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ERRATA

- p 60 line 15: "when in 1927" for "when in 1918"
- p 63 line 6: "crisis" for "scandal"
- p 83 line 15: "*uskorenie*" for "*uskroenie*"
- p 89 line 2: "Evgeny" for "Euvgeny"
- p 209 line 16: "1973" for "1963"

ADDENDUM

- p 30 line 6: the Constitutional Commission was headed by Oleg Rummyantsev
- p 81 para 1: comment: note Aleksandr Ianov's emphasis on the presence of fascist elements among Slavophiles in his monograph *The Russian New Right* (1978)
- p 120 fn41: delete "Northern Ossetia"
- p 159 para 1: comment: note that in the late 1990s the conservatism of the Catholic Church in Poland was less marked

The Struggle for Religious Pluralism
Russian Orthodoxy and Civil Society in Post-Soviet Russia

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BA (Hons)

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the Russian Orthodox Church's social and political role and its relationship to civil society in the Russian Federation. The Church has experienced a paradoxical shift in status – from suppressed to suppressor – since the demise of Soviet communism. The prevalence of religious themes in the rhetoric of the *perestroika* years indicated that the Church would play a significant role in the creation of a new Soviet (subsequently Russian) order. This was confirmed in the postcommunist period in the polemics generated by the upsurge in religious activity and the resultant debate about religious legislation.

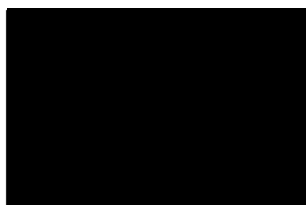
Through the analysis of Orthodoxy and civil society, this dissertation argues that Orthodox prelates, clergy and laity have shaped Russians' attitudes towards religious and ideological pluralism. In turn, this has influenced the ways in which Russians understand civil society, including those of its features – pluralism and freedom of conscience – that are essential for a functioning democracy. Of course, this shift in attitudes has not transpired independent of other social and political developments. Accordingly, conditions producing the changes in the religious sphere, such as the advent of ideological pluralism, legislative changes and the post-Soviet religious 'boom', are also investigated.

The Orthodox Church has had a paradoxical impact on civil society in Russia. On the one hand, the official Church (the Moscow Patriarchate) has impeded the development of civil society, while on the other, the unofficial Church (nonconformist clergy and lay activists sympathetic to their agenda) has promoted concepts central to civil society. Orthodoxy's significance is established by examining the Church's official and unofficial influence in three spheres of civil society: in the social and political arenas, in the religious domain and within Church structures.

The Orthodox Church is habitually overlooked, or misrepresented, in western scholarship on Russia's post-Soviet trajectory. This dissertation seeks to overcome the academic and popular misperception that the Church has a uniformly negative influence on democracy. This view is excessively reductionist because it overlooks the unofficial Church's agenda and the dynamics in the three spheres of civil society that influence Orthodoxy's post-Soviet role.

Candidate's Statement

This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.



Zoe Knox

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The usual caveat applies: any mistakes or oversights are exclusively my own.

Some material has previously appeared in Zoe Knox, "Russia's Religion Law and Threats to Freedom of Conscience", *Russian and Euro-Asian Bulletin*, vol. 9, no. 6 (2000), 1-15 and Zoe Knox, "Orthodox Misbehaviour", *Arena Magazine*, no. 50 (2000-2001), 14-16.

Note on Transliteration

The Library of Congress transliteration system has been used throughout this dissertation. Established English usage has taken precedence over the Library of Congress system in the spelling of common Russian words and proper names: thus Yeltsin, not El'tsin. When, in English-language publications of Russian authorship, Russian names have been transliterated according to a different system, the reference will mirror the publication name while the text will be true to the Library of Congress system. All translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

PART I

Introduction

The federal law 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' ('*O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniiakh*') was arguably the most contentious legislation passed in post-Soviet Russia.¹ The drafting and revision processes (following President Boris Yeltsin's rejection of the legislation on the grounds that it was unconstitutional and violated international human rights conventions) demonstrated the irreconcilable differences between, on the one hand, conservatives and nationalists, who sought legislative guarantees for the Russian Orthodox Church's² protection, and, on the other, liberals and democrats, who sought guarantees of freedom of conscience for all denominations. The legislation threatened the relatively recent formalisation of religious freedom and equality after the demise of Soviet Marxism-Leninism. It also accentuated the fissure between the official Church, represented by the Moscow Patriarchate, the Church's governing body, and the unofficial Church, represented by nonconformist clergy and lay activists.

The great paradox of Russia's post-Soviet religious renaissance was the transition of the Patriarchate from a suppressed institution, directed and regulated by an atheist regime, to a suppressing institution, discouraging religious pluralism and enjoying state-sanctioned privileges in a secular country. This contrasted sharply with Church life outside the Patriarchate's official structures. Orthodoxy as a belief system fostered a movement for the *perestroika* (restructuring) of Church life in order to make the faith more accessible and relevant to post-Soviet realities. The calls for reform fomented discord between traditionalist prelates, clergy, and laity and reformist clergy and laity.

The new pluralism challenged the Moscow Patriarchate to reclaim its position at the centre of national religious life. Orthodoxy's heritage as Russia's traditional faith enabled the Church, both as an institution and as an assembly of believers, to

¹ Hereafter also referred to as the '1997 law'. For the full text see Rossiiskaia Federatsiia Federal'nyi zakon, "O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniiakh", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 1 October 1997, 2-3.

² The terms Russian Orthodox Church, Orthodox Church and Russian Church are used interchangeably to refer to the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate).

garner support from diverse social and political forces. Some of these invoked Orthodoxy to encourage the development and consolidation of civil society, integral to Russia's democratic project. Others appropriated the national Church to augment anti-democratic platforms and ideologies.

The Church's post-Soviet path was determined by the struggle to appropriate Orthodoxy by these diametrically opposed tendencies. Both of these conflicting currents affected the Church's stance in the social and political arenas, as well as the religious sphere, and the dynamics within Church structures. The extent of Orthodoxy's influence in these three spheres of civil society is central to this analysis of the Church's contribution to Russia's postcommunist development.

The Orthodox Church was highly visible in the new Russia. The Church's resurgence was buoyed by renewed consideration of Russian identity. Russians have long regarded the Church as the protector of national interests and the defender of national traditions. In the uncertain socio-economic conditions of post-Soviet Russia, many Russians looked to the Orthodox Church for guidance. Consequently, the Church was frequently invoked in discussions of national identity and in deliberations over the country's future. Orthodoxy's resurgence encouraged leading political figures to identify the Church as an influential ally. Politicians' recognition of the utility of appeals to national identity and tradition fortified the Church's sway.

Thus, from the weak position of a faith tolerated by an atheist regime, the Orthodox Church secured a powerful and prominent position in postcommunist Russia. Although the Church had rivals in schismatic Orthodox groups, other traditional faiths, and in western and, to a lesser extent, Asian denominations, the Orthodox Church benefited from the new freedoms more than any other faith. The Moscow Patriarchate reclaimed Orthodoxy's pre-revolutionary position at the centre of Russia's religious life. Indeed, the Patriarchate directed considerable effort toward securing a heightened influence in the pluralist religious sphere.

This dissertation examines the tension between the Church's official and unofficial contributions to civil society. It is argued that the Church contributes to the emergence of civil society in unofficial, or informal, ways. This influence

emanates from outside Church structures. Lay activism, for instance, has been central to disseminating ideas about tolerance, religious pluralism, ecumenism and an inclusive notion of national identity, while adhering to Orthodox belief, and the rules and practices of the Church. Conversely, though the Moscow Patriarchate has the potential to contribute to the development of Russia's civil society, in an official, or formal, capacity it obstructs the consolidation of civil society in both the social and political arenas and in the religious sphere. The Orthodox Church's heightened influence affects the activities of both traditional and nontraditional denominations operating in the religious domain. The 1997 law 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' confirmed the Church's privileged position.

The 1997 Federal Religious Law³

The legislation's most contentious features are the preamble and the categorisation of religious bodies.⁴ The preamble is curious for a number of reasons. First, it 'affirm[s] the right of each person to freedom of conscience and freedom of religious profession, as well as to equality before the law, irrespective of religious affiliation and conviction'. The guarantee of equality before the law is, however, contradicted in later statutes which distinguish between the religious organisation (*organizatsiia*) and the religious group (*gruppa*) and accord the two radically different legal rights. (Because of this distinction, this dissertation follows the legislation in employing the term 'association' [*ob'edinenie*] as a general term constituting both organisations and groups). Second, the preamble affirms that Russia is a secular state, but also refers to the 'special role of Orthodoxy in the history of Russia and in the establishment and development of its spirituality and culture'. Third, the recognition of 'Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and other religions, constituting an integral part of the historical heritage of the peoples of Russia' implies a hierarchy of faiths, with Orthodoxy at the pinnacle, a group of faiths recognised in the preamble on a second tier, and the unnamed 'other religions' on a lower tier. Finally, the Orthodox Church is the only denomination (as opposed to religion) named in the preamble.

³ Material for this section has been adapted from Zoe Knox, "Russia's Religion Law and Threats to Freedom of Conscience", *Russian and Euro-Asian Bulletin*, vol. 9, no. 6 (2000), 1-15.

⁴ All references to the legislation refer to Rossiiskaia Federatsiia Federal'nyi zakon, "O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniakh", 2-3.

The 1997 law categorises religious associations as either organisations or groups. The rights of religious groups are restricted to performing services and other religious rites and ceremonies and conducting religious instruction and education of their adherents (Art. 7.3). This is in sharp contrast to religious organisations. Organisations are able to establish and maintain buildings (Art. 16.1), conduct services in a range of public and private spaces, such as hospitals and children's homes (Arts 16.2, 16.3), produce and disseminate religious literature (Art. 17.1), produce religious artefacts and material (Arts 17.2, 17.3), establish charitable and cultural-educational organisations (Art. 18), and invite foreign citizens to engage in professional activities, including preaching (Art. 20). There are many advantages to being classified as a religious organisation. The differences in the legal rights of organisations and groups mean that the former are in a much stronger position to carry out evangelical work than the latter.

Eligibility to be classified as an organisation is dependent on bureaucratic record keeping and decision making. The most controversial prerequisite is that an organisation has to have been registered for 15 years, since 1982 (Art. 9.1), when Leonid Brezhnev was still party secretary. The Soviet regime's persecution of religious communities and individual believers made registering with authorities a hazardous move for suspect faiths. The regime permitted official bodies a degree of freedom, but only at the expense of a compromised and censored existence, which some religious communities regarded as an unacceptable concession. In the post-Soviet period, these communities have retained the status of a *gruppа*, which precludes the basic rights enjoyed by an *organizatsiia*. The logic is that disruptive and dangerous faiths are short-lived and will not survive the fifteen-year 'trial period'. Only religious associations that acknowledged the legitimacy of the Soviet regime are able to enjoy the freedoms conferred by the status of organisation.

Debate about the 1997 law served to reinvigorate polemics about Orthodoxy and democracy, and by extension, about ecumenism and religious pluralism in Russia. The polemics can be regarded as a litmus test for Orthodoxy's potential to contribute to civil society in a pluralist environment. Though the legislation appears to violate the Russian Constitution and Russia's international human rights agreements, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, it is not the purpose of this dissertation to explore the legality or illegality of the law. Nevertheless, the legislation is of primary importance for the central argument of the dissertation, and its consequences will therefore be examined in detail. The passage and provisions of 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' stimulated polemics centred on issues such as the presence of foreign missionaries and the spectre of Protestant incursion, religious pluralism and Russian culture, the link between the national Church and national identity, Russia's historical and spiritual destiny, and the relationship between church and state and its import for Russia's governance. These issues derive from or have been reinvigorated by debate about the legislation. They polarised prelates, clergy and laity. After the passage of 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' in 1997, the debate did not subside, but rather escalated. Many social and political forces in Russia and in the international community aligned themselves with this legislation's advocates and adversaries.

Orthodoxy's Centrality to Post-Soviet Polity and Society

The 1997 law showed how important the Church was seen to be in Russia's post-Soviet political, social and cultural development. Orthodoxy has long been central to Russian political life. Prince Vladimir's introduction of Eastern Orthodoxy to Kievan Rus' marked the beginning of an intimate link between church and state, guided by the Byzantine symphonic ideal of the dual rule of the ecclesiastical and temporal authorities. The Church remained a significant political force until the reign of Emperor Peter I. His initiatives, notably the abolition of the Patriarchate and the creation of a council of laypersons in its place, subjugated the Church to the state. The movement for greater Church independence in the early twentieth century was interrupted by the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. There followed a decisive break in the overt linkage of Church and state, though this did not bring about the demise of Orthodoxy's influence among the population, as the Soviet regime had hoped.

The number of self-identified Orthodox believers is testimony to the Church's preeminent position in Russian national consciousness. In the Soviet period, western researchers could offer little more than educated guesses about the number of

Orthodox adherents. The 1937 Soviet census was the first and last to ask respondents to state their *religiia* (religion).⁵ Fifty-six per cent of the population identified themselves as believers.⁶ Despite the regime's closure of churches, the execution and imprisonment of hierarchs and clergy, and the sustained persecution of its adherents, Orthodoxy retained a significant following. The census return revealed the failure of anti-religious propaganda and policies.

Soviet researchers were not able to broach the subject of religious belief with the objective analysis of independent scholars. Consequently, their estimates of the number of believers are of little use, except as testimony to the ambitions of the atheist regime. Jane Ellis, who wrote the definitive modern history of the Russian Church, claimed in the mid-1980s that, while estimates of the number of believers in the USSR by both western and unofficial Soviet sources usually cited between 30 million and 50 million, the actual number was higher, and 'could number 55-60 million'.⁷ The degree of Orthodox adherence is highlighted by the fact that, even at 50 million, the number of believers was two and half times the membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), which in January 1990 numbered close to 19 million.⁸

The number of self-identified Orthodox believers rose sharply in the post-Soviet period. The regime's cessation of the repression of individual believers and religious communities and the eventual demise of materialist Marxism-Leninism allowed unprecedented religious freedom. Estimates of the number of self-identified Orthodox believers range from 50 million, which amounts to roughly one third of the population, to 70 million, or one half of the population.⁹ Muscovites are just as likely

⁵ Akademiia nauk SSSR, *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1937 g.: Kratkie itogi*, Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1991, 206.

⁶ Felix Corley, *Religion in the Soviet Union: An Archival Reader*, New York: New York University Press, 1996, 76.

⁷ Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, London, New York: Routledge, 1986, 177. See the overview of scholarship on the number of believers in Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, 173-77.

⁸ Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuz, "Statisticheskie dannye po KPSS na ianvaria 1990 g.", *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4 (1990), 113.

⁹ Mikhail Tul'skii, "Vakhkhabity v Rossii pobezhdauiut umerennykh musul'man?", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 19 June 2001, 8.

to identify themselves as Orthodox as rural Russians.¹⁰ This departs from the stereotype of the rural and uneducated Orthodox believers that was increasingly misrepresentative from the 1970s, when the intelligentsia began to turn to the Church.¹¹

Data on the registration of Orthodox associations is one indicator of the Church's preeminence in the religious sphere. A large number of churches, seminaries, monasteries, nunneries, and educational institutes were established or reopened throughout the 1990s. In 1990 there were 3,451 registered associations of the Russian Orthodox Church.¹² According to the Ministry of Justice, by 1 January 1993 this number had risen to 4,566; in 1994 - 5,559; in 1995 - 6,414; in 1996 - 7,195; in 1997 - 8,002; and by 1 January 1998 the number of registered Orthodox associations had reached 8,653, accounting for more than half of all registered religious associations in the country.¹³ According to the Moscow Patriarchate, this growth has continued. In 2002 there were 128 dioceses in Russia and abroad (compared to 67 in 1989), 19,000 parishes (6,893 in 1988), and some 480 monasteries (just 18 in 1980).¹⁴ The Church has a strong presence outside Russia; there are more parishes in the former Soviet states than in Russia itself – half of them in Ukraine alone¹⁵ – and there are parishes as far away as Melbourne, Australia.

¹⁰ A sociologist developed a profile of the typical self-identified Orthodox believer, an ethnically Russian, non-church going woman in her older years, residing in Moscow or St Petersburg, or a rural area. B.V. Dubin, "Pravoslaviye v sotsial'nom kontekste", *Informatsionnyi biulleten' monitoringa*, vol. 6, no. 26 (1996), 15-18.

¹¹ On the intelligentsia and Orthodoxy, see Masha Gessen, *Dead Again: The Russian Intelligentsia After Communism*, London, New York: Verso, 1997, 53-56 and Sergei Averintsev, "Opyt bor'by s vnusheniimi vremeni", *Nezavisimaya gazeta - religii*, 3 November 1999, 13.

¹² Apparat Soveta Federatsii Federal'nogo Sobraniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii analiticheskoe upravlenie, *Religioznye ob'edineniia rossiiskoi federatsii: Spravochnik*, Moscow: Respublika, 1996, 244.

¹³ Anonymous, "Svedeniia o gosudarstvennoi registratsii ustavov religioznykh ob'edinenii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii (po dannym Ministerstva iustitsii Rossiiskoi Federatsii)", *Religiia i pravo*, no. 1-2(4-5) (1998), 32-33.

¹⁴ These numbers refer to all parishes under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. Communication Service of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, "Church News (2001)" (Web site). Accessed 14 January 2002 at http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/news_en.htm. By comparison, in 1998 there were 123 dioceses, 17,000 parishes, and 395 monasteries. Communication Service of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, "Church News (1998)" (Web site). Accessed 18 August 1998 at http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/news_en.htm.

¹⁵ Taras Kuzio, "The Struggle to Establish the World's Largest Orthodox Church (5 September 2000)" (Web site). Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline. Accessed 1 February 2001 at <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/09/050900.html>. These parishes are constituted as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate).

Though these figures suggest a revival of Church life, levels of church attendance have led some observers to a different conclusion. An influential study of Orthodox religious life by sociologist B.V. Dubin, published in late 1996 in *Informatsionnyi biulleten' monitoringa*, analysed data from surveys carried out between 1991 and 1996. Dubin reported that seven per cent of self-identified Orthodox believers attended church once a month or more; 17 per cent from one to several times a year, while 60 per cent replied that they did not attend church services at all.¹⁶ A survey carried out in 1999 by the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Finland returned almost identical results.¹⁷ There is thus a gulf between Orthodox self-identification and active worship.¹⁸ While this dissertation is not a sociological inquiry,¹⁹ it should be noted that though Orthodox adherence is widespread, active worship is the exception rather than the norm. This analysis of the Orthodox Church's influence on civil society therefore also examines the Church's influence outside the ecclesiastical realm and in the temporal world of politics and society. Reports on levels of trust in the Church are a further indicator of the Church's prominence. A survey conducted in 1993 and 1994 demonstrated that Russians trusted the Orthodox Church more than any other public institution, including entities as disparate as the law courts, trade unions, private enterprise, the

¹⁶ Dubin, "Pravoslavie v sotsial'nom kontekste", 15-18.

¹⁷ The survey found that seven percent of Orthodox believers attended church services once a month; 19 per cent several times a year; 29 per cent once a year or less and 45 per cent never attend church. The authors conclude that church attendance in Russia is one of the lowest in Europe. Kimmo Kääriäinen and Dmitri Furman, "Religiosity in Russia in the 1990s" in *Religious Transition in Russia*, ed. Matti Kotiranta, Helsinki: Kikimora Publications, 2000, 38. See also Richard Rose, *Russia Elects a President, New Russian Barometer IX*, Glasgow: Centre for Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 2000, 53.

¹⁸ Chinyaeva goes so far as to suggest that Russia 'remains among the least pious of the world's countries'. Elena Chinyaeva, "Russian Orthodox Church Forges a New Role", *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 7 (1996), 14. One Orthodox prelate also recognised the gulf between Orthodox self-identity and active worship: 'Today, if you stop people at random on the streets of Moscow and ask them if they consider themselves believers, perhaps half or even more would identify themselves as Orthodox. In most cases, however, they would not be regular churchgoers: They simply identify themselves with the Orthodox tradition and have only a limited relationship with the Church'. Hilarion Alfeev, "Reviving the Russian Orthodox Church: A Task Both Theological and Secular" in *Russia's Fate Through Russian Eyes: Voices of the New Generation*, ed. Heyward Isham and Natan M. Shklyar, Boulder: Westview Press, 2001, 238.

¹⁹ For a sociological analysis of belief in the Soviet period see Christel Lane, *Christian Religion in the Soviet Union: A Sociological Study*, London, Boston, Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1978.

media, the army and the government.²⁰ This confidence in the Church continued throughout the 1990s.²¹

The political and social importance of the Orthodox Church in post-Soviet Russia is not an exceptional phenomenon in the modern world. Religion has been central to the emancipatory movements of Liberation Theology, which emanated from Latin America, and of *Solidarność* in communist Poland; to Middle Eastern and United States politics; and to the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland. The national churches are of particular political significance in postcommunist Europe. These societies seek to institute religious pluralism after communist rule. The authority of the national churches, buoyed by the resurgence of the so-called 'new nationalisms', is considerable, and they impact on policies toward religious minorities and other religious issues. Though the Catholic leadership in communist Poland was an opposition force (unlike the Moscow Patriarchate), it went on to become the preeminent conservative force in postcommunist Poland. In the postcommunist period, the Moscow Patriarchate and the Catholic Church's leadership have sought to curb the spread of tolerance, pluralism and secularism: notions that are central to the concept of civil society.

Orthodox prelates exerted considerable influence over the political processes in post-Soviet Russia. Patriarch Aleksii II was elected to head the Patriarchate at the June 1990 *Arkhieriei sobor* (Bishops Council) after the death of Patriarch Pimen, who had led the Church from 1971.²² The Patriarch and the ecclesiastical ranks below him – Metropolitan, Archbishop, Bishop and Hegumen – comprise the Church leadership. Of this hierarchy, the Patriarch and the Metropolitans hold power, and it is the outcome of debate among them that produces (or resists) change. The success of the Patriarchate's campaign to implement legislation limiting the activities of foreign missionaries and religious bodies is demonstrative of Orthodoxy's leverage on matters that extend beyond its jurisdiction and into that of political governance.

²⁰ See the table in Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes*, Chatham: Chatham House Publishers, 1997, 52-53.

²¹ A 1999 survey found that 23 per cent of respondents had a 'great deal' and 46 per cent a 'fair amount' of confidence in the Russian Orthodox Church, placing it above all other public institutions. See the table in Kääriäinen and Furman, "Religiosity in Russia in the 1990s", 60.

²² Metropolitan Aleksii had effectively headed the Patriarchate for some time due to Patriarch Pimen's protracted illness.

The campaign gained support from nationalist and conservative politicians, from Orthodox believers, and from representatives of other major religions, who also felt threatened by the perceived interlopers. The 1997 law not only significantly reduced the legal rights of foreign religious bodies, but restricted most religions and denominations except the Russian Church. The Church's domestic political significance was also illustrated by a leading newspaper's regular poll of Russia's most influential political figures; the Patriarch consistently ranked in the top fifteen.²³ The Church's international significance was demonstrated when, in 1997, Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, went directly from the airport to see the Patriarch on a private visit.

Given the large number of Orthodox adherents and the tangible authority of the Orthodox Church in the social and political arenas, the Church was poised in the post-Soviet period to reclaim its position at the forefront of national spiritual life. The Church figured prominently in various discussions as the driving force behind Russia's renewal and recovery. In 1990 Vladimir Poresh, a former prisoner of conscience and Orthodox dissident, wrote of the Church's challenge: 'Never has so much been expected from it by so many people'.²⁴ It soon became clear that the Church leadership could not meet these challenges, and there was increasing disaffection with the leadership for not keeping in step with the needs and wishes of its congregation.²⁵ In many ways the course of the Orthodox Church in the post-Soviet period has been one of struggle between competing visions of how to meet the challenges of post-Soviet realities.

Western Misperceptions of the Russian Orthodox Church

Despite the centrality of religion to Russia's post-Soviet development, western scholars habitually overlook the Orthodox Church's influence. The Church leadership seeks to instill values and norms in society to create a social and political consensus based on Orthodox doctrines and traditions. In this respect, the Patriarchate's quest for influence is not especially different from that of other groups

²³ See, for example, Aleksandr Komozin, "100 vedushchikh politikov Rossii v mae", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 10 June 2001, 11.

²⁴ Vladimir Poresh, "Faith and Lack of Faith in Russia", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 19, no. 1-2 (1991), 75.

²⁵ See Lyudmila Vorontsova and Sergei Filatov, "Religiosity and Political Consciousness in Postsoviet Russia", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 22, no. 4 (1994), 397-402.

seeking to gain power in the new Russia. There are, however, important reasons why the extent of Orthodoxy's influence should be of central concern to analyses of civil society in postcommunist Russia.

Dmitrii Pospelovskii, a distinguished scholar on the Russian Church, is an apologist for the Patriarchate's weak response to post-Soviet challenges. He excuses the leadership's lack of 'clarity of direction and stability':

As human beings, with typically human faults, they are an inseparable part of a nation living through a deep crisis of identity, searching for the meaning of its horrible twentieth-century experience and for a new way of life, humiliated by the revelations of terror and tortures committed by their fathers and brothers, incompatible with the myths of Holy Russia, resulting in a common temptation to find scapegoats rather than coming to terms with the national guilt.²⁶

It is true that the legacy of Soviet religious repression and the manifold complexities of the postcommunist transition have presented the Patriarchate with significant challenges. Pospelovskii's apology for the institutional Church's incoherent contribution to civil society overlooks the experience of Soviet-era dissident clergy and post-Soviet nonconformist clergy. The dissidents experienced the terror and tortures, not the prelates, and the nonconformists underwent harassment in the post-Soviet period at the instigation of the Church leadership. Reformist clergy have had a significant impact on the construction of civil society, in spite of their experiences in the Soviet period.

Worse than overlooking the diametrically opposed tendencies in Orthodox Church life is the proclivity of western analysts to paint the Church as a monolithic body, one that uniformly 'does not support liberalism'.²⁷ It is true that the traditionalist current, which emphasises powerful authority and limits on pluralism, is strong, both within and outside Church structures. The statement in an editorial in *The Times* (London), however, that 'The Russian Orthodox Church is in the grip of extreme nationalists and anti-Semites' is overblown and reduces the movement

²⁶ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, Crestwood (NY): St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998, 377. John Lloyd also defends the Patriarch's lack of leadership, asking 'What more could Alexei II do?' in John Lloyd, *Rebirth of a Nation: An Anatomy of Russia*, London: Michael Joseph, 1998, 171.

²⁷ David W. Lovell, "Nationalism and Democratisation in Post-Communist Russia" in *Russia After Yeltsin*, ed. Vladimir Tikhomirov, Aldershot, Burlington, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate, 2001, 46.

among reformist clergy and laity for *perestroika* in Orthodox life to inconsequence.²⁸ It seems that western commentators on Church life perpetuate the cold war 'Evil Empire' suspicions, the catch-cry for anti-Soviet propaganda.

This dissertation argues that the Orthodox Church is an important social and political force. By contrast, a major study of postcommunist Russian politics by leading scholars contended that the infrequency of Orthodox church attendance indicated widespread indifference toward religion. The same survey that led the eminent political scientists Stephen White, Richard Rose and Ian McAllister to conclude that there was a high level of trust in the Church also led them to assert: 'In parallel with secularization in Western Europe, Russians have increasingly become indifferent to religion rather than dividing between believers and anticlerical secular groups'.²⁹ This statement is problematic. Ronald Inglehart, drawing on surveys conducted in fifteen countries in the 1980s, noted that when evaluating levels of religious practice,

If we were to base our conclusion on church attendance rates alone... we would obtain a crude and somewhat misleading perception of mass orientations toward religion. Church attendance statistics are better than nothing, as a rough indicator of trends in religious belief – but they clearly are no substitute for direct measures of these beliefs.³⁰

There is ample evidence to support Inglehart's contention that church attendance is a poor indication of levels of religious practice in the Russian context. Despite surveys which demonstrate the infrequency of church attendance, the Orthodox Church maintains a high profile, demonstrated by leading politicians consulting with Orthodox dignitaries, continued polemics about the Church's role in mainstream (and peripheral) media, religious themes in art and literature, and the constant presence of the Church in discussions of the nation's historic path: past, present and future. The lack of anticlerical groups is not a symptom of indifference toward religion but the product of an under-developed sphere of independent associations. Such an independent sphere is an integral part of civil society as civil society is defined for the purposes of this study. There exist a not inconsiderable number of Orthodox lay

²⁸ Editorial, "A Church's Shame: Russian Christians Should Lay their Tsar to Rest", *The Times*, 20 June 1998, 23. The same portrait of the Russian Church is presented in Victoria Clark, *Why Angels Fall: A Portrait of Orthodox Europe from Byzantium to Kosovo*, London: Macmillan, 2000.

²⁹ White, Rose, and McAllister, *How Russia Votes*, 65.

³⁰ Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990, 185.

organisations – those united in the *Soiuz pravoslavnikh bratstv* (Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods), for example. The infrequency of church attendance does not necessarily mean secularisation is underway. Though a small number of believers attended church in the Soviet period, it became clear in the *perestroika* years that the population was not indifferent toward religion. The extent of Orthodoxy's influence should not be as readily dismissed as some political scientists propose. Other shortcomings of existing literature are identified in Chapter 1.

This dissertation aims to overcome these western misconceptions of the Russian Church. It contends that the Moscow Patriarchate has a significant social and political influence, that there is a division between reformist and traditionalist clergy, and that a distinction must be made between the Church's official and unofficial influence. The competing visions of Orthodoxy's role in Russia are crucial to understanding changes within this dynamic body. Once the Church's influence on civil society (more precisely, the three spheres of civil society identified in Chapter 1 of this study) is analysed, positions such as that of White, Rose and McAllister are seen to be excessively reductive.

An inquiry into the influence of the Church on civil society is important also because of the centrality of Orthodoxy to polity and society, the high levels of Orthodox self-identification, and the importance of the national faith to the postcommunist transition. That the interplay of religion, politics and civil society is indeed a central issue for the Russian Federation is indicated by the fact that it is an object of deliberation in the Kremlin, in the scholarly journals of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and in mainstream media.

Methodology

The tension between the traditionalist and the reformist factions in the Orthodox Church is a product of differing concepts of the Church's post-Soviet role. At the crux of these tensions are the issues of Orthodoxy's accessibility, the Church's relations with other confessions, the place of Orthodoxy in national identity, and the chance for alternative understandings of Orthodoxy to be expressed. These issues, and thus the conflicts within the Church, are essentially about civil society. The best insight into the role of the Church in post-Soviet Russia is gained through the

analysis of Orthodoxy and civil society. The concept of civil society provides the theoretical basis of this dissertation. Chapter 1 offers a more thorough examination of how the concept of civil society used in this inquiry has been derived.

The transition of the official Church's position from the Soviet to the post-Soviet period has been one of the most startling developments in the religious sphere. The understanding of this transition is a key aim of this dissertation. While in the USSR, the Church existed as an institution in a compromised form, towing the regime's line in domestic and international affairs and forgoing evangelism, there existed lively and impassioned debate in clandestine religious circles. The relaxation of religious discrimination in the Gorbachev period and the subsequent demise of the atheist regime permitted freedom of conscience for the first time in Russia's history. It was immediately apparent that there was a vast gulf, both in experience and in perceptions of Orthodoxy's role, between Church dignitaries – in the main traditionalists – and former dissident clergy who were mostly reformists. This gulf has widened in the post-Soviet period. The negotiation of church-state relations in the new pluralist environment has been problematic. The polemics generated by Patriarch Aleksii's attempts to negotiate a middle ground have served to highlight this division.

The period under study is crucial as the Church's post-Soviet role is yet to be consolidated. The liberation of traditional faiths, the influx of foreign missionaries and the rise of indigenous cults and sects led to a dynamism in the religious sphere that made it difficult for the Church to secure a position of certainty among the numerous canvassers for converts. There were arguably more changes in the religious sphere between 1991 and 1997 than in any other period in the country's history, except perhaps for the Bolshevik assault on religious belief following the 1917 revolution.

This dissertation argues that the influence on the emergence of civil society of both the official and the unofficial Church is to an increasing extent informing debate on religious life. Official Church life is represented by the Patriarchate's stance and unofficial Church life by nonconformist clergy and lay activism. As the distinction

between formal Church influence and informal Church influence is at the heart of this analysis, it is necessary to elucidate what is intended by these terms.

The official influence emanates from the Moscow Patriarchate, the governing body of the Church, and from Church dignitaries. It should be noted that there are conflicting viewpoints among Orthodox prelates, which makes it problematic to attribute any statement, policy, or political ideology to a single member of the hierarchy or to the Church as a whole. Patriarch Aleksii is elected the sole authority entitled to speak for and to establish the Church's policy as a whole. The weight given to these ideas and policies by the wider community – whether it is the social or political community – determines the extent of the Church's formal influence.

Although it has been demonstrated that Orthodoxy has a significant influence outside the walls of its churches, what is meant by informal influence needs further explanation. Michael P. Fogarty, in a seminal text on Christian Democracy published in 1957, argued that Christian Democracy is located in a 'level of action inspired by Christian ideals'. His definition of this 'level of action' is appropriate for this evaluation of the informal contribution to civil society,

at which the laity take over entirely and act on their own initiative and responsibility, though within the normal framework of beliefs, rules and practice of their church. The 'laity' in this case includes members of the clergy who may, for instance, enter politics on the same footing as laymen, leaving behind for that purpose the special authority of their clerical office.³¹

A wide range of social, political and economic activities can therefore be construed as this informal influence. Patriarch Aleksii is adamant that clergy may not be involved in politics (despite the fact that, along with five other priests, he was elected to the USSR's Congress of People's Deputies in April 1989).³² In October 1993 the *Sviatoi sinod* (Holy Synod) decreed that priests could not hold political office. As a result, Gleb' Iakunin, a reformist priest and an outspoken critic of the Patriarchate, was defrocked after his election to the Duma, the lower house of parliament, and

³¹ Michael P. Fogarty, *Christian Democracy in Western Europe 1820-1953*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1957, 4.

³² Anonymous, "Vybor sdelan", *Izvestiia*, 6 May 1989, 3.

eventually excommunicated by a decision of the February 1997 Bishops' Council.³³ Hence, there is little overlap between the official and unofficial Church's activities.

This dissertation is based on a selective analysis of data on Orthodox religious life. It is textually based, drawing on both Russian and English language sources. Data for the Soviet period have been obtained from three sources: for the official material, the Church leadership's statements and publications have been consulted, and for the unofficial material, *samizdat* (self-published) material informs analysis of Orthodoxy's contribution to civil society. The state's policy toward religion has been examined through state-sanctioned anti-religious and atheist publications and official decrees. These three pools of resources allow an understanding of the official Church's position, the activities of non-Orthodox dissidents, and church-state relations in the USSR.

In the post-Soviet period, primary source material for the formal influence is provided by official statements and publications by departments of the Patriarchate and interviews and statements by the Patriarch and other Church dignities. The Bishops' Council and Holy Synod issue periodic statements on matters of ecclesiastical and temporal importance. The reports, pamphlets, articles and monographs issued by the Patriarchate's Publishing Department have been utilised.

The analysis of the contribution of lay activism to the emergence of civil society is evaluated through the laity's work in social, political and charitable organisations, and also through the initiatives of reformist clergy, who seek to make Orthodoxy more 'transparent' and accessible. Both these groups have received a great deal of attention in western and Russian media, and there are many interviews and commentaries on Church life and on wider social issues. The large number of articles is testimony to the importance of these groups in articulating an Orthodox position alternative to that of the Patriarchate.

³³ See Bishops' Council, "Act on Excommunication of Gleb Pavlovich Yakunin (1997)" (Web site). Communication Service of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. Accessed 4 July 2001 at <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/sobor09e.htm#7>.

Russian newspapers, which frequently publish polemical tracts about church-state relations, are a valuable secondary source. The high-profile political activities of Orthodox dignitaries, such as Patriarch Aleksii and Metropolitan Kirill, and the publicity generated by the Patriarchate itself ensure that there is wide coverage of prelates' activities in the mainstream media. The visibility of the Church leadership points to their influence in public life, if not in the political life of the country. Use has been made of reports by religious liberty and human rights organisations active in Russia. Publications by religious associations, both indigenous and foreign (especially western), have been used, though these are largely impressionistic accounts of the Orthodox Church's preeminence in the religious sphere, particularly in relation to their own experiences. They are therefore of limited relevance to this study. The use of the Internet has, for the most part, been limited to official web sites.³⁴ Finally, the author's own interviews with Orthodox clergy and laity, religious rights activists and western missionaries are used to support textual findings.

Dissertation Structure

This dissertation is in four parts. Part I, Chapter 1 addresses how it is best to approach an inquiry into the Church's influence. Civil society has become a 'buzzword' in analyses of the postcommunist countries' democratic transitions. Ernest Gellner wrote in 1994 of the antiquated phrase 'civil society': 'all of a sudden, it has been taken out and thoroughly dusted, and has become a shining emblem'.³⁵ Chapter 1 asks whether this 'shining emblem' is useful for an analysis of the Church's post-Soviet role. It establishes why the concept of civil society is a serviceable tool of inquiry in advance of proposing a new way of evaluating the Orthodox Church's obstruction of, and contribution to, the democratic project. The chapter focuses on three spheres of civil society. The major shortcoming of the existing literature on the Russian Church, from the scholarly deprivations of the Soviet period to contemporary Russian understandings of *grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*

³⁴ The most frequently consulted site is the Moscow Patriarchate's official web page. It contains hundreds of official documents, declarations and addresses and is updated often by the Communication Service of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. For Patriarch Aleksii's endorsement of the site, see Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia rusi Aleksii, "Untitled" (Web site). Communication Service of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. Accessed 25 November 2001 at http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/pa2_gr_ru.htm.

³⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals*, New York: Allan Lane (The Penguin Press), 1994, 1.

(civil society), is the neglect of different currents in Orthodox life, both within and outside Church structures. This chapter articulates just how the concept of civil society is useful for this inquiry and how the different currents in Church life are best analysed through the three spheres of civil society.

Part II turns to the unofficial influence of the Russian Church. Chapter 2 asks whether there is any precedent of Orthodoxy's contribution to the emergence and development of civil society. Given the communist persecution of the Church, whether Orthodoxy was able to contribute to the emergence or development of social organisation independent from the state will impact on its post-Soviet contribution. The question of whether the Soviet experience provided any basis for the Church's contribution to the emergence of civil society in the post-Soviet period is explored. The Church's leadership changed little from the communist to the postcommunist eras. The divide in Church life between prelates and nonconformist clergy and laity did continue. The Russian Orthodox Church came to the fore of discussion about the recovery and regeneration of society in the Gorbachev era. This became evident with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*, which allowed the discussion of previously forbidden issues in an attempt to reinvigorate Soviet socialism. The Patriarchate's claims to a leading role drew on Russian national tradition and national identity. The prevalence of religious themes in the rhetoric of reform and the re-discovery of Russian national identity indicated that the Church would play a significant role in the creation of a new Soviet (and subsequently Russian) order.

Chapter 3 analyses the changes in the religious sphere with the demise of atheist Marxism-Leninism. The new climate of tolerance allowed believers to emerge from silence and celebrate their faiths; they flocked to reopened churches, chanted long-quieted liturgies, demonstrated their devotion, and in many other ways practiced faith without fear. Neophytes found solace in the belief systems of the newly liberated faiths, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox, and western Protestant groups flooded into Russia at this first opportunity. After some seventy years of militant atheist rule, the animation of the religious sphere was one of the most striking developments in post-Soviet Russia. The Moscow Patriarchate faced significant challenges; the most serious was the division that developed between reformist and traditionalist clergy. Chapter 3 considers whether, given the Soviet-era division

between dissenters and prelates, this remained a salient cleavage in the post-Soviet period. The analysis of the influence of the informal current in Church life questions whether the agendas of these two groups coalesced with the end of the distinction between the tolerated and the repressed. The key features of the alternative vision of Orthodoxy indicate how the reformist agenda is compatible with the dissemination of concepts central to civil society and how reformist clergy contributed to civil society. The resultant rift in the Church is also examined.

Part III examines the official influence of the Russian Orthodox Church. In a secular, multi-confessional state, it would be expected that the Church would co-exist with other bodies in the 'sphere of associations' that constitutes civil society. The demise of the Soviet regime heralded the end of the Orthodox Church's traditional position as the official religion of the Russian state. Yet the Church's continued privilege is demonstrated by the legislation 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations'. Chapter 4 asks how, if civil society is social self-organisation independent from the state, the relationship between the temporal leadership and the traditional Russian church impacted on this position. It questions whether post-Soviet church-state relations are conducive to the emergence of civil society. Chapter 4 analyses the Moscow Patriarchate's visions of church-state relations, especially the historic formulae of *symphonia*, and whether this is conducive to the emergence of civil society.

Forces hostile to civil society appropriated Orthodoxy to promote anti-pluralism in the new ideologically pluralist society. The Church became the key constituent of a reinvigorated Russian national consciousness. Discrimination against religious minorities in the name of Orthodox tradition was a central concern of religious liberty and human rights groups, who viewed their work defending religious communities and individual believers as just as important in the post-Soviet period as it had been in the Soviet period.³⁶ Chapter 5 considers in whose name the forces of national chauvinism invoked Orthodoxy, and how the Church's centrality to national tradition and identity was used to oppose concepts central to civil society. Given the strength of the ethno-national linkage among the population, which makes Orthodoxy

³⁶ See, for example, Lawrence Uzzell, *Opening Address, Keston Institute Forum Day*, Oxford: 15 November 1999.

the centrepiece of national chauvinism, this inquiry is essential. This chapter considers how religious pluralism forced the Church leadership to address unprecedented problems, and how the Patriarchate ultimately adopted a defensive position toward both internal and external challenges.

Since the Moscow Patriarchate had a significant political influence, it is essential to analyse how its mediation of competing visions of Orthodoxy's role impacts on this influence. Chapter 6 examines to what extent the Church obstructs civil society. This allows the analysis of the official Church's stance on religious pluralism and thus its official influence on civil society. Orthodox conceptions of communality and freedom provide the basis of tensions between Orthodoxy and Protestantism. These are indicative of the significant differences between the worldview of each denomination. This dissertation's evaluation of religion and civil society acknowledges the different theological underpinnings to civil society in Russia's largest Christian churches, and whether the implications of the different visions determine the Church's post-Soviet path.

Part IV, comprising the Conclusion, considers the conflicting viewpoints of the official and the unofficial currents in Church life. This allows the analysis of the implications of the Church's post-Soviet role and considers how the division between the reformist and traditionalist factions impacted on perceptions of the notions central to the concept of civil society. Given the Church's conspicuous role in Russian polity and society, the analysis of its contribution to the democratic project is vital to an understanding of the nature of post-Soviet Russian politics.

Chapter 1

Civil Society, Religion and Politics

Since its inception in early political philosophy to its present, albeit equivocal, usage, the concept of civil society has undergone terminological and theoretical transitions which reflect changing attitudes toward the relationship between political leadership and citizenry.¹ In the modern period, the concept of civil society was revived in the context of Solidarność's activities in Poland in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It was appropriated by political commentators observing the dramatic changes in the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s; the extensive use of the concept to describe the transformations led to the observation that 'a veritable "cult of civil society" seized liberal analysts of these developments'.²

Civil society has since been used in a variety of contexts. It is an ambiguous and amorphous concept, which is far from offering consensual or consistent service to modern theorists. Chapter 1 examines the antecedents of civil society, its employment in western and Russian thought, and elucidates how it is used in this evaluation of the Orthodox Church's contribution to Russia's postcommunist development. It establishes that the concept of civil society is useful for this dissertation in three ways: as a term denoting a society that accommodates social self-organisation independent of the state; as a term denoting a state of affairs in the religious sphere characterised by interaction between different denominations and religions; and as a term denoting a particular kind of dynamism within Church structures.

¹ Aristotle wrote of *koininia politike* (political society or community) in his treatise *Politics*. This referred to a political association which maintained law and order, thereby assuring the good life and well being of its citizens and a peaceful and harmonious society. In this classical understanding, the sphere of independent union and association, that which modern theorists recognise as civil society, was coterminous with political society. This synonymity continued in the work of the natural law philosophers, among them Kant, Rousseau and Hume. Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Richard Kraut, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

² Roger D. Markwick, "An Uncivil Society: Moscow in Political Change" in *In Search of Identity: Five Years Since the Fall of the Soviet Union*, ed. Vladimir Tikhomirov, Melbourne: Centre for Russian and Euro-Asian Studies, University of Melbourne, 1996: 40.

A review of the literature on civil society, religion and politics reveals that although a great deal has been written on church-state relations in post-Soviet Russia, these publications have not examined the changing role of the Orthodox Church through the prism of civil society. In addition, the passage of 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' in 1997 radically altered the dynamics in the religious sphere. The majority of the literature on the Church has focussed on the Patriarchate, and so emphasised the influence of Orthodoxy as an institution, at the expense of its non-institutional influence. The import of Orthodoxy for contemporary Russia has not been adequately explored in the existing literature. Chapter 1 demonstrates how the concept of civil society is used to overcome these omissions.

Antecedents of Civil Society

There is a large body of literature supporting the thesis that 'without a strong civil society, democracies are inherently weak and unstable'.³ The term 'civil society' is thus central to evaluations of Russia's postcommunist transition; it has been argued that '[b]ecoming 'normal' was conceived as constructing a civil society...'.⁴ Despite the importance placed on civil society's entrenchment, the 'frailty' of Russia's 'languishing' or 'stunted' civil society is widely acknowledged and the long and short-term obstacles to its development and consolidation frequently deliberated.⁵ President Vladimir Putin's accession in March 2000 heightened awareness of its continued weakness. His emphasis on a strong state (*sil'noe gosudarstvo*) and his initiatives such as restrictions on media freedom and increased control over the federal regions pointed to more authoritarian

³ Josef Novak, "The Precarious Triumph of Civil Society", *Transition*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1997), 13. See also Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge (MA), London: The MIT Press, 1992.

⁴ Lloyd defined the construction of civil society as 'introducing the institutions of a democratic order, and allowing citizens to come to their own settlements and decisions on their lives, under a rule of more or less objective law'. John Lloyd, *Rebirth of a Nation: An Anatomy of Russia*, London: Michael Joseph, 1998, xiii.

⁵ Graeme Gill and Roger D. Markwick, *Russia's Stillborn Democracy? From Gorbachev to Yeltsin*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 205; 49. David Remnick wrote: 'Russia cannot be mistaken for a democratic state; rather, it is a nascent state with some features of democracy (and, alas, many features of oligarchy and authoritarianism)'. David Remnick, *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia*, New York: Random House, 1997, 358. See also Novak, "The Precarious Triumph of Civil Society".

rule. A leading human rights activist argues that the Putin administration's instinct to 'control everything that moves' is the main danger facing civil society, and concludes that 'the drive to strengthen the state's vertical chain of command is being followed by a drive to increase control over society'.⁶

In these evaluations, 'civil society' refers to a type of society, and its strength is assessed through the way that a society functions. The concept of civil society offers an appropriate theoretical framework specifically for the examination of the Orthodox Church's institutional and non-institutional influence. The application of the concept to the narrower subject of the religious sphere allows issues central to discussions of contemporary Church life, such as religious pluralism, inter-denominational dialogue and Church reform, to be examined systematically.

The historic development of the concept of civil society is helpful in understanding contemporary developments. The theoretical exploration of state and society was advanced by developments in the mid-eighteenth century, when the idea that the interaction of the individual parts of society to create mutual dependencies and a complex network of reciprocal relations became the key to understanding the relationship between the two. John Keane argues that the development of the concept of civil society was most profound between 1750 and 1850, and identified four 'modernization phases' which traced the evolution of the idea of civil society, each exemplified by one of the following works: Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-1792), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1821), and Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835-1840).⁷

In the first modernisation phase the idea that associations outside the realm of the state agitate for change had not yet developed. Civil society was coterminous with political society, as Ferguson argued that justice, liberty and freedom are ensured by

⁶ Boris Pustintsev, "The Kremlin and Civil Society", *The Moscow Times*, 22 October 2001, 10.

⁷ John Keane, "Despotism and Democracy" in *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, ed. John Keane, London, New York: Verso, 1988, 37-39.

legislation determined by bodies which are themselves part of the state.⁸ Paine is an exemplar of the second phase; he argued that an egalitarian model of government could only be created by the natural self-regulation of society administered by a limited state. While civil society is not articulated as an entity distinct from the state, society and civilisation are defined in opposition to government.⁹ In the third modernisation phase Hegel asserted that the interests of civil society must be subordinate to the state. He regarded civil society as a manifestation of egoism and selfishness, a destructive social force, whereas the state, created by the universal will, is the epitome of all that is good. For Hegel, the maximum individual freedom can only be found in a complex and highly organised political structure.¹⁰ In the final phase, Tocqueville warned that the intrusion of the state in independent life threatens social equality and the scope of citizens to determine their leaders and, by extension, the shape of their society. Independent associations must flourish to ensure an egalitarian social order.¹¹

With the exception of Tocqueville, scholars deliberating the state and society nexus largely overlooked religious belief. Tocqueville partially attributed the conditions of liberty and enlightenment he observed in America to high levels of religious adherence. Under the sub-heading 'Principal causes which render religion powerful in America', he listed first the separation of church and state. He countered the claim that religious faith is incompatible with a democratic state, and that the more secular a society is, the more liberal it is also, as was the belief in Europe at the time. On the contrary, he argued:

There are certain populations in Europe whose unbelief is only equaled by their ignorance and debasement; while in America, one of the freest and most enlightened nations in the world, the people fulfill with fervor all the outward duties of religion.¹²

Tocqueville regarded the churches' abstinence from politics as ensuring that religion was liberty-inducing, and, further, that religion, integral to human existence, provided a

⁸ Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

⁹ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, ed. Henry Collins, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969.

¹⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, ed. T. M. Knox, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

¹¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence, London: Fontana Press, 1994.

crucial foundation for a democratic state. He attributed the demise of religious power in Europe to the growth of links between churches and governments, whereas in America the separation of church and state meant it could provide a moral basis for the functioning of a civil society which was not as fleeting as government but a more enduring basis for a democratic society.¹³ Hegel also regarded religion as part of civil society, and believed that church and state should be separate, especially given their very different modes of existence.¹⁴

From 1750 to 1850 the classical understanding of the relationship between state and society was replaced by a new conception. By the close of this period, civil society was recognised as outside the realm of the state, and as an essential part of a free and democratic society. Key political thinkers considered the relationship between state and society in terms of the modern state's vulnerability to despotic rule and the potential of the natural instincts of society to be subverted by strong governments. The development and transformation of the concept of civil society was a response to this perceived threat and civil associations were seen as a barrier to the state's dominance.

Karl Marx's understanding of state-society relations provided the ideological foundations of Soviet policy toward civil society. Marx believed that civil society could be explained by political economy, reducing the concept to explanation by the production and distribution of wealth and its social consequences. He viewed civil society as the product of the interests of a specific class concerned with securing its dominance over society. In a capitalist society, this is manifested in the bourgeoisie's control of productive forces and the oppression of the propertyless proletariat. Civil society, understood as part of economic competition, was a concept Marx disdained, and it was relegated to an 'undeveloped, residual concept' in his social theory.¹⁵ Thus, by locating egoism and selfish ends in the realm of civil society, Marx condemned the

¹² de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 308.

¹³ 'in forming an alliance with a political power, religion augments its authority over a few and forfeits the hope of reigning over all'. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 310.

¹⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 165.

¹⁵ Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms: Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development of a Theory*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1980, 357.

concept to virtual obscurity in Marxist thought and it ceased to be a focus of either theoretical or practical concern.

Marx damned religious adherence in his frequently cited declaration that 'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people'.¹⁶ It should be pointed out that, contrary to popular misunderstanding, Marx did not explicitly call for religion to be proscribed but rather predicted that in an enlightened communist state it would disappear, since it was nothing more than superstition diverting energy from the revolutionary cause. As the opiate of the masses it dulled workers' senses.

The continued development of capitalism since the deaths of Marx and Engels has meant that political thinkers have added important theoretical dimensions to the concept of civil society. Civil society had a more important role in Antonio Gramsci's work than in that of any other revolutionary Marxist thinker. The idea of civil society was central to his theory of hegemony, which sought to explain how power is maintained in the modern state. Gramsci believed that private associations within civil society were instruments with which the ruling class inculcated its values and thus maintained its hegemonic position.¹⁷ Gramsci's theory that the hegemon's power extends beyond the realm of political society and into civil society itself was to bring the concept of civil society out of the periphery of social theory.

Jürgen Habermas brought the historical development of social self-organisation to the fore of political debate. Habermas regarded civil society as the realm of non-state associations and non-economic interest groups, and considered that the negotiation which takes place in the 'tension-charged field of state-society relations' ultimately

¹⁶ Original italics. Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction" in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Collected Works*, ed. Jack Cohen, London: Laurence and Wishart, 1975, 175.

¹⁷ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.

determines the social order.¹⁸ He identified a 'public sphere', positioned between civil society and the state, in which debate and discussion concerning social goals takes place and mediates between state and society. In the modern state, organised private interests dominate this sphere, though masquerading as a public forum. Habermas, by positioning the public sphere between that of civil society and the state, viewed civil society as the censored interchange of ideas and interests in the private sphere, dominated by specific strata of society. Social organisation brought these interests into the public sphere.

Re-emergence of Civil Society

The idea of civil society lay in the background of political theory for much of the twentieth century. By the late 1980s, the notion of civil society was firmly entrenched in the discourse of political science. Much of this centred on the debate over whether or not Gorbachev's reforms heralded the emergence of civil society in the Soviet Union. In 1988 S. Frederick Starr proclaimed the USSR to have significant elements of a civil society, citing the proliferation of unsanctioned economic and social activity of an anti-regime nature as evidence that the state was unable to form, control or successfully disseminate social values.¹⁹ Geoffrey Hosking and Vladimir Tismaneanu identified social movements overtly opposing Soviet-style communism's environmental and militaristic policies as the rebirth of civil society.²⁰ In this understanding social awareness, social concern and independent organisation were the defining features of a civil society.²¹ Moshe Lewin emphasised the social relations fostered in Soviet cities as

¹⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992, 29.

¹⁹ S. Frederick Starr, "Soviet Union: A Civil Society", *Foreign Policy*, no. 70 (1988), 26-41.

²⁰ Geoffrey Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union*, London: Heinemann, 1990, Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Unofficial Peace Activism in the Soviet Union and East-Central Europe" in *In Search of Civil Society: Independent Peace Movements in the Soviet Bloc*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu, New York, London: Routledge, 1990 and Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel*, New York, Toronto, Oxford, Singapore, Sydney: The Free Press, 1992.

²¹ Rigby wrote: 'the most persistent central component in understandings of the civil society is the salience of socially relevant activity and relationships which are more or less autonomous of the state, and it is precisely this which is inconsistent with a mono-organisational society'. T. H. Rigby, "Mono-organisational Socialism and the Civil Society" in *The Transition from Socialism*, ed. David W. Lovell, William Maley, and Chandran Kukathas, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991, 118. See also Robert F. Miller, "Civil Society in Communist Systems: An Introduction" in *The Developments of Civil Society in Communist Systems*, ed. Robert F. Miller, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992 and Geoffrey Hosking, "The Beginnings of Independent Political Activity" in *The Road To Post-Communism*, ed. Geoffrey Hosking, J. Aves, and P. Duncan, London: Pinter, 1992.

key to the development of civil society. He argued that the rise of cities stimulated an urban culture built on modes of communication and interpersonal contacts which were beyond the control of the regimes. This resulted in spontaneous activity which was most often contrary to the wishes of the state.²² In each of these understandings, the shift from fragmented dissent to organised, communicative oppositional associations marked the re-emergence of civil society.

Chandran Kukathas and David W. Lovell emphasised the role of economics: 'civil society is a complex of institutions and practices which make up "the market", as well as associations of individuals who join together to pursue all sorts of goals beyond narrowly economic ones'.²³ While the economy impacts significantly on civil society, especially emerging ones, and influences, for example, levels of crime and corruption,²⁴ one cannot reduce civil society to economic activity, as Marx sought to do. Social self-organisation is encouraged by a variety of interests, which cannot all be reduced to economic concerns; religion, for example, is quite separate, and yet, as this dissertation contends, constitutes a significant influence on the emergence and consolidation of civil society in Russia. Economic relations do not offer the only basis for social self-organisation.

Religion was either overlooked or cursorily mentioned in literature on civil society in the USSR. While the Catholic Church was central to discussions of civil society in Poland, the Russian Orthodox Church, which as an institution did not provide a point of convergence for dissidents, was for the most part neglected. In 1990, Leslie Holmes recognised that 'religion is being legitimated by the Soviet state – yet another

²² Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

²³ Chandran Kukathas and David W. Lovell, "The Significance of Civil Society" in *The Transition from Socialism: State and Civil Society in Gorbachev's USSR*, ed. Chandran Kukathas, David W. Lovell, and William Maley, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991, 21.

²⁴ See Ariel Cohen, "Ukrainian and Russian Organised Crime: A Threat to Emerging Civil Society" in *Ukraine: The Search for a National Identity*, ed. Sharon L. Wolchik and Volodymyr Zviglyanich, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

sign of the emergence of civil society'.²⁵ Increased religious freedom was often regarded as 'yet another sign' of democratisation, despite the fact that religion, and the Orthodox Church in particular, was just as frequently a theme in Soviet *samizdat* as was Catholicism in Poland's clandestine literature, and that it was at the fore of social and political debates about Soviet reforms. The reasons for this difference will be explored in Chapter 2.

As the concept of civil society was increasingly employed to evaluate the demise of communist regimes and the ascent of postcommunist governments, questions were asked about its utility, especially given the tendency to equate civil society with liberal democracy. Charles Taylor challenged the assumption that civil society exists in the liberal democratic states of the west.²⁶ He argued that the western model of civil society is a false measure of postcommunist developments, as the preconditions for the emergence and consolidation of civil society in the west are entirely different to the conditions in which civil society is being constructed in the east.²⁷ John Gray also challenged the idea that the civil societies of the west should be emulated by the postcommunist states, and argued that the western model of civil society is 'defective'.²⁸ He argued that the emergence of civil life, especially a flourishing civil life, is more vital for the transitional states than the adoption of democratic governance. These democratising states should put in place limitations upon democracy, which would allow civil society to exist rather than aim for the utopian end point of the western model. He concluded: 'In any of its varieties, post-totalitarianism will be stable and irreversible only when the autonomy of its opposite, civil society, is defined and protected by the rule of law'.²⁹ The use of the term civil society by Russian scholars derives from the endpoint offered by the western model, as well as from their experiences in the postcommunist period.

²⁵ Leslie Holmes, "Civil Society and Systemic Legitimation in the USSR" in *The Transition from Socialism: State and Civil Society in Gorbachev's USSR*, ed. Chandran Kukathas, David W. Lovell, and William Maley, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991, 135.

²⁶ Charles Taylor, "Modes Of Civil Society", *Public Culture* vol. 3, no. 1 (1990), 95-118.

²⁷ Taylor, "Modes Of Civil Society", 95-118.

²⁸ Gray labeled Western states 'totalitarian democracies'. John Gray, "Post-Totalitarianism, Civil Society, and the Limits of the Western Model" in *The Reemergence of Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, ed. Zbigniew Rau, Oxford: Westview Press, 1991, 145.

Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo

For Russian analysts, the concept of civil society also became 'a kind of "sign of the times", a conceptual code of the epoch'³⁰ after it was resurrected in Russian discussions in the late 1980s and became especially salient in the early 1990s. A May 1993 draft of the Russian Constitution, prepared by the Constitutional Commission headed by Ruslan Khasbulatov, included a large section on *grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*. This section comprised five chapters (*glavy*) dealing with property, labour and entrepreneurship; social organisations; education, science and culture; the family; and mass information. The wide range of topics covered demonstrates that the term civil society was used in governmental circles in its very broad sense.³¹ Religion was one of many types of associations under the category of *obshchestvennye ob'edineniia* (social organisations), separate from the state and accountable before the law.³² The Constitution adopted in December 1993 omitted this section on civil society.

Throughout the 1990s, the concept of civil society was invoked in historical and philosophical debate about whether or not Russia could only be governed by a strong state, which dominated civil society. This was the subject of numerous round tables and articles in leading journals analysing the failure of Yeltsin's democratic reforms through the prism of a cultural tendency toward autocratic forms of governance.³³ This extended into discussions of Russia's 'authoritarian political-cultural matrix', which, it was argued, accounts for the country's post-Soviet path:

Etatism, hypertrophy of the state and the atrophy of civil society, the almost complete subordination of the former to the latter, conditions Russia's features, such as the lack of her

²⁹ Gray, "Post-Totalitarianism, Civil Society, and the Limits of the Western Model", 159.

³⁰ Zinaida T. Golenkova, "Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo v Rossii", *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, no. 3 (1997), 34.

³¹ This point is made in Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1997, 268.

³² Verkhovnogo Soveta Rossiiskoi Federatsii. "Konstitutsiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 8 May 1993, 9-13.

³³ See Vadim Mezhev, "Traditsii samovlastiia v sovremennoi Rossii." *Svobodnaia mysl'*, no. 4 (2000) and Round Table Discussion, "Russian Historical Tradition and Liberal Reform Prospects," *Social Sciences*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1998).

own social integrating foundations, a very weak ability of the people of self-organisation which is especially manifest at the time of crisis.³⁴

This view was seemingly vindicated when Putin burst onto the political scene as Yeltsin's Prime Minister in August 1999 and achieved a resolute victory just seven months later in the March 2000 Presidential elections. Putin's understanding of civil society can be gauged from his 1999 New Years' Eve address '*Rossia na rubezhe tysiacheletii*' ('Russia at the Turn of the Millennium'). Though he noted the importance of 'creating conditions that will help develop a full-blooded civil society to balance out and monitor the authorities', the emphasis was firmly on the importance of a strong state for Russia's recovery. Putin stated that, unlike the USA and Britain, 'For Russians, a strong state is not an anomaly to be gotten rid of. Quite the contrary, it is a source of order and a main driving force of any change'.³⁵ Commentary on Putin's reign frequently summarises his initiatives in terms of the retreat of civil society. Sergei Kovalev, a former dissident who remains a leading human rights activist, charted Russia's increasing authoritarianism and the popularity of the war in Chechnia and lamented, 'Russians fell definitively out of love with... the West, and everything associated with it, including the concepts of democracy, freedom and human rights'.³⁶ Since democracy and freedom are at the core of a society that allows civil society to consolidate, Kovalev's evaluation was an indictment on the future of civil society as much as it was of Russia's post-Soviet path.

