting the priest and the gentleman-farmer, imposing impossible fines and taxes on the more prosperous peasants and artificially creating divisions where formerly there was unity and mutual aid.<sup>32</sup>

Valentin Rasputin's most impressive novel of the 1970s is *Farewell to Matiora*, a singularly powerful and vivid portrait of old peasant women in an island village, Matiora, on the Siberian Angara River. Matiora is about to be submerged by a man-made lake created by the dam being built for a hydro-electric power station. The women symbolize the old Christian culture of the peasants, for whom, alas, there is no room in Soviet civilization, just as there is none for their village with its cemetery and trees which even modern mechanised saws fail to fell. The aged Daria is the real moral authority in the village, not only among her contemporaries; she is also respected by her son, Paul, who is still very traditional in his attitudes, and even her grandson Andrew, who is reproached by his father and grandmother for wanting to take a job at the construction-site of the very hydro-electric station which is about to annihilate his village. Andrew cannot understand why his father and grandmother want to dig up the graves of their forebears and take them along to the mainland where the village is being evacuated. The idea is incomprehensible to his 'Soviet' rationalism. Yet he cannot help but revere old Daria, sensing that there is something eternally good and morally forceful in her world-view. Every human being for her is a *khristoven'kiy* (a diminutive form of 'pertaining to Christ'), even the rude Bogodul, an old blasphemer. She is sorry for him, she says, when asked why she takes care of such a useless character, probably a former criminal.

'But why are you sorry . . . for man?' Andrew asks. In very simple words in a long, often interrupted monologue, Daria exposes her Christian version of anthropology. Man is poor, because he always remains a helpless child who only thinks he is mighty and all-powerful. He thinks he is master over nature and life. But he is not. He is terrified of death and this causes all his useless activity, fermenting, boiling over and achieving nothing. He is always in a hurry, but his haste only ruins his organism prematurely and he reaches his grave earlier. He is

confused and confuses others. He fools others and himself.

He should be going in one direction, but he goes the opposite way. When he discovers his mistake, instead of being angry with himself, he takes it out on others, turns against the whole world . . . One day, Andrew, you will remember my words. 'Where was I hurrying', you'll say, 'what have I achieved?' All you will have achieved is more empty bubbles and vapour. Your kind of life has an insatiable appetite. Now it's swallowing our Matoria, but that's not the end. It'll digest it, burble and mutter for a while, and then demand something more and bigger. And you will go on feeding that insatiable glutton.<sup>33</sup>

What apparently surprises Andrew is that these thoughts lead Daria not to anger, which he would have understood, but to pity. And pity means forgiveness, for 'they know not what they do'. She does not utter these words of Jesus, but that is the essence of her pity for man, for those men 'who have spent their souls, caring little . . . You've taught yourself to think that what you don't see with the naked eye and cannot touch by hand doesn't exist. In fact, anyone who has a soul, has God within himself.' Daria's pity is for the man who has killed his own soul, for then whatever he tries to achieve goes sour.

In conclusion she sends Andrew off into 'the great world' with the following words: 'Farewell, Andrew, farewell. May the Lord preserve you from having an easy life.'

Soviet reality confirms Daria's words. The mainland settlement with its urban-like dwellings, built for Matoria's evacuees, has been constructed without taking account of subterranean waters. Consequently, the basements are flooded and the peasants have nowhere to store their food for winter. The motorboat sent out to pick up the last old folk in Matoria, including Daria, just before its flooding, never reaches the mainland as the motor breaks down in the middle of the river, and presumably the old folk drown.<sup>34</sup>

In *Farewell to Matoria*, family roots are still strong. Even the third-generation Andrew feels an organic attachment to his native village and respect for Daria's attitudes and values, although some of them appear strange to him. In his 1985 novella *Fire*, Rasputin takes the reader further. He shows what happens to people when the umbilical cord to their native roots

is torn away, and the moral degradation that comes about in settlements of the kind to which Mator's residents were evacuated. In *Fire*, the settlement which houses the populations of several liquidated villages, as well as masses of drifters who came to Siberia only to make a 'fat buck', is described as 'uncomfortable and untidy, neither urban nor rural, more like a bivouac', in which people feel no attachment to each other, no permanence, and which they have no desire to beautify, and hence lack mutual and collective responsibility.

All this comes to a head in a devastating fire at the settlement's warehouses. No fire engines, no working hoses or pumps arrive in time. And then the vast majority of this transient population, instead of fighting the fire, take advantage of it to pilfer the warehouses. The conscientious minority, who try to extinguish the fire and rescue the supplies from the burning warehouses also have to wage a war against the pilferers, who kill the watchman trying to protect the salvaged goods. The positive hero of the story is a peasant approaching retirement age in the 1970s, hence not a pre-revolutionary rarity. By his example and reproaches he manages to appeal to the consciences of some of the drifters who begin to work with him in extinguishing the fire and salvaging the goods. So, one could not describe the situation as completely hopeless morally.<sup>35</sup>

The moral of the story, however, is that the human soul is corrupted in artificial settlements, where the only link between the residents is a materialistic urge to make money – and, even worse, where the source of income is ecological destruction (barbaric felling of the Siberian taiga for the timber industry). In the long run this offers nothing to society but destruction, moral and perhaps even physical death. It is interesting that some Soviet citizens read the 1985 *Fire* with hindsight as a symbolic prophecy of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The scenario, at least according to the Soviet press version, is indeed similar in the sense of irresponsibility shown by the Chernobyl administrators, who not only ran the station without proper safety measures but had even started it up despite the opposition of inspection commissions, because the pressure from Moscow was to hurry up and to fulfil the plans . . .

It would be wrong to conclude from the above that the tendency to Christian themes and ethics is limited only to the ruralists, but in their prose it is typical and natural. Among the

non-ruralists who began to turn to Christian themes, at first only sometimes, but by the late 1960s quite openly, was Vladimir Maximov, subsequently expelled to the West in the same year as Solzhenitsyn. His *Seven Days of Creation* is the biography of a working-class family (largely his own) who began as revolutionary Bolsheviks and ended up as victims of Bolshevism, turning to God. The most persevering and hard-line member of the family also eventually sees the light of Christianity, which becomes symbolically his seventh day, 'the day of Hope and Resurrection'. As was to be expected, the novel could not be published in the USSR, and appeared in print only in the West. But this leads us to *samizdat* and *tamizdat* (Russian works published abroad), and would oblige us also to discuss Solzhenitsyn's later works which are all shining examples of consistent and profound Christian personalism. Most of the unofficial, as well as a growing volume of officially published poetry is permeated with Christian imagery and themes. Limits of space preclude their discussion here. But here is a characteristic quotation from a poem by Nikolai Rubtsov, a talented semi-official peasant poet whose life ended violently in 1971 when he was only 35 years old:

I grieve not. I grieve not the crown of the tsars which was trampled.

I grieve, how I grieve the white churches destroyed.<sup>36</sup>

The year 1986 saw the production of literary works and statements which are openly committed to a Christian *Weltanschauung*. Astafiev's novella, *A Sad Detective Story*, deals basically with the same topic as Rasputin's *Fire*: the moral collapse of Soviet society as an integral by-product of de-Christianized education and the relativist morality of dialectical materialism. The new class, whom one of Astafiev's characters calls 'the new nobles' are shown as amoral, parasitic, uncouth and selfish. Its upper echelons, those of the younger generation, are superficially sophisticated. Their current interest in Russian culture, the Church and history, is transformed in practice into lavish banquets in ancient monastery refectories, now turned into restaurants. The generation of their immediate predecessors is represented by the middle-aged provincial editor Syrokvasova, a stupid, heartless bureaucrat with no literary sense whatsoever. Yet on her depends the publication or rejection of manuscripts.

She may be a symbol of the whole Union of Writers establishment and of the Soviet literary censorship. But the symbolic cradle of this despiritualised Soviet 'intelligentsia' is the peasant mother-in-law of the novella's positive hero, a confused and uprooted peasant woman corrupted by the communist party of which, apparently, she is a member. She speaks an impossible illiterate *mélange* of a peasant dialect with urban 'intellectualisms' picked up from newspaper editorials or party resolutions. Yet she calls herself a member of the intelligentsia, because in her younger days she was an activist in the 'godless' campaigns, as well as a rural cultural organizer and village librarian. She has never learnt how to cook a meal, how to bring up her child or wash up . . . In short, in the eyes of her 'conservative' peasant husband, a man of traditional Christian values and attitudes, who throughout their married life had to perform not only his own chores but also those of the wife and the mother, this party activist is a useless parasite and an aberration, as she is in the eyes of her son-in-law, a young Soviet police officer.

Interestingly, one of the fundamental mistakes of Soviet-Marxist society in the eyes of Astafiev, a member of the Communist Party (!), is the artificial social fusion imposed by the system whereby people have lost their feeling of belonging, their sense of place and purpose in life and society. Consequently, a peasant girl whose mental and physical capabilities and a warm motherly heart would naturally make her a mother of many children and an excellent agriculturalist, aims at the university only in order to be respected. There, a professorial couple of 'new nobles' virtually turn her into their unpaid domestic servant, dishonestly encouraging her to continue her university studies while knowing full well that she is an academic failure, and thus corrupting her nature. The girl is only capable of learning by heart Marxist phrases on class exploitation and feudalism, etc., instead of writing proper literary analyses (she is studying to become a teacher of literature). Soshnin, the novella's hero, and his young wife, who come from the same village as the unfortunate girl, finally convince her to leave the university and enter a farming school; otherwise as a 'graduate', she would have become one of the semi-educated ignoramuses who become party functionaries, art and culture overseers, editors, censors and party secretaries, advancing via corruption,

informing and sycophancy, and thus perpetuating the whole morally corrupting process of Soviet civilization.

The villages are emptying. Only old people (mostly old women), invalids and alcoholics remain there. Taking advantage of these defenceless old people, regular criminals, after completing their term, make it a habit to move into the Siberian villages and settle there, robbing, murdering, plundering and often dictating their own rules of the game to the remaining defenceless population; they thus become the real, though unofficial, masters of these villages, with whom the state police system cannot cope: 'you arrest one such criminal but ten come in his place', sighs Soshnin hopelessly.

Although only forty-two years old, Soshnin is a retired invalid, having been knifed and nearly murdered by criminals while conscientiously fulfilling his police duties. Now he has turned to the craft of writing, while also attending a night college and avidly reading. He owes his strong morals to two peasant women who brought him up, one an aunt, another just a charitable Christian woman who picked up any child in need. Both women are believers; one of them attends a church, the other prays and crosses herself. Neither, however, has a place in Soviet civilization: one begins to steal in order to survive and feed her dependent and ends up in prison, while the other falls victim to an industrial accident caused by an irresponsible drunkard, and becomes an invalid for the rest of her life.

As in the religio-philosophic renaissance among intelligentsia of the early twentieth century, mostly ex-Marxists, Soshnin begins with Nietzsche and ends by praying to the Mother of God. Parallel to this, a fashionable near-divorce situation is averted towards the end of the story. Soshnin's wife and daughter return and his family is restored as he turns to the spiritual values of his forefathers.<sup>37</sup>

Astafiev spells out his Christian message even more fully in a series of short stories published in May 1986. Again the north Russian village is depicted as poverty-stricken and dying. The story-teller takes part in the 'celebration' of the Feast of Christ's resurrection in such a village today, a village without a functioning church, where a bunch of fishermen gather in an old woman's hut, eat some symbolic Easter eggs with plenty of vodka, utter to each other the traditional 'Christ is Risen!' with

the response 'Indeed He is Risen!' and then get drunk. Astafiev compares this with the happy Easter celebrations of his childhood and exclaims:

What has happened to us? Who has thrust us into the abyss of evil and misfortune – and why? Who has extinguished the light of virtue in our souls? Who has blown out the icon-lamp of our consciousness . . . so that we grope in the darkness for some solid ground, for some light to show us the way to the future? Why do we need our present light, which leads us only to a fiery Hell? We used to live with light in our souls, a light acquired long before us by great men of action, lit for us to show us the way, so that we would not have to grope in the dark . . . plucking out each other's eyes, breaking the bones of our neighbours. Why has all this been snatched away without giving us anything in its place, producing only faithlessness in the people and a universal loss of faith. To whom should we address our prayers asking for forgiveness? Didn't we once possess, and have we completely lost, even now, the ability to forgive, even to forgive our enemies?<sup>38</sup>

The 'enemies' are obviously those who have snatched away the faith and light of Christianity. And in a true Christian spirit Astafiev believes in the power of forgiveness, especially on Easter day, the feast not only of Christ's resurrection but of His forgiveness to those who killed Him – That is, in the modern context, all those who persecute religion and those who ignore it, fail to defend it and do not pass it on to their offspring.

In another story, however, Astafiev appears more like the wrathful and vengeful Old-Testament Jehovah. Visiting a mediaeval Georgian cathedral whose frescoes were damaged by the Mongol hordes in the fourteenth century and left that way by order of the Georgian tsar of the time as a monument to the calamity, he clearly compares the Mongols, who left no memory behind them but 'defiled churches, annihilated nations and kingdoms . . . dead dust and desolation', with the Soviet regime. The Mongols turned the church into a stable and lighted bonfires inside it. There was originally a layer of lead in the dome structure. When the bonfires' heat rose up, the lead melted and poured on the heads of superstitiously horrified Mongols, who ran away in horror of this punishment from



Heaven, as they thought. 'Looking at this profaned, but not destroyed temple, I thought to myself', says Astafiev:

is it not high time for rain of molten lead, the final punitive rain, to pour on the modern desecrators of churches, the blasphemers, haters of mankind, and persecutors of pure morals and culture?<sup>39</sup>

## CHRISTIAN THEMES AND THE STATE

This was too much for the atheistic establishment. Its leading spokesman I. Kryvelev, a household name to our readers by now, violently attacked what he called a new trend among some Soviet writers 'of flirting with a god'. Three authors in particular were singled out by name: Astafiev, Vasil Bykov and Chengiz Aitmatov. Kryvelev did not miss the point of the above two quotations from Astafiev, spelling them out verbatim in his article and interpreting them as Astafiev's call for God's vengeance upon Soviet atheists. Bykov, an outstanding Belorussian author, is taken to task for having stated in an interview that the Ten Commandments (and not 'The Moral Code of the Communist') are the Code of Morals, 'which we live by to the present day'.

But why did the attack include Aitmatov, a quite talented but wholly opportunistic party-card-carrying literary careerist from Kirghizia, who has always known the permissible limits of literary dissent at any given moment? The appearance of the Christ theme (somewhat modelled on Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*) in his 1986 novel, *The Scaffold*, is particularly interesting and symptomatic. To begin with, this is the first literary work ever written by Aitmatov in which the central character is Russian. Secondly, as Aitmatov stressed in a newspaper interview, the important thing is not that the hero, Avdiy, is Russian, but that he is a 'Christian': 'Christianity presents a very powerful premise in the figure of Christ. Islam in whose sphere I am included by birth, has no such figure . . . who is not only crucified for an idea but forgives [this crime] to people forever.'<sup>40</sup>

Yet in this case the word 'Christian' must be placed in inverted commas, because, in fact, Aitmatov's Avdiy is a 'god-builder',

not a God-seeker. A former seminary student, Avdivy was expelled for rejecting a personal God, replacing him by 'God as a category developing in time, dependent on the development of mankind'. He further thinks of God as an entity 'invented by our ancestors' whereafter He becomes 'unattainable and inseparable from the spirit' (He and God are capitalised throughout in the original, contrary to the usual Soviet practice). The texts of ancient Orthodox hymns are but 'a formal address to Him; while the first place is given to the spirit of mankind, aimed at the heights of mankind's own greatness'. In short, we witness here the reborn Marxist-revisionist idea of god-building (actually descended from Feuerbach), the idea of God as a personified sum-total of collective human achievement in history, culminating in the construction of the perfect society of mature communism, i.e. of that man-made god's perfection, in which man attains man-godhood (the opposite of Jesus' God-manhood). In this work Aitmatov, the atheist 'expert' on Orthodoxy, as is correctly pointed out by Kryvelev, demonstrates his ignorance of the Orthodox Church. He invents titles in the Church administrative institutions which do not exist, makes a priest-theologian address Avdiy, a mere seminary student, as 'Father', which is used only in addressing a priest. He confuses god-building with God-seeking and therefore makes a theologian talk nonsense: saying that the Church condemns all forms of God-seeking. Eventually the Church supposedly anathematizes Avdiy as if he were another Arius or Leo Tolstoy. Aitmatov's novel fails to sound truly sincere when on the one hand Avdiy is treated morally and intellectually as a positive hero, while on the other Marxism is called 'the mighty logic of scientific atheism'. This contradicts the fact that believers are oppressed and limited in their rights in the Soviet Union, as admitted by Aitmatov. Avdiy's sister fails to be admitted at a pedagogical institute. If Marxism is such a mighty logic, why should there be fear to admit a deacon's daughter as a student at a pedagogical institute, fears of her corrupting the ideological purity of the institution or its charges? Another sign of Aitmatov's opportunism is that the third instalment of the novel, which appeared two months after Kryvelev's attack, no longer has a single line on Christianity.<sup>41</sup> Did he miscalculate the General Line when he was writing the novel, and then hastily change the ending? Or does this indicate the existence of a pro-Church 'party' very high up and some

discord on the issue at the very top? Perhaps Aitmatov simply overestimated the potential of the pro-Church group when in the first two instalments of the novel he portrayed the atheistic world as brutal, cruel, amoral, in contrast to the compassionate Christ-like figure of Avdiy?

A number of speeches by foremost Soviet writers at their Eighth Congress in July 1986 also touched on the subject. Particularly outspoken were the Academician Dmitry Likhachev, and the popular writer on war themes, Yuri Bondarev. Lamenting the collapse of morals in the contemporary Soviet Union, Likhachev blamed it partly on the destruction and closure of churches, which, he said, 'had been centres of moral education' throughout the country. Bondarev in his turn warned:

If we don't stop the destruction of our architectural monuments [euphemism for churches and monasteries], if we don't put an end to this ecological violence, if no moral explosion takes place in the sciences and the arts, then one beautiful morning, a final funereal morning, we with our unceasing optimism will wake up only to see that the great national culture of the Russian giant, its spirit, its love for the homeland, its beauty, great literature, painting and philosophy, have been erased, wiped out, murdered and are lost forever; and we, naked and destitute, will be sitting on its ashes, trying to remember our native alphabet, so dear to our hearts, but our memory will fail us, for thought and senses, happiness and historical memory will have vanished.<sup>42</sup>

Such speeches from the floor of the Congress gave the impression of an ideological turn-around. The general consensus there favoured the publication of all works by such Christian authors as Gumilev, Akhmatova and Pasternak. This, coming upon the publication of the above mentioned works by Rasputin and Astafiev (both the works and the authors received repeated praise at the Congress) and the 'election' of Rasputin to the Board of the Union, Zalygin's appointment as editor of *Novy mir* – all this could give the impression that Christianity was now 'in', that it was recognized at least as a socio-moral necessity in the face of the moral collapse of Soviet civilisation. But then came Kryvelev's counter-attack. Two months later, in September, editorials appeared in at least two *Pravdas*, in the republic of

Uzbekistan, and in the central Moscow *Pravda* itself, attacking 'individual writers who occasionally "flirt" with a god, objectively contributing to the enhancement of god-seeking ideas', giving support to 'religious organizations which exploit people's aesthetic needs and sentiments, trying to convince them that, allegedly, there can be no high morals without a faith in God'.<sup>43</sup>

The *Pravda* editorial was unquestionably a policy statement of the Central Committee Ideological Commission. Strong evidence of this was the 'All-Union Conference of the Heads of Chairs of Social Sciences' which met in Moscow in early October, attended by the whole Politburo on 1st October, when addressed by Gorbachev and E. K. Ligachev, the ideological boss of the Communist Party. Ligachev (not to be confused with Professor Likhachev!) criticised those who, 'encountering violations of socialist morality, are beginning to speak in favour of a tolerant attitude towards religious ideals, of returning to religious ethics'. And he instructs the social scientists to waste no time in finding new and more effective ways of a more effective overcoming of religion and of the use of religious ethics by 'bourgeois nationalists' ('while observing the guarantees of the freedom of conscience').<sup>44</sup>

The fact that the *Pravda* editorial appeared as late as two months after the Kryvelev article, and that both *Pravda* (in contrast to Kryvelev) and Ligachev avoid mentioning any names, indicates that the old antireligious clichés of both statements must have encountered some considerable opposition at sufficiently high levels before the decision to utter them publicly was finally made. It is unclear whether those favouring a 'return to religious ethics' in Ligachev's speech include some elements in the party hierarchy, or whether Ligachev, like the *Pravda* editorial, merely meant the pro-Christian writers. The delay in making the statements from the top, and the fact that the higher the source, the more anonymous the attack (*Pravda* still spoke about writers, Ligachev prefers the anonymous 'some people'), point to a considerable relative weight of that camp in Soviet society.<sup>45</sup>

Ligachev calls for new and more effective ways of combating religion. *Pravda* again is more specific. It addressed itself to the new Party Programme, which in the same 'breath' talks about scientific atheism and the necessity 'to create and broadly disseminate the new Soviet rituals'. *Pravda* adds that it is

necessary to further 'develop socialist traditions', i.e. 'god-building'. This 'doctrine', of course, also allows for the building-up of a deified nationalism, including the glorification of the national ecology, the ecology of culture (Likhachev's phrase), national history and the nation's socialist present, its power and might – an imperialistic national-socialism of sorts.

The god-building doctrine, however, creates a 'grey zone', in which Christian artists, poets, writers and cinematographers will try to promote genuine Christian ideas, while the professional atheistic establishment will continue to attack all kinds of borrowings from Christianity, even in the form of 'god-building', and will pound out the old dogmas of Marxist atheism to protect their institutions and jobs. The Marxist government will be ideologically bound to give at least token support to the atheistic establishment as long as it continues officially to uphold Marxism-Leninism; but in view of the need to permit a 'god-building' revival owing to the moral bankruptcy of Marxism, it might have to tolerate a more positive attitude to the values of Christianity and to their promotion in art.

## 9 (Orthodox) Religious Revival and (Russian) Nationalism

A nation is a historically established stable community of people, which came into being on the basis of common language, territory, economic life and psychic constitution, expressing themselves in a common culture.

(Iosif Stalin)

A nation is a spiritual whole, created and sustained by a community of culture and spiritually inherited from the past, living in the present while being created for the future.

(Peter B. Struve)

A nation is a mystical organism, a mystical personality, . . . an eternally living subject of the historical process. It includes all past generations as much as the present ones . . . National existence overcomes time . . . That is why there is a religious foundation, a religious depth in the national consciousness.

(Nicholas Berdiaev)

The concepts of nation and nationalism are controversial and difficult to define. If we were discussing national tensions in the USSR in general, our starting-point would have to be Stalin's 1913 definition, which to this day remains the official Marxist-Leninist platform on nationality (as no such definition exists in the original 'classics of Marxism'). Stalin's definition leaves no room for evolution, for the appearance of new nations, or for nations without a common territory or language, such as the Gypsies or the Jews of the diaspora, for instance.<sup>1</sup> As culture, according to Marxism, is determined by economic relations, there is no room for spiritual culture, let alone religion, as a determining factor of national identity. Hence this definition is incapable of explaining either the Jewish national phenomenon or the contemporary dual revival of nationalism and religion in the supposedly internationalist Soviet Union (as well

as in most other Communist-dominated states), nor does it explain how the two phenomena are mutually related and nourish each other.

Is there not a contradiction in that 'dual revival' of nationalism and religion? According to the Gospels, there is neither Jew nor Greek in the eyes of Jesus. However, spiritual cultures transmitted to certain nations by religious faiths as a result of their conversion at a certain point in history, have literally formed or at least cemented the fate of those nations and thus have given them the spirituality mentioned in Struve's definition, or the mystical element emphasized by Berdiaev.

The already cited 'historiosopher' Borisov, quoting references in the *Revelation* of St John to 'saved nations', sees the nation as a collective (*soborniaia*) personality.<sup>2</sup> The early Slavophiles, as is well known, argued that the pre-Christian culture of the Slavs and particularly of the Russian people was so primitive and underdeveloped that, perhaps alone among the major civilized nations, they owe everything to Christianity, to their conversion to Orthodoxy; in the words of Dostoevsky, 'The Russian people is wholly immersed in Orthodoxy', as its culture was born of the Orthodox Church and evolved from it. A *samizdat* author citing this passage, adds: 'The Russian idea is the idea of the conversion of Rus'.<sup>3</sup> This brings us back to the immediacy of the forthcoming Millennium and the nervousness of the atheistic establishment concerning it. This was discussed in an earlier chapter.

But is not the identification of Russia with the Orthodox faith incompatible with the multi-religious character of the contemporary Soviet Union, and with the fact that although the proportion of religious believers has been rising for at least the last two decades, probably a majority of the population still remain atheists or agnostics? Not quite. Islam, although the second largest religion of the USSR, is concentrated only in the clearly non-Russian areas of Central Asia and some parts of the Caucasus. Elsewhere Moslems constitute a small minority or isolated pockets (the Volga Tatars, for instance) in a Russian and at least historically Orthodox population. Among the Russians and other Soviet Slavs there is a large and growing minority of Baptists, Pentecostals and similar fundamentalist Protestant sects whose religious origins were Germanic. But as a movement, they have no national ideology and are not in the

mainstream of Russian national culture, hence the idea of Russian national consciousness is less related to these groups. Clearly, further discussion of the subject would lead to the problem of definition of 'Russia' and 'Russian', as well as to the question of how the nationalist sees the future Russia – as an empire approximately within its current borders or as an 'ethnic' Russia? And what is ethnic Russia? Does it include the other Slavs of the East Slavonic group (Ukrainians and Belorussians)? Is it limited to the territory of the present RSFSR, including its Tatars, Ossetians, Bashkirs, Altaians, or will these form independent states, most of them surrounded on all sides by Russia?

This makes it necessary for us to present some form of analysis of different kinds of Russian nationalism especially in terms of the relationship between the Church and nationalism. To begin with, our usage of the term 'nationalism' ought to be explained. The word can be very confusing, because of its use as a pejorative term to describe nationalistic prejudice, intolerance and fanaticism towards other nations, and other ugly phenomena of this kind, which we prefer to call 'chauvinism'. We shall use the word 'nationalism' as a very broad 'umbrella' term encompassing the widest possible range of national sentiment, from an attachment to national culture, art, literature, nature (hence ecological concerns) and spiritual heritage, to the more exclusivist types of nationalism, including contempt and intolerance towards other nations and races and aggressive attitudes towards them.

It is common practice to date both Russian neo-nationalism and Russian religious revival back to the end of the 1960s, when the first Russian nationalist and Orthodox Christian tracts began to appear in *samizdat*, sometimes jointly and at other times quite separately.<sup>4</sup> *Samizdat* is a good measuring stick of the genuineness of a trend of thought, being free from institutionalised censorship and thus more accurate than the official press in mirroring developments in society. Nevertheless, the printed press should not be ignored either, especially those authors who are subjected to frequent party-line attacks, those who find it difficult to print their works, whose works are immediately bought out by the readers, yet rarely see second and third printings. Here we primarily have in mind the ruralists discussed in the previous chapter, whose publications go back to the 1960s. At first their works were marked, above all, by patriotic





'My son brought this back from a tourist trip' (*Krokodil*).

anguish for their motherland – Russia – and its people. In their writings, as has been shown, the national element appeared long before a conscious discovery of the Christian ‘soul’ of the nation as the kernel of its spiritual health. This discovery, or at least its revelation, has been very cautious and gradual, at first appearing almost exclusively in a cultural-aesthetic form. In representative art more and more landscapes appeared with onion-domed churches in either the background or the foreground, at first without crosses, more recently with crosses. Films with similar landscapes gradually evolved to include genuine religious themes with national-nostalgic overtones. In *Oblomov*, by the Russian nationalist film producer Mikhalkov, the pictorially most memorable scenes are: the boy-Oblomov with his mother kneeling in prayer before an icon as a ray of sun lights up their faces and the icon in an otherwise dark corner, in an almost Rembrandtian way; and at the end of the film, Oblomov’s orphan son running around the wheat fields, symbolising Russia, while St Simeon’s words of greetings to the baby-Jesus are sung in the background in the traditional style of the Orthodox Vespers service, symbolising the departure, the death of old Russia. The film is nostalgic for the pre-revolutionary Russia. The pathologically passive character of Oblomov is idealised in the film as the epitome of vulnerable innocence abhorred by the greediness, cynicism and hypocrisy of the world of business and careerism. This has led to an intellectual debate in the Soviet media, in the course of which some critics pronounced Oblomov the Russian ideal type. Until the film’s appearance, the official line on Oblomov was that of Dobroliubov (repeated by Lenin) condemning him as a symbol of the uselessness, superfluousness and criminal laziness of the Russian upper classes. Thus, whether Mikhalkov meant it or not, the overall effect of the film (which was merely heightened by the religious symbolism) has been to glorify the traditional childlike ‘fool-for-Christ’ image, in line with Christ’s words: ‘Become like children’.

The symbiosis of the national and the religious (together with severe national self-criticism) was particularly striking in Tarkovsky’s film *Andrei Rublev*, in which the destruction of Russian churches by greedy local Russian princes using Tatar troops had very topical overtones, recalling the destruction of churches by the Bolsheviks (with international brigades and without them).

The *Siberiade* by Konchalovsky (Mikhalkov's brother), which was seen by 80 000 000 viewers in the USSR of the early 1980s, is a nostalgic epic on the destruction of traditional life and values in Siberia, through the Civil War, collectivization, The Second World War, and finally industrialization, expressed in the discovery of oil and an oil-well fire engulfing the village, its graves, church and cottages in a final flame. In many ways the film is fed on ideas borrowed from Rasputin and Astafiev, but it finds a better 'modus vivendi' with the demands of Soviet ideology by representing the final calamity as a by-product of historical inevitability, not as the work of the barbaric 'new man', so clearly visible in the more daring and honest ruralist prose writers.<sup>5</sup>

## CATEGORIES OF NATIONALISM

The various trends of nationalism can be categorised in relation to the religious revival. The pro-regime nationalist camp who try to marry elements of Marxism-Leninism with nationalism are commonly known as 'National-Bolsheviks'. A more amorphous umbrella-like group overlapping with the National-Bolsheviks, but concerned more with culture, art and national spiritual issues, are referred to as the 'Russites', or the 'Russian party'. Its more principled and religiously orientated 'wing' could be called the 'soil-bound' or nativist trend (which includes the best of the ruralist prose writers); while the more politicized-ideological and obviously 'underground' representatives of the soil-bound (*pochvenniki*) element are somewhat inaccurately known as 'neo-Slavophiles'.

All these terms are somewhat misleading. In Russia, the term 'National Bolshevism' was first used in relation to the so-called 'Change of Signposts' movement in the early 1920s, which developed both among the émigrés and among the intelligentsia remaining in the Soviet Union. Having just survived the bloody calamity of the Civil War, adherents of this movement argued that Russia needed a strong centralized dictatorship to rebuild and restore her strength. With Lenin's virtual abandonment after 1922 of the export of the revolution, with the restoration of limited private enterprise, some intellectual freedom and some relaxation in religious persecutions in 1923–7, these elements (including many so-called 'fellow-travellers' in the literary and

artistic spheres) began to see such a pragmatic national dictatorship in Lenin. Falsely believing that the ideology of international communism would soon be also thrown overboard, they were Bolsheviks in as much as they accepted the Bolshevik principles of centralised dictatorship with its far-reaching powers and its elements of socialist egalitarianism, but not Marxist internationalism or militant atheism. Whether believers or unbelievers, they recognized the positive importance and contribution of a national Church (Orthodoxy in the case of Russia) in building up a powerful state and a sense of national unity. Obviously, after the drive for collectivization and industrialization which was accompanied by a frontal attack on the Church and on any form of intellectual autonomy, the illusions of the original national-Bolsheviks were fatally shattered, and most of them ended up behind bars.<sup>6</sup>

Stalin's flirtation during the Second World War with both nationalism and the Church revived some national-bolshevik trends. But Stalin's official nationalism in the immediate post-war era became a grotesque parody of national Bolshevism. The Russian nation was proclaimed the greatest and most progressive nation in the world. Almost all scientific inventions of the last two centuries were ascribed to Russians. A frenzied persecution of the so-called 'cosmopolitans' – which was largely a cover-up term for mass purging of the Jewish intelligentsia – took place. At the same time, however, Russian national culture was suppressed, the best Russian living writers and artists were expelled from their professional associations and deprived of the right to live off their professional work. The works of many Russian writers of the past, e.g. Dostoevsky, were likewise suppressed. In fact, it became a 'Russian nationalism' without Russia, a process of sovietization of all the peoples of the USSR, an attempt to reduce them all to a single common denominator, a single language, which naturally had to be the language most commonly known, namely Russian.

It should be noted that towards the end of his reign Stalin was again turning his attention to Marxism and to the Marxist ideas of world revolution, interpreting them in his own peculiar way. This, as mentioned earlier, coincided with a reactivation of the antireligious front. Communist internationalism, even the promise to construct a communist society in the USSR by 1980, was renewed under Khrushchev; again accompanied by a most

brutal persecution of the Church. But no efforts could salvage the ideology after the mortal blow of destalinization and the inability of Khrushchev and his 'descendants' to offer an alternative, more morally attractive model of Marxism.

While illusions of 'Marxism with a human face' persisted (1950s to 1960s) on a considerable scale, Marxist revisionism of a more-or-less pluralistic type coincided and overlapped with a growing interest in the West, with a desire to emulate Western social democracies. As part of the search for such traditions at home, interest in Russian nineteenth-century Westernism, particularly its socialist and populist traditions (from Herzen to Chernyshevsky, Mikhailovsky, Dobroliubov . . .), also grew. But to those who studied this intellectual tradition it became clear that Russian radical Westernism had led directly to Russian Marxism, for the 1917 Revolution with the capitulation of the liberal-democratic forces, and the victory of Leninism. The Marxist-Leninist 'alternative' to so-called Stalinism was compromised by the bloody suppression of Hungary in 1956, the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and by the revival of concentration camps in the post-1956 USSR. The resulting disillusionment with Marxism led to disillusionment with the Russian Westernist tradition in general, and to a search for alternative ideas in non-Westernist schools of thought, from the Slavophiles to the Religio-Philosophic Renaissance of the early twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Adoption of the latter school of thought was particularly natural because, like the current 'seeking' generation, the leading thinkers of the early twentieth-century Russian religio-philosophic renaissance had also emerged from a disillusionment with Marxism.

In this climate of ideological collapse, National Bolshevism reappeared from within the Establishment, receiving constant if unevenly growing support from some Party-ideological spheres, particularly, it seems, from the Komsomol, the Armed Forces, some KGB and GRU elements<sup>8</sup> and some Politburo members.<sup>9</sup> Solzhenitsyn defined National Bolshevism as an ideology

which attempts to salvage disintegrating communism, fusing it with Russian nationalism . . . This current recognises no blemishes in either the Russian communist or the national past. All the bad deeds committed by our country are interpreted as good ones.<sup>10</sup>

In the Soviet Union this is also known as 'the Single Stream' (*edinyi potok*). In contrast to the Marxist Pokrovskian historiography, which saw the Bolshevik revolution as a break with the past, the Single Stream ideology treats the Soviet period as an organic continuation of Russian history, a legacy of the sum total of Russian history and culture. In a word, the National Bolshevik philosophy of history is not unlike the fashionable contemporary anti-Russian and historically deficient writings of such Western historians as Richard Pipes, Rev. Chirovsky, or the late Tibor Szamuely. National Bolsheviks attempt to salvage some bits and pieces of the Marxist ideology by grafting it on to the tree of nationalism, the latter interpreted as *étatisme* with a characteristic pride in the power and might of the empire. Being essentially a secular ideology concerned with vindicating the existing status quo, including the police regime, it has to invent justifications for the totalitarian system by perpetuating the doctrine of enemy encirclement and of the enemy within. Jews form a convenient scapegoat as a nationally rootless alien element, who thus can be blamed for the nihilistic 'excesses' of the revolution and the first two post-revolutionary decades, with their destruction of Russian culture, cultural monuments and churches. By now it should be clear that the links between the National Bolshevism of today and Nazism are multiple and quite intimate. There is even reliable inside information that portraits of Hitler and collections of Nazi paraphernalia can be found in many GRU and KGB officials' flats. And it was their sons who staged some minor Nazi parades with swastikas, as reported in the Western press around 1982.<sup>11</sup>

The 'true' National Bolsheviks' attitude to the Church is negative, but supports the cultural-aesthetic aspect of the Church as an expression of the national genius which the particular limitations of the mediaeval mentality had to express in a religious idiom. This is the line maintained by the official Soviet atheistic establishment and its monthly *Science and Religion* (*NiR*). It is the National Bolshevik strain in the leadership apparatus that permitted the formation of the All-Russian Society for the Protection of the Monuments of History and Culture (VOOPIK in Russian). At one extreme of National Bolshevism – let us call it the Nazi fringe – Christianity is condemned as a Judeo-Masonic plot to deprive nations of their identity<sup>12</sup> and the Church as an institution is denied a construc-

tive role in the Russian nation-building process.<sup>13</sup> At the other, the Church is praised as a positive cultural, intellectual and moral force in the history of the nation. We have seen the latter attitude in the writings of the late Efim Dorosh, a party-card-carrying writer of Jewish background, on St Sergius of Radonezh, but Dorosh can hardly be called a National Bolshevik, rather a cultural nativist Russite. More obviously National-Bolshevik in character was The journal *The Young Guard* (*Molodaia gvardiia*, MG in Russian acronym), which in the late 1960s published a series of articles praising the moral and patriotic role of certain Russian mediaeval saints, including St Sergius.<sup>14</sup> This was too much at the time. A purge of the nationalistic editorial board of the journal followed in 1971.<sup>15</sup> The following year Russian nationalism was attacked by a leading party ideologist, A. Yakovlev, in terms of pure Marxist internationalism. Yakovlev paid for this by exile to Canada as Soviet ambassador. It was only Andropov who had returned him to ideological work in the Central Committee and soon made him the head of its Ideological Commission. It was also under Andropov that *Our Contemporary* (*N. sovr.*), which had taken over from MG the role of National Bolshevik and openly nativist spokesman, was temporarily curbed and even had to apologise for Soloukhin's pro-Church writings mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>16</sup> Under Gorbachev, open recognition of the moral collapse and massive corruption of Soviet society and the cultural and ecological near-catastrophe<sup>17</sup> connected with them, has resulted in unprecedentedly open admissions of the Church's positive role. Chapter 8 has mentioned such statements by literary figures which have drawn official attacks and even a resolution by the CPSU Central Committee criticising such trends, if rather obliquely.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the chorus of writers has been joined even by Soviet scientists. In a round-table discussion (in a Moscow Komsomol newspaper) on the catastrophic rise of divorces, now reaching 50 per cent of all marriages in Moscow, a psychotherapist says: 'traditions have changed, parental authority has collapsed . . . there is no fear of God . . . In other words, the external mechanism for keeping families together has weakened.'<sup>19</sup> The previous chapter has already quoted a much stronger statement along the same lines by Soviet men of letters. It is more surprising that statements favourable to the Church and/or to a Christian scale of values

have continued to appear in the central press even after a CPSU Central Committee Resolution of August 1986 in the Party ideological journal *Kommunist* calling for a more vigorous antireligious campaign, as well as the above mentioned September Resolution on the arts and the antireligious *Pravda* editorial referred to in Chapter 8.<sup>20</sup>

It seems that wherever National Bolshevism as a calculated policy gives way to genuine spiritual and intellectual searches, its better adherents are attracted by the Church and her teachings and an evolution takes place in the direction of personal conversion and towards a more humane, broader form of nationalism. Dmitri Likhachev calls it 'patriotism versus nationalism', and attributes to the former love for one's own nation and for one's neighbour.<sup>21</sup> Citing Dostoevsky, he characterizes true patriotism as an ability to see one's own faults, as the virtue of self-criticism: 'There is love for virtue hidden in the condemnation of evil.' Love, goodness, compassion, tolerance and respect for other nations and their cultures are the conditions of true patriotism, according to Likhachev. He sees them present in the Russian national character and in Russian culture, and traces them to the teachers of the Slavs, St Cyrill and St Methodius, and the 'Sermon on Law and Grace' by St Illarion of Kiev.<sup>22</sup>

Likhachev is known as one of the leading ideologists of the 'Russites', a broad amorphous nativist stratum encompassing the more tolerant fringe of the National Bolsheviks (the more-or-less genuinely seeking elements among them) as well as nationally orientated Orthodox Christians and Christian-orientated patriotic writers and other men of arts.

To see the evolution from National Bolshevism of the earlier described, rather ugly, type to a Christian-patriotic *Weltanschauung*, let us remind ourselves once again of the 1969 debate between the literary critics. The already cited Lanshchikov was at the time a leading *litterateur* of the Komosol *MG*, a national-bolshevik journal. When 'pushed to the wall' by his opponents, he proclaimed the Orthodox Church as the cultural core of the values he was defending and Dostoevsky as his guiding star for the future; a position that the Politburo national bolsheviks could only condemn, as demonstrated by the purging of the journal two years later.

In *samizdat* the most salient expressions of National Bolshev-



ism were Mikhail Antonov's 'doctrine' of a symbiosis of Slavophilism and Leninism, and the anonymous manifesto, *A Nation Speaks*. Antonov, a member of an anti-Semitic nationalist dissident group headed by Fetisov was in fact under the influence of Danilevsky's Pan-Slavinism, not Slavophilism. In contrast to Danilevsky's political and moral pragmatism, Christian principles took the precedence over any *raison d'état* for the Slavophiles. Therefore, they condemned aggression and tyranny in history, including those of Peter the Great, who was a great positive hero in the eyes of Danilevsky with his explicit rejection of the applicability of Christian ethics to politics. As he wrote: 'The Benthamite principles of utilitarianism . . . and self-interest . . . are the only behaviour criteria for states.'<sup>23</sup> Danilevsky's ideas of cycles of history, during each of which one single race is supreme, could well be used as a platform for the racialism prominent in Antonov's writing as well as in *A Nation Speaks*. Yet, both documents, like so much of contemporary Russian nationalism, are also expressions of a defensive concern for national preservation in the face of the catastrophical decline in Russian birthrates and the Moslem population explosion in the Soviet Union. In Solzhenitsyn and other Christian nationalists this concern is expressed in a call for Russians to return home 'to the north-east' from the other Soviet republics, and in a desire to get rid of at least parts of the empire to restore Russianness to the Russian nation. The racist Antonov and *A Nation Speaks* echo the Komsomol National-Bolshevik ideologist Skurlatov in calling for a condemnation or banning of mixed marriages. They condemn 'the chaotic-destructive' role of de-nationalised Jews. Antonov even defends the allegedly constructive role of Hitler and Stalin who, in his opinion, represent the Germano-Slavonic spirit, and laments that their structures have been shattered after the deaths of both dictators.<sup>24</sup> Although the same platform of ideas is the starting-point for *A Nation Speaks*, its constructive proposals are more tolerant. It recognises the right of non-Russian nationalities to secede (including Western but not Eastern Ukraine). It follows the concepts of the original Slavophiles and Dostoevsky in proclaiming the moral responsibility of nations as collective personalities (*sobornaiia lichnost'*), thus condemning the European ex-colonial empires for walking out of their colonies without completing their civilizing missions, and indifferently letting the prema-

turely independent African nations bleed themselves to death in inter-tribal and 'ideological' wars and civil wars. Both, the writings of Antonov and the anonymous *A Nation Speaks* proclaim the positive and important role of the Church in history but plan to use the Church as an ideological co-opting instrument by the state.<sup>25</sup>

There are also the in-between elements, national-bolshevik in their attitudes to history, adherents of the 'single stream', but as practising Christians not completely immune to Christian universalism and some compassion for 'the other'; these could be called Christian Bolsheviks or Christian Totalitarians. One of the most notorious of these is Gennadi Shimanov. A self-taught historical determinist of the Hegelian, rather than the Marxist, mould, he sees the Soviet regime not only as a historical necessity, but also as a God-sent way of preserving Russia from the pluralist democracies whose triumphant materialistic hedonism destroys faith in God and causes demoralization. In his view, sooner or later the Soviet Government will be forced to adopt the Orthodox Church as its ideology owing to the collapse of Marxism. Once this happens, the totalitarian system with its centralisation and police system will be able to effectively reconvert Russia to Christianity, which would be impossible in a secular pluralistic democracy.<sup>26</sup> The most systematic exposition of Shimanov's Christian Bolshevism can be found in the two issues of the almanach *Many Years*, which he and a handful of his adherents issued in 1980 and 1981 respectively. The scarecrow of Judeo-Masonry is prominent in that publication. Although a Jewish convert to Christianity, Felix Karelin, is one of the contributors to *Many Years*, this is not the only reason why the publication cannot be written off as anti-Semitic plain and simple. Shimanov stressed more than once that he was not an anti-Semite and respected those Jews who either chose to go to Israel as their national home or totally assimilated by converting to Orthodox Christianity. He even suggested the idea of creating a Jewish homeland in the Crimea for those Jews who chose to stay in Russia without full ethnic and religious assimilation. He claims that the Jewish role in recent Russian history has been negative and destructive, because Jews in Russia lacked a national home and hence remained a rootless element hostile to those with roots.<sup>27</sup> But he does not want to see Jews meddling in Russian affairs if they are unassimilated or

only secularly assimilated. Secular Jewish nationalism of the contemporary Zionist variety is his arch-enemy. Shimanov sees it as a branch of the Masonry whose alleged aim is to destroy both Russia and the Orthodox Church. It is in these terms that he attacks Father Alexander Men', a Moscow Orthodox priest of Jewish background, very successful at converting Jews to Orthodox Christianity. Men's concepts of a Judeo-Christian branch of the Orthodox Church and his friendliness towards Roman Catholicism are attacked by Shimanov as a joint Zionist–Masonic–Roman-Catholic plot to undermine Russian Orthodoxy by diluting it with cosmopolitanism.<sup>28</sup> In its consistent promotion of the 'single stream' theory the Almanach justifies the murder of Nicholas II and his family as a tragic historical necessity. A relatively well-researched article on the subject dwells on a number of mystically symbolic events of the reign, to strengthen the thesis that the end of the dynasty was predetermined by God's will and historical fate. The reign begins with the bloody Khodynka stampede;<sup>29</sup> the heir is born with a terminal haemorrhaging illness in the same year as a national 'haemorrhage' begins: the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 followed by the first Russian Revolution of 1905–6. The Romanov Dynasty begins with Michael I. Michael II, Nicholas's brother, ends the dynasty by refusing to take the crown. A German woman brings the deadly haemorrhaging illness into the dynasty. Germany destroys the Empire in the haemorrhage of The First World War. The Romanov Dynasty was elected on the ashes of the False Pretender whose real name was Grigori; the dynasty ended on the ashes of Grigori Rasputin, a false pretender to sainthood and a fake symbol of the Russian peasantry. The author refutes all claims of the religious orthodoxy of Nicholas and Alexandra (and by implication, their claim to sainthood), presenting evidence of their preoccupation with the occult rather than with true Church Orthodoxy, and their choice of the occultic Rasputin rather than genuine disseminators of Orthodox sainthood such as the elders (*starsy*) of the famous Monastery of Optino.<sup>30</sup>

Yet no attempt whatsoever is made to idealise the Soviet system. Far from it. In a letter to would-be emigrant, an anonymous author (supposedly known to the editor) advises him to remain in Russia, but not because its system is better. On the contrary, Russia has already been destroyed through politics

and will be brought to ruin again. The present regime 'is ruining Russia'. But to emigrate from one's country, to abandon one's people, is to oppose God. The author cites Gogol: 'if you don't love Russia you won't be able to love your brothers; without love for your brothers, a love for God will never flare up in you'. In conclusion, he refers to the wave of emigration from the USSR as 'a fixing of boundaries between the Devil and God'.<sup>31</sup>

Distinct similarities can be pointed out between Shimanov's attitude to emigration and that of Zoia Krakhmal'nikova, a former Communist Party member and an adult convert to Orthodoxy, a writer and compiler of *samizdat* almanachs of religious readings, for which activity she was incarcerated until June 1987. Her husband, Felix Svetov, a Jewish adult convert to Orthodox Christianity, had been viciously attacked in Shimanov's *Many Years*. Although Krakhmal'nikova is not as extreme as Shimanov in condemning emigration from Russia, she sees it as a failure of the spirit and of love, the fullness of which is a function, an expression of faith and love of God. According to her, to stay in Russia by choice is an act of sacrifice in the contemporary conditions. In contrast to those who emigrate and then often begin to condemn Russia as a nation in order to justify their act, Krakhmal'nikova cites the case of a Christian girl who has wavered over whether to apply for emigration. Shortly after conversion to Orthodox Christianity, the girl was mobilized by the state for harvest work on a collective farm. There she saw 'the saddest picture of Russia: the abomination of desolation of the holy place [the church], poverty, spite, blasphemy; she learnt in full measure the despair of fear. Having returned to Moscow, she now declared: "No, how can I abandon *them*.'" This in Krakhmal'nikova's view is a true Christian's attitude to one's nation.<sup>32</sup> It is, we may add, a precise illustration of Christian 'nationalism', which is shared by all kinds of Russian Orthodox Christians and by those nationalists who have come towards Christianity through first embracing the national idea, in whatever form.