This was a significant departure from the Gorbachev era, when human rights and the legislative framework for democracy dominated debates about *demokratizatsiia* (democratisation). Evert van der Zweerde argued that the concept of civil society, amorphous and abstract, did not contribute to concrete discussions of democratisation. Disappointment with the reform process, van der Zweerde observed, caused civil society to lose currency in intellectual circles:

³⁴ Emphasis removed. Dmitry Gudimenko, "Political Culture of Russia: Continuity of Epochs," *Social Sciences*, vol. 26, no. 1 (1995), 55.

³⁵ Putin, Vladimir. "Rossia na rubezhe tysiacheletii", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 31 December 1999, 4-5.

³⁶ Sergei Kovalev, "Putin's War", *New York Review of Books*, 10 February 2000, 7.

As a result of this non-appearance of a 'civil society', in spite of the fact that some of its preconditions – market, political pluralism, civil rights, democratic constitution – seemed to be realized to some extent, many Russian intellectuals lost their faith in the spontaneous development of 'civil society', and opted for more authoritarian and/or nationalistic positions.³⁷

The failure of Yeltsin's reforms prompted the re-evaluation of the democratisation process and encouraged alternative visions to the liberal democratic model of the state-society nexus, which, as has been discussed, developed over a number of centuries. It was argued that 'Civil society relies on the achievements and experience of developed countries and on the results of modern sciences. To attempt a mechanical copying, a transplantation, and imitation would be useless'.³⁸ This led back to a consideration of Russia's cultural predisposition to authoritarian governance, and, coupled with the failure of the democratic reformers, who were synonymous with westernisers, to assertions of Russia's unique political culture.³⁹ The single most important element of this political culture was the penchant for a strong state and a weak civil society.

Van der Zweerde compared civil society as reflected in the debates of Russian intellectuals in the periods 1986–1990 and 1991–1995 and concluded that in the second period there was 'greater awareness of the problematic nature of the concepts employed, abandonment of uncritical 'zapadnichsetvo' [westernism], a turn toward the real problems of Russian society, and more "competition of ideas"'.⁴⁰ Vladimir Tismaneanu noted the 'appeals of the civil society paradigm' were also idealised in east and central Europe. He argued that there was a rise in nationalism when these high expectations were not met.⁴¹ The shift in the way the Russian intelligentsia employed the concept of

³⁷ Evert Van Der Zweerde, "Civil Society Among Post-Soviet Russian Philosophers: A Major Sideshow" in *Resurrecting the Phoenix*, ed. David C. Durst, et al., Sofia: Phare, 1997, 295.

³⁸ Golenkova, "Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo v Rossii", 34.

³⁹ See Liudmila Vorontsova and Sergei Filatov, "'Russkii Put' i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo", *Svobodnaia mysl'*, no. 1 (1995), 58-68.

⁴⁰ Van Der Zweerde, "Civil Society Among Post-Soviet Russian Philosophers", 300.

⁴¹ Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Fantasies of Salvation: Varieties of Nationalism in Postcommunist Eastern Europe" in *Envisioning Eastern Europe: Postcommunist Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael D. Kennedy, USA: The University of Michigan Press, 1994, 102.

civil society is a clear reflection of the changing political landscape. It reinvigorated discussion about a unique Russian model of state-society relations. Thus, the concept of civil society as applied to Russia by western scholars was quite different from that of their Russian counterparts, tainted as it was by their experiences inside a transitional country, and shaped by the exacting price of the reforms. Zinaida T. Golenkova, a sociologist in the Russian Academy of Sciences, surveyed the mass impoverishment in Russia and noted the threat this poses to civil society: 'Equality in poverty in a society that traditionally has not been inclined toward social differences creates a strong base for an authoritarian regime reinforced by nationalist populism'.⁴² The realisation that the demise of the communist regime was not a guarantee of the rise of civil society changed the nature of discussions about civil society in Russia.

At a round table discussion of civil society, published in *Voprosy filosofii* in 1995, Ivanov argued 'we cannot build capitalism today', and that 'a new course of reform, based on the Russian mentality, and on values that have a long history in our country' is needed.⁴³ It is probable that Ivanov was referring to the traditional concepts of collectivism and social justice that underpin the philosophy of the Slavophiles, which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century to promote a unique Slavic path and to oppose the *zapadniki*. Both the prevalence and the changing use of the term civil society were demonstrated in late 1992, when the Civil Society parliamentary faction called on Yeltsin to resign over the failure of his reforms.⁴⁴

Discussions of civil society came to be dominated by the reasons for its obstruction. During a 1998 symposium 'Crisis, Trust and Civil Society in Russia', Alexey Korotaev, director of the Civil Society Program at the Open Society Institute in Moscow, emphasised that the 'third sector', comprised of non-governmental organisations, is a measure of the success of civil society, and argued that the

⁴² Golenkova, "Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo v Rossii", 34.

⁴³ Various Contributors, "Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo i problemy bezopasnosti v Rossii (materialy 'kruglogo stola')", *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 2 (1995), 18.

⁴⁴ Sergei Chugaev, "Atakuiia pravitel'stvo, oppozitsiia pytaetsia nabrat' ochki", *Izvestiia*, 23 September 1992, 1-2.

development of civil society could not take place without an active citizenry.⁴⁵ A second speaker, Leonid Reznichenko, from the Russian Academy of Sciences, emphasised that the crisis in Russia is one of trust above all else, and that citizens must trust the reform process if civil society is to be consolidated.⁴⁶

Oleg Kharkhordin applied this search for a Russian interpretation of civil society specifically to the religious context in his prize-winning essay 'Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity'. He argued that the creation and maintenance of free associations is not the only precondition for the development of democracy, and suggested that the 'religious roots' of a Russian conception of civil society should be examined.⁴⁷ Since conceptions of civil society in political theory are often based on Protestant or Catholic ethics, 'Orthodox Christianity may harbour its own vision of ethical life of a Christian congregation, functionally equivalent to those that underlie the Catholic and Protestant conceptions, but contributing to a very specific conception of civil society...'.⁴⁸ The main feature of this Orthodox conception of civil society (and in fact the only one Kharkhordin identifies) is that 'the Orthodox version of civil society would strive to completely supplant the secular state and its use of the means of violence by bringing church means of influence to regulate in all terrains of human life'.⁴⁹ The close cooperation of the ecclesiastical and temporal authorities is a return to *simfoniia*, the formula of the dual rule of Patriarch and Tsar. (The degree to which contemporary church-state relations adhere to the symphonic ideal is discussed in Chapter 4).

⁴⁵ Alexey Korotaev, "Structural Development of Civil Society in Modern Russia: Organisational Development and Legislative Framework," in *Crisis, Trust and Civil Society in Russia: A Symposium*, Deakin University: Melbourne, 2 December 1998. This is also emphasised in Andrei Topolev and Elena Topoleva, "Nongovernmental Organizations: Building Blocks for Russia's Civil Society" in *Remaking Russia: Voices from Within*, ed. Heyward Isham, New York, London: M.E Sharpe, 1995, 193-201.

⁴⁶ Leonid Reznichenko, "Evolution of the Concept of Civil Society in Post-Totalitarian Russian Journalism and Academic Research" in *Crisis, Trust and Civil Society in Russia: A Symposium*, Deakin University: Melbourne, 2 December 1998.

⁴⁷ Oleg Kharkhordin, "Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 50, no. 6 (1998), 951. Kharkhordin also highlighted the influence of Orthodox Christianity on Russian practices in *The Collective and the Individual in Russia*. He attempts to move beyond the usual dichotomy of the collectivist Russia in opposition to the individualist West by demonstrating that the basis for a specific sort of Russian individualisation can be found in the practices of the Soviet period, though this may seem an anomaly, many of which are themselves derived from Orthodox Christian practices. Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practises*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999.

⁴⁸ Kharkhordin, "Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity", 955.

Kharkhordin failed to identify other examples of this unique Orthodox conception of civil society and also to explain how this Orthodox version can contribute to civil society's construction in post-Soviet Russia.

Anatoli Pchelintsev, Director of the Moscow-based religious rights group the Institute for Religion and Law, regards his organisation's work defending freedom of conscience as a vital contribution to Russia's civil society.⁵⁰ In this understanding, religious bodies are one group among many co-existing in the sphere of associations that constitutes civil society. The religious sphere must also be protected from the intrusions of the state. The Institute's work defending non-Orthodox, particularly Protestant, denominations in courts of law aims to make the authorities accountable to legislation.

Also prominent in discussions on civil society and religion was the traditional Orthodox concept of *sobornost'*. *Sobornost'*, usually translated as 'collectivism' or 'conciliarity', though neither of these terms conveys the religious underpinnings of the Russian usage, derives from the translation of catholic, *sobornyi*, meaning universal and all-embracing. For the Russian Church, *sobornost'* means unity in diversity. It is frequently invoked in deliberations of the Church's challenges in the post-Soviet religious sphere, particularly regarding religious pluralism and democracy and authority in the Church. It is thus central to the notions that are key to this discussion of religion, politics and civil society. (*Sobornost'* is discussed at greater length in Chapter 6).

Politicisation of Religion

Religion has been a significant political force in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Jose Casanova, a sociologist, argues in his influential book *Public Religions in the Modern World* that the 'deprivatisation' of religion is a global trend. He explains:

What I call the "deprivatization" of modern religion is the process whereby religion abandons its assigned place in the private sphere and enters the undifferentiated public

⁴⁹ Kharkhordin, "Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity".

⁵⁰ Interview with Anatoli Pchelintsev of the Institute of Religion and Law, Moscow, 8 October 1999.

sphere of civil society to take part in the ongoing process of contestation, discursive legitimation, and redrawing of the boundaries.⁵¹

Religion, which is concerned with the values of society, and with a vision of the social order, is intrinsically political: it cannot be confined to the private sphere. As the realm of associations between the state and the family, religion enters the sphere of civil society, acting in the sphere of associations as lobbyist for different religious bodies' visions of the social order. Religion's relevance to governance is demonstrated in such phenomena as Solidarność, the religious basis of the black civil rights movement, Liberation Theology, and the Islamic view of religion, civil society and politics.

The case of Solidarność, the Polish independent trade union, clearly links civil society, religion and politics in the communist context. During the late Soviet period the concept of civil society was accepted as part of discourse to evaluate the non-state, or dissident, sphere. The notion of civil society appeared in western academic literature in the early 1980s, when the transformation of Polish dissent was heralded as the end of revisionism and the beginning of civil society.⁵² In 1982 Andrew Arato wrote of Polish dissidents who were divided on most issues: 'One point, however, unites them all: the viewpoint of civil society against the state – the desire to institutionalize and preserve the new level of social independence'.⁵³ In this understanding, the shift from disconnected dissident activity to organised opposition marked the birth of civil society.

The Catholic Church was a significant opposition force. The conflict between the Church and the communist regime heightened from the 1960s. In March 1963, for example, the episcopate published a statement which attacked state policy which obstructed religious instruction. The secular intelligentsia sided with the Church, which came to be associated with the human rights movement and with democratic values as a

⁵¹ Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World*, Chicago, London: The University Of Chicago Press, 1994, 65-66.

⁵² See Jaques Rupnik, "Dissent in Poland, 1968-78: The End of Revisionism and the Rebirth of the Civil Society" in *Opposition in Eastern Europe*, ed. Rudolf Tokes, London: Macmillan, 1979.

⁵³ Arato, Andrew, "Civil Society Against the State: Poland 1980-1981", *Telos*, no. 47 (1981), 24. See also Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, 29-82 and Z. A. Pelczynski, "Solidarity and the 'Rebirth of Civil Society' in Poland, 1976-81" in *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, ed. John Keane, London, New York: Verso, 1988 for more on the re-emergence of the concept of civil society in the Polish context.

whole. Antoni Slonimski, for instance, when asked why he published in a Catholic periodical, replied: 'Before the war [World War II], the church was reactionary and communism was progressive; today it is the other way around'.⁵⁴ There was increasing cooperation between priests and the intelligentsia. The Church became bolder in the 1970s, when protests and violent clashes over rises in food and fuel prices prompted the Church to more direct involvement in civil and human rights, and by the late 1970s it had become the chief focus of opposition, defending the clandestine 'Flying Universities' which refused to remain within official educational parameters, supporting striking workers in the Gdansk shipyard, and allowing dissidents to shelter in churches, out of the authorities' reach. During the period of martial law in 1980/1981, the Catholic Church organised and distributed aid to the families of the imprisoned.

A turning point for both the Church and dissent was the election in 1978 of Polish Cardinal Wojtyla to Pope. His visit to Poland in 1979, the first made by a pontiff to a communist country, served to bolster national pride, give confidence to the opposition movement, and consolidate the link between the Church and dissent; it 'set the seal on the new alliance between the different groups of which civil society in Poland was composed'.⁵⁵ The impact of the Pope's visit for national identity cannot be underestimated: in a 1980 survey, 73 per cent of respondents replied that the Pope symbolised the best in present-day Poland.⁵⁶

The Catholic Church's position as the focus of dissent was usurped by the foundation of Solidarność. The link between the Church and Solidarność was strong. Its first national congress in Gdansk in 1981 opened with a mass. Delegates at the congress referred to the central role of the Catholic Church in Polish society, and also the support given by the Church to the movement.⁵⁷ The ever-present religious symbolism was a reminder of the link between the Church and dissent. During a strike in the Gdansk

⁵⁴ Cited in Adam Michnik, "The Church and the Left: A Dialogue" in *Communism and Eastern Europe*, ed. Frantisek Silnitsky, Larisa Silnitsky, and Karl Reyman, New York: Karz Publishers, 1979, 82.

⁵⁵ Patrick Michel, *Politics and Religion in Eastern Europe: Catholicism in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia*, trans. Alan Braley, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, 134.

⁵⁶ Michel, *Politics and Religion in Eastern Europe*, 43.

shipyard, for instance, as well as a crucifix, portraits of both Our Lady of Czestochowa and John Paul II were hung on the railing of the shipyards.

In Poland, the Catholic Church was viewed as lobbyist for the nation's interests. There was an intimate link between the vestigial civil society, fostered by dissent, and the Church. The link between civil society, religion and dissent was not as blatant in other Soviet bloc countries, except the German Democratic Republic (GDR), where the Protestant churches, notably the Evangelical church, were also a focal point for dissident activity, particularly for the peace movement.⁵⁸

This was clearly not the case in the Soviet Union. The Orthodox Church leadership did not denounce the regime and support dissidents, and even went so far as to discipline priests who spoke against the religious repression, and denied that there was any persecution of believers. In the Polish case, the Catholic Church was central to dissident concerns, and supported calls for civil and human rights, whereas in the USSR dissidents heavily criticised the Patriarchate as a tool of the atheist government. In this way, Orthodox dissent was forced outside Church structures, and the influence of the Orthodox Church on civil society was made through informal channels. As an institution, the Moscow Patriarchate played no role in the burgeoning civil society in the 1970s and 1980s. It was only in the dissident sphere that the Orthodox Church had a presence, and even then many Orthodox dissidents derided Church leaders for their complicity. The marginal role the Patriarchate played contrasts sharply with the socially committed and active role the Catholic Church in Poland adopted (for further discussion see Chapter 2).

The latter half of the twentieth century has been marked by a preoccupation of governments throughout the world with the linkage of religion, politics, and civil society. The black civil rights movement in the USA and Liberation Theology in Latin America

⁵⁷ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia*, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1998, 102.

⁵⁸ See Sabrina P. Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation*, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1991, 42-47.

demonstrate the centrality of religion to social self-organisation for the emancipation and the liberation of the oppressed. The civil rights movement, which emerged in the 1950s, gathered strength throughout the 1960s, and peaked in the 1970s, developed from the understanding that common Christian principles unite humans regardless of racial and cultural background, and that God created all humans as equals. Eugene D. Genovese, who traced the civil rights movement back to the conversion of slaves to Christianity, which led to the questioning of the inequality between black slave and white master, noted: 'Since religion expresses the antagonisms between the life of the individual and that of society and between the life of civil society and that of political society, it cannot escape from being profoundly political'.⁵⁹

In this instance, the politicisation of religion led to a movement protesting against racial segregation and second class citizenship for African-Americans. At the forefront of the civil rights movement was the southern ministerial network developed by Martin Luther King, Jr, himself a Baptist minister, most notably the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In response to criticisms of his nonviolent direct action by his white fellow clergymen, King asked: 'Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world?'.⁶⁰ Though the black civil rights movement fused religion and politics in a context different from that of this dissertation – it was the movement of an ethnic minority within a majority religion, whereas in Russia, Orthodox Russians constitute both the majority ethnicity and the majority faith – the salience of religion and politics for the development of social self-organisation is demonstrated in each case, as are the impact of lay activism and of nonconformist clergy.

Liberation Theology developed in Latin America in the late 1960s.⁶¹ It is controversial because of its radical interpretation of Catholic doctrine, its links to Marxist ideology, its preoccupation with class analysis, dependency theory and

⁵⁹ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1974, 162.

⁶⁰ Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail (16 April 1963)" in *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Flip Schulke, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975, 217.

revolutionary transformation, and the intimate connection it makes between theology and political struggle. Liberation Theology has two fundamental creeds. First, there must be liberation from *all* forms of human oppression, hence its diverse application throughout the developing world.⁶² It holds that oppression is contrary to God's design, so ministry should engage with the struggle to liberate. Second, theology must be indigenous, that is, it must interpret scriptures according to the conditions and needs of the congregation.

Liberation Theology, though it has not significantly altered the Catholic Church as an institution, has had an enormous impact on lay activism, particularly on social movements which call for political representation for the indigenous population and for liberation from state oppression. In Latin America, 'The informal Church has provided an institutional and ideological framework for popular movements after the decline, or repression, of marxism'.⁶³ Interest in the poor, rather than elitist theological questions, as well as the proliferation of grass roots organisations independent of the Church, brought the Catholic Church closer to the cause of democratisation. Likewise, in the Russian context, the development of social and political concerns outside the purview of the Moscow Patriarchate has allowed a similar independent development of social and political concerns, which promote a representative and inclusive Orthodox theology. Orthodox lay activists sympathetic to the reformist agenda also insist that Orthodoxy will only gain followers if it remains relevant in post-Soviet conditions, and call for more democratic, accountable, and transparent Church leadership. In this way, Orthodoxy contributes to the emancipatory politics of civil society.

Islam has become increasingly prominent in governance in many parts of the world, contradicting the theories of secularisation according to which religion is losing

⁶¹ The central precepts of the seminal text of Liberation Theology were developed by a Peruvian theologian in the late 1960s. See Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, London: S.C.M. Press, 1974.

⁶² 'one could roughly generalize that Latin American liberation theology focuses on social, political, and economic oppression; South African liberation theology highlights racism; Asian liberation theology, in its pluralistic religious setting, strongly urges positive dialogue with the other major living religions'. Deane William Fenn, *Third World Liberation Theologies: An Introductory Survey*, New York: Orbis Books, 1987, 1.

⁶³ David Lehmann, *Democracy and Development in Latin America: Economics, Politics and Religion in the Post-War Period*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990, 147.

its relevance. The resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism in the late twentieth century prompted the examination of the relationship between civil society, religion and politics. This became a preoccupation in the west particularly after the Iranian revolution. Islam represents the apogee of the linkage of the three entities, summed up by the modern formulation that Islam is *din wa dawla* – religion and state.⁶⁴ The doctrine leaves little room for the independent sphere of associations that constitutes civil society. Ernest Gellner contrasts this with the yearning for civil society in the former communist bloc, manifest as the activities of Solidarność, for example, and notes, 'The Muslim world... is marked by the astonishing resilience of its formal faith, and a merely weak, at best, striving for Civil Society. Its absence is not widely felt to be scandalous, and stirs up relatively little local interest'.⁶⁵ Discussions of religion in the Islamic context are problematised by the fact that there is no institutional church, or clergy, which complicates discussions of the separation of church and state, church leadership, and religious-based interest groups. As Casanova argues, the politicisation of religion remains a salient feature of contemporary governance. This is most marked in Muslim states, where Muslim law is the basis of governance and the relations between the political leadership and the citizenry are determined by Islamic doctrine rather than by active lobbying by social organisations.

Working Definition of Civil Society

The survey in the earlier parts of this chapter of western and Russian understandings of civil society, religion and politics attests that Keane's model, according to which there are four modernisation phases in the development of the concept of civil society, can be extended by the addition of a fifth stage which continues at the time of writing. The fifth phase is constituted by theorists who seek to formulate an understanding that can be applied to the postcommunist states and also to stable liberal democratic states. They employ a definition free from cultural, ideological and historical specifics and one not designed to have the west as its exemplar. This

⁶⁴ See John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

⁶⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals*, New York: Allan Lane (The Penguin Press), 1994, 14.

examination seeks to apply a concept of civil society in an analysis of the role of the Orthodox Church in postcommunist Russia, without holding western models of church-state relations as an exemplar (see the critique of western models in Chapter 4) or regarding traditional Orthodox understandings of civil society as unquestioningly acceptable (see the critique of cultural relativism in Chapter 6).

Given the differing interpretations of the concept of civil society, it is important to elucidate what it means for this study. As Hegel argued, civil society and the state are antitheses of each other. Civil society is characterised by the fostering of interest articulation by an active and engaged citizenry from all strata of society, whether these people choose to stake their claims as members of society and participate in independent associations, or not. For Gellner, this is the chief benefit of a civil society:

the splendid thing about civil society is that even the absent-minded, or those preoccupied with their private concerns, or for any other reason ill-suited to the practice of eternal vigilance, can now look forward to enjoying their liberty. Civil society bestows liberty even on the non-vigilant.⁶⁶

As in Paine's understanding of the absolute equality of all individuals, participation in debates and discussions is open to all sectors of the population, regardless of gender, race, or religious conviction.

The realm of civil society takes the individual outside of family and locality loyalties and into a more complex web of autonomous associations. The individual parts of society are not atomized – a prerequisite for totalitarian movements,⁶⁷ which represent the antithesis of civil society – but organised into associations which have at their core mutual and reciprocal interests. These associations represent a multiplicity of interests, voluntary, professional, cultural and social. Civil society cannot be reduced to economics, as in the Marxist tradition, because social interaction is not only about labour, capital and commodities but also about the institutional core that comprises non-governmental and non-economic connections. In practical terms, these associations

⁶⁶ Ernest Gellner, "Adam Ferguson and the Surprising Robustness of Civil Society" in *Liberalism in Modern Times*, ed. Ernest Gellner and Cesar Cansino, Budapest, London, New York: Central European University Press, 1996, 131.

⁶⁷ See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1951, 107.

comprise independent mass media, free trade unions, opposition political forces and other voluntary associations.

Forums for the exchange of ideas are present in a civil society. If there is no medium through which non-state organisations may express their interests, there is little point in a social sphere existing as their objectives will come to no end. The organs of civil society do not represent the interests of a single group, as in Gramsci's understanding of the hegemonic class, but rather public instruments for the dissemination of ideas that recognise diverse interests without censorship or discrimination. This can be evaluated by examining minority groups' access to organs of power and the opportunity to change these structures. Habermas notes that 'The core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalises problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organised public spheres'.⁶⁸ The 'problem-solving' process and the respect that these processes are given determines the extent to which civil society is able to mediate conflicting interests.

The establishment of legal boundaries protecting the public space from the exercise of state power facilitates the existence of civil society. Specific personal and group liberties are protected so that individuals and groups may pursue their interests, an argument Ferguson advanced. Formal democratic standards, such as freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of worship, are enshrined in law. The legal basis is a product of a level of consensus regarding the rules, norms and modes of operation of society. In turn, there exists respect for the rule of law, and an acceptance that the competing interests of civil society mean that there are inevitably winners and losers, and respect for the outcome.

The role of sentiments in civil society should not be overlooked. As Korotaev emphasised, a degree of trust in democratic processes encourages citizens to participate in political processes and engage in civil relations with other sectors of society.

⁶⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, 367.

Tolerance and comity also feature.⁶⁹ Pluralism is essentially a product of tolerance and allows the expression of disparate interests.

The foregoing is a capsule account of civil society as a particular sort of society with a specific mode of operation, which is particularly germane to a study of postcommunist Russia where the 'mode of operation' is yet to be consolidated. It offers a frame of reference against which changes can be evaluated – a frame that extends beyond that proffered by other terms, such as 'democratisation' and 'transition'. What follows below is a more precise enunciation of how the concept of civil society is utilised in this dissertation to evaluate the Orthodox Church's contribution to the evolution of Russian society.

In the first instance, the term is understood in a broad sense to denote a type of society possessing the features elucidated above.⁷⁰ A second understanding, more germane to this examination, is the sphere of free associations. That civil society in the second sense can exist within the first sense is supported by Jean L. Cohen and Arato's widely accepted definition:

We understand "civil society" as a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication... The political role of civil society... is not directly related to the control or conquest of power but to the generation of influence through the life of democratic associations and unconstrained discussion in the cultural public sphere.⁷¹

The examination of the Orthodox Church's contribution to fostering the preconditions of the broader understanding of civil society is facilitated by the examination of, to use Cohen and Arato's terminology, the 'sphere of associations'. This distinction is central to this thesis: it is the second (narrow) understanding that is the central concern, not the first (broader) understanding.

⁶⁹ This element of civil society is emphasised in Edward Shils, "The Virtue Of Civil Society", *Government and Opposition*, vol. 26, no. 4 (1991), 3-10.

⁷⁰ This is also emphasised by Van Der Zweerde, "Civil Society Among Post-Soviet Russian Philosophers", 293.

How religion contributes to fostering this sphere has been considered in recent literature concerned with the transnational or global role of religious bodies. Though this examination pertains to Russia, these scholars assert that tolerance, ecumenism and inter-denominational organisations contribute to constructing civil society. Kevin Warr argued that:

organizations within civil society (and global civil society) that are characterized by values of pluralism and where divergent viewpoints are respected and tolerated foster the type of social capital useful for transitions to, and maintenance of, democracy.⁷²

Though Warr's analysis is based on religious institutions in global civil society and the potential for them 'to foster social capital transnationally', the argument that religious institutions have the potential to contribute to the construction of civil society by promoting conditions and sentiments conducive to its consolidation can be applied to the Russian context. The Orthodox Church has a prominent social and political role, and is uniquely positioned to influence attitudes, and even legislation, which shape the religious sphere. It thus has the ability to aid, as well as obstruct, the development of civil society.

Fritz Erich Anhelm asserted that religion contributes to civil society chiefly through the affinity between 'religious interpretations of and secular responsibility for the world...'.⁷³ Where a theological perspective coincides with social and even political mores orientated toward constructive, inclusive and tolerant relations within the religious sphere, a religious group may contribute to the construction of civil society. Not all faiths have this positive influence:

there must be no illusion about the fact that religion can produce the reverse effect: the preservation of hierarchic structures and demagogic manipulation... In the dialogue [within civil society], religious communities, in all their different social forms, can play an important part. Just as much as they are able to divide, to separate, and to stir up conflict and let

⁷¹ Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, ix-x.

⁷² Kevin Warr, "The Normative Promise of Religious Organizations in Global Civil Society", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 41, no. 3 (1999), 500.

⁷³ Fritz Erich Anhelm, "Religion and Civil Society: What is the Relationship Between Them?" in *Civil Society at the Millenium*, ed. CIVICUS, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1999, 98.

themselves be used, or even abused, for power-political ends, they are equally able to become agents of social cohesion and integration and catalogues of an enriching diversity.⁷⁴

The way churches use their influence is particularly pertinent in postcommunist countries. The recent religious pluralism means that denominations may determine the shape of the religious sphere, especially the national churches, such as the Catholic Church in Poland and Hungary and the Orthodox Church in Russia, Romania and Bulgaria. The way the Orthodox Church's leadership uses its influence is central to the evaluation of its role in the development of civil society. Civil society is particularly vulnerable in these states.

Civil Society: Three Spheres

There are three spheres within which the role of the Orthodox Church can be evaluated and its contribution to the development or the obstruction of civil society assessed. The first, the widest sphere, is the Church's influence in the social and political life of the country. The Patriarchate's interaction with the government, with politicians, and with key state bodies determines the extent to which the institutional Church influences civil society. The work of lay organisations and nonconformist clergy in social and political life determines the Church's informal contribution. Orthodox Christians in anti-fascist groups or Christian Democratic parties, for instance, or, at the other end of the spectrum, the influence of the right-wing Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, contribute to Orthodoxy's influence in this wider sphere.

The second sphere of civil society is the religious field. It has been established that civil society is vulnerable to attempts to dominate by certain interests that seek a hegemonic position. The way the Church operates in the pluralist religious environment and how it interacts with other religious bodies determines its influence on this level of civil society. Relations between the Patriarchate and Protestant bodies, for example, determine the official influence on this second sphere, while the unofficial influence is

⁷⁴ Anhelm, "Religion and Civil Society", 97; 107.

determined by lay associations promoting ecumenism and tolerance, or conversely promoting anti-Protestant ideologies and intolerance toward non-Orthodox faiths.

The narrowest sphere comprises the Church itself. Of interest here, for instance, are the way that dialogue and decision-making is conducted among the hierarchy and the clergy, and those initiatives and agendas of nonconformist clergy which deviate from the doctrines and practices laid down by the Patriarchate.

Each of these three spheres coincides in part with the others, and each is vital for the assessment of the Church's influence on the emergence of civil society. The way that both formal and informal Church activities impact upon and inform debate about these three spheres of civil society is the central mode of inquiry for this investigation.

It should be noted that this examination does not seek to judge Orthodox canons. This is essential to avoid charges of western-centric evaluation, or misunderstandings or misrepresentations of Orthodoxy. *Exempli gratia*, that the Patriarchate affirms that *Staroslavianskii* (Old Church Slavonic) remain the language of the liturgy is not relevant here. The debate over whether Old Church Slavonic or vernacular Russian is more appropriate for modern services is pertinent because it reveals how demands to change the language of the liturgy are received and negotiated by the Church leadership. This is indicative of the extent to which dissenting voices are mediated within Church structures, the third sphere of civil society.

The objectivity to which this analysis aspires does not extend so far as to justify traditional practices, religious or otherwise, that obstruct the development of civil society. James Johnson, in his article 'Why Respect Culture?', asks: 'Why do our judgements regarding the justice, equality, fairness, or otherwise of social and political practises and arrangements require that we actively should assign special normative conditions to culture?'.⁷⁵ While Johnson's case study is the ritual enslavement of

⁷⁵ James Johnson, "Why Respect Culture?", *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 44, no. 3 (2000), 406. See also the argument for a limited toleration of gender discrimination practices under the

females in African states, his question is pertinent here in that an Eastern Orthodox heritage does not provide justification for practices which are detrimental to the democratic project.

Review of Literature

There has been a notable evolution of the literature on the Orthodox Church from the Soviet to the post-Soviet periods, a reflection of the changes in the religious sphere and the freedom to practice and indeed research religious activity. Prior to the 1980s, studies on religion in the USSR were based on limited resources. There was a vast amount of officially printed literature, although, as anti-religious and atheist propaganda, it was of limited validity, reflecting the aspirations of the atheist regime rather than providing a genuine account of levels of religiosity or the number of baptisms, for instance. It is self-evident that this poverty of information was replicated in the west. Nikita Struve's *Christians in Contemporary Russia* (1963) drew almost entirely on sources like the official publication *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii* (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*) and the anti-religious journal *Nauka i religii* (*Science and Religion*), as well as on anti-religious propaganda and 'private letters from Soviet citizens and reports from Western tourists'.⁷⁶ Struve's book remained the most informative text on the subject until the mid-1980s. Dmitrii Pospelovskii also relied on the testimonies of witnesses, unofficial letters, secret Church reports, *samizdat* and interviews with emigres.⁷⁷ Journals like Keston College's *Religion in Communist Lands*, first published in 1973, relied on information that filtered to the west. There was also discussion in émigré periodicals, notably the Paris-based *Russkaia mysl'* (*Russian Thought*).

Increasingly, *samizdat* material informed scholarship on religion in communist regimes. Keston College, founded by Canon Michael Bourdeaux, an Anglican priest, in

guise of culture in Bonnie Hong, "My Culture Made Me Do It" in *Is Multi-Culturalism Bad For Women?*, ed. Susan Moller Okin, et al., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, 25-40.

⁷⁶ First printed in English in 1967. Nikita Struve, *Christians in Contemporary Russia*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard and A. Manson, London: Harvill Press, 1967, Foreword.

⁷⁷ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *A History of Marxist-Leninist Atheism and Soviet Anti-Religious Policies*, Basingstoke, London: Macmillan Press, 1987, xi.

1968, received and made available unofficial documents, so that Keston became the leading depository of dissident material on religion. It published *Patriarch and Prophets: Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church* (1969), a compilation of almost all documents written by Orthodox believers which had reached the west by 1968.⁷⁸ The focus of religious *samizdat* was overwhelmingly persecution of Orthodox believers, criticism of the Patriarchate's complicity, and calls for Orthodoxy's reinstatement at the forefront of the Russian and Ukrainian national consciousness. By the 1980s 'the trickle of documents [had] become a flood'.⁷⁹ This was reflected in leading western scholarship, such as Pospelovskii's *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime 1917-1982* (1984).⁸⁰ The best single volume on the Orthodox Church in the USSR, notable particularly for its analysis of dissent, remains Jane Ellis' *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History* (1986). Much of the literature was written by associates of human rights and religious liberty organisations, or by émigrés. The Orthodox Church was also discussed in the context of increasing Russian nationalism, when it became clear that Orthodoxy was a mainstay of Russian national chauvinists.⁸¹ Most significant was John Dunlop's groundbreaking work *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (1983), in which he noted that the Orthodox Church is a natural ally for nationalists, and cautioned western policy-makers that it should not be discounted as a significant political force.⁸²

The ascent of Mikhail Gorbachev to the post of General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985 and his policies of *perestroika*, *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiia* eventually marked a radical break with Soviet religious policy. The officially sanctioned festivities

⁷⁸ Michael Bourdeaux, *Patriarch and Prophets: Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church Today*, London: Macmillan, 1969.

⁷⁹ Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, London, New York: Routledge, 1986, 3.

⁸⁰ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime 1917-1982*, Crestwood (NY): St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984. There were a number of other books published on the topic in the 1980s, among them Michael Bourdeaux and Michael Rowe, *May One Believe - in Russia?*, London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1980.

⁸¹ Alexander Yanov, *The Russian New Right: Right-wing Ideologies in the Contemporary USSR*, trans. Stephen P. Dunn, Berkely: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1978, Stephen K. Carter, *Russian Nationalism: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, London: Pinter, 1990.

⁸² John Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

marking the millennium of Christianity in 1988 brought religion to the fore of discussion about the reform of Soviet society. Official media organs like *Izvestiia* (News) and *Pravda* (Truth) covered the occasion, printing Gorbachev's historic speech which acknowledged the contribution of believers to the reform of Soviet society.⁸³ Publications such as the edited collection *Na puti k svobode sovesti* (The Path to Freedom of Conscience) (1989), which included chapters by leading dissidents and theologians, including the priests Gleb' Iakunin and Aleksandr Men', discussed the religious contribution to democracy and the necessity of freedom of conscience for the success of Gorbachev's reforms.⁸⁴ The centrality of these clergy to the first open discussions of religion signaled the significant role that nonconformist religious figures would play in the post-Soviet period, and also the preoccupation of prominent Orthodox dissidents with democracy and freedom of conscience for all denominations. In the west, books like Bourdeaux's *Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel* (1990) considered the implications of Gorbachev's initiatives for religious life.⁸⁵ At this stage it was still possible that the sudden liberalisation of the religious sphere could be just as easily revoked, and commentators were cautious about how long these new freedoms could be enjoyed. The collapse of the USSR and the demise of Soviet Marxism-Leninism cemented the dramatic changes in religious policy. It also created the opportunity to consider the religious sphere in light of materials from the archives of the CPSU, the KGB, and the Council for Religious Affairs, the official body which monitored religious life.

In the early post-Soviet period, documents, decrees and communications on religious policy became accessible. They provided irrefutable evidence of the extent of religious persecution, which, though it waxed and waned, was present throughout the Soviet period. For the first time, researchers had access to a range of resources,

⁸³ See TASS, "Vstrecha General'nogo sekretaria TsK KPSS M.S. Gorbacheva s Patriarkhom o vseia Rusi Pimenom i chlenami Sinoda Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi." *Pravda*, 30 April 1988, 1.

⁸⁴ Riabikova, T. B., ed. *Na puti k svobode sovesti*, Moscow: Progress, 1989.

⁸⁵ Michael Bourdeaux, *Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel*, London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990.

encouraging the publication of collections of official documents and decrees.⁸⁶ These publications gave rise to further work from primary source materials on the subject of religion in the USSR.

From the early to mid-1990s there was a large amount of literature published on religion in the Russian Federation. The Keston Institute's *Religion, State and Society* (successor of *Religion in Communist Lands*) remains the only English language academic journal devoted to issues of church, state and society in the former communist countries. Books such as Nathaniel Davies' *A Long Walk to Church* and the edited collection *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* made use of access to archives and filled the significant gaps in pre-*glasnost*' knowledge, such as the extent of the KGB's infiltration of the Patriarchate and the level of religious persecution in the communist period.⁸⁷

The literature came to focus on religious legislation, and increasingly examined the Church leadership's responses to religious pluralism. There was a significant amount of material dedicated to evangelical Protestant activity, much of it by missionary groups in the west, such as *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, first published in 1993, which focussed on the status of Christianity and western ministries in the postcommunist region. It is no surprise that much of this literature was orientated toward missionaries; the publication *East-West Christian Organizations*, a directory of western Christian groups working in postcommunist Europe, reported 347 Christian agencies active in Russia in late 1992, well before this activity reached its peak in 1994.⁸⁸ These publications focussed on the successes and challenges of mostly western Protestant missionaries working in the newly opened mission field. The influence of the Russian

⁸⁶ See, for example, Gerd Shtrikker, ed., *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v sovetskoe vremia*, vol. 1, Moscow: Propilei, 1995, N. Sliusareva, ed., *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' i kommunisticheskoe gosudarstvo 1917-1941: Dokumenty i fotomaterialy*, Moscow: Bibleisko-Bogoslovskii institut Sviatogo Apostola Andreia, 1996 and Felix Corley, *Religion in the Soviet Union: An Archival Reader*, New York: New York University Press, 1996.

⁸⁷ Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1995, Michael Bourdeaux, ed., *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Armonk, London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995.

⁸⁸ Sharon Linzey, M. Holt Ruffin, and Mark R. Elliott, *East-West Christian Organizations*, Evanston: Berry Publishing Services, 1993, 21.

Orthodox Church was a recurring theme. These mission publications were more concerned with documenting and publicising discrimination against western Protestants than with the systematic evaluation of the Orthodox Church's operation in the new environment. This sometimes led to literature which condemned the Orthodox Church as a whole, ignoring both laity and clergy opposing conservatism, national chauvinism and defensiveness and supporting reform, tolerance and dialogue. While these publications have played an important role in disseminating information about discrimination against western missionaries, the unbalanced emphasis has not made a significant contribution to scholarship on post-Soviet religious life.

With the dissolution of *Glavlit*, the state censorship body, public discourse in the mass media became 'a huge new mirror and powerful instrument of national consciousness'.⁸⁹ As more money was made available to Russian religious organisations and defenders of religious freedom,⁹⁰ they were able to produce their own publications in defence of believers' rights, such as the Institute for Religion and Law's journal *Religiia i pravo* (*Religion and Law*). There was a large number of Internet publications, notably the Russian Orthodox Internet magazine *Sobornost'*.⁹¹ Most religious debate is carried out on the pages of newspapers. Particularly relevant are liberal newspapers such as *Moskovskie novosti* (*Moscow News*) and *Nezavisimaia gazeta* (*Independent Gazette*), which has a religious supplement, and also rightist newspapers such as *Sovetskaia Rossiia* (*Soviet Russia*) and others, which generally have smaller print runs, but which are far more numerous than the liberal papers. Emigré publications continue to deliberate on religious issues. This is in addition to a large number of religious newspapers and journals. The Orthodox Church remains a foremost theme of articles printed and polemics conducted in these publications.

⁸⁹ Alexander Agadjanian, "The Changing Post-Soviet Contexts: Religious and National Identity in the Post-Soviet Societal Fabric", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 53, no. 3 (2001), 482.

⁹⁰ The end of communist anti-religious policy and propaganda meant a radical change for western research institutions concerned with religion in the communist bloc. Whereas human rights and religious liberty organisations and benefactors had previously sponsored their works, this money was, in the post-Soviet period, re-directed to Russian organisations with the same objectives and concerns. This led to a significant reduction in the amount of money available to non-profit organisations such as Keston Institute. Lawrence Uzzell, *Opening Address, Keston Institute Forum Day*, Oxford: 15 November 1999.

The development of civil society in Russia is a salient issue for contemporary scholars. Discussion of this subject is dominated by debate over whether the seemingly interminable struggle for democracy is due to a Russian penchant for undemocratic forms of government. The 'no' case is best represented by Nicolai N. Petro, who argues in *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy* (1995) that throughout Russia's history there have been repeated attempts to install democratic governance, and that Russia's central institutions are inherently democratic, though constantly frustrated by external protagonists.⁹² The 'yes' case is advanced by Jeremy Lester in *Modern Tsars and Princes* (1995), a neo-Gramscian analysis of the struggle for power in Russia, and Richard Pipes, in *Russia Under the Old Regime* (1974).⁹³ They argue quite the opposite: that Russia is inherently autocratic. These reflections upon whether Russia is inherently democratic or autocratic are overly deterministic. They overlook the dynamics of the political processes that lead to legislation or decrees. The argument that Russia's traditional institutions have a predilection for authoritarian governance leaves little room for recognition of the dynamism within these institutions and overlooks conflicting currents within their structures. This determinism is not enlightening when examining the Orthodox Church, which is an institution in a state of flux where competing interests are yet to consolidate their influence.

Thomas Porter and Thomas Pearson provide a more optimistic assessment when they argue that civil society was in the making in imperial Russia and would have developed were it not for revolution.⁹⁴ They regard post-Soviet conditions as more conducive than those in late imperial Russia to the development of civil society, particularly due to the existence of a middle class.⁹⁵ The extent of philanthropic and

⁹¹ See: <http://www.sobor.ru>

⁹² Nicolai N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1995.

⁹³ Jeremy Lester, *Modern Tsars and Princes: The Struggle for Hegemony in Russia*, London, New York: Verso, 1995, Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, London: Penguin Books, 1974.

⁹⁴ Thomas Porter and Thomas Pearson, "Historical Legacies and Democratic Prospects: The Emergence of A Civil Society in Twentieth-Century Russia", *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*, vol. 23, no. 1 (1996), 51-66. This point is also made in Rigby, "Mono-organisational Socialism and the Civil Society".

⁹⁵ It should be noted that Porter and Pearson's article was published in 1996. The 1998 ruble crash devastated the middle class and, therefore, according to their own argument, the development of civil society would have been impeded. Porter and Pearson, "Historical Legacies and Democratic Prospects".

charitable work (which is largely carried out by religious groups) is also proof of the Church's contribution to postcommunist civil society. Regardless of which of these two positions scholars adopt, there exists a consensus that civil society is crucial for democratic governance, and that economic and political instability in Russia inhibit its emergence.

Shortcomings of Existing Literature

There are a number of shortcomings of existing literature that this dissertation seeks to redress. The tendency of western analysts, first, to dismiss the Orthodox Church as a significant social and political actor in Russia's post-Soviet trajectory and, second, to emphasise extremist and overlook liberal elements, and therefore to neglect the division in the Church, was noted in the Introduction.

Despite the increase in literature on religion in Russia, there have been few publications that examine the changing role of the Orthodox Church through the prism of civil society. Petro insists that the Church fuels civil society; that it has a democratising influence that has been misrepresented as conservative and authoritarian. He argues that the Church is crucial for the process of democratisation.⁹⁶ In addition, evaluations of the Church and civil society have not considered its influence through the three spheres of civil society, the basis of this analysis, which enables a more comprehensive examination of the Church's influence.

Although the flood of scholarship on religion in Russia contributed enormously to the field, making vital documents known and deliberating upon the contribution of churches to democratisation, works published before 1997 are outdated since the passage of 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' radically altered the dynamics within the religious sphere. Journal articles have focussed on specific aspects of the legislation, such as Marat S. Shterin and James T. Richardson's 'Effects of the Western Anti-Cult Movement on Development of Laws Concerning Religion in Post-

⁹⁶ Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy*.

Communist Russia',⁹⁷ though there has been no comprehensive analysis of the changed environment in which religious associations operate. The edited volume *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls* (1999), one of a series on religion and human rights, examines the legislation from a legal perspective and assesses the implications for religious minorities.⁹⁸ The contributions from a range of scholars and religious activists with different approaches and disciplines do not provide a methodic or thorough analysis. The collection *Religious Transition in Russia*, by scholars of Russian studies and sociologists of religion, includes data from extensive surveys on religion and values carried out in the 1990s.⁹⁹ The disparate chapters do not offer a systematic analysis of both the formal and the informal currents in the Russian Church, and so overlook the division in Orthodox life.

Another shortcoming of the existing literature is that evaluations of the Church's influence tend to focus on the Patriarchate, that is, the Church's institutional form. This is not conducive to a thorough examination of Orthodoxy's post-Soviet influence. Lay activism, including the initiatives of clergy separate from Church control, or opposing the Church leadership's decrees or directives, is an increasingly important influence which cannot be overlooked. In addition, much of the literature on the 1997 law has comprised legalistic examinations of its passage and provisions. A focus on the practices and processes that legitimated the Church's privileged position in the pluralist religious sphere and thus its special treatment under the new legislation is overdue.

The term 'civil society' has undergone significant terminological and theoretical changes, a response to changing understandings of citizens' role in society and their relationship to the political leadership. Religion has rarely been central to these

⁹⁷ Marat S. Shterin and James T. Richardson, "Effects of the Western Anti-Cult Movement on Development of Laws Concerning Religion in Post-Communist Russia", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 42, no. 2 (2000), 247-71.

⁹⁸ Witte, John, and Michael Bourdeaux, eds. *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Books, 1999.

⁹⁹ Matti Kotiranta, ed., *Religious Transition in Russia*, Helsinki: Kikimora Publications, 2000.

formulations. It is usually subsumed into the more general category of social organisations independent from the state and therefore grouped with independent economic activity, charitable work, and the like.

The activities of Solidarność had two important consequences for this discussion of civil society, religion and politics. First, civil society re-emerged as a term denoting social activity independent of the state, in this case from the authoritarian regime and, second, it brought religion to the fore of discussions of democratisation in the Soviet bloc due to the preeminence of the Catholic Church in the opposition movement. The relevance of religion and civil society to democratisation is demonstrated by comparisons with the social movements arising from Liberation Theology and from the Christian foundations of the black civil rights movement.

The resurgence of the concept in political discourse, both in Russian and western understandings, has ensured that civil society remains at the forefront of discussion about the postcommunist region. This chapter has attempted to define civil society, and elucidate how the concept can be used in this study of the Orthodox Church and its influence upon Russia's post-Soviet development. Three spheres of civil society have been proposed. Evaluating the Church's influence through these three spheres allows a thorough analysis of the Church's influence, and avoids focussing purely on the institutional church, represented by the Moscow Patriarchate, at the expense of non-institutional currents in Orthodox life.

The inadequacy of existing literature is partly due to this emphasis on the institutional church. In addition, the implementation of the 1997 religious legislation and the rapidly changing religious sphere means that much of the literature on Orthodoxy and civil society is outdated. For these reasons, a study of the Church's influence on civil society is of great urgency; scholars agree on its central role in contemporary Russia but are yet to study and explain the extent of its influence. The reinvigorated debates generated by 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' have highlighted the division in the Church. This has been largely overlooked in contemporary

scholarship. This dissertation seeks to redress the imbalance in political commentary on Orthodoxy and civil society in post-Soviet Russia.

This task necessarily begins with establishing whether there is an historic basis in either the pre-revolutionary or the Soviet periods for the expectation that the Orthodox Church might contribute to civil society. To use S. Frederick's Starr's adage, it is necessary to see whether the Church can play a role in the search for Russia's 'usable past'.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Starr, "Soviet Union: A Civil Society", 24-27.

PART II

Chapter 2

A 'Usable Past'?

Russian Orthodoxy and Civil Society in the USSR

The appellation *Sviataia Rus'* (Holy Rus')¹ conveys the centrality of Orthodoxy to Russia's historical and cultural development. The chronology of Christianity's adoption and spread remains obscure, and therefore contentious, though it is widely accepted that Christianity was introduced to Kievan Rus' in 988.² The earliest surviving accounts of Christianisation are the chronicles of Nestor, a Kievan monk, though their authenticity is contested. The chronicles recount that Prince Vladimir of Kievan Rus' adopted Eastern Orthodoxy after sending emissaries to the Moslem Bulgars of the Volga, to the Jews, to Catholic Germany, and to the Greeks to observe their religious rituals. The party recommended that Vladimir look to Constantinople for the new Kievan faith.³ Accordingly, in 988, Vladimir recanted pagan worship, embraced Christianity, and commanded that his people be baptised.⁴

¹ Though Holy Rus' is accurate, *Sviataia Rus'* is customarily translated into English as 'Holy Russia'.

² See Vladimir Vodoff, "The Conversion of Rus': A Subject of International Historical Research" in *The Christianization of Ancient Russia - A Millenium: 988-1988*, ed. Yves Hamant, Paris: UNESCO, 1992.

³ According to Nestor's *Primary Chronicle*, the envoys were deeply impressed by a service at the Cathedral of St Sophia in Constantinople, stating: 'we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty'. Nestor, *Russian Primary Chronicle*, ed. Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans. Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, Cambridge (MA): The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953, 111. A second explanation is that Christianity was chosen over Islam because it permitted alcohol consumption. Stephen White, *Russia Goes Dry: Alcohol, State and Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 1. For other theories, see Yaroslav Shchapov, "The Assimilation by Kievan Rus' of the Classical and Byzantine Heritage: The role of Christianisation" in *The Christianization of Ancient Russia - A Millenium: 988-1988*, ed. Yves Hamant, Paris: UNESCO, 1992, 57-59.

⁴ Nestor, *Russian Primary Chronicle*, 51-116. The analysis of a millennium of Orthodoxy is beyond the scope of this dissertation. See Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985, 19-199, Nicholas Zernov, *Eastern Christendom: A Study of the Origin and the Development of the Eastern Orthodox Church*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1961, Robin Milner-Gullard, *The Russians*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, Osyp Zinkewych and Andrew Sorokowski, *A Thousand Years of Christianity in Ukraine: An Encyclopedic Chronology*, New York: Smoloskyp Publishers and the National Committee to Commemorate the Millenium of Christianity in Ukraine, 1988 and Dmitrii Pospelovskii, *Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v istorii Rusi, Rossii i SSSR*, Moscow: Bibleisko-Bogoslovskii institut sv. Apostola Andreia, 1996. The only overview of a millennium of the Orthodox Church in Russia which extends to the post-Soviet period is Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, Crestwood (NY): St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998, though this text is written for a college audience and is not as academic in style

The Rus' Church retained close links with the Byzantine Empire and adopted the tradition of symphonia, the dual rule of the temporal and ecclesiastical leadership (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). In 1054 the Roman Pope excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople due to differences over the papal authority and doctrinal issues. The Slavs regarded the split of the Roman and Eastern Orthodox churches as the fall of the 'First Rome'.⁵ During the invasion of the Mongolian Tartars (1240-1480), the Rus' Church became the 'symbolic repository of national identity'.⁶ It was the 'strongest link to the past' after the Slav lands were destroyed, and played an important role in rallying the Slavs to repel the invaders.⁷ This led to greater independence from Constantinople, and enhanced the Church's prestige and authority.

The central place of Moscow in religious life was consolidated when the Turks overran Constantinople in 1453. Muscovites attributed this invasion, and the fall of the 'Second Rome', to the heresies of the Greeks. Thereafter, Moscow came to be regarded as the 'Third Rome'. The monk Filofeus wrote in the sixteenth century:

now this Rome [Moscow] of thy mighty kingdom – the holy catholic and apostolic Church – will illuminate the whole universe like the sun.... all the Christian kingdoms have come together into thine own, that two Romes have fallen, and a third stands, while a fourth there shall not be....⁸

Moscow came to be regarded as the true home of Orthodoxy and the capital of Christendom.⁹ Geographical remoteness, the vast extent of Rus' lands, and

as Pospelovskii's other publications.

⁵ Nicholas Zernov, *Moscow: The Third Rome*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937, 45.

⁶ Nicolai N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1995, 63.

⁷ Zernov, *Moscow: The Third Rome*, 30.

⁸ Cited in Mikhail Agursky, *The Third Rome: National Bolshevism in the USSR*, Boulder, London: Westview Press, 1987, 6.

⁹ Contemporary scholars note that Christianisation was not entirely successful. Subsequently, Russians developed a hybrid of paganism and Christianity, labeled *dvoeverie* (dual faith). For example, to maintain good favour with *domovoi*, the pagan god of the household, upon moving the head of the house would hold an icon in one hand, food for the god in other, and cross themselves in the Christian custom. Christian occasions were often superimposed onto existing festivals, so that painting Easter eggs was a celebration of the traditional pagan festival of spring. These practices were so widespread, particularly among the peasantry, that scholars regard *dvoeverie* as synonymous with medieval popular Christianity. For historiographical interpretations of *dvoeverie* see Eve Levin, "Dvoeverie and Popular Religion" in *Seeking God*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden, Illinios: Northern Illinios University Press, 1993. Marxists have argued that the blend of Christian and pagan practices was a display of defiance against state decrees, while other writers have attributed it to a particularly

particularly the use of *Staroslavianskii* as the ecclesiastical language ensured the Church was isolated from western Christendom.¹⁰ Orthodoxy has since been central to religious life in Russia.

This chapter examines the precedents of the Orthodox Church's contribution to civil society. Though the chapter focuses on the recent past, namely developments since the accession of Leonid Brezhnev to party secretary in 1964 until the collapse of the USSR in 1991, it is necessary to also acknowledge significant events in the history of the Church and civil society in past centuries. The first section of this chapter therefore briefly considers developments from the Imperial to the pre-Brezhnev Soviet periods. This provides the background for the remainder of the chapter, which examines whether there were elements of civil society in Orthodox life from the post-Brezhnev period to the end of the Soviet period. This will establish whether the Orthodox Church has contributed to Russia's 'usable past' and if the Church's experiences can be drawn on in the post-Soviet period.

This chapter demonstrates that a schism developed when in 1918 Patriarch Sergii declared loyalty to the communist regime. This declaration created tensions between prelates and some clergy and laity, who resented this acquiescence. The Patriarchate's capitulation effectively removed the Russian Church as an institution from any stake in the vestigial civil society, which developed particularly after the end of Nikita Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign of 1959-1964. Orthodoxy did, however, contribute to the non-state sphere in an informal way, through religious dissent. This dissent created a sphere of activity beyond the control of the state and set a precedent for the Church's role in civil society.

This chapter also analyses the changes in the religious sphere after Mikhail Gorbachev implemented his policies of *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiia*. At this first opportunity, the Moscow Patriarchate was involved in the reform of Soviet society, and a variety of disparate social and political forces invoked the Orthodox Church,

appealing faith. Whatever the reasons, *dvoeverie* persisted until the early twentieth century, especially among the rural population. Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, London: Fontana Press, 1998, 213-14. This is refuted in Boris Rauschenbach, "The Development of Kievan Rus' in the Wake of Christianization" in *The Christianization of Ancient Russia - A Millennium: 988-1988*, ed. Yves Hamant, Paris: UNESCO, 1992, 47.

both as an institution and as a belief system, for legitimacy. The links between Orthodoxy and national identity were strengthened during the Soviet period, when religious elements perceived the state to be attacking on both spiritual and patriotic fronts, and national defence became linked with defending Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy as a national tradition was used by a variety of social forces to support varied political platforms. The exploitation of Orthodoxy for these disparate causes meant that the Church was bestowed with a renewed political and social influence at this crucial time in Russia's history.

The Russian Empire and the USSR before Brezhnev

Peter the Great's (1721-1725) administrative initiatives remain the most contentious reforms in the Church's history. He regarded the Church as a conservative body frustrating his attempts to industrialise, militarise and westernise the Russian Empire. When Patriarch Adrian died in 1700, Peter I appointed in his place a bishop more open to the westernising process. The *Ecclesiastical Regulations of 1721* abolished the Patriarchate and appointed a collegial board of bishops, the Holy Synod, to replace it. This body was subject to civil authority and similar in both structure and status to other departments of the state.¹¹ Peter I commanded that priests alert the government to oppositional sentiment expressed during confession, brought Church finances under state control, drastically reduced the number of clergy, and restricted the establishment of new parishes.¹²

The reigns of Peter III (1762) and Catherine II (1762-1796) brought Peter the Great's initiatives to their logical conclusion: the depletion of Church resources and the administrative subjugation of the Church to the state. The (lay) position of Over-Procurator was one of extensive power over the Church, appointing key positions and directing the activities of the Synod. The full extent of the Over-Procurator's control was realised under Konstantin Pobedonostev, who held the post from 1880 to 1905. As a staunch conservative, he was loathed by liberal Russians. Some of his less popular measures included reviving religious repression, hindering the introduction

¹⁰ Zernov, *Moscow: The Third Rome*, 18-21.

¹¹ Nikita Struve, *Christians in Contemporary Russia*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard and A. Manson, London: Harvill Press, 1967, 17.

¹² James Shelton Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire, 1900-1917*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1940, 25.

of innovations such as parliamentary government, objecting to freedom of expression in the media, and generally suppressing liberalism and progress and keeping the episcopate in submission.¹³

The clergy were segregated from society; a seminary education was backward and largely irrelevant outside the Church, effectively making their contribution to intellectual life impossible. Zernov describes a 'caste system of recruitment' as priests' sons almost exclusively became clergy and, there being little to attract others to the calling, stagnated without prestige, respect and in the eyes of society at large, without value.¹⁴ Morale was low, as described in the memoirs of Ioann Belliustin, a village priest, in 1858:

If you gave a prize for inventing a way to inflict the maximum humiliation and disgrace, to convert a lofty and miraculous calling into a trade, then surely one could not find a better means to do so than those unfortunate exactions from parishioners known among the clergy as "revenues". The priest administers a short prayer service, and thrusts out his hand for a reward; he accompanies a deceased person to his eternal resting place, and again he holds out his hand; a wedding ceremony has to be performed, and he even bargains over his fee; and on holidays he goes about the parish with the sole purpose of collecting money.¹⁵

Drunken and immoral behaviour led priests to be regarded with contempt. The rural clergy were particularly frustrated by their congregations' lack of interest in even the most basic church teachings, leading Belliustin to despair, 'Our *Orthodox* folk, and I say this without the slightest exaggeration, do not have *the remotest*

¹³ Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire, 1900-1917*, 42-43. For a sympathetic account of Pobedonostsev, which argues that his initiatives were motivated by a deep piety, see John D. Basil, "Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev: An Argument for a Russian State Church", *Church History*, vol. 64, no. 1 (1995), 44-61. The eminent historian Gregory Freeze disagrees with the consensus among historians (notably Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire, 1900-1917*, 36, Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, London: Penguin Books, 1974 and James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great*, London: Macmillan, 1971) that the Church was the 'handmaiden of the state', and that the privileges granted to the Church by the Imperial Government were in return for its continued subjugation to the state. Freeze argues that the Holy Synod could exercise authority to protect its own interests and that the Procurator did not have as much influence as generally attributed. Most importantly, he argued that the Church did not become a department of the government, but rather 'preserved until 1917 its special status - as an institution parallel to, not inside, the state apparatus'. G. L. Freeze, "Handmaiden of the State? The Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 36, no. 1 (1985), 89.

¹⁴ Zernov, *Moscow: The Third Rome*, 44.

¹⁵ Belliustin, I. S. *Description of the Clergy in Rural Russia: The Memoir of a Nineteenth-Century Parish Priest (1858)*, translated by Gregory L. Freeze. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1985, 122.

conception of anything spiritual'.¹⁶ These conditions marked a gulf between clergy and their congregations, and also between clergy and Church dignitaries. They had few points of mutual experience.

There was widespread social unrest at the turn of the twentieth century, resulting in calls for the overthrow of the monarchy. Nicholas II's unpopular reign (1894-March 1917) lurched from one scandal to another. He conceded to the establishment of a parliament, creating a semblance of multi-party government. This, coupled with increased citizen participation and representative institutions in other areas, has led some scholars to identify an emerging democracy, or emerging civil society, at this time, which was interrupted by World War I and then the 1917 revolution.¹⁷

There were also calls for the release of the Church from state control. In the early twentieth century the intelligentsia and the workers, particularly urban dwellers, shifted their attitudes toward the Church. They questioned the Patriarchate's role and condemned it as an organ of the Imperial government. Deeply dissatisfied with the subjugation of the Church to the state, the intelligentsia instigated attempts at Church reform during 1905-1906.¹⁸

At this time, Orthodoxy was the only denomination under state control. In 1905 a religious journal published an appeal by thirty-two St Petersburg priests which articulated their frustration with the secular control of the Church. Nicholas II granted to the Church greater independence as part of wider reforms, prompted by Russia's humiliating defeat in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). He allowed the convening of a council which churchmen anticipated would result in the liberalisation

¹⁶ Original italics. I. S. Belliustin, *Description of the Clergy in Rural Russia: The Memoir of a Nineteenth-Century Parish Priest (1858)*, translated by Gregory L. Freeze. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1985, 125.

¹⁷ See Mary Schaeffer Conroy, ed., *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia*, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1998, Thomas Porter, *The Zemstvo and the Emergence of Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia, 1864-1917*, San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1991, T. H. Rigby, "Mono-organisational Socialism and the Civil Society" in *The Transition from Socialism*, ed. David W. Lovell, William Maley, and Chandran Kukathas, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991 and Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Destruction of Civil Society in Russia (1917-1953)" in *The Transition from Socialism*, ed. Chandran Kukathas, William Maley, and David W. Lovell, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991.

¹⁸ See James W. Cunningham, *A Vanquished Hope: The Movement for Church Renewal in*

of the Church. However, Nicholas II feared the erosion of his power, and withdrew his permission for the council. It was not convened until 1917, when its participants called for the restoration of the Patriarchate, the de-centralisation of Church administration and the restoration of Church sovereignty.¹⁹

There was great public support for these reforms. For the most part, the Russian people were deeply religious. The peasantry formed the mass of the Orthodox believers, and, although the Church's influence was challenged by sects and schisms, on the whole they remained devoted to both Church and Empire.²⁰ Indeed, the self-identity of most Russians was based on religion above national or state allegiance, as was illustrated by the propensity of Russians to describe themselves as *pravoslavnye* (Orthodox) before other identities.