Contrary to some Western writers who prophesy the horror of the day when Russian nationalism replaces Marxism as the ruling ideology in the Soviet Union, so far all indicators point to a pattern of nationalists gradually encountering the Orthodox Church and Christian culture through their embrace of Russian nationalism and their investigation of Russian history and

*Right:* Father Vasili Fonchenkov, a former Soviet historian and atheist. Removed from the teaching staff of the Moscow Theological Seminary for joining Father Yakunin's Committee.



*Left:* Father Alexander Men', an outstanding theologian, author and preacher, often in trouble with the KGB. Brought up by 'catacomb' elders.

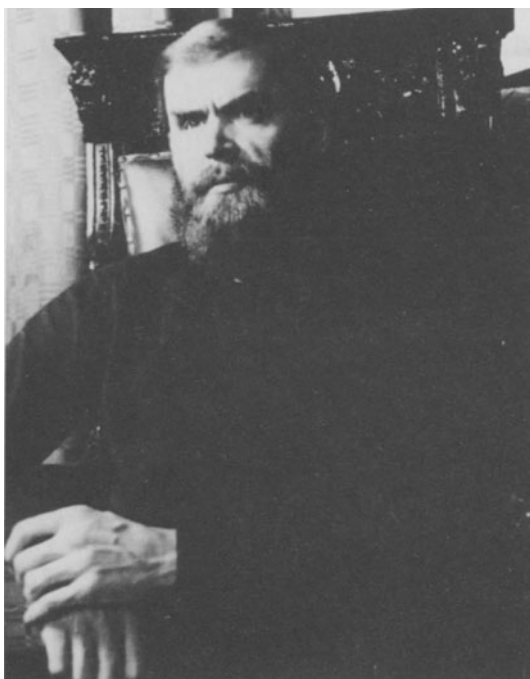


Father Gleb Yakunin.



Father Gleb Yakunin with his family: in prison, camps and internal exile, 1978–87, for founding and chairing the unofficial Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in the USSR. Released in 1987 and re-accepted into the ranks of active Orthodox clergy by the Archdiocese of Krutitsky (the Moscow Province Diocese).

*Right:* Father Alexander Pivovarov (Siberia), sentenced to four years at hard labour for distributing religious literature to his parishioners acquired from underground printers in Moscow. Released after two and a half years.

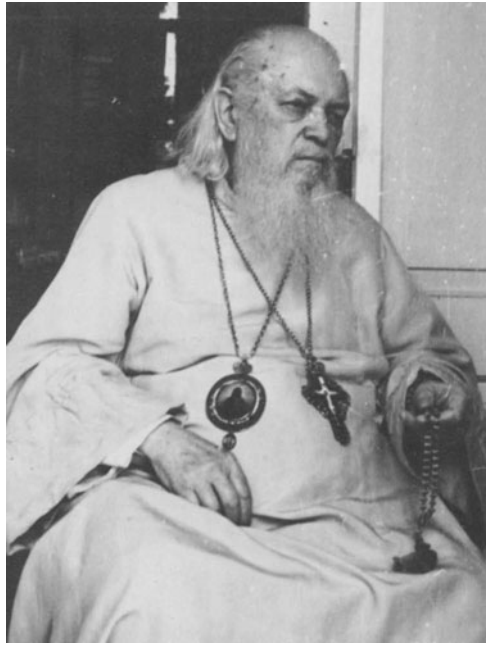


*Left:* Deacon Vladimir Rusak, deprived of the state registration to serve in church because of his sermon on martyrdom. Imprisoned in 1986 for seven years.



Father Dimitri Dudko, famous Moscow preacher and converter to the Church, author of *Our Hope*. Compromised by his TV repentance in June 1980 which secured his release from prison.

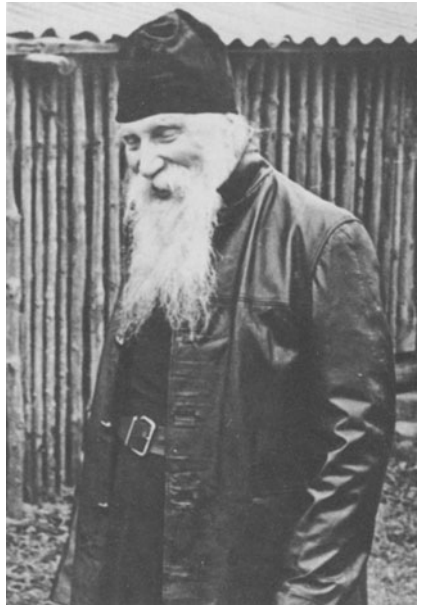
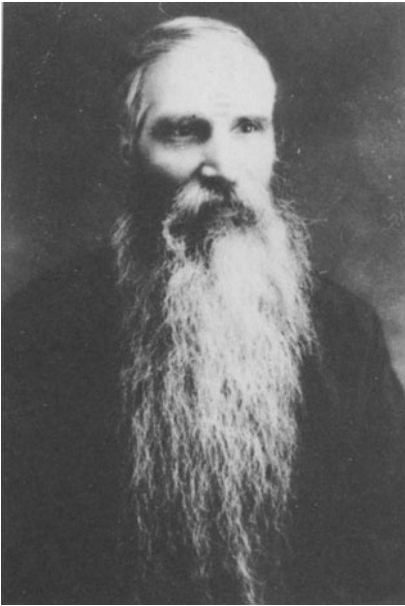




*Right:* Luka Voyno-Yasenetsky, famous surgeon, professor of medicine and orthodox archbishop, who paid for his faith by eleven years in prisons and concentration camps.



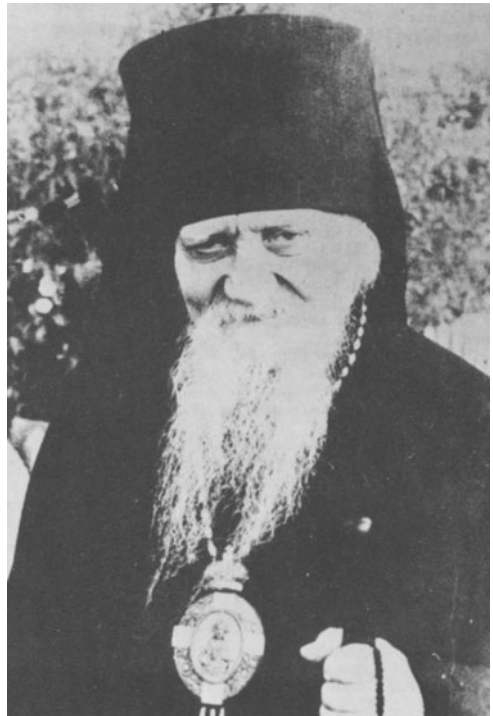
*Left:* Father Sergi Mechev (1895–1941). The leader of the famous Moscow Mechev church brotherhood founded by his father, the priest Alexander Mechev, after whose death in 1923 the brotherhood was taken over by Sergi. Imprisoned in 1929, Father Sergi was executed in 1941.



Famous Startsy and Brotherhood leaders.

*Above:* two photos of Father Tavrion (Batozsky), spent close to 30 years in camps, prisons and in internal exile.

*Right:* Bishop Afanasi (Sakharov): 33 years in prisons, exile, camps; 33 months as ruling bishop. Broke with M. Sergi in 1927, became the recognized leader of the Catacomb Church by the late 1930s. Returned to the Patriarchal Church in 1945 and reconciled with it most of the 'catacombers', including the 'Men' family.





Metropolitan Veniamin of Petrograd, executed on false charges in 1922, in fact for remaining loyal to Patriarch Tikhon (next page).



Patriarch Tikhon, the first post-revolutionary leader of the Church. Imprisoned from May 1922 to summer 1923. Died under mysterious circumstances in 1925.

culture. They cannot avoid encountering St Ilarion, St Sergius of Radonezh, St Seraphim, the Optino Monastery and its elders to whom most Russian writers from Gogol to Dostoevsky and Tolstoy made pilgrimages, the Slavophiles and the thinkers of the Russian religio-philosophic renaissance. Their Christian universalism, Christian ideas of charity, love and brotherhood taught and practised by them inevitably rub off even on the National Bolsheviks. And if not all of them go as far as to embrace Vladimir Soloviev's definition of nationalism as 'Love thy neighbour's nation as thine own', at least a trace of this is likely to influence their *Weltanschauung* and attitudes in one way or another.

We have dwelt so long on the National-Bolsheviks because this is the fringe of nationalism in the USSR most feared in the West, and also because it is a school of thought which might find more echo in the Soviet ruling circles than any other form of nationalism. Nevertheless, its influence among the Russian intelligentsia remains questionable, even minimal according to a recent statement of Academician D. Likhachev, a practicing Orthodox Christian.<sup>33</sup> However, the coming to the surface in 1987 of the unofficial but tolerated society called 'Memory' (*Pamiat'*) may cause some concern. In its mixture of extreme nationalism, restoration of historical memory, cultural monuments and churches, and its alleged condemnation of 1917 as the beginning of the destruction of Russian culture, the blame allegedly is placed on the Jews, the Masons and 'Satanic forces'. The Jewish names of many of the founders and leaders of the League of the Militant Godless (e.g. Gubelman–Yaroslavsky) as well as of the architects who led the 'reconstruction' of Moscow in the 1930s with its destruction of over 400 churches and monasteries (Ginzburg) are clearly spelled out by the *Pamiat'* spokesmen. And the society has applied for official registration at the time of this writing<sup>34</sup> Should it be legalised, it would become one of the many voices in the new *glasnost'* pluralism, along with the communist internationalist antireligious militants of *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and the more universalist-Christian soil-bound (*pochvenniki*) elements. The simplistic message of *Pamiat'*, however, may appeal to a religious and national re-awakening of the less educated masses: it is always easier to blame others for one's moral catastrophe.

Much will depend on the real availability of information,

which alone can lead to the enlightened perceptions of a tolerant Christian patriotism personified, for instance, in the already discussed evolution of Soloukhin. In one of his latest works he comes to the defence of the early Slavophiles by arguing that they knew and loved Western culture, were by no means nationalist exclusivists or chauvinists. Their criticism of the modern Western culture was that it has become too rationalistic and fragmented; wherefore its ability to nourish world civilization was coming to a close. Its role would be taken over by Russian culture because of its spirituality, but only if it was able to assimilate all that which the West had already contributed.<sup>35</sup>

Il'ya Glazunov, exploiting both the national and the religious sentiments now emerging, produces poster-like paintings such as the *Return of the Prodigal Son* where the Father looks like a Russian peasant and is surrounded by Russian historical heroes as well as national saints. This has assured him of true mass popularity in the country. His exhibitions, where in his paintings saints rub shoulders with Brezhnev's daughter (presumably removed from exhibitions since Gorbachev's ascendancy), Castro and their like, attract millions of viewers standing for hours and hours to buy a ticket to the exhibition, not because of Brezhnev's daughter's portrait, of course, but because of the saints and national themes, as witnessed in the entries in the visitors' book at one such exhibition. Glazunov's ability to sniff out the atmosphere and to allow himself just the right proportion of 'dissent' to survive official criticism and yet to earn capital as a true patriot who suffers for Russia's plight, makes his behaviour rather suspect. In this he resembles Chingiz Aitmatov, just as opportunistic a Kirghizian nativist who was discussed in the last chapter.<sup>36</sup> His posture won Glazunov praise as a 'true Russian patriot' from nationalists as diverse as Soloukhin and Vladimir Osipov, a neo-Slavophile dissident and former editor of a *samizdat* nationalist-Christian journal *Veche*, which according to rumours, was partly financed by Glazunov, and for which Osipov paid with an eight-year term of incarceration.<sup>37</sup> Glazunov managed to win trust and admiration even from the less intellectual and highly emotional church people, such as Father Dimitry Dudko, who himself was soon to fall into a nationalistic trap set for him by the KGB.<sup>38</sup> In the words of Krakhmal'nikova, some see Glazunov as satisfying the terrible 'religious hunger' in

the contemporary USSR. ““This is Russia”, say the Slavophiles’. Other believers call it ‘Sales business, making money out of Christ’.

Krakhmal’nikova supports the latter view. Seeing an element of Satanic substitution in Glazunov’s work, she illustrates her point with an analysis of his *Return of the Prodigal Son*, where God-the-father is replaced by a Russian peasant. The painting includes images not mentioned by Jesus in the parable. Among the extra personages is a tempting Satan ‘with *un-Russian* facial features. “Isn’t he a Jew?”’, one hears some visitors whisper. An explanatory note attached to the painting does not mention the Gospel or Jesus, but presents the story as a return *home* to one’s father. The context is the return to Russia of a cosmopolitan young man after disappointment in foreign lands. ‘The Devil’, writes Krakhmal’nikova, ‘has stolen God’s language.’ She quotes the late Father Alexander Schmenann: ‘The whole lie, the force of [Satan’s] lie is that he made *the same* words into words about something *else*, usurped them and turned them into a weapon of evil, and that [the Devil] and his servants . . . speak the language stolen from God.’ Glazunov, she writes, is ready to repeat the words of Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor addressed to Jesus: ‘We have corrected your exploit.’ She explains that according to the Grand Inquisitor, the Devil or Glazunov, ‘In order to rescue the flock God has to be replaced by Devil.’ She accuses Glazunov (and probably all God-builders) of building ‘pseudo-Christianity without Christ, . . . presenting fake-Christianity . . . to a crowd, which came to see crosses in which it does not believe.’ But no true creativity, in her words, can be built on fraud and lies; hence his art is nothing but glorified posters, and ‘Glazunov’s Russian idea is as much a parody as his Christianity’.<sup>39</sup> Is it this type of criticism that led him to announce publicly not long ago that he is a practising Orthodox believer? Whether the statement was sincere or not, its significance in the Russian context is that it shows that the label of a Russian nationalist alone is insufficient; one’s love (or alleged love) for Russia has to be linked with faith in God, which once again brings us back to the words of the Slavophiles and Dostoevsky that there is no Russian culture or Russian history, without the Orthodox Church. In other words, turning to the heritage of Russian history or culture leads one sooner or later to the

Church, despite all attempts by the atheistic press to refute 'the propaganda of the theological-ecclesiastic circles of the Moscow Patriarchate concerning the thesis of the national character [*narodnost'*] of Russian Orthodoxy'.<sup>40</sup>

## THE SOVIET STATE AND NATIONALISM

V. Zelensky, a *samizdat* author and Christian neophyte, tracing the path taken by the contemporary Russian to the Church, writes that on entering the Orthodox Church the contemporary Soviet-Russian 'discovers the motherland in the Church . . . in many cases joining the Church means a return to the motherland. With others the reverse is the case: one finds the Church in the depths of one's fatherland.'<sup>41</sup> He even quotes the contemporary French sovietologist Alain Besançon, without giving the source, as saying that Russian thought has always been divided into two camps 'and their line of demarcation has been the singular question of their attitudes to faith'.<sup>42</sup>

This is probably the crux of the Soviet regime's failure to co-opt Russian nationalism while attempting to separate it from the Church. We have seen that even with National Bolshevism it has not worked. Hence the constant zig-zags in Soviet policies towards nationalisms inside the USSR (not only the Russian one), as well as towards the 'native soil' literature and art. As soon as *The Young Guard's* nationalists began to write in glowing terms about Russian saints, the editorial board was purged. In the same year, however, a Russian nationalist journal on religion, history and culture, *Veche*, appeared in *samizdat* under the editorship Vladimir Osipov. According to a source close to Osipov, it was a Russite, highly placed in the Establishment and probably with the blessing of National-Bolshevik elements in the KGB, who suggested the idea to Osipov, apparently in the hope that he would play the National-Bolshevik game, which he did not. Osipov was primarily a believing Orthodox Christian and, as he wrote, Jesus and Christianity were for him much higher than the ideas of nation and nationalism. But his central aim was the moral restoration of the nation: and this, he believed, he could best do by appealing to national pride, to the sense of a national Russian heritage, rather than to its Christian 'origins'. The Russian nation, he believed, had been de-christianized *en*



*masse* for such a long time that it was more practical to appeal to a drunken Russian to rise from the mud because as a descendant of Suvorov he should be ashamed of his behaviour, than to appeal to his very dormant Christian conscience.

Yet another *Veche* article demonstrated that the two cannot be separated:

the Russian nation . . . must purge itself of its ignorance of nationalism and return to the Orthodox Church and its national culture.<sup>43</sup>

Although the journal avoided direct criticism of the Soviet regime, its statements about the moral suicide and physical degradation of the Russian nation under the impact of an aimless, materialistic and Godless upbringing could not be tolerated by the Soviets for long. *Veche's* condemnation of the Soviet policy of international 'hybridisation' depriving each nation of its particular identity, culture and spiritual core, was not to the liking of the KGB, which wanted Osipov to sing the National-Bolshevik song of praise for the Soviet system as a true expression of Russian national interests. Instead of supporting the blending of nations, *Veche* upheld Konstantin Leontiev in approving the retention of each nation's individual characteristics, and therefore criticised nationally mixed marriages as depriving the offspring of a clear national and cultural identity. At the same time it criticised national and international aggression and upheld Solzhenitsyn's call for the retrenchment of the Russians in their ethnic homeland. All this soon led to Osipov's arrest and incarceration for a total of eight years. But before his imprisonment Osipov had closed down *Veche* on the grounds that there was too much KGB interference in it, and had started a new journal, *Zemlia* or *Land* (*Earth* or *Soil* could also be used as translations), of which only two issues appeared, one already after Osipov's arrest. Significantly, the programme outlined in the first issue declared:

1. in isolation from Christianity nationalism was satanic and would throw Russia into a new abyss;
2. the main aim of *Zemilia* is the regeneration of ethics, morality, and the national culture;
3. these national aims cannot be achieved without constitutional guarantees of human rights and without freedom of expression.<sup>44</sup>

This amounted to a Christian-democratic platform created by nationally concerned patriotic citizens, which represented a radical evolution from the early issues of *Veche*, with its articles by Antonov on Leninism combined with Slavophilism and its open sympathy for the fascistic *A Nation Speaks*. In terms of time this development of a nationalistic platform recognizing the priority of Christian values, under whose influence it was evolving, took only four years, from 1970 to 1974.

There are several examples of the reverse process: turning to the Church and religious philosophy leads to the discovery of national consciousness. Cases in point are the religio-philosophical seminars of Moscow and Leningrad. The 'pre-history' of the Leningrad seminar goes back to meetings and discussions on religion, literature and philosophy held at the flat of the poet Joseph Brodsky and directed by him. This was given impetus by the 1971 Leningrad unofficial art exhibition which was attended by some 2000 people altogether and resulted in the formation of the unofficial Movement for Spiritual Culture, under whose auspices the Religio-Philosophic seminar *per se* began to meet in 1974. Its organizers and members were young Leningrad poets, artists and philosophers, either recent converts to Christianity or simply still in search of a spiritual dimension to life. At first their topics included non-Marxist philosophy in general, Oriental religions, Freudianism, and the study of Church Fathers. The latter subject proved the 'greatest hit'. They then moved on to the study of Orthodox Church history and doctrine, Slavophilism and Russian religious philosophy, concentrating more and more on Russian themes and thus merging with the 'native soil' movement – *pochvennichestvo*. In the process most of its participants (several hundred people *in toto*) were converted to Orthodox Christianity.<sup>45</sup>

The Moscow Seminar was started by Alexander Ogorodnikov, son of communist parents, who had studied (Marxist) philosophy at two Soviet universities before enrolling in post-graduate studies at the All-Union Institute of Cinematography. Deeply impressed by Pasolini's film *The Gospel According to St Matthew*, he converted to Orthodoxy and in 1973 was expelled from the Institute for producing a religious film. The seminar was planned from the beginning not only as a Christian self-education centre but also as a Christian commune. Its aims included missionary work, dissemination of Christian teachings,

work with young people and children, and moral regeneration and enlightenment of Russia through the word of Christ. Its 'Statement of Principles' emphasized the concept of the nation and the national responsibility of Christians, declaring among its aims:

Development of an Orthodox *Weltanschauung* and . . . theological education.

The Russian émigrés have preserved the very depths of our national soul, of Russian religious thought . . . we must take over their burden.

. . .

On Russia . . . . The imperishable beauty of the Church revealed Russia to us . . . To love Russia means to take up its Crisis . . .

We are united in:

1. our love for Mother-Russia,
2. our fraternal love for Christians of all nationalities,
3. our respect for the national dignity of different ethnic groups.<sup>46</sup>

The seminar was subjected to harassment from the beginning, which increased as it grew in numbers and in extent, to include groups in cities as far apart as Ufa in the Urals, Lvov in western Ukraine, Smolensk in west Russia, and other towns (not to mention Moscow and Leningrad). The first issue of their *samizdat* journal *Commune (Obshchina)* was confiscated. At least eight of its members were incarcerated, including the eldest member, Shchipkova, a Smolensk Pedagogical Institute lecturer in Latin and Romance languages. Others were expelled from universities or sacked from their jobs. Ogorodnikov, who had been refused all jobs he had applied for, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment in 1978 for alleged refusal to work. Before his sentence was over he was re-tried at the camp, accused of anti-Soviet propaganda inside the camp, and given another six years' hard labour. In 1986, just before the expiry of that second sentence, he was sentenced to another three years' hard labour for alleged 'violation of camp discipline'. It is clear that all this happened because he held fast to his faith in the camp, regularly went on hunger strike protesting at the confiscation of his Bible and prayer book by the prison authorities, and entered into discussions on religion with other inmates.<sup>47</sup>

The strong links between faith in God and national duties in the beliefs of the Seminar's participants were particularly underlined by Vladimir Poresh, Ogorodnikov's chief assistant, a librarian and bibliographer from Leningrad, who ran the seminar for a year after the arrest of Ogorodnikov until his own arrest in 1979. Poresh declared at the trial, that by participating in the seminar he had acted 'in the national interest of Russia'. At the same time he stated that his distant aim was 'a Christian community unfettered by national boundaries', and expressed full solidarity with the Italian Catholic youth movement *Comunione e Liberta* to liberate man from the collective tyranny of society.<sup>48</sup>

## CONVERSIONS AND NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As we have seen, Krakhmal'nikova severely criticised Glazunov's nationalistic pseudo-Christianity, suspecting it of satanic substitution. I have encountered similar hostile attitudes to Glazunov and National Bolshevism among other representatives of today's Russian Orthodox intelligentsia, including some of the clergy. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the enthusiastic reaction of the hundreds of thousands (in some cases millions) of visitors to the Glazunov exhibitions reflects a colossal spiritual hunger for a non-Marxist vision of Russian history and culture which, for lack of anything better, is satisfied by Glazunov's art. My study of 190 samples randomly chosen from nearly 1500 comments in the visitors' book (many are group comments – i.e. the totals are considerably more than 190 and 1500 respectively) revealed that 32 per cent of the signatories could be categorised as nationalists at loggerheads with the 'Single Stream' line of National Bolshevism. Religious and nationalistic sentiments were difficult to separate in most instances, but the nationalistic sentiment predominated in 24 per cent and the religious in 8 per cent of the comments. The 'nationalism' represented in all 32 per cent of the entries was that of sorrow and compassion for the Russian nation and national culture under the Soviet regime, thanking Glazunov for 'rehabilitating' the historical Russia, her culture, her Church, her saints and other historical figures.<sup>49</sup>

Another example of the deeply interwoven relationship between national feeling and the Church is the Leningrad-based

All-Russian Social-Christian Alliance for the Liberation of the Nation (VSKhSON, in its Russian acronym). It came into being in 1964 and consisted largely of young university lecturers and school teachers, graduate students and some young professionals in other walks of life. It drafted an activist programme outlining the eventual replacement of the Communist dictatorship with a semi-authoritarian system of Christian socialism marked by considerable economic and socio-political pluralism. Its government was to include a chamber of religious leaders who would play the role of moral leadership in society with supervisory rights over the policies and legislation of the government from the point of view of Christian ethics. In 1968 the group was rounded up by the KGB and treated extremely harshly because its eventual aim was to overthrow the communist government by means of a palace revolution. About thirty persons received terms of imprisonment. The leader, Igor' Ogurtsov, topped the list with fifteen years in a strict regime camp followed by five years of internal exile, which he has served in full. The most remarkable thing is that at the time when their programme was drafted most VSKhSON members were not baptised. As nationalists they recognised the importance of the Church for national renewal even before personally becoming members of the Church, which most of them, if not all, eventually did.<sup>50</sup> In their case the road to the Church was clearly via nationalism.

Many Russians maintain that the upsurge of Russian nationalism has been a response and reaction to the existence of nationalistic separatism among the other nationalities of the Soviet Union, often combined with anti-Russian antagonism, confusing Communism with Russianness and blaming it on the Russians.<sup>51</sup> Yet, as one interviewee told this author, 'It is impossible to separate Russian nationalism from [Russian] religiosity; this would be contrary to the nature of the Russian people and its history.'<sup>52</sup>

Yuri Kublanovsky, one of the foremost modern young Russian poets, an adult convert to Orthodox Christianity from a card-bearing communist family, considers himself an 'enlightened Christian' of the 'native soil' type and a follower of Solzhenitsyn. He sees the growth of Russian nationalism not only as a response to local republican nationalisms but as the result of 'the crisis of socialist ideology among the middle-class

intelligentsia, which came to a head towards the end of the 'sixties. The more the intelligentsia began to turn to the Church, just as in my case, a parallel appreciation of national history also developed. The symposium *From Under the Rubble* and the figure of Solzhenitsyn played a great role in this process.' In contrast to this Russian nationalism, he says,

there is also the *nomenklatura*, the KGB and the Party nationalism. These also understand that the old ideology needs renovation . . . I am familiar with young Christian neophytes, some ten years my junior [i.e. born between 1955 and 1960], who are sons of generals. You enter their flats. The corridors are hung with portraits of Marshal Zhukov and all sorts of official diplomas. Then you go into the son's room. There is an icon in the corner and portraits of Nicholas II, Konstantin Leont'ev, etc.

Kublanovsky deplores this narrow nationalism, often imperialistic monarchism, and sees it as a perversion of the Christian type of compassionate nationalism of love for one's own and for 'the other'. Yet, he sees both types of nationalism present among the neophytes, often depending on the family background and culture of the new convert.<sup>53</sup>

Another source, a medical doctor and a Jewish convert to Orthodox Christianity, agrees: 'Nationalism is a decisive element in the Russian religious revival.' After his conversion, Dr G. (he prefers to remain incognito) attended a museum guides' evening school in one of Russia's ancient towns, full of mediaeval churches, where he was surprised to encounter genuine 'religious propaganda' in the lectures of one of the instructors, an artist by profession.

You should have heard how inspiring were his lectures on the Mother of God and on the frescoes he showed us in the cathedral. I was overwhelmed. This committed us profoundly to Russian ecclesiastical culture. The face of the town and the cultural *niveau* literally changed in two to three years. A team of Moscow University students appeared. They formed the core of this change and became absolutely outstanding guides and instructors . . . awakening the people's interest in and respect for their past, their cultural-religious past. Attitudes began to change . . . Now I hardly know a single case [in that

town] where a new-born child would not be baptized . . . even in Party members' families, although surreptitiously, at home, not in the church.<sup>54</sup>

A much more sceptical Jewish observer, who worked as a museum guide in the churches and monasteries of Vladimir, and who was born in 1931 and left the USSR in 1975, refuses to equate the mass conversions and baptisms and the thousands of young people gathering around churches at Easter and Christmas with a genuine religious revival among the masses. Yet he also sees a necessary link between national consciousness and religious feeling when he says: 'I believe there is a fundamental religious revival [because] the national memory has been destroyed.' Yet he believes national memory can be revived; and he and his museum-guide colleagues tried to awaken this memory in the tourists as best they could. That caused concern to the KGB (in the years of Andropov's KGB leadership), and pressure began to mount to reduce the length of tours from five to two hours, and to talk less about history, concentrating instead on the Soviet present. His former colleagues write to him that most of them have left their work, refusing to function according to the new instructions.<sup>55</sup>

The above testimony may be compared with that of a Jewish representative of the next generation (in terms of his birth (1949), and his emigration from the USSR in 1981 – i.e. when most Russian *samizdat* sources, as well as Russian clergy in private conversations, were beginning to speak about mass religious revival, whereas in the 1970s they had spoken more in terms of gathering momentum towards the development of a mass phenomenon). Yuri Shtern, a mathematician, who calls himself a non-believer but observes Jewish religious traditions, was close to Christian conversation in Moscow for a while and knew many neo-Christians. He says of Russian nationalism: 'preoccupation with the national traditions, the roots . . . is a starting-point for . . . Russian neo-Christians' which brings them to conversion. He even sees the Jewish movement as a reaction to this Russian movement: 'The Jews began to feel that they lacked what the Russians were finding for themselves in the spiritual domain.'

For several years, Shtern read Russian religious philosophy, participated in neophyte discussion circles, and visited old churches and monasteries, until he began to feel that all this was

good 'but it was not mine', and that his fate was to return to the Jewish kernel. Yet he makes a clear distinction between the Christian nationalists and the state-supported National Bolshevism. As he says, the whole Soviet Marxist system is based on hatred, and therefore the nationalism which it tries to implant in place of the totally compromised Marxism is a nationalism of imperialistic aggression and hatred 'for the other'. Even though original impulses may in some have been nationalistic, 'believers show a much greater understanding'. In contrast to Nudelman, Shtern puts much of his hopes in the guided tours acquainting the masses with the faith and the Church, which have now also begun to include visits to functioning churches.<sup>56</sup>

A prominent priest in the contemporary Russian Church, a man born in the late 1930s into a communist-military family, joined the Church as a young adult. The early impulse which brought him not only to the Church but also to the seminary was a form of Russian nationalism. In his own words, it was anger at seeing the national degradation, destruction and demoralisation of the Russian nation and culture, brought about by Marxist materialism and militant atheism, that led him to enrol at the seminary which he perceived as the antithesis of all the official values, as the only remnant of the genuine Russia and the continuity of Russian culture and values. A real faith in God came later, while he was at the seminary, and with it came the decision to be ordained. As a priest, he continues to see himself as a fighter for Russia, for the souls of the downtrodden Russian people.<sup>57</sup>

What about the common people, the peasants? Alas, they do not write about themselves. Moreover, owing to a catastrophic shortage of rural parishes after their mass closure in the last five years of Khrushchev's reign, there has been a considerable proliferation of Evangelical sectarians since the mid-1960s in place of the closed Orthodox churches. Moreover, the mass epidemic of alcoholism has affected the villages, and the working class in particular. Yet, according to all evidence available, most rural and well over half of urban working-class children are baptised in the Orthodox Church. According to some first-hand information a trickle of nationalistic ideas has begun to penetrate the countryside as well. Tatiana Goricheva, a former Soviet philosopher who came to God as a mature young scholar, spoke to numerous rural priests in the late 1970s who



claimed that in the villages, too, adults were returning to the Church. She summed up the motives of a young working man or peasant for returning to the Orthodox Church as:

I am Russian. To be Russian is good. Goodness is Christian. Russian Christianity is Orthodoxy. Therefore, in order to be Russian I must be Orthodox.<sup>58</sup>

Does this mean that only an ethnic Russian or a person embracing Russianness can feel spiritually at home in the Orthodox Church? Not at all. The official *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* distinguished between a broad Christian patriotism expressed in love for one's country on the model of love and concern for one's family, – and, the unacceptable from the Christian point of view egotistic, chauvinistic nationalism with idealization of one's own nation while belittling others.<sup>59</sup> We may remember that the Christian Soviet scholar Likhachev made identical distinctions between patriotism and nationalism. Krakhmal'nikova uses the same argument, in an attack on anti-Semitism as 'blasphemy against the Virgin Mary and Jesus and hence against the whole Orthodox Church, while glorifies the Theotokos as All-Holy and Pure, as a Daughter of the Jewish nation and the Mother of our Saviour'. This again implies a 'soil-bound' approach. The Mother of God was a daughter of the Jewish nation; therefore, a Jew, by becoming a Christian, establishes his roots in the 'soil' of the Virgin and the Apostles; or, by implication, the Church embraces all nations, becomes the spiritual home of each nationality.<sup>60</sup>

This is once again reminiscent of the words of the Russian religious philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev, who was a nationalist of sorts, that the formula for Christian nationalism is 'love other nations as thine own'; which one Soviet Russian Orthodox author, in a tract defending the sense of national rootedness and national compassion as organic characteristics of a Christian, formulates thus:

The perdition of the Russian people now taking place is my pain . . . Someone who lacks his own national feelings will not appreciate another's . . . Man cannot live without a sense of his motherland as a 'life-creating sacred place'.<sup>61</sup>

A learned priest and scholar from the younger generation of Soviet Christians, who was quite apprehensive of the National

Bolshevik flirtation with the Church as a potential danger, a possible future attempt by the regime to co-opt the Church in internal as well as foreign affairs, still believed that

if Russia is to have a future, it will be only in an national-Christian renaissance, i.e. in a confluence of nationalism-patriotism with the Church, where spiritual priorities are left to the Church, and the Church is not subordinated to political aims.<sup>62</sup>

The current Gorbachev regime seems to be courting the nationalists more seriously than its predecessors. It allowed the promotion of ruralist writers to the top positions in the Writers' Union. It gave in to the ecological lobby, having at last withdrawn the plan to reverse the northern rivers, which would have flooded the geographical core of Russian culture and church architecture.<sup>63</sup> The novels of Rasputin and Astafiev and other ruralists discussed in the previous chapter, prove the inseparability of the 'native soil' (or ruralist) literary trend from the process of religious revival and its values. All of these authors, as well as Likhachev – whose writings defending the north and attacking the river-reversal plans suddenly appeared in the chief ideological organ of the Soviet Communist Party – are simultaneously Russian patriots, ecologists, active members of VOPIK, and advocates of the re-Christianisation of Russia. Attacks in official party documents and central press statements in late 1986 criticising manifestations of the Christian worldview in Soviet literature and art, show that the regime once again is trying to separate religion from nationalism.<sup>64</sup>

The hopelessness of these attempts to separate nationalism from a search for God and to totally secularise the former, has been implicitly demonstrated in the best of the ruralist writing and explicitly articulated by numerous Soviet unofficial thinkers, including Viktor Trostnikov, a Christian from Moscow, mathematician and religious thinker.

He sees the twentieth century as 'the century when de-spiritualisation has reached its limits and has begun to suffer an ever sharper crisis'. In this process, nationalism 'which has been spreading around the globe, is the most elementary reaction to the destruction of the invisible, which has been in the process of creation for centuries and which now serves as the core of national life. [Nationalism] is a spontaneous manifestation of the

collective instinct of self-preservation' in the face of a materialistic ideology, whether that of Western democracies or that of Marxist dictatorships. Both are incompatible with national self-consciousness, at the core of which are:

mystical foundations of national existence . . . [which] have strong links to the cosmic circulation of Life, to the soil and nature, to God . . . A nation is the bearer of a national covenant, the source of mystical wisdom, the creator of language and religion, of all things . . . not created by human hands.

As such, rediscovery of the national conscience is a rediscovery of intangible, non-materialistic, spiritual values in life, a step towards God. Seeing both systems – Western mob-orientated individualistic democracies, and Marxist collectivism – as satanic perversions of Christian culture, Trostnikov implicitly sums up the Christian nationalists' negative attitudes to emigration from Russia, articulating their distrust of the contemporary West as an alternative to Marxism. It is not an alternative, in their view, as long as it embraces materialism and practises moral relativism and spiritual indifference.<sup>65</sup>

## **Part III**

# **The Life of the Church: Her Faithful and Her Pastors**

# 10 The Believer Through the Eyes of Soviet 'Religiologists'

## SOVIET EXPLANATIONS OF THE MOTIVES FOR RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Official Soviet explanations of the survival of faith in God can be reduced to several categories or 'causes'.

1. The classical 'explanation' is the survival of old superstitions, carried over from the pre-revolutionary past, inflamed by ignorance among the most backward sectors of the population, or by anti-Soviet traditions disseminated by relatives who happen to be *ex-kulaks* or members of the pre-revolutionary privileged classes. 2. Closely related to such explanations are attacks on foreign radio-propaganda and 'anti-Soviet' religious literature secretly imported from the West, which are accused of having a particularly adverse effect on weak persons, elements who have not succeeded in Soviet secular life and thus bear a grudge against the society they live in.

As late as 1963 *Kommunist* claimed that 'in our country religious sentiments are a legacy of the old, pre-socialist social psychology'. The author explained their survival after half a century of active antireligious education as due to 'a great form of stability . . . passed on from one generation to another, which assumes the power of tradition and custom'.<sup>1</sup>

Had this been a satisfactory answer, religion would have been expected to survive only in traditionally religious families, carried on from one generation to the next simply as a semi-conscious habit. And indeed Soviet writings and studies maintain that most contemporary believers come from religious families and have inherited their faith from their forebears.<sup>2</sup> The *Kommunist* author, however, admits not only the fact that religion survives, but also that atheists are converted to religion, which cannot be explained in terms of a family tradition or custom.

This author pauses to discuss only one motive for conversion: aesthetic feeling – the beauty of the service, iconography, church music, which all help ‘to create a mood of mysticism’. Man’s search for beauty leads many to Church, according to numerous Soviet sources. This makes it one of the reasons for not only the survival, but also the revival of religion.<sup>3</sup> Soviet authors, seemingly aware of the legend according to which St Vladimir finally chose Orthodoxy rather than Roman Catholicism because of the celestial beauty of the Eastern liturgy, realise the importance of aesthetics in relation to the ‘enhancement of man’s creative powers, to his political and moral ideals . . . and their realisation’.<sup>4</sup>

The search for beauty in the Church is, of course, an admission that it is lacking in Soviet secular life. This leads us to the third cause of reversion or conversion to religion, according to Soviet sources: general dissatisfaction with the realities of daily life and its brutality, people’s lack of compassion or sympathy for a colleague in need, and the collapse of the secularised Soviet family system.

According to one Soviet study, a Soviet soldier decided to enrol in an Orthodox seminary after the completion of his term of duty, although as yet he had no strong religious convictions. He came from a broken family and had become an orphan at an early age. His first job, in a mine, brought him into contact with alcoholics, thieves and deadly fights. He was not yet sure of his faith, but could not help thinking about God, and to the abhorrence of the author of the study, the soldier believed that in the Church he would be able to devote himself to ‘active spiritual life, to a study of philosophical problems, to thought, doubts and feelings’. In other words, he hoped to find freedom in the Church, inferring its absence in Soviet secular society. It is interesting that a religiologist who wrote to the soldier tried to convince him that Christianity was a form of nihilism, because it negated the communist code of ethics, and set itself against Soviet society and its values.<sup>5</sup>

In another example, a young girl gets a job in a sewing factory. She is unfamiliar with the job, works poorly, becomes an object of hostile jokes. Her mates call her fool. Until a Baptist mate comes along. She teaches her how to work, helps her in all ways, and eventually invites her to Baptist services; ‘I went, and I liked it there: the singing, the sermon and all. Some time later I developed a need for worship.’<sup>6</sup>



Lovers and collectors of ecclesiastical art in the eyes of *Krokodil* (the main satirical journal).

Soviet sociological studies of believers likewise confirm that 'personal misfortune and the need for consolation' are among leading factors in turning to God. In a study of the Baptist-Initiativists in the city of Anapa, 19 per cent of the respondents named this as their main original motive for joining the sect.<sup>7</sup> Of course, this could be explained away in terms of Marx's formula that religion was an opium for the people; and that is what Soviet authors do, claiming that just like drug-addicts, it is the 'spiritually unstable and easily influenced' among the Soviet young people of today for whom 'faith in God becomes an existential necessity'; because, according to the famous physiologist Ivan Pavlov, 'Religion appears where man suffers hardship'.<sup>8</sup> The inconvenience with the 'opium' formula is that when Marx devised it he was referring to the capitalist society and argued that the need for such a dope would disappear in a socialist society. Lenin's version of the phrase 'religion is moonshine' was meant for the tsarist society and its immediate legacy. Pavlov was writing in the 1920s and 1930s, the years of Stalin's corruption of socialism, allegedly put right after 1956. On the one hand, Soviet propaganda blames the survival of religion on bad family influences, thereby sometimes causing family breakdowns. On the other, family breakdowns are cited as causes of conversion to religion. That was most explicitly stated by one of the Soviet Union's leading sociologists, Igor' Bestuzhev-Lada: 'the problems of family life, . . . the high number of divorces was one reason why an increasing number of young people were turning to religion'.<sup>9</sup>

Closely related to the collapse of family life as a cause of religious conversion is what Soviet propaganda terms 'a mistaken view' of the Church as the source and disseminator of morals. A young female worker refused to join the Komsomol because her faith in God was incompatible with the Komsomol attitudes. 'All you do,' she says about the Komsomol, 'is rebuff everybody and rail at them . . . And what's all around you?: a husband beating his wife, a drunkard lying on the factory floor, someone else stealing . . . You say that under Communism man will turn into a model of morality. Well, in our [Christian] community many members could already be such models . . . and everyone wants to do something good for his fellow-man.'<sup>10</sup>

Another reason for conversion to the Church, according to



Soviet authors, is quality and quantity of sermons directed particularly at young people, in which ‘one of the main points . . . is the *presentation of religion as the sole preserve of morality*’ (emphasis in the original). It is claimed that all religious organisations in the country have considerably increased the number of sermons directed at young people, ‘skilfully making use of the problems and weaknesses in atheistic propaganda for the young’. Because Soviet propaganda ignores Church history, young people, according to the author, do not know the dark side of the Church’s role in history and lack a critical view of religion. Orthodox preachers in particular, says the author, take advantage of the situation to present the historical role of the Church in a positive light. Teachings on the sinfulness of this world making suffering meaningful in religious terms help young people to meet difficulties and injustices and make them willing to suffer for the cause. Youthful inclinations towards romanticism, sacrifice and exploits find their realisation in service to the Church. These factors attract some Soviet young people to the Church.<sup>11</sup>

Previous chapters have discussed the Church’s positive role in Russian history and national growth, as well as in national culture and the moral life of the nation; this was reflected in the literary, historical and philosophical writings of the 1980s, particularly 1985–6, which caused such an uproar in the Soviet ideological establishment. As pointed out in Chapters 8 and 9, the atheistic establishment admits that this identification with national culture is among the factors ‘widening the influence of the Church’ in contemporary Soviet society, assuring the Church of ‘a mass character, stability of Church dogmas and of religious consciousness’.<sup>12</sup>

Diehard readers of *Science and Religion* complain that nowadays ‘some young people even declare as if with pride: I am a believer’. Some see the sacrament of confession as a particular strong Church attraction, allowing them ‘to open one’s soul to a good man’, and suggest the necessity of introducing confessions as a part of new atheistic (‘god-building’) rites.<sup>13</sup> The journal grudgingly responds: yes, ‘in some areas there is a revitalisation of religious survivals’; and adds: ‘the results of sociological surveys of Leningrad intelligentsia indicate that 20 per cent of them see no point in atheistic propaganda’.<sup>14</sup>

## HOW MANY BELIEVERS – PAST AND PRESENT?

To give a reliable estimate of the proportion of believers in the Soviet Union, all Soviet statistical returns on the subject must be carefully screened and compared. But it should always be remembered that these are motivated by two mutually incompatible aims: (i) to demonstrate the continuing vitality of the 'hostile religious ideology' in order to assure an even flow of state funds to the professional atheistic establishment and its over-inflated staff; and (ii) to prove the atheistic establishment's worth by giving figures showing constant decline of religious belief and triumph of atheism, however inaccurate or doctored such figures may be.

Soviet historical statistics aim at camouflaging the amount of force used to suppress religion by emphasizing a natural decline in religious faith among the population just before the revolution. Quite accurate data is often cited on the decline of church attendance from thousands to dozens immediately after the February 1917 revolution (when all pressure to attend church was removed).<sup>15</sup> But such assertions are counter-productive, because they lead to the conclusion that despite the billions of roubles spent on seventy years of antireligious propaganda, and despite the persecutions, or perhaps even because of them, religious participation has grown since that low 1917 figure. In fact, Soviet sources occasionally admit that there have been several waves of religious resurgence, such as that of the 1920s and another during The Second World War. Table 10.1 shows the increase reported by the Commissariat of Internal Affairs in newly registered religious communities in twenty-nine major provinces of the Russian Republic in the eleven months between 1 January and 1 November 1925.

A special Communist Party Conference met in 1926 to discuss how to counteract this growth in religious faith, confirmed by

TABLE 10.1<sup>16</sup>

Orthodox parishes	9 per cent growth
Old Believers parishes	11 per cent growth
Moslem communities	19 per cent growth
Judaic communities	10 per cent growth
Evangelical communities	13 per cent growth

over 100 field surveys of religious affiliation undertaken in the course of the 1920s.<sup>17</sup> The result was the infamous legislation of 1929 banning all forms of religious teaching or public statements, restricting the activities of believers to the four walls of a church, and eventually even reducing these by the mass destruction of the church buildings themselves.

However, even on the purely statistical issue there is much inconsistency and incompatibility in the officially released figures relating to ‘the religious sector of Soviet population’ over the last six decades. Thus, in 1930 it was claimed that only 11.2 per cent of Moscow factory workers were practising religious believers, giving the following breakdown: 15.9 per cent believers among those workers who did not belong to the Communist Party; 15 per cent of the non-Party males were believers, as were 27 per cent of the women. If this was so, this would mean, as Table 10.2 indicates, that there had been no decline in the proportion of religious believers among Soviet industrial workers between 1930 and the 1960s; there may have even been a rise, according to data cited at the end of this section.

What is disregarded in the conclusion of the 1930 report, although mentioned in passing, is that of 12 000 distributed questionnaires only 3000 were returned.<sup>18</sup> It is most probable that the vast majority of those who ignored the survey were religious believers doubting the anonymity of the survey in the conditions of religious persecution, which had reached particular intensity in 1928–9.

A 1936 publication claims a decline in observance of religious rites among the population, as shown in Table 10.3. A leading Soviet religiologist, V. Kobetsky, commenting on this survey some forty years later, doubts the earliest figures (particularly the 100 per cent indicators), but not the later ones, not even pausing to mention the persecutions and mass closures of churches in the 1930s, which not only made it very dangerous to observe – let alone admit to the observance of – religious rites, but also physically very difficult, especially for a working male. Kobetsky uses these doubtful figures as indicators of a dramatic decline in religious belief in that decade. Yet a 1930 survey showed that 33 per cent of Leningrad schoolchildren prayed regularly, while 71 per cent of parents and 39 per cent of schoolchildren observed religious feasts and approved of them. In 1937 a leading Soviet religious expert stated in the central

TABLE 10.2<sup>19</sup>

<i>Attitude to religion</i>	<i>Place and year of survey</i>	<i>Urban percentages</i>		<i>Rural percentages</i>	
		<i>Voronezh Oblast'</i>	<i>Penza and Penza Prov., 1960s</i>	<i>Voronezh Oblast', 1965</i>	<i>Penza and Penza Prov., 1960s</i>
Religious fanatics		0.4		0.8	
Convinced believers		7.5		14.8	
Wavering believers	Sample:	7.2		17.1	
Antireligious/ indifferent	15 962 rur. 21 557 urb.	21.5		27.7	
Convinced atheists		46.0		30.8	
			Factory workers		Coll. farmers
			12		30.8
			88.0		69.2

TABLE 10.3

	<i>Observed in</i>	
	<i>1922–3</i>	<i>1934</i>
Men under age 24	62.6%	1.0%
Women under age 24	71.5	12.2
Men, 25–39	71.4	3.2
Women, 25–39	100.0	26.5
Men, 40–59	100.0	14.5
Women, 40–59	100.0	47.5

ideological organ of the CPSU that ‘occasionally . . . the number of believers in our country . . . exceeds the number of non-believers’.<sup>20</sup> Nor does Kobetsky’s conclusion tally with the statistical data of the three chief Orthodox rites through the 1920s (see Table 10.4), which were gradually reversed only under the impact of intensive persecutions beginning in 1928, or (as will be seen) with the figures of the 1960s–70s.

Articles dealing with the methodology of conducting these surveys reveal that they are often carried out by activists from the local atheist clubs and Party ideological institutions, i.e. the interviewers are known to many interviewees personally, caus-

TABLE 10.4

	<i>Baptisms</i>	<i>Percentage of church burials</i>	<i>Church weddings</i>
1925	55.9	57.5	21.1
1926	59.0	59.0	21.6
1927	60.0	66.3	15.1
1928	?	65.6	10.8
1929	50.3	62.0	7.0

Note: The reason for the low official figure for church weddings lies in the particular danger for young people caught performing religious rites. But the same survey’s data on the dramatic decline of weddings – religious or civil – during the weeks of Lent and Advent when the Orthodox Church does not permit weddings – from 9.5 per cent of the annual total in February to 0.8 per cent in March, and from 9.9 per cent in November to 0.4 per cent in December – seems to show that in reality many more people observed the Orthodox Church regulations than the above statistics would indicate.<sup>21</sup>

ing anxiety as to the consequences if they admit to any religious beliefs. Moreover, in many of these surveys, in addition to written (allegedly anonymous) questionnaires the interviewers carry out 'extensive atheistic explanatory work with the interviewees'.<sup>22</sup> In the light of this information it must be concluded that many (if not most) of the 'waverers' in Table 10.2 are believers who are afraid to give a straight answer. In one such survey, for instance, it was discovered later that many of the respondents who had claimed to be waverers were in fact regular churchgoers.<sup>23</sup> Hence, a large part of the 'waverers' should be included in the category of believers comprising between 12 and 16 per cent of believers among the urban industrial workers, and between 31 and 33 per cent among the rural dwellers in the Russian Republic in the mid-1960s. A survey of the urban population of the Voronezh province, including the university city Voronezh with over 600 000 residents in the late 1960s and the more 'backwater' province of Penza (with the provincial capital's population of 300 000), could jointly serve as a representative urban sample, while the rural population of their surrounding regions is as representative of Russian as any. We shall avoid presenting data concerning religious affiliation in western Ukraine and other areas which fell under Soviet control only during the Second World War, having thus evaded the wild antireligious attacks of the 1920s and the holocaust of the 1930s. The proportion of believers there, according to the surveys, remains greater than in the original territories of the Soviet Union. Be that as it may, the above figures, if reliable, indicate that religious affiliation has fallen by half in the original areas in the 30-year period from 1935 to 1965. However, the figures in Table 10.2 lend themselves to further critical analysis.

The 1920s–30s figures included the older generation, particularly the older peasant generation, which had been almost 100 per cent church-going. They also included the generation of people who had been young soldiers, workers and peasants in 1917–22, the already-discussed period when the revolution-infected young drifted away from the Church. True, there was a considerable religious resurgence among this generation in the early 1920s, but it was the return of only some – those who had become disillusioned with the new society to the extent of going back to the Church. Surveys of churchgoers and believers

indicate that at least in the 1960s they were predominantly in the age group of 60 to 75, i.e. those who were 15 to 25 years old in the 1920s<sup>24</sup> – the very generation which had drifted away from the Church during the Revolution and the Civil War and then partly returned in the 1920s and later.<sup>25</sup> Thus the figure given in the Table 10.2 may in fact represent no such dramatic decline in the ratio of religious believers in the given generation as may have appeared at first glance. Soviet religiologists do not dare to come to this conclusion in so many words, although they admit that the vast majority of today’s believers were young people precisely when the atheistic press was ‘predicting’ that the Church would die out with the older generation. Instead, a new ‘old generation’ of believers has grown up.<sup>26</sup>

In the mid-1960s a massive random survey of nearly 23 000 young people and children in regions as far apart as the Urals, the Volga regions, south Russia, central Russia, west Russia, the northern Caucasus, the Ukraine, Lithuania, etc., provided some thought-provoking data. It would be interesting to compare the results of this survey with the limited data of the 1920s (see Table 10.5).

The decline shown in Table 10.5 is dramatic indeed. But are the 1966/7 figures so reliable and final? The exact circumstances in which the figures were obtained are not given. We are told only that the surveys were carried out jointly by the Institute of Scientific Atheism and the Central Committee of the Komso-mol, hence it is likely that some direct or indirect pressure on the

TABLE 10.5<sup>27</sup>

	<i>% of believers, school children</i>	<i>14–25 years old</i>	
Sokol'niki	42–60	Rural	10%
Mar'ina Roshcha	12	Urban working class	2–4%
Lenin District	5–8	Urban general	2.5–3%

1920s survey of three Moscow school districts: (1) Sokolniki, which was still basically rural with a high concentration of churches; (2) Mar'ina Roshcha, a lower-working-class, 'lumpen proletariat' area; (3) Lenin district, fully urban with a high concentration of the Soviet 'new class'. Hence we shall compare the Sokol'niki data with the rural figures for 1966/7. Survey of believers among the young.

respondents was applied along Komsomol lines. These suspicions seem justified when only two years after the completion of this survey Soviet religiologists were drawing attention to the *rise* of religious observance among young intellectuals. Did the 1966/7 survey not conceal more than it revealed?

A 1973 survey by Leningrad University found about 20 per cent religious believers and some 10 per cent waverers on a random sample of 3875 urban dwellers,<sup>28</sup> which is exactly double the rate of urban believers claimed by the 1965 Voronezh survey. If the incidence of believers in rural areas is, as generally claimed, one and half times that in urban areas, then about 45 per cent of rural dwellers should be thought of as religious believers, approximately 50 per cent more than the proportion in the Voronezh survey. Has there been such a dramatic growth of religious belief in the country between 1965 and 1973, or is this but a sad comment on the reliability of Soviet statistical surveys on religion? It is also a revealing comment on the persistence of religious persecution in the country. For if we turn again to the Voronezh sample, we learn from Soviet sources that in 1963 there were 55 Orthodox churches open for worship in the whole diocese for a total population of some 2 200 000, approximately 50/50 urban/rural at the time.<sup>29</sup> If two million of them belonged to the historically Orthodox population, then the proportion of believers (urban 15 to 30 per cent and rural 30 to 45 per cent) would have required at least 300 rural and 150 urban churches (1 church per one to two thousand believers); That is, only 12 per cent of religious believers had been provided with facilities for communal worship.

But to return to the question of youth, we have the limited sample of two student bodies surveyed in 1971, shown in Table 10.6. In the peculiar conditions of Soviet higher education, for a Soviet student to reveal that he or she is a convinced and practising religious believer means almost automatic expulsion, particularly from an institute that trains teachers, who are obliged to be atheists. Hence the figure for waverers, in these conditions, almost certainly means religious belief or at least an active search for it – i.e. 11 per cent of believers in the Kaluga college and nearly 27 per cent in Obninsk. In any case, the above figures reveal a remarkable growth of interest in religion among Soviet university students, unless the surveys themselves are



TABLE 10.6<sup>30</sup>

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Religious believers</i>	<i>Waverers and others (interest in religion expressed in reading religious literature, etc.)</i>
Kaluga Pedagogical Institute	0.2%	10.8%
The Obninsk Campus of the Moscow Engineering- Physics Institute	0.0%	26.8%

quite unreliable. In reality, this probably shows a combination of both factors. Indeed in the 1970s a growing number of Soviet authors drew attention to the presence of practising believers in the ranks of Soviet youth.<sup>31</sup> This phenomenon has not been accompanied so far by satisfactory and sufficiently representative survey figures – a sign that things are far from desirable from the official point of view.

An estimate of the extent to which religion influences the contemporary child may be important in view of Soviet atheist claims that at least in the 1960s some 80 per cent of practising believers inherited their faith from the parents or returned to it in middle age, even though they had been non-believers for certain periods of their lives, while only 10 to 12 per cent claimed to be adult converts with no previous religious experience whatsoever.<sup>32</sup> After asserting that modern young people have a higher degree of atheistic conviction than their forebears, Kobetsky concludes that when they reach old age their rate of return to the faith of their parents will be no more than 5 to 6 per cent; whereas in fact a full 40 per cent of the contemporary religious contingent are former atheists who have returned to the faith of their childhood (half of the 80 per cent). His prognosis is unreliable, however, not only because the evidence suggests growing faith among modern young people and greater indifference to atheism among non-believers, but also because similar prognoses made nearly fifty years earlier proved quite wrong. According to the 1930 survey only 11 per cent of working-class families were educating their children as religious believers. Yet a very low estimate of practising believers in the

Soviet Union now, in the mid 1980s, giving full benefit of doubt to Soviet field surveys, would give the proportion of believers in the total Soviet population as between 30 and 50 per cent, as will be shown later in this chapter. If some 80 per cent of them inherited their faith from their parents in one way or another, then between 25 and 40 per cent (not 11 per cent) of all parents in the 1920s–30s passed religious notions on to their children who are now in their fifties and sixties – the main age of Soviet churchgoers; that is, provided that every child educated as a religious believer remained such or became a believer at a later stage. Assuming a more realistic concept of some ‘wastage’, we could estimate the rate of parents educating their children in a religious spirit in the 1920s and 1930s to have been well over 40 per cent of the working-class population.<sup>33</sup>

There is much controversy in the Soviet press concerning the proportion of children baptised. Official claims vary from 12 to 60 per cent, but the state requirement, in force since 1962, that parents’ passports be registered at the time of their children’s baptism has resulted in many a parent arranging an unofficial home baptism by a courageous priest or one who has retired and has less to risk. Therefore, the real state of baptised children is undoubtedly considerably higher than the official church registers indicate.<sup>34</sup> More significant is a published survey of Soviet teenagers, 14–17 years of age, at the pioneer camp Orlionok in 1966. The figures are clearly biased in the Soviet favour because this is an elitist camp consisting mostly of children of high-ranking party officials and their cronies. All respondents were Komsomol members. The survey shows that 52.7 per cent were baptised, and that 11.5 per cent had been over three years of age at the time of baptism, remembered the rite (according to the survey), and thus were ‘graphically’ influenced by it. Table 10.7 shows a breakdown of the group according to social background.

There are two interesting facts in this table: (i) that the rate of children baptised in small towns is lower than in the big cities; (ii) that a higher proportion of factory workers than of collective farmers have baptised their children. In reality, this is just another indicator that the sample predominantly concerned children of party members and/or of administrative personnel or other citizens with an above-average socio-political status. These people – for example, collective farm chairmen, decor-

TABLE 10.7<sup>55</sup>

<i>Residence</i>	<i>Profession of parents</i>	<i>Percentage baptised</i>
Rural		61%
Small town		42
City		45
	1. Workers	77
	2. Collective farmers	71
	3. Trade and service	55
	4. Retired and housewives	43
	5. Military	42
	6. Medical professions	42
	7. Engineering and technical	42
	8. Civil servants, mass media, arts and theatre	35
	9. Teachers and other educationalists	34

ated tractor drivers, etc. – are more conspicuous in a rural or small-town situation and more so among peasants than among city industrial workers, and therefore would be more anxious to adhere to the party norm than those residing in big cities. Categories 5 and 8 would have a very high rate of party membership, while teachers are required to be active atheists or at least must pretend to be;<sup>36</sup> hence it is particularly indicative that the rate of baptised children in these categories is as high as 34 and 42 per cent. In view of the selectivity of the above sample, unofficial reports (Solzhenitsyn’s testimony, *samizdat*) that between two-thirds and three-quarters of all children born in the areas of traditional Christian settlement in the USSR are baptised, seem to be quite realistic.

An official spot check on St Vladimir’s Cathedral in Kiev revealed over 300 baby and child communicants on Easter Monday, 26 April 1965 – i.e. on a legal work- and school-day – although 8 per cent of that group consisted of schoolchildren and teenagers, 34 per cent were nursery and kindergarten age children (of whom, on a statistical average, two-thirds would in fact already be pupils in these institutions), and 58 per cent were under three years of age. Undoubtedly, the figure for the preceding seven Saturdays and Sundays – i.e. during Great Lent – would have been considerably higher; while any Sunday of the year should have shown a higher number of school-age and teen-age communicants than Easter Monday, because atheist

activities at places of work and study take particular note of people missing from work or school on a Church holiday, with subsequent repercussions. The practice among Russian Orthodox believers is for those aged seven and older to precede Communion by confession; and from then on, because of the risk of discovery, Communion becomes very infrequent, typically from one to four times a year. There are at least nine functioning Orthodox churches in Kiev. Of the above 325 communicants, twenty (6 per cent) were junior-school children (roughly aged seven to eleven). Judging by the calculations in Table 10.8 this represents roughly 0.3 per cent of that age-group.<sup>37</sup> As we have said, there are likely to be more communicants of that age-group on any Sunday, rather than on an Easter Monday. Hence, extrapolating the figure and our own estimates, we could assume that at least 0.5 per cent of that age-group received communion at St Vladimir's Cathedral on an average Sunday and that these children would probably receive communion twice a year. This would give us 12 per cent (0.5 per cent  $\times$  24 Sundays, assuming two to three annual communions per child) of Kiev's junior-school children receiving communion in that particular church. Even if all the other Kiev churches were giving communion only to a fraction of the children frequenting the Cathedral, we could safely surmise, giving the Soviets full benefit of the doubt, that the combined total of the other eight churches would be higher than the above, hence 30 per cent of junior-school children receiving Communion in Kiev would be a low estimate. If we add to this the Baptists, in whose churches according to Soviet estimates the percentage of young people is double that in Orthodox churches<sup>38</sup> (although the total number of Baptists is a fraction of the Orthodox total), and if we include other sects and religions, we would achieve a figure of at least 35–40 per cent of schoolchildren participating in the religious life of Kiev. This gives the atheists no reason to assume that there will be a considerable decline in believers once the current young generation has reached the 'typical' churchgoing age – i.e. returned to the faith of their youth.

Indeed, our above estimate of over 30 per cent practising Orthodox believers among junior-school children has been exceeded by far in a survey of religiousness among nursery and kindergarten children in the Urals-middle-Volga city of Cheboksary. The children had to respond to a picture-associative

TABLE 10.8<sup>39</sup>

<i>Age-groups</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>No religious influence</i>	<i>Religious influence present</i>	<i>Strong religious influence</i>
3–5	30	93.4%	6.6%	0%
5–6	30	80%	20%	0%
6–7	30	40%	60%	33%

test involving religious and secular pictures, and the results are shown in Table 10.8.

Thus, with age there is a growth of religious concepts, influence, and even strength of conviction. A full one-third of all respondents of the age-group corresponding to that of the Orlyonok pioneer camp showed strong religious convictions, while 60 per cent had some Christian ideas and church associations. The question is: would their religious convictions continue to grow or decline once they crossed over from the kindergarten to the primary school, which happens in the USSR at age 7? Active antireligious propaganda begins in the Soviet Union in the nursery, and is progressively enhanced at kindergarten and school. However, some 33 per cent of urban schoolchildren never go to pre-school institutions: They are brought up by their mostly religious grandmothers.<sup>40</sup> So, if at all, the proportion of 'religiously influenced' primary-school children should be higher than that of kindergarten pupils. Apparently, rapid decline occurs at the age of 10–11 and older, when children are induced under considerable pressure to join the Pioneer organisation, where antireligious propaganda is particularly intensive. However, most of today's 55–75-year-olds, who are supposed to be the bulwark of the churchgoers of the USSR, have also gone through the Pioneer and Komsomol organizations. Hence, the question is, how many of the children of today will stand a chance of returning to the faith of their childhood? And the answer is, between 30 and 70 per cent (if we add a few extra percentage points to the Orlyonok-camp figure for rural Komsomol activists of 61 per cent, taking into consideration that the Komsomol sample is a selection in the regime's favour), which tallies with the 1920s–30s Soviet estimate of 33–66 per cent religious believers. If we add to this

the modest estimate of over 10 per cent of the churchgoing population who are adult converts, even disregarding the sharp rise in adult conversions since the 1970s,<sup>41</sup> we see no potential for decline in the rate of believers in the Soviet Union, at least on the basis of the above Soviet surveys.

According to a former *NiR* writer and staff member, sociological studies and spot surveys of religious believers continued in the USSR throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, but their results have not been revealed – in Soviet conditions a sure sign that the information obtained was not favourable from the point of view of the official ideology. Indeed, the most recent book by Arsenkin, a specialist on the subject of faith and atheism among Soviet youth, says that not only have ‘the numbers stabilised in many churches and religious societies in the last few years’, but: ‘Empirical observations reveal that there has been a certain religious reanimation.’ In ordinary language this means: not only have the religious communities ceased to decline in numbers, but have lately been growing. By how much? Apparently the latest real figures are too embarrassing to be published, or simply unavailable even to Arsenkin, and he chooses to cite a 1970 source, albeit giving percentage figures for believers which are unusually high in comparison with other contemporary Soviet sources: 52 per cent atheists and non-believers – i.e. 48 per cent believers and ‘waverers’, of whom 26 per cent are convinced religious believers. We have seen that the Soviet category of ‘waverers’ represents what we would call dormant parishioners, inactive believers who occasionally attend a church service, baptise their children, bury their dead and marry in church.<sup>42</sup> By Western standards they would be counted as believers and would count themselves as such. As a matter of interest, this figure tallies with the estimation of religious believers as ‘a good half of the population’ by Archbishop Feodosi of Poltava in his 1977 letter to Brezhnev.<sup>43</sup> Granted, his experience at the time was wholly Ukrainian and partly West Ukrainian, where the proportion of believers is likely to be higher than in the eastern parts of the Soviet Union which missed the German occupation and the mass church revival in those years. But we can hardly suspect Arsenkin of a pro-Church bias. Assuming the historically Orthodox population of the Soviet Union to be approximately 200 million, there are probably 80–95 million Orthodox believers and waverers,

served by less than seven and a half thousand churches and by seven thousand priests. These numbers themselves demonstrate effective *de facto* persecution of the faith through artificial restriction of churches and seminaries and official refusal to allow more to be opened.

Arsenkin admits that the religious population has been fully reinforced, and that it is the young who constitute the reinforcements, ensuring numerical stability.<sup>44</sup> If we look closer at our above estimate of 80 to 95 million Orthodox believers and add similarly estimated numbers of members of other religions – some 20–25 million Moslems (50–55 per cent of the historically Moslem population), up to 10–12 million Protestants, Roman Catholics and Armenian Orthodox, one million Jews, Buddhists and others, and up to three million Old Believers and related Russian sects – we shall obtain a figure of 120 to 130 million religious believers and waverers on the USSR, or about 45–50 per cent of the total population, a figure fully compatible with Yaroslavsky’s data for 1937, and perhaps only marginally below the highest Soviet estimates for mid-1920s, when the proportion of active believers in the Soviet Union and Russia was probably the highest in the twentieth century. As the calculations are based on Soviet figures of fifteen years’ vintage, and thus ignore the admitted rise in religious affiliation in the 1970s and 1980s, the likelihood is the above estimates err on the low side. In that case the end result of all the propaganda work of the Soviet atheistic establishment is nil practically, especially if we remember that the decline of religious belief in the West over these last seventy years, although unaided by any organised and institutionalised atheistic establishments, has been much more dramatic.

## STUDIES OF AGE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF BELIEVERS

Field surveys in the Riazan’ Oblast’ in 1961 demonstrated a direct correlation between the introduction of general old-age pensions by Khrushchev and a marked rise in church attendance, owing to the increased numbers of self-supporting retired people (women over 55 and men over 60 years of age). The ‘replenishment of the church *actif* on account of pensioners

cannot but cause concern . . . permanent parishioners by their *influence and authority* [emphasis supplied – D.P.] assist in the spreading of religious survivals among young people and children'.<sup>45</sup> What this passage implies is that the pensioners in question (if they are able to influence the younger generation) are not as backward or ignorant as Soviet authors normally claim. The passage, moreover, implies the existence of religious persecution, namely that at least some of these people were sufficiently educated to hold significant jobs, but while they were gainfully employed they did not dare to manifest their religious feelings, and only began to do so once retired. The results of this survey could thus have been used to rationalise the increase in persecution and church closures precisely at that time, thus reflecting the atheists' anxiety over the growth of faith and church attendance in the late 1950s.

In 1969 a survey of a random sample covering 10 per cent of the whole adult population (18 years of age and up) of the middle-Volga city of Koz'modem'iansk, produced a correlation between age and religious affiliation, as shown in Table 10.9. The figure of 23 per cent religious believers in an urban sample tallies with the findings of the early 1970s, mentioned in the previous section. It also agrees with the usual Soviet claim that only 2 to 5 per cent of young people and children are religious believers: in the sample, 15 to 18 per cent of the group aged 18–30 had apparently been believers in their childhood, and conversely 3 per cent of the 18–30 age-group remained believers or had newly acquired their faith. It disagrees, however, with the Kiev and Cheboksary surveys and that of the Komsomol Pioneer camp which found a 30 to 60 per cent association with religion. But then we are not told of the method

TABLE 10.9<sup>46</sup>

	<i>Age of respondents</i>					
	<i>18–20</i>	<i>21–30</i>	<i>31–40</i>	<i>41–50</i>	<i>51–60</i>	<i>Over 60</i>
Religious believers (23% of the total) (196 persons)	0.5	2.5%	8.0%	14%	28.5%	46%
Former believers (348 persons)	2.5	13	20.5	31.5	16.5	16
Atheists (288 persons)	14.5	28.5	39	14	3.5	0.5



of surveying in each case or whether any personal or moral pressure was applied to the respondents.

A comparative survey of urban religious and non-religious families in the big industrial city of Yaroslavl' in 1970 throws additional light, despite its antireligious bias on some details of Christian influence on family life in the USSR and on the age/Church relationship. The scientific methodology applied was quite thorough:

All residential areas of the city were divided into typical districts, each of which contained families of similar structure, living standards, educational levels and professional profiles . . . By means of a mechanical random selection three such areas were chosen for the survey.<sup>47</sup>

It was found that families 'with a religious orientation' (over 11 per cent of the total) were closer than the atheistic or agnostic (indifferent) ones, as expressed in the fact that over 33 per cent of the religious families consisted of parents, children, grandparents and other relatives living together, while the overall percentage of such extended families was 11 per cent. Conversely, less than 4 per cent of religious families consisted of only parents and children, while the general figure for the sample was nearly 50 per cent – i.e. almost all atheistic families were of this type. The other religious families were 'partly extended' – i.e. with only some members of the older generations living in – or consisted of partial families – i.e. father and children or mother and children. Another observation was that in the majority of religious families, the authoritative head of the family was its eldest member, rather than the father or mother of the children, hence religious families had a much clearer hierarchical order than the indifferent and atheistic ones.

To find out the correlation between religious affiliation and educational levels, the following codes were assigned: 1 = primary (four school years); 2 = incomplete secondary (seven or eight school years); 3 = full secondary (10 or 11 years); 4 = professional trade school (11 to 12 years); 5 = incomplete higher (12–14 years); 6 = full higher (15+ years of education). The sample consisted of persons over 18 years of age. (See Table 10.10).

It is easy to explain why there are so few people with higher education among the religious respondents in this provincial

BLE 10.10<sup>48</sup>

<i>Attitude towards education</i>	<i>Educational coefficient</i>			
	<i>Up to 1.1</i>	<i>1.2-2.5</i>	<i>2.6-3.5</i>	<i>3.5-6</i>
<i>Believers</i>	47.5%	45%	7.5%	near zero
<i>Non-believers</i>	32.0	54	14.0	" "
<i>Differently placed</i>	20	61.5	18.5	" "
<i>Believers</i>	13.5	39.5	23.5	23.5

city of Yaroslavl'. (i) The same survey shows that whereas 83 per cent of children born in irreligious families join the Pioneer Organisation, less than 25 per cent of the children born in religious families do so,<sup>49</sup> obviously to avoid the aggressively antireligious character of the organisation. An even smaller percentage of children of religious families join the Komsomol which enforces on its members participation in antireligious work (this makes the above data on the proportion of baptised Komsomol members particularly significant). It is extremely difficult for non-Komsomol members to enrol at universities. (ii) Believers who do not conceal their faith can with great difficulty enrol at some higher education centres in Moscow, Leningrad and in the capitals of some western republics, but not at provincial institutions of higher education.<sup>50</sup> (iii) If it is officially discovered that a student, who is a Komsomol member, is a secretly practising religious believer, he/she is automatically expelled from the Komsomol; and, whereas non-membership does not entirely preclude one's enrolment at a university, expulsion from the Komsomol almost automatically results in expulsion from the university.

But to return to the Yaroslavl' survey, Table 10.11 shows the

TABLE 10.11

	<i>The head of the family being:</i>			
	<i>Religious</i>	<i>Wavering</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Atheist</i>
<i>Members of family adhering to religious norms of behaviour</i>	68.5%	47.5%	22%	0%

TABLE 10.12

	Frequency of such attendance:				
	Once	Twice	3–5 times	More often	None at all
% of waverers attending Atheistic activities in the course of 1969/70	20%	8%	2%	1.5%	68.5%

high degree to which the religious adherence of the whole family depends on the religious faith of the head of the family, which in its turn is an indirect indicator of the hierarchical structure of these families; it is directly related to the high percentage of religious families with living-in grandparents and to the religious belief of the latter.

The same survey also discloses precisely what is meant by the term ‘wavering’, when it states that 50 per cent of all religious families give religious education to their children, and 33.3 per cent of the *wavering* families *do so*. It is explained that although in the latter category of families there is less regularity in religious observances and very irregular church attendance (only on great feast days), a ‘benevolent attitude towards religion prevails in them’. In the ‘wavering families’ nearly 80 per cent belong to the age group of 31 to 50. Table 10.12 shows that the waverers are closer to religion than to atheism.

Even the ‘indifferent’ category in Table 10.13 is by no means an automatic ally of atheism. Only 35 per cent of the indifferent, whom Soviet surveys define as passive atheists approve of atheistic public lectures, although over 50 per cent of them have

TABLE 10.13<sup>51</sup>

Attitude of members of families to the religious behaviour of relatives	In families where the head is:			
	Religious	Waverer	Indifferent	Atheist
Critical	0%	6.5%	25%	68%
Indifferent	30%	60%	58%	30%
Approving	70%	28.5%	16.5%	2%
Other views (?)	0%	5%	0%	0%

found the new civic rituals useful 'for the struggle against religious survivals'. There is an interesting illustration of their attitudes to religion, as shown in Table 10.13. Pro-religious attitudes prevail in one-sixth of families headed by people 'indifferent' to religion, while nearly one-third of the families headed by allegedly convinced (i.e. active) atheists either sympathize with or are indifferent to religion. In this particular category 'indifference to religion' may well indicate sympathy or a personal search for religion, an open admission of which would be particularly embarrassing on the part of people who openly declare themselves to be atheists; more often than not this declared atheism would be associated with a certain job or social position and/or party membership that the respondent holds.

Characteristic of such sympathetic attitudes to religion was a report on the 1965 arrest of an industrial artist and a printing engineer, who were illegally printing Orthodox prayer books in a Moscow state printing shop with the full knowledge of the whole printing personnel, including their Party Cell secretary.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, a typical survey ends with the stereotyped but unconvincing conclusion that religious influences are withering away and that atheism is on the rise in religious families, because:

individuals in 20 per cent of religious families have won labour awards . . . 17 per cent regularly attend training programmes to improve their professional skills . . . 60 per cent subscribe to newspapers and journals, 37 per cent regularly borrow books from public libraries.<sup>53</sup>

The clichéd assumption behind this observation is that a consistent religious believer shuns Soviet society to the extent of refusing a career, avoiding work, and, in his backwardness, ignoring all books and periodicals.

Most surveys in the 1960s showed the predominance of old people among churchgoers. The situation apparently began to change somewhat towards the end of that decade as already discussed, but, probably quite symptomatically, no surveys have been published showing in sufficient detail the 1970s data. There are only partial admissions of change. One article claims that towards the end of the 1960s priests began to address more and more sermons to young believers, changing the subjects of

sermons accordingly: 'One of the starting-points of religious propaganda addressed to the young is *the concept of religion as the sole repository of ethics*.' The works of . . . Berdiaev, V. Solov'ev, S. Bulgakov, which in the opinion of theologians, excellently perform a missionary function, are being extensively disseminated among young people.<sup>54</sup> Another reports: 'There is a church in Moscow . . . [where] university students, musicians and artists often meet. Here . . . you can participate in an interesting discussion or listen to a good performance of the works of Bach, Rakhmaninov or Chesnokov.' The writer is deeply impressed by a sermon he heard at the Church. Obviously addressing himself to the intelligentsia, the priest cites Marx and Lenin in his sermons (apparently debating with atheism), and concludes his sermon: 'if at least one of you on leaving the church is plunged into deep thought, that will mean that our prayer has reached God'.<sup>55</sup> Obviously, this has nothing to do with the usual stereotype of the Church in Soviet propaganda as an obscurantist, retrograde institution catering for the most backward elements and knowingly cheating them.

Sometimes a Soviet newspaper article describing an individual episode is printed deliberately as a signal alerting the appropriate department to an intolerable trend and the need for a campaign against it. An article, published in a literary weekly, deals with a boy born into a modern Soviet intellectual family. The mother, a biologist, saw no objection to his baptism, except that she was anxious not to reveal her identity to the civil authorities, and therefore the boy's nanny arranged with a priest for his unregistered christening. Moreover, the mother said, first, that she had wanted a religious nanny, because 'religious believers are always very decent. They fear God'; and second, that her little son had been a very sickly baby until the day of baptism, whereupon he suddenly recovered his health and strength. Ol'ga, the mother, is a Komsomol member; her husband, a party member, apparently had no objection to the baptism either.

The writer is annoyed not only because here was a young Soviet intellectual family with formal communist ties which, at least implicitly, believed in a miracle by God effected through baptism, but also because 'christenings have lately even become fashionable'. The writer sees an intimate connection between this new religious trend among the young Soviet intelligentsia

and the newly fashionable preoccupation with Russian national history, culture, and traditions, wherein the Church is seen as an organic part of the historic Russia and icons as a necessity in a cultivated family. The author protests against the commonly accepted attitude that since 'the Church is separated from the State, going to church is the private business of any individual'. Moreover, the whole scenario of believers versus unbelievers is reversed in this article in comparison with the traditional stereotype. Here young intellectuals are believers or at least religious sympathizers, while peasants are represented as atheists. The writer claims to have travelled by train with a peasant woman just returning from a Moscow wedding. Her daughter married a young bearded artist. The peasant woman is indignant that her son-in-law is a churchgoer and has apparently converted her daughter as well.<sup>56</sup> So, is it back to the legend of the intrinsically 'atheist Russian people' and to religion as a tool of the exploiting intellectuals?

Indeed, as has been shown in the preceding section, lately Soviet sources have been admitting ever more often the rise in religious belief among young intellectuals. A recent study of Christians in the traditionally Moslem republic of Kazakhstan (where, however, the traditionally Moslem Kazakhs form a minority of under 40 per cent of the population) admits that religions have achieved numerical stability there, while the percentage of young people and those with above-average education has risen considerably, especially among the 'sectarians'. Unfortunately citing no base year for his comparison, the author refers to a 1973 survey in the Karaganda Province as having revealed a decline of illiterates and semi-literates (four years or less of schooling) among believers in general, from 72 to 16 per cent of the total; while those with complete secondary or higher education have increased in numbers among the Baptists, for instance, from five to ten per cent of the total, and 15.9 per cent of the members of Christian sectarian (Pentecostal, Baptist) communities are now under 30 years of age. The author does not reveal what the above figures mean in terms of ratio in the total population, in groups of comparable age and education. But he says that 5.8 per cent of all Karaganda factory workers below the age of 30 are religious believers, but this also includes the Orthodox. Hence the samples are not comparable and do not give a clear clue to the percentage of believers in the general population.

Relevant to this study is the author's comparison of the religious behaviour of the young sectarians with that of the young Orthodox. The young sectarians visit their houses of prayer on average three to four times a week. The young Orthodox turn to the church mainly for special family events: christenings, weddings, funerals, special prayers for someone's health, or for a requiem for deceased friends and/or relatives. Orthodoxy is mainly upheld by 'tradition, supported by the priesthood and the church *actif*; . . . the stability and even the growth in some places of sectarian groups is maintained, as a rule, by the activity of their members, trying to attract new people into the sect'.<sup>57</sup>

In all fairness, it should be said that the Orthodox in most cases could not participate more actively in the life of their church because of the scarcity of churches in relation to the numbers of Orthodox believers in the Soviet population (probably the same thing is true of the Moslems who have an extremely small number of officially functioning mosques in relation to their share of the population). Thus, in the Karaganda area, where there were seventy Orthodox churches in 1909, only five remained by 1973, in comparison with twenty-four sectarian and two Roman Catholic communities. The Karaganda area may be peculiar because of the wartime forced resettlement of the Volga Germans, who in 1973 constituted over 50 per cent of the membership in all the non-Orthodox churches.<sup>58</sup>

Table 10.14 indicates, however, that among the *practising* believers, even in such a typically Russian and historically Orthodox region as Rostov-on-Don, the Orthodox are one of the most disadvantaged groups, in comparison with their numbers, in the religious sector of the population. Out of a total of 186 registered and non-registered houses of prayer in the Rostov Province, only 79 (or 43 per cent) (including the 15 non-registered ones of the Ioannity – who remain within the Orthodox Church theologically – and the True-Orthodox – who are Orthodox but do not accept the pro-Soviet line taken by the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate) belong to the Orthodox sample, who constitute 86 per cent of the religious population of the Province – a 1:2 ratio in favour of the non-Orthodox. On the other hand, the Baptists, the Pentecostals and the Seventh-Day Adventists, constituting only about 4.5 per cent of the religious population, possess 83 meeting houses, i.e. nearly 45 per cent of the total 10:1 in favour of these three sects.

TABLE 10.14 *Religious organizations and groups in Rostov Province, 1917 and 1972<sup>a</sup>*

<i>Name of religious organization or group</i>	<i>Number in 1917</i>	<i>Number in 1972</i>	
		<i>Registered</i>	<i>Not registered</i>
1. Russian Orthodox churches	401	64	—
2. Russian Orthodox monasteries	3	—	—
3. Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical schools	2	—	—
4. Old believer churches	16	4	12
5. Armenian-Gregorian churches	16	2	—
6. Roman Catholic churches	3	—	—
7. Jewish synagogues	12	1	—
8. Moslem mosques	2	1	—
9. Baptist houses of prayer	2	8	33
10. Seventh-Day Adventist houses of prayer	—	2	15
11. Pentecostal Temples	—	—	25
12. Jehovah's Witnesses groups	—	—	2
13. True-Orthodox Christian societies	—	—	10
14. 'Ioannity' societies	—	—	5
15. 'Khristovoveriy' groups (Khlysty)	—	—	1
16. Skoptsy groups	—	—	1
Total	457	82	104

*The proportion of members of different religions in the total religious population who regularly attended services in the Rostov Diocese/Province*

	<i>1916</i>	<i>1972</i>
Russian Orthodox	91.8%	86 %
Old Believers	4.5	5.7
Jews	0.1	0.4
Moslems	0.3	1.2
Baptists	0.1	2.6
Seventh-Day Adventists	0	1.3
Pentecostals	0	0.7
Others	3.2	2.9

That the decline from 401 Orthodox churches before the revolution to 79 in 1972 was unnatural, could be witnessed during the mass wartime reopening of Orthodox churches on German-occupied territory, where in the city of Rostov alone in



less than one year of German occupation the population reopened seven churches in addition to the single one which had survived to 1941, with three daily services in each church (two liturgies and one vespers).<sup>60</sup> The number of churches was halved during Khrushchev’s persecutions (from eight to four). According to all the oral testimonies of Russian Orthodox clergy to this author as well as to other contacts, the post-Khrushchev Soviet leadership has been more reluctant to reopen Orthodox churches than those of the *registered* Protestant sects. Several cases in point have been cited: for example, some rural towns around Leningrad, where for decades groups of Orthodox laity have been attempting in vain to open several churches, while Baptists were given permission to open some; and a similar case in East Prussia (the Kaliningrad Province), where after some two decades of petitioning a single Orthodox church was finally reopened in 1985, while Baptists were able to open several meeting-houses in the province almost a decade earlier.<sup>61</sup> The Orthodox sources see two reasons for this discrepancy: one, the existence of the very active ‘underground’ Baptist and other sectarian movements which forces the regime to grant accommodation to the official or registered Baptists in order to weaken the case of the underground communities; two, the regime’s fear of religions that could personify and unify the nation, particularly the national intelligentsia, around them. And a leading Soviet religiologist Lukachevsky argued as early as 1930 that ‘there is a great increase in religious feeling among the intelligentsia . . . [and] students as well’. According to him members of the liberal professions in Moscow alone baptised over 93 per cent of all their new-born children in 1928, almost exclusively in the Patriarchal Orthodox Church. Lukachevsky argued that Russian nationalism and identification of Orthodoxy with the nation were among the most important criteria in these phenomena.<sup>62</sup>

The disproportion of churches to the Orthodox population and the consequent impossibility of more active participation by the Orthodox in the life of the parishes, cannot be blamed on weaker religious commitment among the Orthodox. (Only a small fraction of the believers can physically be present within the church walls at a service.) A large national, traditional Church will inevitably always have a higher proportion of ‘passive’ members than fundamentalist churches, particularly those who admit members only via *adult* baptism.

In fact, the reasons given for church attendance in a rural and small-town sample of 6000 Orthodox believers in the Penza Province in 1968 (see Table 10.15) shows a remarkably low percentage of simply passive churchgoers among them. Given the fact that the respondents had to respond to a fixed questionnaire with questions pre-set by atheists, among which only three are of a truly religious character, it is safe to conclude that the first 87 per cent of the respondents went to church for reasons of religious attraction, and perhaps the last 4.5 did as well, or at least some of them.

To conclude our brief survey of the image of religious believers in the eyes of Soviet religiologists, it may be of interest to cite a study of the 'origins' of Soviet Baptists (see Table 10.16).

If we remember that Baptists form only about two to three per cent of the total religious population of the Soviet Union (somewhat higher in the Ukraine where this survey was made), the 41 per cent or so of Baptists in Table 10.16 who are of Orthodox background would still translate into no more than 0.5 to 1 per cent of 'desertions' from Orthodoxy. Without any Soviet statistics on the reverse process (which does exist; for instance, the late abbot of the Pskov-Caves Monastery, Alipii, had been a Baptist for a while after ceasing to be an atheist and before joining Orthodoxy), it is hard to come to any conclusions, except to accept Soviet statements that there are *proportionally*

TABLE 10.15<sup>63</sup>

<i>Motives for church attendance</i>	<i>Percentage of believers (rounded off)</i>
1. To receive the Sacraments of Confession and Communion	36
2. In search of satisfaction and calm	19
3. To hear the sermon	15
4. Love to hear church singing	9
5. To place a votive candle before a revered saint's ikon	8
6. Answers such as 'to meet friends' and similar – unrelated, strictly speaking, to religious motives – were given by just over . . .	9
7. 'Other opinion' and refused to answer the question; in Soviet conditions this could mean mere fear to admit one's faith	4.5

TABLE 10.16 *The religious origins of ECB believers<sup>64</sup>*

<i>Religious origins</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
1. Born in Baptist family and belong to ECB	45.2	(182)
2. Changed from Orthodoxy to ECB or were raised in family where parents were Orthodox	41.4	(167)
3. Changed from other Protestant denominations	2.7	(11)
4. Considered oneself a non-believer, but changed to ECB for various reasons	10.7	(43)
Total	100.0%	(403)

less conversions to Orthodoxy from other faiths. The main wave of conversions from the Orthodox Church to fundamentalist denominations occurred in the post-Khrushchev years. When Khrushchev closed up to 70 per cent of the Orthodox churches which existed prior to 1959, the loss was felt particularly in rural areas where the nearest Orthodox church was now sometimes several hundred kilometres away. It was then that the much more mobile sectarian preachers, free of the hierarchical structure of the traditional churches, began to fill the vacuum by organising unofficial gatherings for worship in private peasant houses to which the orphaned Orthodox started to flock for lack of their own churches and clergy. Thus, consciously or unconsciously, the Soviet regime assists the spread of fundamentalist sectarianism in the USSR.<sup>65</sup>

Without taking into consideration the particular scarcity of Orthodox churches in relation to the population, the following statement by a Soviet religious expert is quite misleading: ‘lately believers have shown a marked tendency to attend church more and more rarely’; especially when it is followed by the admission that a survey of a number of villages in a central Russian rural district has demonstrated that in a village with a functioning church 48 per cent of the population visits it, whereas the average for the whole district is 27 per cent of churchgoers. The conclusion that ‘these data show a significant weakening of the population’s links with the church’ does not follow at all from the above figures. What follows is that had there been a sufficient number of open churches, they would have been attended by close to 50 per cent of the population. Yet, the author cites these survey figures on the frequency of church attendance by

TABLE 10.17<sup>66</sup>

<i>Attendance, frequency</i>	<i>Percentage in the total believers' group surveyed</i>
Once a week or more frequently	3.4%
Once to three times a month	8 to 12%
On major feast days	16 to 53%
Once—twice a year (Easter and Christmas or Epiphany)	36 to 39%

Orthodox Christians as a sign of weakening of the faith. Table 10.17 is my compilation of several Soviet field surveys on the frequency of church attendance by Orthodox believers.

According to some surveys, less than one-third of Orthodox believers practise individual prayer at home regularly, and some 50 per cent do so irregularly.<sup>67</sup> But if church attendance is so irregular, then prayer, this very basic element of spiritual discipline, is obviously not regularly practised. Atheist authors come to the rather hasty conclusion that the low rate of church attendance among believers is a sign of the intrinsic withering-away of religious feeling, but studies of villages where churches are still functioning reveal that churchgoers make up 42–48 per cent of the total population, while in villages without a church this drops to 35 and even 20 per cent of the total population.<sup>68</sup> Obviously, without a church, without literature, without any religious classes, religion becomes more a 'call of the soul' than a clear set of theological precepts, ideas, and concepts.

Many believers according to N. Alexeev, were found to have very vague ideas on the Holy Trinity or simply did not believe in it, but all of them believed in a personal God; 'non-acceptance of the idea of God leads the believer straight to a break with religion'.<sup>69</sup>

Soviet authors correctly notice pantheistic and deistic tendencies in contemporary believers, judging by Table 10.18. However, the answers would have been more Orthodox had the respondents in table 10.8 been allowed to use more than one description of God. For example out of the above formulations a Christian could say: God is personal, an omnipresent Spirit, the Founding Motivator and Love, Virtue, Truth . . . Given the choice of only one description, a respondent puts down the first

TABLE 10.18<sup>70</sup>

<i>Concept of God</i>	<i>Orth.</i>	<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>Jeh. Wit.</i>	<i>Pentec.</i>	<i>Advent.</i>	<i>Ukr. Cath.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total no. of surveyed believers	867	199	174	84	11	9	1344
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Human-like Being	19	23	12	17	45	33	19
Omnipresent Spirit	26	44	43	46	27	22	32
Nature, the laws of nature	4	7	16	15	9	22	7
Only the Founding Motivator	1	4	3	1	0	0	2
Ethics (love, conscience, virtue, truth)	2	7	2	1	0	0	2
Uncertain answer	12	4	10	11	9	11	10
No idea	24	6	4	6	9	11	18
No answer	12	4	10	2	0	0	10

thing that comes to his/her mind. Since the top two descriptions of God, in the table, are possibly closest to Christian Orthodoxy, although they are phrased in non-Christian terms, it is interesting that all other groups of believers (in the Ukraine) were found to be more orthodox than the Orthodox, even the Jehovah’s Witnesses. This shows a greater theological intensity and religious conviction in all the sects, as generally recognised by Soviet religiologists, and as is usually the case with fringe groups. Moreover, all these sects are more widespread in the western Ukraine, which fell under communist control more recently, than the bulk of the Orthodox. Although the survey on which Table 10.18 is based was apparently conducted in eastern Ukraine, there is probably more contact among the sectarians and Uniates with their brothers in the western provinces. Anthropomorphic concepts of God among the Orthodox, according to the survey, are more characteristic of the older generation. The particularly high rate of Orthodox believers who did not give a definite description is not necessarily a sign of greater ignorance of religion on their part, however, but may at least partly be a reflection of the traditional Orthodox Apophatic theology which says that God is indefinable and that therefore it is more correct to say what He is not, rather than what He is. Indeed, some Orthodox respondents simply said: ‘God, and that’s all.’<sup>71</sup>

Belief in life everlasting, another important tenet of Christian

orthodoxy, was the subject of a field survey in western Siberia, apparently in the early 1970s (see Table 10.19).