The October 1917 revolution marked a radical change in the status of the Orthodox Church. The Bolsheviks implemented a policy of unequivocal hostility toward Orthodoxy, fuelled by atheist Marxist-Leninist doctrine and also by the Church's legacy as defender of the Imperial government. Initially, religious policy was solely directed toward reducing the Orthodox Church's potential to challenge the new regime.²¹ Bishops, priests, monks, nuns and laypersons were persecuted on any pretext; later this extended to other denominations.

The Church was equally hostile to the Bolsheviks. Patriarch Tikhon pronounced an anathema on the communists.²² The sustained persecution of believers made it apparent that if the Church wished to survive as an institution it must recant this hostile position. Tikhon retracted his opposition. In 1927 his successor, Patriarch Sergii, issued a statement on behalf of the Orthodox Church, a 'Declaration of Loyalty' to the Soviet Motherland, 'whose joys and successes are our

Russia, 1905-1906, Crestwood (NY): St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981.

¹⁹ Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire, 1900-1917*, 46.

²⁰ Zernov argued that the proliferation of churches, the ubiquitous icons and the popularity of Orthodox rites to celebrate significant life events proves a level of faith unparalleled in Europe. Zernov, *Moscow: The Third Rome*, 35-36.

²¹ William C. Fletcher, "Reductive Containment: Soviet Religious Policy", *Journal of Church and State* vol. 22, no. 3 (1980), 503.

²² Patriarch Tikhon, "Poslanie Patriarkha Tikhona. Anafematstvovanie bol'shevikov (19.1.1918)" in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v sovetskoe vremia*, ed. Gerd Shtrikker, Moscow: Propilei, 1995, 110-113.

joys and successes, and whose setbacks are our setbacks'.²³ Some viewed these efforts to ensure Orthodoxy's survival as an institution as spiritual corruption.

Regardless of whether this apostasy was justified, the persecution of Orthodox believers did not cease, as Tikhon and Sergii no doubt anticipated, but continued with increased intensity. The number of church closures confirms this. Before 1917, there were 50,000 functioning Orthodox churches in the Russian Empire; 80,000 including chapels and convents. In 1939, by which time some 80,000 Orthodox priests, monks and nuns had lost their lives, there were 200-300 churches open in the USSR. Of these, just 15-20 were in Moscow. When Stalin could benefit from the Patriarchate's cooperation in World War II, many churches re-opened, so that by 1947 the number of churches reached 14,000. A renewed wave of persecutions resulted in a drop in number by about 1,000 by the mid-1950s. Khrushchev's anti-religious drive resulted in 44 per cent of churches being de-registered, so that by 1966 there were just 7,466 churches operating in the USSR.²⁴

The Bolsheviks promoted their policy toward the Orthodox Church through an atheist league and a 'decoy' sect. The motto of the League of the Militant Godless, founded in 1925, was 'The Struggle Against Religion is the Struggle for Socialism'. The League coordinated anti-religious and atheist publishing, including its newspaper *Bezbozhnik* (*The Godless*) (which by 1931 had a circulation of 500,000) and journal *Antireligiozhnik* (*Anti-Religious*), and conducted propaganda for mass audiences.²⁵ Nikita Struve recounted the League's second 'five-year plan', as ambitious as the regime's economic goals:

In 1932-3 all external signs of religion were to be destroyed; during 1933-4 all religious pictures in books or people's homes were to disappear; during 1934-5 the whole country and particularly its youth, were to be subjected to intensive atheistic propaganda; during

²³ Patriarkh Sergii, "Poslanie pastyriam i pastve (Deklaratsiia mitropolita Sergiia) (29.7.1927)" in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v sovetskoe vremia*, ed. Gerd Shtrikker, Moscow: Propilei, 1995, 268-72.

²⁴ Material for this section is from Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1995, 11-13; 23-27; 43. See further discussion of the extent of church closures and persecution in Michael Bourdeaux, *Religious Minorities in the Soviet Union*, London: Minority Rights Group, 1984, 26 and Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime 1917-1982*, Crestwood (NY): St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984. Their figures correlate closely with Davis'.

²⁵ David E. Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union*, Cambridge (MA), London: The MIT Press, 1975, 35-36.

1935-6, any places of worship still standing would be destroyed; and finally, during 1936-7, religion would be routed out from its most secret hiding places.²⁶

A major strategy against the Orthodox Church was the Bolshevik's support of the Living Church (*Zhivaia Tserkov'*), also known as the Renovationist Church, an Orthodox schismatic sect which professed primary loyalty to the communist regime. After Patriarch Tikhon was imprisoned, two metropolitans set up a provisional ecclesiastical administration. They purged the hierarchy of bishops hostile to the regime, consecrated their own bishops, declared Tikhon deposed, and sent some prelates into exile. Orthodox clergy and laity who refused to recognise the legitimacy of the Living Church were persecuted. Metropolitan Veniamin of Petrograd, for instance, excommunicated one of the schism's leaders. Veniamin was subsequently arrested on false charges of refusing to hand Church valuables to the state, and, after a brief trial, was exiled and then shot in 1922.²⁷ Other clergy who remained loyal to the Patriarch met similar fates.²⁸ Tikhon's release in 1923 and his reinstatement encouraged parishes and believers to leave the schismatic church in large numbers. The Living Church continued to function until 1934, when it was persecuted by the regime, apparently when the enthusiasm of its members made it no longer a reliable ally in the fight against religion.²⁹ By this time, it had become apparent that the Orthodox Church no longer represented a threat to the regime.

The first religious legislation adopted by the Bolsheviks was the January 1918 'Decree on the Separation of the Church from the State and the Church from the School'. While it guaranteed freedom of conscience, other provisions of the decree directly contradicted this guarantee – it nationalised Church property, for instance, and denied it the right to own property. The law was part of the campaign to strip the Church of its former privileges and restrict religious activity as much as possible.³⁰

²⁶ Struve, *Christians in Contemporary Russia*, 54.

²⁷ For documents relating to Veniamin's case, see Gerd Shtrikker, ed., *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v sovetskoe vremia*, 2 vols, vol. 1, Moscow: Propilei, 1995, 143-84.

²⁸ Struve, *Christians in Contemporary Russia*, 36-38.

²⁹ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *Soviet Anti-Religious Campaigns and Persecutions*, vol. 2, New York: St Martin's Press, 1988, 66.

³⁰ It stated: 'Within the confines of the Republic it shall be prohibited to issue any local by-laws or regulations restricting or limiting freedom of conscience, or establishing privileges or preferential rights of any kind based on the religious creed of citizens' and 'Every citizen may profess any religious belief, or profess no belief at all. All restrictions of rights, involved by professing one or another religious belief, or professing no belief at all, are cancelled and void'. *Upravliaiushchii delami Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov*, "Dekret Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov ob otdelenii tserkvi ot

The lack of success of the anti-religious campaign led to the April 1929 legislation 'On Religious Associations'. Its provisions included the compulsory registration of religious societies and believers, and it prohibited religious associations from a wide range of initiatives, including charitable work.³¹ Religious legislation was designed to maximise opportunities for the interference and intervention of the Soviet authorities. For example, 'On Religious Associations' stipulated that religious groups could not use old or unsafe buildings, a provision which meant that the Church's lack of money, coupled with the Bolsheviks' neglect of churches, allowed authorities to declare many places unfit for worship and to refuse religious organisations permission to practice elsewhere.³²

Objectives of Soviet Religious Policy

Unofficial policy was ultimately directed toward achieving the liquidation of individual believers and religious communities. Despite Lenin's repeated emphasis that, as far as the state was concerned, religion was a private matter, Soviet authorities regarded worship as very much a political issue. Constitutionally-guaranteed religious freedoms were manifestly incompatible with atheistic scientific communism. It has been established that Marxism-Leninism holds religion as a corrupting influence that has no place in the socialist order. While the Russian Orthodox Church enjoyed a privileged position and a greater degree of freedom than other denominations, having an official representative body, for example, there were still restrictions on Orthodox activities designed to minimise the Church's influence, discredit its activities, and diminish its following. Though unofficial Soviet policy toward Orthodoxy vacillated between repression and toleration and, at times, even

gosudarstva i shkoly ot tserkvi (23.1.1918)" in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v sovetskoe vremia*, ed. Gerd Shtrikker, Moscow: Propilei, 1995, 113.

³¹ Including: 'setting up funds for mutual aid, co-operatives or associations of producers, and from using the effects at their disposal for any purpose other than the satisfaction of their religious needs', and 'granting material aid to their members, organising religious or other meetings specifically intended for children, young people or women, biblical or literary meetings, groups, sections, circles, or handicraft meetings, religious instruction, etc., excursions, or children's play-groups, or from opening libraries, reading rooms, sanatoria, or providing medical aid.' (Article 16) *Sobranie zakonov i rasporiazhenii*, "Postanovlenie Vserossiiskogo Tsentral'nogo Iсполnitel'nogo Komiteta i Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov o religioznykh ob'edineniakh (8.4.1929)" in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v sovetskoe vremia*, ed. Gerd Shtrikker, Moscow: Propilei, 1995, 307-10.

³² *Sobranie zakonov i rasporiazhenii*, "Postanovlenie Vserossiiskogo Tsentral'nogo Iсполnitel'nogo Komiteta i Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov o religioznykh ob'edineniakh (8.4.1929)", 307-10.

alliance, the regime's core objectives changed little. There were three major objectives of Soviet religious policy throughout the communist period.³³

The first objective was to annihilate religion by implementing severe legal restrictions on religious activity. Conducting religious propaganda was outlawed, denying religious groups the opportunity to teach their doctrines and practices. An anti-religious campaign, which varied in intensity, was sustained throughout the Soviet period. Other legal measures restricting religious activity included redirecting Church income to secular causes, reducing the number of clergy, and outlawing religious education for children. The protection from religious discrimination remained a constitutional guarantee until the USSR's dissolution. The 1977 Constitution stated:

Citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess any religion and perform religious rites or not to profess any religion, and to conduct atheist propaganda. Incitement of hostility and hatred on religious grounds shall be prohibited. (Art. 52)³⁴

Of these, the only assurances honoured by the authorities were the guarantees of the non-interference of the church in state affairs and the right to exercise atheist belief and propaganda. All other provisions were routinely violated.

Despite the persecution of religious communities, Vladimir Kuroedov, President of the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA), the official body governing religious life,³⁵ dismissed accusations of state-sanctioned persecution of religious groups as western propaganda. In an interview with *Izvestiia* in 1976, Kuroedov maintained that all citizens enjoyed freedom of conscience:

³³ This section draws on the objectives identified by Bociurkiw in Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, "Religious Dissent and the Soviet State" in *Religion and Atheism in the USSR and Eastern Europe*, ed. Bohdan R. Bociurkiw and John W. Strong, London, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1975, 58. Bociurkiw also identifies a fourth objective of Soviet religious policy: to exploit Orthodoxy's position as the patriotic faith. The most obvious example of this was the dramatic shift in policy toward the Church during and, to a lesser extent, after World War II. Afraid that oppressed believers would profess loyalty to the Nazi invaders, who allowed thousands of churches to be re-opened on captured territory, Stalin allowed a reprise from the repression of religious life. The Orthodox Church was exploited to rally support for Soviet efforts and the support of the Church greatly benefited the Soviet campaign. As this fourth objective was a less prominent policy objective after Brezhnev's accession, this is not elaborated here.

³⁴ *Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik, Konstitutsiia (osnovnoi zakon) Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik (7.10.1977)*, Moscow: Politizdat, 1977, 22.

³⁵ The Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (CAROC) and the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (CARC) amalgamated to become the Council for Religious Affairs in

Soviet legislation has established special legal norms, defending believers, religious associations and ministers of the cult [non-Orthodox religious denominations] from infringements of their legal rights. These norms make provision for accountability for obstructing the performance of religious rituals, inasmuch as they do not violate the social order and are not accompanied by infringements of citizens' rights. Any kind of discrimination against believers and any kind of violence to their consciences are categorically forbidden.³⁶

It has been illustrated that legislation guaranteeing freedom of conscience did exist. Regardless, the flagrant violations of constitutional provisions by Soviet authorities are well documented. The constitutional status of religious bodies and individual believers, as well as official statements, can be disregarded as any indication of the conditions for believers in the Soviet Union.

The second objective of Soviet religious policy was to maximise state and police controls over religious life. The CRA was under the jurisdiction of the Soviet Council of Ministers. In its original conception this body was to mediate between church and state affairs, however, from 1960, it maintained strict administrative control over religious life and interfered in the most trivial of Orthodox affairs. The CRA oversaw church funding, publishing and theological education, attended religious gatherings, maintained a registry of religious services and rituals,³⁷ appointed church officials, and regulated many other aspects of religious life.³⁸ The legal basis and the powers of the Council were not published,³⁹ giving Soviet authorities the twofold advantage of being unaccountable before the law and flexible in the application of its decrees. The directives of the Politburo and the KGB determined CRA policies. The KGB supervised and controlled religious bodies, infiltrated and spied on them (relying on a massive network of informers recruited to spy for the regime) and coerced and blackmailed believers into reporting on friends, colleagues, acquaintances and their families.⁴⁰

1965.

³⁶ Anonymous, "Sovetskii zakon i svoboda sovesti", *Izvestiia*, 31 January 1976, 5.

³⁷ This enabled the CRA to compile a comprehensive database of religious affiliation.

³⁸ Gerhard Simon, *Church, State and Opposition in the U.S.S.R.*, London: C. Hurst and Company, 1974, 81.

³⁹ Except for in the west, where eventually a statement of CRA duties and objectives was smuggled and published.

⁴⁰ See Jonathan R. Adelman, *Terror and Communist Politics: The Role of the Secret Police in Communist States*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1984.

Soviet authorities employed a variety of methods to ensure that religious activity operated within the confines set by the CRA. The attempt to maintain absolute control over the spiritual sphere was unsuccessful, illustrated by the continued activity of illegal denominations, clandestine worship, the circulation of religious *samizdat* and other forms of religious dissent. However, a complex network of both coercive and non-coercive methods of control attested to the significant effort exerted by the regime to control and manipulate the religious sphere, and also to the importance accorded to this work.

Anti-religious propaganda was a highly visible instrument of social control. The regime dedicated a large amount of energy to eradicating religion; an estimated six million people were involved in atheist propaganda in the late 1970s.⁴¹ The state regarded education as the most important forum for anti-religious agitation. A professional educator advised teachers in the mid-1970s:

When planning a reading lesson or outside reading in natural science, special questions for students that will help to reveal their atheist inclinations (or possible religious influence) are in order. Such questions are raised already when teaching the alphabet.⁴²

Atheist youth groups were set up in primary schools throughout the Soviet Union. In Gorky, students established an atheist museum, which occupied an entire floor of the school. The students conducted tours for visitors, lent books from its library to other atheist groups, and performed plays and delivered lectures throughout the city.⁴³

For adults and pensioners, antireligious and atheist propaganda was waged through organisations as diverse as trade unions, medical institutes, and the council on tourism. It was a requirement in factories and on collective farms, and most workplaces had committees for the promotion of scientific materialism.⁴⁴ There were lectures and seminar series; an estimated 760,000 lectures on atheist themes were delivered throughout the USSR in 1966.⁴⁵ In 1967 *Nauka i religiia* published 22

⁴¹ Oxana Antic, "The Promotion of Atheism in the Soviet Union Today", *Radio Liberty Research*, vol. 77, no. 258 (1977), 1.

⁴² Cited in Antic, "The Promotion of Atheism in the Soviet Union Today", 2.

⁴³ V. Iakub, "Muzei v shkole", *Nauka i religiia*, no. 9 (1964), 46-49.

⁴⁴ Antic, "The Promotion of Atheism in the Soviet Union Today", 2.

⁴⁵ Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union*, 105.

suggested themes for lectures on scientific atheism, each accompanied by key issues to address.⁴⁶

Crude propaganda efforts such as letters to newspapers and journals, anti-religious publications, the ridicule of believers in the media and political posters all emphasised the scientific over the spiritual. When Iuri Gagarin entered space in 1961, this prompted propaganda not only touting the advanced technological capacities of the Soviet Union, but also proclaiming the event a conclusive triumph of science over religion. An editorial in *Izvestiia* was triumphant: 'Iuri Gagarin really has given a headache to believers! He flew right through the heavenly mansions and did not run into anyone: neither the Almighty, nor Archangel Gabriel nor the angels of heaven. It seems, then that the sky is empty!'. The editorial claimed that, since the event, the paper had received a large number of letters renouncing faith, citing one which concluded, 'Glory to you, Soviet man, conqueror of heaven!'.⁴⁷ There were frequent letters and articles by former believers describing what had led them to religion and then why they had renounced their faith and become committed atheists. A professor at the Leningrad Ecclesiastical Academy and Seminary in late 1959 announced in a letter to *Pravda* his conversion to atheism.⁴⁸ He subsequently became a well-known anti-religious activist. Religious figures and denominations were frequently attacked and ridiculed in both anti-religious journals and general media. In mid-1962, for example, *Komsomolskaia pravda* printed an article titled 'The "Quakers" Tremble with Fear from Responsibility', which reported a trial against Society of Friends members' accused of sympathy toward Hitler, attacks of insanity, anti-social behaviour and brainwashing potential converts.⁴⁹ The newspaper *Krokodil* (*Crocodile*) frequently satirised believers and God in absurd caricatures.

Calls for an increase in both the quality and the quantity of anti-religious

⁴⁶ Themes included: 'The Construction of Communism and the Elimination of Religious Vestiges', 'Religious and Atheist Interpretations of the Meaning of Life' and 'Religion and the Conquest of Space'. Anonymous, "Primernaia tematika lektsii po nauchnomu ateizmu", *Nauka i religii*, no. 10 (1967), 90-93.

⁴⁷ Editorial, "Survey of Letters: What is God? (*Izvestiia*, 23 May 1961, 4)", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 12, no. 22 (1961), 28.

⁴⁸ Aleksandr Osipov, "Otkaz ot religii - edinstvenno pravil'nyi put'", *Pravda*, 6 December 1959, 4.

⁴⁹ L. Alekseeva and Is. Svintitskii, "The "Quakers" Tremble with Fear from Responsibility" in *Underground Saints: The Communist Persecution of Christians*, ed. Richard Wurmbrand, New Jersey:

propaganda, such as that made by Khrushchev in 1954, demonstrate that the CPSU was concerned by continued religious adherence.⁵⁰ Clearly propaganda was not working. David E. Powell identified five reasons for the failure of anti-religious propaganda: it did not reach believers, faith was not undermined by reason (for example, although Gagarin did not see God, this does not prove that He does not exist), confusion and apathy in the anti-religious movement, anti-religious agitators' incompetence, and the irrelevance of the propaganda for the average believer, who did not adhere to the aged, deranged and brainwashed stereotypes presented.⁵¹ To this could be added the inability of the regime to penetrate and to destroy the family unit, since most religious practice and instruction was perpetuated there.

Administratively organised coercion was an immediately recognisable characteristic of Soviet rule. While the magnitude and intensity of the terror of Stalin's rule was unparalleled, the major policies and the major institutional features of the Soviet system did not significantly alter after Stalin's death. Adherents of Russian Orthodoxy were most often punished not under criminal laws on religion, but rather under broader criminal laws.⁵² Orthodox believers were imprisoned in psychiatric hospitals and subjected to psychiatric abuse.⁵³ Gennadi Shimanov, an Orthodox nationalist, was detained at a psychiatric hospital for questioning in 1969. After an interrogation about his spiritual beliefs, the medical director of the hospital explained, 'All Soviet people are Marxists; everyone acknowledges only a scientific philosophy; but you believe in God, so you are out of harmony with society'.⁵⁴ Shimanov underwent two years of intensive psychiatric treatment.

Spire Books, 1968, 64-65.

⁵⁰ Nikita Khrushchev, "Postanovlenie TsK KPSS - Ob oshibkakh v provedenii nauchno-ateisticheskoi propagandy sredi naseleniia", *Pravda*, 11 November 1954, 2.

⁵¹ Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union*, 141-51.

⁵² Criminal laws on religion were most often used to punish Evangelical Christians, Baptists, Protestants and Seventh Day Adventists. Amnesty International, *Prisoners of Conscience in the USSR: Their Treatment and Conditions*, London: Amnesty International Publications, 1980, 32.

⁵³ Amnesty International reported: 'It is common for Russian Orthodox religious believers to be confined to psychiatric hospitals and to be told by government officials and psychiatrists that religious belief is a symptom of mental illness'. Amnesty International, *Prisoners of Conscience in the USSR*, 30.

⁵⁴ The same medical officer told Shimanov: 'Everything that you have just told us confirms us in the view that illness lies at the root of your 'conversion'. Of course, you yourself cannot understand this; but you must have confidence in us; we are specialists. If you had grown up in a religious family or had lived somewhere in the West, well, then we could have looked at your religiousness in another way.... But you were educated in a Soviet school, and were brought up in a family of non-believers.... You are an educated person; I am ready even to admit that you know more about philosophy and religion than I do... And suddenly... wham!... you are religious!.... It's very odd

The third objective of Soviet religious policy was to protect the positions of collaborationist religious leaders. The extent of this was not clear until the demise of the communist regime, when the full extent of the KGB infiltration of the Patriarchate became known (see Chapter 3). The CRA appointed key Orthodox figures, and had the power to usurp those who challenged Soviet rule. The regime and the Church each benefited by working together to annihilate schismatic groups and sects. The Church hierarchy assured the international community that accusations of religious persecution were merely anti-Soviet propaganda. In stark contrast to the Patriarchate's assurances, churches were destroyed, priests persecuted, and believers were beaten, imprisoned, raped and murdered. The accession of the Orthodox Church to the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1961, at the height of Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign, the most intensive of the post-Stalin years, indicates the success of this arrangement.

The interests of believers were further impeded by the limitations upon interest articulation in the Soviet Union. The CPSU had a monopoly on political power, guaranteed by Article 6 of the Constitution.⁵⁵ That the CPSU did not maintain total control, however, was evidenced by its failure to eradicate religious belief. Totalitarian theory became increasingly redundant as a means of explaining policy making after Stalin's death.⁵⁶ The totalitarian model held that party organisations, such as trade unions and cooperative societies, were 'transmission belts' between the CPSU and the masses and had no opportunity for policy to be

indeed... and makes one wonder if some abnormal processes were not already developing in you in your youth, which later on brought you to religion.' Cited in Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway, *Russia's Political Hospitals: The Abuse of Psychiatry in the Soviet Union*, Southampton: The Camelot Press, 1977, 166.

⁵⁵ It stated: 'The leading and guiding force of the Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organisation and public organisations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU exists for the people and serves the people. The Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society and the course of home and foreign policy of the USSR, directs the constructive work of the Soviet people, and imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of communism.' *Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik, Konstitutsiia (osnovnoi zakon) Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik* (7.10.1977), 22.

⁵⁶ The totalitarian model entered mainstream political theory with the highly influential texts: Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1951 and Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, New York: Praeger, 1956. The term persists in contemporary political vocabulary, though with considerably less frequency, currency and consensus than in the heyday of the model in the 1940s and early 1950s.

altered by any mediating influence. The recognition that there did exist some scope for interest articulation outside leadership circles led to theoretical literature in the late 1950s and the 1960s condemning the totalitarian model as reductionist and ascribing varying degrees of opportunity for citizens, specialists and institutions to determine policy outcomes.⁵⁷

Pluralism in the sense in which this term is usually employed in democratic theory – put simply, a state of affairs in which diverse and competing interest groups prevent the concentration of power in the hands of the leadership – was not applicable to the Soviet system. The term 'interest group' has no place in the consideration of interest articulation in the Soviet Union as it implies elements of consensus and organisation and a group consciousness, which is of limited relevance to the Soviet experience, because of its atomised and disenfranchised population.⁵⁸

The Orthodox Church was at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to other bodies vying to influence policy-making.⁵⁹ At the outset, it would be an anomaly to speak of Orthodox interests, as there was a profound divide between the concerns of the Patriarchate and those of the mass of Orthodox believers. Patriarch Sergii's expression of unconditional loyalty to the regime was incompatible with challenges to regime policies, and by extension any agitation for change. The agenda of the Church was effectively set by the regime itself. The objectives of Soviet religious policy were to reduce the influence, activity and following of Orthodoxy and, given the precarious nature of the Church's position, the Church hierarchy acknowledged that opposition would ensure the loss of what few privileges they were accorded. It is difficult to ascertain whether there were attempts to influence Soviet policy making from within official Church structures.

⁵⁷ A study of criminal policy led Solomon to conclude that the demise of the totalitarian model was not so much a reflection of change in Soviet policy-making as a general shift in that way western theorists perceived the Soviet system. Peter H. Solomon, *Soviet Criminologists and Criminal Policy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.

⁵⁸ Jerry Pankhurst argues that the Soviet religious sphere can be viewed as a field where interest groups compete for adherents. For an evaluation of competition between the party-state apparatus, the Orthodox Church and Baptists as interest groups, see Jerry Pankhurst, "The Strength of Weak Parties in Church-State Confrontations: The Soviet Religious Situation", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1984), 273-92.

⁵⁹ For more on interest groups see H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn W. Griffiths, eds. *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971 and Jerry F. Hough, "The Soviet Union: From Petrification to Pluralism?", *Problems of Communism*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1972), 25-

Orthodox Dissent

Religious dissent was part of a widespread and diverse movement, which challenged the legitimacy of Soviet rule and demanded the regime adhere to constitutional guarantees of civil liberties. The dissident movement presented a wide range of challenges to the Soviet regime, including the Jewish emigration movement, artists' and writers' rejection of the doctrine of socialist realism, neo-Marxists, the democratic movements and nationalist movements. The dissident movement arose soon after Stalin's death, gathered strength throughout the 1950s, flourished in the post-Khrushchev thaw of the 1960s, and continued into the 1970s and 1980s, despite sustained harassment of dissidents by the authorities.

Religious dissent here refers to 'an overt repudiation of the existing relationship between institutional religion and the Soviet State, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to the legitimacy of the norms and structures governing this relationship'.⁶⁰ Orthodox adherents were particularly visible in dissident activity, as laity and clergy challenged the Patriarchate's subjugation to the atheist regime, and the state's interference in religious, particularly Orthodox, life. Dissent in the religious sphere was manifested in a variety of covert and overt challenges to the authorities. Covert dissent included private worship, religious instruction of children, and religiosity expressed outside state-sanctioned events. It is overt dissent which is of interest to this examination of the Church's contribution to civil society, as it is overt dissent that posed a greater challenge to regime policies. Overt dissent encompassed active challenges, for example petitions to authorities, letters of protest, delegations to appeal to the government, public religious gatherings and the circulation of unsanctioned religious publications. Religious *samizdat* was written, copied and circulated without the CRA's permission, bypassing the official censorship and publication channels. Petro estimates that half of the *samizdat* material written in the 1970s had religion as its main theme.⁶¹ Bohdan R. Bociurkiw recognised three 'generations' of religious dissenters in the USSR: the first generation rejected Sergii's oath of loyalty, the second generation were adherents of

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⁶⁰ Bociurkiw, "Religious Dissent and the Soviet State", 58.

⁶¹ Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy*, 81.

faiths outlawed since World War II, and the third generation of dissenters emerged in the 1950s.⁶² The number of Orthodox believers dissenting from the policies of the Moscow Patriarchate was negligible before the 1950s, so the following evaluation focuses on the 'third generation'.⁶³

There was a sharp rise in religious dissent in response to Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign. The Patriarchate's refusal to defend Orthodox believers' rights was the theme of a letter by two Moscow priests to Patriarch Aleksii in November 1965, in reaction to the dismissal of Archbishop Yermogen for questioning the Holy Synod's resolutions. Gleb' Iakunin and Nikolai Eshliman recounted the repressive measures against priests and believers by the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (CAROC) and condemned the Church hierarchy's lack of resistance. They appealed to the Patriarch to defend Orthodoxy: 'The suffering church turns to you with hope. You have been invested with the staff of primatial authority. You have the power as Patriarch to put an end to this lawlessness with one word! Do this!'.⁶⁴ The following month Iakunin and Eshliman sent a second letter to the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, again outlining the activities of the CAROC, detailing how these activities violated Soviet legislation and demanding the reopening of churches.

Patriarch Aleksii banned the priests from office. He made a statement to bishops warning against subversive elements and asking them:

⁶² Bociurkiw, "Religious Dissent and the Soviet State", 59-60.

⁶³ Dissent in the Baptist Church emerged earlier than that in the Orthodox Church. In 1965 the leaders of the *Initiativnaia grupa* (Action Committee) sent a letter to all Baptist congregations condemning the official body, the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists, for their submission to the state. This resulted in a schism when in 1965 the *Initisiani* split from the official church into the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians and Baptists. Gerhard Simon attributes the early emergence of dissent and the eventual schism to the independence of the congregation and the grass-roots foundation of the Baptist Church. Under these conditions an oppositional movement can form quickly and escape the control of the church leadership. In contrast, individual congregations of the Orthodox Church had little independence. Further, Baptist dissidents did not share the Orthodox concern with staying within the confines of the law, and were frequently in direct confrontation with the state. They were better organised and more active, despite their smaller numbers. See Simon, *Church, State and Opposition in the U.S.S.R.*, 154-73.

⁶⁴ Gleb' Iakunin and Nikolai Eshliman, "Otkrytoe pis'mo sviashchennikov Nikolaia Eshlimana i Gleba Iakunina Patriarkhy Aleksiiu (21.11.1965)" in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v sovetskoe vremia*, ed. Gerd Shtrikker, Moscow: Propilei, 1995, 54-64.

to give strict attention to suppressing personally and with utmost severity the harmful efforts by certain individuals to destroy the peace of the church and to discredit the highest ecclesiastical authority in the eyes of the clergy and laity. The dissemination of all sorts of "open letters" and articles must be definitely stopped.⁶⁵

Metropolitan Pimen, the bishop responsible for disciplining the priests, stated that they were motivated by money. The action of Iakunin and Eshliman is generally credited as the first significant dissenting move against the official Church. Jane Ellis argued this was the most influential religious *samizdat* of the Soviet period.⁶⁶ The letters encouraged other believers to protest against the hierarchy's alliance with the state and its indifference to the oppression of believers.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was inspired by Iakunin and Eshliman.⁶⁷ In 1972 Solzhenitsyn appealed to the recently elected Patriarch Pimen, Aleksii's successor, to defend Orthodoxy. Solzhenitsyn's *Velikopostnoe pis'mo Vserossiiskomu Patriarkhu Pimenu o polozhenii Tserkvy v SSSR* (A Lenten Letter to Patriarch Pimen on the Situation of the Church in the USSR) deplored the collaboration of the hierarchy with the state and asked 'We are losing the last tokens and characteristics of a Christian people – how is this not the principal concern of the Russian Patriarch?'.⁶⁸ The letter reproached Pimen for disallowing preaching to children, condemning injustices abroad while ignoring those in the USSR, submitting to CRA control, and permitting the impoverishment of churches. Solzhenitsyn asked:

What arguments can one find to convince oneself that the systematic destruction of the spirit and the body of the Church under the direction of atheists is the best means of preserving it? Preservation for whom? Evidently not for Christ. Preservation - but how? By lying? But after this lying who is to preserve the Eucharist?⁶⁹

The letter marked the beginning of a heated debate, waged in *samizdat* and *tamizdat* (published there),⁷⁰ over whether the Church should remain an institutional

⁶⁵ Cited in Bociurkiw, "Religious Dissent and the Soviet State", 63.

⁶⁶ Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, London, New York: Routledge, 1986, 355.

⁶⁷ Solzhenitsyn refers to their appeal several times in Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, "Velikopostnoe pis'mo Vserossiiskomu Patriarkhu Pimenu o polozhenii Tserkvi v SSSR", *Russkaia mysl'*, 30 March 1972, 1, 7.

⁶⁸ Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, "Velikopostnoe pis'mo Vserossiiskomu Patriarkhu Pimenu o polozhenii Tserkvi v SSSR", *Russkaia mysl'*, 30 March 1972, 7.

⁶⁹ Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, "Velikopostnoe pis'mo Vserossiiskomu Patriarkhu Pimenu o polozhenii Tserkvi v SSSR", *Russkaia mysl'*, 30 March 1972, 8.

⁷⁰ *Tamizdat* refers to work published in the west which reached Soviet bloc countries and

body, surviving by virtue of its subservience to the regime, or a moral body, rejecting compromise and opting to retain moral integrity and operate clandestinely. Solzhenitsyn argued that, irrespective of circumstance, privileges and the opportunity to survive are not justifications for spiritual corruption. His critics countered that in a militant atheist state, Sergii and his successors were right to adapt to the political order to ensure a tangible Church existed for lay believers to sustain their faith.⁷¹

Between 1974 and 1976 Iakunin and Gleb' Regel'son, a layman, co-authored several dissident works appealing for the religious community's freedom. The most influential was a 1975 letter to the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The WCC was formed in 1948 to aid the ecumenical project of increased unity and harmony among Christian churches. The Russian Orthodox Church had no contact with western churches from 1917 until a British bishop visited the Patriarch in 1943. Though contact increased in the early 1950s, many hierarchs did not support ecumenism, largely due to their isolation, which meant they had little understanding of the ecumenical movement, and were suspicious of the WCC's intentions.

Members of the WCC were also aware of the problems posed by the Orthodox Church's admission. Though some feared purely political motivations,⁷² member churches overwhelmingly supported the Orthodox Church's admission.⁷³ As the Patriarchate could only make foreign contacts with the regime's approval, and only sustain these through support of foreign and domestic policy, it is certain that

circulated clandestinely.

⁷¹ See Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, 293 and Theofanis G. Stavrou, "Foreword" in *A Lenten Letter to Pimen Patriarch of All Russia*, ed. Theofanis Stavrou, Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1972, 1.

⁷² A representative of the Hungarian Church of America explained why his delegation abstained from voting on the Orthodox Church's membership in 1961: 'Our Church feels itself to be at one in Christian unity with the great Russian Orthodox Church. Thousands of martyrs in the recent persecutions bear witness to the glorious Christian belief and the fidelity of the clergy and laity of that great Church. If the official delegates who present themselves as nominees of that Church do correctly represent it, then we agree to its admission. But if the official representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church wish to use this platform for political ends, contrary to the spirit of the Russian Church, and if they mean to make themselves spokesmen of their Government's point of view (based on principles of atheistic materialism and of the undemocratic system of party dictatorship) then, in that case, our Church wants to see its opposition noted in the report of the proceedings. In the meanwhile, we will abstain' Cited in Struve, *Christians in Contemporary Russia*, 113-14.

⁷³ The following year five other Soviet churches joined: the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, the Georgian Orthodox-Apostolic Church and the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists of the USSR. Ans J. van der Bent, ed., *HANDBOOK: Member Churches World Council of Churches*, Geneva: World Council

accession was a move to mollify foreign powers about religious persecution and to promote the USSR's interests in the international body. When representatives of western churches visited the USSR, the warmth of welcome, the contentment of clergy, and the size of congregations impressed them.⁷⁴ It was ironic that as the Church's international role intensified, so too did Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign. This made the Church's new visibility and assurances all the more beneficial to the regime.

Iakunin and Regel'son saw a different opportunity in WCC membership: the potential of this body to object to the violations of human rights and religious liberty in the USSR. Their letter appealed to the WCC to defend the rights of religious communities. It recounted the Church leaders' intolerance toward believers, reminded the Council of the prayers and the help that Christians around the world had shown the USSR in times of crisis, and pointed out that Soviet believers were under no illusions that admittance to the WCC would alleviate their plight. The authors criticised WCC concerns, pointing out that the persecution of religious groups was not a central preoccupation, and moreover that it was not even on their agenda. Finally, Iakunin and Regel'son recommended practical methods by which WCC member churches could aid Soviet religious communities.⁷⁵

The appeal received worldwide publicity – an embarrassment both for Soviet authorities and Church leaders. The official Orthodox delegation issued a statement to the effect that Iakunin and Regel'son were troublemakers. The Council Assembly adopted a resolution stating that it was the responsibility of WCC members to defend the rights of believers in their own countries. While a far cry from the actions proposed by the authors, the response was most likely an effort not to undermine the legitimacy of the Orthodox delegation while acknowledging the importance of defending religious freedom. In Moscow, the Patriarchate issued a statement condemning the 'ecclesiastical dissidents' and their attempts to undermine the official

of Churches, 1985, 178-83.

⁷⁴ See, for example, the report of an Australian priest who visited in the mid-1970s in J. A. Hebl, *The Russians and the World Council of Churches*, Belfast, Dublin, Ottawa: Christian Journals Limited, 1978, 15-16.

⁷⁵ Gleb' Iakunin and Lev Regel'son, "Obrashchenie: Moskovskogo o. Gleba Iakunina i mirianina L'va Regel'sona k delagatam V Assamblei Vsemirnogo Soveta Tserkvei", *Russkaia mysl'*, 25 December 1975, 5-6.

delegation. Slandering dissidents in the media and chastising them as unfaithful Christians were the stock responses from ecclesiastical authorities.

Unsuccessful dissident appeals and other efforts to reform the Patriarchate led believers to search out other ways to change the conditions for religious communities as their frustrations increased and the dissident movement matured. The Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, established by Iakunin and others in 1976, brought together Orthodox believers and members of the democratic movement, and aimed to enable believers to worship freely. The Committee had close ties to the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group, which pointed out that the regime's legislation and their ideological monopoly violated the 1975 Helsinki Human Rights Accord, signed by the Soviet leadership. The Christian Seminar was an Orthodox discussion group organised in 1974. It attracted large numbers of young people. In addition, Orthodoxy was at the fore of feminist writing - the first feminist *samizdat* collection, *Al'manakh zhenshchinam o zhenshchinakh* (*Almanac for Women about Women*), included contributions by Christian feminists.⁷⁶

Orthodox dissidents were more diverse in their views on Orthodoxy's role than they were in their attitude toward the Patriarchate and the regime. Religious dissidents represented a wide range of socio-political perspectives, which can be broadly divided into nationalist and liberal tendencies. The guiding principle of the nationalists was neo-Slavophilism, which gained currency in the 1960s in response to the ideological vacuum created by Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation and the anti-religious campaigns.⁷⁷ It emphasises nationality, morality and Orthodoxy, and prescribes a particular Russian historical path. Neo-Slavophiles believe that incorporating western democratic social and political structures and western ideals into Russian society amounted to corruption of the nation's traditions and would lead to moral degradation, drunkenness, depravity and the demise of the family (for

⁷⁶ Tatiana Goricheva, in her contribution 'Rejoice, Redemption from the Tears of Eve', wrote that she was able to transcend the negative image of womanhood fostered by Soviet society by praising the Virgin Mary and honouring the virtues of purity and self-forgiveness: 'Prayer to the Most Holy Queen helped me to discover and resurrect my female self in all its purity and absoluteness.' Tatyana Goricheva, "Rejoice, Redemption from the Tears of Eve" in *Women and Russia*, ed. Women in Eastern Europe Group, London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1980, 29; 31.

⁷⁷ Philip Walters, "A New Creed for Russians? The Ideas of the Neo-Slavophiles", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1976), 20.

further discussion of neo-Slavophilism, see Chapter 5).⁷⁸ Often Slavophiles did not resolutely reject Soviet authoritarianism, but asserted that Orthodoxy must be superimposed on existing structures.⁷⁹

The most significant nationalist dissident publication was *Veche* (*Assembly*), edited by Vladimir Osipov.⁸⁰ The journal published articles and commentary by nationalists of different colourations, though Woll describes *Veche*'s 'two faces': a liberal one represented by Osipov, and a chauvinist one represented by other dissidents who saw Orthodox identity and Russian national identity as inseparable.⁸¹ Extremist works soon came to dominate, proving popular with *Veche*'s readership. Rightists, often anti-Christian, charged that *Veche* and its successor *Zemlia* (*The Land*) were not nationalist publications but in fact betrayed the Russian nation. Osipov, while xenophobic, was not anti-Semitic, and rightists saw *Veche* as promoting a 'pro-Zionist' view which was irreconcilable with Russian nationalism.⁸² The *samizdat* manifesto *Slovo Natsii* (*Word of a Nation*) contained autocratic, chauvinist and anti-Semitic themes. The proliferation of extremist material worried centrist and liberal democratic nationalists, a Jewish liberal Slavophile countering,

The Russian nationalist movement patently exaggerates the part which the Jews have played in provoking distrust of this movement when it ascribes almost exclusively to them any attacks on the Russian State or the Russian nation. Sadly, we gain the

⁷⁸ See, for example, Solzhenitsyn's criticisms of western democracies in Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. "Velikopostnoe pis'mo Vserossiiskomu Patriarkhu Pimeniu o polozenii Tserkvi v SSSR", *Russkaia mysl'*, 30 March 1972.

⁷⁹ Shimanov wrote, 'If we encourage the imminent transformation of the Communist Party into the "Orthodox Party of the Soviet Union" we shall really achieve the ideal state'. Cited in Walters, "A New Creed for Russians? The Ideas of the Neo-Slavophiles", 25. From a religious point of view, Shimanov's viewpoints brought him into conflict with Protestants and Catholics, who resented the assertion of Orthodoxy's superiority, while from a nationalist perspective, he was criticised by other national groups such as the Ukrainians, who resented Russian domination. See Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, 345.

⁸⁰ Vladimir Osipov, *Tri otnosheniia v rodine*, 25 March–2 April 1970, 216–222.

⁸¹ Josephine Woll, *Soviet Dissident Literature: A Critical Guide*, Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1983, xxxviii.

⁸² An anonymous rightist criticised *Veche*: 'There is no other way for the salvation of the Russian consciousness at present other than by being cleansed from the whole evil of Judaism and Zionism and their repository – the Church! The attempt to drive Russian man into the orthodox cosmopolitan repository of Zionism is THE HEIGHT OF ANTI-PATRIOTISM and the HEIGHT OF BETRAYAL OF ALL THAT IS TRULY RUSSIAN AND TRULY SLAVIC!' Anonymous, "Critical Comments of a Russian Regarding the Patriotic Journal *Veche*" in *The Political, Social and Religious Thought of Russian "Samizdat"* – *An Anthology*, ed. Boris Shragin and Michael Meerson-Aksenov, Belmont: Nordland Publishing Company, 1977, 448.

impression that the Jews are a kind of lightning conductor for the Russian nationalist movement. They receive the anger destined for other targets.⁸³

Liberal Orthodox dissidents did not view the union of Orthodoxy and the Russian nation as the only possible saviour of Russian national consciousness. They were primarily concerned with issues such as civil rights, political freedom, national equality and resistance to the KGB, and viewed a democratic government as the way to gain these freedoms. Liberals promoted Orthodox ideals of individual liberty through work for human rights and civil rights, which they viewed as a Christian responsibility. Meerson-Aksyonov stated, 'I am convinced that the path to the rebirth of the conciliar structure of Orthodoxy in Russia today must pass through the democratisation of Soviet society, and be part of a national movement for civil rights'.⁸⁴ Orthodox Christians spearheaded groups such as the Democratic Movement, a particular anathema to the regime. Liberal Orthodox Christians were eager to ally with other denominations and with human rights groups, an increasing tendency in the 1970s, to achieve individual liberty and freedom of conscience for all citizens.

The repressive measures that the regime used to silence Orthodox dissidents and to eliminate dissension from the official Church were unsuccessful. Several Orthodox dissidents claimed that the attempts to silence them only served to encourage: 'Through attempts to stifle it [*samizdat*], the spirit only burns brighter, and one can only be amazed at the inability of those who try to do so to grasp this truth which has often been confirmed by history'.⁸⁵ Orthodox dissidents challenged the subjugation of the Church to the state and created a sphere of religious activity that rejected the confines within which the regime demanded religiosity remain.

The regime could have done more to persecute religious dissent, but the fear of furthering radicalisation and politicisation, and increasing ties with civil rights groups, put a brake on such efforts. In the 1960s, one commentator estimated that

⁸³ M.S. Agursky, cited in Walters, "A New Creed for Russians? The Ideas of the Neo-Slavophiles", 23.

⁸⁴ Cited in Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History*, 347.

⁸⁵ Yevgeni Barabanov, "The Case of Yevgeni Barabanov", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1974), 30.

there were more than forty Orthodox sects operating in the USSR, and, together with other denominations of the 'Catacomb Church' (the generic term for underground churches) the membership could have been as many as five million.⁸⁶ This resulted in concessions, which strengthened the position of the established churches.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian Orthodoxy

Although Gorbachev acceded to the position of General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985, the initial years of his leadership did not produce any meaningful change in Soviet policy on religion.⁸⁷ In late 1987, Gorbachev introduced policies which marked the beginning of profound changes in many spheres of Soviet life, including the religious.⁸⁸ Between 1987 and 1991, Orthodoxy emerged as a potent social force. The *glasnost*' era was crucial for this development.⁸⁹ Gorbachev implemented *perestroika* in a bid to check corruption and other bureaucratic practices detrimental to the economy. He highlighted the shortcomings of the economic system, which had almost collapsed as a result of Brezhnev's period of stagnation, and emphasised *uskroenie* (economic growth) to re-invigorate Soviet society.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Cited in Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy*, 79.

⁸⁷ In 1987, despite the pardoning of religious prisoners incarcerated under certain statutes of the criminal code, there remained some 296 prisoners detained for their activities or religious beliefs. See Keston College, *Religious Prisoners in the USSR*, London: Greenfire Books, 1987.

⁸⁸ See his political manifesto: Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, London: Collins, 1987.

⁸⁹ The '*glasnost*' era' refers to the period from when the policy was introduced, in 1987, until the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991. The new openness continued to shape social and religious life until the demise of the Soviet Union. Many of the new freedoms were not, however, institutionalised until the early 1990s. For example, a law that formalised the new freedoms enjoyed by religious communities was not passed until October 1990. (For the full text see *Zakon Soyuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik*, "O svobode sovesti i religioznykh organizatsiakh" in *Novye zakony SSSR*, Moscow: Iuridicheskaya literatura, 1991, 4-16.) Further, there were intermittent attempts by the state to control media coverage of sensitive issues, such as the privileges enjoyed by the Party cadres, the popularity of political figures, and military violence against civilians. *Pravda* reported in 1991 that Gorbachev called for restrictions on a new media law after unflattering portrayal of his policies. (See Anonymous, "Vstupitel'noe slovo M.S. Gorbacheva", *Pravda*, 9 October 1990, 1 and N. Volunskii, "Pravda iz-pod pul", *Pravda*, 17 January 1991, 2). For further discussion of the 'precarious, ambiguous and incomplete' (p.95) operation of *glasnost*', see Stephen White, *After Gorbachev*, Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 94-100. While this period extends beyond that advanced by other commentators (for example Judith Devlin, *The Rise of the Russian Democrats*, Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995, 60), *glasnost*' continued to make a significant impact upon social formation and religious life until the demise of the Soviet Union. It is therefore appropriate to extend this analysis until 1991.

⁹⁰ Gorbachev identified economic acceleration as the 'key to all our problems, immediate and long term, economic and social, political and ideological, domestic and foreign'. *Kommunisticheskaya partiya Sovetskogo Soiuza, Materialy XXVII s'ezda KPSS*, Moscow: Politizdat, 1986, 22.

It became clear that reform measures could not be implemented within the framework of the existing economic and political system, and that the Soviet assemblage was in need of systemic change. Gorbachev introduced the policy of *glasnost* to allow for critical thinking about the new processes and for the recognition and combating of social problems. He placed great importance upon this strategy for restoring viable political structures, economic prosperity and a healthy society.⁹¹ However, instead of empowering society to eradicate the barriers to economic performance and social progress and to move closer to achieving communism, *glasnost* ultimately contributed to the Soviet system's destruction. The new openness highlighted the USSR's economic problems, exposed political corruption and publicised the regime's control of all aspects of life. Moreover, it became clear that the existing system was inadequate to meet the challenges set by Gorbachev himself.

The CPSU's redefinition of the boundaries of the permissible and the proscribed facilitated Orthodoxy's reinstatement. Religious themes, particularly Orthodox ones, were reflected in literature, cinema, the media and politics. Judith Devlin argued that 'the recovery of national identity, through the rediscovery of the country's cultural and historical heritage' was one of the ways in which *glasnost*, which represented the 'rebirth of public opinion and of public life', was achieved.⁹² The Orthodox faith was central to this recovery of identity, since any revalidation of the past could scarcely fail to incorporate the Russian spiritual tradition. The policy of *glasnost* therefore restored Orthodoxy's position at the fore of Russian national identity and the nation's cultural consciousness. From this position, Orthodoxy was a readily accessible canon, which could be invoked to support a diverse range of causes.

Orthodoxy and Christianity in general were recurrent themes in the Gorbachev administration's reformist rhetoric. However, official references to religion were cautious; Gorbachev was treading precarious ground by repealing seven decades of atheist and anti-religious policies for an openness which ultimately illuminated the failure of his predecessors' religious policies and a tolerance of

⁹¹ Gorbachev wrote: 'We need glasnost as we need the air'. Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, 64.

religion that subverted central tenets of Soviet Marxism-Leninism. Gorbachev had to justify concessions to the religious community with reference to the problems he was trying to solve without seeming to compromise Party ideology. Initially, the Gorbachev administration referred to the restoration of 'Leninist norms'. The relaxation of religious policy was presented as a return to the principle of non-interference as advanced by Lenin's 1929 'Decree on the Separation of Church and the State'.⁹² However, as religious activity became more conspicuous and the calls for the emancipation of religious life became louder, Gorbachev sought other justifications for the change in policy.

In April 1988, Christian believers celebrated the one thousandth anniversary of the adoption of Christianity by Prince Vladimir of Kievan Rus'. To honour this occasion, Gorbachev met with Patriarch Pimen and members of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was the first time a Soviet leader had met with Church hierarchs since Stalin enlisted the Church's support in 1943. Gorbachev acknowledged the significance of the anniversary, which, he told his audience, 'has not only a religious but also a socio-political significance, since it is an important milestone on the centuries-long path of development of our country's history, its culture and Russian statehood'.⁹⁴ Gorbachev's reference to Russian statehood (*gosudarstvennost'*) instead of to a Soviet construction was an appeal to national tradition and a recognition of the centrality of Orthodoxy to Russian national identity.

Gorbachev and members of his administration attended events celebrating the occasion, exemplifying the new relationship between the Church and the state. This change in attitude was mirrored by other Soviet authorities. In a 1987 interview published in *Nauka i religii*, Konstantin Kharchev, CRA chairman, criticised the violations of believers' rights by authorities, an increasingly common refrain by this stage. More significantly, the publication was accompanied by statistics on religious communities that had not been previously available, their subject matter being

⁹² Devlin, *The Rise of the Russian Democrats*, 60.

⁹³ *Sobranie zakonov i rasporiazhenii*, "Postanovlenie Vserossiiskogo Tsentral'nogo Iсполnitel'nogo Komiteta i Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov o religioznykh ob'edineniakh (8.4.1929)", 307-10.

⁹⁴ TASS, "Vstrecha General'nogo sekretaria TsK KPSS M.S. Gorbacheva s Patriarkhom o vseia Rusi Pimenom i chlenami Sinoda Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi", *Pravda*, 30 April 1988, 1.

outside the acceptable topics for public knowledge.⁹⁵ An article by V.I. Garadzha, Director of the Institute of Scientific Atheism, conceded, 'The demands of new thinking mean that we should reject outmoded dogmas and decaying stereotypes, we should re-examine questions which only yesterday seemed fundamental and immutable'.⁹⁶

The first way Gorbachev sought to justify increased religious freedom whilst maintaining Party support was to represent Orthodox believers as potentially useful to the socialist cause. In April 1988 Gorbachev declared, 'Believers are Soviet people, working people and patriots, and they have the full right to express their opinions with dignity'.⁹⁷ Implicit in his statement is the idea that believers could conceivably display characteristics conducive to the pursuit of socialist goals without necessarily letting their beliefs hinder their efforts. Similarly, Kharchev articulated this new thinking in early 1988 when he asked 'what is more profitable to the party – a person believing in God; a person believing in nothing; or a person believing both in God and in communism?'.⁹⁸ This was a landmark statement by the head of an institution which had been overseeing the persecution, execution and incarceration of believers since its creation in 1947.

Gorbachev's second justification for a changing religious policy was that Christians had high moral standards. Rampant alcoholism, prostitution, drug use, rising crime and other negative social developments indicated that there was something amiss in the degree of morality the Soviet regime inspired. Gorbachev argued that a lack of moral teaching was to blame for these negative societal developments. John Dunlop contends that Gorbachev's emphasis on morality was not purely motivated by his desire to garner support from the Party cadres but was largely inspired by a real belief that Orthodoxy could redress social ills and build social unity.⁹⁹ Gorbachev viewed social conditions as a real obstacle to the objectives of

⁹⁵ Igor Achil'diev, "Garantii svobody", *Nauka i religiia*, no. 11 (1987), 21-23. The statistics were published as a footnote to the interview.

⁹⁶ V. I. Garadzha, "Pereosmyslenie", *Nauka i religiia*, no. 1 (1989), 2.

⁹⁷ TASS, "Vstrecha General'nogo sekretaria TsK KPSS M.S. Gorbacheva s Patriarkhom o vseia Rusi Pimenom i chlenami Sinoda Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi", *Pravda*, 30 April 1988, 1.

⁹⁸ Cited in John Dunlop, "Gorbachev and Russian Orthodoxy", *Problems of Communism*, vol. 38, no. 4 (1989), 101.

⁹⁹ Dunlop, "Gorbachev and Russian Orthodoxy", 104.

perestroika and believed that the Church could work with the state to overcome these hindrances, through, for example, cooperation on the infamous anti-alcohol crusade.¹⁰⁰ Dunlop's evaluation is illustrative of a consensus among scholars that Gorbachev's representations of Orthodoxy were motivated by pragmatic concerns.

The relaxation of Soviet religious policy was to a large degree motivated by Gorbachev's desire to strengthen his political position. There were an estimated 50 million Russian Orthodox adherents in the Soviet Union.¹⁰¹ In addition, the social profile of believers had changed; Orthodox followers were no longer limited to the 'little old lady' stereotype that typified congregations in the 1950s. Instead, young people and, more importantly for Gorbachev, members of the liberal intelligentsia had been increasingly turning to Orthodoxy since the 1960s, particularly in Moscow and Leningrad.¹⁰² This was a result of a loss of faith in Soviet leaders and, in many cases, the socialist cause. Gorbachev acknowledged the liberal intelligentsia's contribution to the reform process.¹⁰³ He saw an important role for the intelligentsia in 'taking care, above all, of society's spiritual development'.¹⁰⁴ Clearly Gorbachev's interests were best served by an intelligentsia which continued to support the reform process. By continuing religious repression, the leadership risked alienating a large portion of this support base.

The Gorbachev administration's attempt to enlist the support of the Patriarchate in the reform effort was another factor determining the treatment of Orthodoxy. Drawing on the idea of social renewal and of the Church as a source of spiritual and moral guidance, the leadership aimed to 'woo'¹⁰⁵ this powerful ally. A

¹⁰⁰ For a thorough examination of Gorbachev's unpopular anti-alcohol campaign, see White, *Russia Goes Dry: Alcohol, State and Society*.

¹⁰¹ See the discussion of the estimated number of Orthodox believers in the Introduction.

¹⁰² Sergei Averintsev, "Opyt bor'by c vnusheniiani vremeni", *Nezavisimaia gazeta - religii*, 3 November 1999, 13.

¹⁰³ Gorbachev identifies the intelligentsia as members: 'of creative unions of film-makers, writers, artists, composers, architects, theatrical figures and journalists.... Our intelligentsia has, along with the Party, got down to change. Its public-spirited stand is manifesting itself more and more strongly, and we have a vested interest in this activity; we appreciate everything We hope that this contribution by the intelligentsia will continue to grow. The intelligentsia is rising to a new level of thinking and responsibility. Its guidelines coincide with the political course of the CPSU and the interests of the people'. Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, 83.

¹⁰⁴ Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, 83.

¹⁰⁵ Novikov and Bascio employ this term in the chapter 'The Wooing of the Church'. Evgeny Novikov and Patrick Bascio, *Gorbachev and the Collapse of the Soviet Communist Party: The Historical and Theoretical Background*, New York: Peter Lang, 1994, 199.

1990 *Moskovskie novosti* front page reported a meeting between RSFSR Prime Minister Ivan Silayev and recently elected Patriarch Aleksii II, at which they discussed 'crime and domestic crafts, freedom of conscience and business, charity and labour productivity, property and taxes, past losses and future tasks'.¹⁰⁶ Such meetings were recognition of the importance of religious figures in Soviet society and, more practically, that the Church was the largest organised body in the USSR. Members of the Holy Synod contributed to drafting new religious legislation.¹⁰⁷ While it is true that the prelates complained that their recommendations were ignored in the drafting process,¹⁰⁸ in the law's final form they wielded a significant degree of influence over its provisions. In any case, the inclusion of the hierarchy in this process was a landmark in Church-state relations.

Gorbachev's initiatives in the religious sphere were an attempt to enlist support from influential elements in Soviet society. In 1989 the French historian Francoise Thom argued that concessions to the Orthodox Church were motivated by the regime's desire to highlight the Church's complete subordination to the state and to illustrate the victory of atheism; 'If God has permitted an atheist state to bring his own Church to heel, it must follow that He does not exist'.¹⁰⁹ Thom pointed to the continued call for vigorous atheist work by Party ideologists, the military and Gorbachev himself, and claimed that *perestroika* and *glasnost* were aimed at destroying the Church from within.¹¹⁰ Thom's analysis that concessions to the Church were paradoxically part of a heightened anti-religious drive overlooks the political mileage of ending the regime's long-standing hostility to religion. The challenge Gorbachev faced was not how to surreptitiously destroy the Church. Rather, he was concerned that the continued repression of religious life would undermine support for his initiatives, while granting complete freedom to believers would undermine the CPSU's monopoly on truth.

¹⁰⁶ Alexander Mineyev, "The Premier Visits the Patriarch", *Moscow News*, 8-15 July 1990, 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Zakon Soyuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik*, "O svobode sovesti i religioznykh organizatsiakh", 4-16.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Archbishop Kirill, "The Holy Synod on Freedom of Conscience", *Moscow News*, 6-13 May 1990, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Francoise Thom, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A History of Perestroika*, London, New York: Pinter Publishers, 1989, 64.

¹¹⁰ Thom cites Gorbachev in 1986, 'We must fight a determined and ruthless battle against religion, intensifying atheist propaganda.' Thom, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon*, 64.

Gorbachev's representation of Orthodoxy as an important actor in the building of a renewed Soviet society illustrates what Evgeny Novikov and Patrick Bascio have called the 'pragmatic elasticity of the ideology of perestroika'.¹¹¹ By representing Orthodox adherents as, first, Soviet patriots and, second, moral characters, it seemed that, at least in part, Gorbachev's policies were a continuation of the communist objectives of mobilising the masses to build a moral and just social order. His concessions to religious communities were a result of the ideological crisis within the Party, a response to the need for support, both institutional and societal, and a search for values to fill the moral vacuum.

Formal (Institutional) Responses to *Glasnost*

With the Orthodox Church's sudden 'reinstitutionalisation', the Patriarchate's subordination to the Soviet regime gave way to an active social role in which Church leaders met with reformist politicians, conducted previously forbidden charitable activity, and engaged in a dynamic dialogue with believers. However, the new conditions posed significant challenges for the ecclesiastical authorities, not least the need to identify a meaningful role for Orthodoxy in the reform period.

Church leaders promoted the relevance of Orthodoxy by emphasising the importance of Orthodox Christian values for the renewal of Soviet society. Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad stated, 'It has been acknowledged that religious beliefs promote personal and social morality; help improve international relations, family ties, and conscientious work; and combat drunkenness and crime'.¹¹² The Patriarchate posited that Christian values were essential to instill a sense of responsibility in citizens. In a 1988 interview Patriarch Pimen emphasised the importance of Orthodox values to the Soviet work ethic: 'The Church elevates labour to the status of an extremely important moral virtue and highly extols it in the category of ethical values. The clergy sees its pastoral and patriotic duty as inculcating in parishioners a conscientious and honest attitude toward labour'.¹¹³ Orthodoxy was represented as indispensable to overcome the problems that

¹¹¹ Novikov and Bascio, *Gorbachev and the Collapse of the Soviet Communist Party*, 199.

¹¹² Metropolitan Kirill, "The Church and Perestroika" in *Religion in the Soviet Republics: A Guide to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and other Religions*, ed. Igor Troyanovsky, New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991, 83.

¹¹³ Cited in Vladimir Chertkov, "Tysiacheletie: Beseda s patriarkhom Moskovskim i vseia

Gorbachev was trying to solve.

The Church hierarchy also promoted its relevance to the transition through its charity work. Before *glasnost*, the charitable work of the Church was limited to mandatory contributions to the Soviet Peace Fund. The regime banned other forms of charity as they suggested that the state could not meet the needs of its citizens.¹¹⁴ In 1988, interviews with Church leaders invariably emphasised the charitable mission; one hierarch stated that charity was 'not an abstract concept but an absolute one. It is love in action'.¹¹⁵ The 1989 Council of the Hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church advocated a significant role for believers in hospitals, homes for the elderly, orphanages, prisons and other places for the infirm and the needy.¹¹⁶ The Church's charitable activity boomed as the Gorbachev administration recognised that the Church could make a valuable contribution to the reform process. Metropolitan Filaret generously stated, 'Now we have launched a structure for charity work all around the country. The Church is ready to collaborate with any civic organisation'.¹¹⁷

The Patriarchate was eager to represent Orthodoxy as relevant to a wide range of social issues. The idea that Orthodoxy fostered social responsibility was supported by the Church's involvement in environmental and peaceful causes. Metropolitan Kirill, editor of the weekly newspaper *Church Messenger*, launched in May 1989, said the publication would consider not only religious matters but important cultural and social issues, a reflection of the concerns of the Orthodox community:

While the main focus of the Church Messenger will be religious news, we will also be considering important issues of cultural and social life such as environmental issues. We are concerned about care of natural resources. How can the destructive processes be

Rusi Pimenom", *Izvestiia*, 9 April 1988, 3.

¹¹⁴ Matthews explains: 'Bolshevik ideology interpreted the socialist state as a protective, charitable institution that scarcely needed support from well-meaning individuals'. Mervyn Matthews, "Perestroika and the Rebirth of Charity" in *Soviet Social Problems*, ed. Anthony Jones, Walter D. Connor, and David E. Powell, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1991, 155.