TABLE 10.19<sup>22</sup>

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Convinced believers in life after death (%)</i>	<i>Convinced believers in the resurrection from the dead(%)</i>
Orthodox	43.5	16.5
Old Believers	33.5	6.5
Lutherans	78.0	78.0
Mennonites	84.5	75.0
Baptists—'Initiativists'	96	89.5

TABLE 10.20<sup>23</sup>

	<i>Orth.</i>	<i>Baptist</i>	<i>Jeh. Wit.</i>	<i>Pentec.</i>	<i>Advent</i>	<i>Ukr. Cath.</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>No. of religious respondents</i>	867	199	174	84	11	9	1344
<i>What attracts you in religion?</i>							
Belief in the Almighty	2%	6%	13%		9%		4%
Promise of life everlasting	3	20	55	58%	18	78%	16
Religious comfort	9	4	4	1	27	11	8
Virtuous morals	15	35	11	27	45		18
Rites and traditions	4	4	2			11	3
Nothing	20	3	1				14
Indefinite answer	14	1.5	1				9
Don't know	3	0.5	0	1			2
No answer	29	25.0	13	12			25

From the already-discussed Ukrainian survey, Table 10.20 shows the reasons given by believers for practising their religion. Again the least articulate in explaining the reasons for their faith are the Orthodox, but the fact that the numbers attracted to their faith by 'rites and traditions' among the Orthodox are as insignificant as among the evangelically minded Baptists, indicates that most contemporary Soviet Orthodox Christians are religious out of choice rather than by tradition. The similarity in the Orthodox and Baptist proportions of those who refused to state the reasons for their faith, is another sign that religion is such an intimate and often inexpressible subject that they were

reluctant or even unable to explain it. The high proportion of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Pentecostals, and Ukrainian Catholics (Uniates) who chose the ‘Promise of Life Eternal’ as a reason for faith, reveals Western rationalistic attitudes in these religions. The high rate of Uniates who considered rites and traditions important to their faith seems to indicate a nationalist motivation, since Eastern Rite Catholicism has become the religion of the nationally conscious Western Ukrainians.

Among the most persistent rites practised by the Orthodox population, according to several Soviet authors, are (probably in descending order of prevalence): baptism, burial and prayers for the dead, Church marriage. Of these, the latter is the most difficult to practise in Soviet society, because (i) newly-weds are normally young people beginning their professional careers or still students, and a registered Christian wedding may ruin a professional or educational career;<sup>74</sup> (ii) the Orthodox church wedding is a complex ceremony which is particularly impressive when it is performed with a full choir, etc., hence it is much more difficult to perform clandestinely than is baptism; (iii) a wedding is a public occasion with a lot of guests, hence a detail like slipping off from the festivities to a church for an hour is difficult to conceal.

Yet again there is total incongruity between different data on church weddings. An official manual on atheism claims that in Leningrad alone, after the introduction of detailed civil marriage ceremonies (formerly there was only civil registration) the percentage of people resorting to church weddings dropped from 25 per cent of the total number of marriages in 1959 to 0.24 per cent in 1962.<sup>75</sup> What it passes over in silence is the introduction in 1962 of obligatory passport registration for people participating in church marriages, which immediately sharply reduced their official, registered practice, but not necessarily their real figure. A survey of church marriages conducted in the late 1960s, in the city of Gorky, which is much more poorly provided with churches than Leningrad,<sup>76</sup> showed that of those who considered themselves to be religious believers, 81 per cent had married in church – about ten years earlier or before. During the subsequent ten years (1958–68? – D.P.) only 4.2 per cent had married in church. However, some articles describe in detail very sophisticated and complex wedding traditions and rituals taking up a total of two to three days

to carry out. The reports are silent as to whether these include going to church for the actual wedding or not. It is likely that they do, because otherwise it would have been emphatically stated that the young only took part in a civil registration. What the reports do state, however, is that these rituals include the blessing of the bride by an icon of the Virgin and a similar blessing of the bridegroom by an icon of the Saviour. The blessings are done by the godmother and the godfather – i.e. the young have been baptised at some stage of their lives. And these ceremonies are described not as an exception but as the general rule, particularly in rural weddings.<sup>77</sup>

Another deep-rooted church rite in the Orthodox Church is the funeral, and all the prayers and traditions connected with the remembrance of deceased's relatives. One author even claims that 'the multi-stage funeral and remembrance cycle is the most enduring ritual in traditional Orthodoxy'. Moreover, in 'settlements where no functioning church has remained', often simplified improvised rite is practised: the all-night vigil at the side of the deceased and the reading of the Psalter is done by so-called 'singers' and 'readers', who are often a kind of nun – elderly unmarried or widowed women serving communal religious needs where no priests are available.

As to the faith of the people who participate in these rites, Soviet surveys claim that some 45 per cent of believers and over 70 per cent of waverers do so out of tradition rather than out of religious belief in the necessity of the ritual.

Christening is recognised by the atheistic press as the most enduring ritual. A Soviet religiologist states that 80 per cent of believers and 66 per cent of waverers have participated in baptismal ceremonies (presumably as parents or as godparents; the remaining 20 per cent being too young?), and adds: 'Non-believers also participate in baptisms not infrequently.' Then he assures us that the number of persons baptising their children has been declining. This contradicts all Soviet witness accounts, according to which baptism of children has become lately a universal practice.<sup>78</sup>

More telling are the motives given for christening children – see Table 10.21. The reliability of this table is very much in question. Why should a person who claims to be an Orthodox believer have other than religious motives for baptising his/her child?



TABLE 10.21<sup>79</sup>

		Motives		
		Religious	Aesthetic	Following the example of others
Believer	Baptised one's child	44%	5.4%	38%
	Acted as a God-parent			
Waverer	Baptised one's child	12.5	11.6	56.5
	Acted as a God-parent			

Yet the conclusions of most Soviet religiologists and their surveys as to the vagueness of religious concepts among the believers of the Soviet Union seem to be reasonable. This could hardly be otherwise in a society where even the reading of the Bible is a major problem. Several religious *samizdat* authors have observed that there is a terrible thirst for religion in Russia, but at the same time those thirsting show incredible ignorance of even elementary concepts of Christ, the Church, etc.<sup>80</sup> However, they also indicate the very reverse of the quotation with which this section began: it is not atheism which is spontaneous, but the religious urge, which, despite all suppression, repeatedly comes to the forefront quite spontaneously, a ‘gut feeling’, as it were, in many believers.

In confusing religious ignorance with religious decline, Soviet authors deliberately confuse cause and effect. They claim that a sign of the weakening of religious intensity is the decrease in the number of churches. Contradicting, this, they give examples of settlements where a church was closed in 1960 for instance, but a religious *aktif* has continued communal prayers without a priest to the present day. That is, the church remains closed obviously against the wishes of the population in a *kolkhoz* where over 43 per cent of the population have declared themselves religious believers! The same article cites for comparison a *kolkhoz* where a church was closed in 1930, and yet 38 per cent of the population remains religious. That is, the closure of churches is not a spontaneous process caused by the decline of religion.<sup>81</sup>

More indicative of the real situation is the absence of most

recent statistics of manifestations of religious life in the country; while general articles in the antireligious press show growing concern over the young turning to religion, wearing crosses, knowing and observing religious feasts and traditions, although their parents were unbaptised and were quite ignorant of religious traditions.<sup>82</sup>

TABLE 10.22 *Knowledge of religious teachings of own denomination by Evangelical Christian Baptists and Orthodox, in percentages<sup>83</sup>*

<i>How well does he know religious teachings of own denomination?</i>	<i>Religious denomination</i>	
	<i>ECB</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
1. Knows them well	58.9	23.3
2. Knows them somewhat	27.1	22.7
3. Knows them a little	10.3	48.6
4. Not ascertained	3.7	5.4
Total	100.0% (107)	100.0% (497)

Comparative Soviet studies on the evangelicals and the Orthodox point to Baptists being much more familiar with the Bible than the average Orthodox believer, and Baptists also have a better knowledge of their religious doctrines, as demonstrated in Table 10.22. Yet converts to the Evangelical-Baptist sect carry over the theologies from their former faiths into the new ones. According to a survey of Baptists in Belorussia the ex-Orthodox among the Baptists have a strong anthropomorphic idea of God; 'believers who have been raised from their childhood under a Baptist influence have mostly the characteristically Baptist abstract idea of God'.<sup>84</sup> When compared with other sectarians, for example Adventists or Pentecostals, the Baptists have the highest educational level.<sup>85</sup>

## SOVIET STUDIES OF SERMONS AND OTHER FORMS OF POPULARIZATION OF THE CHURCH DOCTRINE

Here again the Soviet religiologists' treatment of the subject is contradictory. On the one hand, they try to show that the Church is loyal to the state, that the whole nation is enthusiastically supporting the Soviet leadership's construction of communism, and that this forces most clerics in their sermons to try

‘to prove that communist and Christian ideals are identical’. To convince the reader that the Soviet people are indeed fully dedicated to the communist cause, atheistic ‘religiologists’ lean on the authority of clerics and Soviet theology professors, the idea being that if even such natural antagonists of communism admit that the Soviet people are dedicated communists, then this surely must be so. This closely parallels similar references by Soviet propogandists to convenient passages in the non-communist Western press when trying to convince the Soviet public of Soviet successes. Such quotations are normally preceded by: ‘Even such a well-known anticommunist as XYZ admits that . . .’ On the question of sermons and in the assessment of contemporary believers’ psychology, a convenient Church source for atheists’ quotations is Professor A. Vetelev’s unpublished textbook *Homiletics* (mimeographed for classroom use), written way back in 1949. The most popular quotation from it, which appears in at least four Soviet books and essays, reads:

The concept of a new socio-political life and the struggle for it have become a central ideal of our time. Most of the energies of the nation, including the energies of the believers, are being spent on achieving this ideal. The idea of God . . . has moved from the centre of the sphere of life to a tangent line.<sup>86</sup>

It is rather peculiar that Soviet authors have failed to find any more recent authoritative Church sources confirming the Soviet people’s total dedication to Communism, preferring to quote one and the same passage of near forty years’ vintage. It should be kept in mind that, although unpublished, this was an official textbook which had to pay at least lip-service to the General Line, particularly as it was written in Stalin’s time. It is worth noting that when dealing with their own secular and ideological party subjects, Soviet authors prefer not to refer to sources published under Stalin.

Soviet authors in general have noted the great emphasis that the contemporary Orthodox Church lays upon the sermon. Much time is spent in the seminaries on the theory, history and practice of preaching sermons. The main emphasis is placed on preaching Christian ethics, for as Vetelev says:

The main characteristic of the contemporary believer is the decline of his faith in God, in His providential power and

participation in man's life. There is little . . . real fear of God as the psychological basis of faith and little nearness to God in prayer.

Therefore, sermons should concentrate on subjects which would develop a religious feeling in man. The sermons must be aimed at developing a citizen in whom

the aim of personal salvation would combine with social awareness . . . [with] honesty, courage, love for his fellow-man and for the Motherland . . . The soul of the modern man cannot be understood in isolation from social aims.

Therefore, the preacher must familiarize himself with the social ideals of his flock, and teach them to struggle not only against what is contrary to the Christian faith, but also against what contradicts the state law.<sup>87</sup>

Much attention is paid in theological studies to special research on homiletics, pastoral theology and public speaking, but the samples of model sermons published in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* and cited by atheists are mostly from the pre-revolutionary era,<sup>88</sup> somewhat undermining the above cited assertions by Vetelev.

A noted religiologist, M. P. Novikov, rejects as totally illusory the belief of many Soviet atheist authors that sermons have fallen in number since some bishops requested their priests to present the sermons to them for inspection and approval. On the contrary, sermons are still being delivered in all churches on Sundays, on week-day Church holidays, on saints' days, on Church and State anniversaries.<sup>89</sup> As at least one saint is remembered on almost every day of the year in the Orthodox calendar, this could be interpreted as daily preaching of sermons, which in fact is often true, in the major city churches at least.<sup>90</sup>

One of the very first acts of the 1917–18 *Sobor* was an encyclical of 1st/14th December 1917 on sermons, which emphasized the duty of pastors to preach, and to do so in the spoken language of the given flock.<sup>91</sup> Levitin and many other writers remark on the great resurgence of preaching and the quality of sermons in the 1920s. Levitin laments that since the great mopping-up of the clergy in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the high quality of preaching has not been revived in

Russia.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, most priests are simply afraid of the consequences if they preach too openly or dare to depart from a simple popularization of the Scriptures, while in the Patriarchal Cathedral in Moscow there is formal church censorship. Each sermon has to be submitted by the priest to the censor in a typed version some weeks in advance.<sup>93</sup> It is indeed symptomatic of the intellectual climate in the Soviet Union, and in particular among atheist religiologists if they have such a high opinion of contemporary clerical oratory and its efficacy. The continuing stress on the importance of sermons in the contemporary Orthodox Church is evident, for instance, from a 1963 survey of Voronezh Diocese: in its fifty-five functioning Orthodox churches, over 5000 sermons were delivered in the course of the year for a total of 8000 regular services: i.e. almost two sermons and three services per church per week.<sup>94</sup>

According to Soviet sources, dogmatic and deeply theological questions are normally avoided in sermons, on the grounds that the theologically ignorant Soviet religious believer will simply fail to comprehend them. ‘Religious apologetics are mostly effected through moral arguments’, notes one author. Another analyses the main themes of sermons, and finds that in his sample 94 per cent dealt predominantly or partly with morals and Christian ethics; 14 per cent were on civic themes, and at least 8 per cent dealt with both subjects; the subject of the Supernatural, i.e. God, having been present in all the sermons.<sup>95</sup>

What kind of civic subjects, if one may ask, are present in the sermons of the second category? They cannot be too extensive if compared with the peace campaigns and other Soviet front activities, in which the Government forces the Church to participate and which are so prominently and nauseatingly manifested on the pages of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. Kurochkin quotes three illustrations. A certain priest preached: ‘We must be proud that only during our government administration and for the first time in our country the ideas of Christ are being implemented.’ Another said: ‘Our Soviet State is introducing into life the precepts of truth, justice and love for fellow man – which Christ taught as well.’ A third one, Father Nikolai Trubetskoi of Riga, preached: ‘The October Revolution has proclaimed and implemented the lofty ideals about which Christians have been dreaming for centuries.’<sup>96</sup>

Even these praises do not make atheist authors happy,

because they stress the priority of Christ and Christian teachings and, at best, concede that the official social aims of socialism are based on Christian ideas. There is also the question of the preachers' sincerity and of the context from which the quotations have been taken. This is particularly relevant in the case of Fr. Trubetskoi (1907–78), who was educated in the Paris St Sergius Theological Academy, was an outstanding missionary in the Pskov Mission under the German occupation and subsequently spent eleven years in Soviet concentration camps where, in his own words, he secretly performed mass confessions, funerals, and even baptisms and weddings, apparently thanks to a sympathetic camp administrator, whom he called 'a good Samaritan'. It is unlikely that he had any illusions regarding the Soviet social system, as at one point in the 1970s he said to a *samizdat* author: 'There is very little that has changed in our life since the time of Stalin.'<sup>97</sup>

It is common knowledge that there is much pressure from the Soviet authorities to deliver sermons praising the Soviet social system, but clergymen often interpret this duty in their own way. A leading Moscow priest, for instance, does it by delivering a eulogizing treatise on the alleged aims of a communist society. He paints a picture of a complete communist utopia, but stresses that in it only a material scale of values exists, while God and spiritual values are banished. Then he concludes: 'Suppose all this became a reality, would its citizens be happy?' And the answer of the flock is invariably a loud shout: 'No!' He asks for explanations and voices always respond from the crowd: 'Because no society can be happy without God! Because concentration on material values leads to greed, hate and competition, not love! Without love there can be no perfect society!'<sup>98</sup>

Soviet religiologists do not discuss such expressions of civic attitudes in sermons or in the flock's reactions. The degree to which sermons on civic subjects are circumscribed can be illustrated in the case of Archbishop Chrysostom, formerly of Kursk. In one of his sermons he dared to ridicule the atheists' claim that if the cosmonauts had not seen God, it proved there was no God. Moreover, he asserted that all fundamental values and all progress were based on faith. Believers knew in their hearts of God's existence. Atheists had faith in scientists. And no scientists would ever have advanced human knowledge had they

not first had a belief, a faith motivating their experiments. This led to reprimands from the CRA that he was undermining the authority of the Soviet state, and it was one of the chief factors leading to his removal from the vice-chairmanship of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department of Church Foreign Relations and his transfer from Kursk to the East Siberian see of Irkutsk.<sup>99</sup>

Soviet authors complain that the sermon is not the only channel of clerical influence on the believers:

The clergy and religious activists carry on private conversations with believers, give advice and instructions . . . on subjects as varied as assessments of political events in our country and abroad [or] . . . the most intimate problems of believers’ personal and family lives.

In spite of all legislation to the contrary, local clergy sometimes participate in activities related to the education of children and youth, and in the cultural life of communities by offering them financial assistance. This is resolutely condemned by Soviet authors. In their eyes, whatever the priests say openly, they remain the ideological foes of the socialist society, engaging in such acts as

writing and distributing typewritten articles [religious *samizdat*], sermons, ‘holy letters’ full of libel against our reality, full of venom and threats . . . In some cases . . . they even engage in popularising . . . anti-Soviet literature published by all sorts of anti-Soviet centres abroad.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, the final warning is that the clergy and the sermon are not to be trusted, the latter being a mighty weapon to alienate the believers from the Soviet Establishment.

Many Soviet religiologists published attacks on the unofficial importation of religious literature into the Soviet Union. Among the most notorious of those who slander religious literature and its secret distributors as anti-Soviet are the already mentioned Belov and Shilkin, especially their widely circulated 174-page brochure *Subversion without Dynamite*, of which at least two editions have appeared. They try to confuse the reader by lumping into a single ‘anti-Soviet’ category political and religious broadcasts beamed at the USSR, political and religious literature, theologians and religious publicists. On top of that, such

authors or/and broadcasters are wrongly labelled as activists of the militantly anti-communist organisation, NTS.<sup>101</sup> The brochure is full of lies, half-truths and contradictions. On the one hand, it claims there is no need to disseminate the Gospels from abroad because they are published in the USSR in sufficient quantities. However, it also says that religious literature is appreciated even by politically loyal Soviet citizens, and hence it becomes a very effective tool in alienating Soviet believers politically in the guise of religious education. Obviously, had sufficient quantities of religious literature been produced domestically, Soviet atheist authors would not have had to worry about imports from abroad.

Belov and Shilkin sum up the Soviet Establishment's concern over the penetration of religious literature from abroad very aptly in the following words:

Religion is the only ideology officially existing in the Soviet Union which is an antithesis to the Marxist-Leninist ideology.<sup>102</sup>



# 11 Believers About Themselves

The greatest happiness for a priest is to die in prison.  
(A Moscow priest who later did die in prison)

Christianity is life.

(Fr. Alexander El'chaninov)

Information on the life of the Church through the eyes of the believers themselves unfortunately remains patchy, subjective and uneven, illustrating some aspects and/or periods of Church life rather vividly, while leaving many others out of the picture. Hence, instead of generalising, we have chosen to present accounts by individual witnesses, under various subtitles. Most of our material comes from Orthodox sources, hence the accounts deal mostly with that Church.

## CONTINUITY

We ended the previous chapter with a very imperfect calculation of the number of believers in the Soviet Union today. This led us to the conclusion that the percentage of religious believers in the USSR (including the 'waverers') has declined very marginally in the last sixty years, and is probably higher than in the last years of the Tsarist regime (1915–17). But how could the faith have been preserved in the face of the educational and ideological monopoly of militant atheism, in conditions where a ban has been imposed on all institutionalised religious education, let alone religious youth organisations or similar Church-associated groups and circles?

One of the earliest responses of the Church to the new conditions was Patriarch Tikhon's appeal of 19 January 1918 to the believers to form brotherhoods to protect and defend the Church and to assist in disseminating Christian teachings.

There are several *samizdat* studies and memoirs witnessing to the rapid spread of such brotherhoods and sisterhoods almost

immediately following the appeal, some of them surviving in one form or another to the present day. But let the authors speak for themselves. One of them, Shemetov, writes: 'After a sinful lethargy lasting several centuries Christian Russia began to wake up.'

He mentions one of the earliest brotherhoods: that of Christ's Resurrection, formed in Kiev on 6 December 1917 (i.e. before Patriarch Tikhon's appeal). Its leader, the psalmist Vasilii Popov, left a diary showing his constant hope and belief that the Bolsheviks would not last, a diary which ended with his arrest and disappearance in February 1921. In the new conditions, where the Church had been disenfranchised by the state, where only groups of believers who rented the church building from the state were recognised by the latter, the brotherhoods became the collective employers of the clergy. It was therefore necessary that the brotherhood should consist of people dedicated to the Church, who would protect the priest and allow him to carry out his pastoral work properly; this is not always true of the post-1929 'groups of twenty', which are often infiltrated by Soviet agents, particularly since the 1960s.<sup>1</sup>

Shemetov continues:

In the late 1920s the brotherhoods were headed by spiritually experienced, outstanding individuals . . . In the brotherhoods . . . they saw the only possibility of withstanding the destruction of tradition and culture. New forms of church life were being born in the brotherhoods.

One such brotherhood was formed and led by the Moscow priest, Fr. Roman Medved'.

Here is an example of its activities. The service has just ended. Benches are being set in the nave. People sit down. The priest begins to read from the Church Fathers, then comments upon them. A general and completely informal discussion follows, reviving the communal spirit of the Primitive Church. Father Roman would study the behaviour of the members of the audience; he would form small communities by choosing the most dependable of them. Senior brothers were instructed by Fr. Roman to take care of the junior ones. There were too many Christians for the priest to take care of each one individually. The junior brothers had to keep diaries,

noting their concerns and worries. The senior brothers regularly checked the diaries. Should a problem arise they could not resolve themselves, they turned to the priest. Thus Fr. Roman never lost track of each individual member, while the senior brothers were learning to take responsibility for those close to them, to work with people. Brothers took care of sick people and invalids, helped prisoners' families, collected food and clothing for parcels to camps and prisons.

Fr. Roman was arrested in 1931. Released in 1936, he died the following year, entrusting the brotherhood to Bishop Varfolmei (Remov), who was denounced by his monastic server and shot in 1937. The brotherhood has survived them both and exists to the present day. The brotherhood also included women. The members have been dispersed throughout the country, but:

Still keep contact with each other, look after the infirm and old . . . however their children grew up through the kindergartens and schools and most of them remained outside the church.

Then there was the famous Mechëv brotherhood in Moscow, founded by Fr. Alexei Mechëv before the revolution. On his death in 1923 the brotherhood was taken over by his son, the Priest Sergei Mechëv, arrested in 1929 and eventually shot in 1941. This was the most versatile of the brotherhoods and sisterhoods described by Shemetov. There was a Christian circle for university students. Their discussions dealt with all aspects of the Christian heritage, but particularly with the writings of the Church Fathers. They went on outings or pilgrimages to old and famous monasteries together with the priest. He appealed to the young to concentrate first on 'active self-improvement' which, in the words of one of the members, made her think of an artist

sculpting a wonderful piece of art. And I wondered, why this form of beauty – beauty of behaviour, of human relations, of purity of thought and good deeds – does not excite people, why they don't sense it?

When the question of Christian education of children arose, two suburban houses belonging to the Mechëv family were adapted to house families with children during the summers. Prior to that, Fr. Sergei trained the adult participants, educating

them to bring up children as Christians in a Christian commune of love:

The young brought up in Mechëv's brotherhood proved themselves in terrible trials . . . Many of them were to pass through the prisons. The brotherhood survived Fr. Sergei and his imprisonment. . . . Some members became pedagogues, devoting their lives to the up-bringing of children.

Shemetov mentions three influential catacomb priests who took over Fr. Mechëv's brotherhood, including Fr. Serafim (Batiukov), a famous *starets* of Zagorsk (who died in 1942). He brought into the Church V. Ya. Vasilevskaia and her family, whose nephew is the now famous Moscow priest Fr. Alexander Men'. They were of Jewish background.<sup>2</sup>

The author describes another brotherhood consisting of intellectuals who came to the Church in the immediate post-revolutionary years. Yet their statute is striking for its humility, its assertion of the sinfulness and infirmity of man if devoid of God. The brotherhood concentrated on charity to the oppressed, the persecuted, and their families.

Another brotherhood, which arose in the early 1920s in Penza, survived at least until the death in 1970 of its founder, Fr. Nikolai Pul'khretudov. After his release from prison in 1933 he had lived in Moscow as a private person, refusing to serve as a priest under the Moscow Patriarchate after M. Sergii's 1927 declaration of loyalty. However, he took the sacraments in a Patriarchal church and influenced a number of patriarchal clergy, including the late Archbishop Ermogen (Golubev) and Fr. Dmitri Dudko. He instructed the members of his brotherhood to join registered open churches.

After describing several other brotherhoods, Shemetov concludes that their members surviving into the 1970s have directly influenced the current religious reawakening by acting as catalysts.<sup>3</sup>

Another memoir deals with a sisterhood under the leadership of the *Starets* Serafim (Batiukov). It describes how the *Starets* spiritually strengthened and prepared his 'charges' for the prisons and camps which awaited most of them, by teaching them to hope only in God and to always thank Him for whatever happened. This ability, the author believes, preserved her through all her trials.<sup>4</sup>

It may be of interest that the Christian reawakening among the intelligentsia of the last two decades has manifested itself in the reappearance of such brotherhoods, although under the name of religious seminars; some of them attempted to create Christian communes.<sup>5</sup> A *samizdat* document of the early 1970s calls for the recreation of Christian brotherhoods among the intelligentsia to atone for the historical sins and atheism of their forebears. The document, written in the form of a manifesto, says:

having lost all which makes life respectable and worthy of the name, *we have contaminated our souls.*

. . . we ought to restore a Christian mode of thinking, to atone for our guilt to the Church, not involving her in our political struggle since we turned away from the Church in her most difficult years . . . The Church is incapable of any sort of activism, being under the indefatigable control of the government . . . We are for the Church, but do not want to be bound with her, which would be useless to us and disastrous for the Church. We are categorically against all forms of sectarianism which atomize Christian forces. Our standard is that of the early Christians. At our own risk we have been forming tiny brotherhoods which will eventually merge into one Church Militant, if by their actions they prove worthy of it.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of Christian brotherhoods is thus not dead. Most probably it is inspired by the legacy inherited from their predecessors. But there is a great difference between the early brotherhoods and the current ones. The former were always created and led by their spiritual father, a parish priest or a bishop, who educated the members as humble but active parishioners and disseminators of the word of God. The current brotherhoods arise outside the Church and look forward to a reformed or reforming Church. The clergy are too cowed (and numerically much too limited) to get involved and lead or educate the spiritually thirsty and ecclesiastically rather ignorant brotherhoods. Consequently, the tone of the above document is more like a political declaration than a Christian witness. In contrast to the humility of the neophytes of the 1920s, the current neophyte-dissidents demonstrate a remarkable degree of self-confidence and ambition. Deprived of proper pastoral

guidance, and artificially isolated by the 'Iron Curtain', thus lacking information, they often 'invent the bicycle' all over again; and then feel proud of their 'invention'.

However, at least one well-known attempt at re-creating the pastorally led brotherhoods was made by Fr. Dimitri Dudko. He may have picked up the idea from the late Fr. Pul'khretudov who had died in his parish and was buried by him.<sup>7</sup> But Dudko's 1980 TV recantation after several months of imprisonment compromised him and his attempts in the eyes of his former followers.

Only the future will show whether the mutilated Church of the contemporary Soviet Union will be able to meet the searching and needs of the multiple neophytic Christian study circles and to transform them into truly Church-guided brotherhoods again. But there can be little doubt that the brotherhoods of the 1920s and 1930s helped to carry the torch of Orthodox Christianity through perhaps the most terrible holocaust in Christian history, and to pass it on to the generation involved in the current religious revival.

## THE PRIESTS

In a 1978 Sunday sermon at the Moscow Patriarchate's London Cathedral, Father Vitalii Borovoy, one of the leading officials of the Moscow Patriarchate, declared the contemporary Russian church a resurrected Church of living martyrs, resurrected through the influx of masses of well-educated young neophytes who 'have become most passionate and dedicated confessors of Christ', although most of them do not become regular church-goers as they have grown up outside the Church. He refused to take credit for this phenomenon. They enter the Church through 'no achievement of ours . . . This is the achievement of our Church people . . . who carry on a mission among those who are far away from the Church . . . and yet who come to the Church by various ways.'<sup>8</sup>

Who are these missionaries? Most likely, members of informal communities, or survivors of the more formal brotherhoods discussed above, surrounding saintly elders (*startsy*) or popular parish priests. Profiles of some of the pastors who formed and led such brotherhoods have survived in the memoirs of their

former members. Let us have a look at some of them. Fr. Serafim (Batiukov), a former engineer, was ordained a priest in 1919 and tonsured in 1922. He supervised a sisterhood in a Moscow parish church until 1928 when the legendary 'blessed Mar'ia Ivanovna' told him to go into seclusion, i.e. to become a monastic elder in the world. Maria Ivanovna was a simple woman of saintly life, and elder (*staritsa*) whose spiritual authority meant more to a believer than that of a bishop – a phenomenon unique to Orthodoxy. Even bishops often submitted to her will. Thus Fr. Serafim moved to Zagorsk, rented a room in a Christian family house and became a catacomb pastor leading some of the members of the former Mechëv brotherhood.<sup>9</sup>

He led his willing charges by the hand, yet leaving them absolute freedom of choice whether and how to follow him. He ruled by love, and his authority was so great that an outstanding scholar and teacher of Jewish background, Vasilevskaia, whom he had brought to baptism together with her family, 'wanted so much to surrender to the Father's leadership not only my will, but my senses and thoughts as well'. Yet Fr. Serafim insisted:

If you disagree with me why don't you object . . . If you don't raise your objections you'll never achieve clarity. And then there are many issues on which everybody has one's own opinion.

Vasilevskaia was wavering on the necessity of accepting baptism. She was a believer in Christ anyway, she wrote to Fr. Serafim. But he answered: 'How do you think you can follow Christ without accepting Him?' Baptism for him was bringing Christ into one's very being; and rejection of baptism was an act of pride.

Her baptismal preparation lasted over a year, with regular pilgrimages to Fr. Serafim's cell and attendance at secret services there. The baptismal procedure itself lasted nearly a day and a half, after which the priest said to her and the community with tears in his eyes: 'a soul that has been thirsting after Christ for such a long time has at last come to Him'. He possessed the gift of prophecy. Once the author opened a Bible at random in her Moscow flat before leaving for Zagorsk. When she arrived, Fr. Serafim read to her the very passage which she had read an hour or so earlier.

When the German offensive began on the Day of All Russian Saints (22 June 1941), Fr. Serafim attached a great mystical importance to the fact, called it the true beginning of Russia's martyrdom in which the winner would be the Mother of God. He predicted that Zagorsk would not fall to the Germans even if they took Moscow because it was protected by the Mother of God, advising the author to move her sister and the children to Zagorsk for the war years.

He died in February 1942. A couple of days before, on St Spiridon's Day, he suddenly wanted to eat fresh fish, which was practically impossible to obtain in the war winter. Yet he instructed one of his disciples to go to the market: 'Don't worry,' he said, 'St Spiridon will provide.' She went straight to the market and saw to her surprise an old bearded man carrying fresh fish. Women stood around him, bargaining. But as soon as he saw Fr. Serafim's messenger, he turned around, gave all the fish to her without a word and without taking money, and left. When she returned with the fish and described the old man, Fr. Serafim confirmed that it was St. Spiridon. Giving his final blessing to the seven-year-old Alexander Men', the author's nephew, he predicted that the boy would 'be a great man'.<sup>10</sup> And indeed, now Fr. Men' has become one of the most influential Orthodox priests and theologians in the USSR and has brought thousands to the Church, many of Jewish extraction like himself.

After Fr. Serafim's death, the author, V. Vasilevskaia, had another catacomb priest, Fr. Peter Shipkov as her elder, until his arrest at the end of 1943. Fr. Peter was an admirer and follower of Fr. Serafim but his pastorate was curtailed by a total of nearly thirty years in prisons and internal exile. Like Fr. Serafim he was very broad-minded and believed in the continuing unity of the Christian Church despite human divisions. Man, he believed, ought to keep his mind open to learning and reading, and in God's creation every individual had an individual road to salvation. Both Sefarim and Peter loved life, and both saw death as a transition from the temporal life to the eternal. Both taught deep respect for the mystery of death.<sup>11</sup>

One of the most remarkable elders and brotherhood leaders, only recently deceased, was Fr. Tavrion (Batozsky). Born in 1898, at the 'ripe' age of 13 he convinced his peasant-father to let him become a novice at the Glinskaya 'Desert', one of the most



revered monasteries in pre-revolutionary Russia. In 1925 he was ordained a monastic priest and two years later was imprisoned. With short intervals, he was to remain in prisons, camps and exile until 1956, miraculously surviving attempted execution and drowning by the GPU. He spent the last decade of his life (1968–78) in the Transfiguration ‘Desert’ in the vicinity of Riga, an affiliate of the Riga Orthodox Convent. He arrived there with a community of his followers, ‘mostly women of pensionable age, mostly [secret] nuns’. With the help of his many spiritual children gathering from all over Russia, the disused ‘Desert’ was brought back to life and the houses restored. Pilgrims began to flood the place, where they always met warm and organized hospitality, physical food as well as spiritual. It was Tavrion’s open Christian community that attracted people, as well as the services he conducted, partly in spoken Russian rather than Slavonic, interspersed with many brief homilies and lessons, and accompanied by the communion given to all pilgrims belonging to the Orthodox Church. Tatiana Goricheva, a former Marxist philosopher and a recent convert to Christianity, describes her only meeting with Fr. Tavrion (she calls him by his secular name, Tikhon) soon after her conversion. He warned her: ‘a real Christian chooses the way of the cross and the supreme joy consists in bearing the cross of Christ’.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout his life he said the liturgy daily under all conditions, never missing a day, even in prisons and camps, creating and inspiring disciples everywhere he went.

Thus the mission of the clergy continued in prisons and camps. In fact, shortly before his death Fr. Tavrion said to Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom), without a trace of bigotry:

How grateful I am to God for the wonderful life I have had. Imagine, at such a young age the Lord entrusted to me such important pastoral work among prisoners. Had I not been sent to those camps, so many would never have heard the word of God.<sup>13</sup>

Another author describes his encounters with four priests in a work-tent in the mines of the Kolyma death camps. One of the four priests, Father Sergii, hardly ever uttered a word, but instead prayed through the nights, after spending the whole day in deadly manual labour. One day three of the priests were

driven away in a lorry. Fear, a sense of panic and doom, spread among the remaining inmates of the tent who included regular criminals. It was then that Fr. Sergii spoke to them all for the first time:

and all the bandits and murderers listened to his every word in utter silence. He spoke on the futility and poverty of our life, on the eternal blessedness that awaits those who will repent. All this was so new and unusual to the audience, that it appeared as if Someone Else was speaking through his lips.

Of the other three priests only one, Fr. Rafail, returned. He said that they had been taken to a hut and asked one by one to deny Christ or else they would be shot. Not one of them agreed to deny Christ (the group also included two laymen – all accused of religious propaganda). All, except Fr. Rafail, were shot in his presence. Fr. Rafail was told to bury them and then, for some reason, taken back to the camp. This, he said, was a great disappointment to him, as he had prepared himself for the departure to Christ.<sup>14</sup>

Who knows how many of the witnesses of the above 'episode' and countless others like it subsequently became followers of the martyrs, carrying their message, keeping Christianity alive in the Soviet Union? How many of those who met Fr. Tavrion, Fr. Peter or Bishop Afanasii during their decades of imprisonment have had their lives changed, and perhaps are now among those who 'have become priests and are continuing his work', as Shemetov said of the late Fr. Tavrion's disciples.<sup>15</sup> One such person is the above mentioned Fr. Alexander Men', baptised by the *Starets* Serafim (Batiukov) and, while yet an infant, blessed to the Church's service by the same Fr. Serafim and Fr. Peter; he was brought up by their disciple, Dr. Vasilevskaia. These spiritual pastors, elders, monks and nuns, and their influence on the neophyte intelligentsia of today, are also convincingly portrayed in Tatiana Goricheva's *Talking about God is Dangerous*. The problem is that there are so few of them and they are so widely scattered.

## ROADS TO GOD

Should the censorial and police restrictions one day collapse, and access to manuscript collections, to personal memoirs of

Soviet Christians and interviews with them become possible, someone will write an *inner* history of faith in God in the Soviet Union. And that history will be a history of conversions. These conversions have taken many forms. Some are converts from nothing, through disillusionment with atheism and materialism. Others have 'simply' returned to the faith into which they were baptised but had then drifted away from. Others had been practising Christians, went through a crisis which may have lasted for most of their lives, and returned to the faith towards the end of their lives or even their deathbeds.

The writer Konstantin Paustovsky even ridiculed religion and the clergy in some of his literary works, but towards the end of his life, in the mid-1960s, after giving a talk at the Pushkin Club during a visit to London, he approached an Orthodox priest in the audience and, in the presence of this writer, confided to him:

You know, I have done something for the Orthodox Church as well. I led a campaign to preserve the functioning church in the village of Mikhailovskoe [the Pushkin estate] when they wanted to close it.

A few years later he died. On his deathbed he called for a priest and died a Christian.

The martyr-writer Varlam Shalamov miraculously survived nearly two decades in the Kolyma death camps to write his unique *Kolyma Tales*. The son of a modernist-reformist priest who had welcomed the Russian revolutions of both 1905 and 1917, had joined the Renovationist Schism and yet died in utter poverty and dejection, Shalamov grew up an atheist. Even his terrible experiences in Kolyma did not return him to God. Yet, in his will he asked to be buried by the Church, and so he was. Was he an Orthodox Christian? How would he have been described by a thorough and objective statistical survey? Was he a convert? Humanly speaking, not. But how about the conversion of the Thief on the Cross?

Letters and reports from believers in the Russia of the 1920s speak about the (urban) churches being full of members of the intelligentsia who could be recognised as former activists of pre-revolutionary left-wing parties, as former radical agnostics and atheists, or as people who were earlier simply indifferent to the Church. We have already quoted a *samizdat* 'manifesto' on the

brotherhoods, which speaks of the intelligentsia's need to atone for the sin of their forebears in rejecting the Church, for their failure to stand up for the Church in the hour of her greatest trials. This, of course, refers to the new Soviet intelligentsia (or the 'smatterers', to use Solzhenitsyn's description of the semi-intellectual professionals produced by the new Soviet school to replace the 'bourgeois' professionals), who have gone through the LMG, the military atheistic Komsomol and the Party. Yet history has remarkably repeated itself.

Some of pre-revolutionary Russian intelligence had already begun to foresee the pitfalls of materialism and the forthcoming despiritualisation of the nation by the atheist and revolutionary propaganda disseminated by their radical confrères. In 1909 *The Signposts*, the already mentioned symposium by neo-Christian intellectuals of Marxist background, warned that if deprived of God the people would turn into beasts and take a double vengeance on the intelligentsia for depriving them of God, of the spiritual side of life.

An anonymous *samizdat* memoir, *The Ways of Providence*, describing the immediate post-revolutionary period (1919–21), declares, as if confirming the *Signposts'* prophecy: 'The intelligentsia was hated by the masses more than anybody else, as if in vengeance for their role as the original instigators of all the bloody horrors.'

And then the story, as it unfurls, describes several kinds of conversions. The first is the conversion of the female author's whole family. Her husband was a lawyer; she, a well-educated amateur pianist. None of the family were atheists, but: 'The soul was still incapable of hope in God's help, incapable of prayer.' The author sees the collapse of ordinary life and all the future trials, including imprisonment and starvation, that befell her and her family as a sort of miraculous conversion. 'Everything was falling apart, all strongholds.' The resulting 'total helplessness and defencelessness' helps man to free himself of his pride, to give himself up eventually to God. And the author's husband, a middle-aged lawyer in a Siberian village, where he, like Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago, had taken his family in search of salvation from the famine of central Russia, 'clearly seeing in all this God's hand, His astonishing providence', takes priestly orders.

The rest of the memoir is the story of a family led through terrible trials, throughout which their religious faith is only

strengthened. Miraculous help comes, always unexpectedly, in moments of total hopelessness; and, given Soviet conditions, it ends well: the husband returns alive from prison, the author is found by a well-to-do Christian, helped, and made a private teacher of music, which saves the family from near-starvation, and a son returns from a punitive-labour colony, etc.

The author sees their whole life as a chain of miracles, and reproaches people for failing to recognise the miracles which surround each one of us. The only purpose of her notes, she says, is:

to confess and glorify God's providential work in the destinies of men and in my own.

All we have lived through was so necessary to awaken the soul, to strengthen faith and confirm hope. Without the experience the soul would never have been resurrected from fussing over attachment to earthly things.<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, the miraculous is constantly present in one form or another in practically all life-stories written by believers in the USSR, ranging from the above naive account of the fresh-fish miracle (the reliability of whose author is however beyond doubt) to many episodes from this memoir. At least one of these episodes is directly related to a conversion, a rather striking story worthy of recounting.

Olga, an orphan, was being raised by her uncle, a deacon in the Church of Christ's Resurrection in Moscow (Sokol'niki). Her spiritual father was the famous Moscow pastor of this church, Fr. Ivan Kedrov. As Olga began to work for a Soviet institution she fell under the spell of antireligious propaganda and promises of future communistic bliss, and drifted away from the church. With her Christian upbringing and her natural intelligence, after a while she saw through the propaganda.

In horror she recognised her error . . . fell into a dark depression . . . and decided to commit suicide by throwing herself under a train.

As she was writing her pre-suicide letter to her former confessor, Fr. Ivan, opening up her soul and saying that now she was not worthy of living . . . she suddenly heard a voice: ' . . . stop it, go to my father, he'll tell you what to do and you'll once again become his spiritual daughter.'

Olga turned around and saw a young girl smiling at her.

Olga began to shout: 'Who are you? You've no right to interfere, this is my decision . . .' 'I'm Father Ivan's daughter, Vera,' the girl replied, 'My father loves you, go to him with no fear; don't cry.' Vera put her hand upon Olga's head. Olga suddenly felt peace and bliss: 'But I'm Judas', she responded. Vera moved her arm and suddenly Olga saw three crosses on a hill: 'You see the thief and murderer next to Jesus, and what did the Lord tell him?'

For a while Olga sat petrified. Then she rushed to Fr. Ivan, begging him to show her any family photographs he had. In one of them she recognised Vera and asked him, who is she? Father Ivan replied that this was his daughter Vera who had died long ago. Olga then recounted the whole story. The priest took her to the church and then to Vera's grave. After this experience, as the deacon told the author, Olga took the veil at a convent.<sup>17</sup>

In Chapter 10 we have pointed out the incongruity of Soviet statistical calculations and of the predictions of the 1920s that the generations brought up in atheism would remain atheists. We have shown from current Soviet studies that the present proportion of believers in the age-group who were atheist activists in the 1930s, reveals that many contemporary believers must have been atheists in their youth. Well, we have at least one striking account of such a transformation.

Some 1500 residents of Narofominsk, an industrial city not far from Moscow, fought in vain in the 1960s and early 1970s to open a church there. With the help of dissident intellectuals, some of whom had summer cottages in the area, the petitioners presented their plea to the district court. Preparing their case, one of their legal advisers searched in the archives for the issues of *The Godless* which contained a reference to the forced closure of the last Orthodox church in the town in the mid-1930s. Soon an article on the closure of all three churches in the town was found, with the full names of the activists who had been particularly aggressive towards the church. After the churches had been closed and ruined, the icons and all church utensils were piled up in the main market place and set on fire. One of the Komsomol activists danced around the fire shouting blasphemies. The name and the picture were unmistakably of one of the initiators of the petition for the reopening of the church, now a saintly old woman, totally dedicated to the church. When

she was shown the article and the picture, she burst into tears, 'It's me, it's me. God has punished me!'<sup>18</sup>

A Soviet Jewish doctor of medicine was attracted to Orthodox Christianity partly via a former secretary of Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin's wife and head of the *Kul'tprosvet* department of the Commissariat of Education, explicitly entrusted with the anti-religious struggle. This secretary, who had been a schoolteacher by profession – i.e. had to be an active atheist by definition – gave the Doctor a Slavonic Bible as a present in 1957. Reading the Bible was the first step towards his eventual conversion some twelve years later.<sup>19</sup>

It is generally believed in Moscow that Georgi Malenkov, Stalin's former heir-apparent and Khrushchev's unsuccessful rival, returned to the Church sometime in the early 1970s and served as a psalmist in one of the suburban churches. Nikita Khrushchev's son is a practising member of the Orthodox Church, and so is Stalin's daughter. Eighty per cent of the students at the Leningrad (postgraduate) theological Academy are adult converts from atheism, and so are 15 to 20 per cent of its teachers.<sup>20</sup>

Analysing the growth of religious belief in the ranks of Soviet intelligentsia, one observer confirms that the intelligentsia's attraction to religion began towards the mid-1960s in Moscow and Leningrad. In the early 1970s the process began to engulf larger numbers of natural scientists in Moscow, 'followed by the provinces'. In the 1960s this interest was mainly concentrated on religious art, architecture, iconography, the role of the Church in Russian history, the study of Russian religious philosophy and the reading of the Paris-based *Messenger of the Russian Christian Movement*; however, in the early 1970s religio-philosophic study circles began to mushroom in Moscow and in the provinces. At first it was more of an intellectual form of religion.

The 1970s brought an unexpected element into the life of Russia: among scientists as well as other groups of young intellectuals, numerous adherents of church Orthodoxy began to appear. Doctors of sciences began to frequent churches, to baptize their children, to take Communion. The greatest numbers of converts are in the 25 to 30 age-group.<sup>21</sup>

The Moscow priest Dimitri Dudko's notes on his adult conversions begin with thirteen adult baptisms in 1961 (of

whom only two, apparently, had higher education) and end with at least 300 conversions of adults in 1973, mostly from the intelligentsia. The numbers of his conversions have considerably increased since 1973, when he thus concluded his notes: 'Now I have completely lost track of the numbers of baptisms.'<sup>22</sup> These figures pertain only to baptisms performed by Fr. Dudko himself. Although an outstanding pastor, Fr. Dudko was one of three or four priests in each of the parishes he served in the two dioceses of Moscow and Krutitsy-Kolomna. There are some 190 functioning parishes of the Orthodox Church, most of them served by several priests in the two closely knit dioceses covering the city and the province of Moscow. Fr. Dudko has disclosed one of the secrets of his very high number of conversions: he performs most of the baptisms 'in private homes, because official registration in the church may cause unpleasant consequences to converts at their places of work'.<sup>23</sup> He thus breaks the State regulations requiring that every person baptized, married or buried in church should have the information recorded in his or her internal passport and submitted to the civil authorities.