¹¹⁵ Vladimir Sorokin, "Charity is Not an Abstract Concept but an Absolutely Concrete One. It is Love in Action (*Meditiinskaya Gazeta*, 30 March 1988, p.4)", *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 40, no. 15 (1988), 6.

¹¹⁶ Igor Troyanovsky, "Religion and Charity in Soviet Society" in *Religion in the Soviet Republics: A Guide to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and other Religions*, ed. Igor Troyanovsky, New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991, 58.

¹¹⁷ Cited in Jim Forest, *Religion in the New Russia: The Impact of Perestroika on the Varieties of Religious Life in the Soviet Union*, New York: Crossroad, 1990, 43-44.

brought to a halt? This is a spiritual as well as a technical question. A healthy ecology depends on healthy *dukhovnost* [spirituality]. The spiritual person understands his responsibility for life.¹¹⁸

Archpriest Pyotr Buburuz emphasised his concern for ecological issues and the centrality of the cause to his political role and continued that it was his duty, as a 'son of the church and my country', to pursue pacifist and green policies alongside the traditional roles of Church leaders.¹¹⁹ These wider social concerns were part of the Church's search for social relevance. Further, the Church hierarchy pushed for concessions through this emphasis on its ability to contribute to the rebuilding of Soviet society.

At the first opportunity, the Patriarchate cooperated with the Gorbachev administration. In September 1987 Metropolitan Aleksii stated, 'It is the moral duty of every Soviet citizen to devote all his strength and creative energies to aiding perestroika'.¹²⁰ In 1988 Patriarch Pimen reiterated this support, 'The Orthodox Church's flock, all believers and non-believing citizens, welcome with all their heart the process of spiritual, social and economic renewal of Soviet society, which has become irreversible: the process of *perestroika*, democratisation and *glasnost*'.¹²¹ There were four motivating factors for the Church hierarchy's cooperation with the Soviet leadership. First, it was motivated by pragmatism, as the state could help the Church to rebuild. Second, the traditional collaboration between the Church and the state meant that cooperation was a continuation of pre-Gorbachev policy. Third, Orthodoxy's position as the patriotic faith working for the people motivated their efforts to help with the democratic reforms. Finally, the cooperation with the leadership illustrated the Church's centrality to the reform process and to Soviet society in general.

Unlike in the pre-reform Soviet era, the hierarchy criticised the gap between the word and deed of the government, for example, its role in devising the new religious law and the reluctance of regional authorities to honour the religious

¹¹⁸ Cited in Forest, *Religion in the New Russia*, 86.

¹¹⁹ Pyotr Buburuz, "Archpriest Pyotr Buburuz" in *Religion in the Soviet Republics: A Guide to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and other Religions*, ed. Igor Troyanovsky, New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991, 49-50.

¹²⁰ Cited in Melville, Andrei, and Gail W. Lapidus, eds., *The Glasnost Papers: Voices on Reform from Moscow*, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1990, 129.

freedoms of *glasnost*'.¹²² Nonetheless, the creation of new Church institutions and the expansion of the Church's role indicate that the Orthodox hierarchy gained a significant political voice. Further consolidating the Church's relevance to the processes of reform, in a move unthinkable a decade earlier, Church hierarchs engaged in formal political processes. Five Orthodox clergymen were elected to the Congress of People's Deputies in March 1989, among them Patriarch Pimen.¹²³

Paul Vallierre argues that the Orthodox hierarchy gained a significant political voice in the *glasnost*' era, and that it was the dominant partner in the new Church-state relationship. The creation of new Church institutions and the expansion of its role in society lead him to conclude that 'Russia has been turned into a gigantic ecclesiastical construction site with many hands pitching in'.¹²⁴ While the triumphant note of this statement is somewhat exaggerated, it nevertheless points to a consensus that the Church re-emerged as a highly visible social actor in the rebuilding of Soviet society.

Informal (Lay) Responses to *Glasnost*'

The Church leadership acknowledged that Orthodoxy was invoked by a wide range of groups to support both reform and counter-reform. The April 1990 *Declaration of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church* stated:

For decades the church has been artificially separated from the people and largely from the life of society, but now it attracts close attention from various social forces and movements. Not infrequently, these forces and movements find themselves bitterly opposed to one another and each would like to see the Church among their allies and to have the church support their understanding of the objectives and purposes of spiritual, political, social, and economic transformation of the country [USSR] and the solution of ethnic problems.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Cited in Thom, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon*, 64.

¹²² See, for example, Metropolitan Alexiy, "Looking Back After a Millennium" in *Perestroika Annual*, ed. Abel Aganbegyan, London: Futura, 1988, 327.

¹²³ Patriarch Pimen, Metropolitan Alexei and Metropolitan Pitirim received their mandates from public organisations, and an Orthodox priest from the Moldavian capital, Kishinev, Pyotr Buburuz, was elected by direct vote in his territorial district. After the death of Patriarch Pimen, Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Belorussia was elected. For the full list of People's Deputies of the USSR see Anonymous, "Spisok Narodnykh Deputatov SSSR, izbrannykh ot territorial'nykh, natsional'no-territorial'nykh okrugov i ot obshchestvennykh organizatsii", *Izvestiia*, 5 April 1989, 2-12.

¹²⁴ Paul Vallierre, "The Social and Political Role of the Orthodox Church in Post-Communist Russia", *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1992), 1.

¹²⁵ Holy Synod, "Declaration of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church (3 April 1990)" in *Religion in the Soviet Republics: A Guide to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and*

This excerpt points to the manipulation of Russia's Orthodox tradition by 'various social forces and movements' in order to promote their relevance in the reform period. The analysis in this study of lay responses to changes in the religious sphere examines two opposing ideological positions: the work of lay activists in Russian chauvinist organisations, in this instance *Pamiat'* (Memory), and in non-extremist organisations, namely the Christian democratic movement. Both heralded Orthodoxy as indispensable for the renewal of Soviet society, and both exploited Orthodoxy as an institution and as a component of Russian tradition to support their disparate objectives.

A. National Patriots

The new freedoms allowed for the dissemination of formerly banned ideas, and a chauvinistic Russian nationalism was one of the most potent ideologies to emerge. The plethora of nationalistic groups led many political observers to conclude that these organisations were a decidedly negative consequence of the reforms.¹²⁶ This reactionary ideology contained a strong Orthodox Christian element. National-Patriotic groups gained a significant following, particularly *Pamiat'*, the most widely publicised of these organisations. While *Pamiat'* was the most visible and controversial nationalist organisation of the *perestroika* years, it was not representative of all strains of Russian nationalist thought.¹²⁷

A consideration of National Patriotic ideology is problematic from the outset by virtue of its incoherent and often contradictory philosophy. At its most basic,

other Religions, ed. Igor Troyanovsky, New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991, 66.

¹²⁶ Aron Katsenelinboigen, "Will Glasnost bring the Reactionaries to Power?", *Orbis*, vol. 32, no. 2 (1988), 217-30. Other commentators conclude that phenomena like *Pamiat'* are essential in a pluralist society and were entirely legitimate within the goals of *perestroika*. See Vladislav Krasnov, "Pamyat: A Force for Change?", *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1991), 167-82.

¹²⁷ See the 1990 manifesto *Pis'mo pisatelei Rossii* (A Letter from Russia's Writers), which trivialises *Pamiat'*: 'The bogeyman of *Pamiat'* is being blown out of all proportions and passed off as a mighty aggressive force... The truth of the matter is that there are a few clowns who by no means express the view of an entire people...'. Various Signatories, "Pis'mo pisatelei Rossii", *Moskva*, no. 5 (1990), 192-99. The letter was first published in *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, 2 March 1990, and was signed by 74 writers. The significance of *Pamiat'* is also downplayed in John D. Klier, "The Dog That Didn't Bark: Anti-Semitism in Post-Soviet Russia" in *Russian Nationalism, Past and Present*, ed. Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service, New York: St Martin's Press, 1998, 129. *Pamiat'* were, however, representative of a broad Russian nationalist ideology which gained strength in the *glasnost'* era and as such is an appropriate object for a case study. In addition, it is widely recognised that *Pamiat'* was a forerunner of post-Soviet Russian nationalist groups. See Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict In and After the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997, 255.

Russian National Patriotism is characterised by the principles of nationality, autocracy and Orthodoxy, as devised by Sergei Uvarov, the nineteenth century education minister.¹²⁸ At its heart is the defense of Russian traditions. National Patriots deplore democratic reformers and their capitalist orientation, and hold Imperial Russia as the ideal model of statehood. Much of their ideology draws on the ideas of the Black Hundreds, which organised pogroms against Jews in Tsarist Russia (for further discussion, see Chapter 5). National Patriots are distinct from other nationalist groups which gained strength during the *glasnost* era in that, unlike National Bolsheviks, National Patriots reject Marxism-Leninism, and, unlike neo-Stalinists, they reject the legitimacy of the Party-state apparatus.

The Orthodox Church embodies many of the values professed by Russian National Patriots. Most importantly, they share a conviction that Russia has a unique spiritual destiny and a special historical path. The convergence between Orthodoxy and National Patriotism is fostered by their mutual affinity for *sobornost*. There is also a convergence between certain elements of the Church and the anti-Semitic and xenophobic ideas advanced by Russian chauvinists. At the June 1988 Orthodox-Patriotic Conference delegates called on Orthodox Christians to engage in the struggle against the enemies of Orthodoxy and demanded that believers 'rise against heresies', meaning non-Orthodox faiths. Conference delegates announced a 'war on Satanism', referring to Judeo-Masonic conspirators, and protested against 'foreigners' settling on Russian soil.¹²⁹ Three Orthodox priests attended the Conference, and National Patriots found further support within the ranks of the Church. The purity of the Church was also an issue of concern for National Patriots. The 1990 murder of Father Aleksandr Men', a Jewish convert and liberal priest, is widely believed to be the work of extreme nationalists. National Patriots claim that his murder was carried out by 'an agent of the Jewish Mason mafia', and that he was killed 'in a bid to cast aspersions on orthodox patriots'.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ See Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1959.

¹²⁹ Sergei Ivanenko, "They Want to Restore the Russian Monarchy", *Moscow News*, 4-11 November 1990, 9.

¹³⁰ From *Tsar Bell*, a publication of the *Zemski Sobor* movement, cited in Ivanenko, "They Want to Restore the Russian Monarchy", 9.

The affinity between Orthodoxy and the ideology of Russian nationalists led to a concerted effort by National Patriots to align with the Patriarchate. Semyon Reznik, a Jewish émigré, argues that pragmatism motivated this affiliation:

Different "patriotic" organizations actively compete with each other for influence over the Russian Orthodox Church. The "patriots" need the church not as a house of repentance or prayer, purification, and a source of spirituality, but as a ready-made organizational structure through which to achieve their political goals.¹³¹

This is an important motivation for the alliance of National Patriots with the Russian Church. However, the reduction to purely practical objectives denies the aforementioned ideological convergence between the two entities, which ensures their association is more than merely pragmatic, but represents a degree of ideological coalescence. This is not to suggest that extremist or chauvinistic values or ideas are implicit in Orthodox theology, but rather that there is a significant degree of convergence between the Church and National Patriots, most obviously the protection of Russian traditions and the promotion of the idea of Russia's messianic mission.

In 1988 *Pamiat'* had an estimated 20,000 members and 40 branches in cities throughout the Soviet Union.¹³² It later degenerated into a number of anti-Semitic and xenophobic groups. Competing factions emerged, the two most prominent being the Moscow-based National-Patriotic Front *Pamiat'* and the National-Patriotic Movement *Pamiat'*. This factional conflict belied an ideological symmetry; both groups emphasised the importance of Orthodoxy and blamed a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy for everything from killing the Tsar to 'alcoholising' the Russian population. It is important to note that most but not all *Pamiat'* splinter groups emphasised the place of Orthodoxy in the new Russia; Vladimir Pribylovskii reports a neo-pagan and anti-Christian faction which from 1987-1992 was known as the World Zionist and Anti-Masonic Front *Pamiat'*.¹³³

¹³¹ Semyon Reznik, *The Nazification of Russia: Antisemitism in the Post-Soviet Era*, Washington DC: Challenge Publications, 1996, 102.

¹³² Paul Midford, "Pamyat's Political Platform: Myths and Reality", *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1991), 197.

¹³³ In 1992 it was renamed simply Obshchestvo 'Pamiat'' (Society *Pamiat'*). Vladimir Pribylovskii, *Russkie Natsional-Patrioticheskie (Etnokraticheskie) i Pravo-Radikal'nye Organizatsii*, Moscow: Panorama, 1994, 12.

Walter Laqueur, an eminent historian on Russian fascism, argues that there was a notable shift in *Pamiat*'s attitude toward the Orthodox Church in 1989-1990. Laqueur observed that before 1989-1990 there had been little reference to the role of the Church, however, as *Pamiat*' disassociated itself from the communists, it embraced Orthodoxy and the monarchy. He argues that this was the result of a search for new ideas; by the late 1980s a plethora of extreme right groups emerged with similar ideologies. Orthodoxy was one method of ensuring *Pamiat*'s distinction from other extremist organisations.¹³⁴

The *Manifesto of the National-Patriotic Front Pamiat*' emphasised Orthodoxy above all else. It stated that *Pamiat*'s programmatic demands were not centred on politics, economics or demography, the central concerns of other organisations, but instead, 'Our aim is the spiritual revival and unification of the People of our Fatherland which has been tortured and plundered by aggressive Zionism, Talmudic atheism, and cosmopolitan usury'.¹³⁵ The *Manifesto* called for the 'restoration of religious life'; freedoms for Orthodox Christians; the construction of religious shrines; and the memorialisation of murdered priests. Alongside these provisions for the recognition of the place of Orthodoxy in Russian history, *Pamiat*' made demands for the priority of Russian citizens in all fields of life.¹³⁶

Orthodoxy was presented as a justification for xenophobic sentiment. The *Pamiat*' Orthodox National-Patriotic Front formalised the links between Orthodoxy and Russian chauvinism. This faction's ideology was based on a mix of religious piety, fanatic anti-Semitism and an admiration for Stalin.¹³⁷ Alexander Kulakov, one-time leader of the Orthodox Front, insisted on the intimate link between Orthodoxy and defence of the nation:

The destruction of evil forces on earth, ie., of Zionism will start with the revival of the Orthodox spirit among the grass roots.... The destruction of the Orthodox faith, of the

¹³⁴ Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993, 209.

¹³⁵ Cited in John Garrard, "A Pamyat Manifesto: Introductory Note and Translation", *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1991), 135.

¹³⁶ Garrard, "A Pamyat Manifesto", 139.

¹³⁷ Thomas Parland, *The Rejection in Russia of Totalitarian Socialism and Liberal Democracy: A Study of the Russian New Right*, Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1993, 183.

Aryan genotype, and the ruin of Russia is the basic credo of Zionism.... It means that anti-Judaism and faith in God are inseparable.¹³⁸

National Patriots represented Orthodoxy as crucial to the survival of the Russian nation, not only to fill the moral or spiritual vacuum, but also to help repel conspirators who came in any number of guises. Like other *Pamiat'* ideologues, Vasil'ev portrayed these scapegoats not only as enemies of the Russian people, but also enemies of Christianity,

They are inseparable: Zionism-Judaism and communism. One stems from the other and vice-versa. All the postulates are the same: Zionists have hegemonic claims on the world and their theory of racial superiority just as the communists do. The communists summon the devil, Satan, to help.... All this enables me to conclude that their power is from Satan.¹³⁹

Most National Patriots rejected both Yeltsin's reformist leadership and the Patriarchate, viewing both as unable to effect the spiritual rebirth of the nation and protect Russian interests. *Pamiat'* insisted on the political relevance of both itself and the Russian Church as significant counter-forces to the policies of *perestroika*, *glasnost'* and *demokratizatsiia*, which they viewed as undermining national strength. National Patriots represented a strong Orthodox Church as indispensable for the renewal of Soviet society and as the only hope for Russia's salvation.

B. Christian Democrats

Gorbachev's initiatives allowed social organisations and movements to develop into bodies with political significance. By 1988 the intensifying demands for the formalisation of a pluralistic society led Gorbachev to speak of a 'socialist pluralism of opinions',¹⁴⁰ the representation of a range of viewpoints within the framework of the existing one-party system. The *neformaly* (unofficial organisations) matured to become political parties that challenged the CPSU's monopoly.¹⁴¹ Many of these organisations invoked Christian ideals, in particular

¹³⁸ Cited in Reznik, *The Nazification of Russia*, 103.

¹³⁹ Michael McFaul and Sergei Markov, eds, *The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy: Parties, Personalities, Programs*, Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1993, 46.

¹⁴⁰ Cited in White, *After Gorbachev*, 43.

¹⁴¹ See Valentina Levicheva, "On the Unofficial Wave (*Nedelya*, 12-18 February 1990, pp.13-14)", *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 42, no. 8 (1990), 13-14 and Anonymous, "There Are Such Parties - Russia's Colourful Palette (*Moskovskie novosti*, 15 July 1990, pp.8-9)", *Current*

Christian Democratic groups, which had an important influence on the developing multi-party system.

Christian Democratic parties have been a significant feature of the political systems of western Europe, particularly in Catholic countries. They arose in the late nineteenth century, enjoyed great influence in the mid-twentieth century, and continued to gain considerable electoral support in many countries throughout the twentieth century. Christian Democratic ideology is liberal and peaceful, centred on the notions of community and consensus, and is anti-fascist and anti-communist, with a pro-market orientation. A diverse range of opinions coalesce around Christian Democracy, drawn together by the Christian teaching which forms the basis of their political programmes.¹⁴² Russia, on the other hand, has no tradition of Christian democracy.¹⁴³ Richard Sakwa points out that, despite the absence of tradition, the Christian democratic parties which emerged in the *perestroika* years era drew on the dissidents' emphasis on human rights and on the Orthodox traditions of philanthropy and *sobornost'* to construct a philosophy quite similar to that of western Christian democratic parties.¹⁴⁴

The largest and most influential Christian democratic group to emerge in the *glasnost'* era was the *Rossiiskoe Khristiansko Demokraticheskoe Dvizhenie* (Russian Christian Democratic Movement; RKhDD). The amendment of Article 6 of the Constitution, which guaranteed the CPSU the leading role in society, enabled the Movement to form a party within the movement, which took place at its constituent congress in Moscow on 8-9 April 1990. The RKhDD was initiated by activists associated with the Russian literary and philosophical magazine *Vybor (Choice)* and with the activities of Iakunin. It attracted participants from educational, political and

Digest of the Soviet Press vol. 42, no. 35 (1990), 13.

¹⁴² See Kees van Kersbergen, "The Distinctiveness of Christian Democracy" in *Christian Democracy in Europe: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. David Hanley, London, New York: Pinter Publishers, 1994, 31-47 and Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*, Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1996, 1-20.

¹⁴³ There have been Christian democratic precedents in Russia; there existed a small Christian Democratic group in the Duma in the pre-revolutionary period, a group in the Constitutional Democratic party in 1905, and a Christian Democratic party was formed in 1917. None of these gained much influence, however, and were not established features of their respective political systems. Richard Sakwa, "Christian Democracy in Russia", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1992), 137.

¹⁴⁴ Sakwa, "Christian Democracy in Russia", 136-37.

cultural Christian activities and associations, mainly, though not exclusively, Orthodox.¹⁴⁵ Viktor Aksiuchits, Father Viacheslav Polosin and Gleb' Anishchenko were elected co-chairmen of the Movement, while Iakunin was one of fifteen elected to the Duma.¹⁴⁶ By June 1990 the RKhDD had an estimated fifteen thousand members with branches in eighty cities across the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷

The RKhDD's political programme was based on traditional Orthodox values. In a February 1991 speech Aksiuchits stated, 'the basic aim of Christian Democracy is the spiritual rebirth of society – in this case, the rebirth of Russia. It is this spiritual rebirth on which all other beneficial reforms in the country are based'.¹⁴⁸ The RKhDD argued that 'three fundamental principles: the primacy of spiritual values, enlightened patriotism and rejection of communist ideology' would guide the reawakening of spiritual consciousness and the renewal of Soviet society.¹⁴⁹ The RKhDD regarded Orthodoxy as crucial to fulfill these principles.

The RKhDD represented Orthodoxy as central to its ideology by insisting that the spiritual values of Orthodoxy are inherently democratic. Indeed, this was its claim to a political voice. The Movement's leaders cited the peace-loving and community-centred nature of Orthodoxy as evidence that believers should lead the democratic transition. Further, the tolerance and consensus that were at the core of the Christian ideal were essential to lay the foundations for a civil society. The *Declaration of the Constituent Assembly of the Russian Christian Democratic Movement*¹⁵⁰ stated:

The Christian ideal, in contrast to the communist ideal, is not monopolitarian. It does not exclude differences of opinion or opposing views. The freedom of the individual will be preserved only when political pluralism becomes firmly established as the natural law of the state. God allows evil to exist in the world so that man's freedom of individual choice should in no way be limited. But evil is always a monopoly,

¹⁴⁵ In some Russian cities members were recruited from among communities of Seventh Day Adventists. M. Steven Fish, *Democracy From Scratch*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, 106.

¹⁴⁶ Rossiiskoe Khristianskoe Demokraticeskoe Dvizhenie, *Rossiiskoe Khristianskoe Demokraticeskoe Dvizhenie: Sbornik Materialov*. Moscow: Duma RKhDD, 1990, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Sakwa, "Christian Democracy in Russia", 147.

¹⁴⁸ Viktor Aksyuchits, "Speech at the First Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1992), 191.

¹⁴⁹ Aksyuchits, "Speech at the First Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR", 193.

¹⁵⁰ Hereafter referred to as the *Declaration* or the *Declaration of the RKhDD*.

destroying good. In order, then to preserve precisely this freedom of choice between good and evil, we must make our own choice in such a way that evil does not gain a monopoly of social or political power – for it is an ideal that transcends this world.

The RKhDD advanced that the Christian ideal is pluralist, and allows for freedom of choice, thus ensuring that it is the ideal basis for democratic governance. The *Declaration* continued that Christian politicians must direct the renewal of Soviet society:

The fact that it is intrinsically impossible to realize the Christian ideal on Earth gives Christian politicians an advantage: they are free from the temptations of any kind of utopianism, and from the fanaticism in defense of this or that socio-political doctrine which always goes with it.¹⁵¹

A Christian party was therefore crucial to ensure the transition to a democratic, open and tolerant society. Aksiuchits identified the RKhDD's main strength as lying in its emphasis on Christian ideals; the Movement's objectives were not based on fleeting contemporary issues but rather on something altogether more enduring: Christian values. Aksiuchits derided democrats for their focus on contemporary issues and their utopianism at the expense of a realistic and enduring ideology, which would remain relevant in a changed social and political order.¹⁵²

The second way that the RKhDD represented Orthodoxy was as the patriotic faith of the Russian nation. A central tenet of the Movement's ideology was 'educated patriotism, as we understand Christianity within the context of centuries of Russian and orthodox culture'.¹⁵³ The Movement claimed that without an understanding of Russian national culture and history there could be no appreciation of the centrality of Orthodoxy to Russian life, and no pride in religious tradition, which was of course a democratic tradition. The *Declaration of the RKhDD* stated: 'The patriotism of a genuine Christian consists in the fact that Russian culture is dear to him because it is based on the highest truth – Christian ideals'.¹⁵⁴ The leadership of the Movement was careful to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy patriotism; the former excludes while the latter flaunts 'national arrogance, enmity

¹⁵¹ Rossiiskoe Khristianskoe Demokraticheskoe Dvizhenie, *Rossiiskoe Khristianskoe Demokraticheskoe Dvizhenie: Sbornik Materialov*, Moscow: Duma RKhDD, 1990, 19.

¹⁵² McFaul and Markov, eds, *The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy*, 119.

¹⁵³ Original italics. McFaul and Markov, eds, *The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy*, 125.

¹⁵⁴ Rossiiskoe Khristianskoe Demokraticheskoe Dvizhenie, *Rossiiskoe Khristianskoe*

and chauvinistic hatred'.¹⁵⁵ Orthodoxy could provide the basis for 'educated patriotism' and 'tolerant nationalism', important constituents of the rediscovery of Russia's Orthodox heritage, and crucial for the building of civil society.

The third way the Movement represented Orthodoxy was as fundamentally opposed to the ideology of communism. Aksiuchits stated, 'we consider communism to be the most radical anti-Christian doctrine and power in world history' and argued that Orthodoxy and communism were manifestly incompatible, as were communism and democracy.¹⁵⁶ The *Declaration of RKhDD* supported this, claiming: 'The Christian ideal is the exact opposite of the communist ideal', and that the aim of communism is 'the spiritual death of humanity'.¹⁵⁷ As with many other *neformaly*, the RKhDD's opposition to the ruling communists was the basis of its claims to democracy and garnered significant support for their initiatives, ensuring they were regarded as members of the democratic camp.

After the August 1991 putsch, the RKhDD shifted to the right and its detractors labeled it a nationalist organisation. This shift undermined its support within the democratic camp and in the west. Iakunin resigned from the RKhDD in response to alliances which indicated the Movement's shift to the right.¹⁵⁸ His disassociation and the resultant split damaged the Movement's democratic credentials.¹⁵⁹ The Movement became increasingly nationalistic after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In February 1992 it organised the Congress of Civic and Patriotic Forces of Russia, a nationalist, monarchist and patriotic bloc which attracted the likes of the Russian vice-president Aleksandr Rutskoi and *Pamiat'* leader Vasil'ev.¹⁶⁰ Further, it is alleged that the RKhDD did not advance a secular society

Demokraticheskoe Dvizhenie: Sbornik Materialov, 177.

¹⁵⁵ Aksiuchits, "Speech at the First Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR", 191.

¹⁵⁶ McFaul and Markov, eds, *The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy*, 125.

¹⁵⁷ Rossiiskoe Khristianskoe Demokraticheskoe Dvizhenie, *Rossiiskoe Khristianskoe Demokraticheskoe Dvizhenie: Sbornik Materialov*, 173.

¹⁵⁸ The RKhDD joined Democratic Russia in 1990 to 'become its right wing'. The RKhDD insisted that Democratic Russia was a coalition of groups with various political orientations drawn together by their opposition to the regime. McFaul and Markov, eds, *The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy*, 126-27.

¹⁵⁹ Iakunin also left the RKhDD because of the attitude of the Movement toward the official Orthodox Church. The RKhDD sought to collaborate with the Patriarchate while Iakunin continued to be critical of the body for its subordination to the state.

¹⁶⁰ Eduard Dorozhkin, "Patriots Gathered at the 'Rossia' (*Kuranty*, 11 February 1992, p.2)", *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 44, no. 6 (1992), 5.

imbued with Christian values, as in the west, but rather a Christian society. The latter insists upon a state religion dominating the political order and wider society.¹⁶¹ The promotion of a privileged position for the Orthodox Church counters the pluralism that is essential to the concept of civil society.

A number of other Christian democratic parties arose in the *glasnost* period, occupying different positions on the political spectrum.¹⁶² The RKhDD maintained fierce competition with them. Its leaders did not miss an opportunity to slander the 'spiritual' and democratic credentials of their 'opposition', especially its chief rival, the Christian Democratic Union founded by Aleksandr Ogorodnikov in August 1989.¹⁶³

Michael Urban argues that the RKhDD did not have a western orientation, but rather 'constructed its [identity] on eschatological scaffolding retrieved from Russia's past'.¹⁶⁴ It is true that the Movement referred to traditional organisations such as the *zemskii sobor*. However, Urban's analysis that the RKhDD was exclusively Russian differs from Aksiuchit's own understanding of the Movement; he explicitly stated that the appeal of the RKhDD lies in the combination of traditional Russian ideas and the 'most constructive' western tradition, Christian democracy.¹⁶⁵ Sakwa argues that the Movement is closer to traditional conservative parties than to the Christian Democratic parties of west Europe, citing the Movement's combination of traditional values with the conditions of the modern world as defining features of conservative thought.¹⁶⁶

In the *glasnost* era the RKhDD occupied a position which brought together the elements set out above; the National-Patriotic, western democratic and traditionalist combined to create a conservative-nationalist movement which

¹⁶¹ Sakwa, "Christian Democracy in Russia", 185.

¹⁶² Among them the Christian Democratic Union of Russia, Russian Christian Democratic Union and the Christian-Socialist Union. M.A. Razorenova, "Rossiiskoe Khristiansko-Demokraticeskoe Dvizhenie: Poiski Sebia", *Kentavr*, no. 6 (1992), 100-01.

¹⁶³ See Aksiuchit's comments in McFaul and Markov, eds, *The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy*, 124-25.

¹⁶⁴ Urban, Michael, Vyacheslav Igruna, and Serfei Mitrokhin, *The Rebirth of Politics in Russia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 207.

¹⁶⁵ McFaul and Markov, eds, *The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy*, 135.

¹⁶⁶ Sakwa, "Christian Democracy in Russia", 160.

formulated its policy according to the need to respond to specific issues rather than according to a formulaic ideology. The RKhDD drew on aspects of each and consequently appealed to Christians of diverse political orientations, including a national chauvinist element that was attracted to the Movement's preoccupation with national tradition. The RKhDD's emphasis on spiritual values, patriotic traditions and Orthodoxy's anticommunist nature was justified by constant reference to the Christian ideal and specifically to Russian Orthodoxy. The correlation between Christian Democracy and *sobornost'* is also revealing, particularly as the ideological parallels led to the organic growth of a Russian Christian Democratic movement where there was no precedent for this. In many ways, this is similar to the political colouration of reformist clergy in post-Soviet Russia (discussed in Chapter 3).

There was little that is fundamental to the concept of civil society in the Imperial period. The Emperor maintained control over political, military and social institutions. There were no features of a functioning civil society, as identified in Chapter 1; as an autocracy, opportunities for social self-organisation were extremely limited and there was little semblance of democracy. The Church was not one of many religious bodies operating in the sphere of associations that constitutes civil society. It had a privileged position that placed it above other denominations. There was no concept of the separation of church and state prior to Lenin's decree of 1918. The Holy Synod had no independence. The power of the autocrat was inextricably linked to that of the Orthodox Church.

Key features of civil society emerged between 1905-1917, described as the 'false dawn' of Russia's civil society.¹⁶⁷ Other freedoms between the revolutions of 1917, not least the criticism of the Imperial government and the reformist activity of educated society, points to the emergence of civil society.¹⁶⁸ Though this was short-lived, David Wartenweiler points out in his study of the influence of liberal academic ideas on the concept of civil society at the turn of the twentieth century that 'this

¹⁶⁷ Shlapentokh, "The Destruction of Civil Society in Russia".

¹⁶⁸ See Thomas Porter and Thomas Pearson, "Historical Legacies and Democratic Prospects: The Emergence of A Civil Society in Twentieth-Century Russia", *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*,

interruption should not overshadow the attempts to give personal freedom, rule of law, and democratization concrete meaning'.¹⁶⁹ Calls for Church reform, a result of discontent among laity and priests, and the convening of an independent Church Council suggests that the Church was able to pursue its interests. This experience provided a relatively recent historic basis for the Church's claims to contribute to civil society.

If the Church's contribution to civil society through the three spheres elucidated in Chapter 1 is evaluated, then it is clear that, as an institution, the Patriarchate removed itself from any stake in the vestigial civil society. The official Church maintained a capitulative role and had no influence in the social and political arenas, in stark contrast to the Catholic Church in communist Poland. The two churches had very different experiences, especially in the last decades of communist power. As an institution, the Moscow Patriarchate played no role in the burgeoning civil society in the 1970s and 1980s, while the Catholic Church in Poland was a significant opposition force and an institution around which dissident forces could rally. The contrast between the churches in Poland and in the USSR was noted in Polish *samizdat*. In 1984 an open letter, signed with the pseudonym 'Father Olaf', criticised the Polish Primate for his excessive 'submission' to the government and begged him not to 'take the path of Patriarch Pimen'.¹⁷⁰

In the Polish case, the Catholic Church was viewed as lobbyist for the nation's interests. The Church was central to civil society and could therefore stake a claim in its emergence and development. This was clearly not the case with the national church in Soviet Russia. The Orthodox leadership did not oppose the regime and even went so far as to discipline clergy who spoke against the religious repression and the Patriarchate's denial that there was religious discrimination in the USSR. Dissidents criticised the Orthodox leadership for its refusal to acknowledge repression and to remain anything but a tool of the atheist government. In this way,

vol. 23, no. 1 (1996), 52.

¹⁶⁹ David Wartenweiler, *Civil Society and Academic Debate in Russia, 1905-1914*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Cited in Patrick Michel, *Politics and Religion in Eastern Europe: Catholicism in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia*, trans. Alan Braley, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, 44.

Orthodox dissent was forced outside Church structures, and the influence of the Orthodox Church on civil society was made through informal channels.

In a 1979 edition of *Index on Censorship*, Leszek Kolakowski, a dissident Marxist philosopher, argued that the Catholic Church in Poland acquired an 'anti-totalitarian significance' simply by existing. He contended that, regardless of the extent to which the episcopate assisted or resisted the regime, the Church provided a counter-weight to communist dominance: 'an independent Church, no matter how rigid or intransigent, would still have preserved, by the simple fact of being there, a priceless element of pluralism in an otherwise totalitarian situation'.¹⁷¹ No similar assertion could be made about the Orthodox Church in the USSR. The Patriarchate actively supported the regime's anti-religious and atheist propaganda, by promoting Soviet interests in the World Council of Churches, for example. By cooperating with the regime, the Church acted not as 'an element of pluralism', providing an alternative to the ideology of the state, but as a part of the party-state apparatus that had as a key objective the demise of religious belief. It is a fallacious proposition that the mere existence of the Church meant it was an anti-totalitarian force. On the contrary, its cooperation with the regime served to legitimate the regime's intrusion into all aspects of life and to support a profoundly anti-pluralist leadership. This chapter has sought to establish that Orthodox dissent constituted the 'priceless element of pluralism' in Church life. Dissidents made the real impact in the religious sphere, not the formal Church. Moreover, the condemnation of dissident clergy meant that there was no room for independent voices within Church structures.

In the decade following the Bolshevik revolution it became obvious that official Orthodoxy must remain under the strict control of the state if it was to survive as an institution. Communist control allowed little opportunity for religious activity free from state control. While T. H. Rigby contends that the 'mono-organisational socialism' of the Soviet state was 'manifestly incompatible with any concept of civil society',¹⁷² it is possible to refer to a 'civil space' in the Soviet Union, but not civil society as such. The refusal of Orthodox dissidents to accept the subordinate position

¹⁷¹ Leszek Kolakowski, "Christian Poland and Human Rights" in *The Fall of Communism and the Rise of Nationalism*, ed. Ruth Petrie, London, Washington: Cassell, 1997, 54.

¹⁷² Rigby, "Mono-organisational Socialism and the Civil Society", 99.

of the Church fostered the creation of a religious sphere beyond the control of the state. Orthodox dissidents were the independent voice of moral and political criticism. The social consciousness Orthodox dissent aroused manifested itself as opposition to Soviet rule. Clandestine publications and organisation provided lively forums for intellectual discussion and debate. Religious dissent created a 'space' where freedom of expression and of conscience undermined the ideological monopoly of the regime. It rejected the politicisation of life, refusing to let the atheist principles of Marxism-Leninism extend into the private matter of religious worship. The alliance of Orthodox dissidents with human rights organisations created a powerful challenge to the regime. Religious dissent fostered informal networks that challenged loyalty to the regime. Religious adherence was a powerful tool of opposition.

In one understanding of the concept of civil society, it is argued that civil society cannot exist without the sanction of the state:

The governmental authorities must recognise that there are limits to the intrusiveness of their power and to their appropriate sphere of competence. They must acknowledge that the citizen-based groups have a legitimate right to independent activity, including the protection of the citizens from inappropriate governmental interference.¹⁷³

This understanding reduces the significance and even the very presence of elements central to the concept of civil society in the dissident sphere. The 'civil space' fostered by religious dissent was characterised by tolerance, a fundamental feature of civil society. Through *samizdat*, clandestine meetings, and debate among intellectuals, dissidents expressed a diverse range of opinions. Regardless of whether individuals agreed with their fellow dissidents, they upheld each participant's right to contribute to debate and express their opinion. Clandestine literature was copied and circulated by people who did not necessarily agree with the material that they helped to distribute. The space was not exclusive; the power to agitate for change was not concentrated in the hands of the few, the dissidents urged, but open to all. Though the expression of chauvinist sentiment undermined the democratic nature of the 'civil space', these sentiments were the exception, with debate among dissidents primarily focussed on agitating for change, protecting believers, and defending human rights

¹⁷³ Stephen White, Graeme Gill, and Darrell Slider, *The Politics of Transition: Shaping a Post-Soviet Future*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 226.

and civil liberties against the regime's assaults. Another feature of civil society fostered by dissidents was the acknowledgment of the rules and norms of behaviour within the 'civil space'. Orthodox dissidents used legal means in their protests, adding fuel to their charge that religious policy disregarded constitutional guarantees of freedom of conscience and of civil liberties. It is the unofficial Church that constitutes Russia's 'usable past' in terms of Orthodoxy's contribution to civil society in post-Soviet Russia.

The freedoms permitted by Gorbachev allowed civil society to emerge. The onset of multi-party elections, the end of media censorship and the liberation of religious activity are just three new conditions that enabled this to happen. The Russian Orthodox Church came to occupy a prominent position, largely because it was exploited as a political tool in the *glasnost*' era. Each group examined above adopted similar themes in their representation of Orthodoxy, centred on ideas of morality and social renewal, and always drew on Orthodoxy as tradition, even where this seemed antithetical to Christian tenets. Advancing a significant role for Orthodoxy was a quick route to support for both the Gorbachev administration and the National Patriots, though they were appealing to different sectors of society. The Gorbachev administration recognised the political mileage in espousing a prominent role for Orthodoxy by virtue of its number of adherents and its demographics, while National Patriotic groups gained support from those pining for a great Russia. The Church hierarchy sought to free itself from a long-standing position of subjugation to the state and secure a prominent position in the new climate of freedom. They soon found this ambition was welcomed by wide and varied sectors of the community. Christian Democrats invoked Orthodoxy to bolster their democratic credentials and to gain political credence from their claims to follow higher ideals than that of the non-Christian parties and politicians.

During the *glasnost*' era, the centrality of Orthodoxy and Christianity to Russian national identity was highlighted. The Gorbachev administration, the Church leadership, National Patriots and Christian Democratic bodies each emphasised the inextricable link between the two. Anishchenko summarised the attitude of these groups toward the nation and the Church when he said, speaking on behalf of the RKhDD, 'We believe that the way to unity is through a return to our

traditional sources. And those sources are Christian. The Russian nation, and Russia in general, are inconceivable without Christianity'.¹⁷⁴ The recurring theme of Orthodoxy as national tradition suggests that Orthodoxy was central to the rediscovery of post-Soviet Russian identity. This is a reflection that Orthodoxy is important for the development of national identity and self-awareness.

When Soviet communism collapsed as a result of Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost*, *perestroika* and *demokratizatsiia*, there was a burgeoning of *neformaly* and clubs and societies representing a wide range of interests, including many religious groups. This attests to the strength of elements of civil society present in the USSR and also shows that religious elements in the communist period were more than vestigial social and political forces. The role of religion, particularly the Orthodox Church, during the reforms, and the response of religious communities to these changes indicates the official Church was re-entering religious debates and coming to the fore of social and political discussions during the final years of the Soviet Union. The fact that some participants in these discussions invoked Orthodoxy to encourage the development and consolidation of civil society, integral to Russia's democratic project, while others appropriated the national Church to augment anti-democratic platforms and ideologies points to the prevalence of Orthodoxy in the rhetoric of reform.

With the collapse of the USSR, the status of both Orthodox dissidents and the Moscow Patriarchate changed significantly. These Soviet-era adversaries could now openly work toward promoting the Orthodox faith and its relevance to Russia's transition. They were no longer limited by the CPSU's dictates. The activities of the Church in the post-Soviet era were problematised because the Moscow Patriarchate was one of the few Soviet institutions that retained the same leadership in the post-Soviet era. This complicated relations between prelates and former dissidents. The question of whether the interests of these opposing camps converged or whether they remained opponents is the subject of the following chapter.

¹⁷⁴ Cited in Valentina Nikiforova, "The Way to the Truth. - Or, What the Christian Democrats are Fighting For (*Pravda*, 7 January 1992, p.2)", *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. 44, no. 1 (1992), 30.

Chapter 3

'Unofficial' Orthodoxy and Civil Society

The demise of Soviet Marxism-Leninism released the Moscow Patriarchate from the obligations and limitations the atheist regime imposed. For believers, the most profound changes lay outside the official Church structures. Religious issues were publicly debated and religious participation was no longer hazardous. It is necessary to question if the Church's unofficial contribution to civil society, identified in Chapter 2 as Orthodox dissent and Orthodoxy's centrality to the rhetoric of reform, has retained its salience in post-Soviet Russia. In particular, this chapter addresses the following questions: if the division between collaborators and dissidents has ended, have the interests of these Soviet-era adversaries converged? Do they work together for the Church's regeneration in the postcommunist period? How is Orthodoxy's contribution to civil society constituted in the unofficial Church's agenda? These constitute the key concerns of this chapter.

It has been argued that the move from an authoritarian regime to a democratic polity engenders the decline of social movements.¹ In the postcommunist context, the shift deprives social movements of their adversary (the authoritarian state), their operational methods (clandestine), and their *raison d'être* (regime change). The previous chapter argued that religious – particularly Orthodox – dissent fostered a sphere of civil society, beyond the control of the state. Many former Orthodox dissidents now work inside formal political structures. For instance, layman Aleksandr Ogorodnikov founded the political party the Christian Democratic Union and priests Viacheslav Polosin and Gleb' Iakunin were members of the Duma's Committee on Freedom of Conscience, Religion, Mercy and Charity. Therefore, this chapter is also concerned with providing answers to questions such as: has this element of civil society, along with its aims and

¹ 'it is liberalisation phases in authoritarian regimes that encourage social movement activity, and where these are followed by democratisation the invariable result is a decline in social movement activity'. Christopher G. Pickvance, "Democratisation and the Decline of Social Movements: The Effects of Regime Change on Collective Action in Eastern Europe, Southern Europe and Latin America", *Sociology*, vol. 33, no. 2 (1999), 368.

objectives, diminished, like social movements? Social movements were central vehicles for dissent, and churches were frequently at their core, as seen in Solidarność and the peace movement in the GDR. Therefore, it seems necessary to ask: has Orthodoxy's informal influence on civil society disappeared with the oppression that fostered it?

This chapter evaluates whether the Church's unofficial contribution to civil society continues in the post-Soviet period. It analyses two aspects of Church life: activism opposed to the Patriarchate's official line within Church structures and Orthodox activism outside official Church policy. Examining the Church's influence through informal channels facilitates the discussion of central debates in Orthodox life and key actors in the post-Soviet religious sphere. Informal channels remain an avenue for Orthodoxy's influence, evident through the significance of lay activism, the agitation for freedom of conscience for all denominations, and the initiatives of nonconformist clergy. It demonstrates that there remains a prominent, and ever-widening, division between official and unofficial Church life. The division in the Church is best understood in the context of Russia's religious boom. Thus, this chapter begins by outlining major developments in the religious sphere, including legislative changes and the activities of non-Orthodox denominations, and by considering the 'veritable spiritual smorgasbord' that constituted the post-Soviet religious revival.²

Legislative Changes

During the 1988 millennial celebrations Soviet authorities repeated that they were drafting a new law on freedom of conscience. There followed a great deal of discussion and debate about its provisions: the Supreme Soviet received more than 1,500 comments and suggestions on the law from citizens.³ According to Michael Bourdeaux, the first proposed draft of the law was published in the *samizdat* journal *Ekspress khronika*

² Eliot Borenstein, "Suspending Disbelief: "Cults" and Postmodernism in Post-Soviet Russia" in *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society Since Gorbachev*, ed. Adele Marie Barker, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1999, 439.

³ I. Novikov, "Kak ponimaiut v parlamente svobodu sovesti", *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 27 September 1990, 1.

(*Express Chronicle*) in July 1988.⁴ The second draft, and the first to gain a wide readership, was by Iurii Rozenbaum of Moscow's Institute of State and Law, printed in the popular legal journal *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (*Soviet State and Law*) accompanied by his commentary.⁵ The third was by the Council for Religious Affairs, passed on to religious leaders for their comments.⁶ Each draft directly contradicted the existing legislation – which remained Stalin's 1929 decree 'On Religious Associations' – by allowing far-reaching freedoms for religious communities.

The law 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations' was adopted in October 1990. The preamble stated four objectives: to guarantee citizens' right to express their attitude toward religion, to guarantee the right to exercise religious rites, to guarantee equality regardless of religious conviction, and to regulate the activity of religious organisations.⁷ Western commentators commended the USSR for formalising the new religious freedoms and fulfilling its international human rights obligations.⁸ The law, however, was short-lived. The dissolution of the USSR just one month later meant that the laws of the new republics superseded Soviet laws.

In the case of the Russian Federation, a religious law had already been drafted. Viacheslav Polosin, in his role as a member of the Committee on Freedom of Conscience, Religions, Welfare and Charity, formulated a law that guaranteed even greater freedoms. 'On Freedom of Belief' was adopted on 25 October 1990.⁹ It was

⁴ Konstantin Kharchev, head of the CRA, later confirmed that this was one of several drafts circulating within the government. Michael Bourdeaux, *Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel*, London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990, 71.

⁵ Iuri Rozenbaum, "K razrabotke proekte zakona SSSR o svobode sovesti", *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, no. 2 (1989), 91-98.

⁶ A copy of the CRA proposal was sent to the west by an anonymous informer, apparently at the request of members of a Moscow Baptist Church who wanted the west to 'help encourage the [Soviet] government to move on this'. Anonymous letter to Keston College, 19 February 1989, in *Keston Archives*, Keston Institute, Oxford, England.

⁷ Zakon Soyuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik, "O svobode sovesti i religioznykh organizatsiakh" in *Novye zakony SSSR*, Moscow: Iuridicheskaya literatura, 1991, 4.

⁸ See, for example, Stephen J. Roth, "The New Soviet Law on Religion", *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 2-3 (1990), 36. For an analysis of the Soviet law in light of the 1929 decree and previous drafts, see Giovanni Codevilla, "Commentary on the New Soviet Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 19, no. 1-2 (1991), 119-45.

⁹ For the full text of the law, first published in *Sovetskaya Rossiia*, 10 November 1990, see Communist Party of the Soviet Union, "On Freedom of Belief" in *Religion in the Soviet Republics: A*

widely regarded as more liberal than its Soviet predecessor. It included provisions against any form of discrimination based on religious belief or practice (Arts 1-7, 17, 22, 25, 29).¹⁰ It reiterated that state and religious associations were separate and should not interfere with or finance state elections, secular public education, or other political affairs (Art. 8).

Most significantly for the shape of religious life, the Russian law guaranteed freedom of worship for indigenous religious associations and foreign religious associations (Art. 4).¹¹ The significance of the law lay in the definition of 'worship', which comprised a wide range of activities:

Worship and promotion of faith shall be understood to include the performance of rites, the dissemination of one's beliefs in society directly or via the mass media, missionary work, acts of charity, religious instruction and education, ascetic establishments (monasteries, retreats, etc.), pilgrimage and other activities as defined by the appropriate system of beliefs and provided for by the statutes (regulations) of the given association (Art. 17).

The 1993 Russian Constitution endorsed these extensive freedoms.¹² Both Russian and foreign religious bodies benefited from the new freedoms, as demonstrated by the dramatic increase in the number of registered religious associations and the visibility of religious activity in the immediate post-Soviet period.

It was not long, however, before there were calls to revise 'On Freedom of Belief'. Criticism focused on its hasty drafting and contradictory statutes.¹³ Soon after, the influx of foreign missionaries and the rise of new religious movements, both native

Guide to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Other Religions, ed. Igor Troyanovsky, California: Harper San Francisco, 1991, 63-72.

¹⁰ Notably the guarantee that '[p]ersons who on account of religious beliefs cannot serve in the armed forces in a combatant role shall... be permitted to serve in a capacity unconnected with the use of bearing arms' (Art. 7).

¹¹ 'Citizens of the RSFSR, foreign citizens, and stateless persons shall enjoy the right to freedom of worship on an individual or a shared basis, by way of founding appropriate public organisations'.

¹² Specifically Art. 28: 'Everyone is guaranteed freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including the right to profess any religion individually or together with others or not to profess any religion, and freely to choose, hold and disseminate religious or other convictions and to act in accordance with them'. B. El'tsin, *Konstitutsiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (12.12.93), Moscow: Prospekt, 1999, 10. See also Arts 14 and 19 (pp.8-9).

¹³ Iuri Rozenbaum, "Nekotorye problemy gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nykh otnoshenii na sovremennom etape" in *Dia-Logos: Religii i obshchestvo 1997*, ed. Mark Smimov, Moscow: Istina i Zhizn', 1997, 290.

and foreign, prompted the criticism that the freedoms guaranteed therein were too extensive. The influx of foreign missionaries aroused suspicion and resentment among many Russians, particularly Orthodox, who were affronted by their ubiquity, evangelical vigour and opulence. There were calls to regulate and to monitor, and, in some cases, to outlaw their evangelism and proselytism. The Moscow Patriarchate led the campaign. Patriarch Aleksii stated in an address in Kostroma:

The work of the Russian Church for the rebirth of society is threatened by the expansion of foreign missions in Russia. Hundreds and thousands of very different preachers have invaded Russia. There is great tension in our country owing to divisions between people on political and nationalistic issues. There is a danger of similar division on religious grounds, the Patriarchate wants to prevent this and to help our society to be stable. So the Patriarchate has suggested to the parliament that it pass a law proclaiming a moratorium on religious propaganda from outside.¹⁴

Evidently 'On Freedom of Belief' required significant revision before the Patriarch's proposals could be legally implemented. (The influx of missionaries and the Patriarchate's campaign for restrictions on non-Orthodox faiths is detailed in Chapter 6).

In many of Russia's regions, local laws contradicted federal legislation. Between 1994 and 1996 more than one third of the regions enacted laws to restrict foreign religious activity. These were justified by local authorities by the need for greater control over religious life. The typical provisions of the regional laws are predictable in their measures to control foreign religious activity: indeed, most of them apply only to foreign religious groups.¹⁵ A decree in Sakhalin was prefaced:

Connected with the growing influx of foreign citizens and missionaries on the territory of the Sakhalin region, the number of violations of the procedure and rules governing their arrival and residency in the region is increasingly arousing righteous alarm of the law-enforcement organs and sharpening the anxiety of local organs of power.¹⁶

¹⁴ Cited in Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: Triumphalism and Defensiveness*, London: Macmillan Press, 1996, 175.

¹⁵ Lauren B. Homer and Lawrence A. Uzzell, "Federal and Provincial Religious Freedom Laws in Russia: A Struggle For and Against Federalism and the Rule of Law" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999, 304.

¹⁶ *Sakhalin region: On the regulation of missionary activity of various religious organisations on the territory of the Sakhalin region*, 4 July 1996, 1, *Keston Archives*, Keston Institute, Oxford, England.

For the purpose of this chapter, we need only recognise the ongoing debate over federal legislation, which demonstrated the irreconcilable differences between, on the one hand, conservatives and nationalists, who sought legislative guarantees for the Russian Church's protection, and, on the other, liberals and democrats, who sought guarantees for freedom of conscience for all confessions, and that the 1990 law 'On Freedom of Belief' remained in force, with restrictive regional laws also in place.

The Patriarchate's Post-Soviet Challenges

The Patriarchate's campaign for restrictive legislation was a response to the multifarious challenges it faced in the post-Soviet period. Russia's traditional faith had more to gain from the new freedoms than any other denomination. There was a dramatic increase in the number of Orthodox parishes, educational institutes and monasteries. The number of parishes reached 14,000 by 1994.¹⁷ Two priests explained how already by 1993 the new freedoms changed religious life in their region:

For a long period the Novgorod diocese, one of the oldest in the Russian Orthodox Church, had no bishop of its own and was governed by the Metropolitan of Leningrad. Only five years ago [1988] it hardly numbered 25 parishes; most of them were situated in remote villages. Recent years have brought many changes. Since July 1990 the diocese is governed by Bishop Lev (Tserpitsky) of Novgorod and Staraya Russia. The famous St. Sophia Cathedral, closed in 1929, is again opened for believers; dozens [of] churches are being restored and rebuilt. There are four cloisters, numerous Sunday schools and a children's choir in the St Sophia cathedral.¹⁸

By 1 January 1998 the number of registered Orthodox associations had reached 8,653, accounting for more than half of all religious associations.¹⁹ This example of Orthodox life's invigoration was mirrored throughout Russia. The most significant growth was the number of Orthodox educational institutions. From 1993 to 1996, the number of theological academies increased from 7 to 31.

¹⁷ Mezhdunarodnaia akademiia informatizatsii, *Novaia Rossiia informatsionno-statisticheskii al'manakh*, Moscow: Vsia Moskva, 1994, 640.

¹⁸ A. Bovkalo and A. Galkin, "Church Life in the Novgorod Diocese", *Religion in Eastern Europe*, vol. xiii, no. 6 (1993), 44.

¹⁹ Anonymous, "Svedeniia o gosudarstvennoi registratsii ustavov religioznykh ob'edinenii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii (po dannym Ministerstva iustitsii Rossiiskoi Federatsii)", *Religiia i pravo*, no. 1-2(4-5) (1998), 32-33.

There were dramatic changes within the institutions themselves. As theological education in the Soviet period was limited by ideological restrictions, the revival of monasteries and seminaries has been regarded as one of the Church's greatest successes.²⁰ Previously banned subjects, such as the history of philosophy, the history of religion and the history of Russian religious thought, were able to be introduced to theological academies. The training of priests is almost as important to Church life as the existence of congregations. Therefore, the large growth of monasteries, which increased from 81 in 1993 to 264 in 1996, is another significant development. Additionally, Orthodox religious societies grew from 4,357 to 6,709 in this period, reflecting the Church's involvement in education and a range of social and welfare services.²¹ This brief survey of the reinvigoration of Orthodox life shows an impressive increase in the Church's activities. There were, however, significant obstacles to the building of the basic structures to service the faithful.

A. Financial Shortages

The most immediate of these obstacles was the shortage of priests to administer the new parishes. One scholar compared Patriarch Aleksii's statements in *Zhurnal Moskovskie Patriarkhii* in late 1994 on the number of parishes and on the number of serving priests and concluded there was a deficit of some 4,000 to 5,000 Orthodox priests in Russia.²² Moreover, the training of priests was rudimentary, due to the low standard of monastic education in the Soviet era and the rapid training of priests to meet the new demand. A shortage of theological textbooks compounded this problem. According to an official at the Theological Academy:

We have not had time to train our priests properly. Monasteries are reopened, but we lack sufficient numbers of well-trained priests to serve in them. We have made priests of people

²⁰ Philip Walters, "The Russian Orthodox Church and Foreign Christianity: The Legacy of the Past" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999, 46.

²¹ Unless otherwise indicated statistics in this section derive from Ministry of Justice figures published in Anonymous, "Kak idet religioznoe vozrozhdenie Rossii?", *Nauka i religia*, vol. 1 (1997), 35. See the table Anonymous, "Svedeniia o gosudarstvennoi registratsii", 31-32. The statistics for all years are as at 1 January.

who are poorly prepared, and this shortcoming is seriously affecting the internal life of the Church. It is crucial that the people in such positions have both an excellent education and a deep spiritual life.²³

The phenomenon of young priests being ordained before they are adequately prepared is referred to in Church circles as *mlado-starchestvo* (youthful eldership), since they then instruct others.²⁴ In addition, aged and retired priests were encouraged back into service.²⁵ The poverty of theological scholarship in the post-Soviet period was also a problem.

There were shortfalls in other areas of Church life. In 1991, Patriarch Aleksii stated that although in three years the number of active churches in Moscow had risen from 45 to 130, 'many are in such a state that they must literally be rebuilt. And where are the craftsmen and architects capable of erecting a church to be found today? Unfortunately, their secrets and skills have been lost'.²⁶ The art of ringing church bells, for instance, has been largely lost due to the restrictions of the Soviet period. A low level of awareness of Orthodox doctrine and theology among its adherents, a legacy of the communist era compounded by inept preaching in the postcommunist era, also emerged as a major challenge to the Church's post-Soviet regeneration. The observations of Ioann Belliustin, the nineteenth century priest, that Orthodox adherents did not have the 'remotest conception of anything spiritual'²⁷ was not remedied by seventy years of religious persecution. This incognizance has also been blamed for the prevalence of

²² Nathaniel Davis, "The Russian Orthodox Church: Opportunity and Trouble", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3 (1996), 282.

²³ Professor Andrei Osipov, cited in Wallace Daniel, "Religion and the Struggle for Russia's Future", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 24, no. 4 (1996), 375.

²⁴ Alla Snegina and Evgenii Strel'chik, "Gde plianska, tam i diabol", *Segodnia*, 6 October 1999, 6.

²⁵ Davis, Nathaniel. *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*. Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1995, 122-123.

²⁶ G. Alimov and G. Charodeev, "Patriarkh Aleksii II: Prinimaiu otvetstvennost' za vse, chto bylo", *Izvestiia*, 10 June 1991, 2. This condition was a result of the Soviet practice of using church buildings for storage, miners' hospitals, and other uses which contributed to their decay.

²⁷ Italics removed. Belliustin, I. S. *Description of the Clergy in Rural Russia: The Memoir of a Nineteenth-Century Parish Priest (1858)*, translated by Gregory L. Freeze. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1985, 125.

anti-Semitism among Orthodox laity.²⁸ Nonconformist priests' attempts to overcome the low level of knowledge are discussed later in the chapter.

The lack of priests, their inadequate training, and the loss of essential skills were not obstacles that could be easily or quickly overcome, and they further strained the Church's financial resources. The seriousness of the lack of funds was highlighted by an appeal from the rector of the Smolensk Theological Institute in *Russkaia mysl'* in March 1994, which noted that the future of the Institute was threatened:

From the moment of its founding, it was financed almost entirely by the parishes of the diocese of Smolensk. Today the situation in the parishes is so difficult that one can categorise it as catastrophic. Galloping inflation ever more decisively curtails the scope of donations. Simply put, we have no means of feeding our students.²⁹

The Institute's bank account number was provided to encourage donations. In order to raise funds clergy became involved in unlikely business ventures. In 1994 bottled water from the Kostroma Province on the Volga River was sold under the name 'Saint Springs' to raise funds for the restoration of churches and monasteries in the region. The label on the bottles carried a picture of an Orthodox church and a blessing from Patriarch Aleksii.³⁰ The attention that the clergy devoted to raising operational funds created the additional problem of their time and energy being consumed by efforts to secure financial help and church property rather than serving their congregations.

B. Schismatic Orthodox Churches

The state-enforced unity of Orthodox jurisdictions ended with the demise of communist power. Orthodox schisms, driven underground in the Soviet period, emerged to challenge the Moscow Patriarchate's jurisdiction. The Patriarchate had hostile

²⁸ See the comments of Zoia Krakhmal'nikova and priest Aleksandr Borisov in Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, "Christianity, Antisemitism, Nationalism: Russian Orthodoxy in a Reborn Orthodox Russia" in *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society Since Gorbachev*, ed. Adele Marie Barker, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1999, 425.

²⁹ Cited in Davis, "The Russian Orthodox Church", 284.

³⁰ The 'Saint Springs' venture has, like other Church enterprises, been the subject of scandal. The profits have not been used to restore churches and monasteries in the Kostroma Province, as the label promises, but instead has been secreted away. Uzzell alleges that these profits almost certainly go to the Moscow Patriarchate, though his investigation has not confirmed exactly who receives these profits. Lawrence Uzzell, "Holy Water (2000)" (Web site). Accessed 1 February 2000 at <http://www.keston.org>.

relations with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA),³¹ the émigré church which entered Russia in 1990 as the Russian Orthodox Free Church (ROFC). The ROCA continues to spurn the Patriarchate for its capitulation to the communists. As the ROFC, it has proselytised priests and parishes who, for a variety of reasons, are discontented with the Moscow Patriarchate.³² This has resulted in open, even violent, conflict. One of the first instances when the ROFC gained a priest, a parish, and church property in Suzdal the local bishop wrote a letter to the city council denying that the ROFC had any claim over church property and condemning their militancy, provocation, lies, unauthorised prayers, and bigotry.³³ Despite this opposition, in 2001 the ROCA had 37 parishes in Russia.³⁴ Older schismatic churches, notably the True Orthodox Church, also present (albeit less threatening) challenges to the Moscow Patriarchate's jurisdiction.³⁵

The status of Orthodox churches in Ukraine, Moldova and Estonia remained a sensitive issue, one widely regarded as political rather than religious.³⁶ Patriarch Aleksii boycotted a gathering of representatives of the fifteen Eastern Orthodox churches in late 1995. He cited the differences between the Istanbul see and the Moscow Patriarchate on church politics in Ukraine and Estonia, and was critical of Istanbul for encouraging independent aspirations in these countries.³⁷ This not only emphasised differences within the Orthodox world, it also depleted the Russian Orthodox Church's resources. National churches claimed property and buildings that had only recently been returned to

³¹ Also known as the Russian Orthodox Church (Outside Russia).

³² For a summary of the tensions between the ROFC and the Russian Orthodox Church see Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993, 227-31.

³³ See Alexander Nezhny, "Something Bishop Eulogius has forgotten", *Moscow News*, 2-9 June 1991, 11.

³⁴ These are listed on the official web site of the ROCA. Anonymous, "Number of Parishes in Russia" (Web site). Accessed 28 June 2001 at <http://www.orthodox.net/directory/russia.htm>.

³⁵ On the little-understood True Orthodox Church see Vladimir Moss, "The True Orthodox Church of Russia", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 19, no. 3-4 (1991), 239-50. On the Old Believers see Mikhail Shakhov, "Staroobriadchestvo segodnia: problemy i perspektivy" in *Dia-Logos: religia i obshestvo, 1998 - 1999*, ed. Nikolai Shaburov, Moscow: Istina i Zhizn', 1999, 57-66 and Roy R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia*, DeKalb: University of Illinois Press, 1995.

³⁶ Lev Mitrokhin believes 'purely political motives underlie the growing tensions...'. Lev Mitrokhin, "In Quest of Faith We Grope From the Opposite", *Social Sciences*, vol. 27, no. 4 (1996), 30.