Not many priests dare to take such risks; yet Fr. Dudko is not a sole exception. A 1972 Leningrad convert had the following experiences. Twenty-six years old at the time, with degrees in linguistics and biology, she confided to a Christian colleague that she wanted to be baptized without any official records. In no time he took her to a village church in the suburbs of Leningrad. There an octogenarian priest only asked her her age and her sincerity in desiring to be a Christian. Then he told her that once a Christian she should never recant, and then baptized her, asking neither her family name nor any other personal questions. To her surprise, a modest reception was waiting for her at a peasant home in celebration of the great event. At the reception there were only the hostess, her adult son, and her Leningrad friend who had arranged it all. She was warmly welcomed as a new member of the Christian family. Henceforth, whenever she attended services at that church, served by several priests, the priest who had baptized her kept aloof, making it clear he did not want anyone to suspect they knew each other<sup>24</sup> – Quite a different approach from Fr. Dudko, who ran informal seminars and discussion groups for the neophytes.<sup>25</sup> Yet the above illustration suggests that a catechumen has no particular



difficulty in finding a priest to perform baptisms without any records.

However, Fr. Dudko himself admits that secret baptisms are not the only avenue adults find to Christianity: 'some are prepared to suffer the unpleasant consequences' of becoming known to the civil authorities as neo-Christians.<sup>26</sup> Here are some Russian priests' reports on open baptisms and church attendance in provincial cities in the mid to late 1970s. In Cheboksary, the capital of the Chuvash ASSR, with a population well under 300 000, there are two churches. In the frost-free period of the year there are about 100 baptisms each Sunday and from 20 to 40 baptisms each weekday in the main cathedral, many of them adults. Sometimes there is a simultaneous baptism of a family of three generations, while a two-generation, simultaneous baptism of whole families is quite common. Because of the numbers, both baptisms and weddings are performed in groups. An arithmetical extrapolation of the above figures would give us at least five thousand baptisms per annum in the cathedral alone, plus an unknown number in the other city church, a total of at least 6000, provided that the other church baptises no more than 20 per cent of the cathedral's quota. On the basis of Soviet surveys claiming that some 80 per cent of the Orthodox faithful inherit their faith from their families and 20 percent join the Church as adults, we may assume a 20 per cent adult ratio in the total number of people baptised in Cheboksary. Taking the average age of the adults baptised as thirty, with another thirty years to live, and the infants' projected life expectancy of sixty years, we shall achieve a figure of over 350 000 baptised members of the Orthodox Church in Cheboksary in sixty years, when, according to the current population dynamics, the population of that city will be 460 000.<sup>27</sup> In addition to Cheboksary, there are thirty-five other Orthodox churches in the republic-diocese for a total population of 1 300 000, including the capital.<sup>28</sup> Owing to the fact that many rural and small-town residents often choose to go to a large city for their private rites in order to be less conspicuous, we may assume that the other parishes baptise considerably smaller numbers than the diocese cathedral. Even if we assume, however, that only two-thirds of all the diocesan baptisms are performed in the remaining thirty-five churches, by using our above methods of extrapolation, we shall still end up with some 1 100 000 baptised Orthodox souls in

sixty years in a projected total population (Chuvashia is a low-birth-rate area) of some 2 000 000, i.e. 55 per cent of the total population; the remainder including not only atheists but also Tatar Moslems and non-Orthodox Christians.

In the preceding chapter a Soviet survey of an elitist youth camp revealed at least a 60 per cent ratio of baptised children. Alexander Solzhenitsyn said in many of his public statements since his expulsion from the USSR, that the rate of child baptisms in the central Russian city of Riazan where he had resided up to 1973, was over 60 per cent of all babies born in that city and its province. In fact, recent emigrants from the Soviet Union, standing as far apart as Mr Nudel'man, an agnostic Russian Jew very sceptical of the seriousness of the contemporary religious renaissance, and Igor' Gerashcheno, an adult returnee to Orthodox Christianity, maintain that 'practically all parents', both among the intelligentsia and workers' and peasant families, baptise their children today.<sup>29</sup> If one were to equate this phenomenon with actual belief in God, then it would represent no decline of faith from 1928, when, according to official Soviet statistics just under 58 per cent of children born in Moscow were baptised (as contrasted with just under 56 per cent in 1925). In 1927, i.e. just before the intensification of religious persecutions in 1928–9, the proportion was comparable to the above Solzhenitsyn figure, namely just under 60 per cent; but only 11 per cent of parents who were students at (presumably) Soviet institutions of higher or vocational education baptised their children in 1927. In this category, according to all accounts, the rate of baby baptisms today by far surpasses that of 1927. So, where are the achievements of antireligious propaganda and persecutions?<sup>30</sup>

But a more telling indicator of faith is adult conversions. Who are these converts? What brings them to the Church? How do they behave and feel in a Church still numerically dominated by semi-literate women with little knowledge of even basic theology and led by a subservient, often sycophantic clergy? Let us look at Fr. Dudko's case-studies of adult conversions.

### *1961–63*

A 22-year-old second-year engineering student, Yuri, and a 31-year-old, Viacheslav, will full secondary education, whose mother is an atheist card-carrying member of the CPSU.

Theological ideas of both are weak; but when I begin to give explanations, they respond that they believe.

A 13-year-old schoolgirl. Has a sincere Orthodox faith, knows that some scientists believe in God. Has read Dostoevsky.

Baptized a 20-year-old girl . . . with higher education . . . She . . . said she knew that there were religious scientists.

A 32-year-old woman with incomplete higher technical education. Began to explain to her the Creed and its meaning. When I mentioned the World-to-Come she began to cry: her son had drowned. After explanatory remarks said she believed, but knew next to nothing of religious books. Questions: 'How could Mary give birth to God? Where was He prior to that if this was One and the Same God?' Later I was told that she had said after the baptism: 'If all priests and believers gave such explanations there would be very few atheists left.'

On the eve of 1st May baptized 22 persons – an unusual number for a weekday. Among others there was a 33-year-old woman lawyer, a believer who had not been baptized because her husband, killed in action, had been a communist. Changed her name. Came to communion on May Day.

1963–72

A boy nearly missed baptism at home. He was punished with detention after school. The teacher saw him crying. When he explained to her that he was to be baptized that afternoon, she turned out to be a believer and let him go home.

'A young man with full higher education; his faith developed under the influence of Hindu philosophy, but the faith was Orthodox.'

Lately:

Many artists come for conversion. After baptism their moral behaviour markedly improves . . .

Many Jews come for baptism. Some are very sincere, trusting; others immediately [upon conversion] try to teach others.

A few days ago baptized six adults, all with full university education; all possessed a well-thought-out Christian *Weltanschauung*.

A . . . 25–27-year-old Osetian. When I analysed the Creed with him point by point he responded to each question very definitely: ‘Yes, I believe in everything. The only thing I don’t believe in is the Communist Party.’

Recently I baptized a doctoral candidate in architecture. Quite familiar with religious literature . . .

Earlier I used to record the numbers of baptisms, but now have lost all track. Must have baptised around 300 adults. They come to baptism usually very conscientiously and well prepared. The life style of some changes so much after baptism that they become unrecognizable.

Baptized a film producer, his wife and a 4 year-old daughter. He is very humble, meek . . . tormented by his party membership.

A geologist about 35 years old. Says he has been a believer all his life, but being a materialist did not allow himself too many thoughts on the subject . . . One day he suddenly felt that he was an idealist; jumped up and rushed to his neighbour: ‘You know, I am an idealist!’ She responded sceptically. He returned, sat down in the same seat at the window and tried to imagine himself a materialist once again, but found materialism boring and depressing. And he realized that he was an idealist after all. Then he had a few conversations with believers, and decided to convert, ‘for we can do nothing without God,’ he concluded.

During the past week baptized three [adults]: a 65-year-old Jewish woman, a third-year coed of philology, and a [male] teacher of English, 35 years old. All have some understanding of Christianity, all are believers. The Jewess had resisted baptism for a long time; then began to feel that she could not live without Christianity . . . The teacher . . . decided to be baptized because he came to the conclusion that nothing had any sense [without Christ].

Baptized a student of an art institute . . . [and] an artist. He had read much on Buddhism and other religions but concluded that a Russian could only be Orthodox. Likes to paint in an iconographic style . . . At an exhibition of his paintings, many remarked that one felt like praying before his paintings.

The god-mother of a journalist’s child who was being baptized:

Was a Komsomol secretary, a believer, . . . took Communion the following day.

Recently baptized a poet. He found himself once in a desert and there asked himself what would it be like if there were no God. Then the whole world would be a desert. Henceforth he 'began to think about God' . . . now he frequents the church, goes to confession, takes Communion.

1973-74

Baptized two men and one woman and her 4-year-old child. Both men are engineers, both used to drink a lot. Now have decided to break with their past. One of them remarked: 'I must do one more thing: quit the party.'

Baptized a 24-year-old man, incomplete university education. Has read no religious books, not even the Scripture. But believes in Christ's resurrection and in our personal resurrection. Came to this conclusion on his own through a rejection of the whole of the surrounding reality as total fraud. Both parents are non-believers.

Yesterday baptized a scientist. He is familiar with Christian teachings. Has Russian national inclinations . . . Appreciates that Orthodoxy is Russia's salvation. The godfather is an architect and a historian.

The notes conclude with the following remark: 'Now I've lost all count. Sometimes I have to baptise two to three adults in a day and countless numbers of children.'<sup>31</sup>

Let us now analyse the motives for conversion more closely, under three approximate headings.

(1) *Science and Religion* In Fr. Dudko's samples, this tendency expresses itself in most cases by a convert's reference to the authority of believing scientists, but then as far as science is concerned these are either generally educated laymen or engineers. Only towards the end of notes does he mention a growing proportion of scientist converts, but his samples show many more artists, literary figures and other professionals in the humanities coming to Christianity than pure scientists.

This observation has been confirmed (to this author) by a recent émigré from the Soviet Union who has the rare experience of four 'worlds', relevant to study. Larisa Volokhonskaia, a

Leningrad Jewish convert to Orthodox Christianity, holds degrees in linguistics and biology from the USSR and has obtained an M. of Div. Degree from St Vladimir's Seminary and Yale University since her emigration. Her leisure friends in Leningrad, up to 1973 when she emigrated, were artists and young *littérateurs*; her professional colleagues were biologists in distant salmon research expeditions in the Far East. Some members of both circles of colleagues learned of her religious beliefs and conversion and discussed religion with her. Her generalization is that in the arts, at least among her own generation, the Leningrad literary and artistic avant-garde, there was simply not a single person who would call himself or herself an atheist. Everybody claimed to be a Christian, whatever he or she meant by it, but far from all of whom were formally baptised and even fewer went to church; although most of them would cross themselves when passing a church. The majority thought the ceremonial of a church service necessary for the uneducated *babushki*, while *their* lot was to pursue Christianity intellectually. It was generally taken for granted that Russia's culture was Christian and would have been impossible outside of Orthodoxy Christianity and that one had to return to the ideas, values and intellectual legacy of that Church in order to revive and preserve Russian culture.

With the natural scientists she found the reverse tendency. Most students begin their studies of the natural sciences as atheists, but then their work with nature, with the miracle of life in plants and animals, with the secrets of the universe leads them to reject the over-simplifications of Darwinism and the materialists. Here she found a prevalence of atheism among young, inexperienced researches, but a prevalence of belief in God among the more experienced scientists. But even among her younger biology colleagues there was much curiosity about her conversion, as well as sincere interest and discussion. She was not subjected to any humiliation on account of her conversion in either circle.<sup>32</sup>

*Samizdat* presents numerous similar examples. One author describes how his critical study of a Soviet textbook, *Elements of Darwinism*, led him to see logical flaws in Darwinism and the limited applicability of the theory of evolution. Appreciation of the ingenious organic interdependence of the Creation finally led him to the conviction that there is a Creator; while the

limitations of natural sciences led him to the reading of philosophy and literature. It was Dostoevsky who finally opened the essence of Christianity to him. The final act of baptism occurred after he had confided his thoughts and ideas to a student of theology. But this happened only after he had overcome the intellectual pride-complex of seeing the Church as a body for the unenlightened. It came as a revelation to him when he entered a church service. He was overwhelmed by the mystical beauty and the intensity of prayer, suddenly realizing that the symbols of the liturgy were just as necessary as words, as without symbols no communication, culture, progress, human life would have been possible.<sup>33</sup>

A mathematics professor, born in 1928, with more than ten scholarly books to his credit, wrote a book in the mid-1970s debunking point by point the materialistic strains in the natural sciences, from Bacon to Darwin, arguing that contemporary physics 'has unexpectedly hit upon ideas . . . [such as] the elementary components of matter . . . "Quarks" . . . the components of matter, are . . . pure abstractions which have no physical but only a mathematical status, and therefore cannot be revealed in an experiment' – That is, in his view, contemporary science has confirmed the original Bible scenario of God creating the world out of nothing.<sup>34</sup>

Igor' Gerashchenko, now a 34-year-old physicist, became a convinced believer in a personal God in the early years of his university studies via his speculations about the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which precludes any development and continuation of life once heat equilibrium is achieved on a planet. In other words, whether one accepts the coincidental evolution or the 'big bang' theory, neither of them could have produced, supported and/or developed life without the interference of a Creator who had to be *outside* the universe, overcoming the Second Law of Thermodynamics by His will. Once you accept this miracle as the foundation of life, then you have no trouble in accepting the miracles of God in general, the Bible and all the Church teachings. The universe then has a beginning and an end depending on the will and plans of God alone.

According to Gerashchenko, this road to faith in God is quite common among serious and seeking students of physics, wherefore Soviet textbooks on the Second Law of Thermodynamics are very vague and as non-specific as possible, while

Western studies on that subject are in specialised scientific libraries and banned to the general reader.<sup>35</sup>

(2) *Rejection of the Theoretical Foundations of the Soviet System* The scientific path to religion is linked to the most common reason for turning to the Church shown in the Dudko samples: disillusion with the whole complex of Marxist doctrines and with the discrepancy between official claims and reality. For a scientist this means rejection of the claims of Marxist atheism to being scientific and universally true. The average Soviet citizen who dares to see things as they are, sees the lie in the daily reality of social and legal injustices, class privileges and lack of freedom, and in the material privations and poverty which in theory should have been eradicated by the Soviet-Marxist system long ago. In fact, the revolution itself occurred in the name of these aims. The thinking Soviet citizen, 'the one who does not drown his frustrations in alcohol' in the words of one adult Soviet convert to Christianity,<sup>36</sup> rejects the theoretical or ideological foundations of the Soviet system, and looks for alternatives. The only non-Marxist alternatives visibly open to the Soviet citizen are the non-Marxist Russian culture and literature (Dostoevsky, Berdiav, Soloviev, iconography, abstract art)<sup>37</sup> and the Church. But which Church? Well, in Russia it would normally be the Russian Orthodox Church, for, despite the proliferation of sects, as one of our informants has put it: 'In the cities you have to search to find a Baptist church, while the Orthodox churches, whether functioning or closed, remind you of their existence everywhere by their characteristic architecture'.<sup>38</sup> This may be a part of the answer, but it is much more important to the intelligentsia neophyte searching for roots and history that the Orthodox Church has a historico-cultural tradition extending not only to the origins and sources of Russian culture, but also to the Church Fathers and the Apostles. It is no coincidence that the unofficial Leningrad Spiritual-Cultural Movement which included artistic, literary and philosophic non-conformists and organised unofficial exhibitions of modern art and seminars on literature and philosophy, had to dedicate most of their seminars on religion and culture to the study of the Church Fathers. These seminars were the ones which attracted the greatest interest and had to be repeated several times in the course of 1976–8.<sup>39</sup>



It is the search for and rediscovery of culture as originating from the word 'cult', i.e., religion in the sense of a hierarchy of ethics and values culminating in the Absolute (the 'alpha' and 'omega') as the source, that brings the Russian intelligentsia to God.<sup>40</sup>

Rejection of the Soviet-Marxist phenomenon as a way to the Church, is accompanied by a growing sense of estrangement and alienation, which can lead to despair, pessimism and eschatologism. Indeed, as one neophyte describes this, 'Despair precedes the birth of the person [in *homo sapiens*], despair at the impossibility of creating a paradise on earth may become the first step to Heaven.'<sup>41</sup> Obviously, the quintessential place for such an enlightening despair is prison. And we have many *samizdat* accounts of prisons and camps as places which turn men to God. One ex-prisoner observes, concerning Khrushchev's incarceration of hundreds of dissenting university students in the late 1950s: 'We all entered the prisons as faithful Marxists, but nearly all left as believing Christians.'<sup>42</sup>

Why?

One *samizdat* author, a medical doctor who by 1952 had spent ten years in the concentration camps, gave the following reasons for the phenomenon of 'a vast majority' of prisoners of conscience becoming 'firm, unwavering believers in God': 'man has been created only in order to think', and prison, where time loses its sense, is the ideal place for such prolonged, profound thinking, for there man is free from the daily concern for his own and his family's material existence: 'Nowhere else is there such freedom for thought, such a deliverance from all wordly concerns.'<sup>43</sup> A more recent ex-prisoner added to this that in prison you are constantly faced with the choice either to improve your conditions and probably eventually gain an early release by co-operating with the guards – by agreeing, for instance, to report on your buddies – or to disregard your physical life, risking your health and sometimes your very survival by refusing to do such things. The choice not to co-operate cannot be rationalized in terms of materialism and moral relativism: that is, the criteria for such behaviour lie in the sphere of religious morality based on the recognition of the Absolute as the source of ethics and morals.<sup>44</sup>

But is not the whole Soviet Union, in fact any totalisatian system, a prison, although with somewhat wider and more flexible walls? The very concept of the 'Iron Curtain' points to the same; while in the Soviet Union common nicknames for the Soviet territory outside the camps are the 'Unescorted Zone' or the 'Larger Zone', in contrasting to the prisons which are known as the 'Escorted' or 'Small' zone. In other words, the differences between the two zones are those of degree only, not of principle. Hence the same criteria for religious renaissance which exist in the prisons and camps in a quintessential way, also exist in the Soviet Union at large, only in a less concentrated, more diluted variant.

(3) *Nationalism* Dudko's third category is that of Russian patriots whose religious feelings are intertwined with their love for Russia, with the desire to re-establish the thread of historical and cultural continuity torn asunder by revolution, which is always seen as '*a pagan reaction* against the Christian era of history'. The search for national history and culture has led many to the Church, for in this deliberately cultivated historical '*amnesia . . . memory, rejected and persecuted, has survived in the Church, that citadel of "memory eternal" . . . the discovery of memory is, for us, equal to finding the historical future*', wrote a young *samizdat* Christian historian of a 'soil-bound' or neo-Slavophile orientation.<sup>45</sup>

This combination of nationalism and religiousness is a paradox of sorts, in view of the universality of Christian teachings. Yet the sincerity of the 'soil-bound' Christian viewpoint is beyond doubt. It is simultaneously:

a reaction against atheism and against the secularization of ideals . . . [as well as] against the erosion and destruction of the centuries-old traditions of Russian culture. The soil to which we are being called to return today is Russian Orthodoxy, the Russian national idea, patriotism, the legacy of our ancestors . . . There are two tendencies in this . . . *religious nationalism* . . . One is connected with the agonizing experience of loss of historical memory, with a sense of personal responsibility for the destiny of the national religion and culture. The other is an attempt to build a nationalist ideology as a dynamic alternative to the existing order of things.

The quoted author, a young professional philosopher and a

neophyte, sees much danger in this second school of thought, and many problems awaiting the Christian soil-bound orientation in finding the proper balance between nationalism and the Church in a hypothetical revived Russian Christian state.<sup>46</sup>

There are inherent dangers in this trend, fully recognised by the Russian Orthodox Church which has on occasion warned against chauvinistic nationalism and idealisation of nations.<sup>47</sup> Privately Russian Orthodox clergymen have expressed fears that nationalistic sentiments could be exploited by the Communist Party to give a new lease of life to a sagging Marxism revised as national socialism; for nationalism based on the cultural nihilism of Marxist materialism is not contained by any hierarchy of values, its only values being national pride, aggrandisement, aggression, force and power. Identification of a patriotic attachment to one's people with the needs of the state is a constant temptation for a Christian nationalist of his involvement in the Church remains at the level of his original historical-cultural attraction to religion. The fall of Fr. Dimitri Dudko in 1980 when in his TV recantation he identified his patriotism with Soviet state interests, is a serious warning to all Christian nationalists.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the trend, if carried far enough, possesses centrifugal tendencies: why should a Ukrainian, a Moldavian or a Chuvash belong to a nationalist Russian Church?

Circles inside the contemporary Russian Church hope, however, for 'a re-churching of the national culture', as one priest has put it. Elements of this are seen in the prose of the contemporary ruralist writers, as well as in the proliferation of the unofficial Christian religio-philosophic seminars and study groups with their considerable concentration on the writings of the Slavophiles and other expressions of Russian Christian culture.<sup>49</sup>

## THE 'CATACOMBS'

The Christian seminars and study circles are illegal, hence they represent the catacomb layer of Church life in the Soviet Union. The Catacomb Church in this context is not some separate religious institution, but the absolutely vital invisible part of the iceberg whose visible top consists of the open churches, the registered clergy, and the liturgical offices performed by them.

In a state where the clergy is deprived by law of the right to evangelise on pain of withdrawal of the license without which they may not openly officiate, the only way to bring people into the Church, to familiarize seeking individuals with the teachings of the Church, is via illegal, i.e. underground or catacomb, activities of the laity.

Take the following simple case described by a recent convert. While in the last year of high school (That is, at 17 years of age), he met a Christian family. Visiting the family several times, he always encountered there sizeable groups of people, thanks to whom he realised 'that Christianity is a *living* faith, not just a set of rituals'. It was there, apparently, that he was given a brochure on the Lord's Resurrection which, 'for the first time allowed me some minimal appreciation of the Christian experience'. Gradually he realised the senselessness of atheism, the impotence of man without God; even thoughts of committing suicide went through his head, before he described all his 'experiences of the last nine-ten days' in a letter delivered to a priest by his new acquaintances. Apparently, the same friends arranged a meeting between the young man and the priest. A week later he was baptised. He concludes: 'My whole life now is a life in the Church; my falls, misfortunes and happiness are all defined by my relationship to Christ. The main thing was my conversion. It is the beginning, the birth.'<sup>50</sup>

Let us briefly analyse this man's road to the Church. He met Christians who involved him in discussions on Christianity, and Christian apologetics. This is religious propaganda, banned by the Soviet Constitution and punishable according to certain articles of the Criminal Code – i.e. this is a catacomb activity. The Christians gave him religious books to read, published either before the revolution, or abroad, – smuggled into the USSR illegally. In either case, allowing him to read this 'religious propaganda' is a criminal offence. They put him in contact with a priest and the latter agreed to meet him and, apparently, dispelled his last doubts and brought him into the Church. This is all illegal religious propaganda. Thus, an official clergyman, if he is prepared to be true to his pastoral duties, enters into the catacomb layers of Church life. The act of baptism, if it was done without entering it and the convert's passport data in the church records, was another catacomb activity. Only in the final stage of frequenting the church and taking the Sacraments does the

convert emerge from the catacomb sphere. Thus it is the catacomb layer of Church life which at least since 1929 has assured the Church's survival and growth, supplying the groups which struggle for the opening and registration of parishes, introducing new people into the Church, educating them to become Christians, and also protecting the registered priest from unnecessary exposure of his pastoral activities to the state authorities.

## THE FAITHFUL AND THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CHURCH

The previous sections of this chapter might perhaps have led the reader to over-optimistic conclusions regarding the Church and the faith in the Soviet Union. The reality is not so glamorous, and is much too complex to be reduced to some sort of a common denominator.

On the one hand, there are testimonies of great spiritual power and deep convictions among the lay believers. Sergei Fudel', a Russian lay theologian and church activist who had spent close to thirty years in prisons, camps and internal exile for his faith, has described how in the 1920s at the end of a liturgy in a suburban Moscow parish an officiating priest came out of the sanctuary, took his robes off and announced to the congregation: 'I have been fooling you for two decades, and now I am unfrocking myself'. A panic started, people were crying.

Suddenly an unknown young man mounted the ambo and addressed himself to the congregation: 'Why are you so peturbed, crying? . . . Just remember that even at the Last Supper Judas was present.' These words, reminding us of the presence in the Church's history of her dark Double [Devil = Dia-bolos = the Double], pacified the people . . . Although present at the Last Supper, Judas failed to violate the Sacrament.

Fudel' sees the work of the Double as 'very near to the never dying life of Christ's Church', tempting the weaker members and even leading them away from the Church if they do not remember the Judas who sat in Christ's presence. He sees the work of the Devil even in the superstitions of ignorant church

women, who threw a searching young girl out of the church for entering it without a kerchief and not knowing how and when to cross herself. One Moscow priest calls them 'the church witches'. Fudel' describes a young convert, full of enthusiasm for the newly acquired faith. He prayed through the nights, hiding this from his violently antireligious father; he hoped to become a monk. But when faced with real parish life, with the evil forces making their way into the Church, he gave up and drifted away from the Church. People, Fudel' says, ought to be warned about the Double as bluntly as it is done in the Gospel, and should look only for Christ incarnate, 'who alone is the Church', sweeping out of the way all the signs of the Double. He criticises the terrible conservatism of the contemporary hierarchy and clergy; the continuing use of Slavonic instead of living Russian. For the average Russian neophyte, he says, Slavonic is becoming almost as incomprehensible as Latin. The Typicon is often placed above pastoral-educational needs. He says he has met non-believing priests who observed every rule of the Typicon and were very proud of it.

And yet, next to all this, he describes a young priest who in the present-day Soviet Union secretly visits hospitals, giving Communion and Extreme Unction to the sick and the dying. In view of the risks and consequences involved in such acts, Fudel' calls him a true 'warrior-priest'.

In contrast to atheist religiolgists who have a very high opinion of church sermons in today's Soviet Union, most believers, including Fudel', complain about their low quality. Fudel' complains also that general theological ignorance, lack of comprehension as to what is really essential in the liturgy is characteristic not only of the laity but even of some priests. Thus he knows churches where the Communion is served after the liturgy as a private service to the communicants, so as not to extend the service, because 'the choir is unhappy' about its length.

But then again he describes zealots dying for the Church, meeting death in prison with gratitude to God. Or . . . he recalls that 'in the '30s and early '40s a holy wanderer of Jewish background, called Illarion, used to wander around in the vicinity of Turgenev's homeland, Lebedian'. No one asked where this former tailor was baptised. 'His name will not be

preserved in the annals of any church history', but his true apostolate is remembered by the local population which 'to this day adorn his grave, next to a church, with fresh flowers and light a candle on it on feast days'.<sup>51</sup>

Although Fudel' died in 1977, his notes, according to the editors, were finished in the late 1960s when the current religious renaissance was just beginning. Hence, his complaints about the 'Orthodox witches' and the unpreparedness of the average parish to meet the neophytes may be outdated. The distrustfulness originates from the confusion of the young with the Komsomol activists from whom the old-timers have suffered so many insults for their faith. It seems that the more enlightened attitude is taking over, for the latest informants maintain that church people go out of their way to make a neophyte feel at home.<sup>52</sup>

As to the attitude of the Church leadership, it is obvious from the Church careers of some of these neophytes and from the happiness and hope expressed regarding their potential in the Church by such leading personalities of the Moscow Patriarchate as Fr. Vitalii Borovoi, that they are certainly welcome and that the church leadership sees a great future for them in defending and promoting Christianity in the Soviet Union.<sup>53</sup>

According to priests in Russia, there are two categories of neophyte-intellectuals entering the Church: regular Soviet citizens with higher education, and active dissidents. The dissidents become active in signing petitions in defence of human and religious rights, participating in bodies like Fr. Yakunin's Christian Committee for the Defence of the Rights of Believers, or in unofficial religio-philosophic seminars, thus performing some missionary work outside the church walls, which priests generally avoid, owing to the state ban on such activities and the danger of being deprived of their licenses. Some clerics are critical of over-involvement in socio-political activities, feeling that they could serve the Church much better by joining parish councils and using their erudition and well-placed secular connections to fight for the Church or for the opening of a parish here and there.<sup>54</sup>

This sceptical attitude to some of the activities of neophytic Christian dissidents seems to be changing in clerical circles, at least among the younger and better-educated priests. A good example is the 1979 entry into the Christian Committee of Fr.

Vasilii Fonchenkov, a 47-year-old professor at the Moscow Theological Academy at the time, who holds a secular Soviet history degree. He had worked as a researcher at the Central Museum of Revolution before dedicating his life to the Church in 1964. His father and other relatives were prominent Old Bolsheviks. For his participation in Yakunin's committee Fr. Fonchenkov lost his teaching position and was removed to a rural parish in Moscow Diocese.<sup>55</sup>

Information on church attendance is also full of paradoxes. In the major cities, churches are packed. Our earlier calculations of some fifty to eighty million practising Orthodox Christians to some 7000 open churches indicate a colossal inadequacy of churches in comparison with the number of believers. Orenburg, a city in the Urals with a population of 400 000 and only one 'working' Orthodox church, may serve as an example. On a regular Sunday the church is attended by between ten and fifteen thousand people (two liturgies are conducted on ordinary Sundays, three on feast days). During Lent there are over 10 000 communicants each week. The communion takes five priests three hours to hand out, simultaneously using five chalices. Confessions in these conditions can only be general. This means that at least 20 per cent of the area's population receive communion each year; a high proportion in a city and area which contain sizeable minorities of Old Believers, Pentecostals, Baptists, Mormons, and Moslems.<sup>56</sup>

And yet the already cited Nudel'man says that in some north-Russian small towns he saw services conducted in churches with a congregation of only two or three persons. But thousands of young people gather around the ancient Dormition Cathedral in Vladimir at Easter. In his view, the 'mass character' of child baptism is a mere fashion, due to the revival of nationalism – Orthodoxy as part of a 'package deal' of being Russian.

The poet Kublanovsky, an adult convert, formerly active in the Church, explains why many rural and small-town churches remain half-empty:

In the countryside every person's behaviour is closely verifiable. The Church is under the KGB's close control. The believer dares to go to church only when he/she visits a large city. After two or three visits to a local church, he is liable to lose his job with a note in his personal file that will follow him throughout his life. Going to church in a small provincial town



requires as much daring as joining a public anti-regime demonstration in Moscow's Red Square and entails similar consequences.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, although the proportion of believers in the rural areas, according to Soviet sources, is 50 per cent higher than in urban centres, church attendance in no way reflects these numbers.

Some of Kublanovsky's university friends, having converted, opted for ordination. Owing to the great seminary shortage, they were ordained without formal training, through home education supervised and checked by the local bishop. Such ordinands are particularly distrusted by the CRA officials and, as a rule, are forced to serve as priests in distant rural parishes, often in Siberia, in half-empty churches. Despite all the odds militating against them, they nevertheless become messengers of the religious renaissance going on in the major cities, gradually spreading it to otherwise isolated pockets of the population, as well as overturning the propaganda cliché that faith in God is the domain of the uncouth.

Kublanovsky's two priest-friends are not an exception. There have been unconfirmed reports that in the 1980s newly ordained priests from Soviet intelligentsia and/or party families, with degrees from secular Soviet educational institutions, are numbered in hundreds each year. What is the profile and Church potential of this new type of priest? Until at least the late 1960s the Soviet Government simply did not permit young people with secular university degrees to enter theological schools or take up clerical vocation in the Soviet Union. Not without resistance,<sup>58</sup> the government retreated on this point. The Soviet religiologist Kurochkin's apprehension that with the growth of secularly educated members in the Church their role and prestige would increase, and that priests would appear from among them who would behave quite differently from previous generations, is proving true.<sup>59</sup> Today the youngest lecturers in the theological schools of Moscow and Leningrad include theologians who also hold advanced degrees in physics, mathematics, biology, philosophy, history, etc. Many of them are sons of communist party members. Most are relatively recent adult converts to Christianity. Their life stories vary, but they all share some common experiences which led them to the Church: primarily, the same old disillusionment with materialist doctrines in theory and practice. One of them at a certain point in

his professional secular life saw its aimlessness and senselessness within the context of materialistic philosophy, and retired to a rural school to get away from it all for a while. There he listened to the Russian programmes of Western radios, heard religious programmes, learned about Russian religious philosophy for the first time, and managed to find a set of Vladimir Solov'ev's works and became fully absorbed in them. Thence he went on to the Bible, and a few months later to baptism. The discovery of Christianity filled even his secular profession with a new meaning. He successfully pursued it for a number of years until the time when he felt a calling to the priesthood, whereupon he entered one of the theological schools and was eventually ordained. Another, also from a communist party family, had a very vague sense of God when he entered the seminary. His main reason for going there was his revulsion from the official lies, and his desire (i) to go to a school that would be as free from Marxism-Leninism as possible, and (ii) to be able to serve his Russian people and the historical Russia which in his view were being subjected to ethnocide by communism. It was within the walls of the seminary that his faith in God became firm, and he accepted ordination in full religious sincerity, though never forgetting his original interests and ideas. A third priest was converted to the church in his late teens partly in revulsion against the growing drunkenness, moral deterioration and brutality of the secular world around him, the cause of which he saw in materialism, which rendered life meaningless. What is common to them all and what links these priests with the dissidents and the intelligentsia neophytes who do not become ordained, is their rejection of the official doctrine of the Soviet social system: materialism.

This, as well as their former experience and knowledge of the official secular culture, establishes direct links between the neophytic priest and his urban and urbane secular Soviet contemporaries. I venture to add that the same characteristics which establish invisible links between these new priests and the Soviet secular intelligentsia, also set them somewhat apart from the older generations of Soviet-Russian priests and bishops, who come mostly from rural peasant and worker families or are sons and grandsons of priests. Many of the former college or professional colleagues of the convert-priests do not break their ties with them once they become priests. They meet, they

discuss, they argue. In fact, owing to the general interest in Christianity, simply as an alternative to Marxism, their circle of 'social' friends and acquaintances increases once they become seminarians and priests, and such social contacts and gatherings often become a platform for missionary activities, for bringing new converts to the Church.<sup>60</sup>

According to the young priests, people all over the country show much respectful curiosity concerning the clergy. Indeed, a young priest, especially an adult convert with a Soviet secular college degree, becomes a living denial of Soviet antireligious propaganda clichés. Wherever a young priest travels in trains, aeroplanes or coaches, he is approached by co-passengers. They usually begin with personal questions (How did you, such a young man, decide to become a priest?) and end with the existential ones. If fifteen to twenty years ago it was quite common to see priests publicly insulted, now this hardly ever happens; and if a drunk tries to pick on a priest, he is normally silenced by passers-by or co-passengers. Consequently, priests are now beginning to dare to appear in public in cassocks. It is now a byword among the populace that one should not approach a priest with empty talk or try to argue with him, for he is so clever and well educated that he will beat anyone in debate.<sup>61</sup>

No doubt it is predominantly the bright young priest with direct roots in secular Soviet culture, a convert in most cases, who is the source of such legends. This, then, is our second category of converts, those who become fully involved in church life. Whether they choose or are chosen to become priests, or remain lay Christians, the above observations apply particularly to them. We may therefore have traced the pattern of how a general philosophic-religious thirst evolves first to the urge to be baptised, and then to become a practising church member.

Yet, in the opinion of Kublanovsky and several other interviewees, too much should not be read into this religious renaissance.

Yes, the influx of the intelligentsia, often former party members, into the Church and to the ranks of the clergy, is changing the Church's specific gravity in Soviet society. But this will not lead to social changes. The hierarchy is wholly demoralised, neither are there many brave parish priests . . . They have cosily convinced themselves that all political power

is God-given and that as long as the liturgy can be performed, all is well. They cannot be spiritual leaders because they lack a realistic vision of today's world, and have no positive human ideology outside the Church.

The CRA tries its best to bar the most daring, brilliant and religiously most enthusiastic young men from the seminaries. Nor are the bishops interested in priests who would make their life difficult. Yet, adds Kublanovsky: 'Every bishop has his own ideas, his own layer of clandestine activities'; and so the situation varies from diocese to diocese. But one thing must be made clear: 'In contrast to Poland, there is no social dimension to the Russian religious renaissance.'<sup>62</sup>

Similar opinions were obtained from a *samizdat* questionnaire distributed inside the Soviet Union among seven young Orthodox intellectuals. They pointed to the negative consequences of the isolation of the Church Establishment from the world at large as well as from the masses of the faithful. Moreover, 'the salvation of an individual cannot be separated from the salvation of the world'. A Church that is sycophantically subordinate to a theomachistic state which denies her a place in society, is unable to save and transfigure the world.<sup>63</sup>

Probably these assessments are too gloomy. There is a social dimension to every sincere conversion, because a convinced Christian is bound to act differently in society from a convinced materialist or cynic. Hence a mass return to the Church is bound to affect the social and socio-moral destiny of the country.

But if such critical attitudes are typical of the neophytes, is there not a danger of a new schism in the Russian Orthodox Church? For a while in the 1960s it seemed there was such a danger.<sup>64</sup> But even the most dissatisfied elements were restrained from plunging into an open schism by the unfortunate experience of two earlier schisms in the history of the Russian Church – the Old Believers' Schism in the seventeenth century and the Renovationists' Schism of the 1920s; both tragically weakened the Church's position *vis-à-vis* the state, both helped the state to extend and increase its control over the Church. The other important factor in this restraint was the very character of the neophytes: they are predominantly conservatives searching for continuity – by their inclinations they are the very antithesis of revolutionaries, of people who would be ready

to revolt, i.e., to break with tradition and history.<sup>65</sup> Finally, it now seems, with the appearance and growth in numbers of young clerics from the ranks of the secularly educated neophytic intelligentsia, and the tendency of such clerics to behave more independently, a more intimate relationship and mutual understanding have developed between the lay neophytes and the clergy. The above case of Fr. Fonchenkov, or of the Siberian priest Fr. Alexander Pivovarov who was imprisoned in 1984 for distributing religious literature obtained from 'illegal *samizdat* printers in Moscow, are typical examples.<sup>66</sup>

Although the above *samizdat* questionnaire brought very critical responses on the current state of the Church, the conclusions of the respondents by no means suggested any split from the Church. Some respondents stressed that owing to the paralysed state of the clergy, the 'transfiguring' work ought to be done by the laity, which in Soviet conditions must not only carry out its usual share of the ministry, but also do 'two-thirds of the work normally expected from the pastors', namely:

liturgical renovation, theology, philosophy, art and finally, Christian life *per se* – all devolves upon the laity. We have the greatest freedom of the flock in the whole history of the Orthodox Church, complete freedom from intermediaries between the lay Christian and Jesus. Alas, little has been done; particularly inadequate is the Christian community life: the cornerstone of everything.

The decline of the family, divorces, lack of understanding of the sacrament of marriage, sexual promiscuity – all these are seen as barriers to a true spiritual revival.<sup>67</sup>

All this is very sad. Yet the thirst for God is recognised as a near-universal phenomenon. Shortly before his death in 1978, a dedicated priest who had spent a good ten years in Soviet concentration camps for his active pastoral work during the revival of church life in the German-occupied Pskov Diocese during the Second World War, described that period in the following words:

We reopened and re-consecrated closed churches, carried out mass baptisms. Marriages, burials, we literally had no time for sleep and food. You cannot imagine how the people, having experienced Sovietism, thirsted after God . . .

Well, if such a mission as ours were to appear in today's Siberia or the Urals, or even the Ukraine, I think we would have the same response [as in Pskov in 1941–7].<sup>68</sup>

It may be interesting that the late Fudel' who knew the clergy of the 1920s and 1930s, had a rather low opinion in general of the contemporary clergy (pointing out some exceptions to the rule). But young interviewees, recent converts, describe the clergy they have met as very dedicated, intelligent, spiritual and erudite. It appears that Kublanovsky has the right answer to this discrepancy, when he says that although the clergy is made up of the best stuff morally and spiritually that contemporary Soviet society can produce, its moral standards and those of Church community life shine only in relation to the general morass of the morally deteriorating Soviet society.

Would Kublanovsky and his like retain such a severely critical view of the Russian church situation after experiencing the religious and moral crisis in the West? Tatiana Goricheva concludes her little book of reminiscences, about her own eventual conversion from Marxism to Orthodoxy by way of nihilism and Oriental occultism, with an assessment of religious life in the West after her experience of some four years of seminary studies, public lectures and Church life in Western Europe. She places the spiritual life of the contemporary Russian Church – the dedicated laity, as well as the monasteries and the many *startsy* and clergymen – far above anything she has experienced in the West. She finds Western Christianity, including the Orthodox Church in Western Europe, much too lukewarm in comparison with the church life she was used to in Russia.<sup>69</sup>

# Notes and References

## PREFACE

1. Sylvain Marechal, *Dictionnaire des athés* (1797), as quoted in: David B. T. Aikman, *The Role of Atheism in the Marxist Tradition*, a 1979 PhD dissertation at the University of Washington. Ms., p. 32.
2. Saul K. Padover (ed. and transl.), *Karl Marx on Religion* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1974) pp. 35–6.
3. James Thrower, *Marxist-Leninist 'Scientific Atheism' and the Study of Religion and Atheism in the USSR* (Berlin: Mouton, 1983) p. 68.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
5. Akademiia nauk SSSR, Institut filosofii, *Osnovy nauchnogo ateizma*, a textbook for colleges and universities, 3rd edn (M.: Polit. literatura, 1964, circulation 50 000 copies) p. 3. See also the new Gorbachev's, Communist Party Programme's call for 'the creation and broad dissemination of new Soviet rituals'. 'Programma KPSS (novaia redaktsiia). Proekt', *Kommunist*, no. 16 (November 1985) pp. 33–4.
6. *Osnovy nauchnogo. . .*, p. 4.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 14–37.

## CHAPTER 1: HISTORY AND THE CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

1. Details in Dimitri Obolensky, *The Bogomils, a Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* (Twickenham, England: Anthony C. Hall, 1972) *passim*.
2. Lunacharsky, *Vvedenie v istoriiu religii* (Moscow – Petrograd: Gosizdat, 1923) *passim*.
3. *Nauka i religii*a (henceforth *NiR*, no. 12 (1967) pp. 28–9. M. M. Kublanov's 'Khristos do Khrista' was the first article on Dead Sea Scrolls in *NiR*. It claimed the scrolls did not confirm the existence of Christ, but showed that Christ's teachings had not been an exclusive monopoly of Christianity.
4. Compare and contrast Tokarev's: (i) 'Problema proiskhozhdeniia i rannikh form religii', *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 6 (1956) p. 137; and (ii) 'O religii kak sotsial'nom iavlenii', *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 3 (1979) pp. 87–105.
5. Cited by A. Kazhdan, 'Istoricheskoe zerno predaniia ob Iisuse Khriste', *NiR*, no. 2 (1966) p. 9.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–14.
7. E. Dujardin, 'Chelovek iz chelovekov', *Ateist*, no. 48 (January 1930) pp. 78–93, esp. 85–6; N. Rumiantsev, 'Iosif Flavii ob Iisuse Khriste i Ioanne Krestitele', *Ateist*, no. 36 (1929).
8. Dr I. Svetsitskaia: (i) 'Proroki, spasiteli, messii', *NiR* no. 2 (1969) pp. 56–9; (ii) 'Ot obshchiny k tserkvi. Vozniknovenie khristianstva', *NiR*, no. 4 (1985) p. 44.