³⁷ Marlise Simmons, "At a Crossroads, Rifts Pull at Orthodox Churches", *New York Times*, 5 November 1995, 3. These tensions are part of a wider issue of Istanbul regarding itself as the bastion of Orthodoxy in the communist period and the Moscow Patriarchate's attempts to regain its place at the centre of the Orthodox world.

the Moscow Patriarchate by Yeltsin's April 1993 decree 'On the Transferring of Religious Structures and Other Properties to Religious Organisations'.³⁸ In addition, much to the chagrin of the Moscow Patriarchate, disenchanted clergy have occasionally left its ranks and converted to the schismatic churches. Most notably, Metropolitan Filaret (Denysenko), disappointed that he was not elected Patriarch in 1990, became head of the schismatic Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kiev Patriarchate) after being defrocked by the Moscow Patriarchate for immoral behavior, abuse of power, and the extent of his KGB cooperation. It has even been alleged that Filaret has 'intimate links to the Kievan criminal mafia'.³⁹

The schisms in Ukraine were most worrying for the Moscow Patriarchate. In 1989 the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was revived and direct confrontation between Patriarch Aleksii and the leaders of the Ukrainian Church ensued as they declared autocephaly in early 1992. At the centre of these tensions is the Moscow Patriarchate's concern over property seizure by schismatic Orthodox churches. This arises from the division of Orthodox prelates and clergy on the territory of Ukraine into the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kiev Patriarchate) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate). The Moscow Patriarchate regards the former as illegitimate. The division has led to conflicting claims for church property, which has resulted in the loss of parishes, as well as buildings and items such as icons, which exacerbates the Moscow Patriarchate's financial shortages.

C. The 'War for Souls'

The preeminence of the Russian Orthodox Church was also challenged by competition from non-Orthodox denominations. Though the emphasis of this dissertation is on Christianity, it is essential to recognise the experiences of other religions and denominations in order to appreciate the diversity of postcommunist

³⁸ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, "The Russian Orthodox Church in the Postcommunist CIS" in *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux, New York, London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995, 45.

³⁹ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, Crestwood (NY): St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998, 371. For Filaret's biography, see Vladimir Ruban, "Moscow Wants to subdue Ukraine Through the Church", 19-26 July 1992, 14.

religious life. The perceived need to protect the Russian Church from these interlopers largely shaped the Patriarchate's responses to the new religious pluralism. Debate about the Church's relations with and response to these non-Orthodox faiths heightened the tensions between conflicting currents in Church life. This served to exacerbate the divide between traditionalist and reformist prelates and clergy.

For the purposes of this dissertation, 'traditional' or 'established' refers to faiths that had a significant presence before the Gorbachev era. These include Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity. Christianity incorporates a large number of denominations, so the following examples from Christian denominations highlight common experiences, so that the broad strokes of religion are considered rather than confessional specifics.

Like the Orthodox Church, traditional religions experienced a significant growth in the number of registered associations.⁴⁰ There are a number of factors that set these faiths' post-Soviet experiences apart from the Orthodox Church. Russia's Muslim and Buddhist populations are heavily concentrated in certain republics. There are nine Muslim republics, which together have a population of some twenty million Muslims.⁴¹ Moscow itself has a population of around one million, predominantly Tatars, the second largest ethnic group in the city. The Buddhist population is concentrated in Buryatia, which borders Mongolia. In 1993, 139,000, or 32 per cent, of Russia's 435,000 Jews resided in Moscow.⁴²

⁴⁰ In 1990, before the passage of the new legislation, there were 870 Islamic associations, 16 Buddhist associations, and 31 Jewish associations. Apparat Soveta Federatsii Federal'nogo Sobraniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii analiticheskoe upravlenie, *Religioznye ob'edineniia rossiiskoi federatsii: Spravochnik*, Moscow: Respublika, 1996, 244. By 1 January 1996 there were 2,494 Islamic associations, 124 Buddhist associations, and 80 Jewish associations registered with the Ministry of Justice. Of the traditional Christian denominations, there were 677 Evangelical Christian-Baptists, 222 Seventh Day Adventists and 183 Roman Catholic registered associations in January 1996. Anonymous, "Svedeniia o gosudarstvennoi registratsii", 32-33.

⁴¹ The Muslim republics are Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Dagestan, Adygeya, Chechniia, Ingushetia, Northern Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachayevo-Cherkessia. Gasym Kerimov, "Islam and Muslims in Russia Since the Collapse of the Soviet Union", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 24, no. 2-3 (1996), 183.

⁴² Robert J. Brym and Rozalina Ryvkina, *The Jews of Moscow, Kiev and Minsk: Identity, Antisemitism, Emigration*, New York: New York University Press, 1994, 23. For discussion of the

The level of religiosity is an important consideration when assessing the activities and influence of traditional religions and their perceived threat to the Moscow Patriarchate. Donna Arzt contended:

In contrast to Russian Orthodox Christians, who tend not to self-identify as such unless they are firmly committed believers, or to Soviet Jews, who until recent decades were a predominantly assimilated population, a Muslim in Russia will usually profess to being Muslim, regardless of how loosely he or she adheres to Islamic precepts and practices.⁴³

There are three inaccurate statements in this extract. It has been established that self-identified Russian Orthodox adherents are usually nominal believers; numerous studies, both by Russian and western researchers, support this conclusion. While it is true that Russia's Jewish population is predominantly assimilated, emigration since the late 1980s means that the proportion of assimilated Jews has increased, not decreased, as Arzt suggests.⁴⁴ For most of the Soviet period, Jews were denied the right to emigrate, prompting the coinage *otkaznik* (refusenik). After the liberalisation of emigration policy, over one million emigrated, chiefly to Israel and also to the USA.⁴⁵ Further, a sociological study concluded that 'Muslims go to mosques twice as often as Orthodox believers go to church, they pray more, and they are more diligent about observing religious rules and prescriptions'.⁴⁶ On the whole self-identifying believers of non-Orthodox confessions participate in religious life more actively than self-identifying Orthodox believers do;⁴⁷ in the case of Muslims, Jews and Buddhists, it is likely that this is because religion is a signifier of identity in a country where these are minority groups.

difficulties assessing the size of Russia's Jewish population, see Rozalina Ryvkina, "Jews in Modern Russia", *Social Sciences*, no. 1 (1997), 148-50.

⁴³ Donna E. Arzt, "Proselytizing and the Muslim Umma of Russia: Historical Heritage or Ethno-National Threat?" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Books, 1999, 119.

⁴⁴ See the sociological surveys Ryvkina, "Jews in Modern Russia" and Lyudmila Vorontsova and Sergei Filatov, "Religiosity and Political Consciousness in Postsoviet Russia", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 22, no. 4 (1994), 63; 64.

⁴⁵ See Brym and Ryvkina, *The Jews of Moscow, Kiev and Minsk*, 66-93.

⁴⁶ Department of Ethics and Law, "Religious Life in the Mirror of Statistics and Sociology (*Moskovskie novosti*, 17-24 March 1996, p.34)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 28, no. 13 (1996), 20.

⁴⁷ B.V. Dubin, "Pravoslavie v sotsial'nom kontekste", *Informatsionnyi biulleten' monitoringa*, vol. 6, no. 26 (1996), 15-18.

Like the Orthodox Church, traditional religions engaged in a wide range of activities at the first opportunity, and they, too, experienced significant challenges in the new conditions. They faced challenges as minority groups. Anti-Semitism was a significant problem.⁴⁸ Anti-Muslim sentiment was evident in the opposition to the erection of an Islamic cultural centre in Moscow, which mobilised thousands of residents, opportunistic politicians, and even Orthodox clergy.⁴⁹ The relationship between the Orthodox Church and individual faiths depends on a number of factors, principally the interests of the Patriarchate. For instance, the Patriarchate cooperated with Islamic leaders to lobby for a restrictive religious law. At other times, anti-Islamic statements by Orthodox clergy have soured this relationship. Traditional religions have also been affected by attempts to promote a privileged position for Orthodoxy. The Patriarchate particularly targets Protestant confessions; Baptists, for example, are stigmatised as a cult and invaders despite their presence on the territory of modern day Russia since the eighteenth century.⁵⁰

Protestant confessions were particularly threatened by the influx of nontraditional religious groups. The newcomers had modern evangelistic methods, and similar theological tenets as Russian Protestants. In addition, there was a lack of dynamism characteristic of faiths subjected to prolonged repression. Traditional faiths also suffered from internal divisions.⁵¹ In the Catholic Church there were tensions between Russian Catholic and Russian-Polish Catholic clergy; the former claimed that the latter were anti-

⁴⁸ See the publications of the Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, *Antisemitism in the Former Soviet Union: Report 1995 - 1997*, Washington: Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, 1997, 33-122 and Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, *Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Religious Persecution in Russia's Regions: 1999-2000*, Washington: Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, 2001.

⁴⁹ The discourse surrounding the debate over the cultural centre was saturated with racial stereotypes and references to the Islamic threat. Valerii Musin, "Pravoslavnye ne khotiat musul'manskoi kul'tury", *Segodnia*, 16 August 1994, 2. See also the articles in Various, "Planned Muslim Center Disturbs Muscovites", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 96, no. 32 (1994), 1-4.

⁵⁰ Interview with Pavel Bel'kov of the Baptist Union, Moscow, 15 October 1999.

⁵¹ In the case of Muslims it was largely because they originate from more than twenty different ethnic groups. For splits among Russia's Buddhists, see Geraldine Fagan, "Buddhism in Postsoviet Russia: Revival or Degeneration?", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2001), 9-21. There was also a high profile split in the Jewish community over the election of a chief Rabbi. For interviews with rival candidates Adol'f Shaeovich and Berl Lazar, see Maksim Shevchenko, "Dva Ravvina...", *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 July 2000, 8.

Russian Polish nationalists.⁵² Though these tensions are characteristic of modern religion, their significance derives from the specific context: many cleavages emerged only in the 1990s, at the first opportunity to openly discuss religious issues, and highlighted the significant philosophical and theological differences within these diverse communities.

In addition to the emergence of schismatic Orthodox churches in Ukraine, tensions resurfaced between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Greek Catholics (Uniates). These were evident during Pope John Paul II's visit to Ukraine in June 2001, in which the pontiff hoped to enhance ecumenical relations between Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism. While the independent Ukrainian Orthodox churches did not object, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) harshly criticised the Pope for his perceived confrontation and for attempting to proselytise in Orthodox lands.

For the purposes of this dissertation, 'nontraditional' refers to denominations that have developed a significant presence since Gorbachev's accession. The most conspicuous new arrivals were evangelical Protestant groups, predominantly from the USA, but also from western Europe and to a lesser extent South Korea. Reverend Billy Graham visited the USSR in 1990, and was followed by innumerable American evangelicals. These preachers excited their audiences in stadiums and concert halls throughout Russia, and also bought radio and television time which further spread their messages across the country, and into the homes of Russians who had conceivably not been much affected by *glasnost* in the religious sphere. Their messages were delivered in a very different way from the preaching familiar to most Russians.⁵³ Consequently these evangelical preachers received a great deal of media coverage, almost all of it negative.

⁵² See the comments of a Polish prior of the Dominican community in Moscow, cited in Sergei Filatov and Lyudmila Vorontsova, "Russian Catholicism: Relic or Reality?" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, Maryknoll (NY): Orbis Books, 1999, 99.

⁵³ Bob Wilcox, an American evangelical preacher, reputedly called forth the sufferers in his audience at Moscow's October Theatre and shouted, 'I speak to back pain! In the name of Jesus, I command you to go!'. Cited in Serge Schmemmann, "Religion Returns to Russia, With a Vengeance", *New York Times*, 28 July 1993, A1.

Thousands of missionaries entered Russia at the first opportunity, recruited, trained and placed by sending agencies in the west. In 1995 missionaries under the jurisdiction of the 25 largest western sending agencies totaled 3,190 in the former Soviet Union, compared to just 1,716 in east and central Europe.⁵⁴ The overwhelming majority of these missionaries were placed in Russia and Ukraine, presumably because some post-Soviet states are predominantly Muslim and are culturally and geographically further removed from the west.

One of the first projects undertaken by Protestant groups was the translation, production and distribution of religious literature. Bibles for Russia, Inc. began operating in 1988 as 'bible smugglers'. Disguised as Swedish tourists, its members hid literature in suitcases and carried it into the USSR. They feared that as American tourists they might be subject to more intense scrutiny by Soviet customs officers.⁵⁵ In late 1990 they expanded their activities to include a range of humanitarian projects as well as programs designed to establish new churches and train church leaders.⁵⁶ The Salvation Army, active in St Petersburg from 1913 until 1923, when the Bolsheviks forced it out of the country, resumed its work in mid-1991. *The Salvation Army Year Book (1993)* reported the Army's initial activities:

In charge of the St Petersburg corps, Lieutenant and Mrs Geoff Ryan faithfully disciplined the new converts, established a corps programme with Bible studies, preparation classes, Sunday schools, open-air activities, community work, hospital and prison visitation, leading to the enrolment of the first soldiers some months later.⁵⁷

By late 2000, there were 93 active officers, 32 cadets, 359 employees, 40 corps, 18 feeding centres, 6 senior care centres, 2 social centres, 1 village for homeless people,

⁵⁴ Pamela Meadows, "Missionaries to the Former Soviet Union and East Central Europe: the Twenty Largest Sending Agencies", *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1995), 10 and Matt Miller, "Missionaries to the Former Soviet Union and East Central Europe", *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1995), 3.

⁵⁵ Alfred McCroskey, *Bibles for Russia*, New England: Morris Publishing, 1998, 2-3.

⁵⁶ Alfred McCroskey of Bibles for Russia, Inc., Letter, 4 February 2000. For a thorough account of the work of Bibles for Russia, see McCroskey, *Bibles for Russia*.

⁵⁷ Stanley Richardson, ed., *The Salvation Army Year Book (1993)*, Surrey: Unwin Brothers Limited, 1992, 87. For an explanation of the Salvation Army's militaristic language in the context of their Christian pacifist activities see the glossary in their year books.

1,969 senior soldiers, and 546 junior soldiers.⁵⁸ The Salvation Army's emphasis on community service and welfare provision is illustrative of the contribution to civil society made by the new arrivals, or, in this case, the re-entry of previously forbidden religious bodies. The autonomous provision of services constitutes independent social self-organisation. In this instance, foreigners led the Russian division of the Salvation Army. The suspicion that surrounds these new arrivals is indicated by the liquidation of the Moscow branch of the Salvation Army in 1999. The Moscow Justice Department decreed that the Salvation Army is a para-military organisation. A Moscow court later reinforced this judgment.⁵⁹

Denominations such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church of Scientology, Unification Church and Hari Khrishna also established a significant presence in the post-Soviet period. These confessions do not fit neatly into any category for this examination. They are generally mistrusted and condemned by mainstream Christian denominations in both the west and Russia on the grounds that they are 'cults'. They have been and continue to be at the fore of discussion about religious liberty, being the target of campaigns to restrict the access of foreign missionaries. Of these five, only Scientology and Mormonism arrived in the 1990s. The others were present either in pre-revolutionary Russia (Jehovah's Witnesses) or in the Soviet period (the Unification Church, Hari Khrishna). Soviet authorities heavily persecuted both Jehovah's Witnesses and Khrishnaite. They are included in the 'nontraditional' discussion because they did not achieve a large number of adherents in the USSR, and have increased their following exponentially in the post-Soviet period.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Margaret Sutherland, ed., *The Salvation Army Year Book (2001)*, Norwich: Page Bros, 2000, 191.

⁵⁹ In mid-2001, the Slavic Centre for Law and Justice (which works closely with the Institute for Religion and Law) launched an appeal on behalf of the Salvation Army in the European Court of Human Rights. See the Centre's press release: "ECLJ and SCLJ Ask the European High Court to Protect Moscow Salvation Army" (Web site). Slavic Centre for Law and Justice. Accessed 1 March 2002 at http://www.sclj.org/news/pr_010712_protect_salvation_army.asp.

⁶⁰ The number of registered religious associations increased from 1 January 1993 to 1 January 1997 as follows: Jehovah's Witnesses 44 to 144; Mormons 1 to 11; Hari Khrishna 23 to 113; Unification Church from 1 to 10; Scientology 0 to 2. The small number of registered Scientology organisations belies the fact that the Moscow Scientology Centre is the largest branch office in the world. Anonymous, "Svedeniia o gosudarstvennoi registratsii", 32-33.. One 1996 survey cited Hari Krishna's as the largest

Initially the Moscow Patriarchate regarded Protestant missionaries as the chief threat to the Orthodox tradition. The scandal surrounding Aum Shinrikyo caused a re-evaluation of the presence and the threat of nontraditional religious associations, both foreign and indigenous. Aum Shinrikyo, a Japanese apocalyptic cult that promotes the violent hastening of armageddon and the salvation of its followers alone, received a great deal of attention due to the extent of its Russian following and leader Syoko Asahara's contact with Russian authorities. Asahara's plans for world domination came to light in March 1995, after an attack on a Tokyo subway and the discovery of a stockpile of chemicals and other toxic agents. These events prompted the scrutiny of Aum Shinrikyo's activities in Russia. After meeting the head of Russia's Security Council in 1992, and sponsoring a Russian-Japanese University in Moscow, Asahara spoke at the Kremlin Palace, lectured at Moscow State University, and met with prominent politicians and representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate. Soon after Aum Shinrikyo was officially registered. It had regular timeslots on television and radio.⁶¹ Aum Shinrikyo had offices in Moscow and an estimated following of 30,000 in Russia in 1995, compared with 10,000 in Japan.⁶² Raids following the subway attack revealed a Russian military helicopter, a Russian-made military gas analyser, and suspicions that the expertise for creating noxious chemicals was sold to Aum Shinrikyo by Russian experts. Sensationalist media have since made much of the world-wide terrorist network apparently demonstrated by the Aum Shinrikyo-Russian connection.

The issue raised by Aum Shinrikyo's success in Russia was summarised by a journalist after relaying the findings of raids on Russian offices:

new religious movement in Russia. Department of Ethics and Law, "Religious Life in the Mirror of Statistics and Sociology (*Moskovskie novosti*, 17-24 March 1996, p.34)", 20.

⁶¹ Penny Morvant, "Cults Arouse Concern in Russia", *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 7 (1996), 20.

⁶² Sergei Agafonov, "Strannye svyazi 'kremleuskikh mechtatelei' s iaponskoi sektoi 'Aum sinrike'", *Izvestiia*, 28 March 1995, 1-2., Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia*, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1998, 317. Sergei Filatov claims that at its height in early 1995 Aum Shinrikyo had no more than 2,000 actual members, though he does not explain how he arrived at this number. Sergei Filatov, "Sects and New Religious Movements in Post-Soviet Russia" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999, 166.

But the most important thing is not these details, nor even the fact that the sect has three times as many devotees in Russia as it does in Japan itself – what is important is that it was in Russia (and only there) that Aum Shinrikyo operated under conditions of almost absolute freedom, winning recognition in the highest echelons of Russian government structure and enjoying the patronage of influential people who gave the sect a “green light” in Russia’s vast expanses.⁶³

For those pushing for a revised religion law, the Aum Shinrikyo scandal provided the ultimate justification for restricting the access of foreign religious bodies.

There are a large number of indigenous groups that fused neo-paganism, Christianity and eastern mysticism. Three in particular prompted widespread concern – The Great White Brotherhood (*Velikoe beloe bratstvo*), The Mother of God Centre (*Bogorodechnyi tsentr*), and the Vissarion Sect (*Visarion sekt*). The Great White Brotherhood, and particularly its leader Maria Devi Christos, received a great deal of attention for the predictions of the apocalypse and its pilgrimage to Ukraine. In addition, hundreds of children, some as young as eleven, joined the Great White Brotherhood, and worried parents wrote to newspapers and petitioned politicians.⁶⁴ A former monk established the Mother of God Centre in the late 1980s. Bereslavskii claimed that God has chosen to reveal himself through regular visions of Mary, including during the August 1991 coup, when the Virgin Mary appeared above the White House and attempted to save Russia. The Vissarion Sect came to public attention in 1995. It is based on the teachings of millionaire Sergei Torop, a former militiaman, who proclaims to be ‘Vissarion-Christ’. Vissarionites live in accordance with doctrine based on the worship of the Earth and a return to nature. The followers live in settlements in the Altai taiga where they practise ‘vegetarianism, accumulation of cosmic energy, extrasensoriness, urinothrapy, childbirth in the water and Zen Buddhism’.⁶⁵ They reject modern culture and urban living, and are building a ‘Sun City’ in the Siberian forest.⁶⁶ Though not unlike the guiding principles of hippies in the west in the 1960s and 1970s,

⁶³ Agafonov, “Strannye sviazi”, 1.

⁶⁴ In 1993 the *Moscow Times* ran a story by a reporter intrigued by the success of these Russian cults in attracting children and the methods they used. For an account of their recruitment methods, see Svetlana Kolosovskaya, “Religious zealotry resurgence in Russia”, *Moscow News*, 12 March 1993, 14.

⁶⁵ Alexander Soldatov, “From Moscow to the Taiga”, *Moscow News*, 15-21 December 1995, 12.

the claim of Torop to be Christ, the complete isolation of the community, and the prevention of members from leaving the settlements illustrate a dogma that does not replicate the freedom of hippie ideals.

Faith Healers have long been regarded with credence in Russia. The influence of Grigory Rasputin over Emperor Nicholas II and his wife illustrates the widespread reverence for the *starets* (spiritual advisor). While a 1994 headline in *The Times Magazine* that claimed 'In America everyone has an analyst. In Russia they have a wizard' is overstated,⁶⁷ it is true that faith healing has experienced a resurgence. In 1998, Sabrina Ramet estimated there were 300,000 folk healers, witches, wizards and psychics in Russia. There is even a test designed by the Ministry of Health which, if passed, grants wizards and witches a certificate to practice, 'in effect, a witchcraft license'.⁶⁸ The degree of acceptance of these healing powers was highlighted by the success of Russia's most famous television psychic, Anatolii Kashpirovskii, in the 1993 elections to the Duma.⁶⁹ Kashpirovskii and fellow healers like Iuri Longo are widely known to the Russian public through their television appearances. In one instance Longo appeared in a 1990 documentary dancing around an unidentified corpse in a Moscow morgue, 'The body apparently responded to his bioenergy by raising first one hand and then the other, and finally rising jerkily off its slab'.⁷⁰

Paganism is deeply embedded in Russian culture. Much has been written on this in recent years, particularly on the link between faiths which emphasise ecological

⁶⁶ Serafim Kobyshev and Natal'ia Medvedeva, "'Serdtshe mira" na Tiber-Kule", *Ogonek*, no. 3 (1996), 27-29.

⁶⁷ Juliet Butler, "Magical Mystery Cures", *The Times Magazine*, 9 April 1994, 16. See also Borenstein's claim that the popularity of 'new age' movements means that Russia is becoming 'the Southern California of Europe'. Borenstein, "Suspending Disbelief", 441.

⁶⁸ Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, 320.

⁶⁹ Kashpirovskii was a candidate for Vladimir Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party in the 1993 elections to the Duma. Anonymous, "Kandidaty v deputaty Gosudarstvennoi Dumy", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 12 December 1993, 3.

⁷⁰ Butler continues: '[t]he performance won him instant adulation, in no way reduced when the corpse gave an interview to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* newspapers admitting the whole thing had been a set-up'. Butler, "Magical Mystery Cures", 17.

concerns, such as the Vissarion Sect, and pagan groups.⁷¹ Conscious adherence to pagan worship still exists, most notably in Siberia, and experienced a resurgence in the post-Soviet decade. In 1994 *Nezavisimaia gazeta* reported:

According to recent surveys by Mari sociologists, in Mari-El, 5 to 7 per cent of the population are "pure" pagans, 60 per cent are "dual believers" (that is how they identify themselves; dual believers go both to church and to sacred groves, believing that they are worshipping the same God in different ways), and only 30 per cent, most of them Russians, are Orthodox. The 200,000 Mari of the diaspora – in Bashkiria, Tataria and the Urals – are mainly descendants of refugees who fled Christianisation. Up to 90 per cent of the diaspora are pure pagans.⁷²

In 1991 the Ministry of Justice registered Russia's only official pagan organisation, *Oshmari-Chimari* (White Mari-Pure Mari), which has its own prayer books and priests. A republican law 'On the Protection and Rational Use of the Natural Environment' was adopted which stipulates that 'trees may not be cut down nor any type of work done in traditional Mari worship sites'.⁷³ This law protects the sacred groves in which local pagans conduct their worship. The authors note: 'Following the registration of Oshmari-Chimari, the aforementioned law essentially gave paganism semiofficial status'.⁷⁴ This case is a reminder that Russia's regions are far different from the urban centres often cited as typical representations of the Russian population.

The Committee for the Salvation of Youth from Totalitarian Sects was created in 1993 to protect children from these native religious movements.⁷⁵ Indigenous movements drew on Russia's Orthodox heritage, especially the pagan elements in this tradition, for popular appeal, leading one commentator to the conclusion that 'one almost gets the impression that their leaders ransacked the same public library for inspiration, or

⁷¹ See, for example, V. Krutous, "Novoiazychestvo v sovremennoi kul'ture", *Svobodnaia mysl'*, no. 7 (2000), 78-89, Boris Falikov, "Neoiazychestvo", *Novyi mir*, no. 8 (1999) and the chapter "Ekologicheskoe myshlenie. Novoe slovo dlia starogo iazychestvo" in Andrei Kuraev, *Okkul'tizm v Pravoslavii*, Moscow: Blagovest, 1998.

⁷² Sergei Filatov and Aleksandr Shchipkov, "Sotaia eparkhiia: Poslednii iazycheskii narod Evropy", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 17 March 1994, 5.

⁷³ Filatov and Shchipkov, "Sotaia eparkhiia: Poslednii iazycheskii narod Evropy", 5.

⁷⁴ Filatov and Shchipkov, "Sotaia eparkhiia: Poslednii iazycheskii narod Evropy", 5.

⁷⁵ Ol'ga Semenova, "Sakta "Aum Shinrikyo Sinrike" stremitsia lishit' Rossii ee "kul'turnogo Genofonda", schitaet Komitet po spaseniyu molodezhi ot totalitarnykh sekt", *Radio Liberty Information Unit*, vol. 151, no. 27 (1995), 1.

that the component parts of the country's national myth were sold off to new religious movements at an ideological privatization auction'.⁷⁶

The re-emergence of traditional religions and denominations, the re-entry of previously banned religious bodies, and the arrival of a range of preachers and religious workers created unprecedented challenges for the Moscow Patriarchate, the most immediate of which was defining the Church's role in the pluralist religious environment. The first task was to reduce the influence of perceived competitors in the 'new war for souls'.⁷⁷ Predictably, it was the Patriarchate's adoption of a position toward the changing conditions that created tensions within the Church itself. Three key themes in the concept of civil society – tolerance, which, in the religious context, means the acceptance of other faiths; cooperation, which manifests as ecumenism and inter-confessional dialogue; and democracy itself, which takes the form of openness in both the religious sphere and within Church structures – underpinned the negotiation of the Church's new role. It is the implications of these external conditions on the internal life of the Church, and the subsequent rift between Orthodoxy as a formal institution represented by the Patriarchate, and Orthodoxy as informal influence, represented by nonconformist clergy and lay activists, to which we now turn.

D. Reformists vs Traditionalists

The division within the Church between traditionalists and reformists was a product of differing convictions about how to meet the multifarious post-Soviet challenges. In 1991 Veniamin Novik, an Orthodox priest, wrote, 'If one had to describe the spiritual condition of Russia in one word, that word would be 'schism', a deep inner schism of Russian society, and one that pierces every Russian who has lost his identity'.⁷⁸ The Orthodox Church itself has not escaped this imbroglio. Highly visible divisions have developed. Each faction within the Church has its own lay organisations, publications, journals and institutions. This is a result of different understandings of the

⁷⁶ Borenstein, "Suspending Disbelief", 451-52.

⁷⁷ First used in the title of the edited volume *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*.

⁷⁸ Veniamin Novik, "Russia - Between Past and Future", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1994), 138.

Church's social and political role. The following section outlines the fundamental ideological and theological disagreements that underpinned this salient division.

Ralph Della Cava emphasises the importance of acknowledging internal Church dynamics:

Largely for its xenophobic, anti-Semitic and nationalist stand, an ultra-nationalist wing of the clergy has dominated the headlines. It alone has largely given shape to the currently dominant view of the Russian Church as a proponent, ally or pawn of broader conservative and nationalist forces. In contrast, other internal Church currents go largely unnoticed or have gotten short-shrift. Moreover, "in house" debates, especially those which on the surface seem to deal strictly with "religious matters", go for the most part unreported – in the erroneous belief that quarrels over doctrine and practise have little relationship or bearing on society as a whole.⁷⁹

The salience of internal Church dynamics, and especially the convictions and activities of the reformist wing, is often overlooked in western analyses of Church life. As Della Cava points out, these generally focus on nationalist and conservative Orthodox clergy. A case in point is Victoria Clark's long chapter on Russia in her book on Eastern Orthodoxy in modern Europe. Each Orthodox adherent she encounters, from prelate to priest to *starets*, is a Russian national chauvinist, or anti-Semitic, anti-western or anti-Catholic, though usually a combination of these.⁸⁰

This dissertation aims to establish that though there is indeed a strong current of national chauvinism within the Church, this is by no means an accurate portrayal of Orthodox life. The emphasis on nationalists obscures the contribution of reformist elements. Likewise, the impression that there are but a handful of laity promoting Orthodoxy as a tolerant, ecumenical and intellectual faith is misleading.⁸¹ This examination strives to restore some balance in these assessments by appraising the agenda and influence of reformist elements in the Church, and demonstrating that their

⁷⁹ Ralph Della Cava, "Reviving Orthodoxy in Russia: An Overview of the Factions in the Russian Orthodox Church, in the Spring of 1996", *Cahiers du Monde russe*, vol. 38, no. 3 (1997), 388.

⁸⁰ Victoria Clark, *Why Angels Fall: A Portrait of Orthodox Europe from Byzantium to Kosovo*, London: Macmillan, 2000, 299; 301; 305; 306; 317; 322.

⁸¹ Judith Deutsch Kornblatt describes Zoia Krakhmal'nikova as 'a lone voice in the wilderness'. Deutsch Kornblatt, "Christianity, Antisemitism, Nationalism", 423.

objectives encourage the strengthening of principles central to the concept of civil society.

The division in the Church became apparent when Gorbachev's concessions allowed open discussion of religious issues. Jane Ellis predicted a rift between hierarchs and dissidents.⁸² This dichotomy lost currency when clergy became critical of the Patriarchate's position for reasons as different as those of former dissident priests Gleb Iakunin and nationalist Dmitrii Dudko. The cleavages became more complex. They were characterised as rifts between modernists and traditionalists,⁸³ reactionaries and progressives,⁸⁴ authoritarians and reformists,⁸⁵ and between the four factions identified by Della Cava: ultra-nationalists, ecumenists, institutionalists, and pastoralists.⁸⁶ The most useful terms for this discussion are reformists and traditionalists. When the discussion surrounding a number of key issues is examined, these two opposed positions can usually be identified.

The first such issue to emerge, and one which engaged many commentators on Church life, including prelates, clergy and laity, was the cooperation of Church dignitaries with the KGB. The degree to which the Patriarchate had been infiltrated led the institution to be derisively referred to as the *Mitropolitbiuro*, an amalgam of *mitropolit* (Metropolitan) and *Politbiuro* (Politburo).⁸⁷ Church collaboration with the KGB was first made an issue by the dissident journal *Glasnost*, which published accounts of KGB meetings with Patriarch Pimen, Metropolitan Aleksii, and other hierarchs,⁸⁸ and an interview with a former KGB general confirming the collaboration.⁸⁹

⁸² Jane Ellis, "Hierarchs and Dissidents: Conflict over the Future of the Russian Orthodox Church", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 18, no. 4 (1990), 307-18.

⁸³ Davis, "The Russian Orthodox Church", 280.

⁸⁴ James L. Haney, "Two Faces of Russian Orthodoxy: Reactionary and Progressive", *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1995), 3-5.

⁸⁵ James H. Billington, "Orthodox Christianity and the Russian Transformation" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999.

⁸⁶ Della Cava, "Reviving Orthodoxy in Russia", 387-414.

⁸⁷ Mikhail Frankov, "Mysteries of the Holy Synod", *Moscow News*, 1992, 16.

⁸⁸ Davis, Nathaniel. *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1995, 95.

The details were soon published. Three researchers had access to KGB files on the Patriarchate: Iakunin, Polosin, and Aleksandr Nezhnii, a prominent journalist. They located files that detailed prelates' recruitment, trustworthiness, and the extent of their cooperation, and, after Nezhnii deciphered the thinly veiled code names, the collaborationist hierarchs were exposed in *Ogonek* (*Small Light*), the newspaper at the forefront of *glasnost*.⁹⁰ There followed a great deal of public debate, published on the pages of *Argumenty i fakty* (*Arguments and Facts*), *Russkaia mysl'* and *Posev*.⁹¹ The Patriarchate responded by appealing to the 'accusers' to cease their denunciations and exposes. Round table discussions in *Ogonek* and *Stolitsa* represented a range of views on the issues of collaboration, including justifications of necessity (by Metropolitan Ioann and Deacon Andrei Kuraev) and outright condemnation (by Iakunin and Orthodox convert Zoia Krakhmal'nikova).⁹²

The controversy was heightened by an interview with Patriarch Aleksii in 1991. When asked about the oath of loyalty that each Patriarch made during the Soviet period (he did not have to make the oath as he was elected in 1990) he replied: 'As I am a churchman, I must accept responsibility for all that happened in the life of my church: not only for what was good, but also for what was difficult, regrettable, mistaken'. He apologised for the resultant suffering,

Of those people who were pained by such concessions, by the failure to speak out, by the forced passivity and expressions of loyalty of the church leadership during that period, I ask forgiveness, understanding and prayers – not only before God, but before those people, too.⁹³

This admission and apology was significant, and many believers, especially former dissidents, had been waiting for it for some time. It can be interpreted as

⁸⁹ He stated: 'A part of the upper hierarchy of the church is on the KGB payroll'. Lev Yelin, "Demoted to the rank of... People's Deputy", *New Times*, no. 38 (1990), 15.

⁹⁰ Aleksandr Nezhnyi, "Kto na imia", *Ogonek*, no. 4 (1992), 2-3.

⁹¹ See, for example, the interview with Shushpanovym, who worked in the Patriarchate's Department of External Church Relations, describing how he met with and provided information to the KGB, including on Iakunin. P. Luk'ianchenko, "Isproved' byvshego agenta". *Argumenty i fakty*, February 1992, 5.

⁹² Aleksandr Nezhnii, "Kamo griadeshi, sviataia tserkov'?", *Ogonek*, no. 18-19 (1992), 12-13.

⁹³ Alimov and Charodcev, "Prinimaiu otvetstvennost' za vse", 2.

Aleksii's recognition of the public support for reformists on this issue and demands for making the leadership accountable to the laity. The upper echelons of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church recognised that there could be no legitimate leadership unless repentance was sought for the collaboration with the communist security services. Consequently, in 1991, the Church's bishops publicly apologised.⁹⁴

For some, the *modus vivendi* that began with Patriarch Sergii in 1927 was necessary for the institutional survival of the Church. Others were less forgiving. For Iakunin, acknowledgment and repentance were not enough. In an open letter to the Patriarch he asked:

Is it not time for all archbishops and priests who cooperated with the secret police to reveal to the people of the church the truth about our church's tragic history, and to put it to that same church to judge whether it has any further use for hierarchs who are CPSU and KGB collaborators, or whether the time has finally come for them to step down and for the people of the church to exercise their right to choose their own pastors freely?⁹⁵

The contempt for past collusion is clear, and has been linked to the call for a more democratic and transparent leadership, and the expulsion of compromised prelates. The issue of KGB-Church collaboration has, more than any other, highlighted the gulf between the hierarchy and reformist clergy, and, moreover, there appears to be no prospect for reconciliation between the two positions.

The accessibility of Church doctrine was another key issue dividing reformists and traditionalists. The reformists called for changing the language of the liturgy from Old Church Slavonic, which cannot be understood by the average church-goer, to vernacular Russian, to make the service more accessible for the congregation.⁹⁶ Georgii

⁹⁴ Except for Patriarch Maksim. Michael Radu, "The Burden of Eastern Orthodoxy", *Orbis*, vol. 42, no. 2 (1998), 290.

⁹⁵ Gleb' Yakunin, "First Open Letter to Patriarch Aleksii II", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1994), 314.

⁹⁶ See Kochetkov's argument for presenting the liturgy in Russian in Georgii Kochetkov, "Mertvovoe i zhivoe", *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 14 January 1993, 5. At least one Church expert believes that: 'it is clear that as long as the Orthodox Church continues to use the poorly understood Church Slavonic and does not develop some simplified forms of worship for the beginner, supplement worship with catechisms for adults and make religious literature in modern idiom readily available, its missionary role will remain minimal'. Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox

Kochetkov, well known for his evangelism and widely regarded as a leader of the reformist 'movement', introduced the reading of the gospel and other parts of the liturgy in Russian at his large Moscow parish, without the permission of the Patriarch. The Patriarch responded by moving Kochetkov to a smaller parish which could not accommodate his congregation. This prompted an open letter, published in *Segodnia*, by forty priests supporting Kochetkov and condemning the Patriarch's attempt to silence him.⁹⁷ The letter showed that there is support for Kochetkov's initiatives among his fellow clergy, though this is far more prominent in Moscow and St Petersburg than outside the largest cities. There has been widespread support for Kochetkov from diverse sources, including from Pospelovskii, who generally supports the Patriarch on doctrinal issues. Pospelovskii wrote in an appeal to Aleksii published in *Kontinent* (*Continent*), citing Kochetkov as the most prominent example, 'One's heart bleeds with each new report of persecution against the very best, the most evangelistically active and successful pastors of the Russian Orthodox Church and against the fruits of their spiritual, educational and missionary work'.⁹⁸ (See Chapter 6 for further discussion of the disciplining of reformist priests.)

Reformists placed primary importance on grassroots work in parishes. The work of slain priest Aleksandr Men' continues to inspire reformists. His emphasis on parish life and his inspirational preaching, which literally brought hundreds of thousands to the church, is regarded as a model for modern ministry.⁹⁹ Iakov Krotov, a frequent commentator on religious affairs who maintains a web site devoted to Men', noted:

The real meaning of Fr Alexander is his symbolical [*sic*] position in the mass media. Many of his parishioners, acquaintances, and readers still work as journalists. When they need to name someone as an exemplar of "good Christianity", they name Men. Who else? Yakunin is too politicized a figure and he is still alive; so he is not as good for a myth. The majority

Church: Its Problems and Its Theological Education", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 23, no. 3 (1995), 257.

⁹⁷ See Pospelovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church", 257, n.75.

⁹⁸ Dmitrii Pospelovskii, "Raznoe", *Kontinent*, no. 96 (1998), 392-95.

⁹⁹ For an introduction to the work of Men', see the chapter by Michael M. Meerson, "The Life and Work of Father Aleksandr Men'" in *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia*, ed. Stephen K. Batalden, Georgia, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993. On the mysterious circumstances surrounding his assassination, see Sergei Bychikov, *Khronika neraskrytogo ubiistva*, Moscow: Ingushetiia, 1996.

of the intelligentsia is peacefully minded, and Men carries quite a peaceful name: he didn't struggle with the Patriarchy and didn't collaborate with the KGB either. So his name symbolizes for the audience of mass media... the non-aggressive, non-politicized, non-silly, non-ghetto, non-fundamentalist Russian Orthodoxy.¹⁰⁰

Iakunin's initiatives stand in stark contrast to the non-politicised and non-confrontational nature of Men's initiatives. The radical changes that Iakunin believes would achieve greater accessibility were evident when he established the Orthodox Church of Resurrection in cooperation with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the True Orthodox Church. His initiatives included making fasting voluntary, replacing Old Church Slavonic (not necessarily with Russian; the language is determined by the language of the congregation), and making traditionally long services shorter. A greater level of accountability is guaranteed by Iakunin's decision to make the financial records of the Church public. These initiatives are all directed toward making Orthodoxy more accessible, including the radical move of shifting the altar to the middle of the worship room, closer to the congregation. The Church is to be open to other Orthodox denominations for dialogue and joint efforts to reform and revive the Orthodox tradition.¹⁰¹ Traditionalists regard these initiatives as heretical. Moreover, in a highly controversial move, Iakunin canonised Men'. This was criticised as unfaithful to Men's memory (Krotov commented 'Nothing could be farther from Men's spirit than his canonisation to spite "official Orthodoxy"'),¹⁰² particularly as Men' emphasised the unity of the Church, and distanced himself from politics.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Yakov Krotov, "Fr Alexander Men (2001)" (Web site). Accessed 4 August 2001 at <http://www.earthlink.net/~amenpage/amenbio2.htm>. Krotov was converted to Orthodoxy by Men'.

¹⁰¹ Yakov Krotov, "Aleksandr Men' i podrazhateli", *Segodnia*, 9 September 2000, 4, Konstantin Krylov. "Orthodox Church of Resurrection" (Web site). Accessed 1 December 2000 at http://prcenter.nm.ru/11_sep_yakunin_-_myen.html.

¹⁰² Krotov, "Aleksandr Men' i podrazhateli", 4.

¹⁰³ Men's son issued the following statement condemning the canonisation: 'My father, Alexander Men, who died a martyr's death, gave his entire life to preaching the Gospel and to serving the Russian Orthodox Church. It is therefore with a feeling of deep misapprehension that I learned today about a canonization of my murdered father by an organised group of people having no relation to the Russian Orthodox Church. Keeping in mind that the people perpetrating this action are conducting an active propagandistic campaign against the Church's Hierarchy, I consider all that has taken place as a clumsy attempt to cover up their dubious undertakings by taking advantage of the reputation of my murdered father, who was always removed from any political nonsense, and I look on this as a provocation directed against all my family.' Cited by Yakov Krotov, "Michael Men Protests Against Attempts to Use the Name

The Patriarchate's stance on other Orthodox jurisdictions, and by extension on the status of ecumenical relations, also contributes to the division within the Church. Reformists regret the schism in the Church that has emerged in the post-Soviet period, which priest Georgii Chistiakov believes has led to the 'loss of the most important virtue we [Orthodox] possess, the loss of the catholicity of our faith'.¹⁰⁴ This statement is of a tenor very different from that of the hostile statements toward other Orthodox jurisdictions by the Moscow Patriarchate. Reformists regard the disintegration of the Orthodox world into competing factions as a regrettable product of the Church leadership's competitive and pragmatist policies.

Reformists argue that relations with non-Orthodox denominations should also be strengthened. Chistiakov lamented:

Today Orthodox religiosity includes, as an almost inseparable component, a struggle against Catholics and Protestants, an attempt to expose them as enemies of our faith and of Russia, as well as complete rejection of ecumenism and of any openness towards other confessions. The very term 'ecumenism' has become pejorative and an accusation of affinity towards it is seen as evidence of a certain betrayal of Orthodoxy.¹⁰⁵

Chistiakov continued to condemn religious intolerance and appealed to believers to embrace ecumenism and enhance inter-confessional understanding. He laments that self-righteousness and exclusiveness plague the Orthodox Church.¹⁰⁶ Though Patriarch Aleksii has experience in ecumenical bodies, including in his position as president of the Conference of European Churches,¹⁰⁷ his promotion of protecting Russia from other faiths has led reformists to regard the Church as hostile toward inter-denominational

of His Father in an Anti-Church Campaign (2000)". (Web site). Accessed 1 December 2000 at <http://home.earthlink.net/~amenpage/imitator.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ First published in *Russkaja mysl'*, 28 September 2000, and available at: Georgy Chistiakov. "Moment of Truth for World Orthodoxy" (Web site). Russia Intercessory Prayer Network, accessed 24 September 2001 at <http://www.ripnet.org/strategies/church/dialogue.htm>.

¹⁰⁵ Georgi Chistyakov, "Whence the Anger?", *Religion in Eastern Europe*, vol. 17, no. 3 (1997), 9.

¹⁰⁶ 'We [Russians] did not elect Orthodoxy because it is the only correct teaching of faith, since correctness can only be demonstrated in the sphere of knowledge, but not in matters relating to faith which transcends into the realm of the indemonstrable'. Chistyakov, "Whence the Anger?", 9.

¹⁰⁷ For testimony of Patriarch Aleksii's 'background of genuine and deep-seated devotion to ecumenism', see John Arnold, "Patriarch Aleksii II: a Personal Impression", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1992), 237-39.

cooperation and dialogue. Tensions about the Moscow Patriarchate's membership in the World Council of Churches, over feminist and homosexual issues, led to a temporary lapse in the Orthodox Church's active participation in this body.¹⁰⁸ Reformists also argue for the relaxation of restrictions on women, such as the wearing of headscarves, skirts and dresses in churches and for the adoption of the Gregorian calendar instead of the Julian calendar. Iakunin and Kochetkov's congregations continue to be markedly different in their demographics, characterised by younger and more intellectual worshippers. Their followers and supporters have contributed much to Orthodox life through lay activism.

Lay Activism

Lay activists are those persons identifying Orthodox precepts as central to their political cause. In addition, the Introduction noted that lay activism can include the political activities of clergy or their involvement in projects unrelated to Church life. This is explained by Fogarty: 'The 'laity' in this case includes members of the clergy who may, for instance, enter politics on the same footing as laymen, leaving behind for that purpose the special authority of their clerical office.'¹⁰⁹ This activity takes place outside official Church structures.

There was great debate about the political involvement of clergy following the Holy Synod's November 1993 resolution that priests would not be permitted to stand for political office. This was inspired by events during the attempted coup of October 1993, when priests elected to the Congress of People's Deputies 'literally ended up on opposite sides of the barricades: Father Aleksii Zlobin was in the White House, and Father Gleb' Iakunin was with the President'.¹¹⁰ The involvement of priests in the debased world of politics prompted the Patriarch to put the choice to four clergy standing for the December 1993 Duma elections that they could retract their candidature or continue to run for election and be defrocked. Iakunin was the only priest to choose the latter

¹⁰⁸ On tensions over WCC membership see Anonymous, "Schism Threatens Russian Orthodoxy", *The Christian Century*, vol. 115, no. 34 (1998), 1179.

¹⁰⁹ Michael P. Fogarty, *Christian Democracy in Western Europe 1820-1953*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1957, 4.

option.¹¹¹ There followed the publication of a number of open letters: from Iakunin to Patriarch Aleksii arguing that his defrocking was uncanonical and condemning the Patriarchate's conservatism ('The church is cutting itself off from the life of society; it is ossifying, turning into a marginal, ritualised structure'); from Aleksii to the Duma chairman denouncing Iakunin's schismatic mission ('Members of the State Duma ought to know that G. P. Iakunin is actively working to create schism in the Russian Orthodox Church and thereby promote division in our society') and a number of other (increasingly bitter) correspondences.¹¹² The conflict turned violent when, in 1995, during a debate in the Duma, Nikolai Lysenko, a nationalist deputy, tore Iakunin's cross from his neck and swung it around his head, refusing to return it. A brawl ensued as other deputies defended the two men.¹¹³ The Holy Synod's resolution that clergy cannot have political involvement makes the distinction between those acting with the official Church's censure and with its commendation clear.

Orthodox laity have been involved in a wide range of political projects. Some of the most well-known Orthodox activists, such as the human rights activist Zoia Krakhmal'nikova and Aleksandr Ogorodnikov, have been involved in politics. In some instances, their claim to a political voice is based on the claim that Orthodoxy is the foundation of their political principles. They believe that Orthodoxy as a faith can and should aid the development of democracy in post-Soviet Russia, and lament that the official structures of the Church have not been able to facilitate this positive influence.

Iakunin has been described as the 'chief democrat in the Church',¹¹⁴ a fair summation, except for the fact that Iakunin is no longer 'in the Church', having been defrocked for his political activities in 1994. His involvement in various radical democratic parties, election blocs and alliances testifies to the primacy he places upon

¹¹⁰ Aleksei Makarkin and Ol'ga Pashkova, "Delo tserkvi - molit'sia", *Segodnia*, 29 May 1999, 2.

¹¹¹ It has been argued that Iakunin's choice of politics over priesthood dismayed many of his supporters. Pospelovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church", 249.

¹¹² See four documents related to the case in *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 22, no. 33, 9-21.

¹¹³ Vladimir Zhirinovskii entered the fray, leading to a fistfight between extremists and democrats. For a photograph and an account of the fracas see Anatolii Barkhudarov, "Draka na zasedanii Dumi N.L. Lysenko napal na Iakunina, a Zhirinovskii na Tichkovskuiu", *Segodnia*, 12 September 1995, 1.

the role of religion in the development of democracy. Likewise, Krakhmal'nikova has emphasised that religion can play a valuable role in increasing the prospects for democracy: 'We have to create ethical, religious and humanitarian programmes. This will help the democratic parties to produce people capable of becoming genuine democrats in action'.¹¹⁵ Activists like Krakhmal'nikova have been involved in a range of overtly political activities, such as the political movement *Net* (No), which advocated boycotting the 1995 and 1999 elections to the Duma to protest the issues central to the electoral platforms of major parties.

A similar emphasis upon religious tolerance is evident in an interview with Krakhmal'nikova following the publication of her volume *Russkaia ideia i ievrei. Rokovoi spor. Khristianstvo, Antisemitizm, Natsionalizm* (1994) (*The Russian Idea and the Jews: A Fateful Controversy. Christianity, Anti-Semitism, Nationalism*), which was a response to Igor' Shafarevich's influential anti-Semitic text *Rusofobiia* (see Chapter 5). Krakhmal'nikova explained.

The book was conceived of... as a Christian alternative to the threat of Russian fascism, which might don the uniform of the totalitarianism that Russia has not yet overcome, this time outfitted with an aggressive, nationalistic idea. It is no accident that this new type of fascism is trying to create a religious ideology. Its components are "patriotic Nazism", anti-Semitism and pseudo-Orthodoxy....¹¹⁶

The denunciation of 'pseudo-Orthodoxy' demonstrates her concern that nationalistic elements within the Russian Orthodox Church seek to use Orthodoxy for exclusive ends. Krakhmal'nikova is also concerned about its appropriation into a new chauvinistic formulation of the Russian Idea. She warns: 'a vast panorama of ominous signs of a new "Russian Idea" that is aggressive and anti-Orthodox is opening up before us'. Krakhmal'nikova's conception of Orthodoxy is one that is constructive. This translated into direct action when in September 1994 she was a founding member of the Committee

¹¹⁴ Judith Devlin, *Slavophiles and Commissars: Enemies of Democracy in Modern Russia*, London: Macmillan Press, 1999, 62.

¹¹⁵ Cited in Georgy Tselms, "The Angel of the Apocalypse has Already Sounded His Trumpet (*Novye Izvestiia*, 13 June 1999, p.4)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 51, no. 26 (1999), 8.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Zoia Krakhmal'nikova, Irina Rishina, "S veroi i nadezhdoi", *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 28 September 1994, 3.

For Democracy and Against Political Extremism, a response to the rising influence of neo-Nazi and other extreme right groups.¹¹⁷

Orthodox laity were principal voices in opposition to the legislation 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations'. This is the foremost issue sustaining debate about the Church's post-Soviet role. Krakhmal'nikova is a fierce defender of freedom of conscience and spoke out against the Patriarch and Yeltsin for supporting the legislation: 'Freedom of conscience... cannot be bought or sold, nor is it granted in exchange for certain services. It is above any table of ranks. It is an absolute value'.¹¹⁸ A number of clergy have been driven out of the official Church due to their opposition to this legislation. Veniamin Novik, dismissed from his teaching position at the St Petersburg Theological Academy for speaking against the 1997 law, wrote:

The new law in spirit not only eliminates the possibility of ecumenism and religious reconciliation in Russia, but also further forces apart and separates a multi-confessional society. Only a rather low level of religiosity in society, and the social marginalisation of religion, can assuage the social consequences of this law.¹¹⁹

Novik, who mailed a letter of protest to the Yeltsin administration, was subsequently ordered to resign. The different approaches to this legislation have exacerbated existing divisions between reformists and traditionalists. The law pitted those who favoured an emphasis on ecumenism and inter-confessional dialogue against supporters of the restrictions. Iakunin, long outspoken against what he believed was fallacious religious legislation, stated that restrictive legislation would not rid Russia of dangerous cults and disruptive sects and ensure that the state had total control over the religious sphere. On the contrary, Iakunin argued that the 1997 law would damage the credibility of the Church and ultimately disadvantage it.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Vladimir Guliev, "Demokraty namereny dat' boi fashizmu", *Rossiiskie vesti*, 13 September 1994, 2.

¹¹⁸ Zoia Krakhmal'nikova, "Svoboda sovesti prevyshe tabelia o rangakh", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 19 September 1997, 2.

¹¹⁹ Veniamin Novik, *Pravoslavie, Khristianstvo, Demokratiia*, St Petersburg: Aleteiia, 1999, 361.

Although opposition to the Moscow Patriarchate is not a defining characteristic of lay activists, many are hostile toward the Moscow Patriarchate, primarily for its reluctance to regard their concerns as important to the Church's role. Krakhmal'nikova published a number of articles called *Bitter Fruits of Sweet Captivity*, devoted to the problem of religion and the Church. The main focus of her writing is the struggle against fascism and anti-Semitism in the Russian Orthodox Church, and the spiritual rebirth of Russia. Krakhmal'nikova is scathing in her criticism both of the compromises of the Patriarchate in the Soviet period and of the pragmatism with which contemporary politicians regard Orthodoxy.¹²¹ Opposition to the Moscow Patriarchate has also to do with the dissident roots of many lay activists – Iakunin's dissident activities were discussed in Chapter 2; from 1979 to 1986 he was in a labour camp; Krakhmal'nikova was imprisoned from 1982 to 1987 for compiling a *samizdat* religious journal; and Ogorodnikov was imprisoned from 1979 to 1987 for his involvement with the discussion group the Christian Seminar.

The politically active clergy and laity mentioned here wish to see the Church leadership take a more active role in fostering tolerance and democracy, crucial to the development of civil society. Some of the most respected rights activists identify themselves as Orthodox activists. For them, the Church's preoccupation with disciplining reformist priests and protecting Russia from the incursion of foreign missionaries denies Orthodox believers affirmative leadership, and removes the institutional Church from a positive stake in Russia's post-Soviet development. The overall effect of this lay activism has been to create internal fronts which further weaken the Church's claim to hegemony. The inability of the Patriarchate to meet post-Soviet challenges and to lead the country's recovery has led to widespread frustration, as noted by Dmitrii Pospelovskii, who opened his article 'Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church' with the animadversion: 'The Russian Orthodox Church has failed to find in itself the living force to lead Russian society morally or spiritually, as

¹²⁰ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. "Russian Orthodox Church Welcomes Passage of Law (22 September 1997)" (Web site). Accessed 19 August 2000 at <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1997/09/220997.html>.

¹²¹ Rishina, "S veroi i nadezhdoi", 3.

was hoped by both believers and nonbelievers when the collapse of the Soviet state had become obvious'.¹²²

The 'Spiritual Vacuum' Thesis

This discussion of the unofficial influence of Orthodoxy has been contextualised in terms of the reinvigoration of religious life in the post-Soviet period. The literature deliberating religious life in Russia frequently cites a 'spiritual vacuum' as the explanation for increased religiosity.¹²³ Proponents of the spiritual vacuum thesis argue that increased religiosity is a consequence of the demise of Soviet Marxism-Leninism. The regime forbade the contemplation of religious matters and explicitly rejected the need for such contemplation. Advocates of the spiritual vacuum thesis reason that when Marxism-Leninism, essentially a pseudo-religious belief system, disappeared, it left a profound void. Russians turned to the spiritual realm for guidance.¹²⁴ This chapter demonstrates that there was indeed a significant religious boom. There was, however, a lot more at play than a simple 'vacuum'; the explanations for the religious revival are far more complex than a yearning for a new belief system and a religiosity unfettered by traditions.

Ramet contends that the spiritual vacuum thesis does not provide an explanation for postcommunist religious developments. She summarises the arguments:

The advocates of the "spiritual vacuum" view generally have in mind either of two theses: (1) that communism had largely wiped out all religion, leaving the people of the area dazed, confused, and hungry for the Christian gospel; or (2) that Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam, and Judaism, together with traditional Protestantism, cannot qualify as legitimate spirituality, and so their presence does not disqualify one from speaking of a spiritual vacuum.¹²⁵

¹²² Pospelovsky, "Impressions of the Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church", 249.

¹²³ See, for example, Mitrokhin, "In Quest of Faith We Grope From the Opposite", 30.

¹²⁴ Often the spiritual vacuum is synonymous with the moral vacuum, since both grew from the profound moral and spiritual crisis of Soviet, and subsequently Russian, society. Having a certain set of spiritual beliefs, particularly in the Christian faiths, would ensure that people would live their lives in accordance with a concrete set of moral guidelines, and a concomitant sense of community and responsibility. The moral and the spiritual vacuum are therefore intimately linked. See, for example, Barbara von der Heydt, "Russia's Spiritual Wilderness", *Policy Review*, no. 70 (1994), 12-19. In this article von der Heydt speaks of a 'moral vacuum' and a 'spiritual hunger' as part of the same conditions causing the crisis of Russian society.

¹²⁵ Ramet, *Nihil Obstat*, ix.

Ramet rejects these theses, arguing that the existence of established churches means that there are strong spiritual actors in, and influences upon, the postcommunist societies. Further, they have made a significant contribution to the re-building of religious communities, which clearly contradicts the second thesis.

The first understanding has the most resonance with western commentators, and is a fallacious assumption that ignores more complex issues shaping developments in Russia's religious sphere. The vast numbers of religious organisations found fertile ground for their evangelical and proselytising activities. This cannot be simply attributed to the spiritual vacuum. There are five reasons why these nontraditional groups, which in some cases had only been in Russia for years, or even months, before they could boast a substantial local following, were so attractive to Russians. First, the leadership style of the foreign Protestant groups was a major attraction. Traditional Orthodox clergy maintained a level of formality and rigidity that alienated members of their congregation, which reformist clergy aspired to overcome. In stark contrast, Protestant leaders were generally approachable, readily involved in their parishioners' lives, and able to tap into human emotions and personal themes to deliver their messages. Second, the lure of the west cannot be underestimated. The west, especially the USA, the origin of most of these recent arrivals, was seen to represent the ideas and principles upon which the new Russia was to be founded. R. Vito Nicastro, in his study on mission and proselytism in Russia, points out that some missionaries were unaware of the lure of their 'westernness'.¹²⁶ Linked to this is a third advantage: becoming involved in these religious groups was an opportunity to travel to the west, perhaps to study, and at least to learn English, a highly desired skill. There were frequent reports of religious workers playing on these potentialities, which were, and continue to be, out of reach for most Russians, in order to maintain attendance of these hopefuls. A fourth motivation is the financial advantages of involvement, in the form of free Bibles and other religious literature (which, as pointed out earlier, could then be sold), welfare provisions, and

¹²⁶ See R. Vito Nicastro, "Mission Volga: A Case Study in the Tensions Between Evangelizing and Proselytizing", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3-4 (1994), 240.

treats such as bible study camps for children. Fifthly, the novelty of these groups in itself was attractive for many.

One factor influencing the dramatic increase in religiosity in the postcommunist period is often overlooked: the legal changes that formally permitted religious pluralism. The most significant impact of *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiia* on the lives of believers in the Soviet Union was the disappearance of the threat of reprisal and recrimination for their religious views. There was no longer any reason to fear the implications of religious participation on their families, their jobs, or career prospects. The removal of this threat was especially important for followers of the established religions. While their institutional existence was not outlawed in the Soviet period, participation in religious worship had serious consequences for the lives of many believers. As a result of Gorbachev's initiatives they ceased to fear the gulf between the word and deed of authorities. The removal of this threat also removed a major barrier to worship.

An additional factor influencing religiosity in the postcommunist period derived from the specific historic experiences of religion in the east, and particularly in Russia. In the west in the mid-late nineteenth century the process of secularisation of knowledge began, and a scientific, rational and logical worldview came to predominate. There was a reappraisal of religious doctrine in light of scientific progress. Russia did not experience an identical process due to its isolation from the west, its comparative backwardness, and the persistence of the intimate link between the autocrat and the Orthodox Church. Chapter 2 contended that in the early twentieth century, there were social and political conditions conducive to the emergence of the concept of civil society. The movement for Church reform called for the Church's independence from the state and the democratisation of Church life. It is likely that the process of secularisation which developed in the west would have taken place organically had it not been for the Soviet experiment, which halted the organic spread of anti-clericalism and replaced it with state-sanctioned anti-religious and atheist propaganda.

A few final points should be made regarding religious life in postcommunist Russia. The peak of religious activity was from 1990 to 1994. After this time the religious revival died down significantly. There are numerous reasons for this; one is that many churches failed to meet the expectations of Orthodox dissidents, religious believers and neophytes. This is illustrated by the small percentage of neophytes who continued to attend church after their baptism. The discrediting of the Orthodox Church has been outlined earlier. Other groups also suffered this fate. For example, for Protestant groups, novelty is no longer advantageous. Cults and other religious and pseudo-religious organisations suffered; as their leaders were arrested and exposed, they too became mundane, and Russians grew more wary of the financial prerequisites of membership. The aggressive proselytising of some Protestant evangelicals took its toll on their success, as it became clear that many proselytisers 'tend to view conversion more in terms of numbers than submission of the human will to the divine'.¹²⁷

These factors demonstrate that the spiritual vacuum thesis is an unsatisfactory reduction of more complex developments in the post-Soviet religious sphere. Russians were drawn to religious belief for a variety of reasons, which have been elucidated here because of their significant implications for the development of religious pluralism.

This chapter has sought to outline how Orthodoxy has contributed to the development of civil society through informal channels, chiefly through reformist clergy, who operate outside the Patriarchate's purview, and through lay activism. The religious boom in the early post-Soviet period, which continued, albeit to a lesser extent, throughout the 1990s, also contributed to the emergence and development of civil society. This can be qualitatively evaluated by examining the three spheres of civil society elucidated in Chapter 1.