9. *NiR*, nos 8–12 (August to December 1977). Svetsitskaia's comment in no. 12, pp. 64–5.
10. 'Ot obshchiny', *NiR*, nos 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 (1985), pp. 33–8, 42–4, 38–40, 26–9 and 24–7.
11. For example: Krylev, 'O nekotorykh tendentsiakh v sovremennom iudeisko-khristianskom bogoslovii' (an excerpt from his book *Sovremennoe bogoslovie i nauka*), *VIRiAt.*, 7 (1959) p. 5. Also: G. L. Andreev, V. E. Ladorenko, L. P. Poliakova, 'Sotsial'nye npravstvennye printsipy kommunizma v interpretatsii sovremennykh khristianskikh bogoslovov', *Voprosy nauchnogo otcetizma* (henceforth: *VNAI*), no. 2 (1966), p. 131. The denial of the historicity of Christ remains the official Soviet position, most favoured by the party-ideological establishment to the present day.
12. For example, Kazakova, *Vassian Patrikeev i ego sochineniia* (M.-L.: Akad. nauk SSSR, 1960) *passim*, and her other works. For Pokrovsky's views, see his *Izbrannye sochineniia v chetyrekh knigakh* (M.: Mysl', 1967) *passim*.
13. N. A. Smirnov (ed.), *Tserkov' v istorii Rossii*, editor's note (M.: Nauka, 1967) p. 2.
14. This is one of the clues to the more sympathetic treatment of the sects by communist regimes, particularly in their early stages.
15. *Istoriia Russkoi tserkvi* (M.: Moskovskii rabochii, 1931(?)); 3rd edn in 1983, circ. 100 000; *Istoriia ateizma*, vypusk IV, 2nd amended edn (M.: Ateist, 1929); *Tserkov' v istorii*. . . , respectively. In the introduction to the 1983 edition of Nikol'sky's *Istoriia*, it is stated that the book remained the only Marxist monograph on the history of the Russian Church and that its republication is meant to counter the Church's publications related to the Russian Christian Millennium (pp. 8–20).
16. S. A. Zenkovsky, *Russia's Old Believers* (Muenchen: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1970) pp. 290–321 *et passim*.
17. Nikolsky, *Istoriia* (1931) *passim* and pp. 222–4, 226, 235, 237, 254, 274–7, 279, 295–7, 306–7, 329. His factual data on the late-nineteenth-century sects is a compilation from the original research by the leading pre-revolutionary scholar A. S. Prugavin.
18. Ya. V. Minkivichius, 'Martin Liuter i reformatsiia', *VopNAI.*, no. 32 (1985) p. 167.
19. Voronitsyn, *Istoriia ateizma*, 2nd edn U.: Ateist, 1929, p. 186. In this thesis, however inconvenient for the propaganda line, he even disagrees with a pre-revolutionary historian V. N. Tukalevsky ('Istoriia russkikh masonov', *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 1911, no. 5, p. 16), who claimed that the 18th-century Russian intelligentsia was too unsophisticated to assimilate the deist ideas. Hence, he claimed, they were atheists, pure and simple. In contrast, see, Iu. Kogan, E. F. Grekulov and V. F. Milovidov, 'Tserkov'i russkii absolutizm v XVIII v.', in *Tserkov' v istorii*. . . pp. 167–204, where an attempt is made to imply that even Russian common masses were atheistically inclined.
20. Voronitsyn, p. 187.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
22. Among Voronitsyn's contemporaries could be mentioned: N. Rumiantsev's 'Iosif Flavii ob Iisuse i Ioanne Krestitele' (*Ateist*, no. 36, January 1929, pp. 32–57), arguing that Christ was not a historical figure; A. Dmitrev's



- 'Tserkov'i samoderzhavie v Vizantii i drevnei Rusi' (*Ateist*, no. 48, January 1930, pp. 60–77), etc.
23. For example: Kazakova, 'Nestiazhatel'stvo i eresi', and R. G. Skrynnikov, 'Istoricheskie sud'by raskola i staroobriadchestva' and 'Mitropolit Filipp i oprichnina', *VIRiAt*, nos 5 (1958) and 11 (1963); Budovnits, 'Pervye russkie nestiazhateli' and 'Russkoe dukhovenstvo v pervoe stoletie mongolo-tatarskogo iga', *VIRiAt*, nos 5 (1958) and 7 (1959).
  24. For example: Kazhdan, 'Vizantiiskaia tserkov' v IV–XII vv. Vozniknovenie pravoslavnoi tserkvi', in *Tserkov' v istorii* . . . , pp. 5–29; Klibanov, 'K izucheniiu genezisa ereticheskikh dvizhenii v Rossii' and 'Samobytiinaia eres'. K istorii russkoi reformatsionnoi mysli', *VIRiAt* no. 7 (1959) and no. 4 (1956).
  25. 'Aktual'nye problemy kritiki ideologii sovremennogo russkogo pravoslaviia', in *Ateizm, religia, sovremennost'* (L.: Muzei istorii religii i ateizma, 1977) pp. 82–100.
  26. *Kreshchenie Rusi. Fakty protiv legend i mifov. Polemicheskie zametki* (L.: Lenizdat, 1984) pp. 1–130. Although published in 75 000 copies, it was an immediate sell-out.
  27. *Ibid*, p. 45. See also the publication of the Moscow Patriarchate on the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the Patriarchate in Russia, where it is stated that the Orthodox Church has liberated the people from the darkness of 'superstition . . . a state of oppression and spiritual enslavement'. As these words appear in a report on the history of the Church from 1917 to 1967 (although they officially pertain to the early years of Christianity in Russia), Gordienko's displeasure is self-explanatory, hence his angry reference to them. '50-letie vosstanovleniia patriarshestva', *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii* (henceforth: *ZhMP*) (special edn, 1971) p. 25.
  28. Gordienko, *Kreshchenie*, p. 76 *et passim*.
  29. *Ibid*, pp. 42–7.
  30. Compare: Budovnits, 'Russkoe dukhovenstvo . . .' (pp. 284–302), and A. M. Sakharov, 'Tserkov' v period mongolo-tatarskogo iga i ob'edineniia russkikh zemel' v edinoe gosudarstvo', in *Tserkov' v istorii* . . . , pp. 61–78.
  31. 'Kak ustoiiala Rus'', *NiR*, nos 7 and 8 (1980) pp. 18–28 and 15–25. For another view on the role of Kiprian, see: Fr. John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 1981) pp. 200–60.
  32. Klibanov, 'Napisanie o gramote', *VIRiAt*, 3 (1955) pp. 366–8.
  33. 'Nestiazhatel'stvo . . .', pp. 62–70 *et passim*.
  34. 'Vizantiiskaia tserkov' . . .', pp. 20–8.
  35. V. I. Koretsky, 'Krest'ianskaia voina nachala XVII v. i tserkov'', and Sakharov's section in 'Tserkovnaia reforma i raskol' – both in *Tserkov' v istorii*, pp. 136–44 and in his generalization on the role of the Church in the Time of Troubles, pp. 151–3. Koretsky even uses the phrase, 'the treasonous activities of the churchmen' (p. 143).
  36. E. F. Grekulov, *Tserkov', samoderzhavie, narod* (M.: Nauka, 1969) p. 84; on Vostorgov and his death, see vol. 2, ch. 1.
  37. 'Sotsial'no-politicheskaia pozitsiia russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi v 1905–1917 gg.', *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma* (henceforth: *VNA*), 32 (1985) pp. 185–204.

38. Pospelovsky, *Russian Church*, vol. 1, ch. 2.
39. I. I. Migovich, 'Uniatsko-natsionalisticheskii al'ians na sluzhbe imperializma', *VNAt.*, no. 28 (1981) *passim*; P. A. Petliakov, *Uniatskaia tserkov' – orudie antikommunizma i antisovetizma* (L'vov: Vyscha shkola, 1982) pp. 22–7, 150–2, 86, *et passim*; on the SVU fraud, see Pospelovsky, *Russian Church*, vol. 1, p. 178.

## CHAPTER 2: THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS IN THE VIEW OF SOVIET ATHEISM

1. *Mysli o religii* (M.: OGIZ, 1936) pp. 288–94. The dishonesty of Skvortsov's attack is further demonstrated by the way he twists Patr. Tikhon's warning: 'Desperate from the sufferings, the sons of Russia are ready even to cowardly throw themselves into the embraces of the external enemy in hope that he will be able to pacify social life and put an end to the horrors.' Skvortsov concludes from this passage that Tikhon and the Church are ready to sell Russia to the Germans.  
In a similar way, a former theologian, Professor A. A. Osipov, who had broken with the Church in 1959, in his popular books against religion levelled accusations against clerics imprisoned in the course of Khrushchev's religious persecutions on fraudulent charges, citing the official indictments as if they were genuine. See his *Katikhizis bez prikras* ('Catechism without Embellishments') (M., 1963, circulation 105 000 copies) p. 37.
2. Iakov Okunev, '*Smena vekh' tserkvi*' (M.: Proletarii, 1923) p. 19.
3. V. Mashchenko, 'Sredi natsional'nostei. Antireligioznuiu rabotu – v natsoblasti!', *Antireligioznik*, no. 10 (1931).
4. 'O religii kak sotsial'nom iavlenii', *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 3 (1979) pp. 87–105.
5. Iu. I. Semenov, 'O sushchnosti religii', *ibid*, no. 2 (1980) pp. 49–63.
6. V. N. Sherdakov, 'O glavnom v ponimanii religii', *ibid*, pp. 64–71. Of course, in the Marxist total-society context the logical conclusion from Sherdakov's presentation of religion is the absolute necessity of life-or-death struggle against it.
7. N. I. Martynenko, *Kritika pravoslavnogo ucheniia o nraustvennosti* (Voronezh: The University Press, 1973) pp. 47–8, 52–3, 88–102.
8. Pospelovsky, *Russian Church*, vol. 1, p. 144; Solzhenitsyn, 'My-to ne umrem' (We Shall not Die), his 'Tiny Stories' cycle, *Sochineniia* (Frankfurt/ M.: Possev, 1968) pp. 300–1.
9. A. Belov and A. Shilkin, *Diversiia bez dinamita* (M.: Political Literature Publ. House, 1972) *passim*. The thesis of this book is completely un-Marxist, because it implies that ideas carried over from a totally different economic environment can prevail over ideas which are the product of the socio-economic system of Marxism-Leninism.
10. P. K. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia sovremennogo russkogo pravoslaviia* (M.: Mysl, 1971) *passim*, particularly chapters 3 and 5. Characteristically, this volume, being one of the most scholarly and truthful products of Soviet

atheistic scholarship, was published only in 8500 copies. See also, Martynenko, *Kritika*, p. 65.

On 24–26 April 1974, an All-Union Conference of scholars dedicated to ‘Contemporary Problems of the History of Religion and Atheism in the Light of the Marxist-Leninist Science’ took place in Leningrad, at which Kurochkin presented a paper on the evolution of religion and the Church under socialism and on the social doctrines of contemporary Orthodoxy (G. S. Lialina, ‘Religiia i ateizm: problemy istorii i sovremennost’’, *VNAI*, no. 17, 1975, pp. 304–9) along the same lines as above.

11. K. S. Siniutina, ‘Kritika khristianskoi sotsiologii S. N. Bulgakova’ (‘A Critique of Bulgakov’s Christian Sociology’) *VNAI*, no. 12 (1971) p. 94 *et passim*. Also: M. M. Sheinman, *Khristianskii sotsializm* (M., 1969) pp. 162–82; N. P. Krasnikov, ‘Evolutsiia sotsial’noi kontseptsii pravoslaviiia’ (‘Evolution of the Social Concept of Orthodoxy’) *Voprosy istorii*, no. 9 (1971) pp. 16–23; and many others.
12. Sheinman, *Khristianskii . . .*, pp. 165–73; Siniutina, ‘Kritika . . .’, pp. 95–117.
13. See: Pospelovsky, *Russian Police Trade Unionism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971) *passim*; Jeremiah Schneiderman, *Sergei Zubatov and Revolutionary Marxism* (Cornell University Press, 1976) pp. 146–8, 151–2.
14. The main reason for the attack upon and rejection of Christian socialism by the above and other Marxist writers, is that the former teaches social harmony instead of class struggle. Even the Renovationists emphasized inter-class harmony rather than struggle, wherefore Sheinman condemns them as an ideologically alien body as much as any Christianity (pp. 178–9).
15. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia*, p. 217; Pospelovsky, *Russian Church*, vol. 1, ch. 2.
16. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia*, pp. 170–73, etc. Kurochkin distinguishes between Christian Socialism, which is alien to Marxism because of its acceptance of private entrepreneurship, and the modern ‘Left Christianity’, which he also calls ‘Communist Christianity’, which accepts even the Marxist-socialist practical programme of reconstruction of society. My own observation is that such claims and attempts to closely associate Christianity with the Marxist social programme have been made by the currently middle-aged Church leaders in the Soviet Union (the first post-Stalin generation, born in the 1920s–30s). while the youngest generation, just rising to prominence in the late 1970s and 1980s (born after 1940), seem to have no illusions regarding Marxism any more, at least in intimate conversations.
17. *Ibid*, pp. 172–3.
18. *Ibid*, p. 168. ‘Remember’ and ‘new social system’ are morally neutral terms, connoting neither approval nor condemnation, but neither excluding such conclusions.
19. *Ibid*, pp. 162–7.
20. V. A. Cherniak, *Nauchnyi progress i religiia* (Alma-Ata: Science Publishing House, 1976) pp. 99–105. It should be noted, however, that Cherniak’s book is written in much more of a propaganda style than Kurochkin’s, who tries to be as close to scholarship as possible in his *a priori engagé* position.

21. Pp. 166–7 and 196.
22. Pp. 164.
23. A quotation from Metropolitan Nikodim's article in 1963. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia* p. 200. See also: Kurochkin, *ibid*, *passim*; and G. L. Andreev, *et al.* 'Sotsial'nye' pp. 110–17.
24. 'Evolutsiia religii i tserkvi v sotsialisticheskom obshchestve', *VNAt.*, no. 21 (1977) pp. 19–36.
25. Novikov, *Pravoslavie i sovremennost'*, p. 22, citing an Ms. theology textbook, *Konspekt po osnovnomu bogosloviu* by the Moscow Theological Academy Professor, V. I. Talyzin (Zagorsk, 1957) p. 82.
26. N. Krasnikov, 'Posle pomestnovo sobora', *Nauka i rel.*, no. 12 (1975) pp. 38–40.
27. E. D. Kondrat'ev, 'Kritika pravoslavno-teologicheskikh kontseptsii 'primireniia' nauki i religii', *VNAt*, no. 19 (1976) pp. 231–2, citing Kurochkin.
28. Andreev *et al.*, 'Sotsial'nye', pp. 115–18, as well as notes 22 and 25 above. What the Marxist objections to the social teachings of Orthodox modernists boil down to, is that they treat Marxism as just another socio-political doctrine, no better nor worse than others, neither apparently any more original than others; leaving nothing of the claim of the uniqueness, universality and scientism of Marxism.
29. Andreev, *et al.*, pp. 119–23. They cite Patriarch Sergii's words that 'the sense of life for a believer' is in his 'striving for the World-to-come', as evidence that life on this earth does not interest a Christian.  
M. M. Kopanitsa maintains that Christians cannot be consistent patriots, because 'to love one's country means to passionately hate its enemies', while Christians preach love for one's enemy, and Metrop. Nikolai (Yarushevich) taught in his sermons (citing Christ): 'Don't love the world and what is in the world . . . Our eternal fatherland is there, in Heaven'. *Kritika kontseptsii kommunisticheskovo khristianstva* (Kharkov: Vyshcha shkola, 1974) pp. 61–2.
30. Andreev *et al.*, p. 123; Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia . . . russkogo prav.*, p. 208.
31. 'Aktual'nye problemy kritiki ideologii sovremennogo russkogo pravoslaviia', in *Ateizm, religii, sovremennost'* (Leningrad: Min. kul'tury RSFSR, Gos. muzei istorii religii i ateizma, 1977) pp. 83–97; 'S pozitsiy mistitsizma', *NiR*, nos 11 and 12 (1980) pp. 24–7 and 24–5, respectively.
32. I. Moiseev, 'Sovremennyi bogoslov i problema tselesoobraznosti', *NiR*, no. 8 (1963) pp. 16–19.
33. Yu. A. Levada, *Sovremennoe khristianstvo i sotsial'nyi progress* (M.: Social-Economic Literature Publ. H., 1962) pp. 151–2. This Patriarch Alexii's response to the question on the relationship between Marxist Communism and Christianity, at a press conference in the late 1940s, became one of the wandering quotations cited in innumerable books and articles by Soviet religiologists, including Kurochkin's *Evolutsiia*, and V. M. Ushakov's *Pravoslavie i XX vek* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstanskoe izd., 1968) p. 4, etc. Another favourite 'roving' quotation is from Professor Vetelev's 1949 *Homyletics* text for seminarians, where, bowing to Stalin's regime and only feeling out the still largely unknown church people in the reviving Church, he wrote: 'The idea of the new socio-political life and struggle for

it have become the central idea of our time . . . The idea of God has moved from the centre of the circle of life to its periphery.' This citation continues to be quoted in Soviet religiological books and articles to this day (e.g. the above Ushakov's book) as evidence of religious decline, although the statement is almost forty years old now.

34. G. L. Andreev, *et al.*, 'Sotsial'nye', *et al.*, p. 130.
35. *Ibid*, p. 125.
36. A. Belov, 'Po stranitsam pravoslavnogo kalendaria' (According to the Orthodox Calendar), series.
37. F. Korsakov, 'Russian Destinies', in *From Under the Rubble*, ed. A. Solzhenitsyn (Little, Brown & Co., Bantam Books, 1976) p. 154.
38. L. Mitrokhin, 'Baptizm o smysle zhizni', *NiR*, no. 4 (1967) pp. 24–8. His criticism of those who insult believers is characteristic of the first post-Khrushchev years.
39. Kryvelev, 'O nekotorykh tendentsiakh', pp. 5–52.
40. Mitrokhin, 'Baptizm . . .', p. 28.
41. Kurochkin, *Pravoslaviie i gumanizm* (M.: VPSH pri TsK KPSS, 1962) pp. 115–22 *et passim*.

### CHAPTER 3: RELIGION AND SCIENCE

1. Besides the sources cited in this chapter, here are some of the major Soviet titles specializing in the religion–science issue: E. M. Babosov, *Nauchno-tekhnicheskaia revoliutsiia i modernizatsiia katolitsizma* (Minsk, 1971); V. I. Garadzha, *Neotomizm. Razum. Nauka.* (M., 1969); M. P. Mchedlov, *Katolitsizm* (M., 1970); L. N. Mitrokhin, *Protestantskaia kontseptsiiia cheloveka* (M., 1969); D. M. Ugrinovich, 'Bezreligioznoe khristianstvo Bonheffera i ego prodolzhateli', *Vop. Fil.*, no. 2 (1968); I. A. Kryvelev, *Sovremennoe bogoslovie i nauka* (M., 1959); Kryvelev, *Religioznaia kartina mira i ego modernizatsiia* (M., 1968); N. S. Gordienko, *Sovremennoe pravoslaviie* (M., 1968); Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia sovremennogo pravoslaviia* (M., 1971); V. M. Ushakov, *Pravoslaviie i XX vek* (Alma-Ata, 1968); E. F. Grekulov, *Pravoslavnaiia tserkov' – vrag prosveshcheniia* (M., 1967); R. S. Prikhod'ko, *Pravoslaviie – vrag nauki i progressa* (Kiev, 1962); V. L. Sal'nikov, *Evolutsiia otnosheniia sovremennogo pravoslavniiia k nauke* (L., 1973).
2. V. A. Cherniak, *Nauchnyi progress i religiia* (Alma-Ata: 'Nauka' Kazakhskoi SSR, 1976) pp. 52–3.
3. Iosif Aronovich Kryvelev, *Istoriia religii* (M.: Mysl', v. II, 1976) pp. 114–20 and 128–32.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 123–8.
5. *Ibid*, pp. 125 and 128: See Chapter 1 above for discussion on the historicity of Christ in Soviet literature.
6. Ia. V. Minkivichius, 'Katolicheskaia teologiia i nauchno-tekhnicheskaia revoliutsiia', *VNAi.*, no. 28 (1981) pp. 125–32.
7. Kryvelev, *Istoriia*, II, pp. 114–16; V. A. Molokov, *Filosofiia sovremennogo pravoslavniiia* (Minsk: Vysheisha shkola, 1968) p. 47.

8. Cherniak, *Nauchnyi*, pp. 55–6.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–70; Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976) *passim*.
11. Cherniak, *Nauchnyi*, p. 56.
12. Molokov, *Filosofia*, pp. 61, 76–80; Grigorii Aronovich Gabinsky, *Teologija i chudo* (M.: Mysl', 1978) p. 145.
13. Molokov, *Filosofia*, pp. 58–9.
14. Kryvelev, *Istoriia*, II, pp. 132–5.
15. I. A. Akchurin, 'Neischerpaemost' materii vglub' i sovreninnaia fizika', *Vop. fil.*, no. 12 (1969) pp. 28–9.
16. Mark Popovsky, *Zhizn' i zhitie Voino-Yasnetskogo, arkhiepiskopa i khirurg* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1979) *passim*.
17. 'Slovo ob uchitele i druge' and 'Detishche akademika', *NiR*, no. 3 (1966) pp. 6–9; Mykh. Khomenko, 'Bat'ko i dity', *Liudyna i svit*, no. 7 (July 1966) pp. 7–13.
18. E. K. Duluman, N. I. Kiriushko and P. L. Yarotsky, *Nauchno – tekhnicheskaia revoliutsiia i formirovanie ateisticheskogo mirovozzreniia* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1980) pp. 55–7.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–98. Also, T. Oizerman (of the USSR Academy of Sciences), 'Nauchnaia kritika idealizma i religii', *NiR*, no. 4 (1970) pp. 34–9.
20. Gabinsky, *Teologija*, pp. 134–6.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 137–40.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 141. The quotations are from Bulgakov's *Pravoslavie* (Orthodoxy), (Paris, 1967) p. 181.
23. Cherniak, *Nauchnyi*, p. 66; S. L. Frank, *Nepostizhimoe* (Muenchen: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971) *passim*.
24. Gabinsky, *Teologija*, pp. 143–4.
25. Cherniak, *Nauchnyi*, p. 68.
26. Gabinsky, *Teologija*, pp. 150–66.
27. N. S. Muradei, 'Problema ratsional'nogo i irratsional'nogo: antichnost', srednevekov'e', *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 9 (September 1982) pp. 107–16.
28. B. Mezentssev, 'Net, ne mistika!'; L. Vasil'ev, 'Neobychainye sovpadeniia'; P. Bul', 'Fakty nado izuchat!'; D. Ushkov, 'Chtenie myslei i telepatii'; V. Milashevich, 'Iasnovidenie' i gipnoz', – *NiR*, no. 7 (1965) pp. 56–66. Characteristically, Dr E. Naumov, an internationally recognized scholar in parapsychology, was imprisoned in 1974 on framed-up charges. *Khronika zashchity prav cheloveka*, nos 8 and 10 (N.Y.: 'Khronika' Press, 1974) pp. 59 and 55.
29. Cherniak, *Nauchnyi*, p. 69.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 70–4.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 70; Gabinsky, *Teologija*, pp. 169–81. The simplistic arguments of Gabinsky won for his book an edition of 40 000 copies with colour reproductions; Cherniak's more thorough study was published in only 1500 copies.

## CHAPTER 4: CHURCH AND CULTURE

1. F. N. Oleshchuk's introduction to a re-publication of Lunacharsky's *Pochemu nel'zia verit' v boga?* miscellany (M.: Nauka, 1965) pp. 10–11.
2. *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, book 3 (M.: Mysl', 1967) p. 36.
3. 'K voprosu o kreshchenii Kievskoi Rusi', in *Istoriĭ–Marxist*, book 2 (60), (M.: Institute of History, Academy of Sciences, 1937) pp. 40–5.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 68–77. To play it safe, Bakhrushin begins his article by citing the Decree of 16 May 1934 of the Soviet Council of People's Commissars and of the Central Committee, 'On the Teaching of History in the Schools of the USSR', which laid the responsibility upon Soviet historians 'to overcome the erroneous anti-scholarly concepts of the so-called "historiographic school of M. N. Pokrovsky" which have been assimilated by a certain part of our historians' (p. 40).
5. Z. Tazhurazina, 'Lad'ia na gorodskom gerbe', *NiR*, no. 9 (1982) p. 23, citing Likhachev's article in *Srednevekovaiia Rus'* (M., 1976). She also attacks Soloukhin for stressing the destruction of churches under the Soviet regime, and yet ignoring the decrees on their protection.
6. Characteristically, the general editor of this third edition of Nikol'sky's book (the first two were in 1930 and 1931) is N. S. Gordienko, 'Dr. of philosophy and professor'. See *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi* (M.: Izd. polit. literatury, 1983).
7. 'Pered litsom drevnego iskusstva' (a collection of anti-Soloukhin letters from *NiR*'s readers), *NiR*, no. 3 (1970) pp. 51–5; 'Vozvrashchenie pamiatnika' (an interview with Academician Yanin, one of the leaders of the All-Russian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments), *NiR*, no. 3 (1983) pp. 22–5. He contradicts his own condemnation of Soloukhin's and other private persons' pursuit and collection of icons when he admits that many of the nation's major state collections of art had originally been collected by private lovers of art.
8. *O prichinakh i usloviakh sushchestvovaniia religioznykh perezhitkov v SSSR* (Vologda, 1971) pp. 82–3. Eugene Trubetskoi, *Icons: Theology in Color* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973).
9. The series is: Z. Tazhurazina, K. Nikonov (Doctors of Philosophy), 'Proiskhozhdenie i sotsial'naia sushchnost' starchestva', *NiR*, nos. 4, 5 and 6 (1981). See, for instance, no. 4, p. 41: the Soviet authors are V. Soloukhin, 'Vremia sobirat' kamni' (Time to Gather the Stones – a citation from the Old Testament), *Moskva*, no. 2 (1980); and N. Pavlovich, 'Optina Pustyn'. Pochemu tuda ezdili velikie?', *Prometei*, vol. 12 (M., 1980). The remaining eight titles of the bibliography are by pre-revolutionary authors: priests or ecclesiastical publicists.
10. *NiR*, no. 5 (1981) p. 24.
11. *Ibid.*, no. 6 (1981) p. 34.
12. *Ibid.*, no. 4, pp. 39–40; no. 5, pp. 24–7; no. 6, pp. 34–7. For a reverse interpretation of *starchestvo*, see Robert L. Nichols, 'The Orthodox Elders (*Startsy*) of Imperial Russia', in *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook*, vol. 1 (University of Minnesota, 1985) pp. 1–30. He quotes Dostoevsky: 'If the Russian people have still preserved the true image of the living Christ, it is only among the *startsy* that they have done so . . . the salvation of Russia

- will depend on the prayers of these humble men' (p. 2). See also, A. Shamaro, 'Kniga o russkom ikonopistse', *NiR*, nos 5 and 6 (1983) pp. 25–8 and 42–5. In it a certain art historian Valeri Sergeev is taken to task for his book on the great Russian mediaeval iconographer Andrei Rublev, in which the Church, Monasticism and the Religious piety of the nation are unduly idealized, according to Shamaro. What in particular irritates the Soviet author is that even professional pre-revolutionary church historians, both clergy and laity, depicted the historical Russian Church and national piety much more critically than such contemporary Soviet authors as Sergeev, Likhachev, S. Romanovsky (author of another book on Rublev) and others.
13. M. Danilova and Tazhurazina, 'Kul'tura i mirovozzrenie: problemy i diskussii', *NiR*, no. 10 (1982) p. 19. Citation from Hieromonk Tikhon's article in *ZhMP*, no. 10 (1981) p. 21.
  14. *Ibid*, Danilova and Tazhurazina, 'Kul'tura', p. 21; also: G. A. Gabinsky, 'Ratsionalizm kak faktor razvitiia ateisticheskogo soznaniia', *VopNAi*, no. 30 (1982) pp. 30–45.
  15. 'Kul'tura i mirovozzreniie', pp. 19–22; Yurii Loshchits, 'Vzyskuiushchaia pravdu. K 1000-letiiu russkoi literatury', *Nash sovremennik*, no. 1 (January 1982) pp. 163–9.
  16. 'Kul'tura i mirovozzrenie', p. 22.
  17. This is a slightly camouflaged recognition of the growth of nationalism, particularly of cultural nationalism (replacing the nationally rootless Marxist materialism). See D. M. Ugrinovich, 'Kul'tura i religii (Nekotorye teoreticheskie problemy)', *VopNAi*, no. 30, p. 8.
  18. *Ibid*, p. 8.
  19. *Ibid*, pp. 9–17.
  20. *Ibid*, p. 15.
  21. *Ibid*, pp. 21–8. The cited Bychkov's book is *Estetika pozdnei antichnosti II–III veka* (M., 1981).
  22. 'Mesto i rol' muzykal'nogo iskusstva i religii v kul'turno-istoricheskom protsesse', *VopNAi*, no. 30, pp. 61–78; also: Davilova . . ., 'Kul'tura', p. 22.
  23. 'Mesto i rol' . . .', pp. 75–7. Against Soloukhin and Gumilev, Antonova cites Leonid Brezhnev who points out 'the necessity of being on the offensive in the ideational struggle for Marxism-Leninism'. In the context of her attack on Soloukhin, his greatest sin and sign of ideological capitulation appears to be the fact that the *Journal of Moscow Patriarchate* approvingly refers to Soloukhin's 'Vremia sobirat' kamni' (see Protoierei Rostislav Lozinsky, 'K 600-letiiu pobedy na Kulikovom pole', *ZhMP*, no. 8 (August 1980) pp. 68–74).
  24. Section 2: 'Russkaia kul'tura i razvitie svobodomyслиia i ateizma', pp. 120–285. Particularly: A. I. Volodin, 'A. I. Gertsen: o svoeobrazii ego otnosheniia k religii', pp. 153–72; N. V. Karpov, 'Ateisticheskaia i antiklerikal'naia temy v tvorchestve Gleba Uspenskogo', pp. 200–15; A. I. Klibanov, 'K kharakteristike ideinykh iskanii A. Bloka', pp. 216–44.
  25. A. A. Shamaro, 'Pamiatniki tserkovnogo zodchestva v ateisticheskom vospitanii', pp. 262–85.
  26. Dr of philosophy M. Novikov and Tazhurizina, 'Ateizm i razvitie dukhovnoi kul'tury', *NiR*, no. 4 (1983) p. 29. Among other things the



authors complain that a number of modern Soviet literary authors describe atheists 'as people of spiritual poverty, primitive, vulgar. This cannot but throw a shadow upon scientific atheism as a cultural-ideological phenomenon' (p. 28).

## CHAPTER 5: CHURCH AND POLITICS

1. For example: 'Otchet VIII-go (likvidatsionnogo) otdela Narodnogo komissariata Iustitsii VIII-mu Vserossiiskomu s'ezdu Sovetov', *Revolutsia i tserkov'*, nos 9–12 (Sept.–Dec. 1920) esp. pp. 88–91. Note that the Department of the Commissariat of Justice responsible for Church affairs is called 'liquidationist', denoting not only the direct transitional function of confiscating all property from the Church, but also the confidence of the early Bolsheviks that with the completion of that operation religions themselves will cease to exist, will be liquidated.
2. 'Politika i religiia', *Izvestia*, no. 129 (8 June 1929).
3. F. Putintsev, 'Sektanty i kolkhoznoe stroitel'stvo', *Pod znamenem marxizma*, no. 1 (1934) pp. 147–76; F. Oleshchuk, 'Na antireligioznom fronte', *ibid*, no. 5 (1930) pp. 56–61.
4. K. Berkovsky, 'Sovremennoe sostoianie pravoslavnogo tserkovnogo fronta', *Voinstvuiushchee bezbozhie v SSSR za 15 let. Sbornik*, M. Enisherlov, A. Lukachevsky, M. Mitin, eds (M.: Gos. antirel. izd., 1932) pp. 127–33 *et passim*.
5. I. A. Malakhova, 'Religioznoe sektantstvo v tambovskoi oblasti v posleoktiabr'skii period i v nashi dni', *VopIstReliAt.*, no. 9 (1961) pp. 86–91.
6. Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church*, vol. 1, 'Introduction' and ch. 1; Pospelovsky, 'Nekotorye voprosy otnoshenii Tserkvi, gosudarstva i obshchestva v dorevolutsionnoi Rossii', *Grani*, no. 128 (1983) pp. 157–214; James W. Cunningham, *A Vanquished Hope. The Movement for Church Renewal in Russia, 1905–1906* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981) *passim*.
7. Among others; N. P. Krasnikov, 'sotsial'no-politicheskaia pozitsiia pravoslavnoi tserkvi v 1905–1916 godakh' and 'Sotsial'no-politicheskaia pozitsiia russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi v 1905–1917 gg.', respectively, in: *Voprosy istorii*, no. 9 (Sept. 1982) pp. 30–41, and *VopNAt*, no. 32 (1985) pp. 185–204. The purpose in the massive exaggeration of the power of the pre-revolutionary Church is to impress upon the Soviet reader how little that Church cared for the underdog, to show that the Church is a class enemy of the proletariat.
8. This thesis contradicts the mass religious revival during the war in the territories occupied by the enemy. Surely, the masses of believers taking advantage of the enemy and petitioning the latter for permission to reopen churches, religious educational institutions, religious instruction in schools, could not have been happy with the Soviet socialist system which had only recently closed these churches by force and physically annihilated a majority of the clergy. See: Pospelovsky, *Russian Church*, vol. 1, ch. 7; and W. Alexeev and T. Stavrou, *The Great Revival* (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1976) *passim*.

9. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia sovremennogo russkogo pravoslaviia* (M.: Mysl', 1971) pp. 138–9 and 202–15. Contrast and compare this and the following sources, all allegedly scholarly (in small circulation publications): N. S. Gordienko and Kurochkin, 'Osnovnye osobennosti evolutsii religii i tserkvi v usloviiaakh sotsialisticheskogo obshchestva', *VopNat*, no. 25 (1980) pp. 223–43; V. A. Cherniak, *Nauchnyi progress i religia* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1976) pp. 97–105; V. E. Ladorenko, 'K voprosu ob izmenenii politicheskoi orientatsii Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi (1917–1945)', *VIRiAt*, 12 (1964) pp. 106–23.
10. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia*, p. 140.
11. L. N. Mitrokhin, 'Reaktsionnaia deiatel'nost' "Istinno-pravoslavnoi tserkvi" na tambovshchine', *VopIstReliAt*, 9 (1961) pp. 144–60.
12. On Bui and Petrovykh, see: Lev Regel'son, *Tragediia Russkoi Tserkvi, 1917–1945* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1977) pp. 587–90 and 595; and Metropolitan Manuil (Lemesevskij), *Die russischen orthodoxen Bischofe von 1893 bis 1965*, vol. 1 (Erlangen: Oikonomia, 1979) p. 105.
13. 'Reaktsionnaia deiatel'nost'', pp. 154–5.
14. J. Armstrong, *Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964) p. 247.
15. 'K kharakteristike techeniia tak nazyvaemykh Istinno-pravoslavnykh khristian', *VIRiAt*, 9 (1961) pp. 161–88.
16. Kurochkin, 'Problemy nauchnogo ateizma v svete reshenii XXVI s'ezda KPSS', *VopNat*, no. 28 (1981) p. 6.
17. Unsigned editorial: 'Aktual'nye voprosy ateisticheskogo vospitaniia v svete reshenii iun'skogo Plenuma TsK KPSS', *VopNat*, no. 32 (1985) pp. 9–11.
18. P. A. Petliakov, *Uniatskaia tserkov'—orudie antikommunizma i antisovetizma* (L'vov: Vyshcha shkola, 1982) *passim*: I. I. Migovich, 'Uniatsko-natsionalisticheskii al'ians na sluzhbe imperializma', and I. V. Poluk, 'O praktike raboty po protivodeistviu katolicheskoi i uniatskoi propagande', *VopNat*, no. 28, respectively pp. 89–104 and 202–8; A. Babiuchuk, 'Molodezhi – ideinuiu zakalku', *NiR*, no. 1 (1985) pp. 10–13.
19. For example: D. Karpov, 'Pod flagom RSKhD', *NiR*, nos 8 and 9 (1980) respectively pp. 62–3 and 60–1; M. Gol'denberg, 'Protiv fal'sifikatsii polozheniia religii v SSSR', *NiR*, no. 10 (1984) pp. 26–30; Vistunov, *Priglasenie v zapadniu* (L.: Lenizdat, 1984) *passim*; A. Belov, *Sviatyie bez nimbov* (M.: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1983) *passim*; Konik, *Tainy religioznykh missii* (M.: Molodaia gvardiia, 1980) *passim*; Belov, 'Klerikal'nyi antikommunizm', *NiR*, no. 6 (1982) pp. 18–21. These above were all mass publications, but the tone and message in the following 'academic' publications remains the same: Gordienko, P. Komarov and Kurochkin, *Politikany ot religii. Pravda o 'Russkoi zarubezhnoi tserkvi'* (M.: Mysl', 1975) *passim*; M. A. Babi, 'Nesostoiatel'nost' sovetskoi konceptsii ateisticheskogo gosudarstva', and M. A. Gol'denberg, 'Printsip svobody sovesti i ego klerikal'nye interpretatory', *VopNat*, no. 27 (1981) respectively pp. 212–31 and 232–50.
20. V. Iu. Niunka, 'Evolutsiia sotsial'no-politicheskikh pozitsii Vatikana', I. R. Grigulevich, 'Katolotsizm i sotsial'nye problemy Latinskoj Ameriki', I. B. Yastrebov, 'Kritika katolicheskoi interpretatsii prav cheloveka i svobody sovesti', *VopNat*, no. 28, particularly pp. 31–2 and 63.

21. *VopNat*, *Ibid*, pp. 25–44. The quotation from *Osservatore romano*, 1979 (Niunka, p. 36) would soon prove prophetic with the birth of the ‘Solidarity’ movement in Poland with its uniquely effective Christian alternative to totalitarianism.
22. I. Ya. Kanterov, ‘Poslesobornyi katolitsizm i ateizm’, *VopNat*, no. 28, p. 72.
23. In *VopNat*, no. 32, pp. 185–204, partic. p. 188; on Rom. Cath. ‘renovationism’, see, I. I. Machiulis, ‘Obnovlencheskie tendentsii v katolicheskoi tserkvi (na materialakh deiatel’nosti katolicheskoi tserkvi v Litovskoi SSR)’, *VopNat*, no. 28, pp. 105–23.
24. Pospelovskiy, *Russian Church*, vol. 1, pp. 43–70; A. E. Levitin-Krasnov and Vadim Shavrov, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi tserkovnoi smuty*, 3 vols in one book (Kuesnacht, Switzerland: Glaube in der 2 Welt, 1978) *passim*; Levitin-Krasnov, (i) *Likhie gody* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1977) *passim*, (ii) *Ruk Tvoikh zhar* (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1979) *passim*.

## CHAPTER 6: ATHEISM: ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND SELF-CRITICISM

1. ‘Sud’ba very v Boga v bor’be s ateizmom’. A lecture delivered at the Petrograd Philosophical Society, 19 March 1922. *Mysl’*, no. 1 (a journal of the Petrograd Philosophical Society, January–February 1922) pp. 3–20.
2. Gr. Bammel, ‘Ob idealisticheskoi filosofii posle Oktiabria’, *PZM*, no. 5 (1930) pp. 36–59. The reader’s only clue that the ‘idealistic’ philosophers have been expelled abroad is that only two references to their works point to a publication within Soviet Russia (both are to *Mysl’*: another of Vvedensky’s articles in no. 2 and an S. Askol’dov article in no. 3 – both for 1922); all other post-1921 publications have the dateline for Paris, Prague or Berlin. The new type of ‘forums’ for believers and non-believers are lectures by professional Soviet atheistic lecturers to which believers (only laity, no pastors or theologians!) are invited to come as listeners and are allowed to ask questions only. For example, ‘Priglashaiutsia veruiushchie i neveruiushchie’, *NiR*, no. 10 (1980) p. 9.
3. Ya. Shur, ‘Osnovnye nedostatki antireligioznoi periodicheskoi pechati’, *Antireligioznik*, no. 6 (June 1929) pp. 63–5.
4. Komissarov, ‘Paskha . . . – sovetskaia’, *Koms. pravda*, no. 210 (Sept. 1929) p. 2. Komissarov’s admission only confirms Vvedensky’s above words, of course.
5. A. Pokrovsky, ‘Antireligioznoe vospitanie v leningradskikh shkolakh’, *Antireligioznik*, no. 2 (Feb. 1930) p. 73.
6. D. Mikhnevich, ‘Iskusstvo i antireligioznaia propaganda v SSSR za 15 let’, in *Voinstvuiushchee bezbozhie za 15 let*, A. Lukachevsky, ed. (M.: Bezbozhnik, 1932) pp. 485–505.
7. A. Kosul’nikov and V. Snastin, ‘Lektsionnaia rabota – vazhnaia forma ideologicheskoi raboty’, *Kommunist*, no. 3 (Feb. 1954) p. 76. On the established high honoraria for *Znanie* lecturers this author interviewed a former *Znanie* lecturer, Dmitry L. (San Francisco, June 1984).
8. V. F. Zybkovets, ‘Problema proiskhozhdeniia religii v sovetskoi nauke’,

- VIRiAt, no. 6 (1958) pp. 328–33; *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, 3rd edn (M.: Polit. Literatura, 1983) p. 8.
9. L. Dunaevsky, 'Nauchno-issledovatel'skaia rabota v oblasti voinstvuiushchego ateizma za 15 let', *Voinstvuiushchee bezbozhie*, pp. 434 and 445.
  10. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, 'Obshchestvu voinstvuiushchikh materialistov' and the Society of Militant Atheists Presidium's reply, *PZM*, no. 2/3 (1927) pp. 256–60; responses—attacks on Skvortsov-Stepanov, Timiriazev and other 'mechanicists', *PZM*, no. 4 (1927) pp. 252–60; 'Novyi etap' (Conclusions of the Second All-Union Conference of the Marxist-Leninist scientific research institutions), and 'Rezolutsiia II Vsesoiuznoi konferentsii Marksistsko-Leniniskikh nauchno-issledovatel'skikh uchrezhdenii', *PZM*, no. 5 (1929) pp. 1–11.
  11. 'O zhurnale "Pod Znamenem Marxizma"' (CPSU CC Resolution of 25 January 1931) *PZM*, no. 10–12 (1930: note the delay in publication) pp. 1–2.
  12. *Lenin i problemy ateizma* (M.-L.: Akademiia nauk, 1961) pp. 43–4 and 68–9.
  13. S. I. Nikishov, *Leninskaia kritika filosofskikh osnov religii* (M.: M. University Press, 1968) pp. 46 and 347.
  14. L. Dunaevsky, 'Nauchno-issledovatel'skaia', pp. 432–4, 445, 449.
  15. A. T. Lukachevsky (ed.), *Antireligiozni uchebnik* (M.: OGIz, 1933) p. 158. See also: Lukachevsky (ed.), *Uchebnik dlia rabochikh antireligioznykh kruzhkov* (M.: 'Bezbozhnik', 1930, 5th rev. edn) *passim*; M. M. Sheinman (ed.), *Antireligiozni krest'ianskii uchebnik* (M.-L.: Moskovskii rabochii, 1931, 6th rev. edn) *passim*.
  16. Two factors contributed to the slower rate of growth of Orthodox parishes than that of other religions: (i) the fact that the Orthodox Church was singularly persecuted while the other faiths enjoyed very relaxed attitudes of the Soviet regime towards them in the 1920s (see, V. Zybkovets, 'Put' sovetskogo ateizma', *NiR*, no. 9, 1967, p. 12); (ii) the removal of the pre-revolutionary restrictions on the establishment of non-Orthodox religious communities led to a compensatory effect: parishes were being established in proportion to the number of the faithful of these religions. Therefore, in these conditions it was most significant that the number of Orthodox parishes continued to grow in numbers in comparison even with the pre-revolutionary Russia when their construction and establishment had been supported by the state. This fact constitutes indisputable proof of the rise of factual Orthodox believers in comparison with the situation before the revolution.
  17. 'Put' sovetskogo ateizma', pp. 12–17; for the return of the radical intelligentsia and also workers and peasants to the Church in those years, see Vvedensky, 'Sud'ba very', citing S. Kanatchikov's article in the Bolshevik *Petrogradskaia pravda* of 24 February 1922.
  18. N. M. Zakovich and V. A. Zots, 'Prazdniki i obriady kak element sotsialisticheskoi kul'tury', *VopNat*, no. 26 (1980) pp. 165–77; V. E. Ostrozhinsky, 'Povyshenie effektivnosti sotsialisticheskoi obriadnosti v ateisticheskom vospitanii', *VopNat*, no. 29 (1982) pp. 152–61; P. P. Kampars and N. M. Zakovich, *Sovetskaia grazhdanskaia obriadnost'* (M.: Mysl', 1967) *passim*; A. Budov and E. Rakhovskaia, 'Novye obriady – v byt',

- NiR*, no. 7 (1964) pp. 85–7.
19. For example, see the above note. Compare Ostrozhinsky's over-optimistic report with Kampars and Zakovich, pp. 24–35: their admission of the failure of Soviet rites and rituals goes to 'the early sixties', that is to the end of the Khrushchev era. The successes, of course, belong to the Brezhnev years when the book was published.
  20. Lukachevsky, *Marxizm-Leninizm kak voinstvuiushchii ateizm* (M.: Gos. antireligioznoe izd-vo, 1933) pp. 10–11; Lunacharsky, *Ocherki po filosofii marxizma* (St Pbg, 1908) pp. 110–17 and 127.
  21. M. P. Gapochka, 'Uroki bogostroitel'stva', *VopNat*, no. 25 (1980) pp. 186–204, particularly 192.
  22. A. N. Kolodnyi, *Ateisticheskaia ubezhdenost' lichnosti* (Kiev: Vyshcha shkola, 1983) pp. 33–7, 63–5, 81, etc.; also: V. S. Solov'ev, 'O vliianii ateizma na dukhovnoe razvitiie lichnosti', *VopNat* no. 14 (1973) pp. 186–95; M. M. Persits, 'Moral'nyi kodeks stroitelei kommunizma i problemy ateizma', *VIRiAt*, 11 (1963) pp. 43–63; and N. A. Kostenko, A. P. Pleshakov, and V. E. Titov's articles, *VopNat*, no. 29, pp. 96–151.
  23. Kolodnyi, p. 84 *et passim*.
  24. O. A. Belov and B. I. Zelenkov, 'Nekotorye voprosy ateisticheskogo vospitaniia molodiozhi', *VopNat* no. 29, pp. 162–72. Kurochkin cites other studies indicating that 'over 50 per cent of young people under thirty years of age are indifferent to atheism': 'Ateizm i ateisticheskoe vospitanie v obshchestve gosподstvuiushchego nauchno-materialisticheskogo mirovozzreniia', *VopNat*, no. 23 (1978) p. 53. A Soviet philosopher, N Tarasenko, complains in *Pravda* (15 May 1983) of lack of good convincing books on atheism in contrast to the growth of books idealising the Middle Ages and Russian saints (the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 35, no. 20, pp. 7–8).
  25. David Aikman in his excellent doctoral dissertation *The Role of Atheism in the Marxist Tradition* (Ms., Univ. of Washington, 1979), argues with conclusive evidence that the spirit of Promethean and demonic destructiveness and hate is among the fundamental motive powers of Marx's whole *Weltanschauung* and of his communistic-revolutionary vision and ambitions. In particular see pp. 36–42, 68–192 *et passim*.
  26. Kolodnyi, p. 108.

## CHAPTER 7: PHILOSOPHICAL SEARCHES FOR THE MEANING OF LIFE

1. Prof. V. A. Fok, 'Kvantovaia fizika i filosofskie problemy' (Quantum Physics and Philosophic Problems), *Vop. fil.*, no. 3, 1971, pp. 46–8.
2. Professor L. L. Vasil'ev, *Vnushenie na rasstotanii* (Moscow, 1962), as cited in Rev. Sergei Zheludkov, *Pochemu i ia khristianin?* (*samizdat*, Frankfurt: Possev, 1973) pp. 110–11; also, Stanley Krippner and Richard Davidson, 'Parapsychology in the USSR', *Saturday Review*, no. 18 (March 1972) pp. 56–60.
3. This was a posthumously published article by B. I. Shenkman (1903–62),

- former lecturer at the Plekhanov Institute of National Economy in Moscow. It appeared in *Vop. fil.* in December 1966, under the title 'Dukhovnoe proizvodstvo i ego osobennost' (Spiritual Production and Its Peculiarity).
4. *Vop. fil.*, no. 5 (1967) pp. 16–18. Kedrov was one of Lysenko's staunchest supporters at the height of his career, but in the 1960s Kedrov changed his position and attacked Lysenko (*Novy mir*, no. 1, 1965) for his destruction of the sciences.
  5. In order to protect himself from accusations of 'idealistic heresies', Kedrov quotes the reports of the 23rd Party Congress (*Materialy XXIII s'ezda KPSS*, p. 123): 'Scientific research should define a timely and clear perspective for production, and progressive decisions.' Another Soviet philosopher, D. V. Gur'ev, tried to solve the problem of what came first in a more empirical way. According to him, primitive labour preceded consciousness; that was not the conscious labour of men, but of the Australopithecines who were not really human. Human labour, on the other hand, is a rational process, hence it is subject to thought and consciousness. At the same time, consciousness is an indispensable component of human activity. The whole question of precedence is misplaced: 'Labour and consciousness, at the necessary moment, are companions' ('Predshestovoval li trud soznaniuu?', *Vop. fil.*, no. 2, 1967, pp. 58–65).
  6. 8 June 1967. Rumiantsev is a high-ranking party ideologue and a vice-president of the Academy of Sciences, who often speaks with the voice of the party, although his defence of greater freedom for the intellectuals cost him the editorship of *Pravda* in 1965. See his article, 'Partiia i intelligentsiia', *Pravda*, 21 February 1965.
  7. No 4, 1969.
  8. But what is meta-science, meta-mathematics, meta-logic, if not more limited and specified versions of the original metaphysics! See these terms, for instance, in P. V. Kopnin's 'O prirode i osobennostiakh filosofskogo znaniia' ('On Nature and Specifics of the Philosophic Cognition') *Vop. fil.*, no. 4 (1969) p. 123. A leading Soviet biologist, V. Z. Engelgardt, repeats a purely 'meta-physical' formula of Plato that a sum is more than its components for it also contains the unknown element 'and' (two *and* two), and says that the sciences and philosophy face now the objective of searching for that 'and'. ('Put' ot prostogo k slozhnomu v poznanii iavlenii zhizni', *Vop. fil.*, no. 11, 1970, pp. 104–5).  
A Soviet physicist, V. F. Turchin ('Sumasshedshii teorii i meta-nauka', *Vop. fil.*, no. 5, 1968, p. 122) refers to an aphorism of the Danish physicist, Nils Bohr, that a new theory must sound mad to turn out true, and he elaborates that 'mad' should be understood as 'coming from nowhere'. This brings us back to the basic thesis of the Bible, that God created the world from nothing.
- Turchin was later expelled from the USSR for chairing the unofficial Moscow branch of Amnesty International.
9. Doctor of economics, G. M. Dobrov, 'Kriterii vybora' ('Criterion of Choice') *Priroda*, no. 1 (January 1969) p. 10. See also the brochure, A. S. Karmin and E. P. Khaikin, *Tvorcheskaia intuitsiia v nauke* ('Creative Intuition in Science') (Moscow: Zanie, 1971).