In the widest sphere, the intensified religious activity during the 1990s forged a plurality that is essential for the development of civil society. The large number of

¹²⁷ Nicastro, "Mission Volga", 224.

religious bodies initiated social welfare and independent programs, many of which (though not the majority) were Orthodox projects. The parish of Aleksandr Borisov, a leading reformist figure, is indicative of the important contribution that reformist priests make to civil society. His parish oversees two hospitals, several children's homes, a feeding centre for the homeless, free food for the elderly, as well as groups which work with refugees, prisoners, and youths.¹²⁸ Projects such as the girls' shelter established by Ogorodnikov's Christian Democratic Union also constitute Orthodoxy's contribution to wider social welfare projects.

The Orthodox Church was not, of course, alone in this influence on the widest sphere of civil society. The dissemination of religious literature exposed its readers to new debates and philosophies, many of which had been repressed in the Soviet period. The entry of missionaries and other religious associations resulted in the establishment of organisations free from state interference. Further, the concerns of some of these groups with welfare meant they were providing a service that had traditionally been the preserve of the state. The re-building of the infrastructure to service the faithful and also to accommodate charitable and philanthropic pursuits is reminiscent of the thriving civic life that Tocqueville found in America: 'Americans combine to give fetes, found seminaries, build churches, distribute books and send missionaries to the antipodes. Hospitals, prisons and schools take shape that way'.¹²⁹ In this discussion, the 'Americans' are 'religious workers', and, though the state established the vast majority of hospitals, prisons and schools, the work inside the first two and the influence on curriculum in the third contributed to independent social organisation.

The Salvation Army is one example of the contribution of a religious body to social and welfare services. Foreign religious workers' organisational methods were emulated not only by Russia's religious communities but also by others seeking to establish organisations concerned with welfare and other social services, both secular

¹²⁸ Anonymous, "Patriarch Bestows Medal on Fr Alexander Borisov on 60th Birthday (10 November 1999)", (Web site). Paul Steeves, accessed 24 September 2001 at <http://www.stetson.edu.au/~psteeves/relnews/9911a.html>.

and religious. The exposure to foreigners and their experiences was also of crucial importance to developing ideas about the contributions of non-governmental organisations to pluralist societies. The reinvigoration of Russian religious life, in all its diversity, contributed to the development of civil society through a range of projects.

Dmitrii Gorin, a frequent commentator on Church affairs, points out the irony of the Church's existence in the post-Soviet period: though the state has ceased its anti-religious policy, and the Patriarchate is independent from state control, there has been heightened scandal and schism within the Church.¹³⁰ Turning to the second aspect of civil society, that of the religious sphere, the discussion of the 1997 legislation demonstrated that Orthodox activists and reformist clergy have done much to encourage rights for believers of all denominations, and advocated an inclusive understanding of freedom of conscience that forged religious plurality and enhanced ecumenical understanding. A case in point is the court case in which Iakunin acted on behalf of minority faiths when he filed a lawsuit against Aleksandr Dvorkin, a prominent Orthodox writer on new religious movements. Dvorkin published a brochure in which he labeled religious bodies such as Hari Khrishna as 'totalitarian sects' and 'destructive cults' and accused all groups listed of theft and violence. Iakunin filed the suit, under the banner of the People's Committee on Freedom of Conscience, for the 'defence of the honour, dignity, and reputation of a number of religious organisations and for the determination that the information disseminated by A.L. Dvorkin defaming these organisations does not conform to reality'.¹³¹ Iakunin lost the case.

There has been opposition to the Patriarchate as reformists and religious activists have taken directly opposing stances on key challenges the Church faces in the post-Soviet period. These informal forces have been pushing for *perestroika* within the Church since the first revelations of the extent of the leadership's collaboration with the

¹²⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence, London: Fontana Press, 1994, 240.

¹³⁰ Dmitrii Gorin, "Molchanie pastyrei", *Nezavisimaia gazeta - religii*, 3 November 1999, 11.

¹³¹ Andrei Zolotov, "Orthodox Church Wins Key Legal Battle Against Russia's New Religions (23 May 1997)", (E-mail Bulletin). Ecumenical News International News Service, accessed 13 November 1997.

KGB. Within Church structures, traditionalists have condemned all attempts to update Church practice; they viewed these initiatives as heretical and as attempts to destroy Church unity. Reformists view the Church as for the people, and argue that its clergy should be accessible in order to fulfil a meaningful social role. The latter regard the primary task of the Church as the recovery of tradition, including the restoration of a privileged position in a secular state. Patriarch Aleksii is forced to negotiate between the two conflicting currents in Church life, and concessions to one inevitably lead to criticism from the other.

The schism between reformist and traditional elements was highlighted in mid-1998 when books by Orthodox theologians, among them Aleksandr Men', were burned under order of the local hierarch in a schoolyard in Ekaterinburg. The books were denounced as 'heretical'. One commentator concluded: 'Now the appalling philosophy of schism within Orthodoxy is upon us and is taking hold in parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church.... Active efforts are underway to divide members of the Orthodox community into "clean" and "unclean".'¹³²

The assumption that there could be a singular understanding of Russian Orthodoxy is naïve. Gary Bouma, a sociologist of religion, notes in his article on managing religious diversity that:

Diversity is now so pervasive that religious groups are internally diverse and many do not provide embracing, overarching, totalising meaning for their adherents. Their meanings have become one set among others, which is made even more complex by the rise of profound levels of internal diversity within religious groups.¹³³

This religious diversity is characteristic of all modern societies. It is therefore not surprising that different visions of Orthodox life have emerged in postcommunist Russia, especially as there was limited opportunity to conduct dialogue about religious issues in the USSR. The growing strength of these unofficial currents in Orthodox life is

¹³² Maksim Shevchenko, "V Ekaterinburge szhigaiut knigi russkikh bogoslovov", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 29 May 1998, 1.

¹³³ Gary D. Bouma, "From Hegemony to Pluralism: Managing Religious Diversity in Modernity and Post-Modernity" in *Managing Religious Diversity*, ed. Gary D. Bouma, Surrey Hills: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1999, 21.

testimony to the presence of a plurality of opinions within the Church itself. The informal elements in Church life are similar to the social movements in the Soviet era in that they oppose the *status quo*, and agitate for the reform of the dominant structures in Church life. There remains a clear division between prelates and reformist clergy. Though there is nothing as coherent as a grass-roots reform movement, criticism of the Patriarchate from a variety of sources, and support for these reformists from outside the Church, comprise disconnected dissent from the Patriarchate's line.

By outlining the challenges confronting the Church in the postcommunist period, this chapter has analysed changes in religious life and assessed the response of different elements in the Church. It has examined the division within the Church between traditionalists and reformists, and established that Orthodoxy has contributed to the development of civil society through informal channels. Nonconformist priests and lay activists sympathetic with the reformist agenda espouse values and goals conducive to democracy. They advocate a free-minded, ecumenically open and intellectual Orthodoxy which is not constrained by tradition and conservatism. The activities of nonconformist clergy bring the Church closer to the cause of democratisation. It is pertinent to ask if, since the informal Church makes a significant contribution, the formal Church also contributes, or if it obstructs the development of civil society. Part III of this dissertation assesses the Moscow Patriarchate's influence on religious pluralism and civil society in post-Soviet Russia.

PART III

Chapter 4

The Symphonic Nonpareil:

The Moscow Patriarchate and the State

The Russian Orthodox Church is a powerful symbol of Russian statehood, tradition and culture. Orthodoxy was frequently invoked in discussions of post-Soviet revival and regeneration in the political as well as the social and cultural arenas. For these reasons, many politicians, from all positions on the political spectrum, regard the Moscow Patriarchate as a powerful institutional ally. Part II of this dissertation evaluated the unofficial influence of Orthodoxy on the emergence and development of civil society. It established that through the informal channels of dissent (in the Soviet era) and reform movements and lay activism (in the post-Soviet era) Orthodoxy has had a significant influence on the advancement of civil society and thus the democratic project. Part III turns to the official influence of Orthodoxy on civil society in postcommunist Russia.

Many of the Church's activities leave the sphere of civil society, that of social self-organisation, and enter into the political sphere. This breaches the separation of church and state enshrined in the 1993 Russian Constitution. The Moscow Patriarchate promotes this enhanced political role and seeks to cooperate with the state on a wide range of social, cultural, economic and even defence issues. In this respect, it appears that the Church leadership desires a return to the Byzantine symphonic ideal, under which is envisaged the dual rule of the temporal and the ecclesiastical authorities. Symphonia (in Russian *simfoniia* or *konkordantsiia*) places the church on an equal footing with the state. The extent to which the Moscow Patriarchate promotes the symphonic nonpareil is the key concern of this chapter. The doctrine is incompatible with civil society and religious pluralism.

Despite Church dignitaries' claims that the status of a state church is undesirable and would be detrimental to the Church as a whole, the close links between Church and state have allowed the Orthodox Church considerable privileges which are not extended

to other denominations. The legislation 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations', the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, cooperation with the military, financial privileges accorded by the state, and Church-state collaboration under the Putin administration demonstrate that the Church enjoys a favoured status with the political leadership.

That the links between the Moscow Patriarchate and the state are unconstitutional is not a concern of this chapter. More relevant to this dissertation are the privileges accorded to the Russian Orthodox Church above other denominations in the pluralist religious sphere and the role of the government in granting these. This confirms that a civil society, in which religion operates in a separate sphere from the state, is not institutionalised. Further, state support for the Patriarchate disadvantages non-Orthodox faiths.

Symphonia

The symphonic ideal emerged in the Byzantine Empire. According to John Meyendorff, an eminent Orthodox theologian, 'The great dream of Byzantine civilization was a universal Christian society administered by the emperor and spiritually guided by the Church'.¹ The definitive description of symphonia is accredited to Emperor Justinian I (527–565 AD), who wrote in his treatise on Byzantine civil law:

There are two greatest gifts which God, in his love for man, has granted from on high: the priesthood and the imperial dignity. The first serves divine things, the second directs and administers human affairs; both, however, proceed from the same origin and adorn the life of mankind. Hence, nothing should be such a source of care to the emperors as the dignity of the priests, since it is for the [imperial] welfare that they constantly implore God. For if the priesthood is in every way free from blame and possesses access to God, and if the emperors administer equitably and judiciously the state entrusted to their care, general harmony will result, and whatever is beneficial will be bestowed upon the human race.²

¹ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, New York: Fordham University Press, 1979, 213.

² Cited in Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, 213.

The ecclesiastical and temporal leaders thus ruled in symphony. Although each had his own autonomous sphere, there was no strict line of separation between the two. The priesthood had responsibility for the spiritual guidance of secular affairs and the sanctification of the civil authority, while the imperial power protected church traditions, doctrine and faith, and had the power to proclaim a doctrine heretical to protect the faith from dissonance. The church and the state were thus inextricably linked, such that 'Orthodoxy was the ideological fabric of *imperium* [imperial power], and so there could really be no separation drawn between state policies and church policies'.³ Christian principles therefore shaped state policies to the same extent that they guided the church.

The symphonic nonpareil patterned the Russian Church's historical and cultural development, a corollary of the Byzantine cultural influence. The political ideal of *symphonia* was introduced to the Rus' lands through links with the Byzantine Empire, particularly through the prevalence of Greek Orthodox prelates. Though Eastern Orthodoxy has enjoyed state support since its introduction to Kievan Rus' in 988, church-state relations have never strictly adhered to the symphonic nonpareil. In Kievan Rus', for instance, political power was not vested in a single authority. Because the civil authority was not a distinct entity, it is impossible to speak of the dual rule of ecclesiastical and temporal leaderships. There have also been tensions between the Tsar and Church dignitaries throughout Russia's history, most notably when Ivan the Terrible had Metropolitan Fillip strangled for opposition to his *oprichnina*, the system of repression designed to exterminate Ivan's enemies, and for denouncing his barbarous reign. In this instance, when civil authority is clearly greater than religious, it seems more apt to describe church-state relations as 'caesaropapist'. Caesaropapism, a term popularised by the historian Arnold Toynbee, refers to the joining together of things which should be split asunder: unto Caesar and unto God.⁴ Anatoli Krasikov described Ivan the Terrible's act as 'the most odious manifestation of Russian caesaropapism

³ William-Kenneth Medlin, *Moscow and East Rome: A Political Study of the Relations of Church and State in Muscovite Russia*, Westport (CO): Hyperion Press, Inc., 1952, 22.

⁴ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. IV, London: Oxford University Press, 1940, 347-48.

before Peter the Great'.⁵ However, as Nicolai Petro has pointed out, Ivan IV made no moves toward secularisation akin to those made by England's Henry VIII at the same time.⁶ Though not emulating the doctrine of symphonia, there remained an inextricable link between the church and state. It is thus more apt to speak of the symphonic nonpareil rather than any concrete realisation of this doctrine.

Any semblance of symphonia ended with Peter the Great's reforms. He brought Church finances under state control, drastically reduced the number of clergy, and restricted the establishment of new parishes. The most obvious manifestation of the state's control over the Church was the abolition of the Patriarchate and the creation of a department of laypersons in its place (see Chapter 2). Petro argues that, even after some two hundred years of the Church's subjugation to the Imperial power, Orthodox prelates did not forget the symphonic nonpareil: 'the most dramatic evidence of the survival of the pre-Petrine ideal of symphonia came at the turn of the twentieth century, when Russian civil society actively helped to restore the autonomy of the Church'.⁷ Symphonia thus remained the ideal model of church-state relations for the Orthodox leadership. The communist regime explicitly rejected any semblance of symphonia. It has been demonstrated that although the separation of church and state was enshrined in successive Soviet constitutions, the regime regulated and controlled the Moscow Patriarchate and discriminated against religious communities and individual believers.

The extent to which the doctrine of symphonia guides the Patriarchate's understanding of the Church's post-Soviet social and political role is of crucial importance in this analysis of Orthodoxy's influence on civil society. Symphonia is not

⁵ Italics removed. Anatoly Andreevich Krasikov, "Church-State Relationships in Russia: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" in *The Law of Religious Identity: Models for Post-Communism*, ed. Shlomo Avineri and Andras Sajo, The Hague, London, Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1999, 157.

⁶ Nicolai N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1995, 65.

⁷ Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy*, 67. Petro also argued that the Bolsheviks persecuted the Orthodox Church because they realised that the Church leadership wanted to reinstate the symphonic ideal, and, as they did not want a body of independent moral criticism to oppose their policies, call them into account, or constrain the abuse of political power, they sought to eradicate the church. (p.72). It is doubtful that this was the case. Even at the turn of the twentieth century, the Church's power did not even approach that of its status in centuries past. It was not the symphonic ideal that the Bolsheviks feared.

possible in a modern democratic state for two principal reasons: it makes one confession the sole repository of faith and it elevates the temporal leader to the position of God's representative on earth. In the symphonic nonpareil, one church is not a part of civil society. It is inter-dependent with the secular authorities. It does not co-exist with other social organisations in the 'sphere of associations' or take its place among other religious bodies in the pluralist religious sphere. Instead, one church is situated in the political sphere, influencing state policies, while the state is guided by its custody of the church. The symphonic nonpareil is thus incompatible with civil society. This model of church-state relations obstructs the development of a pluralist religious sphere, and, by extension, the democratic project.

Church-State Relations in the West

The relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian state are best appreciated in the context of church-state relations in other countries. The following overview is limited to western models for reasons of germaneness (examples are drawn from Christian states) and brevity (there is insufficient space to discuss the non-western world). Church-state relations in the west are shaped by the Enlightenment approach to religion, which culminated in the separation of church and state as a result of two central precepts: state neutrality toward religious bodies and the privatisation of religion. The state regarded religious associations as no different from other forms of social self-organisation. Religious associations were limited to the sphere of civil society; they had no special claim to political influence or even a political voice. In the modern world, when religion is increasingly politicised, the influence of religion extends beyond the sphere of associations that constitutes civil society. Jose Casanova's phrase the 'deprivatisation of religion' sums up the modern condition, where religious interests are not limited to the private sphere, but instead enter the public arena.⁸

Orthodoxy as a pillar of Tsarist autocracy, coupled with militantly atheist Marxism-Leninism, led to these measures.

⁸ This is the central thesis of Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World*, Chicago, London: The University Of Chicago Press, 1994. He argues that 'religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity and as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them.' Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World*, 5.

Before the practicalities of the link between religion and politics can be discussed, it is useful to begin with formal models of church-state relations in the west. They generally fall into four categories. The first model is the full separation of church and state, exemplified by the USA. The US Constitution's First Amendment (1791) guarantees that the government is neutral toward religious associations and does not interfere in their activities.⁹ In other words, the state does not intrude into the religious sphere. The second model is that of a state church, as in the United Kingdom and Finland. In this case the state church (the Church of England and the Evangelical Lutheran Church respectively) co-exists with other churches, which enjoy the same rights to freedom of worship.¹⁰ The third model is exemplified by France, where church and state are separate and there is a strongly secularist government and education system.¹¹ The fourth model of church-state relations can be described as church-state accommodation. In Germany, for instance, churches have the status of legal public corporations.¹² A variation of this is the situation where the church is regarded as a private corporation. There are, of course, differences within each of these models: in Greece, for example, where the Greek Orthodox Church is the state religion, proselytism is outlawed by the constitution.¹³ Different church-state arrangements are enshrined in these countries' constitutions (except for the UK, which is ruled by common law), alongside guarantees of freedom of conscience for all denominations in these multi-confessional states.

The constitutional separation of church and state can be manipulated to restrict the activities of religious associations that the state deems undesirable. Nikolas K. Gvosdev evaluated the separation of church and state in constitutions throughout the

⁹ 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...'. Government of the United States, "The Constitution of the United States of America" in *The United States in the Twentieth Century: Key Documents*, ed. Richard Maidment and Michael Dawson, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1998, 170.

¹⁰ Government of Finland, "The Constitution of Finland" (Web site). Accessed 20 February 2002 at <http://www.om.fi/constitution/3340.htm>.

¹¹ French Government, *The Constitution of the Fifth Republic*, trans. Peter Campbell and Brian Chapman, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959.

¹² Federal Republic of Germany, "The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany" in *Democratic Tradition: Four German Constitutions*, ed. Elmar Hucko, Hamburg: Berg, 1987.

¹³ Government of Greece, "The Constitution of Greece" (Web site). Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed 24 September 2001 at <http://www.mfa.gr/syntagma/artcl25.html>.

world and concluded that, in western Europe as elsewhere, 'In many cases, what appear to be solid guarantees of religious freedom when seen from afar reveal, after careful examination, fissures and cracks through which this precious right can slip away'.¹⁴ Chapter 2 noted that constitutions are not dependable guides to political action. Although this observation was made in the context of the USSR's constitution, which guaranteed the separation of church and state despite the regime's intrusion into every aspect of religious life, it can be extended to the western models of church-state relations. The practicalities are not as straightforward as these models suggest. In some cases, the reality plainly contradicts the church-state relationship that exists *de jure*.

Religious denominations seek to influence state policies. Shlomo Avineri argues that, in this respect, religion is not limited to the private sphere: 'The reason for the existence of this public aspect of religion is simple enough: contrary to what the privatization construction of religion would like to see, religions are not only about personal, subjective devotion or salvation, but also about the public order'.¹⁵ This shift of religion from civil society to the political sphere is evident in the USA. Despite the formal separation of church and state, the national motto is 'In God we trust', and paid chaplains lead prayer in the Congress. Derek Davis contends: 'the American system must be understood as embracing three distinct, yet inter-related set of rules: *separation* of church and state, *integration* of religion and politics, and *accommodation* of civil religion'.¹⁶ There is integration because the state encourages religious voices in the political process, evident in the resurgence of Protestant fundamentalism in US politics, and accommodation because the state acknowledges the primacy of God, giving a sacral meaning to national life. Australia's constitution also prohibits the establishment of a state religion and the imposition of religious observance.¹⁷ This is contradicted in

¹⁴ Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "Constitutional Doublethink, Managed Pluralism and Freedom of Religion", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 29, no. 2 (2001), 87.

¹⁵ Shlomo Avineri, "Introduction: Religion and the Public Sphere" in *The Law of Religious Identity: Models for Post-Communism*, ed. Shlomo Avineri and Andras Sajó, The Hague, London, Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1999, ix.

¹⁶ Original italics. Derek H. Davis, "Editorial: Separation, Integration, and Accommodation: Religion and State in America in a Nutshell", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 43, no. 1 (2001), 5.

¹⁷ 'The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth' (Chapter 5).

practice; the Senate's president, upon taking his or her chair each day, asks for God's blessing of the parliament, then reads the Lord's Prayer. In these examples, the separation of church and state is merely institutional.

There are many examples of religion entering the political sphere and influencing state actions, just as there are many examples of the state entering the religious sphere and influencing churches' actions. Religion is not limited to the private sphere. One example from western Europe is *l'affaire du voile* (the affair of the veil) in France. In 1989 and 1990 the issue of state neutrality toward religion was brought to the fore of public and political debate when Islamic students at a state school in Paris were expelled for wearing a veil (the *hijab*) on the grounds that this violated the principle of the non-display of religious adherence.¹⁸ Other examples of the state's religious partiality are found in Sweden, where religious instruction is required according to Lutheran teachings, and in Germany, where church taxes are collected along with state taxes.¹⁹ These examples demonstrate that the separation of church and state in the west is merely formal.

Given the presence and pertinence of religion in the political sphere, the role of churches in postcommunist countries is especially salient. Though no country of the former Soviet bloc has established a state church, religion has had a significant influence upon politics in the region. Ruti Teitel has identified this trend as the 'partial establishments of religion', observing that many states have policies that distinguish between churches on the basis of whether they are historical or traditional.²⁰ This runs

Commonwealth of Australia, *The Constitution*, Canberra: Office of Legislative Drafting, Attorney General's Department, 1999, 53.

¹⁸ See Michel Troper, "The Problem of the Islamic Veil and the Principle of School Neutrality in France" in *The Law of Religious Identity: Models for Post-Communism*, ed. Shlomo Avineri and Andras Sajo, The Hague, London, Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1999, 9.

¹⁹ For further discussion of this point see Gyorgy Bence, "The limits of religious neutrality" in *The Law of Religious Identity: Models for Post-Communism*, ed. Shlomo Avineri and Andras Sajo, The Hague, London, Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1999.

²⁰ Ruti Teitel, "Partial establishments of religion in post-communist transition" in *The Law of Religious Identity: Models for Post-Communism*, ed. Shlomo Avineri and Andras Sajo, The Hague, London, Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1999, 104. The Bulgarian Constitution states: 'Eastern Orthodox Christianity shall be considered the traditional religion', but does not establish the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as a state religion. 'Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria' in Government of Bulgaria, "Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria" in *The Rebirth of Democracy: 12 Constitutions of*

counter to the neutrality that is enshrined in their constitutions. Apart from in the Russian Federation, to which we will soon turn, the influence of the traditional church on politics is most evident in Poland. The Catholic Church, which was regarded by Polish intellectuals as a progressive force in the communist period,²¹ has emerged as the preeminent conservative force in Polish politics.²² Debate about the Catholic Church's influence, particularly on church-state relations and abortion legislation, stalled the implementation of a new constitution. In 1995, a conference of Catholic bishops demanded that the constitution define the state as 'neither secular, nor neutral' on religious issues such as abortion, divorce laws and religious instruction in schools.²³

Shlomo Avineri, a political scientist, argues that to enforce a definitive line between the church and the state is to 'maintain that any construction of religion which impinges on the public realm is illegitimate and as such unacceptable to a liberal order', which 'raises serious questions regarding tolerance and pluralism'.²⁴ Avineri has raised an extraneous point: issues like abortion, for example, have at their root religious arguments. It is thus necessary to move beyond debate about whether the intrusion of religion into the public sphere is legitimate or not, and consider the practical implications of this inevitable, and, in some cases, pervasive influence.

The extent of the Moscow Patriarchate's presence in the political sphere is central to understanding Orthodoxy's official influence on civil society. The Russian Constitution affirms the separation of church and state:

Central and Eastern Europe, ed. The International Institute for Democracy, Netherlands: Council of Europe Publishing, 1996, 17.

²¹ See the comments of Antoni Slonimski cited in Adam Michnik, "The Church and the Left: A Dialogue" in *Communism and Eastern Europe*, ed. Frantisek Silnitsky, Larisa Silnitsky, and Karl Reyman, New York: Karz Publishers, 1979, 82.

²² For more on the Catholic Church's 'theocratic stridency' (p.295) and its influence on debate about abortion and media laws and the constitution, see Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia*, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1998, 293-307. See also Hockenos, who seeks to prove that 'At first cautiously, and then with striking audacity, the arch-conservative Church hierarchy has battled to impose its vision of a fundamentalist Catholic state upon Poland'. Paul Hockenos, *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, New York, London: Routledge, 1993, 239.

²³ From 'Niemoralna konstytucja', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 19 June 1995, cited in Andrew A. Michta, "Democratic Consolidation in Poland After 1989" in *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 87.

1. The Russian Federation is a secular state. No religion may be established as the state religion or a compulsory religion.
2. Religious associations are separated from the state and are equal before the law. (Art. 4.1).²⁵

It has been established that, first, constitutions are not dependable guides to political action, and, second, that, even where there is the formal separation of church and state, religion often intrudes into political life. This section has sought to demonstrate that any endeavour to assess the relation of religion and politics in a particular polity on the basis only of its constitution is excessively reductionist. The political dimension of religion also determines its influence on the emergence and development of civil society. This chapter will now turn to the Patriarchate's understanding of its role in post-Soviet Russia.

The Moscow Patriarchate's Conception of Church-State Relations

A document on the Patriarchate's conception of the Orthodox Church's social and political role and the Church's challenges at the turn of the millenium was adopted at the Jubilee Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, held at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in mid-August 2000.²⁶ The document, *Osnovy sotsial'noi kontseptsii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvy* (*Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*), expounds the official position of the Patriarchate on the Church's relations with the state and with secular society. It was developed by a Synodal working group, with Metropolitan Kirill at its head, and is a guide for synodal institutions, dioceses, monasteries, parishes, clergy and laity in their relations with the government, various secular associations and with the secular media. It is also a key text in the curricula of theological academies. Of particular interest is section III: *Tserkov' i gosudarstvo* (*Church and State*). It provides a thorough description of the Patriarchate's stance on contemporary church-state relations. As a fundamental Church document, the *Bases of*

²⁴ Avineri, "Introduction: Religion and the Public Sphere", ix.

²⁵ B. El'tsin, *Konstitutsiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (12.12.93), Moscow: Prospekt, 1999, 7.

²⁶ The full text of the document is posted on the Moscow Patriarchate's official web site: Bishops' Council, "Bases Of The Social Concept Of The Russian Orthodox Church (15 August 2000)" (Web site). Accessed 13 February 2001 at <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/sd00e.htm>.

the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church provides the foundation of the following analysis of the Patriarchate's understanding of church-state relations.

The Patriarchate's perception of the jurisdictions of church and state is explained thus:

In church-state relations, the difference in their natures should be taken into account. The Church has been founded by God Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, while the God-instituted nature of state power is revealed in historical process only indirectly. The goal of the Church is the eternal salvation of people, while the goal of state is their well-being on earth.²⁷

The separation of the responsibilities of the two entities is a clear departure from the symphonic nonpareil described by Emperor Justinian. In symphonia, a foremost task of the secular authorities is to protect the church and to ensure that people live according to church doctrines. In the excerpt above, temporal authorities are not God's representatives on earth and do not have as their goal the eternal salvation of citizens. The political leadership is not the protector of Church traditions, canons and practice, but has as its foremost task the protection of its citizens' wellbeing.

Though *Bases Of The Social Concept Of The Russian Orthodox Church* recognises the symphonic tradition in the Church's history, it acknowledges that the symphonic ideal is incompatible with the modern secular state:

The Orthodox tradition has developed an explicit symphonic ideal of church-state relations. Since church-state relations are two-way traffic, the above-mentioned ideal could emerge in history only in a state that recognises the Orthodox Church as the greatest people's shrine, in other words, only in an Orthodox state.²⁸

It is clear that the Church leadership wishes to remain formally separate from the state. Orthodox dignitaries repeatedly specify that they do not want Russian Orthodoxy to become the state religion. In 2000, Metropolitan Kirill categorically rejected various historical models of relations between the Church and the state:

We are not striving to resurrect the role which the Orthodox church exercised in the Russian empire. Well before the 1917 Revolution, the church's best representatives were aware of

²⁷ Bishops' Council, "Bases Of The Social Concept Of The Russian Orthodox Church (15 August 2000)" (Web site).

²⁸ Bishops' Council, "Bases Of The Social Concept Of The Russian Orthodox Church (15 August 2000)" (Web site).

how the church's dependence upon the state, the subjugation of her life to the interests of the state, is so detrimental to the church's own mission. In this sense, the separation of church and state – regardless of which political system is in effect – is unquestionably favourable to the church, and we will always insist on this fundamental principle....²⁹

Church dignitaries frequently cite the Church's subjugation to the state in the Imperial period as evidence that the position of a state church does not guarantee power, influence, or even a degree of autonomy. In the Soviet period, when the separation of church and state was enshrined in the constitution, the regime relentlessly intruded into religious life. The Orthodox Church's experiences in these different epochs were such that in the post-Soviet period the Patriarchate defends the Church's separation from the state. It could also be argued that the Church's experience of a radical shift from a position of privilege in Imperial Russia to the status of a persecuted church in the Soviet Union shapes its attitude toward church-state relations. One of the reasons why the Bolsheviks targeted the Church was its position as a pillar of the Tsarist autocracy. Alexis de Tocqueville argued that the separation of church and state is essential for the health of both religion and society.³⁰ While faith is enduring, government is ephemeral. A good illustration of the danger of a church aligning itself with temporal forces was demonstrated when, in mid-1990, Patriarch Aleksii stated in an interview with *Pravda* that he prayed that catastrophe would not befall the CPSU.³¹

Metropolitan Kirill asserted that the separation of church and state should not prevent the Church from influencing Russian social and political life:

So the Russian Orthodox Church stands at the same time for separation of church and state, but against the separation of church from life or from society. On the political plane this entails the necessity of dialogue and cooperation between the church and the powers that be, in the interests of the people.³²

²⁹ Kyrill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Third Millennium", *Ecumenical Review*, vol. 52, no. 3 (2000), 306.

³⁰ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence, London: Fontana Press, 1994.

³¹ Viktor Gerasimov, "Sokhranite sviashchennyi dar zhizni", *Pravda*, 17 July 1990, 4.

³² Kyrill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Third Millennium", 307.

This view is also reflected in the *Bases of the Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church*, which states that although Russian Orthodoxy should not be a state church, it should play a prominent social and political role. Religion should therefore not be limited to civil society but rather enter the political sphere:

The principle of the secular state cannot be understood as implying that religion should be radically forced out of all the spheres of the people's life, that religious associations should be debarred from decision-making on socially significant problems and deprived of the right to evaluate the actions of the authorities. This principle presupposes only a certain division of domains between church and state and their non-interference into each other's affairs.³³

The foregoing discussion of the presence of religion in the political sphere established that this was inevitable and certainly not confined to the traditional Church in postcommunist Russia. However, the Church's perception of the extensive issues on which the church and the state should cooperate is made explicit in the *Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* in a long list:

The areas of church-state co-operation in the present historical period are as follows:

- a) peacemaking on international, inter-ethnic and civic levels and promoting mutual understanding and co-operation among people, nations and states;
- b) concern for the preservation of morality in society;
- c) spiritual, cultural, moral and patriotic education and formation;
- d) charity and the development of joint social programs;
- e) preservation, restoration and development of the historical and cultural heritage, including concern for the preservation of historical and cultural monuments;
- f) dialogue with governmental bodies of all branches and levels on issues important for the Church and society, including the development of appropriate laws, by-laws, instructions and decisions;
- g) care of the military and law-enforcement workers and their spiritual and moral education;
- h) efforts to prevent crime and care of prisoners;
- i) science and research;
- j) healthcare;
- k) culture and arts;
- l) work of ecclesiastical and secular mass media;
- m) preservation of the environment;

- n) economic activity for the benefit of the Church, state and society;
- o) support for the institution of family, for motherhood and childhood;
- p) opposition to the work of pseudo-religious structures presenting a threat to the individual and society.³⁴

Many of these areas of cooperation are expected of churches in the modern world. Others are more surprising. Some clearly refer only to the role of the Orthodox Church, and do not extend to other confessions. Point c), for example, church-state cooperation on spiritual, cultural and patriotic education and formation, clearly refers to the Orthodox Church and not to other faiths. As Orthodoxy has influenced national culture more than any other denomination, and since it does not want other faiths to influence education curricula, this point advocates cooperation with the state not by any denomination, but specifically by the Orthodox Church. The same observation can be made about g) – work in the military and law enforcement agencies (see below). Point f), dialogue with the state on 'issues important for church and society' asserts that the Church should influence legislation on a wide range of issues. In the case of the 1997 religious law, the Church not only conducted dialogue with the state, but in effect led the campaign for, directed the drafting, and promoted the passage of this legislation (see below). This was consistent with the Patriarchate's claim that it had a right to influence legislation because of its work against 'pseudo-religious structures', articulated in p). In some instances, such as i) science and research and l) secular mass media, it is not clear how the Church can make a legitimate claim to cooperation in these areas.

The Bishops' Council's statement on the areas of church-state cooperation includes a number of areas that transgress the separation of church and state. It sets out a role for the Orthodox Church in the political processes of the country. Many of these areas are usually confined to the purview of the state. In addition, following this exhaustive list, the document states 'Church-state co-operation is also possible in some other areas if it contributes to the fulfillment of the tasks enumerated above'. The areas

³³ Bishops' Council, "Bases Of The Social Concept Of The Russian Orthodox Church (15 August 2000)" (Web site).

³⁴ Bishops' Council, "Bases Of The Social Concept Of The Russian Orthodox Church (15 August 2000)" (Web site).

deemed unfit for church-state cooperation are few: political struggles, war, and informing on believers to intelligence agencies.³⁵ This addendum reflects the Church's experience in the Soviet period.

This analysis of the Moscow Patriarchate's conception of church-state relations does not suggest that the Church leadership seeks to institute a symphonic model which weds the church with the state in governing the country. Nonetheless, the Patriarchate desires a significant influence on the running of the country and seeks to cooperate with the state on a remarkably wide range of areas. It does not seek to extend this church-state cooperation to other denominations. This is clear from those areas identified which elsewhere Church dignitaries have stated are not legitimate activities for non-Orthodox confessions.³⁶ The Patriarchate's conception of church-state relations is not one of separation, but instead the bridging of the two entities. The claim to extensive areas of cooperation, coupled with the political leadership's complicity with this privileged status, allows the Orthodox Church a prominent political role, as envisaged in the symphonic ideal. The following examples illustrate how the Church approaches a symphonic relationship with the temporal leadership.

'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations'³⁷

The Moscow Patriarchate led the campaign for restrictive religious legislation. Debate about the provisions of the new law demonstrated the irreconcilable differences between, on the one hand, conservatives and nationalists who sought legislative guarantees for the Russian Church's protection, and, on the other, liberals and democrats who sought guarantees of freedom of conscience for all confessions. The debate also demonstrated the influence of the Moscow Patriarchate in national political life.

³⁵ Bishops' Council, "Bases Of The Social Concept Of The Russian Orthodox Church (15 August 2000)" (Web site).

³⁶ A representative of the Moscow Patriarchate emphasised that, apart from Russian Orthodoxy, only Islam should be tolerated among soldiers, all other religions and denominations should not be permitted to preach in the military. Igor' Korotchenko, "Armiia i pravoslavie: vzaimnye simpatii nalitso", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 18 November 1995, 8.

³⁷ Material for this section has been adapted from Zoe Knox, "Russia's Religion Law and Threats to Freedom of Conscience", *Russian and Euro-Asian Bulletin*, vol. 9, no. 6 (2000), 1-15.

In early 1995 the Yeltsin administration, following the recommendations of Anatoli Krasikov, established the Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations as a consultative body to mediate between religious associations and the government and to discuss drafts of religious legislation. Krasikov subsequently became its secretary.³⁸ The regulations governing the Council reflected his concern that the interests of all denominations be represented; members were representatives of Russia's major confessions and all resolutions had to be unanimous.³⁹ However, conservatives and nationalists gained an increased presence in the debate and, according to Krasikov, the Council was 'hijacked' by conservative forces that deemed the preservation of Orthodoxy more important than freedom of conscience. The Council was reorganised so that it no longer nominated its own president, and more than a dozen representatives of the state were appointed to its board and enjoyed the same rights as the religious representatives. Its decisions only had the strength of recommendations. The Council, the most important body charged with ensuring that the government took into account the wishes of the largest religious communities, was dominated by members of the Yeltsin administration. Krasikov resigned in response to the state's domination of the body at the expense of the rights of minority faiths.⁴⁰ The changed constitution of the Council paved the way for collaboration between the Orthodox Church and conservative and nationalist politicians, the main proponents of new legislation.

One argument in support of restrictive religious legislation was that the influx of foreign missionaries and the rise of numerous Russian faiths would lead to disorder and lawlessness in the religious sphere, therefore new legislation was essential to monitor and to regulate religious life. The activities of foreign 'cults', such as Scientology and

³⁸ See B. El'tsin, "Polozhenie: O Sovete po vzaimodeistviu s religioznymi ob'edineniiami pri Prezidente Rossiiskoi Federatsii", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 30 August 1995, 6 and Anonymous, "U kazhdogo svoia vera. No edina Rossiia", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 30 August 1995, 2.

³⁹ Members of the Council were representatives of the Old Believers, Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism and Orthodoxy.

⁴⁰ Krasikov explained his visions for the Council: 'I had hoped that such a council would achieve three goals: first, that religious figures would be granted the right and opportunity to formulate their positions free from intimidation from the government; second, that religious leaders, by meeting together, would learn tolerance, with the stronger forbearing from coercing the weaker; and third, that on the eve of the parliamentary debates about the new law, the government would listen directly to the viewpoints of those affected by the law.' Anatoly Krasikov, "From the Annals of Spiritual Freedom: Church-State Relations in Russia", *East European Constitutional Review*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1998), 1.

Aum Shinrikyo, and native 'cults', such as the Mother of God Centre and the Vissarion Sect (see Chapter 3), were cited as evidence of the damage caused by the extensive freedoms guaranteed by the existing legislation. The successes of these so-called 'totalitarian' and 'destructive' cults and sects⁴¹ were regarded as a threat to traditional faiths, in particular the Russian Orthodox Church. Patriarch Aleksii wrote in an appeal to Yeltsin that a restrictive religious law:

takes serious precautions for protecting the individual from the destructive, pseudoreligious and pseudomissionary activity that has brought obvious harm to the spiritual and physical health of people, to the national integrity of our people, and to stability and civic peace in Russia.⁴²

The argument that new legislation was essential to monitor and to regulate religious life was strengthened by appeals to Russian tradition. Its proponents argued that as Russia had no tradition of pluralism, it was particularly vulnerable in the new conditions, and so the country required a unique model of church-state relations. This position was exemplified when Patriarch Aleksii spoke against the imposition of 'North American standards' in Church-state relations: 'we want to preserve our own personality and countenance, the spiritual and cultural heritage which was laid down over the course of the thousand-year history of Russia'.⁴³ The Church's supporters argued that national traditions should influence legislation, rather than artificial constructions imposed by the west.

A second argument in support of restrictive religious legislation was that the Orthodox Church was at a significant disadvantage as foreign missionaries with greater financial resources, organisational experience, and savvy evangelistic methods were proselytising Russians before the Church had a chance to 'reclaim' Russian souls: it was essential to provide citizens with a chance to embrace Orthodoxy after seventy years of

⁴¹ The Russian word '*sekta*' has a more negative connotation than the English 'sect'. *Sekta* implies schism and the corruption of a faith.

⁴² Patriarch Aleksii II, "Untitled" (Web site). Accessed 23 March 1997 at http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/pa2_gr_ru.htm.

⁴³ Anonymous, "Patriarch Rejects North American Standards of Freedom of Conscience (27 August 1997)", [Web site]. Pravoslavie v Rossii. Accessed 30 August 2000 at <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/>.

its inaccessibility, without being crowded, confused or conned by recent arrivals from the west (see Chapter 6 for further discussion on the criticisms of western missionaries).

A third argument for restrictive legislation gained strength as western opposition to the legislation became greater. Pope John Paul II, the United States Congress, the European Union, and countless international human rights and religious liberty organisations formally protested against restrictive legislation.⁴⁴ In response, it was argued that it was Russia's sovereign right to formulate independent domestic policy free from the west's pressure and interference. In an article fierce in its defence of the Orthodox Church and in support of restrictive legislation, Andranik Migranyan and Aleksandr Tsipko, well known political analysts, wrote that the debate over new religious legislation:

is not about human rights or the principles of the Russian Federation's Constitution, but about the right of the new Russia to pursue an independent foreign and domestic policy, its right to build a new, noncommunist life in accordance with its national interests and historical traditions....⁴⁵

For conservatives and nationalists, this law also represented a struggle for sovereignty and against the imposition of western models of church-state relations. The defence of the symphonic nonpareil was thus linked to the defence of national traditions.

The Moscow Patriarchate led the campaign for restrictive religious legislation. Religious liberty groups, human rights organisations, Orthodox lay activists and reformist priests led the campaign against its implementation (see Chapter 3). The Russian division of the International Association of Religious Freedom sent an appeal to Yeltsin which presented four arguments in opposition to restrictive legislation.⁴⁶ Its first objection was that the law was ambiguous and that local bureaucrats could interpret and

⁴⁴ Maksim Shevchenko and Sergei Startsev, "Novyi zakon 'O svobode sovesti i veroispovedanii' stanovitsia predmetom politicheskogo torga: Vatikan i kongress SShA, khotia i po raznym prichinam, predosteregaiut Borisa El'tsina ot ego podpisaniia", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 19 July 1997, 1, Derek H. Davis, "Editorial: Russia's New Law on Religion: Progress or Regress?", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 39, no. 4 (1997), 647-48.

⁴⁵ Andranak Migranian and Aleksandr Tsipko, "Slabaia vlast', slabaia tserkov' i slaboe obshchestvo mogut byt' sil'nymi tol'ko vmeste", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 20 August 1997, 2.

apply it arbitrarily. The provision that a religious organisation must prove that it has been registered for fifteen years means that it is reliant on local authorities verifying this information, and so, the Appeal states, the law 'creates a vicious circle which only the local authorities, who themselves are hostile toward religious freedom, can break...'.⁴⁷ A second criticism was that the 1997 law divides Russians on the basis of religious affiliation at a time when solidarity is essential to overcome the post-Soviet period's multifarious challenges. It creates tensions between believers who are able to worship and evangelise unimpeded, and minorities who are subjected to greater scrutiny and obstructions.⁴⁸

The distinction between religious groups and religious organisations and the differences in their legal rights is the linchpin of a third argument; that the 1997 law is unconstitutional, contradicts existing legislation, and violates international human rights agreements.⁴⁹ The parameters of constitutional law and international law are outside the ambit of this dissertation, though it should be noted that the Constitution contains provisions that guarantee equality of all persons and protects against discrimination on

⁴⁶ Hereafter also referred to as the 'Appeal'. Rossiiskoe otделение Mezhdunarodnoi assotsiatsii religioznoi svobody, "Obrashchenie k Prezidentu Rossiiskoi Federatsii B. N. El'tsinu", *Russkaia mysl'*, 10-16 July 1997, 1, 5.

⁴⁷ Rossiiskoe otделение Mezhdunarodnoi assotsiatsii religioznoi svobody, "Obrashchenie k Prezidentu Rossiiskoi Federatsii B. N. El'tsinu", 1, 5.

⁴⁸ See the comments of an Orthodox priest: Veniamin Novik, *Pravoslavie, Khristianstvo, Demokratiia*, St Petersburg: Aleteia, 1999, 361.

⁴⁹ Russia is a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the 1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). Like the Constitution, the ICCPR and the ECHR prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious belief. See Article 14 of the ECHR and Article 26 of the ICCPR; 'Appendix A. The 1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms' in Mark Janis, Richard Kay, and Anthony Bradley, eds., *European Human Rights Law: Texts and Materials*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995 and 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights' in Frank Newman and David Weissbrodt, eds., *Selected International Human Rights Instruments*, Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing Co., 1990. T. Jeremy Gunn examined their provisions and concluded that the 1997 law violates the fundamental rights of freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association enshrined in their provisions. T. Jeremy Gunn, "The Law of the Russian Federation on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations from a Human Rights Perspective" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999. The ICCPR and the ECHR also contain provisions that guarantee freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this is again violated by the distinction between the rights of groups and organisations. Both international treaties contain provisions for freedom of association; yet again restrictions on the rights of religious groups to establish and maintain buildings and to rent places of worship, for example, prevent this freedom. The 1997 law also distinguishes between foreigners and Russian citizens, the former unable to create religious organisations.

the grounds of religious belief.⁵⁰ In contrast, the distinction between organisations and groups discriminates between associations that were registered before 1982 and those registered after 1982.

The Appeal also objected to the role of communist and nationalist politicians in drafting and promoting the legislation.⁵¹ The 1997 law was condemned as a tool of wider political ambitions. Freedom of conscience provided a rallying point for conservative forces eager to bolster support by demonising foreign ideologies. The purported threat to Orthodoxy provided a mobilising cause for these forces. The Duma Committee on Relations with Public Associations and Religious Organisations, headed by Viktor Zorkaltsev, a communist deputy and an Orthodox believer, developed the law. It was claimed that the draft was introduced to the Duma without being shown to representatives of Russia's largest religious bodies.⁵²

In addition to the Appeal's arguments against the legislation, elsewhere it was claimed that it was inappropriate to assign Orthodoxy a privileged role in a secular state, especially since so few Russians are active Orthodox believers. The aforementioned article by Tsipko and Migranyan prompted a rejoinder which concluded:

In this case, "traditional believers" very soon will be transformed into a kind of folkloric reserve which will be displayed to tourists along with the Saint Sergius-Holy Trinity Lavra and the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. If officials of the government apparatus continue

⁵⁰ Chiefly Article 19: '1. All are equal before the law and before the courts. 2. The state guarantees equality of human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, property and position, place of residence, attitude towards religion, convictions, membership of public association and also other circumstances. Any forms of restriction of citizens' rights on grounds of social, racial, national, linguistic or religious affiliation are prohibited' and Article 28: 'Each person is guaranteed freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including the right to profess any religion individually or together with others or not to profess any, and freely to choose, hold and disseminate religious and other convictions and to act in accordance with them. El'tsin, *Konstitutsiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (12.12.93), 10.

⁵¹ At the September 1997 International Conference on 'Religion and Human Rights' held in Moscow and dedicated to Aleksandr Men', a number of participants, renowned for their work defending religious liberty, pointed to the influence of communists. Anonymous, "Two Major Conferences Focus on Religion Law (12 September 1997)" (Web site). Accessed 4 December 1998 at <http://www.ff.org/heritage/insiderussia/updates/update091297.htm>.

⁵² Krasikov, "Church-State Relationships in Russia: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow", 174, Krasikov, "From the Annals of Spiritual Freedom: Church-State Relations in Russia", 77.

the line of creating a general state ideology within the limits of traditional religious confessions, then their own 1991 awaits them.⁵³

The critic continued that on an average day only a handful of people are in Orthodox churches, and that 'today's Orthodoxy looks pitiful: Russia cannot expect anything worthwhile from it; it has learned nothing and is at the same level as it was in the days of Grishka Rasputin'.⁵⁴ Opponents argued that Orthodoxy as a national ideology is weak, lacks authority, and is compromised by its leadership's capitulation to the Soviet regime and its reluctance to adapt to postcommunist conditions.⁵⁵

There was extensive debate about religious legislation and the Patriarchate's role in post-Soviet Russia from 1993, when the Moscow Patriarchate began the campaign. The Federal Assembly's upper and lower houses, the Federation Council and the Duma, passed a draft law in June and July 1997 respectively.⁵⁶ There was great pressure on Yeltsin to veto the legislation. Representatives of Russia's largest faiths (excluding the Orthodox Church) and the international community formally protested against the law. Yeltsin rejected the law on the grounds that it was unconstitutional and contravened Russia's international human rights agreements.⁵⁷ Yeltsin threatened to veto the draft if the Federal Assembly approved it. It seemed likely that the Federal Assembly and the Duma would override the veto.⁵⁸ The Federal Assembly and the Moscow Patriarchate pressured Yeltsin to pass the legislation; Duma president Gennadii Seleznev denounced Yeltsin for falling 'under the influence of the American capital and the Roman Vatican',⁵⁹ and Patriarch Aleksii sent an open letter to the Russian President urging him

⁵³ Mikhail Buianov, "Mnenie ateista", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 6 September 1997, 6.

⁵⁴ Buianov, "Mnenie ateista", 6. 'Grishka' is a derogatory form of the name Grigorii.

⁵⁵ Buianov, "Mnenie ateista", 6.

⁵⁶ Both houses overwhelmingly passed the draft legislation; the Duma by 300 votes to 8 and the Federation Council by 112 votes to 4. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Duma Passes Law Restricting Religious Groups (24 June 1997)" (Web site). Accessed 19 July 2000 at <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1997/06/240697.html>.

⁵⁷ See Yeltsin's letter to Duma president Gennadii Seleznev: B. El'tsin, *Gosudarstvennaia Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniia: Predsedateliu Gosudarstvennoi Dumy G. N. Seleznevu*, 21 July ed., Kremlin, Moscow: 1997.

⁵⁸ See Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. "Opposition Blasts Veto (3 July 1997)" (Web site). Accessed 16 August 2000 at <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1997/07/230797.html>. It requires the vote of two thirds of the Duma and the Federation Council to override a Presidential veto.

⁵⁹ Cited by Ivan Rodin, "Spiker otvetil Prezidentu", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 31 July 1997, 2.

to adopt the law.⁶⁰ Both houses passed a revised law in September 1997. Yeltsin, sensitive to pressure from a conservative parliament, signed the law on 26 September, even though there was little difference between the draft initially rejected and the amended version passed. This represented a victory for conservative forces and for the Moscow Patriarchate.

The significance of the 1997 law for this discussion of church-state relations is twofold. First, the preeminence of Moscow Patriarchate in the promotion, drafting and passage of restrictive religious legislation demonstrates its significant influence on policy-making, at least in religious life. Second, the acknowledgement that Orthodoxy has a special place in the country's spiritual and cultural development, as well as the advantages of the legislation for the Orthodox Church, demonstrate the Church's privileged position in relation to other denominations in this secular state. In short, the Orthodox Church's position does not uphold the separation of church and state. This legislation is an example of the strong link between religion and politics.

Cathedral of Christ the Saviour

Moscow's gargantuan Cathedral of Christ the Saviour (*Khram Khrista Spasitelia*)⁶¹ is visible testimony to the Orthodox Church's position at the forefront of national spiritual and political life. Tsar Aleksandr I decreed that a cathedral be built to commemorate the Russian forces' victory over Napoleon's invaders in 1812. The Cathedral, which was finally consecrated in 1883, was destroyed just 48 years later at Stalin's command. Plans for a Palace of Soviets, a museum and monument to Soviet might, were abandoned after steel from the Cathedral's scaffolding went toward the war effort and the site was found too marshy to support the construction. The remnants of the foundation were made into an open-air swimming pool, which opened in 1960, and closed in 1993. In 1994, as part of a project to restore buildings in Moscow's centre,

⁶⁰ The appeal was also signed by forty-nine other Russian Orthodox Church leaders. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. "Church Leaders Ask Yeltsin To Sign Religion Law (18 July 1997)" (Web site). Accessed 16 January 2002 at <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1997/07/180797.asp>.

⁶¹ Infrequently translated Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer or Church of Christ the Saviour. The Russian *khram* and *sobor* are often translated as cathedral even though the building may not be the main church of a diocese, containing a bishop's throne, as in the English usage.

mayor Iurii Luzhkov announced that the Cathedral would be reconstructed.⁶² It was consecrated in September 1997. The Cathedral is one of the most prominent features in the cityscape. It is laden with national symbolism, alluding to Russia's imperial strength, Orthodoxy's post-Soviet revival, the nation's new epoch, and Moscow's place in the country's spiritual life. It also demonstrates the favour accorded to the Moscow Patriarchate by the political actors involved in its erection.

The state's involvement in the project has been highly controversial, particularly Luzhkov's role. Luzhkov has enjoyed consistent popularity during his terms in office, despite questionable business practices and allegations of links to organised crime.⁶³ He is one of Russia's most powerful political figures, renowned for his ambition and his ability to complete huge projects: according to Donald N. Jensen, 'The mayor has a reputation of getting things done – even to the smallest detail – never mind exactly how'.⁶⁴ The Cathedral is Luzhkov's most conspicuous enterprise yet – it was perceived so much to be his pet project that it has been derisively referred to in a word play on the diminutive of Luzhkov as the 'Cathedral of Luzhok the Saviour'.⁶⁵ The project has secured him favour with Patriarch Aleksii, and with many (though by no means all) of the capital's, if not the country's, Orthodox believers. At the official opening in October 2000 Luzhkov stated that the Cathedral 'will help to regenerate Orthodoxy and spirituality in Russia'.⁶⁶ Of greater personal significance to Luzhkov, perhaps, was the fact that that Cathedral has demonstrated Luzhkov's own potency in the capital.

⁶² In 1993 Luzhkov established a Coordinating Council for the Reconstruction of the Capital's Centre. It listed one hundred buildings for restoration, most of them Orthodox churches. Approximately seventy billion rubles from the city's budget were allotted to the project. Irina Frolova, "Moscow churches will be restored", *Moscow News*, 24 January 1994, 12.

⁶³ Luzhkov was re-elected with 71 per cent of the vote in the December 1999 mayoral elections. Polls show that Luzhkov is a comparatively highly trusted political figure. See Mikhail Gorshkov, "42 protsenta oproshennykh zhitelei Rossii sami gotovy lech' na rel'sy", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 18 July 1998, 8.

⁶⁴ Donald N. Jensen, "The Boss: How Yuri Luzhkov Runs Moscow", *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2000), [Expanded Academic ASAP]. Luzhkov has overseen grand projects under a tight schedule, such as the Manezh shopping centre's construction and the Luzhniki sports arena's renovation. Natalya Davidova, "Expensive Anniversary Gifts", *Moscow News*, 4-10 September 1997, 1; 15.

⁶⁵ Mikhail Ivanov, "Faithful Reproduction", *Russian Life*, vol. 43, no. 4 (2000), 28.

⁶⁶ Cited in Elena Tsivileva, "Vosstanovlenie sviatyni zaversheno", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 6 October 2000, 2.

The cost of the reconstruction remains controversial: the total is estimated to be between US\$250 million and US\$500 million.⁶⁷ It was argued that this money was sorely needed elsewhere, such as in schools and hospitals, and not only in the capital, but throughout the entire country.⁶⁸ Because much of the money came from the federal budget, the cost of the project fueled resentment of Moscow by those outside the relatively affluent Moscow region.⁶⁹ The source of funding is a further point of contention. While official Patriarchate sources claim that 25 million Russians contributed money to the project, this cannot have amounted to a significant percentage of its cost.⁷⁰ A large amount of money came from the federal budget. Some of it derived from Luzhkov's business connections.⁷¹ Companies received tax exemptions for donations. As further incentive, donors had their names engraved on memorial plaques in the Cathedral.

Other financial scandals include the US\$11.8 million the government granted to the Moscow Patriarchate to buy a collection of icons for the Cathedral. This contribution was kept secret until it aroused the interest of a Duma deputy, who demanded the Patriarchate make public how this money was spent, and *Moscow News*, which investigated how the Patriarchate spent taxpayers' money.⁷² The scandal demonstrated the Patriarchate's lack of accountability, the clandestine nature of government

⁶⁷ Jensen, "The Boss: How Yuri Luzhkov Runs Moscow".

⁶⁸ Alfred Kokh, vice-chairman of the State Property Committee, asked: 'How can you explain the fact that our so-called civilised country has a capital that spends more on building one church than on schools and hospitals?'. Cited in Kristia Frilend, "Khram Khrista-Spasitelia stanovitsia simvolom rossiiskogo kapitalizma", *Finansovye izvestiia*, 29 August 1995, 8.

⁶⁹ Moreover, if the money had been set aside for the reconstruction of historical monuments, it could have been used to restore hundreds, possibly thousands, of decaying Orthodox churches that are needed by parishioners across the country, or to rescue historic stonework from deterioration. On neglected sculptures, see Tatyana Andriasova, "Neglected Legacy", *Moscow News*, 22-28 December 1999, 5.

⁷⁰ Mikhail Ivanov, "1931: Razed and 2000: Raised", *Russian Life*, vol. 43, no. 4 (2000), 18.

⁷¹ Jensen asserted that corporate contributions to the Cathedral fund were 'the most spectacular symbol of the close relationship between business and the city', and alleged that Luzhkov solicited contributions by offering favours to companies, including the state arms dealer. Jensen also noted that on the very same day that Stolichny bank donated fifty kilograms of gold for the cupola, it was awarded the rights to manage the Patriarchate's bank accounts. Jensen, "The Boss: How Yuri Luzhkov Runs Moscow".

⁷² See Tatyana Andriasova, "Chernomyrdin's Gift", *Moscow News*, 3-9 September 1998, 4.

contributions, and the lack of oversight over how public money was spent. In the cultural sphere, debate centred on the reconstruction's artistic merit (or demerit).⁷³

The Cathedral's reconstruction had great significance for both the Moscow Patriarchate and the Yeltsin administration. In official rhetoric, the Cathedral symbolises the resurgence of Orthodoxy, the strength of the Church, and Russia's anticipated moral and spiritual recovery. The 1999 Church calendar (which features the reconstruction on its front and back covers) opens with an article on the history of the Cathedral:

Moscow is the heart of Russia... now the rebirth of Russia's Orthodox spirituality has great significance for all our country. And on this path, the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour is the most powerful step.... We can say with confidence that the reconstruction of the Cathedral in today's Moscow is an event of great importance, as was its construction one and a half centuries ago. It is confirmation of the spirit of Orthodox life in Russian people, and that the attempt to convert Moscow to a featureless multi-national city will not succeed.⁷⁴

The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour is thus regarded as cementing the presence of Russian Orthodoxy in the capital's spiritual and cultural life. The conspicuousness of the reconstruction is a powerful symbol of the Church's post-Soviet political presence and of politicians' support for the Patriarchate.⁷⁵ The speed of the reconstruction and its completion in time for Moscow's 850th anniversary, despite cost and considerable opposition, was a testimony to Luzhkov's efficacy and power. It has endeared him and other politicians involved (particularly Yeltsin) to the Patriarchate. It was thus to the benefit of all figures concerned. Leslie McGann argues that Aleksii, Luzhkov and Yeltsin 'tarnished the spiritual symbol they had set out to create, erecting instead a symbol of Orthodoxy's value, and Aleksii's prowess, in the political sphere'.⁷⁶ The reconstruction is recognition of the centrality of Orthodoxy for Russia and for Russians,

⁷³ See Dmitrii Shimanskii, "Agressiia surrogata", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 31 December 1994, 13, Yelena Lebedeva, "Largest Construction Site of the Post-Soviet Era", *Moscow News*, 1-7 August 1996, 15 and Ivanov, "Faithful Reproduction".

⁷⁴ *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov'*, *Pravoslavnyi tserkovnyi kalendar' 1999*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskoi Patriarkhii, 1998, 2-4.

⁷⁵ For further discussion of these points see Dmitri Sidorov, "National Monumentalization and the Politics of Scale: The Resurrections of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 90, no. 3 (2000), 548-72.

⁷⁶ Leslie L. McGann, "The Russian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Aleksii II and the Russian State: An Unholy Alliance?", *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1999), [Expanded Academic ASAP].

and the acknowledgement of this by the political actors involved. The Cathedral is also testament to the intersection of Church and state.

The Tobacco Scandal

Chapter 3 established that an acute challenge facing the Moscow Patriarchate is a shortage of finances. Metropolitan Kirill has emphasised the importance of the Church's financial independence, stating that it:

is one of the conditions of her true freedom. And not only from the state. She should be independent of the powerful of this world, and the power in today's world is determined not as much by a person's position, but by the thickness of their wallet. God forbid that the Church become dependent on banks and commercial structures.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour was reliant on state support, drawing on both city and federal funds, with significant contributions from the banking and commerce sectors. The Patriarchate has also procured state support through a privileged tax status that allowed it significant savings on excise.

The Patriarchate's funding comes from a variety of sources, including a bank it founded, a factory in Sofrino, a prestigious hotel at the Danilov Monastery and, the largest known earner, the joint-stock company International Economic Cooperation, an oil exporter, among other things.⁷⁸ While these budgetary contributions have long been public knowledge, a series of exposes in the media in the mid-1990s revealed hidden business activities and the state's role in according the Patriarchate financial privileges. These revelations began when Gleb' Iakunin leaked a document about the Patriarchate's import of chicken drumsticks, in which an Orthodox dignitary appealed to a government authority that the imports be given humanitarian aid status and therefore exemption from the usual customs duties.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Interview with Kirill in *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, cited in Anonymous, "Russia's un-Orthodox business", *Christian Century*, vol. 114, no. 1 (1997), 7.

⁷⁸ The International Economic Cooperation was co-founded by the Patriarchate's Finance Department, which owns 40 per cent of its shares, and has an estimated annual turnover of US\$2 billion. Mark Franchetti, "Russian Priests Get Rich on Back of Big Business", *The Sunday Times*, 17 January 1999, 28.

⁷⁹ Irina Rykovtseva, "Blessed Tobacco", *Moscow News*, 17-23 October 1996, 4.

Far more scandalous was the revelation of the Patriarchate's importation of tobacco duty-free. According to a *Moscow News* investigation, the Department of External Church Relations, headed by Kirill, contacted foreign cigarette manufacturers and arranged shipments of cigarettes. In 1994 the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission granted the Patriarchate the right to import tobacco on a large scale as humanitarian aid. This meant that these imports circumvented the usual value added tax. The Patriarchate agreed to pay an excise for the imports. The cigarettes were then distributed to wholesalers, who sold the cigarettes and returned the proceeds to the Department. Over 10,000 tonnes of tobacco products were imported, which some estimate comprised 10 per cent of Russia's total cigarette intake. This was a significant financial boost for the Patriarchate. It deprived the government of some US\$40 million in tax. There was a similar arrangement made with wine.⁸⁰

An article in *Nezavisimaia gazeta* argued that the accusations of dubious financial dealings were false, the Church had not improperly used funds, and there had been no fallacious interpretations of tax legislation:

The simple fact of the enjoyment by the Moscow Patriarchate of a privileged tax status is not in any way seditious (*kramol'nyi*). Everything was done with the knowledge and approval of appropriate state agencies. And cigarettes were not the only imports (although apparently they were the most profitable), since in addition to them groceries and building materials have been imported.⁸¹

The fact that the import of these goods was not *kramol'nyi* is irrelevant, and even the circumvention of government legislation or the considerable profits from these irreligious products was less significant than the fact that state agencies applied different regulations to the Patriarchate's financial dealings than to those of other social organisations, to say nothing of religious bodies.

⁸⁰ Rykovtseva, "Blessed Tobacco", 4. The National Sports Fund (run by Yeltsin's tennis coach) was also privy to special import conditions for cigarettes. Chrystia Freeland, *Sale of the Century*, New York: Crown Business, 2000, 100.

⁸¹ Maksim Shevchenko, "Kurit' - dushe ne vredit", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 18 February 1997, 6.

Reports on the tobacco and alcohol imports concede that most clergy, and even most prelates, were unaware of these arrangements.⁸² However, the large amount of money involved means that the Patriarch almost certainly was aware of these dealings. It is widely believed that such matters are closely controlled by a handful of hierarchs, chiefly Kirill. The Department of External Church Relations is the most significant of the Patriarchate's departments, and manages the majority of the Church's commercial activities. The secrecy of finances, the products under dispute, and the state's complicity in the tobacco scandal has damaged the Patriarchate's reputation. Aleksii has been labeled 'Oligarch' of All Rus', and the Patriarchate a 'religious *Gazprom*', a reference to the scandal-ridden gas company widely believed to be controlled by the Russian mafia.⁸³ One commentator wrote that the Church's 'present ambitious pretensions of supplanting [communist] party agencies as a guardian of public morality hold no tragedy in store – the worst they can amount to is a pitiful farce'.⁸⁴ Further, it demonstrates a breach of both the constitutional separation of church and state and equality of religious associations: the Patriarchate was accorded special rights by state agencies when other religious associations were not privy to the same terms and conditions of commercial conduct. In contrast, other religious bodies have had genuine shipments of humanitarian aid obstructed; for example, the decree labeling the Salvation Army as military subversives prevents their distribution of social and welfare provisions (see Chapter 3).

The Military

The Patriarchate's official web site, after recounting the number of Orthodox believers, dioceses, parishes and clergy, and listing its educational, charitable and missionary enterprises, concludes its overview of Church life with the following remarks:

In recent years the Russian Orthodox Church has developed close cooperation (*tesnoe vzaimodeistvie*) with the Russian armed forces. To maintain these contacts the Patriarch and

⁸² 'It doesn't seem like these people are being cunning. And the comprehensiveness of their ignorance points to one thing, that the church is conducting business very quietly, concealing it from itself, or more precisely, from the unprivileged portion of its membership'. Rykovtseva, "Blessed Tobacco", 4.

⁸³ Mikolai Mitrokhin, "Church Corp.", *Moscow News*, 5-11 July 2000, 5.

⁸⁴ Mikhail Novikov, "Physician, Heal Thyself (*Kommersant-Daily*, 2 December 1997, p.3)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 49, no. 48 (1997), 19.

the Holy Synod have established a Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Armed Forces and Security Organs.⁸⁵

The declaration of 'close cooperation' is the only citation of an alliance with a state agency in the text.

Church work in the military began in May 1992 when Patriarch Aleksii stated that, as the army had been de-politicised, it was possible for the Church to begin training clergy for ministry in the armed forces. The Orthodox presence in the armed forces began in 1994, when an agreement between the Church and the army made provision for military chaplains.⁸⁶ These relations were formalised by the creation of the Department in 1995. This concordat has resulted in numerous agreements, surrounded by the rhetoric of moral and spiritual renewal and especially the importance of the Orthodox faith for the morale and efficacy of the armed forces.⁸⁷ Kirill explained how courses on Orthodox culture aid soldiers:

When the time comes for people to perform their duty by rising to the defence of the Motherland, this becomes the most important and primary matter of their lives... Thus one of the tasks of the church in its special ministry is to teach and confirm in people spiritual and moral principles which will make them worthy people and stalwart defenders of the Fatherland.⁸⁸

The defence of territory, couched in religious and patriotic terms, is also a recurring theme in the Patriarchate's statements on cooperation with the military. Relations between the Church and the armed forces are strengthened by initiatives such

⁸⁵ Sluzhba kommunikatsii OVTsS Moscow Patriarchate, "Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' na sovremennom etape (2001)" (Web site). Accessed 8 February 2001 at http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/today_ru.htm.

⁸⁶ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, "The Russian Orthodox Church in the Postcommunist CIS" in *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux, New York, London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995, 50.

⁸⁷ Kirill emphasised the importance of renewal in the military: 'the church has no right to refuse spiritual nourishment to those in the armed forces who are seeking spiritual direction. Against a backdrop of moral emptiness and an absence of substantial ethical signposts – which characterizes both society as a whole and those of its members responsible for peace and welfare – this challenge is an exceptionally important one'. Kyrill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Third Millennium", 305.

⁸⁸ Cited in Press Service of Department of External Church Relations, "Department of Orthodox Culture Opened at the Military University in Smolensk (17 March 2000)" (Web site). Paul Steeves, accessed 27 March 2000 at <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/0003b.html>.

as that in March 2000, when a Department of Orthodox Culture was opened by Kirill and Deputy Minister of Defence, N. V. Mikhailov, at the Military Academy of Anti-Aircraft Defence of Ground Forces.⁸⁹

The Patriarchate's policy on the war in the secessionist republic of Chechnia has evolved from one of cautious criticism of violence to active support of the Russian offensive. In December 1994, when Yeltsin decided to use military force to crush Chechen forces, the Patriarch made vague comments to the effect that both sides should engage in dialogue to resolve the conflict rather than resort to violence. In October 1994, however, Aleksii appealed to conscripts to 'defend the Motherland from external, as well as internal, enemies'.⁹⁰ This was a clear reference to military action in Chechnia, stated amidst a great deal of public debate on the conflict, especially surrounding conscription. A front-page *Izvestiia* article suggested Aleksii's statement was made to assist the government in soliciting recruits for Chechnia. The journalist also commented that this stance fused the services that Christian canon says should be separate: unto Caesar and unto God.⁹¹ Orthodox clergy and hierarchs regularly bless Russian forces, weaponry and military machinery. The Moscow Patriarchate's support for the army's objectives is *de facto* support for Russia's foreign policy. Clearly, the Patriarch is willing to overlook issues which may embarrass the government or the military; there is never any comment made about the privations conscripts endure or human rights atrocities committed by Russian armed forces.⁹²

⁸⁹ Press Service of Department of External Church Relations, "Department of Orthodox Culture Opened at the Military University in Smolensk (17 March 2000)" (Web site). Paul Steeves, accessed 27 March 2000 at <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/0003b.html>.

⁹⁰ In *Krasnaia zvezda*, cited in Elena Chinyeva, "Russian Orthodox Church Forges a New Role", *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 7 (1996), 17.

⁹¹ Iuri Feofanov, "Obrashchenie patriarkha k prizyvnikom: tol'ko li slovo Bozh'e?", *Izvestiia*, 12 October 1995, 1.

⁹² For conditions in the military, see John Lloyd, *Rebirth of a Nation: An Anatomy of Russia*, London: Michael Joseph, 1998, 111-30. On Chechnia, see a March 1999 press release on the worsening situation in Chechnia, when Aleksii stated, 'Unfortunately, cases of murder, hostage-taking, depriving peaceful people of their civil rights, freedom, health and property have become an evil tradition. The actions of terrorists have brought death and suffering to innocent victims and profound grief to their relatives and friends. This situation defies the norms of law and morality accepted universally in the world and represents a grave sin before God'. Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia. "Statement on the Situation in Chechnya (11 March 1999)" (Web site). Accessed 8 February 2001 at <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/ne903111.htm>. The 'evil tradition' refers to Chechen forces, not Russian, though they too have committed serious human rights violations. Human Rights Watch reported: "Both sides

An article critical of the Patriarchate's relations with the armed forces argued that the Church does not care about the real implications of war and violence. The author was repulsed by Orthodox priests' support for the war in Chechnia, blessing of weapons, bestowing awards on the designer of the Kalashnikov weapons system, and elevation of military values over spiritual: 'Apparently the supreme church echelon considers these facts unworthy of its attention. The main thing is to bless military might and it is not important whether it is good for the people and the country'.⁹³ The point that the Church sanctions aggressive military policies, despite their problematic nature, is one that is increasingly voiced by those who follow the 'close cooperation' advanced by the unlikely alliance of the Orthodox Church and the armed forces. In fact, this violates the *Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*, since war was deemed an area not legitimate for cooperation between the Church and the state.

In mid-1997 it was reported that Orthodox churches existed on the territory of 88 military units. There were no instances of non-Orthodox churches on the grounds of military units.⁹⁴ At a meeting of Church and military dignitaries in late 1995 a representative of the Moscow Patriarchate emphasised that, apart from Russian Orthodoxy, only Islam should be tolerated among soldiers, all other confessions should not be permitted to 'penetrate' battle units.⁹⁵ There is little evidence that there would be close cooperation between minority faiths and the military. It is also unlikely that the emphasis that many Orthodox clergy place on encouraging conscripts would be pursued by other confessions; this is a particular focus of the Patriarchate because of the link between the Church and defence of the motherland.⁹⁶ There is also the potential for

showed scant respect for international law, but the far larger force of Russian troops backed by air power and artillery committed the lion's share of [human rights] violations'. See Human Rights Watch, "Human Rights Watch World Report 2001: The Russian Federation" (Web site). Accessed 20 February 2001 at <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/europe/russian.html>.

⁹³ Vladimir Pashkov, "Sokoly Mitropolita Kirilla (*Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 19 December 1999)" (Web site). Accessed 14 February 2001 at <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/kirill190199.html>.

⁹⁴ Svetlana Sukhova, "Road to Church Passes Through Military Unit (*Segodnia*, 15 August 1997, p.2)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 49, no. 34 (1997), 13.

⁹⁵ Korotchenko, "Armiia i pravoslavie: vzaimnye simpatii nalitso", 8.

⁹⁶ The Khomiakov Centre for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Nontraditional Religions is headed by an Orthodox priest who claims to have recovered 450 people for Orthodoxy in two years. Many of these people were conscientious objectors who had refused to perform military service. Once

discrimination against non-Orthodox confessions in the military in 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations', which states that, unless a religious body is classified as an organisation, its clergy cannot receive exemption from military service.⁹⁷ In late 2001, the first case of a conscript being permitted to perform alternative civil service as a result of conscientious objection on the basis of religion was reported in Nizhnii Novgorod.⁹⁸ Human rights defenders have lobbied heavily for exemptions on the basis of conscientious objection. Although a constitutional right, in the absence of a federal law, there was no alternative service, a fact that particularly affected Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. Given the large percentage of Russians who identify themselves as Orthodox believers, it stands to reason that they dominate the armed forces, and that there is little incentive for the government to provide alternative arrangements for minority faiths.

Putin's Accession

The influence of the Patriarchate on the administration of both Presidents Yeltsin and Putin is exemplified by the presence of prelates at state functions. For instance, Patriarch Aleksii officiated at Yeltsin's inauguration in July 1991.⁹⁹ Relations between the Patriarchate and the state have become markedly closer since Putin's accession in March 2000. In July 2000, Aleksii himself blessed the opening of a federal Health Ministry.¹⁰⁰ These instances exemplify the strong links between the episcopate and the government. Although at the time of writing Putin has not made a discernible impact on

'rehabilitated', many of their number converted to Orthodoxy and fulfilled their military duties. Pashkov, "Sokoly Mitropolita Kirilla (*Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 19 December 1999)" (Web site).

⁹⁷ While conscripts of any denomination are guaranteed the right to alternate service ('Citizens of the Russian Federation whose convictions or religious profession preclude performance of military service have the right to substitute alternative civic service'), only clergy of organisations, not groups, are guaranteed the same right ('Upon the request of religious organisations, and by decision of the president of the Russian Federation, clergy may be granted deferment from conscription to military service and exemption from military muster in peacetime, in accordance with legislation of the Russian Federation on military obligation and military service') (Art. 3.4). Rossiiskaia Federatsiia Federal'nyi zakon, "O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniakh", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 1 October 1997, 3.

⁹⁸ Anonymous, "Nizhegorodskomu adventistu razreshili sluzhit' al'ternativno (2001)" (Web site). Accessed 20 November 2001 at http://www.religio.ru/news/2398_print.html.

⁹⁹ Anonymous, "Prezident Boris El'tsin: My mozhem byt' tverdo uvereniy: Rossiia vozrodit'sia", *Izvestiia*, 10 July 1991, 1;3.

¹⁰⁰ The federal Health Minister requested that a priest bless the ministry at its opening. The Patriarch himself came. Representatives of Russia's Muslim and Jewish communities were not

religious life, there is much to say about his preferential treatment of the Patriarchate. Orthodox dignitaries have been present at all major state occasions since his accession, and from this and many other statements and gestures, not least Putin's efforts to promote a pious image, it is clear that it is Putin's priority to cultivate links with the Church hierarchy.

In March 2000, as Acting President, Putin extended the date by which religious associations were required to register with the Ministry of Justice by one year.¹⁰¹ This was widely interpreted as a demonstration of his concern for religious minorities' rights. In fact, the extension was a mere formality. Though the 1997 law stated that associations not registered by 31 December 1999 may be liquidated (Art. 27.4), the large number of religious bodies seeking registration made this deadline unrealistic. Both the religious associations' submission of the necessary paperwork (proof of previous registration, charter, members of guiding committees) and the processing of these applications by the Ministry of Justice were time-consuming and frequently complicated procedures. Moreover, at the close of 1999, Muslim communities and Russian Orthodox parishes were having difficulties with the registration process, so the Moscow Patriarchate and the major Muslim spiritual directorates campaigned for an extension.¹⁰² In addition, often overlooked was the change in wording. The original statute stipulated that as of this date unregistered bodies *may* (*mogut byt'*) be liquidated, whereas the amendment stipulated that unregistered groups *must* (*podlezhat*) be liquidated.

Putin habitually emphasises the centrality of Orthodoxy to Russia's historical, spiritual and political development. He opened his 1999 New Years Eve address with the words: 'Humankind is witnessing two major events: the new millenium and the

approached to perform their blessings. Alla Astakhova, "Minzdrav okroplennyi", *Segodnia*, 5 July 2000, 6.

¹⁰¹ Rossiiskaia Federatsiia Federal'nyi zakon, "O vnesenii izmenenii v punkt 4 stat'i 27 Federal'nogo zakona 'O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniakh'" *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 30 March 2000, 1; 4.

¹⁰² Fagan, Gerolde, and Lawrence Uzzell. "Church-State Relations in Putin's Russia: What's Next? (13 April 2000)" (Web site). Accessed 23 August 2000 at <http://www.keston.org/Crossroads/RelInPutinsRussiaWhatsNext.html>.

2000th anniversary of Christianity'.¹⁰³ In January 2001 he awarded state medals to Christian clergy at the Kremlin. At the ceremony he stated:

We have stepped over the threshold of the 2000-year anniversary of the history of Christianity and are convinced once and for all we have done away with spiritual nihilism and moral poverty and with the century of fierce struggle for the individual's right to believe. We enter the new millennium with hope, which, I am convinced, will be a time of historical and spiritual transformation of our Motherland, Russia.¹⁰⁴

Patriarch Aleksii was among those decorated, along with thirty-five prelates and clergy of the Orthodox Church. There were few representatives of other confessions. Aleksii was singled out for commendation for his 'great contribution to the spiritual and moral regeneration of Russia and the consolidation of civil peace'.¹⁰⁵ The importance Putin places on Orthodoxy was demonstrated when immediately after the presidential inauguration in May 2000, the Patriarch blessed Putin at a Kremlin cathedral.¹⁰⁶ On the tenth anniversary of Aleksii's enthronement, Putin recognised the Church's 'enormous role in the spiritual unification of the Russian land after many years of life without faith, moral degradation and atheism', and he acknowledged the Church's 'traditional mission as a key force in promoting social stability and moral unity around moral priorities of justice, patriotism, good works, constructive labour and family values'.¹⁰⁷

Putin is a self-identified Orthodox believer, and the national faith is central to his rhetoric about moral renewal, about the spiritual regeneration of the country, and

¹⁰³ Putin, Vladimir. "Rossiia na rubezhe tysiacheletii", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 31 December 1999, 4-5.

¹⁰⁴ Sluzhba kommunikatsii OVTsS MP, "Prezident Rossii V.V.Putin vruchil gosudarstvennye nagrody sviashchennosluzhiteliu" (Web site). Accessed 15 January 2002 at <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/nr101161.htm>.

¹⁰⁵ Sluzhba kommunikatsii OVTsS MP, "Prezident Rossii V.V.Putin vruchil gosudarstvennye nagrody sviashchennosluzhiteliu" (Web site).

¹⁰⁶ Patriarch Alexy II Of Moscow And All Russia, "Exhortation By Patriarch Alexy II Of Moscow And All Russia Upon The Inauguration Of V. V. Putin As President Of The Russian Federation (7 May 2000)" (Web site). Accessed 21 September 2000 at <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/ne005103.htm>. The Patriarch did not officiate at Putin's inauguration, as he had at Yeltsin's. This was a result of protests by activists, including Sergei Kovalev and Lev Ponomarev, who argued that the Patriarch should not participate in the inauguration as Russia is a secular state. The appeal stated that even countries where the Catholic Church is powerful, such as Poland, Italy and Spain, would not allow such a blatant expression of the links between church and state. Ivan Sas, "Pravozashchitniki poshiaguli na sviatost", *Segodnia*, 29 April 2001, 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Reuters, "Putin Lauds Church Role as Patriarch Marks 10 years" (J#4359) (E-mail list). Accessed 9 June 2000.

increasingly, about subjects that breach the separation of church and state, such as defence. Putin appears to support the Patriarchate's promotion of a privileged role for the Orthodox Church. While it is true that Christianity is a prevalent theme in the rhetoric of other world leaders, such as US President George W. Bush, this reverence for the traditional faith has more consequence in the Russian context. The relative novelty of the concepts central to civil society, such as pluralism and tolerance in the religious sphere, coupled with the discrimination against religious minorities in the post-Soviet decade, means that such overt gestures of favour send a message not conducive to the entrenchment of religious pluralism and religious tolerance.

The evidence presented above suggests that the contemporary social and political role of the Moscow Patriarchate does not approach that of the dual rule of ecclesiastical and temporal authorities that is the Byzantine symphonic nonpareil. While Kharkhordin, in his analysis of Orthodoxy and civil society, argues that the Church seeks to supplant the state, not to co-exist with it, and seeks to exert influence over both spiritual and temporal matters,¹⁰⁸ the power of the Church does not approach that of the president or the executive. The symphonic ideal has never really existed in Russia's history. What this chapter does argue is not that the Patriarchate has power equal to that of the temporal authorities, but that it is elevated above other religious bodies and has a significant political influence.

The Orthodox Church has moved beyond the 'partial establishments of religion' identified by Tietal as characteristic of church-state relations in postcommunist Europe. The religious legislation was most actively promoted by the Patriarchate. The reconstruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour was achieved only with significant contributions from the Moscow and also the federal budget, and because the powerful Iurii Luzhkov, who recognised the utility of appeals to national identity and tradition,

¹⁰⁸ Oleg Kharkhordin, "Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 50, no. 6 (1998), 957.

stood behind its proposal. The state granted the Church a privileged tax status, allowing it to import goods without paying excise. The Patriarchate has sought close cooperation with the armed forces, and the state supports its projects in the military. The Patriarchate, in return, supports unquestioningly the state's military policy. Finally, the cooperation of the Orthodox Church and the government has continued to be a feature of contemporary politics as Putin also seeks ties to this powerful institutional ally. These examples demonstrate the 'deprivatisation' of religion in the Russian context.

These instances of close ties between the Patriarchate and the state give the impression that Orthodoxy is the state religion. Russia, however, is a secular state. It is therefore possible to suggest that the Russian Orthodox Church is a pseudo-state church. Teitel cautioned that the partial establishments of religion could present a threat to the liberalising democracies and to religious minorities within the postcommunist countries.¹⁰⁹ For this reason, the links between the Orthodox Church and the state are of crucial importance in evaluating the development of civil society in Russia.

When justifying why the Orthodox Church should remain separate from the state, Hieromonk Hilarion (Alfeev) stated: 'This is the first time in many centuries that we [the Church] exist completely independently of the state'.¹¹⁰ While the Church's current position is drastically different from its place in Imperial Russia, or in the Soviet period, the Patriarchate's policy clearly prioritises returning to the tutelage of the state. This chapter has demonstrated that, in fact, the Church is not independent. It is granted a privileged position by virtue of its strong links to the government. Despite this, there is little chance that Orthodoxy could become a state church, since it has been weakened by financial hardship, division and controversy.

¹⁰⁹ Teitel, "Partial establishments of religion in post-communist transition", 104.

¹¹⁰ Hilarion Alfeev, "Reviving the Russian Orthodox Church: A Task Both Theological and Secular" in *Russia's Fate Through Russian Eyes: Voices of the New Generation*, ed. Heyward Isham and Natan M. Shklyar, Boulder: Westview Press, 2001, 240. Alfeev is executive director of the Secretariat for Inter-Christian Affairs, Department for External Church Relations, the Moscow Patriarchate.

The Keston Institute reported in mid-2001 that the *Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* could provide the foundation of state religious policy.¹¹¹ A hearing in the Duma asserted that the document 'could prove a good foundation for the drawing-up of normative legal acts supplementing existing legislation on issues concerning freedom of conscience and religious organisations.'¹¹² If this proposal was passed, it would institutionalise the Orthodox Church's privileged position and render fallacious claims that the separation of church and state exists in Russia in any meaningful way. The Church would cease to be a part of civil society. It would leave the sphere of associations and enter that of state's jurisdiction. The symphonic ideal, whereby the Church has responsibility over the spiritual guidance of the citizenry and the state protects Church doctrine and tradition, would be realised. This would remove the institutional Church from any stake in the development of civil society.

This chapter has demonstrated that the Moscow Patriarchate maintains a privileged position in the post-Soviet religious sphere. It is now appropriate to consider if the social and political forces that seek to appropriate Orthodoxy to bolster anti-democratic platforms have visibility and support in the Church or in wider society. The exploitation of Orthodoxy, which encourages a link in the popular consciousness between the Church and ideologies antithetical to the concept of civil society, is the subject of Chapter 5.

¹¹¹ Geraldine Fagan, "Russia: Third Draft Religious Policy? (12 July 2001)" (Web site). Accessed 28 August 2001 at <http://www.keston.org/knsframe.htm>.

¹¹² Cited in Fagan, "Russia: Third Draft Religious Policy? (12 July 2001)" (Web site).

Chapter 5

Orthodoxy, Nationalism and Civil Society

Russian national chauvinism became increasingly palpable over the post-Soviet decade. The motley assemblage that constituted the right in the immediate post-Soviet period became better organised and, drawing on widespread disillusionment with the democratic reforms, garnered support from disparate sectors of the population. This transformed nationalist personalities, parties and organisations from peripheral to central political actors. Support for their xenophobic platforms was bolstered by an increasingly nationalist rhetoric in the mainstream political and cultural arenas. In 1997, Valerii Tishkov, who was Minister for Nationality Affairs in 1992, observed: 'There is no doubt that fascism *a la russe* has transformed itself from a marginal political tendency of the late 1980s into a real political phenomenon of today'.¹

What precisely constitutes 'fascism *a la russe*' requires clarification. The meaning of the term fascism is contested; between the *fascismo* particular to inter-war Italy and the abusive 'fascism' of today's common parlance, this meaning has suffered 'rampant inflation and prolific diversification'.² Roger Griffin proposes a 'minimalist definition' of fascism as 'a genus of modern, revolutionary, "mass" politics' which 'draws its internal cohesion and driving force from the core myth that a period of perceived national decline and decadence is giving way to one of rebirth and renewal in a post-liberal new order'.³ Though it overlooks the violence, organisational rigidity and cult of leadership central to the popular perception of fascism, Griffin's definition acknowledges fascism's defining feature as the pursuit of a new order based on national myths. Though Tishkov does not explain what he intends by '*a la russe*', there are a number of characteristics unique to Russian fascism. The ethno-national element is not necessarily present in Russian fascism, especially as the notion of Orthodox brotherhood

¹ Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict In and After the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997, 237.

² Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, London, New York: Routledge, 1993, 8.

³ Italics removed. Roger Griffin, "Introduction" in *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus*, ed. Roger Griffin, London, Sydney, Auckland: Arnold, 1998, 14.

is central to Russian national chauvinism. Given the ambiguities of the terms fascism and extremism, it is more propitious here to refer to 'national chauvinism', meaning a blind and aggressive loyalty to the idealised nation. National chauvinism is against diversity, pluralism and individualism, and therefore against civil society.

The paradox of civil society, particularly in post-Soviet states, is that it provides the opportunity for chauvinistic sentiments to be aired, which, more often than not, oppose the ideological pluralism that is the basis of civil society itself. Jürgen Habermas points out that without a liberal political culture, and the socialised norms that accompany such an order, civil society cannot consolidate as there is the potential for antidemocratic populist movements to rise and to threaten civil society.⁴ Thus, according to one commentator, 'Nationalism is all too often the enemy of democracy rooted in civil society'.⁵

Paul Steeves has emphasised the prevalence of 'Russian Orthodox fascism', alluding to both the centrality of Orthodoxy to the national myth and to the presence of fascist elements within the Church.⁶ The extent to which religion supplies the symbols and the discourse of national chauvinist ideologues is crucial to understanding the Church's influence on the development of civil society. Russian Orthodoxy is highly visible in national chauvinists' myths and imagery. The prevalence of religious themes in nationalistic rhetoric has led to assertions of the 'definitional link' between religious identity and national identity.⁷

This chapter examines the place of Orthodoxy in the discourse of national chauvinists who speak in the name of, though not necessarily from within, the Church.

⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, 371.

⁵ Craig Calhoun, "Nationalism, Civil Society and Democracy" in *Legacies of the Collapse of Marxism*, ed. John H. Moore, Fairfax (VI): George Mason University Press, 1994, 98.

⁶ Paul D. Steeves, "Russian Orthodox Fascism After Glasnost (1994)" (Web site). Accessed 12 November 2001 at <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/rusorthfascism.html>.

⁷ Natalia P. Dinello, "Religious and National Identity of Russians" in *Politics and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe: Traditions and Transitions*, ed. William H. Swatos, London, Westport: Praeger, 1994, 87.

This chapter begins by outlining theories of nationalism, national identity and civil society. A brief exploration of the historical precedents of contemporary Russian nationalism is illuminating, as post-Soviet nationalists draw on tradition as the basis of a unique, collective identity. The place of Russia's traditional faith in the ideologies of neo-Slavophiles, who emphasise Russia's messianic imperative and incompatibility with the west, monarchists, who glorify Russia's imperial past, and national chauvinists, who have an exclusive vision of an Orthodox Russia, is examined. The connection between Orthodoxy and national chauvinism in the cultural and intellectual spheres and in the political sphere indicates the salience of the connection between religious and national identity. The presence of Orthodoxy and antidemocratic sentiments in popular attitudes is considered. Finally, national chauvinism among Orthodox prelates, clergy and laity is examined.

While this survey reinforces the disparate tendencies among nationalists, it also highlights the central role of the Orthodox Church in their designs for Russia's future. This contributes to the assessment of Orthodoxy's influence on civil society because, as established at this dissertation's outset, religion is not limited to private worship but enters the public sphere and may exert a political influence.

Nationalism: Conceptual Clarifications

Interpretations of nationalism and national identity vary from one scholar or from one academic discipline to the next. It is important to elucidate what these terms mean for this study. Most scholars trace the genesis of national loyalties to western Europe and North America in either the eighteenth⁸ or nineteenth centuries.⁹ Definitions of national identity almost invariably incorporate religion, culture, history, language or territory, and the desire to preserve perceived traditions and mores from encroachment.

⁸ See Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1990 and Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, London: Hutchinson, 1966. Anderson argues that new communities were able to be imagined through capitalism's quest for new markets, the advent of the technology of communication (notably the printing press), and the recognition of linguistic diversity. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1992, 4.

⁹ See Gellner, who links the 'transition to nationalism' to the emergence of industrial society. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, 40.

Ernest Gellner offers a widely accepted definition: 'Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent'.¹⁰ Nationalism is borne from a shared culture and from the recognition that one belongs to that culture, and so 'nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities'.¹¹ Here Gellner echoes Ernest Renan, who, in 1882, stated that a nation is a group that wills itself to persist as a community; 'an everyday plebiscite'.¹²

Contemporary scholars generally agree that the nation, nationalism and national identity are constructed phenomena that are not an 'inherent attribute of humanity',¹³ but are rather modern cultural and political constructs.¹⁴ Herein lies the greatest paradox of nationalism; whereas historians view nationalism as a modern, constructed phenomenon, whose use is characterised by 'the invention of tradition',¹⁵ nationalists themselves regard their loyalties as ancient and enduring. Nationalism is, therefore, fundamentally about group identity. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as 'an imagined political community'.¹⁶ This identity is imagined, invented and constructed, leading Anthony D. Smith to conclude that: 'Nationalism provides perhaps the most compelling identity myth in the modern world...'.¹⁷ Though nations are imagined, they are not imaginary. Nations are a prominent feature of the global political landscape, confirmed, for instance, by the break-up of the USSR under calls for national autonomy, the Balkan wars, and the conflict in Northern Ireland.

¹⁰ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.

¹¹ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 7.

¹² Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" in *Nationalism*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 17.

¹³ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 6.

¹⁴ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 48-49.

¹⁵ This is argued most clearly in the edited volume *The Invention of Tradition*, whose contributors contend that the myths, symbols and the memories that create nationalist loyalties are invented. Invented traditions are 'highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the 'nation', with its associated phenomenon: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest'. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions" in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 13.

¹⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

¹⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, London: Penguin, 1991, viii.

As national identity is a cultural phenomenon as much as it is an ideology or a political project,¹⁸ religion is central to national identity. In the case of Russia, it is vital to examine national identity and religious identity and the way that nationalism enters the nation's consciousness, not just to examine it from official statements issued by the Moscow Patriarchate or the presidential administration. Hobsbawm has argued that though nations are constructed from above, they are manifested below.¹⁹ This 'view from below'²⁰ is also central to the analysis of the link between nationalism and Orthodoxy. Michael Billig, in a major contribution to scholarship, argues that national identity is seldom forgotten because it is always subtly present. This 'banal nationalism' is a feature of every day life because it is ingrained in citizens' consciousness through the constant affirmation of the prime importance of nationhood and the promotion of its myths, symbols, and rhetoric, perpetuated by politicians and the media.²¹ Billig argues that, while the reproduction of the ideas of nationhood is ever present, for the most part, this remains unnoticed. It is the aim of this chapter to identify how Orthodoxy is exploited to provide the essential myths, symbols and rhetoric of an exclusive Russian national identity in the cultural and intellectual, political, social and religious arenas.

Because nations are constructed, they are not immutable. The elite can manipulate the sentiments attached, in the name of tradition, culture, or religion, for personal political purposes. Nationalism is a key instrument for mobilising popular support. Chapter 1 established that civil society is based on the rejection of monopolies on ideology, which extends to denial of prescriptions of identity and on the acceptance of diversity. The rise of national chauvinism in postcommunist Europe is a development that threatens civil society, largely due to its use for homogenising ends.

Adam Seligman argues that nationalist trends are major obstacles to constructing civil society in eastern Europe, as there is 'the continued existence of strong ethnic and group solidarities, which have continually thwarted the very emergence of those legal,

¹⁸ This is a central argument of Smith, *National Identity*.

¹⁹ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870*, 10.

²⁰ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870*, 11.

economic, and moral individual identities upon which civil society is envisioned'.²² He thus engages with the debate about whether there are two types of nationalism. John Plamenatz argued in the 1970s that there existed 'eastern' and 'western' nationalism; the former ('eastern' because it 'flourished among the Slavs') was not just susceptible but 'apt to be illiberal'²³ and to develop into authoritarian, oppressive nationalism.²⁴ In a sound refutation of this theory, Stefan Auer contends: 'Differentiation between two types of nationalism can only be maintained by a purposeful interpretation of European history'.²⁵ He cites liberal thinkers from the east, such as Adam Michnik and Vaclav Havel, and illiberal aberrations from the west, such as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, to disprove claims that there are two distinct nationalisms, and that the 'east', an amorphous geographical label in itself, is condemned to illiberal forms of nationalism.

Though Auer's argument pertains to central and eastern Europe, it also serves to refute claims that Russian (and indeed other Slavic, and especially Orthodox) nationalism is innately illiberal. This is clear in the works of liberal thinkers like Dmitrii Likhachev, the distinguished historian, who eschewed an exclusive Russian national identity as destructive. Likhachev counterpoised nationalism (*natsionalizm*) and patriotism (*patriotizm*). In Russian, *natsionalizm* is understood exclusively as ethnic nationalism, and has a negative connotation, while *patriotizm* is regarded as enlightened, tolerant, and a progressive force in a multi-ethnic (and multi-confessional) country. Though Likhachev was accused of being a nationalist,²⁶ there are marked differences between the fundamental tenets of nationalist ideology and his formulations of Russia's

²¹ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995, 6.

²² Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, 163.

²³ John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism" in *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, ed. Eugene Kamenka, Canberra: ANU Press, 1975, 34.

²⁴ Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism", 23. His argument that 'Nationalism of the eastern kind is both imitative and competitive' (p.33) is true but, as Greenfeld convincingly demonstrates, all nationalisms developed as imitative and competitive. This is the core thesis of Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1992.

²⁵ Stefan Auer, "Nationalism in Central Europe – A Chance or a Threat for the Emerging Liberal Democratic Order?", *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2000), 225.

²⁶ Evidently sensitive to such misunderstandings, Likhachev appealed to his readers not to misunderstand or misrepresent his intentions. He wrote in the introduction to one essay: 'This essay does not promulgate nationalism, although it is written with sincere pain for my beloved native Russia'. Dmitrii

role in the world. Likhachev points out that much in Russia is not unique and rejects the messianic principle: 'Once again people are searching for Russia's special "mission".... Russia has no special mission and never has had!'.²⁷ He claimed that the universal values of Orthodoxy are incompatible with chauvinism. In the essay '*Zametki o Russkom*' ('Reflections on Things Russian') he concludes: 'A conscious love for one's own nation cannot be combined with a hatred for others',²⁸ while nationalism 'is a manifestation of the weakness of a nation and not of its strength',²⁹ and 'the gravest of human misfortunes'.³⁰ Elsewhere, Likhachev argued that the Russian national character is 'internationalist (*universal'nyi*) and tolerant toward other national cultures'.³¹

It is misleading to suggest that postcommunist nationalism and national identity are necessarily illiberal, or that the presence of nationalism and a reverence for traditions and institutions, such as the Orthodox Church, excludes the possibility of developments favourable to civil society. Chapter 3 explored inclusive and tolerant understandings of Orthodoxy in post-Soviet Russia. This chapter is concerned with Orthodoxy and national chauvinism, which is profoundly incompatible with the development of civil society. National chauvinism denies other ethnic groups equal rights in society and does not regard their claims to equality as legitimate. Social organisation created on ethnic lines in order to promote a hegemonic culture threatens civil society. It is the prevalence of nationalist organisations in the volatile environment of post-Soviet Russia that makes the inquiry into Orthodoxy, national chauvinism and civil society a particularly urgent issue. A great deal of literature has deliberated on the resurgence or emergence of the

Likhachev, "I Object: What Constitutes the Tragedy of Russian History" in *Remaking Russia: Voices from Within*, ed. Heyward Isham, New York, London: M.E Sharpe, 1995, 51.

²⁷ Likhachev, "I Object: What Constitutes the Tragedy of Russian History", 60.

²⁸ D. S. Likhachev, "Zametki o Russkom: Priroda, rodnik, rodina, prosto dobrota", *Novyi mir*, no. 3 (1956), 36.

²⁹ Likhachev, "Zametki o Russkom: Priroda, rodnik, rodina, proste dobrota", 36.

³⁰ Likhachev, "Zametki o Russkom: Priroda, rodnik, rodina, prosto dobrota", 37. These views are similar to that of Russian philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev, who wrote in 1895: 'how can a true patriot rip apart solidarity with others, and hate or despise foreigners for the sake of the interests of his nation? If the nation itself sees its true good in the common good, then how can patriotism set up the good of the nation as something separate and in opposition to all else? Obviously, this will not be the moral, ideal good which the nation itself desires. And illusory patriotism will turn out to be in contradiction not to a foreign nation, but to one's own in its best aspirations'. Cited in Vladimir Wozniuk, "In Search of Ideology: The Politics of Religion and Nationalism in the New Russia (1991-1996)", *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 25, no. 2 (1997), 197.

'new nationalism' in the former Soviet bloc, described as 'the region's dominant postcommunist ideology'.³² Religion has been at the heart of much conflict in the region. The Yugoslav conflict demonstrated that though different ethnicities might have co-existed for some time and might share the same territory and the same language, religious identities and rivalry ultimately drove the populations to delineate and differentiate.³³ Vladimir Tismaneanu notes that there is a battle throughout the region between liberal values and hegemonic national identities, and that '[t]he conflict brings into confrontation the advocates of democracy and the supporters of ethnocracy'.³⁴

Not all commentators on civil society in post-Soviet countries perceive nationalism to be a destructive force.³⁵ As Auer recognised, the literature often distinguishes between civic and ethnic nationalism, also referred to as political or western nationalism as opposed to cultural or eastern nationalism. The difference lies in the focus of identity and the basis on which a national community is constructed: in the case of civic nationalism, citizens identify their community with territory and citizenship, whereas in the case of ethnic nationalism, descent and myth determine national identity.³⁶ The validity of this dichotomy is questioned by scholars critical of its reductionism and of its deterministic ascription of western nationalism and eastern nationalism. Both understandings are present in rhetoric about Russian identity, demonstrated by the use of *rossiiskii* and *ruskii*. While both mean 'Russian', the former equates identity with citizenship and the latter with ethnicity. Civic and ethnic nationalism can both be either liberal or illiberal. Indeed any given nationalism may be a mixture of the two, both political expression and cultural identity. David Brown argues

³¹ D. S. Likhachev, "O natsional'nom kharaktere russkikh", *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 4 (1990), 3.

³² Michael Radu, "The Burden of Eastern Orthodoxy", *Orbis*, vol. 42, no. 2 (1998), 283.

³³ This point has been made by Ernest Gellner, *Encounters With Nationalism*, Oxford, Cambridge (MA): Blackwell Publishers, 1994, 178.

³⁴ Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Fantasies of Salvation: Varieties of Nationalism in Postcommunist Eastern Europe" in *Envisioning Eastern Europe: Postcommunist Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael D. Kennedy, USA: The University of Michigan Press, 1994, 112.

³⁵ See, for example, Oxana Prisiajniouk, who wrote: 'National identity provides for consensus, for a shared set of values and worldviews, and this in turn encourages the emergence of social institutions and democratic rules of the game. National identity also provides social solidarity and enhances willingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of the cause.... National identity contributes most to the formation of civil society'. Oxana Prisiajniouk, "The State of Civil Society in Independent Ukraine", *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1-2 (1995), 172.

that the assessment of whether nationalism in a given state is liberal or illiberal is best done by examining 'the ways in which political elites depict the nationalist goals, and the insecurities, threats or enemies which inhibit their attainment; and also the receptivity of the wider populace to these nationalist visions and threats'.³⁷ This chapter assesses the place of Orthodoxy in both elites' and the public's understanding of Russian national identity.

An exclusive national identity, with its trademark rhetoric centred on the identification of the counterpoised 'other', is detrimental to the concept of civil society. Inherent in the notion of belonging to a nation is the shared recognition of differentiation.³⁸ It is the manifestations and methods of differentiation that determine whether nationalism is a constructive or an obstructive force. Civil society is characterised by ideological diversity; it stands to reason that, if these views gain common currency, attempts to limit this diversity are detrimental to civil society. If a single identity, whether it be ethnic or religious, is advanced above others, then nationalism becomes the enemy of civil society. If the contact in civil society discourages or, worse, threatens diversity, then relations in civil society may break down, as 'If democracy is to flourish, nationalism must not become the enemy of difference'.³⁹ Zinaida Golenkova recognises that the dominance of the nationalist agenda in Russia threatens civil society:

Nationalistically orientated subjects (movements, parties, ideas) in Russia today completely dominate democratic ones. The idea of civil society cannot be realised within the political confines of the closed nationalist state. A civil society in the full sense of the word must be an open society. An emphatically nationalist society, as a rule.... is a closed and authoritarian society.⁴⁰

³⁶ John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism*, London: Fontana Press, 1994, 17-18.

³⁷ David Brown, *Contemporary Nationalism: Civic, Ethnocultural and Multicultural Politics*, London, New York: Routledge, 2000, 67.

³⁸ Hobsbawm writes, 'there is no more effective way of binding together the disparate sections of restless peoples than to unite them against outsiders'. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870*, 91.

³⁹ Calhoun, "Nationalism, Civil Society and Democracy", 101.

⁴⁰ Zinaida T. Golenkova, "Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo v Rossii", *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, no. 3 (1997), 34.

As well as being a political principle, nationalism is a subjective phenomenon, which defines the nature of the relationship between an individual and a collectivity. The Introduction noted the tendency for ethnic Russians to identify as Orthodox regardless of their spiritual beliefs and religious practices. Since adherence to the national religious tradition is subjective, it is illuminating to turn to the forms and formulations of Russian national identity, and particularly the place of the Orthodox Church in this identity. Religion, as Natalia P. Dinello argues, is a fundamental part of national identity: 'Religion, whether it is traditional or civil, provides the moral foundations and validating symbolism for the way of a nation's life. Religious representations of unity and self-legitimation constitute a bridge between personal and national identity'.⁴¹ Many Russian nationalists regard Orthodoxy as providing the only possible basis for a post-Soviet social and political order. Tismaneanu identifies one feature of national chauvinism as 'apocalyptic salvationism', by which he means the resistance to alien forms through indigenous traditions.⁴² In the Russian context, this is drawn from Orthodox messianism, one of the central features of the link between Orthodoxy and nationalism in Russia. Russia is, however, a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country, highlighted by the fact that the Russian Federation has twenty-one ethnically based republics.

While there have been particular identity problems for Russians in the postcommunist period, the construction of a post-Soviet identity is no doubt more problematic for Russians resident in other states, who have the added complexity of minority status.⁴³ This 'crisis of identity' has served to strengthen the religious identity of Orthodox Russians, both within and outside the territory of Russia.⁴⁴ Three factors in particular problematise this relationship. Russians have had to contend with the loss of empire. Russians were more likely than other nationalities to identify with the Soviet

⁴¹ Dinello, "Religious and National Identity of Russians", 87.

⁴² Tismaneanu, "Fantasies of Salvation", 113.

⁴³ See David D. Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*, Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1998.

⁴⁴ This is the central thesis of Dinello, "Religious and National Identity of Russians".

Union,⁴⁵ chiefly because Russian was the culture that was used to integrate its peoples. Second, a major issue was the treatment of the approximately 26 million-strong Russian diaspora. Language legislation in the Baltic states discriminated against Russian residents, reversing the process of discrimination put in place with the Soviet takeover of the Baltic region.⁴⁶ A third issue, related to loss of empire, is the fear of maintaining territorial legitimacy, which has been renewed with secessionist aspirations in Chechnia. This served to strengthen national identity and increasingly define it in terms of the 'other', the Islamic Chechens. Socio-economic difficulties led to disaffection with the reformist leadership and increasing support for politicians who seek to explain Russia's post-Soviet problems as attacks on national integrity and prosperity.

The Roots of Post-Soviet Nationalism

The 'Russian Idea' (*Russkaia ideia*), a philosophical conception of the national character, has profoundly influenced the evolution of Russian nationalism. The central precept of the Russian Idea is that Russia is fundamentally different from the west and incompatible with western political culture, historical development and religious conceptions.⁴⁷ At the heart of this conviction is the notion of the country's messianic mission, rooted in the vision of Moscow as the Third Rome. Nikolai Berdiaev, an eminent Russian philosopher, explained: 'The mission of Russia was to be the vehicle of the true Christianity, that is, of Orthodoxy, and the shrine in which it was treasured'.⁴⁸ A key conviction of the Russian Idea is that the country's traditions provide a blueprint for its future, centred on the Orthodox faith, with its collectivism and spirituality, epitomised by the concept of *sobornost*.

⁴⁵ Elites were more likely to identify Russia with the USSR than the average citizen. See the analysis in V. N. Ivanov, "Mezhnatsional'naia napriazhennost' v regional'nom aspekte", *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, no. 7 (1993), 58-66.

⁴⁶ Shlapentokh notes: 'nowhere has the transition in status from ruling nation to discriminated against minority been so nearly instantaneous as in the USSR in 1990-1991'. Vladimir Shlapentokh, "Preface" in *The New Russian Diaspora: Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Republics*, ed. V. Shlapentokh, M. Sendich, and E. Payin, London: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, xx.

⁴⁷ Williams argues that at the heart of the Russian Idea is the concept of the unique 'Russian soul' (*Russkaia dusha*). Robert C. Williams, *Russia Imagined: Art, Culture, and National Identity, 1840-1995*, New York: Peter Lang, 1999, 3-18.

Boris Yeltsin demonstrated his conviction that the Russian Idea could provide a unifying concept for the nation when he announced a competition for a text formulating an '*ideia dlia Rossii*' ('idea for Russia') on the front page of *Rossiiskaia gazeta* in mid-1996, alongside a reproduction of a painting by Il'ia Glazunov, a nationalist artist.⁴⁹ The challenge elicited responses from a range of writers. Later, Putin predicted that 'a new Russian idea will come about as an organic unification of universal general humanitarian values with the traditional Russian values that have stood the test of time..'.⁵⁰ Political and religious figures appealing to national identity frequently argue that Russia is culturally incompatible with the west. Hegumen Hilarion Alfeev, from the Patriarchate's External Relations Department, cites Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' thesis, which identifies nine 'civilisational poles', among them Orthodox and western, to support his claims that western ideas are incompatible with (Orthodox) Russian ideas.⁵¹ These examples demonstrate the perceived salience of the concept of a unique Russian Idea, rooted in Orthodox spirituality.

The most fundamental split in competing visions of Russia's future remains the Slavophile/Westerniser divide. Slavophile (*slavianofil*) thought emerged in the 1830s and 1840s in the work of leading writers. Slavophiles looked to the institutions of Russia's past, especially the Orthodox tradition, the communal village and the powerful state, for inspiration. The Orthodox heritage was central to their claims that Russia has a unique spiritual character that sets it apart from, and elevates it above, the west. Western Christianity was derided as corrupted by rationalism and individualism. According to Ivan Kireevskii (1806-1856), it was 'distorted' by 'individual thought'.⁵²

⁴⁸ Nikolai Berdayev, *The Russian Idea*, trans. R. M. French, London: G. Bles, Centenary Press, 1947, 8.

⁴⁹ Anatolii Iurkov, "Kto my? Kuda idem?", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 30 July 1996, 1-2.

⁵⁰ These traditional Russian values are listed as patriotism (he is careful to distinguish this from nationalism), 'the greatness of Russia', statism and social solidarity. Vladimir Putin, "Rossiia na rubezhe tysiacheletia", *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 31 December 1999, 4-5.

⁵¹ Hilarion Alfeev, "Reviving the Russian Orthodox Church: A Task Both Theological and Secular" in *Russia's Fate Through Russian Eyes: Voices of the New Generation*, ed. Heyward Isham and Natan M. Shklyar, Boulder: Westview Press, 2001, 240-42, Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (1993), 22-50.

⁵² Ivan Vasilevich Kireevsky, "A Reply to A. S. Khomyakov" in *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, ed. W. J. Leatherbarrow and D. C. Offord, Ardis: Ann Arbor, 1987, 82.

Slavophiles regarded Catholics as losing their freedom to the Pope, and Protestants as overcome by individualism so that they were atomised and alienated, lacking the communality integral to Orthodox spirituality. Aleksii Khomiakov (1804-1860) wrote that 'the Catholic conceives of a Church unity where nothing remains of the Christian's freedom, and the Protestant clings to the sort of freedom under which the unity of the Church completely disappears. We profess a Church which is united and free'.⁵³

The category Westerniser (*zapadniki*) is misleading; there existed no coherent ideology to unite these thinkers. Broadly speaking, Westernisers believed that Russia must compete with and be equal to the west. Though Slavophiles regarded Peter the Great as an enemy for his westernising reforms,⁵⁴ Westernisers regarded these as the first step towards their vision: Timofey Granovsky (1813-1855) wrote that Peter I 'gave us a right to history and almost single-handedly announced our historical calling'.⁵⁵ Westernisers found no value in the 'backwardness' the Slavophiles defended and no sanctity in the 'common people'. Vissarion Belinskii (1811-1848) argued that Russia had no national literature, and that a cultivated elite represented the real Russia, not the common people.⁵⁶ In their view, traditional institutions were retarding development and progress. Belinskii argued that Slavophiles' reverence for Orthodoxy was misplaced; in his 'Letter to N.V. Gogol' he reprimanded the author: 'you have failed to notice that Russia sees her salvation not in mysticism, ascetism, or pietism, but in the advances of civilisation, enlightenment, and humanism'.⁵⁷ Westernisers thus rejected the centrality of Orthodoxy to national life.

⁵³ Aleksii Khomiakov, "On the Church" in *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, ed. W. J. Leatherbarrow and D. C. Offord, Ardis: Ann Arbor, 1987, 91.

⁵⁴ Slavophiles argued that Peter I introduced reforms alien to the Russian way of life. Konstantin Aksakov (1817-1860), for instance, believed that 'The state, in the person of Peter, did encroach upon the people, intruding into their lives and customs, and forcibly changing their manners, traditions, and even their dress.' K. S. Aksakov, "Memorandum to Alexander II" in *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, ed. W. J. Leatherbarrow and D. C. Offord, Ardis: Ann Arbor, 1987, 102-95.

⁵⁵ Timofey Granovsky, "On Slavophilism" in *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, ed. W. J. Leatherbarrow and D. C. Offord, Ardis: Ann Arbor, 1987, 178.

⁵⁶ Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka, Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press, 1979, 138-39.

⁵⁷ Vissarion Grigorevich Belinsky, "Letter to N.V. Gogol" in *A Documentary History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, ed. W. J. Leatherbarrow and D. C. Offord, Ardis: Ann Arbor, 1987, 131.

The extreme right emerged as a political force during the Tsarist crisis of 1905-1907.⁵⁸ A number of political groups, collectively known as the Black Hundreds (*Chernosotentsy*), formed, espousing patriotism and loyalty to the monarch, exalting Orthodoxy, and resisting the communists. These groups drew on widespread anti-Semitism for support. The most influential was the *Soiuz Russkogo naroda* (SRN). Walter Laqueur estimated a following of some 3,000 branches at the height of the SRN's influence in 1906/1907, and some 700 pogroms carried out under its direction.⁵⁹ The Black Hundreds dissolved after 1907, when the movement became weaker, though there was continued sympathy for their ideas. The chief legacy of the Black Hundreds was the union of Russian national chauvinism with anti-Semitism.

This became evident in Soviet policy toward Jews in the USSR. Nationality policy in the Soviet Union was guided by the Marxist principle of proletarian internationalism, which eschewed nationalist loyalties to promote a solidarity that transcended divisive national identity on the higher principles of communism. The policy of categorising ethnic identities, which Tishkov labeled 'ethnic engineering',⁶⁰ led to heightened awareness of different ethnic groupings within the USSR. Despite the recognition of diversity, in practice, linguistic Russification, forcible integration of nationalities, and prevalence of Russians in key posts in the republics led to nationalist tensions and inequalities. In addition, official policy discriminated against Jews, identified by the compulsory category of nationality in the Soviet internal passport. The frustrations of the *otkazniki*, Jews subjected to emigration quotas, are well documented, as are state-imposed education and employment restrictions, and the popular belief in a Jewish conspiracy.⁶¹ Laqueur argues that Soviet anti-Zionist campaigns provided

⁵⁸ See Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*, London: Macmillan, 1986, esp. chapter 7: 'The Formation of the Russian Right: 1900-1906', Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993, 16, and Martin Gilbert, *The Jews of Hope: The Plight of Soviet Jewry Today*, New York, London: Penguin Books, 1984.

⁵⁹ Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, 16.

⁶⁰ Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict In and After the Soviet Union*, 15.

⁶¹ Bernard D. Weinryb, "Antisemitism in Soviet Russia" in *The Jews in Soviet Russia Since 1917*, ed. Lionel Kochan, Oxford, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, 308-109, Gilbert, *The Jews of Hope: The Plight of Soviet Jewry Today*.

continuity between old (pre-revolutionary) anti-Semitism and new (Soviet) anti-Semitism.⁶²

The emergence of the village prose (*derevenskaia proza*) literary genre in the 1950s marked the reemergence of Russian nationalist issues in popular consciousness.⁶³ Valentin Rasputin, Vasili Shukshin, Fedor Abramov and others broke with the socialist realist model that defined officially sanctioned publications. Village prose writers emphasised Russians' connection with nature and the soil by glorifying the peasant and life in the countryside. According to Abramov: 'The village is that centuries-old soil out of which has grown the whole of our national culture – its ethics, folklore and literature'.⁶⁴ The countryside was portrayed as pure and unsullied, in stark contrast to the cities, which were defiled by technology and progress. Implicit was the accusation that the Soviet regime had destroyed the environment and alienated Russians from their primordial connection with the land. For one literary critic, the 'phenomenon of village prose' represented not just a literary theme, but a new philosophical and ethical program, and a collective manifesto for a new conception of life.⁶⁵

The significance of Russian nationalism as a force in Soviet politics was brought to the attention of western scholars with the publication of John Dunlop's *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (1983). Dunlop noted the intimate link between Orthodoxy and nationalism, and emphasised that it had a mass dimension. He warned that there were a variety of nationalist groups in the Soviet Union, and that, despite the regime's attempts to quash nationalist loyalties, there were chauvinistic tendencies

⁶² Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, 110.

⁶³ Nicolai Petro argues that the emphasis on ecology, history and tradition opened discussion of national identity, pride and national characteristics, which developed into national movements and a new ideology for the opposition. Nicolai N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1995, 104-05. Some writers fail to make the connection between Russian nationalism and village prose writing, for example Mikhail Agursky, "The Attitude to Religion in the New Russian Literature", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1982), 145-55.

⁶⁴ Ivetta Nikolaevna Kniazeva, *Discussing Soviet Literature: Interviews with Soviet Writers and Poets*, Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1978, 30.

⁶⁵ Viktor Chalmaev, "'Vozdushnaia vozdviglas' arka...'", *Voprosy literatury*, no. 6 (1985), 73.

strong enough to pose a challenge to the ideological monopoly of the regime.⁶⁶ Aleksandr Ianov became a pariah for Russian nationalists when he argued that, beginning in the 1960s, a new right ideology was born simultaneously among dissidents and regime, which amounted to a convergence between the 'dissident New Right' and the 'establishment New Right'. Both came to express a 'militaristic-imperialist' nationalism.⁶⁷ As late as 1990, Stephen Carter also urged western political scientists not to underrate the influence of nationalism across the length and breadth of the political spectrum.⁶⁸

These appeals not to underestimate the strength of Russian national chauvinism were vindicated by events after the collapse of the Soviet Union. There was a rich ideological armory for the radical right to draw upon: Russian messianism, the religious philosophy of the Slavophiles, the anti-Semitism of the Black Hundreds, Soviet anti-Zionist policy and the religio-ecological bent of the village prose writers. While there is disagreement over the extent to which Russian national chauvinism was informed by indigenous intellectual traditions,⁶⁹ this chauvinism was by no means new, leading Laqueur to observe: 'The mixture may be novel, [but] not the ingredients'.⁷⁰ In each instance, the Orthodox Church was at the base of claims to national superiority.

Types of Nationalists

It is difficult to classify Russian nationalists into distinct types, partly due to the disordered political spectrum in the immediate post-Soviet period (when 'left' and 'right' were rendered all but meaningless), curious alliances, shifting allegiances, and the immaturity of the pluralist political system, and partly due to the crude, often contradictory, nature of extremists' platforms. Some tendencies are easily labeled;

⁶⁶ John Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

⁶⁷ Alexander Yanov, *The Russian New Right: Right-wing Ideologies in the Contemporary USSR*, trans. Stephen P. Dunn, Berkely: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1978.

⁶⁸ Stephen K. Carter, *Russian Nationalism: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, London: Pinter, 1990.

⁶⁹ Stephen Shenfield argues that there is no Russian tradition of fascism: 'the crucial handicap and guilty secret of Russian fascism is that it is not really very Russian' (p.259). This is the central thesis of his monograph: Stephen D. Shenfield, *Russian Fascism: Tradition, Tendencies, Movements*, New York, London: M.E. Sharpe, 2001.

⁷⁰ Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, xvi.

National Bolsheviks are easily identified by their fusion of communism and nationalism and their affection for the Soviet state. Gennadii Ziuganov's curious mix of Orthodox piety, Russian chauvinism and communist nationalism defies convenient description. It is tempting to follow the lead of Jeremy Lester, who recognised the complexity of proposing a typology of nationalists and collectively referred to the post-Soviet right as 'Russophiles'.⁷¹

This discussion is possible due to one key feature uniting this diverse group: the perceived relevance of Russian Orthodoxy. Regardless of where on the political spectrum they lie, national chauvinists seek the rehabilitation of the Orthodox faith and spirituality in the life of their country, and continue to view Orthodoxy as a unique faith with a universal role.⁷² National chauvinists draw heavily, in some cases primarily, on Orthodoxy for support of their platforms.

Neo-Slavophilism, especially the views of its leading exponent, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, warrants elaboration here, before the consideration of national chauvinism in different spheres of postcommunist life. In 1976, Philip Walters, recognising the rise of Russian nationalism, ventured: 'Neo-Slavophilism is a system of ideas which could well supplant a moribund Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union'.⁷³ Like their predecessors, neo-Slavophiles emphasise the relevance of traditional Russian institutions. The west is regarded as a pariah for misunderstanding Russian culture and seeking to impose alien political and economic forms in Russia. They deride the reformist postcommunist leadership for the same reasons.

⁷¹ Jeremy Lester, *Modern Tsars and Princes: The Struggle for Hegemony in Russia*, London, New York: Verso, 1995, 128-68.

⁷² There are exceptions to this rule, notably a neo-paganist and anti-Christian *Pamiat'* faction. Vladimir Pribylovskii, *Russkie Natsional-Patrioticheskie (Etnokraticheskie) i Pravo-Radikal'nye Organizatsii*, Moscow: Panorama, 1994, 12.

⁷³ Philip Walters, "A New Creed for Russians? The Ideas of the Neo-Slavophiles", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1976), 20.

In *Rebuilding Russia*, Solzhenitsyn promoted the *zemstvo*, the traditional village institution which neo-Slavophiles believe embodies genuine local self-government.⁷⁴ He derided the west for its interference in the postcommunist reforms in Russia and criticised the reformist leadership: 'We are today creating a cruel beastly, criminal society - much, much worse than the Western examples we [intellectuals and reformers] are attempting to imitate.'⁷⁵

Solzhenitsyn advocated spiritual freedom above the political: 'Politics must not swallow up all of a people's spiritual and creative energies. Beyond upholding its *rights*, mankind must defend its soul, freeing it for reflection and feeling'.⁷⁶ Judith Devlin argues that it is this concern for religious liberty that sets Solzhenitsyn apart from other right-wing nationalists.⁷⁷ It is, however, his view of spiritual freedom as more important than democracy that aligns him with these same nationalists, and has been a key object of criticism by Solzhenitsyn's detractors in the democratic camp.

Solzhenitsyn demonstrated his preoccupation with protecting a Slavic identity in *The Russian Question* (1995).⁷⁸ A key part of Russia's degradation is 'the process of pushing Orthodoxy out of Russian life altogether...', exacerbated by the threat from foreign confessions.⁷⁹ He advocated the formation of a union of eastern Slavs, comprised of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and parts of Kazakhstan populated primarily by Russians,⁸⁰ and chastised the government for not protecting the rights of the Russian

⁷⁴ Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals*, trans. Alexis Klimoff, London: Harvill, 1990, 75-76. *Rebuilding Russia* was first published as 'Kak Nam Obustroit' Rossiyu?' in *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* and *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 18 September 1990. See also the report on a 1995 speech at a Kremlin conference, where Solzhenitsyn argued that *zemstva* were the key to empowering and franchising rural Russians. Elena Tregubova, "'Grazhdanin - eto prezhde vsego zhitel" Rossiiskie regiony vybiraiut Solzhenitsyna", *Segodnia*, 18 February 1995, 1.

⁷⁵ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *"The Russian Question" at the End of the Twentieth Century*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995, 100.

⁷⁶ Original italics. Solzhenitsyn, *Rebuilding Russia*, 44.

⁷⁷ Judith Devlin, *Slavophiles and Commissars: Enemies of Democracy in Modern Russia*, London: Macmillan Press, 1999, 69.

⁷⁸ Solzhenitsyn's perceived shift toward more nationalistic concerns in *"The Russian Question"* is criticised by reviewer Tatyana Tolstaya: 'Even Soviet imperialism, in its post-Stalinist version, seems softer, more humane, clearly more democratic than Solzhenitsyn's version [of Russia's policy toward the FSU]'. Tatyana Tolstaya, "Russian Lessons" *New York Review of Books*, 19 October 1995, 9.

⁷⁹ Solzhenitsyn, *"The Russian Question" at the End of the Twentieth Century*, 100.

⁸⁰ This was first proposed in *Rebuilding Russia*.

diaspora.⁸¹ He lamented the declining population: 'We [Russians] are dying out.... who knows if in another century the time may come to cross the word "Russian" out of the dictionary'.⁸² In the final sentences of the manifesto Solzhenitsyn argued that the preservation of the Russian people is the most important task in modern Russia.⁸³

Solzhenitsyn differs from national chauvinists in his view that Russia should not have an empire. David Rowley argues that this is only a minor difference between Solzhenitsyn and extreme nationalists (he argues the latter are best termed 'Imperialists'): 'There is surely no representative democracy in the world today in which Solzhenitsyn would not occupy a position on the extreme right'.⁸⁴ These views vindicate earlier arguments by Aleksandr Ianov that Solzhenitsyn was representative of a dangerous nationalist trend.⁸⁵ Both analyses overstate the point: though Solzhenitsyn does vilify the west, his writing has not shown the vehemence characteristic of extreme nationalists. In addition, his scapegoating is focused on the west and western-orientated reformers, and does not extend to other 'pet' enemies of the extreme right: Jews, masons and Caucasians. Neo-Slavophilism has not become a predominant political force. There is a palpable tiredness with Solzhenitsyn's ideas, evident from the reaction to his television programme *Vstrechi s Aleksandrom Solzhenitsynym* (*Meetings with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*).⁸⁶ Neo-Slavophilism has been eclipsed by more extreme nationalist formulations.