10. Kopnin, 'O ratsional'nom i irratsional'nom' ('On the Rational and the Irrational') *Vop. fil.*, no. 5 (1968) pp. 114–20.
  11. Dmitrii Blokhintsev, 'O fizicheskikh osnovakh kvantovoi mekhaniki' ('On the Physical Foundations of Quantum Mechanics') *Vop. fil.*, no. 3 (1969) p. 134.
  12. Maria Petrosian, at the Belgrade symposium devoted to the 100th anniversary of the publication of the first volume of *Das Kapital*, in *Politika* (Belgrade) 24 May 1967.
  13. *Vop. Fil.*, no. 9 (1967) pp. 118–21.
  14. *Vop. fil.*, no. 9, pp. 137–46.
  15. *Ibid.*, pp. 148–9. His article on Dostoevsky in connection with the 159th anniversary of his birth (*Novy mir*, no. 11, 1971) follows the same pattern of thought.
  16. 'Karnaval'noe' i ser'ioznoe' ('That Pertaining to the Carnival and that of the Serious') *Narody Azii i Afriki* (Moscow) no. 2 (February 1968) pp. 107–16; 'Po povodu dialoga' ('Concerning A Dialogue'), and 'Chelovek niotkuda' ('A Man From Nowhere'), both in his *samizdat* collection *Neopublikovannoe* (Frankfurt: M., 1972) pp. 236–44 and 138–42, respectively.
  17. 'Karnaval'noe . . .', p. 109, and 'Po povodu . . .', p. 238.
  18. 'Po povodu . . .', p. 238.
  19. *Novy mir*, no. 10 (1969) p. 225 and elsewhere. See also an interesting article by the geneticist V. Efroimson, 'Rodoslovnaia al'truizma' ('The Family Tree of Altruism') *Novy mir*, no. 10 (1971) pp. 193–213, where the author sees solidarity and harmony, not mutual struggle and antagonism, as the main constructive factors of the evolution of life, survival and progress. Efroimson was strongly supported by Academician B. Astaurov, President of the All-Union Society of Geneticists, in a follow-up article, 'Homo Sapiens et Humanus', *Novy mir*, no. 10 (1971) pp. 215–24; but attacked by the dogmatists: *Novy mir*, no. 5 (1972).
  20. 'Nauka liudei' ('A Science of Men') *Novy mir*, no. 11 (1969) pp. 200–3, etc.
  21. See *Vop. fil.*, no. 3 (March 1970) pp. 139–42. It is interesting that the directive was published in the philosophical journal with a four-month delay. Apparently there was considerable opposition to it in the ranks of the official Soviet philosophers.
  22. F. V. Konstantinov's report to the Congress, *Vop. fil.*, no. 1 (1972) pp. 25–39.
  23. Full text of the statute published in *Vop. fil.*, no. 2 (1972) pp. 142–5. See also, Pospelovsky, 'The Philosophic Society of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics', *R. L. Research*, 64/72 (15 March 1972).
  24. On earlier statements of Soviet scholars in defence of convergence, see: Pospelovsky, 'Teorii konvergentsii i ikh protivniki' ('Convergence Theories and Their Opponents') *R. L. Research*, 359/69 (30 October 1969); and, by the same author, 'Official Soviet Views on Peaceful Coexistence and Ideological Confrontation', *R. L. Research*, 27 March 1972.
- For attacks on the revisionist 'renegades' in *Vop. fil.*, see the series of articles by the Soviet orthodox philosopher, Kh. N. Momdjan, beginning with his 'Filosofia renegatstva', *Vop. fil.*, no. 11 (1972) pp. 209–33.
25. For example: Acad. V. L. Ginzburg, 'Novye fizicheskie zakony i astron-

- miiia', no. 11 (Nov. 1972) pp. 11–19; Acad. N. P. Dubinin, 'Filosofiiia dialekticheskogo materializma i problemy genetiki', no. 4 (1973) pp. 94–107; I. T. Frolov, 'O dialektike i etike biologicheskogo poznaniia', no. 7 (1978) pp. 31–45; Yu. B. Molchanov, 'Issledovaniia v oblasti aktual'nykh filosofskikh problem fiziki', no. 8 (1985) pp. 19–32 – these are all re-statements of official positions by the establishment scholars, hence their prominence. A more problematic article by V. V. Kaziutinsky, 'Sotsial'naia determinatsiia nauchnogo poznaniia', in contrast, finds itself on pp. 74–82 of *Vop. fil.*, no. 10 (1985).
26. For example: E. L. Feinberg, 'Iskusstvo i poznanie', no. 7 (1976) pp. 93–108; E. G. Krasnostanov, 'Razvitie dialektiki v iskusstve i filosofii prekrasnogo', no. 10 (1985).
  27. N. F. Utkina, 'Problemy nauki i mirovozzrenia v tvorchestve L. N. Tolstogo', no. 9 (1978) pp. 125–34, partic. 131. Much more stereotypic, impersonal, is O. C. Soina's 'Tolstoy o smysle zhizni: eticheskie iskaniiia i sovremennost' ', no. 11 (1985) pp. 124–32.
  28. Rubtsov, 'O "mnogoznachnosti" iskusstva i "odnoznachnosti" nauki', no. 7 (1985) pp. 107–15. Among other articles related in terms of themes and problems to Rubtsov's, could be mentioned the relatively individualistic L. N. Stolovich's 'O protivorechiiakh esteticheskogo i religioznogo soznaniia', no. 6 (1974) pp. 106–11; and the much more stereotypic, roundtable discussion, 'Vzaimodeistvie nauki i iskusstva v usloviakh sovremennoi nauchno-tekhniceskoi revoliutsii', no. 8 (1977) pp. 111–29; and Ya. Ya. Veish's 'Lingvistiko-analiticheskaiia religioznaia apologetika kak slozhivsheesia napravlenie v sovremennoi filosofii religii', no. 3 (1985) pp. 139–47.
  29. Her 'Fenomen Paskalia', no. 2 (1979) pp. 135–45; and 'Dekart i Paskal', no. 3 (1985) pp. 100–12. More stereotypic is N. S. Mudragei's article on Kierkegaard: 'Problema cheloveka v irratsional'nom uchenii Serena K'erkegora', no. 10 (1979) pp. 76–86.
  30. Z. A. Kamensky (ed.), 'Urok Chaadaeva', no. 1 (1986) pp. 121–39.
  31. *Ibid*, editorial article, pp. 111–21.
  32. Averintsev, *Religiia i literatura* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ermitazh, 1981) pp. 41–3, 57–9, 49–50, 56, 96, 131. These are photostatic reprints of his articles from *Voprosy literatury*, 1968–73.
  33. The Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR, Institute of Philosophy and Law, *Dialektika i etika* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1983) pp. 113–14; the quote within the citation is from Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Sochineniia*, v. 46, p. 476, as quoted in the above book.
  34. *Let History Judge* (New York, 1972), particularly pp. xxxii–xxxiii of his preface.
  35. This explicit and implicit debate with Tolstoy is particularly visible in his *August 1914*. But Solzhenitsyn's personalist philosophy is visible in all his works.
  36. Revol't Pimenov, a young Leningrad University mathematics teacher, during his trial in 1957 for organizing an underground anti-communist group, admits to having studied Nietzsche (R. Pimenov, 'Istoriia odnogo protsessora', *Vol'noe slovo*, no. 8, 1973, pp. 29, 53, 76 and 89).

Numerous references to Nietzsche are found in G. Pomerants's



- Neopublikovannoe*, and in Victor Vel'sky's apocalyptic philosophic essay 'Otkrovenia Viktora Vel'skogo' ('Victor Vel'sky's Revelations') *Grani*, no. 75 (1970) pp. 3–114. Nietzsche's influence is obvious in the unpublished manuscript *Inok* ['Monk'] by a young mystic, Evgenii Shiffers (see Chapter 9), and in A. Moskovit, *Prakticheskaia metafizika* ('Practical Metaphysics'), two chapters from which have been published in *Grani*, no. 87–88, pp. 316–70. Since his emigration the real name of Moskovit has become known: Igor Efimov.
37. See the famous collection, *Vekhi* ('Signposts'), published in Moscow in 1909. The tremendous influence of Nietzsche on his generation of Russian intelligentsia is also mentioned in Boris Pasternak's autobiographical sketches: 'Liudi i polozheniia' ('People and Positions') *Novy mir*, no. 1 (1967).
  38. Recurrent names of Russian philosophers in *samizdat* are: Alexei Khomiakov and Ivan Kireevsky, the slavophiles of mid-nineteenth century; Vladimir Solov'ev, who died in 1900; Fedorov, the cosmological mystic who taught in his *Common Cause* that God wills it that people achieve life eternal through their own creative effort, a combination of love and science and the conquest of the outer space; Rev. Paul Florensky, a professor of electronics at Moscow University and of theology at the Seminary who eventually died in a Soviet concentration camp; V. Rozanov, a controversial religious and political thinker who died in 1919; and Nicholas Berdiaev, Semion Frank, and Lev Shestov, who all died in emigration.
  39. An excellent example of the former is the theomachistic mystical philosophic confession, 'Revelations of Victor Vel'sky'; of the latter: the work of Moskovit.
  40. O. Altaev, 'Dvoinoe soznanie intelligentsii i psevdokultura' ('A Dual Consciousness of the Intelligentsia and Pseudo-Culture') *Vestnik RSKhD*, no. 97 (1970) pp. 8–32. See also, Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, *Vtoraiia kniga* (the English version is *Hope Abandoned*) (Paris, 1972), particularly pp. 86–8.
  41. Vel'sky, 'Otkroveniiia . . .', pp. 105–14.
  42. Vladimir Osipov, 'Ploshchad' Maiakovskovo, stat'ia 70' ('Mayakovsky Square, Article 70') *Grani*, no. 80, pp. 110–11. On the Society of Communards, 1964–5, see *Posev*, no. 1 (January 1968) pp. 11–12, and in various issues of the *Chronicle*.
  43. Evgenii Shiffers, *Inok* (*samizdat*, n.d.) pp. 114–16.
  44. Anonymous, 'Put' chistoty i sviashchennogo molchaniia', *VRKhD*, no. 143 (1984) pp. 13–14.
  45. See particularly his short essay 'Nezavershennost' ('Incompleteness'), *Neopublikovannoe*, pp. 115–22.
  46. Moskovit, 'Prakticheskaia', including the excellent introduction by the Russian émigré philosopher, Roman Redlich, pp. 316–17, 340–6, 351–6 and 365–70. Only six chapters, a total of 47 pages, out of the 400-page manuscript have been reprinted in *Grani*. The fact that Moskovit-Efimov ignores Hegel and Marx while showing a thorough knowledge of Kant and Schopenhauer, is characteristic of today's intellectual moods in the Soviet Union, as well as his references to the Christian-existentialist

- philosopher-theologian Semion Frank. But despite the gaps in formal erudition, his method demonstrates an accomplished philosopher and an original thinker. See also his *Metapolitika* (Strathcona Publishing Co., 1978).
47. Evgeni Barabanov, 'Rannerkhristianskaia estetika', *VRKhD*, nos 116 (1975), 119 (1976), and 120 (1977), pp. respectively, 53–76, 71–87 and 49–59 – in particular no. 116, pp. 62–74 and no. 119, p. 71.
  48. *Ibid.*, no. 119, p. 85. This imagery is brought to life in the experience of most Soviet citizens. The KGB, particularly in Stalin's time, carried out its arrests, questionings, tortures and executions during nights; Stalin worked at night, slept during the day.
  49. *VRKhD*, no. 119, pp. 86–7, and no. 120, pp. 51–9. To this could be added the Light of the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor and its centrality in the mystical teachings of St Gregory of Palamas and the Hesychasts.
  50. *VRKhD*, no. 120, p. 51.
  51. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–9.
  52. 'O sovremennom estetizme', *VRKhD*, no. 134 (1981) pp. 246–57.
  53. Igor' Shafarevich, 'Sotsializm i individualnost' ', *VRKhD*, no. 120, p. 127, and 'Sotsializm', *Iz-pod glyb* (*From under the Rubble*, a symposium ed. by A. Solzhenitsyn and Shafarevich) (Moscow, 1974; Paris: YMCA Press, 1974) pp. 63–5.
  54. This is a summation of Shafarevich's theses as found in the above essays and in greater detail in his *Sotsializm kak iavlenie mirovoi istorii* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1977) 390 pp. See also: Pospelovskiy, 'Vol'nye mysli o sbornike "Iz-pod glyb" ', *Grani*, no. 97 (1975) pp. 174–222; and David Aikman, *The Role of Atheism in the Marxist Tradition*, a Doctoral Dissertation (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington, 1979) pp. 9, 35–87 and 183–4. For his religio-philosophic interpretation of mathematics, see his 'Ohnekotorykh tendentsiakh razvitiia matematiki', *VRKhD*, no. 116, pp. 77–82.
  55. Dr Boris M. Paramonov, ' "Kul't lichnosti" kak taina marxistskoi antropologii', *VRKhD*, no. 123 (1977) pp. 64–9. As quoted in Mikhailov's 'O sovremennom', one of these myths in Peter B. Struve's prophetic words would be 'a cynical creation of "man-god" ' (p. 258).
  56. 'V poiskakh propavshei istorii', *VRKhD*, no. 125 (1978) pp. 122–31.
  57. K. Nekliuev, 'Vladychestvuiushchaia ideia', *VRKhD*, no. 133 (1981) p. 77.
  58. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
  59. Viktor Axiuchits, 'Metafizika zla u Dostoevskogo', *VRKhD*, no. 145 (1985) pp. 105–52, in particular 105, 107, 137–8, 146–7.
  60. 'Vera, bor'ba i soblazn L'va Shestova', *VRKhD*, no. 136 (1982) pp. 68–120. Other important essays on Russia's religio-philosophic heritage in the same periodical: Barabanov, 'Zabytyi spor' (on V. Solov'ev) no. 118 (1976) pp. 117–65; S. I. Fudel', 'Slavianofil'stvo i tserkov' ', no. 125 (1978) pp. 35–97; V. Ya. Vasilevskaia, 'Uchenie K. D. Ushinskogo o vospitanii', nos 129 and 130 (1979) pp. 75–90 and 83–110, resp.
  61. Nekliuev, 'Vladychestvuiushchaia', p. 78.

## CHAPTER 8: SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION IN SOVIET LITERATURE

1. E.g. *Vor (The Thief)*. The transformation falls well into the Marxian definition of crime as being only a justified product of class relations, hence, as its further Soviet criminological elaboration states: regular criminals are an 'element of social proximity' to Communists. It is no accident that Alexander Fadeev's (whom Nicholas Rzhevsky puts into the category of pure socialist-realists and thus defines him as a true Soviet writer, in contrast to Leonov, Kataev and others whom he regards as Russian writers) revolutionary hero Morozka is also a thief. Should it be added that this permissive attitude to crime, i.e. contempt for the inviolability of the human person and its possessions, has influenced the whole 'new Soviet morality'? See Fadeev, *Razgrom (The Rout)*, any edition; Rzhevsky, *Russian Literature and Ideology* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1983) p. 133.
2. Yu. Sazonova, 'Religioznye iskaniiia v otrazhenii sovetskoi literatury', *Puť*, no. 21 (Paris, April 1930) pp. 76–93.
3. *Liudi* (Cambridge University Press, 1967) *passim*. The other aspect of the work is the superfluous man, useless in any social system, unable to contribute positively, and hence the society produced by the revolution conceived by the superfluous dreamers becomes a caricature of the dream. The theme of the transformation of a beast into a beastly human being, and human being into a beast, in the obvious context of Soviet society, has preoccupied other authors of the Soviet era as well. See, for instance, M. Bulgakov's *A Dog's heart*, and Georgi Vladimov's *The Faithful Ruslan*.
4. Viacheslav Shishkov, 'S kotomkoi', *Kr. nov'*, no. 6 (1922) partic. pp. 292–7.
5. 'The Foundation Pit', *Collected Works* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1978) pp. 156–7.
6. Sazonova, 'Religioznye iskaniiia', pp. 77, 81.
7. *San'ka-pobeditel'*, a novel for children (M.: Bezbozhnik, 1930) *passim*.
8. Bednyi, *Udar po vragu* (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1935) pp. 139–40. See also, the socialist-realist A. Serafimovich's contributions to *Bezbozhnik u stanka*; *Antireligioznye rasskazy*, E. D. Vishnevskaiia, ed. (M.: Gosudarstvennoe antireligioznoe izdatel'stvo, 1939); *My – bezbozhniki*, a readings manual for schools, I. A. Flerov, ed. (M., 1932?) *passim*.
9. Bulgakov, *Izbrannoe* (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1982) pp. 14–19.
10. Among others, Abram Tertz (Andrei Siniavsky), 'Chto takoe sotsialisticheski sotsializm', *Fantasticheskie povesti* (N.Y.: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1967) pp. 444–6. Also Pospelovskiy, *Russian Church*, vol. 2, pp. 350–59.
11. 'Derevenski dnevnik, 1959', *Novyi mir*, vol. 40, no. 6 (1964) pp. 18–83, particularly 18, 42–3, 64. It was probably his sympathetic treatment of the Church which caused the five-year delay in publication.
12. *Zhivoe derevo iskusstva*, a collection of Dorosh's essays (M.: Iskusstvo, 1967) *passim*, particularly pp. 120–33, 192–238 and 21–3.
13. *Apostol'skaia komandirovka*, a collection of Tendriakov's novellas (M.: Sovetskaia Rossiia . . . Biblioteka ateista series, 1984) particularly p. 331, and *passim*.

14. 'The Search for an Image of Man in Contemporary Soviet Fiction', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, vol. 11, no. 4 (October 1975) p. 349. I only disagree with his term 'post-totalitarian': a genuine culture of the arts and letters cannot be totalitarian, the socio-political system is totalitarian, and has remained so to the present day. Perhaps a post-Soviet culture, in the sense that it is returning to the national cradle, could be a more accurate term.
15. 'Ob iskrennosti v literature', *Novy mir* (henceforth *N.m.*) no. 12 (December 1953).
16. Baklanov, 'Chtob eto nikogda ne povtorilos', *Litgaz*, 22 November 1962.
17. For direct attacks on *Matriona's Home*, see: V. Poltaratsky, 'Matrionin dvor i ego okrestnosti', *Izvestia*, 30 March 1963; V. Kozhevnikov, 'Tovarishchi po bor'be', *Litgaz*, 2 March 1963; N. Sergovantsev, 'Tragediia odinochestva i "splushnoi byt"', *Oktiabr*, no. 4 (April 1963). Other attacks dealt mostly with *Ivan Denisovich*, but their publication followed the appearance of *Matriona's Home*. For details, see, N. Tarasova, 'Vkhozhdenie A. Solzhenitsyna v sovetskuiu literaturu i diskussii o nem', *Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 6, 2nd edn (Frankfurt/M.: Possev, 1973) pp. 402–38.
18. 'Kameshki na ladoni', *Nash sovremennik*, no. 3 (1981) p. 39. English translation in John Dunlop, *The New Russian Nationalism* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1985) p. 21.
19. Some attacks have been mentioned in earlier chapters of this book. See also, L. Koltunova *et al.*, 'Pered litsom drevnego iskusstva', in which Soloukhin's 'Dark Boards', his notes on icons and their collection, are being attacked, *NiR*, no. 3 (1970) pp. 51–5.
20. *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3 (M.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1984) pp. 257–494. First published in the monthly *Moskva*, beginning with no. 2 (February 1980). This was followed by the even more outspoken 'Kameshki na ladoni', *Nash sovremennik*, no. 3 (March 1981); viciously attacked by the party sociologist M. Rutkevich in a letter published in *Kommunist*, no. 2 (January 1982). This was followed by an editorial letter of *Nash sovremennik* (*Kommunist*, no. 8, May 1982, p. 128) to *Kommunist* apologizing for publishing Soloukhin's work and also apologizing on Soloukhin's behalf (in the third person only!). There were attacks also in *NiR* and *Litgaz* on his defence of the monastic elders, particularly of the Optina Monastery, destroyed in the 1920s with its monks finished off in Soviet camps and prisons. See: Tazhurizina and K. Nikonov, 'Chto takoe starchestvo?', *NiR*, nos 4, 5 and 6 (1981); and Literator's notes (the editor Chakovsky's pseudonym), *Litgaz*, 17 Feb. 1982.
21. 'Chernye doski', *Sob. sochinenii*, 3, p. 131.
22. *Ibid*, pp. 138–9 and 176–87.
23. 'Pis'ma iz Russkogo muzeia', *Sob. soch.*, 3, pp. 55–72.
24. 'Pervoe poruchenie', *Grani*, no. 118 (Oct.–Dec. 1980) pp. 24–49.
25. *Beyond Socialist Realism. Soviet Fiction since Ivan Denisovich* (London: Granada Publishing, 1980) p. 29.
26. *Ibid*, p. 30. In fact, both Nadezhda Mandelshtam in her memoirs (particularly the second book, *Hope Abandoned*) and Solzhenitsyn with Professor Igor' Shafarevich in their jointly edited symposium *From under*

- the Rubble*, acknowledge their profound debt to *Landmarks* and see themselves as disciples and continuers of the Russian religio-philosophic renaissance thought.
27. Revolution, he says, 'as a pagan reaction against the Christian era of history . . . is the most profound aspect of the whole problem'. 'V poiskakh propavshei istorii', *VRKhD*, n. 125 (1978) pp. 124–6 and no. 122. Borisov was one of the contributors to *From under the Rubble*.
  28. Sergei Zalygin, Vasili Shukshin, Valentin Rasputin and Viktor Astafiev are from Siberia; Fedor Abramov and Vasili Belov come from the distant north of European Russia.
  29. Anatoli Lanshchikov's statement, 'Na seminarie literaturnykh kritikov', *Političeski dnevnik* (M.: Samizdat; Herzen Foundation reprint, Amsterdam, 1972) pp. 494–509.
  30. Astafiev, 'Pechal'nyi detektiv', *Oktiabr*, no. 1 (January 1986) pp. 8–74. The relevant works of the other mentioned authors are: Belov, *Kanuny* (M.: Sovremennik, 1976) *passim*; Abramov, 'Dve zimy i tri leta', etc., *Izbrannoe*, 2 vols (L.: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975); Zalygin, 'Solionaiia Pad' *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (M.: Molodaia gvardiia, 1979) pp. 25–474 and 'Komissiiia', *Sobranie . . .*, vol. 4 (1980) pp. 5–438.
  31. *Beyond*, pp. 57–8.
  32. *Kanuny*, as in note 30.
  33. The hint is probably at the then-planned reversal of north-Russian rivers southwards, against which Rasputin, along with many other men of arts and science in the Soviet Union, had been desperately fighting, until finally, after the first stage of the works had already begun, the plan has officially been at least temporarily abandoned 'for further study' of its effects. Critics say it would destroy the ecology and architectural monuments of the north, by flooding, and of the south, by the ambient temperature changes.
  34. 'Proshchanie s Matoroi', *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, vol. 2 (M.: Molodaia gvardiia, 1984) pp. 288–320.
  35. 'Pozhar', *Nash sovremennik* (henceforth: *N. sov.*), no. 7 (July 1985) pp. 3–38.
  36. S. Vikulov, 'Shiroko po Rusi' (in memoriam of the 10th anniversary of Rubtsov's death. 1936–1971), *N. sov.*, no. 12 (1981) p. 157.  
 Among the official pro-Christian poets could be named Akhmadulina, Voznesensky, Evtushenko (but one is never sure when he is sincere), Okudzhava, Kushner, Boris Slutsky (particularly his poems in *N.m.*, no. 7, 1986, pp. 162–5). Viktor Kochetkov, with his poem of praise of the seventeenth-century Old Believer leader, Priest Avvakum (*N. sov.*, no. 8, 1986, p. 112). A host of unofficial poets or those recently expelled from the USSR show considerable preoccupation with religious themes, including Brodsky, Korzhavin, Losev, Kublanovsky, Gorbanevskaiia, Ratushinskaiia, Krivulin, to name but a few.
  37. The Astafiev novella caused much discussion in the Soviet Union, mostly praise from fellow-writers, negative comments and even attacks from the diehards. Characteristically in one published discussion one of the negative criticisms of the work is that the positive hero in it is a policeman: 'A policeman reading Nietzsche in the original language – that's too much' – Starikova, an Establishment functionary, betrays the characteristically

- low esteem in which police are held in the USSR. 'Khudozhnik ili publitsist – kto prav?', *Litgaz.*, 27 Aug. 1986.
38. 'Mesto deistviia. Rasskazy', *N. sov.*, no. 5 (May 1986) p. 118.
  39. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
  40. Irina Rishina, 'Tsena – zhizn'. Interview with Aitmatov, *Litgaz.*, 13 Aug. 1986.
  41. 'Plakha', *N.m.*: part 1, no. 6 (June 1986) pp. 7–69; part 2, no. 8 (Aug. 1986) pp. 90–131; part 3, no. 9 (Sept. 1986) pp. 6–174.
  42. 'VIII s'ezd pisatelei SSSR. Vystupleniia uchastnikov', *Litgaz.*, 2 July 1986. In tone and essence Bondarev was practically repeating the late Abramov's words of five years before, when he said: 'The time we are living in is such that the gloomiest Biblical predictions may become a reality . . . The real heroism appears to be in man's active morality, his ability to remain true to the voice of conscience and justice.' And, contrary to the Marxist dialectics, he stated that 'the Word has always been the guiding star of mankind. The Word created culture, faith, ideals.' *Litgaz.*, 8 July 1981.
  43. 'Koketnichaia s bozhen'koi', *Koms. pravda*, 30 July 1986; 'Protiv religioznogo durmana', *Pravda vostoka*, 2 Sept. 1986; 'Vospityvat' ubezhdennykh ateistov', *Pravda*, 28 Sept. 1986.
  44. 'Uchit' po-novomu myslit' i deistvovat' ', *Pravda*, 2 October 1986, pp. 1–2.
  45. The issue is further 'aggravated' and obscured by the fact that the Writers' Union Congress was preceded by a meeting of Gorbachev with a group of writers, including the then Writers' Union First Secretary, Georgi Markov, and Chakovsky, the *Litgaz* chief editor. According to an unofficial report, Gorbachev encouraged the writers to speak up at the Congress freely and critically to help him in his 'democratisation process' which is impossible without *glasnost* (open information and criticism). Should this be the case, then there must be a conflict going on between Ligachev (representing the old-style traditional ideological camp which includes the 'antireligious struggle' and its establishment) and Gorbachev. See: *Beseda chlenov S.P. s M. S. Gorbachevym* (19th June 1986) AS 5785; and 'Vstrecha v TsK KPSS', *Pravda*, 21 June 1986.

## CHAPTER 9: (ORTHODOX) RELIGIOUS REVIVAL AND (RUSSIAN) NATIONALISM

1. For a broader discussion of this subject, see, Pospelovskiy, 'Russki natsionalizm, marxizm-leninizm i sud'by Rossii', *Grani*, nos 111–112 (January–February 1979) pp. 418–23.
2. 'Natsional'noe vozrozhdenie i natsiia-lichnost' ', in *Iz-pod glyb* (English version: *From under the Rubble*) (M.: Samizdat, 1974; Paris: YMCA Press, 1974) pp. 206–7.
3. Zoia Krakhmal'nikova, 'Vozvrashchenie bludnogo syna', *Nadezhda*, no. 4 (USSR: Samizdat; Frankfurt/M.: Possev, 1980) pp. 347–8.
4. Pospelovskiy, 'The Resurgence of Russian Nationalism in *Samizdat*', *Survey*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Winter 1973) pp. 51–74.
5. For a more detailed discussion of the film, see John B. Dunlop, *The New Russian Nationalism* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1985) pp. 67–73.

6. For more details on the Change-of-Signposts movement and the National Bolsheviks, see: M. Agursky, *Ideologiya natsional-bol'shevizma* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1980) *passim*; and Pospelovsky, *Russian Church*, vol. 1, pp. 87–9.
7. Pospelovsky, 'The Neo-Slavophile Trend and Its Relation to the Contemporary Religious Revival in the USSR', in *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, Pedro Ramet (ed.), (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1984) pp. 43–5.
8. Alexandr Vasil'ev, 'Real'naia ideologiya praviashchego sloia', *Posev*, no. 9 (September 1986) pp. 26–8. Similar information was supplied to this author by Yuri Kublanovsky, an outstanding contemporary Russian poet and a 1982 exile from the Soviet Union, an Orthodox Christian from a Communist family background. Oral interview, Paris, July 1983.
9. According to Dunlop, one of the Politburo protectors of the nationalists was Mikhail Suslov, the supreme ideological boss under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. His death in 1982 and replacement by the strongly anti-national Andropov coincided with renewed attacks in the ideological press on Russian nationalism. Dunlop, *The New*, pp. 12–15.  
Although Suslov was known to have been a 'true believer' in Marxism, the one does not rule out the other: having realised that Marxism as an ideology capable of inspiring people had collapsed, he tried to salvage its remnants by grafting nationalism on to it.
10. A. Solzhenitsyn and Igor' Shafarevich, *Dve Press-konferentsii* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1975) p. 49. The term 'National Bolshevik' was first used by Karl Radek in 1918 in relation to the Hamburg German CP organization which he accused of co-operating with extreme German nationalists. Agursky, *Ideologia*, pp. 62–3.
11. Vasil'ev, 'Real'naia . . .', *Posev*, no. 9 (1986) p. 28. Reports of young fascist parades, in: *Globe and Mail* (Toronto) 7 July 1982; *Posev*, no. 7 (July 1982) p. 10; and others.
12. Ivan Samolvin, 'Letter to Solzhenitsyn', in *The Political, Social and Religious Thought of Russian 'Samizdat' – an Anthology*, Michael Meerson-Aksenov and Boris Shragin (eds), (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Co., 1977) pp. 420–48. Also: V. Emel'ianov, 'Sionizm na sluzhbe antikommunizma', a *Znanie* public lecture in Moscow on 7 February 1973. Summary in *Demokraticheskie al'ternativy*, V. Belotserkovsky (ed.), (W. Germany: Achberg, 1976) pp. 215–18.
13. This is the typical line of *NiR* and of the whole professional antireligious establishment, particularly N. S. Gordienko, e.g. his 'Kreshchenie Rusi' (see Volume 1, Chapter 4 of this study). According to Professor Yuri Luryi, who used to know Gordienko in Leningrad, the latter is a strong Russian nationalist of the National Bolshevik type, although he is Ukrainian by birth.
14. See my 'Russki natsionalizm', n. 42 (*Grani*, 111–12, pp. 444–6); and Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983) pp. 218–27.
15. As note 14 above. Also, Pospelovsky, 'Nationalism as a Factor of Dissent in the Contemporary Soviet Union', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Fall 1974) p. 102.
16. Also, Dunlop, *The New*, pp. 19–25.

17. See Chapter 8 for the statements and latest writings of major Soviet literary figures on the subject. Also, Zalygin, 'Intelлект i literatura', *Pravda*, 29 September 1986, p. 3. Similar admissions in the 11 April 1986 speech of B. N. El'tsin, the then-new First Secretary of the Moscow City Party Organisation, to a conference of Moscow Propaganda Department officials. *Samizdat* text in *Posev*, no. 10 (October 1986) pp. 29–33.
18. 'O zhurnale "Kommunist". Postanovlenie TsK KPSS', *Kommunist*, no. 12 (August 1986) pp. 3–10; 'V Tsentral'nom Komitete KPSS. . . . "O merakh po dal'neishemu razvitiuu izobrazitel'nogo iskusstva. . ."', *Pravda*, 11 September 1986, pp. 1–2. Also articles in the Soviet press as cited in Chapter 8.
19. As quoted from *Moskovski komsomolets* by Christopher Walker, *The Times* (London) 31 October 1986, p. 12.
20. As referred to in note 18, and the 29 September (1986) *Pravda* editorial.
21. Likhachev, *Zametki o Russkom* (2nd edn, M.: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1984) pp. 39–44.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.
23. Danilevsky's *Rossia i Evropa*, pp. 31–2, as cited in Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) pp. 503–6. See also, Antonov's 'Uchenie slavianofilov – vysshii vzlet narodnogo samosoznaniia v doleninski period', *Veche*, nos 1 (January 1971), 2 (May 1971), 3 (September 1971). Radio Liberty *Arkhiv samizdata*: AS 1013, pp. 16–35; AS 1020, pp. 4–27; AS 1108, pp. 5–49. On 'A Nation Speaks' see my 'Resurgence . . .', pp. 59–63.
24. As above, and 'Zapiska Valerii Skurlatova' summarized in Roy Medvedev's *Kniga o sotsialisticheskoi demokratii* (Amsterdam: Herzen Foundation, 1973) p. 105.
25. *Slovo natsii*, AS 590; Pospelovsky, 'Resurgence . . .' as in note 23, and 'Slovo natsii ili slovo natsi?', *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, no. 38 (29 Sept. 1971).
26. Shimanov, *Ideal'noe gosudarstvo* (*Samizdat* ms. at Keston College Archives); also Dunlop, *The Faces*, p. 187; and other material in both issues of *Mnogaia leta*, e.g. F.V. Karelin, 'Teologicheski manifest', *Mn. 1.*, no. 2, pp. 1–43.
27. Shimanov, 'Lie Abramson', *Mnogaia leta*, no. 2 (*Samizdat*, 1981; Keston *Samizdat* archives) pp. 131–63; Dunlop, *The New*, pp. 40–5.
28. P. I. Ivanov (apparently Shimanov's pseudonym), 'Pis'mo sviashchenniku Alexandru Meniu', *Mn. 1.*, no. 1 (1980) pp. 217–28.
29. A field in a Moscow suburb where the Tsar was handing out gifts to any people that came, as a part of the coronation ceremonies in 1896. The whole thing was so poorly handled by the authorities that several thousand people were trampled to death in a stampede squeezed into a bottle-neck.
30. V. Ibragimov, 'Anatomiia velikoi mistifikatsii', *Mn. 1.*, no. 1, pp. 153–200.
31. 'Sergeiu I-vu', *Mn. 1.*, no. 1, pp. 80–90.
32. Krakhmal'nikova, 'Krizis krasoty', *Nadezhda*, no. 6 (*Samizdat*, 1980; Frankfurt/M., 1981) pp. 379–96.
33. Likhachev, 'Im neobkhodimo doverie', *Litgaz.*, 20 May (1987).
34. E. Losoto, 'V bespamiatstve', *Koms. Pravda*, 22 May 1987.
35. 'Vremia sobirat' kamni', *Sobranie Sochinenii*, vol. 3 (1984) pp. 432–3.
36. It is said that the official ideology has discredited itself so much that in



- order to have any respect and popularity in society a person, particularly an artist (writer, cinematrist) must take up a non-conformist posture of one type or another. People like Glazunov, Aitmatov, Yevtushenko and Konchalovsky take up precisely such a posture – of ‘tame dissidents’ – which assures them of sufficient respect and popularity in the nation at large without risking their security with the Establishment.
37. Osipov, ‘Russkii khudozhnik Il’ya Glazunov’, *Veche*, no. 9 (1973) AS 1665.
  38. ‘O vystavke khudozhnika Il’yi Glazunova’, *Russkaia mysl’*, 24 August 1978, p. 5.
  39. Krakhmal’nikova, *Nadezhda*, no. 4, pp. 328–47.
  40. Gordienko, ‘Aktual’nye problemy kritiki ideologii sovremennogo russkogo pravoslaviia’, in *Ateizm, religiia, sovremennost’* (L.: Gos. muzei istorii religii i ateizma, 1977) p. 88.
  41. ‘Prikhodiashchie v Tserkov’, *Veche* (an émigré right-wing journal taking the name from the defunct Osipov *Veche*), no. 7/8 (Munich, 1982) p. 137.
  42. *Ibid*, p. 131.
  43. Mikhail Kheifets, ‘Russkii patriot Vladimir Osipov’, *Kontinent*, no. 28 (Paris, 1981) pp. 140–71; N. V., ‘Otryvki iz dnevnika’, *Veche*, no. 4 (M.: *samizdat*, January 1972) AS 1140, p. 43; Osipov, ‘Pis’mo v redaktsiiu zhurnala *Vestnik RSKhD*’, *VRSKhD*, no. 106 (1972) pp. 294–5.
  44. Pospelovskiy, ‘The Neo-Slavophile’, p. 53.
  45. Oral testimonies to this author by former Seminar members, the Zakharov-Ross couple, Vadim Filimonov, Lev Rudkevich and Mrs Nedrobova, Vienna, 20–22 January 1979; and Tat’iana Goricheva, Frankfurt/M., September 1980.
  46. Pospelovskiy, ‘The Neo-Slavophile’, pp. 54–5.
  47. *Ibid*, pp. 55–6; Alexander Ogorodnikov, a 1986 Keston College brochure; ‘Russian Christians Reproach Western Churchmen’, *Keston News Service* (henceforth: *KNS*), no. 257 (21 August 1986) p. 2; Ogorodnikov’s letter to his parents, ‘Document: What Awaits me Now?’, *KNS*, no. 260 (2 October 1986) pp. 18–20. Ogorodnikov was released from the labour camp early in 1987.
  48. Pospelovskiy, ‘The Neo-Slavophile’, p. 56.
  49. *Ibid*, p. 50.
  50. Dunlop, *The New Russian Revolutionaries* (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1976) *passim*. The information that most members adopted Christian ‘ideology’ prior to their conversion, was supplied by Leningrad acquaintances of some VSKhSON members at an Orthodox youth reunion in Sea Cliffe, N.Y., Spring 1978.
  51. Interviews with recent émigrés, Israel, July 1983 (the source asked not to be identified); Yuri Kublanovskiy, Paris, July 1983; Piotr V. Kinev, New York, May 1981. Also, Pospelovskiy, ‘The Neo-Slavophile’, p. 51.
  52. The source, who preferred to remain unnamed, was born in Moscow in 1927 in an old intelligentsia family. She is a practising Orthodox Christian married to a practising Russian Jew.
  53. Oral testimony, Paris, 1 August 1983.
  54. Oral testimony, Jerusalem, June 1983.
  55. Rafail Nudelman, oral testimony, Jerusalem, 1 July 1983. Note that this was during the Brezhnev–Andropov era. Things may have changed

- again in favour of nationalism under Gorbachev.
56. Oral testimony, Jerusalem, July 1983. An American (September 1986) visitor to the USSR actually saw such (very respectful) guided visits to functioning churches during services. Oral testimony to this author, London, October 1986.
  57. Oral testimony (source may not be named for obvious reasons), July 1979.
  58. Tatiana Goricheva, a former lecturer in Marxism–Leninism, returned to the Church when twenty-six years of age (in Leningrad), was one of the founders of the Leningrad Religio-Philosophic Seminar and of a Christian feminist movement, and was expelled to the West in 1980. Oral testimony, Frankfurt/M., September 1980.
  59. P. Urzhumtsev, 'Khristianstvo i natsional'nyl vopros', *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*, no. 4 (April 1962) pp. 42–7.
  60. 'Vozvrashchenie', pp. 349–50. Several Jewish converts to Orthodox Christianity have confirmed to this author that through conversion to Christianity they, for the first time in their lives, began to feel their 'flesh and blood' Jewishness, a blood kinship to the Virgin and to the Apostles. As secular Jews they had felt quite rootless.
  61. A. Nazarov, 'Natsional'noe vozrozhdenie – nasushchnaia neobkhdimost' ', *VRKhD*, no. 135 (1981) pp. 280–81.
  62. Oral testimony by a priest who necessarily remained incognito, a mathematician before his conversion, seminary studies and ordination. June 1979.
  63. Among others: D. Likhachev and V. Yanin, 'Russkii sever kak pamiatnik otechestvennoi i mirovoi kul'tury', *Kommunist*, no. 1 (January 1986) pp. 115–19; speeches by Zalygin, Rasputin, Likhachev and others at the 8th USSR Writers Union Congress, *Litgaz.*, 2 July 1986; Party and Government resolution annulling the plans to reverse northern rivers, *Pravda*, 20 August. Also, R. Vorob'ev, 'Porazhenie perebroschikov', *Posev*, no. 10, (October 1986) pp. 41–4. The same issue of *Posev* contains the unofficial (*samizdat*) transcript of the El'tsin address which he begins by deploring the destruction of 2200 important historical and architectural monuments in Moscow alone since 1935: 'Griaznyi kolodets', pp. 29–33.
  64. See Chapter 8 above.
  65. 'Konets epokhi samougozhdeniia', *Kontinent*, no. 25 (1980) pp. 255–84. On the incompatibility of any form of Marxism with nationalism, see also: P. Derzhavin, 'Zametki o natsional'nom vozrozhdenii', *VRSKhD*, no. 106 (1972) pp. 261–74; Borisov, 'V poiskakh propavshei istorii', *VRKhD*, no. 125 (1978) pp. 122–59; Nazarov, note 59 above.

## CHAPTER 10: THE BELIEVER THROUGH THE EYES OF SOVIET 'RELIGIOLOGISTS'

1. V. Bukin, 'Preodolenie religioznykh chuvstv', *Kommunist*, no. 2 (January 1963) p. 69.
2. 77 per cent of all believers in one such sociological survey carried out in the mid-1960s in the Sumy Province of eastern Ukraine. V. D. Kobetsky,

- Sotsiologicheskoe izuchenie religioznosti i ateizma* (Leningrad: University Press, 1978) p. 32.
3. Bukin, pp. 69–70; A. Zuevsky, 'I modno, i bogougodno', *Koms. pravda*, 16 October 1970; L. Sharmanova, 'Byt' ubezhdenym', *NiR*, no. 11 (November 1976) pp. 53–6; 'Vospityvat' ubezhdennykh ateistov', *Pravda* (editorial) 28 September 1986.
  4. Bukin, p. 69.
  5. German Driubin, 'Kuda poidesh ty, paren?', *NiR*, no. 12 (December 1964) pp. 5–9.
  6. I. Pantskhava, 'Nauchnyi kommunizm – zhiznneutverzhdaiushchee mirovospriiatie', *Kommunist*, no. 18 (December 1965) p. 61.
  7. I. A. Galitskaia, 'Izuchenie kanalov vosproizvodstva religioznosti v novykh pokoleniakh – odno iz trebovaniĭ ateisticheskogo vospitaniia', *VNAI*, no. 9 (1970) p. 60.
  8. A. Lichko (M.D.), 'Razdum'ia nad leninskoi strokoi', *NiR*, no. 4 (April 1968) pp. 1–5; Al. Gur'ianov, 'Bogi ne umiraiut sami', *NiR*, no. 9 (September 1969) p. 16; N. Uvarova, 'Samomu rasporiaditsia svoei zhizn'iu', *NiR*, no. 10 (October 1980) pp. 21–2; A. A. Alimbaev, *Molodym – ateisticheskuiu ubezhdennost'* (M.: Politliteratura, 1980) pp. 27–37.
  9. Christopher Walker, 'Moscow Professor Draws Grim Picture', *The Times*, 10 December 1986.
  10. Oxana Antich, 'Ob odnoi popytke pereubedit' veruiushchuiu', *Radio Svoboda: Materialy Issledovatel'skogo otdela* (Munich), 10 December 1975.
  11. Galitskaia, 'Izuchenie kanalov', pp. 58–62.
  12. See Chapters 8 and 9 above; V. Podshibiakin, 'Zemnye korni nebesnogo', *Litgaz.*, 26 October 1983, p. 12. A more positive confirmation of the historical significance of the Orthodox Church, see in Yuri Shcherbak, 'Bez domyslov i nedomolvok', *Litgaz.*, 23 July 1986, where the author remembers his visit to a church near Stalingrad packed with intense worshippers during the Stalingrad battle, and then talks about the Church's understanding and patriotically compassionate response to the Chernobyl' tragedy. A symptomatic and significant parallel indeed!
- Among the more significant essays praising the historico-cultural and nationally positive contribution of the Orthodox Church in the past, could be named: Vladimir Shubkin's 'Neopalimaia kupina', and Yuri Loshchits's 'Vzyskuiushchaia pravdu' – both in *Nash sovremennik*, nos. 12 and 1 (1981) pp. 175–88 and 163–9 respectively.
13. A Letter by the Nikolaev Family, *NiR*, no. 11 (November 1986) p. 9; V. Murzalevsky, a letter, *NiR*, no. 2 (February 1984) p. 33. One would have thought the KGB performs its function of the atheistic confessional well enough. In a survey of Orthodox believers, 36 per cent of respondents pointed to confession and communion as the chief motivation for attending church. L. N. Ul'ianov, 'Opyt issledovaniia motivatsii religioznogo povedeniia', *VNAI*, no. 11 (1971) p. 223.
  14. Evg. Baikov, 'Udivitel'no, otkuda eto beretsia?', *NiR*, no. 11 (November 1986) p. 9.
  15. L. Emeliakh, 'Ateizm i antiklerikalizm narodnykh mass v 1917 g.', *Voprosy istor. rel. i ateizma* vol. 5 (1958) pp. 64–7. The *samizdat* biographical novel *Ostraiia Luka* claims that the process began as the people became tired of

The First World War and began to blame priests as scapegoats for the war. Around 1922 the author shows the beginning of the reversal of the process, a return to the Church. Ms., Keston College *Samizdat* Archives, p. 163 *et passim*.

16. V. D. Kobetsky, *Sotsiologicheskoe izuchenie religioznosti i ateizma* (Leningrad: Izd. Leningradskogo universiteta, 1978) p. 17.  
For an analysis of this data and explanation for the slower growth rate of the Orthodox parishes see Chap. 6, n. 16.
17. Kobetsky, 'Issledovanie dinamiki religioznosti naseleniia SSSR', *Ateizm, religii i sovremennost'* (L., 1973) pp. 116–27; Kobetsky, *Sotsiologicheskoe*, pp. 16–17.
18. 'Religioznost' i antireligioznost' moskovskikh rabochikh', *Pravda*, 26 December 1930, p. 5.
19. L. Onufriev and Kobetsky, *Religioznost' i ateizm* (Odessa: Maiak, 1974) pp. 36–7.
20. Kobetsky, *Sotsiologicheskoe*, p. 16; A. Pokrovsky, 'Antireligioznoe vospitanie v leningradskikh shkolakh', *Antireligioznik*, no. 2 (February 1930) p. 75; N. Fominov, 'Protiv blagodushii i bespechnosti v antireligioznoi rabote', *Bol'shevik*, no. 20 (15 October 1937) p. 36.
21. A. Uchevatov, 'K voprosu o roste bezbozhii', *Antireligioznik*, no. 8–9 (August–September 1930) p. 102.
22. A. S. Onishchenko, 'Tendentsii izmeneniia sovremennovo religioznovo soznaniia', *Vop. nauch. at.* vol. 2 (1966) p. 92, fn. 2; N. P. Alexeev, 'Metodika i rezul'taty izucheniia religioznosti sel'skovo naseleniia', *VNAI*, no. 3 (1967) pp. 139–40.
23. *Inter alia*, see the next section.
24. E. Duluman, 'Vosproizvodstvo religii', *NiR*, no. 7 (1968) pp. 9–13. He cites a priest who adds to the above statement that he himself was an atheist at that age.
25. Kobetsky, 'Issledovanie', pp. 116–27. Documents of the Smolensk Archive speak of 'religious offensive', the successful attraction of youth to the Church etc., in the period from 1925 to 1930. See files 458, 459, 460.
26. Kobetsky, 'Obriad kreshcheniia kak proiavlenie religioznosti', in *Konkretno-sotsiologicheskoe izuchenie sostoianii religioznosti i opyta ateisticheskovo vospitaniia*, I. D. Pantskhava, ed. (M.U. Press, 1969) pp. 168–9.
27. I. A. Galitskaia, 'K voprosu ob izuchenii religioznosti molodiozhy', *VNAI*, no. 7 (1969) pp. 390–94.
28. G. V. Vorontsov, *Leninskaia programma ateisticheskovo vospitaniia v deistvii*, p. 175.
29. Tepliakov, 'Materialy k issledovaniiu . . .', p. 150; on population, see the relevant volumes of the yearbook *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR*.
30. V. V. Pavliuk, *Religioznost' i ateizm* (publ. ref. lost) pp. 52–119; A. A. Lebedev, 'Studencheskaia molodezh i ateizm', *VNAI*, no. 15 (1973) pp. 199–209. Compilation mine.
31. We have already cited Kurochkin and other authors. A collection under the title *V poiskakh dukhovnykh naslednikov* (Politizdat, 1975) concentrates on the Church's not unsuccessful efforts to pass her message to the new generations. One of the authors, V. K. Arsenkin, sees as the main factors in attracting youth: (a) foreign religious broadcasts; (b) infiltration of

- religious literature from abroad, particularly publications of the Russian-language Roman Catholic Publishing House, *Life with God* (which, *inter alia*, publishes the works of the Moscow priest, A. Men'); (c) efforts of the priesthood in the USSR, including the attempts of the Russian Orthodox Church 'to appropriate the role of the guardian of the spiritual values of the nation . . . the patron of Russian culture and art' (pp. 17–20). On atheism and the teaching profession, see note 36 below.
32. In the Duluman sample (note 23) it is 11.6 per cent. Other sources give from 10 to 12 per cent; Kobetsky (*Sotsiologicheskoe*, p. 32) gives the figure of 77 per cent for those who inherited their faith from their parents, in an east-Ukrainian sample.
  33. I. Blinkov, 'Metodika izucheniia religioznosti', *Antireligioznik*, no. 5 (May 1930) p. 72; Kobetsky, *Sotsiologicheskoe*, p. 27. The source of the inaccuracy of predictions made on the basis of questionnaires is the non-return of the vast majority of them by the respondents. Blinkov gives the contents of a questionnaire that his team is to disseminate in 12 000 copies. Expecting only 3000 completed returns, he sees nothing wrong with using the resultant data for a 'statistical generalisation' (*sic*).
  34. Fr. Dmitrii Dudko says that he performs the majority of his baptisms unofficially, especially adult baptisms: 'Kreshchenie na Rusi', *VRKhD* no. 117 (1976) p. 208. Other Soviet-Russian clerics have privately confirmed similar practice. See also Chapter 11.
  35. Kobetsky, 'Issledovanie', pp. 170–71. 1.6 per cent did not state the age of their baptisms. We have included them into the 11.5 per cent of baptisms above 3 years of age, because in all likelihood it conceals a 'grown-up' baptism, embarrassing and professionally unsafe for a Komsomol member. Many priests, including Dudko (note 34) report secret baptisms of Komsomol activists, even executives. The calculation is based on representatives of those ethnic populations which have been traditionally Christian: Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Armenians, Lithuanians, etc.
  36. Levitin lost his job as high school teacher in 1959 because of active faith. Shchipkova, a Smolensk teacher of French and Latin, was dismissed from her job and deprived of her academic awards by the Institute's Council for holding unacceptable convictions and 'spreading religious propaganda'. *KNS*, no. 122 (24 April 1981) p. 16. She was a member of the Ogorodnikov Religious Seminar. Other members of the Seminar, including Elena Kashtanova, a third-year student, and Alexander Shchipkov, a fourth-year student, at the Institute, were likewise expelled for making their religious convictions known. See Keston College Archives: *The Christian Seminar* (SU 12/11.1). The official rules of Soviet teachers require that they participate in the dissemination of 'scientific', i.e. atheistic, *Weltanschauung*.
  37. Kobetsky, 'Issledovanie', p. 167. The calculation is mine on the basis of Kobetsky's statement that 160 children, one to three years old, represent 2.3 per cent of Kiev's population of that age.
  38. Galitskaia ('K voprosu', p. 393) says that whereas the rate of youth in the Orthodox churches equals 2 to 6 per cent, in Baptist churches it equals 6 to 15 per cent (this relates to mid-1960s).
  39. G. E. Kudriashov, 'Metod kartinnovo interv'iu pri izuchenii religioznovo vliianiia na doshkol'nikov', *VopNAI*, vol. 11 (1971) pp. 276–81. Of course,

- all these samples are too limited in size and area to be conclusive. They can only indicate a trend.
40. *VNAI*, *ibid*, p. 277.
  41. In the cited Dudko essay, the rate of adult conversions alone rises from 13 in 1961 to well over 300 in 1973, whereafter Fr. Dudko gives up, noting down: 'Now I have completely lost track of the numbers of baptisms.' Several times, discussing adult baptisms, he remarks that there were so many child christenings that he did not bother counting them. Other priests have likewise confided to this author a marked increase of adult conversions in the 1970s.
  42. Veniamin Arsenkin, *Krizis religioznosti i molodiozh* (M.: Nauka, 1984) citing V. I. Lebedev's *K obshchestvu svobodnomu ot religii* (M., 1970) p. 62. Arsenkin's book was unavailable to this author. The quotations are from O. Antich, 'Krizis religioznosti i molodiozh', *Radio Liberty: Materialy issledovatel'skogo otdela*, 4 February 1985. At least one Soviet religiologist combines the 'believer' and the 'waverer' categories into a single category of believers. D. S. Gurov, *Problemy konkretno-sotsial'nogo issledovaniia religioznosti molodiozhi* (Dissertation, 1969) p. 40; as cited in Jerry G. Pankhurst, *The Orthodox and the Baptists in the USSR: Resources for the Survival of Ideologically Defined Deviance* (PhD Dissertation: University of Michigan, 1978) pp. 285–6.
  43. Archb. Feodosi, 'Gen. sekretariu TsK KPSS . . . Leonidu Il'ichu Brezhnev', *VRKhD*, no. 135 (1981) p. 245.
  44. *Krizis*, p. 70; Antich, p. 3.
  45. Z. A. Yankova, 'Sovremennoe pravoslavie i antiobshchestvennaia sushchnost' ego ideologii', *VIRiAt*, no. 11 (1963) pp. 74–5.
  46. Here and elsewhere, statistical figures are often rounded-off by me. V. S. Solov'ev, 'O vliianii ateizma na dukhovnoe razvitie lichnosti', *VNAI* vol. 14 (1973) pp. 186–95.
  47. N. S. Vasilevskaia, 'Opyt konkretno-sotsiologicheskovo issledovaniia otnosheniia k religii v sovremennoi gorodskoi sem'e', *VNAI*, no. 13 (1972) p. 385.
  48. *Ibid*, pp. 385–8.
  49. *Ibid*, pp. 396–7.
  50. Oral testimonies of recent Soviet émigrés to this author, including Peter Vins, a former student of Kiev university and a 'wavering' (not baptized) son of Georgi Vins, the famous leader of Soviet-Russian unofficial Baptists. Both of the sons of a recently emigrated Moscow priest, Fr. Konstantin Tivetsky, practising believers, were prevented from enrolling at the Academy of Arts because of their religion (1970s). One managed to enrol with great difficulty in the fine arts faculty of a teachers' college; another achieved his skills as artist via private lessons. Because of the pressures and persecutions Fr. Dimitri Dudko's daughter quit high school without completion; her brother, a persevering fighter, fought on and remained at school. Such examples could be cited indefinitely.
  51. Vasilevskaia, 'Opyt', pp. 392–3.
  52. *Pravda*, 13 August 1965.
  53. Vasilevskaia, 'Opyt', p. 397.
  54. Galitskaia, 'Izuchenie', pp. 58–67.

55. A. Zuevsky, 'I modno i bogougodno' . . .', *Koms. pravda*, 16 Oct. 1970.
56. Liubov' Yunina, 'Pochemu krestili Sashku . . .', *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, no. 43 (22 Oct. 1974) p. 16.
57. Alimbaev, *Molodym*, pp. 3–4, 19–21.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–20.
59. The table is my compilation of three tables taken from Soviet sources but appearing in English translation in Pankhurst's *The Orthodox and the Baptists*, pp. 301–4. Ioannity appeared as a fringe movement within the Orthodox Church on the eve of the twentieth century. They are admirers of Fr. John of Kronstadt (died in 1909), widely recognized as a saint for his well-established remarkable record of miraculous healings. The Orthodox Church, including Fr. John in his lifetime, have frowned upon the Ioannity movement (a sort of Orthodox Charismatics), but they have not been explicitly banned or excommunicated.
60. Pospelovsky, *Russian Church*, vol. 1, pp. 241–8.
61. Information supplied to this author by Soviet-Russian clergy. See also, 'New Russian Orthodox Community in Kaliningrad', *Keston News Service*, no. 237 (31 October 1985) p. 7.
62. Lukachevsky, *Izuchenie sotsial'nykh kornei religii v SSSR* (M.: 1930) pp. 13–19.
63. Ul'ianov, 'Opyt', p. 223. Motivation 1, being the predominant one, somewhat contradicts Pankhurst's (and many Soviet sources') assertion that the theological considerations were a low priority motivation of belonging to the Church amidst the Orthodox. Pankhurst, *The Orthodox*, p. 9.
64. A. G. Gerasimchuk, *Religioznaia mikrosreda i puti preodoleniia eio vliianiia na veruushchikh*. Dissertation, Kiev University, 1972. Cited by Pankhurst, p. 305.
65. Testimonies of Soviet-Russian clergy (1986). The 1959 estimate of 20 to 25 thousand Orthodox churches was but one half of the pre-revolutionary number.
66. Ul'ianov, 'Opyt', pp. 223–4.
67. Kobetsky, *Sotsiologicheskoe*, pp. 41–2. The samples of 90 believers in the Karelian SSR and 232 in Leningrad are too small and localised to be truly representative.
68. N. Alexeev, 'Metodika', pp. 138–46; Ul'ianov, 'Opyt', p. 222.
69. Alexeev, 'Metodika', p. 134. This confirms our earlier contention that in Orthodoxy any 'theology of the death of God' is impossible.
70. Onishchenko, 'Tendentsii', p. 93.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 93–8.
72. Pavliuk, *Religioznost'*, pp. 30–1.
73. Onishchenko, 'Tendentsii', p. 102.
74. A Russian-Soviet priest confided to this author a recent case from his pastoral experience in Moscow. Two graduate students in philosophy converted to Orthodoxy and soon decided to get married, but doing so openly while in the department of philosophy, meant expulsion from the university. So they underwent a civic ceremony only, but continued to live apart, although in the same one-room flat, until their graduation; whereupon he married them in church, still succeeding in avoiding to register the rite. Only thereafter they have begun to live as man and wife.

- But how many young couples would be strong enough to go through such an ordeal, and how many priests would have the courage and the know-how to perform a marriage ceremony in church without registering it?
75. *Vop. nauch. at. v kurse istorii KPSS* (1975) p. 176; Ul'ianov, 'Opyt', pp. 231–2.
76. There are only three churches in various suburbs of Gorky, not a single one in the city, despite the fact that over the last fifteen years in total over 2000 people have unsuccessfully petitioned the Government to reopen churches in the city.
77. L. A. Tul'tseva, 'Etnograficheskie aspekty izucheniia religioznovo povedeniia', *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 4 (1979) pp. 43–57; L. L. Ivashneva and E. N. Razumovskaia, 'Usviatskii svadebnyi ritual v ego sovremennom bytovanii', *Sov. etnogr.*, no. 1 (1980) pp. 80–95. Studies published in an ethnographic periodical are less ideologically motivated than those in professionally-atheistic, sociological or philosophic publications, and hence more reliable.
78. Official sources avoid giving the rate of people baptizing their children or taking the sacrament as adults in the total population. They tell us only that 80 per cent of religious and 66 per cent of wavering parents baptize their children, i.e. between 20 and 30 per cent of all parents, which does not tally at all with the above sample of 35 to 60 per cent baptized Komsomol members. Ul'ianov, 'Opyt', pp. 227–35; Tul'tseva, 'Etnograficheskie', pp. 52–4. On witness testimonies, see next section.
79. Ul'ianov, 'Opyt', pp. 227–33.
80. T. Shchupkova, 'Imeet li pravo sovetskii prepodavatel'na svobodu sovesti?', *Vest. RKhD*, no. 130 (1979) pp. 345–54.
- Levitin-Krasnov, describing his conversations with regular (non-political) young criminals during his imprisonment in the early 1970s, and observing their ignorance of but eagerness to learn about Christianity, concludes that Russia needs and is ripe for a new St Vladimir to reconvert her to Christianity. A. Krasnov, 'Moe vozvrashchenie', *Grani*, no. 79 (1971) pp. 46–70.
81. Alexeev, 'Metodika', pp. 137–46; the already cited *Vop. nauch. at. . . v ist. KPSS* (pp. 195–8) claims that arbitrary closure of churches by local Soviet authorities did take place only in a few isolated places in the 1920s, and was emphatically condemned by the Soviet Government in 1923, 1930, 1954, and again in 1966. If the practice was not widespread, why were the resolutions so often repeated, and why were they not passed between 1934 and 1938 or in 1959–64 when most of the churches were closed?
82. E. Sergienko, 'Spor o krestike', *NiR*, no. 10 (October 1976) pp. 51–3. In it a letter is published from a 17-year-old adult convert to Orthodox Christianity and an extra-mural university student with a completed post-secondary technical degree, addressed to an old atheist who had published in the journal an antireligious letter. The young man stresses that the Church has always given charity and love to those in need, has been the disseminator of education and culture, and it is not an accident that 'Millions of people count the years from Christ's Birth'. A young woman married to an irreligious Kazakh (historical Moslem) is proud to consider herself Christian and wear a cross 'as a symbol of Russia . . . the history of the Russian people lies in the cross'.



- V. Dobrynina, 'Lenochka i "sviataia" paskha', *NiR*, no. 11 (1976), tells of an 18-year-old salesgirl, a daughter of atheists, but who, in contrast to them, knows and observes all the Orthodox fast-related traditions. The article attacks those soil-bound writers and artists who have disseminated among modern youth a cult of Russia's saints and religio-historical personalities for this trend, and concludes that she would not be surprised to see the young generation of her block of flats 'marry in Church rather than at the registry office' (pp. 15–18).
83. Gerasimchuk, *Religioznaia*, p. 6; in Pankhurst, p. 307.
  84. L. M. Ignatenko and E. S. Prokoshina, 'Opyt konkretnykh issledovaniï psikhologii baptistov v BSSR', *VNAt*, no. 11 (1971) p. 253. Supposedly by abstraction the authors mean the Baptists' iconoclasm, insistence that God may not be symbolised iconographically, which conceals a rejection of the Trinitarian concept of Jesus as God in human form, allowing His depiction in iconography in accordance with the Orthodox theology. This Baptist iconoclasm leads to a spiritualist 'abstractionism'.
  85. Pankhurst, pp. 308–9. An interesting aspect of Soviet studies of both the legal (registered) Baptists and the Baptist-Initiativists (unregistered), demonstrates the relative ageing of the former and the predominance of younger and middle-aged categories in the latter. This is an interesting indicator that the Soviet God-seeking youth is politically more radical than the elder generation and more hostile to the Soviet social system and its imposition of its rules on the Church. See Pankhurst, pp. 310–20.
  86. M. P. Novikov, *Pravoslavie i sovremennost'* (M.: Univ. Press, 1965) p. 231. The same quote is to be found in multiple Soviet studies on religion, e.g. Kurochkin, Cherniak, etc.
  87. Novikov, *Pravoslavie*, p. 221.
  88. *Ibid.*, pp. 219–41, ch. 5, entirely dedicated to the analysis of sermons and their effect. *Ostraia Luka* (p. 381) witnesses a sharp rise in sermonising very soon after the revolution. For example, the hero of the novel, a provincial rural Volga priest Fr. Sergii, delivered eighteen sermons during the first week of Lent, 1924, alone, and his neighbour, Fr. John, even more – twenty-one.
  89. Novikov, *Pravoslavie*, pp. 222–3.
  90. A noted Moscow priest confided to this author that he and many other clerics carry on thematic-lecture-type sermons at weekday evening services. They must not, however, issue any advance programmes, lest they be accused of religious propaganda and education.
  91. 'Opredelenie Sviashchennovo Sobora P.R.Ts. o tserkovnom propovednichestve', in the *American Orthodox Messenger*, no. 7/9 (July–Sept. 1918) pp. 98–100.
  92. Levitin-Krasnov, 'Letter to Pope Paul VI' (M.: *Samizdat*. 1967; reprint; *Vestnik RKhD*, no. 95–96, 1970, p. 86); and note 87 above.
  93. The details were told to this author by a Moscow priest who was occasionally asked to deliver sermons at the Cathedral. He also showed approved originals, signed by the Cathedral censor, a priest in close contact with the State Council for Religious Affairs which is but a slightly camouflaged agency of the KGB. The texts of the sermons had to be brought in three copies: one for the Church Archive, one for the Council,

- which then went to KGB with a copy to the Leningrad Museum of Atheism, wherefrom the atheistic religiologists must have got their analyses of contents etc. Other churches had no formal sermon censoring, but the given priest for security's sake always typed his sermon and delivered it exactly as typed, keeping the copy in case of trouble, for proof of its contents.
94. M. K. Tepliakov, 'Materialy k issledovaniuu religioznosti naseleeniia Voronezha i Voronezhskoi oblasti', in *Konkretnye issledovaniia sovremennykh religioznykh verovaniu* (M.: Inst. of Scientific Atheism, Acad. of Sciences, 1967) p. 150.
  95. V. N. Nikitin, *Kritika sovremennoi religioznoi propovedi* (L., 1971) p. 7.
  96. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia*, p. 202.
  97. Nikolai Shemetov, 'Edinstvennaia vstrecha', *VRKhD*, no. 128 (1979) pp. 244–51.
  98. Oral testimony of a Soviet-Russian priest to this author.
  99. CRA's Vice-Chairman V. Furov's Report to the CPSU CC; see Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church*, vol. 2, pp. 410–11. Fr. Savva Kol'chugin lost a parish in 1979 and later ended up in a psycho-prison for preaching in his sermons on the incompatibility of Marxism and Christianity. Pospelovsky, p. 462.
  100. Novikov, *Pravoslavie*, pp. 223–9. Elfimov's observations are similar to Novikov's. He adds that the themes and profile of sermons are constantly being renewed, the moral theme emphasizing that belief in personal God is the source and foundation of morality and ethics. Much attention is paid to involve the whole congregation in prayer and common singing. *O prichinakh . . . religioznykh perezhytkov*, pp. 120–40.
  101. A Russian organisation founded by young émigrés in 1930, with the aim of overthrowing the Soviet system by an internal revolution, which was to be an organic event resulting from a moral-spiritual re-education or rebirth of the nation. The movement is also known as Russian solidarists, as its social doctrine is based on concepts of Christian personalism and social solidarity (in place of Marxist class struggle ideas), accompanied by a mixed economy with a strong state, municipal and co-operative sectors.
  102. *Diversiia* (1972) p. 11.

## CHAPTER 11: BELIEVERS ABOUT THEMSELVES

1. Father Vsevolod Shpiller's Report to Patriarch Alexii, Ms. (12 January 1967), Keston College Orthodox *Samizdat* Archives; a Letter by Fr. Vl. Seminishin to his diocesan bishop Veniamin of Irkutsk (16 December 1970), *VRKhD*, no. 120 (1977) pp. 300–1.
2. N. Shemetov, 'Pravoslavnye bratstva (1917–1945)', *VRKhD*, no. 131 (1980) pp. 147–81 (including the statute of one of such brotherhoods); V. Alexeeva, 'Vospominaniia o khrame sv. . . . Kira i Ioanna na Solianke', *VRKhD*, no. 142 (1984) pp. 209–15; Sister Maria, 'Pravoslavnoe ses trichestvo pri moskovskom khrame sv. Sofii', *VRKhD*, no. 138 (1983) pp. 195–214; V. Ya. Vasilevskaia, 'Katakomby XX veka', Ms. (180 pp.),

- Keston College Orthodox *Samizdat* Archives; 'Dva portreta', an excerpt from the latter memoir, *VRKhD*, no. 124 (1978) pp. 269–98; on S. Mechëv in particular: 'Vospominaniia ob o. Sergii Mechëve', *Nadezhda Khristianskoe chtenie*, no. 12 (*Samizdat*; reprint, Frankfurt/Main: Possev, 1985) pp. 83–114.
3. Shemetov, 'Pravoslavnye bratstva', pp. 164–9.
  4. Alexeeva, 'Vospominaniia', pp. 209–15.
  5. See references to the Ogorodnikov seminar, for instance, in previous chapters.
  6. I. Denisov, 'Slovo otstupnikov', *VRSKhD*, no. 99 (1971) pp. 112–21.
  7. Shemetov, 'Pravoslavnye bratstva', p. 165; 'Za zhizn prikhoda', *V svete Preobrazheniia* (Fr. Dudko's weekly parish bulletin), no. 1 (3 September 1978); *VRKhD*, no. 127 (1978) pp. 237–8.
  8. Sermon at the Russian Orthodox Cathedral, Ennismore Gardens, July 1978. See also 'Slovo Borovogo', *Russkoe vozrozhdenie*, no. 9 (New York–Moscow, quarterly, 1980) pp. 38–43.
  9. S. I. Fudel', 'U sten Tserkvi', *Nadezhda*, no. 2 (1979) pp. 216–17; Shemetov, 'Pravoslavnye bratstva', pp. 161–2.
  10. Vasilevskaia, 'Katakomby' (complete text, *samizdat*, n.d.) p. 125.
  11. 'Dva portreta', particularly pp. 282 and 290–98.
  12. Shemetov, 'Arkhimandrit Tavrion (Batozsky)', *VRKhD*, no. 127, pp. 253–5; his 'Pravoslavnye bratstva', pp. 169–72; 'Konchina arkhimandrita Tavriona', *Nadezhda*, no. 4 (Frankfurt/M, 1980) pp. 245–60; Tatiana Goricheva, *Talking about God Is Dangerous* (London: SCM Press, 1986) pp. 78–80 (she uses his pre-monastic, secular name, Tikhon).
  13. M. Anthony, Pushkin Club, London, 13 February 1987.
  14. 'Mucheniki khristianstva XX veka' (*samizdat*), *VRKhD*, no. 134 (1981) pp. 235–45.
  15. Shemetov, 'Pravoslavnye bratstva', pp. 171–2.
  16. 'Puti Tvoi, Gospodi', Ms. (46 pp.), Keston College Orthodox *Samizdat* Archives.
  17. *Ibid*, pp. 21–2.
  18. The interviewee providing this information preferred to remain anonymous. The writer is convinced of the source's reliability. The information was obtained in 1983.
  19. The source, preferring to remain anonymous, was born in 1930. The information was provided in Jerusalem (Israel), 4 July 1983.
  20. For obvious reasons the source may not be named. The information was provided in 1981.
  21. M. Popovsky, 'Vo chto verit i vo chto ne verit sovetskii uchionyi', *Posev*, no. 2 (February 1979) pp. 26–9.
  22. 'Kreshchenie na Rusi', *Vestnik RKhD*, no. 117 (1976) p. 208.
  23. *Ibid*, p. 208.
  24. Oral testimony by Larisa Volokhonskaia to this author, St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y., August 1980. The cited Fr. Tivetsky confirmed that unregistered baptisms and other private services are quite widespread; although they are performed secretly by the priests only when assured by someone they trust of the trustworthiness of the person involved. The numerous priests deprived of registration by the

- civil authorities for running foul of them, but remaining legal canonical clerics as far as the Church is concerned, resort to performing unregistered baptisms, weddings, funeral services, and even unofficial liturgies in private homes in the areas where there are no functioning churches, as a matter of course.
25. 'O nashikh besedakh', *V svete preobrazheniia*, no. 20 (38), 20 May 1979; repr. in *Vestnik RKhD*, no. 129 (1979) p. 273.
  26. 'Kreshchenie na Rusi', p. 208.
  27. Statistical extrapolations by this author based on Soviet statistical year-books' data for the years 1968 to 1972 (*Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR.*, 1967; *Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleeniia*, 1970 g., vol 1; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR.*, 1922–72).
  28. Information on baptisms supplied by a priest from the area in 1978.
  29. Rafail Nudel'man was born in 1931, worked as a 'museum' guide in the churches and monasteries of Vladimir-on-Kliaz'ma, emigrated to Israel in 1975. Interviewed in Jerusalem, 1 July 1983. Igor' Garashchenko, born in Kiev in 1953, emigrated in December 1986. Interview, London, 12 February 1987. 1920s statistics from N. S. Burmistrov, 'Religioznye obriady pri rozhdeniakh, smertiakh i brakakh', *Antireligioznik*, no. 6 (June 1929) pp. 89–90.
  30. The Soviet atheistic literature dwells a lot on the argument of theological ignorance of the bulk of Soviet believers. For example: *K obshchestvu svobodnomu ot rel. . .*, pp. 170–75; Tepliakov, 'Materialy', pp. 154–5; A. S. Onishchenko, 'Tendentsii izmeneniia sovremennovo religioznovo soznaniia', *Vop. nauch. at.*, no. 2 (1966) pp. 91–109; Pavliuk, *Psikhologiiia sovremennykh veruushchikh i ateisticheskoe vospitanie* (L'vov, 1976) pp. 30–31 and 120–21.
- Many of them cite articles from the *Journal of Moscow Patriarchate*, and mimeographed manuals for Soviet theology students by contemporary Soviet theologians critically analysing the low level of theological information in contemporary Soviet believers. Many *samizdat* sources likewise testify to the extreme theological ignorance of the contemporary Soviet believers: for example, Yakunin, 'O sovremennom polozhenii Russkoi pravoslavnoi Tserkvi', *Vol'noe slovo*, no. 35–36 (1979) pp. 42–3. This stands to reason given the total ban on general religious education and on the publication of general religious literature in the USSR.
31. 'Kreshchenie na Rusi', pp. 188–208.
  32. See note 23.
  33. Valerii Leviatov, 'Kak ia prishol k Bogu', *Grani*, 111–112 (January–June 1979) pp. 324–9.
  34. Viktor Trostnikov, 'Stranitsy iz dnevnika', *Metropol'*, a literary almanach (Moscow; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1979) pp. 717–43; see also his *Mysli pered rassvetom* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1980) *passim*.
  35. See note 29.
  36. See note 23. Also, oral testimony to this author by a former Leningrad artist and adult convert to Orthodox Christianity, Vadim Filimonov (Vienna, 29 January 1979).
  37. Artists from the USSR (including the above Filimonov, Igor' Zakharov, another ex-Leningrad artist interviewed by me in Vienna) and others see

- an ideational connection between abstract art and iconography, both being ideographic, rejecting the confines of matter, time, space, perspective.
38. Filimonov's testimony.
  39. See the report by E. Giriaev, 'Religiozno-filosofskii seminar v Leningrade', *Vestnik RKhD*, no. 123 (1977) pp. 169–74. Maria Nedrobova and Lev Rudkevich, who were among the founding members of the seminar and its periodical, 37, confirmed to this author that of all the themes of the seminar (which included Western and Russian Christian and existentialist philosophers, Russian literature, art, Oriental mysticism, etc.), those devoted to Patristics were the most popular ones.
  40. See the discussion of *samizdat* authors published under the joint title of 'Metanoia', *Vestnik RSKhD*, no. 97 (1970) pp. 4–96; a young Moscow priest formulated this to me in the following words: 'Russia can be saved only through a re-Churched national culture, a culture originating from *cult*, i.e. a spiritually oriented hierarchy of values culminating in the Absolute.' Tat'iana Goricheva, another founding member of the Leningrad Movement and, later, founder-editor of the first *samizdat* feminist journal, *Women and Russia*, put the same idea thus: 'in order to attain Christianity and the Church our intelligentsia had to experience the idea of *culture*'. This was preceded by 'the frightening nihilism of the 1950s'. 'O neofitsial'noi kul'ture i Tserkvi', *Posev*, no. 9 (Sept. 1979) p. 45.
  41. Zoia Krakhal'nikova, 'Vozvrashchenie bludnovo syna', *Nadezhda*, p. 383.
  42. Vladimir Osipov, 'Ploshchad' Maiakovskovo, stat'ia '70', *Grani*, no. 80 (Sept. 1971) pp. 119, 131–2.
  43. 'Formuliar' by an anonymous *samizdat* author. Keston College Archives, Ms., pp. 1–2. Another veteran of Soviet prisons and camps, Sergei Fudel (died in Moscow in 1977), an erudite Orthodox theologian, observes: 'the jail can enlighten and sanctify the soul, miraculously opening in it that which would remain invisible in other conditions'. *Nadezhda*, no. 2, p. 234.
  44. This is generally recognized by most former prisoners, *inter alia* by Vladimir Tel'nikov, a former student activist of the 1960s converted to Christianity while in prison in the 1960s. (His recorded public talk at Radio Liberty on his arrival from the USSR, Munich, 28 March 1972.)
  45. V. Borisov, 'V poiskakh propavshei istorii', *Vestnik RKhD*, no. 125 (1978) pp. 124–31.
  46. A representative of this school of thought in *samizdat* is Gennadii Shimanov referred to in Chapter 9. See: Evgenii Barabanov, pp. 111–19; Shimanov's article follows immediately, pp. 119–31; his views are stated even more explicitly in his *samizdat* ms., *Protiv techeniia* (*Against the Current*) (M.: 1975) Keston College *Samizdat* Archives.
  47. For example, P. Urzhumtsev, 'Khristianstvo i natsional'nyi vopros', *ZhMP*, no. 4 (April 1962) pp. 42–7.
  48. Dudko, 'Zapad ishchet sensatsii', *Izvestia*, 21 June 1980, p. 6.
  49. Conversations with several Soviet Russian priests and theologians.
  50. 'Istoriia odnogo obrashcheniia', *Nadezhda*, no. 4, pp. 295–300.
  51. Fudel, 'U sten', pp. 229, 233–5, 245–8, 257, 328–31. Goricheva and other interviewees also maintained that most sermons were weak and almost wholly removed from direct associations with Soviet reality, owing

- to the pressure of the CRA and threat of deprivation of licence to serve as priests.
52. Cited testimonies of Volokhonskaia, Filimonov and Fr. Tivetsky. On Fudel's notes, see *Nadezhda*, no. 2, p. 214 (n.).
  53. Above interviews. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia*, pp. 108–10. The irony is that the contemporary college of bishops in the USSR, allegedly representing the outdated ideology of a dying generation, is younger in average age than the CPSU Central Committee which is supposed to represent a youthful and dynamic revolutionary ideology.
  54. Confidential oral testimony by some Russian clerics. An indirect confirmation of this is in a *samizdat* article by a certain Nikolai Gerasimov, 'Vkhozhdenie v Tserkov' i ispovedanie Tserkvi v tserkvi' ('Joining the Church and Pursuit of Church in the Church'), *Vestnik RKhD*, no. 128 (1979) pp. 41–96. There he writes about the frustration of the neophytes over apathy prevalent in the official Church. Some become disappointed and depart into some occult groups, or withdraw from active participation in church services while remaining Christians; others form unofficial religious discussion groups and engage in missionary and Christian charity work alongside the Church; still others concentrate fully in the Eucharistic life of the Church and integrate in the parishes as much as possible.
  55. His 'Statement' on joining Fr. Yakunin's Christian Committee for the Defence of the Believers' Rights in the USSR (Moscow, 16 May 1979), *Vol'noe slovo*, no. 35–36 (1979) pp. 123–8. Also, Alena Kojevnikova, 'Interv'iu s Vadimom Shcheglovym', *Rus. m.*, 4 August 1983, p. 7.
  56. Testimony to this author, Autumn 1978. The name of the source may not be disclosed for obvious reasons.
  57. Interview, Paris, 1 August 1983.
  58. One of the notorious, though not anywhere officially published, examples of the regime's ban on theology students with previously attained secular university degrees, occurred when Bishop Filaret, then rector of the Moscow Academy, unofficially allowed a medical doctor to attend the classes as an auditor. After the latter had passed all the exams he was granted the diploma and was ordained priest during the graduation exercises. This was all news to the Committee on Religious Cults which avenged by forcing the Patriarchate to dismiss Filaret. This happened in the early 1970s.
  59. Kurochkin, *Evolutsiia*, pp. 108–10.
  60. Oral testimonies by such young Russian priests and theologians about themselves. Their identity may not be disclosed for obvious reasons.
  61. Interview with a young Russian priest, Autumn 1978.
  62. As in note 58 above.
  63. 'Sem' voprosov i otvetov o Russkoi pravoslavnoi Tserkvi', *VRKhD*, no. 138 (1983) pp. 215–17.
  64. See, for instance, the letters and statements critical of the Moscow Patriarchate collected in Michael Bourdeaux' *Patriarch and the Prophets* (London: MacMillan, 1969) especially from p. 152 on. There are many additional *samizdat* documents of the 1960s and early 1970s reflecting the same mood of almost schismatic rejection of the Moscow Patriarchate's towing of the line.

65. See the already cited article by V. Borisov. Even such radical critics of the Patriarchate's policies as Frs. Dudko and Yakunin stressed the necessity of retention of the unity of the Church within the Patriarchate, and appealed to the Russian émigré Synod to re-establish a spiritual-liturgical unity with the Moscow Patriarchate (although not an administrative one). See Dudko's letters to the Emigré Church, in *Posev*, no. 3 (1979) pp. 39–41; and Yakunin's cited report in *Vol'noe slovo*, pp. 5–78.
66. Note 55 above. On the Moscow religious printers, see note 91, Chapter 7, Volume 2 of the current study. On Pivovarov: 'Vsegda byli i budut takie podvizhniki', *Posev*, no. 4 (April 1984) pp. 2–4; 'Sud nad o. Alexandrom Pivovarovym' and 'Presledovanie Khrisian v SSSR', *VRKhD*, nos 141 and 143 (1984) pp. 227–30 and 232–3 respectively.
67. 'Sem' voprosov', pp. 217–20.
68. Shemetov, 'Edinstvennaia vstrecha', *VRKhD*, no. 128 (1979) pp. 246–7.
69. *Talking about God*, pp. 86–03.

# Appendix

Ministry of Higher and Middle Specialized Education, USSR. Central administration on the teaching of Social Sciences.

FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC ATHEISM – COURSE PROGRAMME FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS  
(Moscow: 'Vysshiaia shkola', 1985)

LECTURES:

**Topic 1: The Subject of Scientific Atheism** (1 Hour)

K. Marx, F. Engels, and V. I. Lenin on Scientific Atheism. Scientific Atheism as an important aspect of dialectical materialism and as a branch of philosophical knowledge. Two aspects of Scientific Atheism: refutation of religious ideas and confirmation of scientific understanding of reality. Party Spirit of Scientific Atheism, its humanitarian and creative character, and its role and place in the contemporary ideological struggle. Criticism of bourgeois-clerical falsification of Scientific Atheism.

**Topic 2: Religion as a Social Phenomenon** (2 Hrs)

Marxist–Leninist definition of religion. The roots and social basis of religion. V. I. Lenin on the social basis of religion in a capitalist society. Religion as a product of the superstructure. Belief in the supernatural as the defining character of religious consciousness. Religious cults, their structures, levels of consciousness, and functions. Religion and social progress.

**Topic 3: Contemporary Religions** (5 hrs)

Types of religion: tribal, national, international.

Buddhism. Lamaism, and its remnants in the USSR. Buddhism and the contemporary political ideological struggle.

Christianity, its birth and evolution. Engels on early Christianity. The transformation of Christianity into state religion. The division of Christianity.

Orthodoxy. The Orthodox Church in pre-revolutionary Russia, in the USSR, and abroad. Old Believers and sects. Modernism in contemporary Orthodoxy.

Catholicism. The organization of the Roman Catholic Church. Vatican II and the struggle against various currents in post-Vatican II Catholicism. Vatican's social and political doctrine. Reactionary activities of the Catholic Right, the necessity of unmasking their ideological subversive activities. Catholicism in the USSR.

Protestantism. Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinists, Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostals, and other confessions. Social position of the Protestant Churches. Protestantism in the USSR.

Islam. The Koran, Sunni, Shiite. Islam and nationalism. Islam and social-political struggle. The necessity of unmasking the ideological anticommunist



direction of the subversive activities of reactionary Islamic groups. Islam in the USSR.

International religious organizations and Churches. The Ecumenical movement.

### *Religion and the Present-Day Political and Ideological Struggle*

XXVI congress of the CPSU on the use of religion by various social and political forces. Religion in the plans and actions of present-day anti-Soviet and anti-communist forces. Anti-communist organizations operating under the flag of religion. The reactionary nature of Zionism. The unmasking of clerical anti-communism – a chief goal of ideological struggle. Social-political differences among contemporary religious organizations. The participation of believers in anti-imperial struggles. XXVI congress of the CPSU on the importance of supporting believers in struggles for peace, democracy and social progress.

The Religious Crisis and the process of secularization in contemporary society. Religion and the scientific-technological revolution in capitalist societies. The deepening crisis of religion in socialist societies.

### **Topic 4: Atheism and Social Progress**

(4 hrs)

The birth and natural evolution of atheism as an expression of man's growing control over nature and society. The inherent association between atheism and the interests of progressive social forces. The expansion of the social base of atheism as a part of social development. Elemental atheism of the masses. The natural association between atheism and scientific knowledge. The superiority of atheistic ideas. Materialism as the philosophical foundation of atheism.

The Historical Stages of the Development of Atheism. Free thought and atheism in slave-ownership societies of the Ancient East and in the Ancient World (Democritus, Epicur, Lucrecius). Philosophical foundations of ancient atheism, and its criticism of religion.

Free thought in the feudal epoch. Anticlericalism. Popular heresies. Rationalist criticism of religious texts. The struggle with religious dogmatism and authoritarianism.

Bourgeois atheism. Free thought and Atheism of the Renaissance. The evolution of natural-scientific foundations of atheism. Aggressive atheism of the French materialists of the XVIII c. and of Feuerbach – the pinnacle of the evolution of bourgeois atheism. Bourgeois atheists on the roots, content and social role of religion. Criticism of religious morality. Historical evaluation of bourgeois Atheism.

Revolutionary-democratic Atheism. V. G. Belinsky, A. I. Herzen, N. G. Chernyshevsky, M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin and others. The connection of criticism of religion with criticism of private property, exploitation, and with the concept of utopian socialism. Atheistic ideas in the revolutionary-democratic thought of the peoples of the USSR and in foreign states.

### *Marxist–Leninist Atheism – the Highest Form of Atheism*

Marx and Engels as the foundation layers of Scientific Atheism. The close ties

between Marxist Atheism and the struggle for revolutionary re-education of society and the evolution of science. Marxist Atheism on the reasons for the birth and existence of religion, its content, social functions, and on the means by which religion can be overcome. Lenin's contribution to the evolution of atheism. Actual problems of Scientific Atheism in developed socialist society.

Atheism and spiritual culture. Scientific and religious concept of culture. Criticism of clerical concept of religion as the foundation of spiritual culture.

The role of religion in the spiritual culture of presocialist societies. Free thought and atheism as foundations of culture. Secularisation of spiritual culture in the process of man's growing control over his surrounding world. Scientific Atheism as the logical result of the progressive development of man's spiritual culture.

**Topic 5: Philosophical and Scientific Foundations of Atheism** (4 hrs)

Atheistic criticism of religious ideology. Religious ideology and philosophical idealism. Atheistic criticism of the concept of God. The subservience of logic to blind faith in religious ideologies. Criticism of clerical attempts to reconcile science with religion. Modernisation of religious ideology as a method of adapting religion to the present. The weakening of the ideological stand of religion in the contemporary world.

Dialectical-materialistic, atheistic comprehension of the world, man and society. Materialistic unity of the World, negation of the supernatural – these are the principal roots of atheistic world outlook. The organic link between atheism, science and reality. The influence of the victories of socialism and the achievements of the scientific-technical revolution on the development of atheistic understanding of the world.

The atheistic implications of contemporary scientific knowledge on the endless and uncreated nature of the world. Atheistic understanding of the origin and essence of life. Refutation of the concept of the eternal spirit, and life after death. The natural character of the evolution of man. The implications of marxist social-evolutionary theory on the refutation of providence and eschatology. The groundlessness in the nature of religious concepts of human interrelations.

The egalitarian essence of atheism. The social nature of morality. Criticism of the religious concept of equality. The unmasking of the class nature and pseudo-humanitarianism of religious morality. The role of Scientific Atheism in communist egalitarian education. Atheism and personal spiritual freedom. Atheism and the humanisation of human relations.

**Topic 6: Atheism and Religion in Socialist Society** (2 hrs)

Scientific basis of the policies of the CPSU with regard to religion, the church and believers. Formulation of scientific-materialistic world outlook – goal of the programme of the Communist Party. Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the overcoming of religion in the process of the revolutionary re-education of society, on the road to the construction of Communism. The principle of submitting the struggle with religious remnants to the goals of the struggle for socialism and communism. Criticism of opportunistic-reconciliatory and

leftist-anarchistic attitudes towards religion, the church and believers. The main documents of the CPSU on the issues of atheistic education. The XXVI congress of the CPSU on the formulation of communist, scientific-materialistic world outlook. June (1983) Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the necessity of increasing attention to the issue of atheistic education. Critical analysis of the manifestation of 'God-searching' motifs. The struggle with unprincipled, subjective, and conciliatory attitudes towards religion. The essence of religious extremism.

Freedom of conscience in socialistic society. Marx, Engels, Lenin on freedom of conscience. Criticism of bourgeois understanding of freedom of conscience. The separation of the Church from the state and the school from the church. The Constitution of the USSR on freedom of conscience. Consistent observance of Soviet laws on cults – important condition for the realisation of freedom of conscience. Criticism of bourgeois falsifications of the situation of religion and the church in the USSR, and of the theories and practices of the atheistic movement. Freedom of conscience in socialist countries.

The reasons for the endurance of religion within socialism. Manifestations of religiosity in socialist society. Objective and subjective reasons for the endurance of religious remnants. The influence of capitalist systems on the endurance of religiousness within socialism. The limits of social ties and weak social activism as factors for the endurance of religiousness. The role of backward traditions and practices in the regeneration of religion.

The development of mass atheism in socialist society. The undermining of the social roots of religion in the process of socialistic re-education. The development of the Soviet socialist example of life as a factor for the expansion of the influence of atheism. The main stages of the establishment of mass atheism in Soviet society. The growth of atheism's role in the development of spiritual culture. The formulation of the activist life role of the Soviet man and the overcoming of remnants of religion. The negative influence of religion upon the development of the personality. The ideological-political unity of the Soviet people, the participation of believers in social life. Marx on the withering-away of religion as a result of the development of socialism and the establishment of communism.

### **Topic 7: Atheistic Education**

(2 hrs)

Atheistic education – an essential aspect of communist upbringing. The strengthening of materialistic and spiritual basis of socialist life – objective conditions for the effectiveness of an atheistic education. The need for a complex approach to atheistic education as an essential aspect for the formulation of a well-rounded developed personality of the new man.

Methods of atheistic education and its basic characteristics. Organization of atheistic education in workers' collectives, regions, cities, etc. Party leadership of atheistic education. Methods of atheistic education: development of social activism of workers, development of a system of social holidays, practices and convictions. Conditions for ensuring the effectiveness of atheistic education: formulation of atheistic social concepts, the establishment of a healthy psychological-moral climate in worker collectives, the training of cadres of organisers and propagandists, envelopment of all basic social-demographic

groups, and individual approach to each group, and the usage of a variety of methods and means of atheistic actions.

Unique aspects of atheistic work among children and youths. Atheistic education in the family and in the school.

Forms and methods of atheistic propaganda. Propaganda and its role in the system of atheistic education. Mass and individual forms of propaganda.

The lecture, the group discussion, the question-and-answer session as forms of atheistic propaganda. The role of culture and means of mass information in atheistic propaganda. Organisation of atheistic propaganda in the worker collective and at home.

Formation of atheistic personal convictions: expansion and consolidation of social-individual ties; and development of individual's social activism. The bringing-out of healthy spiritual needs and interests – an important aspect of atheistic education. Surmounting ideological indifference and the formation of atheistic convictions of conscious builders of socialist society.

The perfection of a developed socialist society, and the subsequent consolidation of the principles of socialist humanism – is the basis of the gradual overcoming of religiousness and the assertion of mass atheism.

### Seminar Topics

#### *I. Scientific Basis of the Policies of the CPSU and the Soviet Government with Regard to Religion, Church, and Believers* (2 hrs)

1. Lenin's criticism of bourgeois-enlightenment, leftist-anarchic and revisionist attitudes towards religion.
2. Lenin on the submission of the struggle with religious remnants to the goals of the struggle for socialism.
3. Constitution of the USSR on freedom of conscience.
4. The realisation of the principles of freedom of conscience in Soviet law on religious cults.

#### *II. Forms and Methods of Atheistic Education* (2 hrs)

1. Propaganda and its role in the system of atheistic education.
2. Mass and individual forms of atheistic propaganda.
3. Organisation of atheistic education in workers' collectives and at home.
4. Forms of individual work with believers.

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Total: 24 hrs

Note: When covering topic 3 it is recommended to place special emphasis upon the predominant religion of the local area.

### Bibliography

Consists of works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Chernenko, as well as various decrees and official documents and the following texts: *Scientific Atheism*, M., 1982; *Atheistic Education: Questions and Answers*, M., 1983; and *Party Organisations and Atheistic Education*, M., 1975.

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