⁸¹ Solzhenitsyn, *"The Russian Question" at the End of the Twentieth Century*, 89. See also the transcript of a telephone call-in, in which Solzhenitsyn spoke to a Russian resident of Kazakhstan about the deprivation imposed on Russian residents by the Kazakh government, and his continued belief in a union of Russia and parts of Kazakhstan. Editorial, "Conversations with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (*Komsomolskaia pravda*, 23 April 1996, pp.3-4)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 28, no. 19 (1996), 17-18.

⁸² Solzhenitsyn, *"The Russian Question" at the End of the Twentieth Century*, 105.

⁸³ Solzhenitsyn, *"The Russian Question" at the End of the Twentieth Century*, 108.

⁸⁴ David G. Rowley, "Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Russian Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 32, no. 3 (1997), 336.

⁸⁵ Ianov wrote: 'does not the logic of [Solzhenitsyn's] struggle against democracy (both as a doctrine and political practice) lead – in the final analysis – to the justification of even the most extreme, totalitarian forms of authoritarianism?'. Original italics removed. Yanov, *The Russian New Right: Right-wing Ideologies in the Contemporary USSR*, 7.

⁸⁶ His ideas have frequently been described as tired and outdated since his return to Russia in 1994. Kedrov wrote: 'a genius can not always be a genius. Inspiration, like love, passes...'. Konstantin Kedrov, "Poniatna tol'ko bol'... Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn na telekrane", *Izvestiia*, 20 September 1995, 5. There were similar reactions to his 1994 Duma address: his speech was 'listened to with polite attention that stemmed from nothing more, it seems, than respect for the speaker himself and his hard won right to

A number of nationalist-monarchist organisations were established in the early 1990s, among them the All-Russia Monarchist Centre and the Union of Christian Regeneration, founded by former dissident Vladimir Osipov. The rehabilitation of Tsar Nicholas II led to a rise in support for the royal family, evident through the proliferation of Tsarist memorabilia, popular among Russians as well as tourists. However, as Devlin points out, for most Russians this was more an interest in a previously forbidden past than it was a viable political alternative: 'Monarchism remained the domain of a small number of authoritarian nationalists'.⁸⁷ There was also increasing support for the claim by radical nationalists that Jews murdered the royal family.⁸⁸ The Union of Christian Regeneration fielded candidates in the 1990 elections to the Congress of People's Deputies, though was unable to gain enough signatures for representation at subsequent elections.

Monarchist organisations drew on the Black Hundreds' tradition as much as on the Orthodox tradition. Anti-Semitic elements were prevalent among their number. The Union of Christian Regeneration co-organised an anti-Semitic monarchist conference and had links to the *Pamiat'* National-Orthodox Movement. Members of the Union blamed the mythical Jewish-Masonic mafia for the death of the royal family and the Soviet experience. A link between monarchist and Orthodox concerns was made at the World Russian National Council, convened under the direction of Metropolitan Kirill. The merging of monarchist, Orthodox and nationalist sentiments was evident in a document adopted by a 1993 Assembly, which read: 'The monarchy, the centuries-old form of governance in Russia, serves as the optimal historical sample of governance'. Similar sentiments were expressed at the Third World Russian National Assembly in

say anything he likes'. Valerii Vyzhutovich, "Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn kak zerkalo obshchestvennogo smiateniia", *Izvestiia*, 1 November 1994, 4. For an opposing view, see the account of Solzhenitsyn's 'wildly successful with regional representatives' address at the All-Russia Conference 'On Questions Concerning the Implementation of the Constitutional Provisions on Local Self-Government and the Organisation of State Power in Members of the Russian Federation': Tregubova, "Grazhdanin – eto prezhe vsego zhitel" Rossiiskie regiony vybiraiut Solzhenitsyna", 1.

⁸⁷ Devlin, *Slavophiles and Commissars*, 76-77.

⁸⁸ See, for example, Igor' Shafarevich, *Rusofobiia*, Moscow: Tovarishchestvo russkikh khudozhnikov, 1991, 74.

December 1995, this time with Patriarch Aleksii at its head and Kirill as his deputy. The Final Document called for the protection of ethnic Russians against anti-Russian forces.⁸⁹

National chauvinists argue that Orthodoxy and Russian ethnicity are inextricably connected. Aleksandr Borisov, an Orthodox priest and a liberal figure, captured the pragmatism of the post-Soviet appropriation of Orthodoxy by extreme nationalists:

Former members of Komsomol [the Communist Party Youth Organisation] now call themselves Orthodox. They say, 'I don't know if I'm a believer, but I know that I am Orthodox'. They trumpet, 'We're first, we're the best, and we're surrounded by enemies'. Just like under the Communists. The psychology of these people is that of an 'Orthodox nationalist'. They believe that Moscow is the Third Rome.⁹⁰

National chauvinists promulgate an exclusive Russian identity where there is no room for other faiths; hence the backlash against the purported Protestant incursion and support for restrictive religious legislation.⁹¹ It follows that figures who promote reform within the Church, especially advocates of ecumenism, are regarded as traitors to the Russian Church and so to the nation. It is no surprise that Gleb' Iakunin and Zoia Krakmal'nikova are targets of hatred, Krakmal'nikova all the more so as a Jewish convert to Orthodoxy. National chauvinists believe the Soviet experiment and the post-Soviet socio-economic crises are the result of interference in Russia's affairs and find conspirators in their traditional enemies. The most easily identifiable feature of national chauvinists is the rhetoric of blame that derives from the search for scapegoats.

There were, of course, proponents of secular chauvinist ideologies, which did not have Orthodoxy at the core of their ideologies. Eurasianism, a movement that developed among the émigré community in the inter-war period, enjoyed a resurgence. Eurasianists argue that Russia has a unique position between Europe and Asia and should isolate

⁸⁹ Cited in Valerii Senderov, "Natsional-patrioty i Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov: Vsemirnyi Russkii Narodny Sobor" in *Dia-Logos: Religii i obshchestvo*, 1997, ed. Mark Smirnov, Moscow: Istina i Zhizn', 1997, 119.

⁹⁰ Cited in John Dunlop, "Orthodoxy and National Identity in Russia (2000)" (Web site). Accessed 1 December 2000 at http://www.wysiwyg://64/http://eshcolarship.cdlib.org/ias/bonnell/bonnell_du.htm.

⁹¹ See, for example, Andrei Riumin, "Pravoslavnaia gruzia otvergaet ekumenizm...", *Zavtra*, 1997, 5.

itself from the two continents.⁹² Eurasianism promotes a multi-ethnic state, departing from the emphasis on nationality of Russian chauvinists. The statist also advocated what can be described as secular nationalism, and comprised a significant opposition force in the late 1980s and early 1990s. At the core was an imperialist mentality that called for the maintenance of the Soviet state, with Moscow as its centre, which did not rest on religious justifications for Russian dominance. These two nationalist trends enjoyed less support than forms of radical nationalism that emphasised ethnicity.

Orthodoxy and National Chauvinism in the Cultural and Intellectual Spheres

A number of leading cultural figures espoused chauvinistic principles that had anti-Semitism or Russian Orthodoxy at their core. When Igor' Shafarevich's treatise *Rusofobiia* (*Russophobia*), which had been circulating in *samizdat* since 1982, was published in *Nash sovremennik* in 1989, nationalists adopted the title 'Russophobia' as their main label for the alleged anti-Russian sentiment of those whom they identified as enemies. Shafarevich, a world-renowned mathematician, was also a prominent dissident, contributing to *From under the Rubble* (1963) alongside Andrei Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn. Robert Horvath argues that *Rusofobiia* was a highly influential text, which rehabilitated the view that there exists a link between a Jewish conspiracy and the decline of the Russian nation. Horvath finds proof in the proliferation of the term among radical nationalists: 'For the red-brown alliance, "Russophobia" had been indispensable not only as invective, but as a theory to explain the collapse of their world'.⁹³ Particularly influential was Shafarevich's thesis about the 'big people' and the 'small people'; small people instigate social change, despite their minority views, by maintaining disproportionate influence over the majority (big people).⁹⁴ This reference to Russians suffering under the influence of a well-organised Jewish minority is a central theme of Russian anti-Semites. *Rusofobiia* was a key tract for national chauvinist forces;

⁹² David Kerr, "The New Eurasianism: The Rise of Geo-Politics in Russian Foreign Policy", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 47, no. 6 (1995), 977-88.

⁹³ Robert Horvath, "The Specter of Russophobia", *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*, vol. 25, no. 2 (1998), 219-21.

⁹⁴ Shafarevich, *Rusofobiia*.

it was cited approvingly by Viktor Aksiuchits, among others.⁹⁵ The anti-Semitic conspiracy theories by a well known mathematician lent a new legitimacy and a sophisticated veneer to ideas that were no different from those promulgated by the Black Hundreds. Shafarevich's critics included Krakhmal'nikova, who condemned his pretense at piety and *Rusofobiia*'s 'anti-Christian ideology'.⁹⁶

In the late 1980s the link between *derevenskaia proza* themes and national chauvinism became evident when prominent writers, among them Valentin Rasputin, showed that they were sympathetic to *Pamiat'*,⁹⁷ and, in turn, *Pamiat'* ideologues, among them Konstantin Smimov-Ostashvili, proclaimed Rasputin to be a 'real' Russian writer.⁹⁸ In his work *Rossia: dni i vremena*, Rasputin located the origins of Russian national culture in the baptism of Rus' and argued that Russia should not emulate the west, which was spiritually impoverished and intent on destroying Russia. It was essential to reinvigorate the Russian Idea.

Another high profile cultural figure linking Orthodoxy and national chauvinism was the artist Il'ia Glazunov. In the 1970s and 1980s Glazunov pushed the boundaries of what was acceptable to censors by including Orthodox and monarchist themes in his work. In 1994, Yeltsin visited a Glazunov exhibition at the Manezh and praised his works, including a painting titled 'Russia, Awake!', as displaying a 'spirit of optimistic patriotism'.⁹⁹ The painting 'Eternal Russia' was reproduced in the publicity materials that announced the competition to formulate an *ideia dlia Rossii*. It depicts hundreds of figures from Russia's history. A river of blood divides the painting. On one side are figures the artist has sympathy for: Orthodox saints, icons, the monarchy, and military and cultural figures. These are historical figures and institutions favoured by nationalists. On the other side is heavy industry, a statue of Peter the Great, Soviet

⁹⁵ Horvath, "The Specter of Russophobia", 208.

⁹⁶ Zoia Krakhmal'nikova, "Rusofobiia, khristianstvo, antisemitizm. Zametki ob antiruskoi idee", *Neva*, no. 8 (1990), 167.

⁹⁷ Carter, *Russian Nationalism: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 122.

⁹⁸ Vladimir Vigilianskii, Oleg Khlebnikov, and Andrei Chernov, "Deti Sharikova", *Ogonek*, no. 5 (1990), 2-3.

⁹⁹ Cited in Evgeniia Al'bats, "El'tsin v manezhe", *Izvestiia*, 22 July 1994, 4.

propaganda figures and labour camps. It has been alleged that Glazunov financially supports national chauvinist organisations.¹⁰⁰

Orthodoxy and National Chauvinism in the Political Sphere

A measure of the success of attempts to appropriate Orthodoxy for extreme nationalist causes is the degree to which religious themes have been co-opted by mainstream political figures. Vladimir Wozniuk noted that in the postcommunist period, religious, and particularly Orthodox, interests

have not only been making a comeback, but are increasingly courted openly as valuable political allies. They are viewed as potentially contributing to a redefinition and reshaping of Russia within, and, perhaps, even eventually assisting in creating a new Russian mission to the world.¹⁰¹

The expression of Orthodox piety demonstrates a reverence for Russian tradition and culture. Both Yeltsin and Putin have made visible their support for the Moscow Patriarchate (see Chapter 4). The following analysis focuses on the appropriation of Orthodoxy by two well-known national chauvinist politicians, Gennadii Ziuganov, leader of the Communist Party (KPRF), and Vladimir Zhirinovskii, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR).

The resurgence of the KPRF since Yeltsin banned it in 1991 has been a notable political phenomenon. The KPRF has the largest membership of any party. In the 1996 presidential election, Ziuganov received 32 per cent of the votes, forcing a second round, while in the 2000 presidential election, Ziuganov received 29.2 per cent of the votes. Zhirinovskii's party was successful in the 1993 and 1995 Duma elections, though not as strong in the 1999 elections, a result of a swing away from nationalist-patriotic and towards communist-agrarian parties. After the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections, in which Zhirinovskii received 5.7 per cent and 2.7 per cent of the vote respectively, it became evident that Zhirinovskii himself was a spent political force.¹⁰² He remains one

¹⁰⁰ Al'bats, "El'tsin v manezhe", 4.

¹⁰¹ Wozniuk, "In Search of Ideology", 196.

¹⁰² Tsentral'naia izbiratel'naia komissii Rossiiskoi Federatsii, "Vybory Prezidenta Rossiiskoi federatsii 26 marta 2000 goda" (Web site). Accessed 30 August 2001 at <http://www.fci.ru/prez2000/default.htm>, Tsentral'naia izbiratel'naia komissii Rossiiskoi Federatsii.

of the most recognisable figures in Russian politics, as much for his unpredictable antics as for his position as vice-speaker in the Duma. Imperialist, anti-reformist and xenophobic discourse dominate the rhetoric of the two party leaders. Their references to religious themes demonstrate the perceived pragmatism of invoking Orthodox themes.¹⁰³

Ziuganov was a central figure in the political hybrid of communism and nationalism referred to as the 'red-brown alliance'. He recognised the political mileage of incorporating Orthodoxy into his nationalistic and class-based rhetoric, prompting Lester to observe: 'no one has done more than Zyuganov to construct a symbiotic connection between communism and religion, with Islam and Buddhism, and most importantly of all, of course, with the most dominant of all of Russia's religions – Orthodox Christianity'.¹⁰⁴ The frequent reference to Russia's traditions and culture and the concern to present that party as one of patriots has led one commentator to refer to Ziuganov as a 'cultural nationalist'.¹⁰⁵

In a 1995 interview Ziuganov spoke of his frequent contact with Metropolitan Ioann, a high-profile anti-Semitic prelate, and his support among Orthodox hierarchy, clergy and laity. Ziuganov also referred to the KPRF's 'respect' for Orthodoxy, the need to protect the Church from foreign interlopers, and Orthodoxy and the Russian Idea: 'At the basis of the Russian idea lie two fundamental values – Russian spirituality, which is unthinkable without the Orthodox world view, and awareness of our true purpose on

"Rezultaty golosovaniia za kandidatov v Prezidenty po Rossii v tselom (2000)" (Web site). Accessed 30 August 2001 at <http://www.fci.ru/archive/pr96/00961101.htm>.

¹⁰³ Both were speakers at the Fifth World Russian People's Council in December 1999, held at St Daniel's Monastery and chaired by Patriarch Aleksii, the theme of which was 'Russia on the Eve of the 2000th Anniversary of the Church: Faith, People, Power'. See the report on the Council: "The Fifth World Russian People's Council (2000)" (Web site) Accessed 20 August 2001 at <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/ne912071.htm>

¹⁰⁴ Jeremy Lester, "Overdosing on Nationalism: Gennadii Zyuganov and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation", *New Left Review*, no. 221 (1997), 38.

¹⁰⁵ Flikke explains: 'Cultural nationalism is an ideological force which aspires to legitimacy not on behalf of a nation or a state but on behalf of a volatile cultural-historical entity'. Geir Flikke, "Patriotic Left-Centrism: The Zigzags of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 51, no. 2 (1999), 275, 91.

earth, and Russian power and statehood'.¹⁰⁶ In this statement Ziuganov appropriates many of the traditional religious elements of Russian nationalism. Ziuganov also identifies a 'genuine invasion of false prophets'.¹⁰⁷ He opens the section on religion in his political autobiography with the statement: 'Russian culture in general and the Orthodox Church in particular are currently the targets of constant attacks by the opponents of our statehood',¹⁰⁸ and writes: 'The Orthodox Church is under an intense offensive by these foreign religions, which clearly enjoy the support of the current [Yeltsin] regime'.¹⁰⁹ He thus positions himself as a protector of national culture.

Ziuganov has aligned himself with radical nationalist and anti-Semitic bodies such as the All-Russian People's Union, the Russian National Assembly, and the National Salvation Front. He expressed anti-Semitic sentiments when, paradoxically, he warned against fascism and appealed to the KPRF leaders to denounce anti-Semitism. He called for continued vigilance against Zionism, which he likened to Hitlerite Nazism, and continued:

Communists did not invent this problem, which really exists. Our people are not blind. They cannot but see that the Zionization of the governmental authorities of Russia was one of the causes of the present-day catastrophic situation in which the country is, of the mass impoverishment and extinction of its population. They cannot close their eyes to the aggressive destructive role of Zionist capital in the disruption of the economy of Russia and in the misappropriation of its national property. They are right when they ask the question as to how it could happen that the key positions in several branches of [the] economy were seized during privatization mainly by representatives of one nationality [the oligarchs who rose out of the loans-for-shares schemes]. They see that control over most of the electronic mass media, which wage a destructive struggle against our Fatherland, morality, language, culture and beliefs, is concentrated in the hands of the same persons.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ O. Nikolsky, "The Path of Goodness and Righteousness (*Pravda Rossii*, 5 October 1995, p.2)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 97, no. 41 (1995), 4-5. The interview was first printed in *Pravoslavnaia Moskva (Orthodox Moscow)*.

¹⁰⁷ Nikolsky, "The Path of Goodness and Righteousness (*Pravda Rossii*, 5 October 1995, p.2)", 5.

¹⁰⁸ Gennady Zyuganov, *My Russia: The Political Autobiography of Gennady Zyuganov*, ed. Vadim Medish, Armonk, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1997, 9.

¹⁰⁹ He identifies Aum Shinrikyo, the Unification Church, Scientology and 'tele-evangelists' as the attackers. Zyuganov, *My Russia: The Political Autobiography of Gennady Zyuganov*, 10.

¹¹⁰ Genadii Ziuganov, "Statement by the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (19 December 1998)" (Web site). Union of Councils of Soviet Jews. Accessed 30 December 2000 at <http://www.fsmonitor.com/stories/122998zyug.shtml>. See also

Wendy Slater cites an anonymous source when she asserts that Metropolitan Ioann's ghostwriters also wrote for Ziuganov and Aleksandr Rutskoi.¹¹¹

The LDPR's slogan, 'Russia for the Russians' ('*Rossia dlia russkikh*'), says much about its imperialist and nationalist platform, though as a factor contributing to the LDPR's popular appeal this platform is secondary to the personality of the party's charismatic leader. Zhirinovskii has paid scant attention to religious issues, except to pay lip service to the centrality of Orthodoxy and to warn that Russia is under attack by foreign religious bodies. Zhirinovskii has been successful in tapping into a feeling of national humiliation, particularly over Russia's loss of international status. His appeal to this sentiment is evident in an oft-cited passage in his political autobiography: 'I dream of Russian soldiers washing their boots in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and changing to their summer uniforms forever'.¹¹² The coat of arms of the LDPR depicts Russia, Finland and Alaska as one territory under Russian control. Zhirinovskii gained notoriety for his undisciplined behaviour and anti-Semitic remarks; the latter have been all the more remarkable in the light of his Jewish ancestry.¹¹³ Comparisons between Zhirinovskii and Hitler are misinformed.¹¹⁴ Zhirinovskii is regarded as the clown of Russian politics, and many right-wing political forces are loath to be associated with him for this reason. Nevertheless, Zhirinovskii has inspired white-supremacist literature,

Zyuganov, *My Russia: The Political Autobiography of Gennady Zyuganov*, 85, when Ziuganov rallies against the 'fifth column', the 'agents of influence' that are promoting a 'new world order'. It should also be noted that when Ziuganov refers to Russia's revival he says there 'will be a place for everyone' and mentioned Orthodox and Muslims, but omitted Jews (p.84).

¹¹¹ Wendy Slater, "A Modern-Day Saint? Metropolitan Ioann and the Postsoviet Russian Orthodox Church", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2000), 318.

¹¹² Italics removed. Vladimir Zhirinovskii, *Poslednii brosok na iug*, Moscow: Liberal'no-demokraticheskaiia partiia, 1993, 142.

¹¹³ An anti-Semitic brochure by Zhirinovskii's former associate claims that many LDPR deputies are Jewish. Eduard Limonov, *Limonov Protiv Zhirinovskogo*, Moscow: Konets veka, 1994. In their discussion of Zhirinovskii's Jewish heritage, the authors make a connection between his early wish to conceal his ancestry and his anti-Semitism later in life. See the chapters 'The Secret Jews' and 'An Acquired Complex: Russians a Minority' in Vladimir Solovyov and Elena Klepikova, *Zhirinovskii: Russian Fascism and the Making of a Dictator*, trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick, Reading (MA): Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995, 23-52.

¹¹⁴ See these misunderstandings in David W. Lovell, "Nationalism and Democratisation in Post-Communist Russia" in *Russia After Yeltsin*, ed. Vladimir Tikhomirov, Aldershot, Burlington, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate, 2001, 49.

such as printed in the paper *Sokol Zhirinovskogo* (*Zhirinovskii's Falcon*).¹¹⁵ Since the LDPR rose to prominence in the 1993 elections, Zhirinovskii has been instrumental in bringing national chauvinist themes into the parliamentary arena and thus into mainstream politics.

Popular Attitudes

The extent of Orthodox self-identification, the number of Orthodox religious associations, and the popularity of cultural and political figures espousing a link between Orthodoxy and national interest have been explored at various points throughout this dissertation. It has been argued that Russian Orthodoxy is a prominent feature of Russian spiritual, cultural and political life. Alexander Agadjanian points to the importance of the 'growing mass receptiveness of Orthodox symbolic identity as a part of "nation-ness"'.¹¹⁶ This section will consider the linkage of religious and national identity in popular attitudes, especially through attitudes toward religious minorities.

The majority of Russians identify themselves as Orthodox believers.¹¹⁷ A survey on religion and national identity, undertaken in 1999, found that 75 per cent of respondents identified themselves as Orthodox, only 59 per cent identified themselves as believers in God, while 40 per cent identified themselves as just 'believers'.¹¹⁸ There were more self-identified Orthodox than either believers in God or simply believers. This points to a trend to identify as Orthodox regardless of religious belief, thus pointing to a high level of ethno-national linkage in the public consciousness.

For nationalists, Jews serve as the archetypal 'other' in relation to this Orthodox Russian identity. This is evident in numerous publications which wed Orthodoxy with anti-Semitism, drawing on Orthodox symbolism such as the use of Slavonic font, the

¹¹⁵ See Andrei Arkhipov, "Novyi poriadok: parallel'nye iskoropleniia", *Sokol Zhirinovskogo*, 1992, 8-9 in Roger Griffin, ed., *Fascism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 297-299.

¹¹⁶ Alexander Agadjanian, "Reviving Pandora's Gifts: Religious and National Identity in the Post-Soviet Societal Fabric", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 53, no. 3 (2001), 481.

¹¹⁷ B.V. Dubin, "Pravoslavie v sotsial'nom kontekste", *Informatsionnyi biulleten' monitoringa*, vol. 6, no. 26 (1996), 15-18, Richard Rose, *Russia Elects a President, New Russian Barometer IX*, Glasgow: Centre for Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 2000, 53.

Russian cross, and the onion church domes. Such publications often denounce unfavoured politicians and personalities as Jewish, frequently publishing caricatures with exaggerated features intended to represent their Jewish origins.¹¹⁹

There has been a great deal of interest in fascist ideas in the post-Soviet period. A survey carried out in 2000 found that 7 per cent of respondents aged 18-29 voted for Zhirinovskii, while only 2 per cent in the 30-59 category and 1 per cent in the over-60 category did. Members of national chauvinist organisations, and Zhirinovskii's constituents, are mainly young people.¹²⁰ On the other hand, one commentator concluded from interviews with high-school students in 1995 that young Russians saw Russian identity as inclusive, identifying Russians as *rossiiskii*, not *russkii*.¹²¹ It is probable that, as a result of the intensified Chechen conflict and a palpable increase in xenophobia, these conclusions could be different if the same survey were to be conducted in the late 1990s or early 2000s.

Leading scholars disagree about the presence of anti-Semitism among the adult population. While James Gibson concluded that anti-Semitic sentiment was not high among Russians, and no more so among Russians than Americans,¹²² Robert J. Brym

¹¹⁸ See the table in Kimmo Kääriäinen and Dmitri Furman, "Religiosity in Russia in the 1990s" in *Religious Transition in Russia*, ed. Matti Kotiranta, Helsinki: Kikimora Publications, 2000, 34.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, the drawing of an octopus with exaggerated facial features intended to portray a Jewish influence lying over the Kremlin with its tentacles spread throughout Russia. Above the octopus is a swartny Russian male with a club. The caption reads, 'Kremlin octopus, you are kaput!'. Gennadii Zhivtov, "Illustration", *Zavtra*, September 1999, 1.

¹²⁰ In contrast, 10 per cent of respondents aged 18-29 voted for Ziuganov, while 29 per cent in the 30-59 category and 41 per cent in the over-60 category did. Rose, *Russia Elects a President*, 36.

¹²¹ Fran Markowitz, "Not Nationalists: Russian Teenagers' Soulful A-politics", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 51, no. 7 (1999), 1183-98.

¹²² Gibson concluded a 1994 analysis with the following: 1. The tendency to seek Jewish scapegoats has not materialised in Russia; 2. Few Russians perceive Jews as responsible for the problems of the country; 3. The Russians most likely to hold anti-Semitic views are highly unlikely to influence Russian politics because they come from powerless groups; 4. Few Russians support discrimination against Jews; 5. Anti-Semitism is not more widespread in Russia than it is the United States. James L. Gibson, "Misunderstandings of Anti-Semitism in Russia: An Analysis of the Politics of Anti-Jewish Attitudes", *Slavic Review*, vol. 53, no. 3 (1994), 805-06. See also James L. Gibson, "Understandings of Anti-Semitism in Russia: An Analysis of the Politics of Anti-Jewish Attitudes", *Slavic Review*, vol. 53, no. 3 (1994), 796-806.

argued the opposite.¹²³ Brym contends that the level of anti-Semitism depends on the political climate: 'The fate of Russian Jewry today depends less on the level of anti-Jewish sentiment in the general population than on the policies and perceived needs of the people who control the Duma and especially the Presidency'. Brym labeled this the 'Makashov effect' after noting heightened anti-Semitism following communist deputy Albert Makashov's calls in the Duma for the expulsion of all Jews from Russia. After debate in the Duma, a resolution to condemn his words was overturned by communists and nationalists, representing a defeat for liberal forces and a victory for extremists.¹²⁴

Mark Krasnoselskii, director of the Russian Federation of Jewish Organisations and Religious Congregations Centre for Monitoring Anti-Semitism, estimated in August 1997 that over 50 extremist organisations and 300 periodicals disseminate anti-Semitic propaganda, with a combined print run of several million copies.¹²⁵ Many of these groups call on Orthodoxy for legitimacy. The Russian National Council (RNC), for instance, intends to make Orthodoxy the state religion when they seize power, as well as restrict the rights of non-Orthodox faiths and prevent the distribution of atheist propaganda. It has been reported that the RNC retains close contact with the Moscow Patriarchate and the Old Believers.¹²⁶ Russian National Unity (RNU), the largest neo-Nazi organisation, has sought to 'maintain order' at Orthodox gatherings, apparently with the blessing of 'sympathetic priests and local church officials'.¹²⁷ Authorities have treated these groups lightly: in 1998 a Krasnodar regional court ruled that the RNU cannot be charged as fascist, though its doctrines of Aryan supremacy, violent anti-Semitism, and Hitler worship clearly mark their fascist sympathies.¹²⁸ There has been a

¹²³ Robert J. Brym, "Anti-Semitism in Moscow: A Re-Examination", *Slavic Review*, vol. 53 (1994), 842-55, Robert J. Brym, "Russian Attitudes Towards Jews: An Update", *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 26, no. 1 (1996), 55-64.

¹²⁴ Robert J. Brym, "Russian Anti-Semitism, 1996-2000" (Presented at the Davis Center for Russian Studies, Harvard University: 1999). I am grateful to the author for passing on his paper.

¹²⁵ In comparison, in 1989 there were approximately 35 such publications. Mark Krasnosel'skii, "Est' li budushchee u Evreev v Rossii?", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 29 August 1997, 5.

¹²⁶ Vladimir Sirotin, "The Russian National Council", *Moscow News*, 1-7 July 1994, 6.

¹²⁷ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 143. Russian National Unity has also disrupted gatherings of non-Orthodox confessions such as Seventh Day Adventists. For more on RNU's cooperation with the Orthodox Church see Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 143-44.

¹²⁸ See the article on meeting with RNU members: Stefan Scholl, "Russian Right Extremists Supported by State and Society", *Moscow News*, 2-8 July 1998, 1, 5.

dramatic rise in anti-Semitic violence and property crimes since the 1998 ruble crisis. That these popular attitudes find support within the Church is indicated by the presence of national chauvinists among Orthodox prelates and clergy.

National Chauvinism in the Church

The most widely known nationalist prelate is Metropolitan Ioann, who died aged 68 in November 1995. Ioann was in a position of great influence; he was a permanent member of the Holy Synod and became Metropolitan of St Petersburg and Ladoga after Aleksii vacated the position when elected Patriarch. Ioann had more than two dozen articles published in nationalist newspapers like *Den'* (*Day*, later *Zavtra* [*Tomorrow*]), the self-identified 'paper of the spiritual opposition', *Sovetskaia Rossiia* (*Soviet Russia*), in which he was a regular contributor to the insert *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (*Orthodox Rus'*), and appeared on the television programme *60 Sekund* (*60 Seconds*) in the early 1990s. Ioann's articles replicated the Black Hundreds' conspiracy theories; the demons in his diatribes were the traditional enemies of Russia. This prompted one commentator to compare Ioann with Ioann Sergei, archpriest at Kronshtadt Cathedral in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁹ Ioann Sergei, to whom Ioann of Petersburg and Ladoga made favourable reference, was an honorary member of the *Soiuz Russkogo naroda* and instigator of pogroms.

Ioann frequently referred to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the anti-Semitic forgery of the nineteenth century, lending new legitimacy to a work that was reprinted in large editions in the early 1990s. After noting the controversy surrounding this publication, he wrote:

But whether the Protocols are genuine or not, the 80 years that have gone by since their publication provide abundant material for reflection, because world history, as if obeying the command of an invisible dictator, has submissively pursued its capricious course in astonishingly detailed correspondence with the plans set forth in their pages.¹³⁰

Ioann continued to quote extensively from the *Protocols* to demonstrate that plots similar to those described in it are being played out in post-Soviet Russia. Though the *Protocols*

¹²⁹ Iurii Furmanov, "Strasti po Ioannu - mitropolity i antisemitizm", *Novoe Vremia*, no. 13 (1993), 40-43.

have long been popular with Orthodox figures, this was the first public defence of this work by a prelate.¹³¹ His conclusions are an exemplar of the conspiracy theories that are a feature of most national chauvinist works:

Let's look around: What more proof do we need to realise that a base and dirty war – well funded, carefully planned, unrelenting and merciless – is being waged against Russia, against the Russian people? It is a struggle to the death, for, according to the intent of its diabolical instigators, the entire country – the people as a people – is to be destroyed for being true to its historical mission and its religious devotion....¹³²

In the 1993 article '*Bitva za Rossiю*' ('Battle for Russia') Ioann sought to prove that throughout the country's history,

Russia's enemies repeatedly devised cunning plans to enslave her... It was felt that the most reliable ways of doing this was to deprive Russia of her religious distinctiveness and the sacred traditions of her Orthodox faith, "dissolving" them in western Catholicism.¹³³

This anti-Catholic stance was also evident in an interview when Ioann asserted that Catholicism is 'an ecclesiastical organisation that nurtures hopes of seizing Russia'.¹³⁴

In a 1994 interview Ioann outlined three principles that he believed could regenerate Russia: an imperial ideology, upon which powerful statehood (*derzhavnost'*) is based, *sobornost'*, and religious messianism. Ioann found these three principles in Sergei Uvarov's nineteenth century formula of Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality.¹³⁵

The link between Ioann and members of the national chauvinist movement were made explicit when *Sovetskaia Rossiia* reported that, at a meeting to discuss Ioann's regular contribution *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, leaders of the National Salvation Front were present, as were the editors of *Den'* and *Sovremennik*, two of the most prominent radical

¹³⁰ Mitropolit Ioann, "Ia ne politik, Ia - pastyr", *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 11 June 1993, 3.

¹³¹ Maksim Sokolov, "Peterburgskii vладыka v bor'be s 'sionskimi mudretsami", *Segodnia*, 2 March 1993, 7. For Ioann's defense of the authenticity of the Protocols, see Mitropolit Ioann, "Ia ne politik, Ia - pastyr", 3.

¹³² Mitropolit Ioann, "Ia ne politik, Ia - pastyr", 3.

¹³³ Mitropolit Sankt-Peterburgskii i Ladozhskii Ioann, "Bitva za Rossiю", *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 20 February 1993, 1;4.

¹³⁴ Cited in Leonid Simonovich, "For the Remission of Sins, (*Den'*, 21-27 February 1993, p.5)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 45, no. 8 (1993), 8.

¹³⁵ V. Chikin, "Ostanovim smutu", *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 26 March 1994, 1-2.

nationalist newspapers.¹³⁶ The continued reverence for Ioann clearly contradicts Della Cava's contention that his death effected the demise of support for the 'ultra-nationalist' faction in the Church.¹³⁷ The hagiography of Ioann began immediately after his death, and there have been calls for his canonisation. In his obituary the editors of *Sovetskaia Rossiia* predicted Ioann's words 'would return to us again many times, they will be heard in Russia and accepted with gratitude. With their inextinguishable force of love and faith, they will overthrow its enemies and inspire Russians to heroic deeds'.¹³⁸ Responsibility for a grenade attack on the US Embassy in Moscow in March 1999, part of a campaign against western targets to protest against NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia, was claimed by an extremist group founded in honour of Ioann.¹³⁹

Pospelovskii reports that Ioann privately admitted that he did not write much of the material published under his name.¹⁴⁰ Slater finds evidence for this in Ioann's prolific writing, where apparent expertise in history in some instances contrasts with mediocre scholarship in others. Slater asserts that many of the texts signed by Ioann were written by his 'Press Service', under the leadership of Konstantin Dushenov, a layman and leader of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods. (Dushenov was also present at the aforementioned meeting.) According to Slater, the Press Service also comprised three or four close collaborators, eight to ten regular contributors and a number of academic specialists.¹⁴¹ The fact that Ioann was able to publish vehemently xenophobic tracts under his name, invoking the authority of the Church leadership, is indicative of the levels of support for these sentiments among prelates, clergy and laity. In any case, Ioann certainly had control over the content of interviews that he gave, and it can be assumed that he controlled the content of the many volumes published under his name.

¹³⁶ Anonymous, "Redaktsiia posetil metropolit Ioann", *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 11 June 1993, 3.

¹³⁷ Ralph Della Cava, "Reviving Orthodoxy in Russia: An Overview of the Factions in the Russian Orthodox Church, in the Spring of 1996", *Cahiers du Monde russe*, vol. 38, no. 3 (1997), 388-89.

¹³⁸ Redaktsiia gazety *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, "Pamiati mudrogo druga", *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 4 November 1995, 3.

¹³⁹ Julie A. Corwin, "Group Claims Responsibility for U.S. Embassy Shooting (1999)" (Web site). Accessed 31 March 1999 at <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1999/03/310399.asp>.

¹⁴⁰ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, Crestwood (NY): St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998, 373.

¹⁴¹ Slater, "A Modern-Day Saint? Metropolitan Ioann and the Postsoviet Russian Orthodox Church", 317.

National chauvinist sympathies are also prevalent among the clergy. Father Dmitrii Dudko has been singled out for discussion because of his change in status from dissident in the Soviet period to national chauvinist in the post-Soviet period. Consideration of his case helps maintain balance in the assessment of former dissident priests in this study, since Dudko's ideologies are diametrically opposed to those of Iakunin. Dudko was one of the first clergymen to speak out against the Patriarchate's collaboration with the Soviet regime. He was imprisoned, and became a prominent dissident, though, in a famous sermon in 1989, he recanted his opposition to the Soviet regime. In the post-Soviet period, Dudko became a leading light of the Orthodox nationalist movement. He was a regular contributor to *Zavtra* and a proponent of a renewed Russian empire; in one article he reproached Solzhenitsyn for his dismissal of the need for Russia to maintain an empire.¹⁴² Dudko is by no means alone in this orientation; other Orthodox clergy cooperate with Russian National Unity and other Russian neo-fascist organisations. Many of these priests were involved in the structures of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods. In an interview in 1992, priest Kirill (Sakharov), head of the Union, called for strict church discipline and keeping the Patriarchate accountable in order to guard against the infiltration of Jews, masons, Catholics and Protestants.¹⁴³

The Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods is a high-profile lay organisation with a national chauvinist bent. It was formed in October 1990 at the initiative of Patriarch Aleksii, who, recognising the need for Orthodox laity to develop a sense of community and belonging, urged laity to become involved with the Church through a fellowship organisation. The Brotherhoods were thus created to unite laity and to carry out missionary, educational and charitable work.¹⁴⁴ Patriarch Aleksii and Metropolitan Kirill both spoke at a service to mark the foundation of the alliance and the Patriarch was appointed its honorary patron. By July 1990, the Union comprised ninety brotherhoods,

¹⁴² Dmitrii Dudko, "K priezdu A. Solzhenitsyna v Rossiiu", *Zavtra*, June 1994, 8.

¹⁴³ Nataliia Babasian, "Soiuz pravoslavnykh bratstv - 'redut' tserkvi", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 21 May 1992, 6.

with a wide range of activities, including running Sunday schools for children and catechism classes for adults.¹⁴⁵

Though Kirill maintained that there were a wide range of orientations within the Union, from conservatives and monarchists to modernists and democrats,¹⁴⁶ the Union immediately took on a national chauvinist agenda. It was headed by Dushenov, Ioann's press secretary, and came to be dominated by national chauvinist brotherhoods, notably the Brotherhood of Sergei of Radonezh, based in Sergiev Posad, and the monarchist Union of Christian Regeneration. At the Union's third congress, in mid-1992 (at which Ioann was present), discussion gravitated toward claims that the last Tsar and his family were victims of Jewish ritual murder. The Brotherhoods published a great deal of anti-Semitic work.¹⁴⁷ The Union condemned ecumenism as heretical, called for the defence of Orthodoxy from Catholic and Protestant expansionism and opposed any attempts at Church reform. Many of the Brotherhoods are monarchist in orientation. Pospelovskii observed that, '[a]mong the leaders of the Union are genuine Nazis, who have published portraits of Hitler and excerpts from *Mein Kampf* in some of their bulletins'.¹⁴⁸ The masthead of Union of Christian Regeneration's publication *Russkoe voskresenie* (*Russian resurrection*) depicts an Orthodox cross alongside a swastika and Hitler's profile. A typical article is '*Zashchitim Russkoe Pravoslavie ot zhidov!*' ('Protect Russian Orthodoxy from Yids!').¹⁴⁹ In June 2001 the Ukrainian branch of the Brotherhood organised protests against the Pope's visit to Ukraine. This has been approvingly cited on the web site of the Moscow Patriarchate.¹⁵⁰ The Union was highly

¹⁴⁴ Oxana Antic, "Revival of Orthodox Brotherhoods in Russia", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 11 (1992), 62.

¹⁴⁵ Nataliia Babasian, "Kartinki s vystavki", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 11 July 1992, 6.

¹⁴⁶ Babasian, "Soiuz pravoslavnykh bratstv - 'redut' tserkvi", 6.

¹⁴⁷ A 1993 publication by the Union reprinted, in Old Church Slavonic and Russian, rules barring the false conversion of Jews and called on Holy Rus' to protect the Orthodox faith from its enemies. Kornblatt notes that the same pamphlet printed on the back the necessity for such a publication given false accusations of anti-Semitism and intolerance within Orthodoxy. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, "Christianity, Antisemitism, Nationalism: Russian Orthodoxy in a Reborn Orthodox Russia" in *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society Since Gorbachev*, ed. Adele Marie Barker, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1999, 420.

¹⁴⁸ Pospelovskii, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, 372.

¹⁴⁹ A. Udavov, "Zashchitim Russkoe Pravoslavie ot Zhidov!", *Russkoe voskresenie*, April 1992, 1.

¹⁵⁰ Sluzhba kommunikatsii OVTsS MP, "Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' na sovremennom etape (2001)" (Web site). Accessed 8 February 2001 at http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/today_ru.htm

politicised, though moves by Patriarch Aleksii to limit their political involvement did result in the tempering of their activities (see Chapter 6).

The Russian Orthodox Church is frequently invoked by national chauvinists to bolster the legitimacy of claims that Russians are treated unjustly and, like the traditional church, need to be protected from foreign elements who intend to corrupt, undermine and harm the nation. The evidence presented above strongly suggests three things: that Orthodoxy and Russian national identity are inextricably linked, that extreme nationalists exploit Orthodoxy for political ends, and that nationalists' xenophobia targets non-Orthodox faiths, particularly Judaism. Russian anti-Semitism, which the Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, an advocate group for Jews and human rights in the former USSR, asserts 'offers a window into the grave deterioration of Russia's civil society since 1998',¹⁵¹ is indicative of a wider tendency for Orthodoxy to be associated with religious intolerance. The rhetoric of religious intolerance fuelled by national chauvinism has resulted not just in anti-Semitism, but also in anti-Catholicism, anti-Protestantism and anti-Muslim sentiment.

Anatol Lieven derides western scholars for stressing the dangers of extreme nationalism in Russia. He argues that the threat of nationalism is blown out of proportion in the 'aggressive portrait drawn by many Western analysts' and that 'the West has unnecessarily frightened itself'.¹⁵² While it may be true that the threat is occasionally overstated in evaluations of nationalists' influence on foreign policy, in terms of the attitude toward ethnic minorities, the strength of national chauvinism is very real. The harassment of Caucasians after the September 1999 apartment bombings, the rise in anti-Semitic vandalism and violence in the post-Soviet decade, the large number of national chauvinist publications, and the appropriation of nationalist themes by

¹⁵¹ Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, *Antisemitism, Xenophobia and Religious Persecution in Russia's Regions: 1998-1999*, Washington: Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, 1999, 11.

¹⁵² Anatol Lieven, "The Weakness of Russian Nationalism", *Survival*, vol. 41, no. 2 (1999), 53-70.

mainstream politicians refutes Lieven's argument that nationalism can be ignored. Although there has been no 'Balkanisation' of Russia, it does not follow that nationalism is a benign social and political current. Lieven also contends that Russian nationalism is not ethnically based, and so has a positive influence. He argues that Orthodoxy is central to this non-ethnic sense of national identity, and finds proof in the supra-national claims of Moscow to be Orthodoxy's Third Rome.¹⁵³ This chapter has demonstrated that Russian chauvinists use Orthodoxy for narrow political ends. Where they do express a feeling of affinity for non-Russian peoples, this is limited to Orthodox Slavs (for example, the Serbs during the NATO bombing campaign).

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that Russian Orthodoxy has been appropriated by a wide array of social forces who seek to harness this conveyor of national traditions for their own uses. Agadjanin argues that these attempts can only have relevance if Orthodoxy already has meaning for large numbers of people. It is undeniable that religious identity has been a major provider of national symbols and a source of solidarity. Religious identity has served as a basis of national identity, as has the presence of a host of 'others'. Orthodox identity is invoked when there are perceived threats to the hegemonic cultural forces, whether these threats come from western-style reforms, nontraditional denominations, or from secessionist movements in the republics.

Judith Devlin argues that because the Orthodox Church is vulnerable, due to financial shortfalls, division, competition and other challenges (outlined in Chapter 3), it is susceptible to exploitation by an array of social movements and forces.¹⁵⁴ This is why the nexus between Orthodoxy and national chauvinism is relevant for the study of civil society: their connection encourages an exclusive national identity. There is a large number of groups and individuals – not to mention religious tendencies, outside of this identity construction. Charles A. Kupchan argues 'Precisely because nationalism is not primordial or essentialist, it is malleable and its trajectory is susceptible to influence

¹⁵³ Lieven, "The Weakness of Russian Nationalism", 65.

¹⁵⁴ Devlin, *Slavophiles and Commissars*, 69.

through policy instruments'.¹⁵⁵ The discourse about the Orthodox Church in relation to national identity influences governmental policy, as is evident in the passage of 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' which recognises the 'special role of Orthodoxy in the history of Russia and in the establishment and development of its spirituality and culture'.¹⁵⁶ Orthodoxy is also a central component of Billig's 'banal nationalism', so prevalent as to be unnoticeable, that encourages an ethno-religious national identity that excludes competing identities in multiconfessional societies.

The significance of the links between Russian Orthodoxy and Russian national chauvinism depends on whether those who seek to wed an exclusive national identity with the national faith can gain influence in the government, or prevalence in the cultural arena, or have resonance with key figures in the Moscow Patriarchate. This chapter has demonstrated that the xenophobic sentiments espoused by cultural and political figures finds resonance with sections of the population that blame socio-economic crises on attempts by non-Russians to undermine the country's post-Soviet recovery. This is detrimental to civil society, which cannot exist if certain ethnic or religious groups gain undue influence or gain a monopoly over legitimate expressions of identity, religious or national.

The way that national chauvinist groups' incorporate Orthodoxy into their myths and symbols affects the image of the institutional Church. The Church's image is, however, also dependent on the response of the Moscow Patriarchate to national chauvinists' attempts to appropriate Orthodoxy to legitimate anti-democratic ideologies. This runs counter to the visions of inclusive Orthodoxy promoted by reformist priests and lay activists, which contributes to the construction of civil society. Chapter 6 turns to Patriarch Aleksii's responses to national chauvinism.

¹⁵⁵ Charles A. Kupchan, "Introduction: Nationalism Resurgent" in *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe*, ed. Charles A. Kupchan, USA: Cornell University Press, 1995, 3.

¹⁵⁶ Rossiiskaia Federatsiia Federal'nyi zakon, "O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniakh" *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 1 October 1997, 3.

Chapter 6

The Patriarchate's 'Institutional' Obstruction to Civil Society?

The two preceding chapters have argued that elements of the Orthodox Church have undermined the consolidation of civil society in postcommunist Russia. Chapter 4 demonstrated that the symphonic nonpareil inspires the temporal and ecclesiastical leaders to elevate Russian Orthodoxy to a privileged position in a secular state. Chapter 5 posited that prominent political and cultural figures promote an exclusive national identity. This favours Orthodox Russians over other religious identities in a multiethnic federation. This final chapter questions the extent to which the Church as an institution obstructs the emergence and development of civil society.

Chapter 6 argues that the Moscow Patriarchate – which has a significant influence on public opinion – is effectively limiting the growth of religious freedom. Patriarch Aleksii and other Orthodox prelates, such as Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad and Metropolitan Iuvenalii of Krutitskii and Komonskii, are highly visible national figures. Aleksii consistently ranks in the top fifteen in *Nezavisimaia gazeta*'s regular poll of Russia's most influential political figures.¹ Orthodox elites stand apart from the presidents, prime ministers, leaders of political parties and other politicians who comprise the remainder of these lists of influential figures. It will be shown that Orthodox dignitaries' influence in the political, cultural and social arenas has not made an active contribution to the development of civil society. This stands in contrast to the Church's non-institutional influence.

The Church leadership's contribution to Russia's post-Soviet path is guided by Orthodox conceptions of civil society. It was noted in Chapter 1 that there is a fine

¹ Patriarch Aleksii reached tenth position in the April 2000 survey Aleksandr Komozin, "100 vedushchikh politikov Rossii v marte", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 12 April 2000, 11. See also Aleksandr Komozin, "100 vedushchikh politikov Rossii v mae", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 10 June 2001, 11. Representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate in Belarus and Moldova are also positioned highly: in May 2001 Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk polled as the eighteenth most influential figure and Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishnev and all Moldova was in eleventh position. Aleksandr Komozin, "50 vedushchikh politikov Belorusi, Moldavii i Ukrainy v mae", *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 27 June 2001, 14-15.

balance between sensitivity toward national traditions and the objective evaluation of cultural practices. James Johnson points out that culture should not automatically be offered as justification of, or as excuse for, social and political practices.² There is no precedent of religious pluralism in Russia's history. Though the Orthodox tradition is frequently cited in attempts to justify limits on religious pluralism, this is to the detriment of other denominations and religions operating in the sphere of associations that is central to the concept of civil society. As this dissertation has shown, contemporary Orthodoxy offers much that is conducive to civil society. The contribution to the development of civil society by the Moscow Patriarchate, the most influential body in Church life, however, has been limited.

The Patriarchate's activities cannot be explained away by the Orthodox tradition. The Moscow Patriarchate's view that western-style religious pluralism is inappropriate in Russia may have cultural resonance, but it serves to discriminate against minority faiths in a multi-confessional society and to act against ecumenical forces within and outside the Church. This obstruction is not an organic process predestined by cultural heritage. The thesis that Russia has a predilection for authoritarian governance resorts to cultural determinism, as does the counter-argument, exemplified by Nicolai Petro, that, historically, Russians desired democratic governance, so that Russia's contemporary political culture provides a template for democratic society.³ Such determinism, if it had explanatory value (which it does not), would render the analysis of competing influences in the Church redundant, given that the outcome is determined by a cultural predilection for authoritarianism or, as the case may be, democracy.

It is, however, illuminating to consider the principle of *sobornost'*, which, since the mid-nineteenth century, has been central to discussions of Orthodoxy, community and governance. Patriarch Aleksii has adopted a policy of compromise when dealing

² James Johnson, "Why Respect Culture?", *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 44, no. 3 (2000), 406. See also the argument for a limited toleration of gender discrimination practices under the guise of culture in Bonnie Hong, "My Culture Made Me Do It" in *Is Multi-Culturalism Bad For Women?*, eds Susan Moller Okin, et al., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, 25-40.

³ Nicolai N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1995.

with conflict within his Church, particularly in negotiating between reformist and traditionalist clergy. His habitual concessions to right-wing clergy and prelates have led to charges of increasing fundamentalism in the Orthodox Church.⁴ It is argued here that, although the Patriarch's 'right-centrist'⁵ course may be 'centrist' in that it reflects key themes in mainstream politics and in the media, his rightist bent is detrimental to the democratic project.

Previous chapters have outlined the provisions of 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' and the arguments for and against its passage. In this chapter, the Patriarchate's campaign for restrictive legislation is examined. This is placed in the context of the religious boom in the early-mid 1990s, with a particular emphasis on the activities of western Protestant missionaries, who influenced Russians' attitudes toward religious pluralism. The disciplining of reformist priests is also examined as an indicator of the degree of tolerance toward dissenting voices within Church structures. Clergy such as Gleb' Iakunin, Georgi Kochetkov, Georgi Chistiakov, Aleksandr Borisov and Vladimir Lapshin, who promote Orthodoxy on the basis of openness, dialogue and *perestroika* in Church life, are silenced, ignored or, at best, tolerated. In line with the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation, this chapter concludes with an evaluation of the Moscow Patriarchate's influence in the three spheres of civil society.

Orthodox Theology and Civil Society

Each religious tradition has its own understanding of concepts central to the social order, such as democracy, community and authority. Chapter 4 argued that, just as the creed of *din wa dawla* defines church-state relations for fundamentalist Muslims, the Byzantine doctrine of symphonia is an exemplar for Orthodox traditionalists. Likewise, religious conceptions of democracy, community and authority guide Orthodox interpretations of civil society. Oleg Kharkhordin contends that there are Protestant,

⁴ See, for example, Alla Snegina and Evgenii Strel'chik, "Gde plaska, tam i diabol", *Segodnia*, 6 October 1999, 6.

⁵ Paul D. Steeves, "Russian Orthodox Fascism After Glasnost (1994)" (Web site). Accessed 12 November 2001 at <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/rusorthfascism.html>.

Catholic and Orthodox variants of civil society, each with its own vision of the role of the individual in society and the relationship between the political leadership and the citizenry. He argues that the Orthodox Russian version is exemplified by the work of Dostoevskii, particularly by his belief in the ethical mission of the Church. In Kharkhordin's understanding, the Orthodox Church seeks to supplant the role of the state altogether and govern through Orthodox dogma, traditions and mores.⁶ This links the Russian Idea, with its religious conception of national destiny, to a distinct political culture. As James Johnson would argue, civil society with Orthodox characteristics is just as open to criticism as civil society based on any other religious tradition, regardless of the cultural or historical context.

Unity is a particularly strong concept in the Russian Church. It has been argued that unity is a basic concept of Eastern Orthodoxy.⁷ Georges Florovsky, an eminent Russian theologian, wrote that the corporate emphasis constitutes the 'distinctive *ethos*' of Eastern Orthodoxy.⁸ This ethos is captured in the concept of *sobornost*'. Aleksii Khomiakov, the prominent Slavophile, was responsible for bringing the concept to the fore in the debate between Slavophiles and Westernisers and also to the fore in modern Orthodox theology. For the Russian Church, *sobornost*' means unity in diversity: 'Its [the Church's] unity consists not in the joining together of what is different in nature, but in inward agreement and unanimity'.⁹

⁶ Oleg Kharkhordin, "Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 50, no. 6 (1998), 955.

⁷ See the comments of contemporary lay theologians in Gillian Crow, "The Orthodox Vision of Wholeness" in *Living Orthodoxy in the Modern World*, ed. Andrew Walker and Costa Carras, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1996, 2-22 and Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985, 243. Radu notes this tendency throughout Orthodox Europe: 'Whether the result of Orthodox influence or a cause of its specific dislike of individualism, collectivism, defined as the primacy of the nation over the individual and of the state over group interests, remains a strong element in the social and political behavior or predominantly Orthodox countries, particularly among those social sectors closely associated with the church.' Michael Radu, "The Burden of Eastern Orthodoxy", *Orbis*, vol. 42, no. 2 (1998), 287.

⁸ Original italics. Georges Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, vol. 2, Belmont (MA): Nordland Publishing Co., 1974, 131.

⁹ Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: A Concise Exposition*, California: Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994, 234.

The survey of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's ideas in Chapter 5 demonstrated that there is a specific notion of rights in Slavophile philosophy which derives from the subordination of the individual to the common good in recognition of the collective's primacy. Vigen Guroian, an Armenian Orthodox scholar, argues that Orthodox theology does 'not support theories of autonomous and secular human rights such as those that have emerged even within Western Christian thought'.¹⁰ Guroian traces this back to Orthodox notions of redemption, which, unlike Protestantism or Catholicism, do not have a legal or political dimension, but presuppose a more introspective understanding based on humility and self-limitation. Solzhenitsyn articulates this Orthodox notion of rights in *Rebuilding Russia*:

"Human rights" are a fine thing, but how can we ourselves make sure that our rights do not expand at the expense of the rights of others? A society with unlimited rights is incapable of standing up to adversity. If we do not wish to be ruled by a coercive authority, then each of us must rein ourselves in.... A stable society is achieved not by balancing opposing forces, but by conscious self-limitation: by the principle that we are duty-bound to defer to the sense of moral justice.¹¹

The term *lichnost'*, usually translated as 'personality', 'individual', or even 'selfhood', is associated with the western current in the Slavophile/Westerniser debate.¹² In the Orthodox tradition, the notion of the individual is a theme only in that it extols the sacrifice or the subordination of the individual for the communal good. For the Slavophiles, as for traditionalists in the Church, the value of Eastern Orthodoxy lay in the willingness of its congregation to renounce individuality and to submit to the community. Florovsky wrote of Eastern Orthodoxy, 'The whole emphasis was on the corporate nature of man. Individualism is therefore destructive'.¹³ Individualism, which has been at the centre of western political culture since the Renaissance, is the basis of civil society: there has to be a plurality of interests for there to be the dynamism that is

¹⁰ Vigen Guroian, "Human Rights and Modern Western Faith: An Orthodox Christian Assessment", *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1998), 243.

¹¹ Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals*, trans. Alexis Klimoff, London: Harvill, 1990, 48.

¹² See Derek Offord, "'Lichnost': Notions of Individual Identity" in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940*, ed. Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 13-25.

¹³ Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, 133-34.

characteristic of societies which represent a range of ideologies. *Sobornost'*, though it recognises diversity, emphasises the importance of unity in the face of this diversity. Some scholars point to the continuity between Orthodox doctrine and practice and the communist regime, and argue that subordination, among other features of Orthodox piety, was conducive to the development of a totalitarian state.¹⁴ Civil society, with its emphasis on individual interests competing for influence in a pluralist sphere of associations, is very much based on the individual. There is a tension between the concept of *sobornost'* and the concept of civil society. Civil society also presupposes competition, and the acceptance that this is a part of modern social inter-dependence. Max Weber's classic text *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* locates the impetus for the creation of competition, market and profit in the Protestant tradition.¹⁵ The individual spirit and bourgeois values that Weber identified as integral to Protestantism encourage the development of civil society. It is these values that are absent from traditional Orthodox conceptions of democracy and community. The reformist agenda reflects a modern understanding of Orthodoxy, with an emphasis on individual rights and individual interpretations of Christian doctrine. This is conducive to the impulses which Weber recognised as key to the development of capitalism.

Orthodox and Protestant theologies also differ in their approach to evangelism and proselytism. Proselytism, taking into account its negative connotations, can be defined as the 'aggressive targeting and winning of converts from their (recognized) church to one's own, especially through improper means'.¹⁶ Proselytism has been at the heart of tensions between Orthodox and Protestants in post-Soviet Russia. Orthodox canon holds that when a baby is baptised it is Orthodox for life, regardless of whether as an adult it is an active or inactive believer, whereas Protestant canon holds that one must

¹⁴ Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practises*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999. Radu takes this point too far when he argues that there was an 'ideological, social, cultural compatibility between the Orthodox churches and ruling Marxist-Leninists...'. Radu, "The Burden of Eastern Orthodoxy", 287.

¹⁵ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Unwin University Books, 1965.

¹⁶ This definition is a synthesis of other accepted definitions as formulated by R. Vito Nicastro, "Mission Volga: A Case Study in the Tensions Between Evangelizing and Proselytizing", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3-4 (1994), 226.

consciously decide to accept faith as an adult, and only then can be baptised. In the Protestant view, an inactive Orthodox adherent is not a believer and therefore a potential convert. Miroslav Volf, a Croatian theologian, wrote in his article 'Fishing in the Neighbor's Pond' that mission and proselytism were at the centre of religious turmoil in the postcommunist states, since 'what Protestants (mainly of the evangelical kind) consider to be legitimate *mission* Catholics and Orthodox... consider to be illegitimate and culturally damaging *proselytism*.'¹⁷ Metropolitan Kirill expresses his contempt for proselytism in post-Soviet Russia thus:

Proselytism is not some narrow religious activity generated by a wrong understanding of missionary tasks. Proselytism is the fact of invasion by another culture, even if Christian, but developing according to its own laws and having its own history and tradition. This invasion is taking place after the old missionary patterns of colonial times. It is not merely a desire to reveal Christ to people – people who have confessed Christianity for over a thousand years at that – but also to refashion their culture in the Western mode.¹⁸

The reaction to the perceived 'western mode' has done much to shape the Patriarchate's relations with non-Orthodox, and particularly foreign, denominations. Chapter 5 argued that Russian national identity and religious identity are closely linked. This link has repercussions for nontraditional or foreign faiths: their evangelism could be construed as proselytism. The Orthodox opposition to proselytism is made clear in the Greek Constitution, which guarantees the freedom to practice religion but outlaws proselytism,¹⁹ and in the comment of Greek Patriarch Bartholomaios, who stated in 1997 that 'Orthodox Christianity is confronted with the zeal of many Western Christians, especially from America, who are spiritually pilfering the house of their brethren'.²⁰ This understanding fueled the Moscow Patriarchate's campaign against nontraditional

¹⁷ Original italics. Miroslav Volf, "Fishing in the Neighbor's Pond: Mission and Proselytism in Eastern Europe", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1996), 26.

¹⁸ Kyrill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Third Millennium", *Ecumenical Review*, vol. 52, no. 3 (2000), 74.

¹⁹ 'All known religions shall be free and their rites of worship shall be performed unhindered and under the protection of the law. The practice of rites of worship is not allowed to offend public order or the good usages [sic]. Proselytism is prohibited' (Article 13.2). Government of Greece, "The Constitution of Greece" (Web site). Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accessed 24 September 2001 at <http://www.mfa.gr/syntagma/artcl25.html>.

²⁰ Cited in Radu, "The Burden of Eastern Orthodoxy", 286.

denominations. Before this chapter examines whether or not the official Church obstructs civil society, it turns to traditional religions' contributions to civil society.

Contributions to Civil Society

Deliberating on the legislation 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association', Derek Davis, editor of the *Journal of Church and State*, wrote:

What makes things so difficult in the Russian context is that the people are not accustomed to religious and philosophical pluralism; they seemingly would rather the new government step in and attempt to fill the void with a new public philosophy, and given that Russia's public philosophy for nearly a millenium prior to the Bolshevik Revolution was centered around Russian Orthodoxy as the national faith, it is hardly surprising that that secular state model, in which religious pluralism is encouraged, is not an easy fit in the Russian context.²¹

There is no reason to assume that a pluralistic religious sphere must contribute to this instability. On the contrary, the tensions between Russian Orthodoxy and other faiths are a result of efforts to undermine pluralism, not to consolidate it. In addition, to overlook Russia's 20 million Muslims or 500,000 Jews and to ignore the presence of Protestantism and Catholicism on the territory of modern day Russia for some 300 years is to deny that Russia is a multi-denominational state. The advancement of a homogenous identity in such a state is detrimental to the democratic project as it necessarily marginalises certain religious adherents, and promotes the majority faith in a homogenous society.

The Moscow Patriarchate has contributed to the construction of civil society in many ways, chiefly through organisations established for social and welfare projects. Charity is a strong tradition in the Russian Church – as Chapter 2 noted, the Church's charitable work was a key justification for a central position in Gorbachev's reforms.²² The Moscow Patriarchate created a Department for Church Charity and Social Service. Its initiatives included free medical care, dispensed at the Moscow Patriarchate's Central

²¹ Derek H. Davis, "Editorial: Russia's New Law on Religion: Progress or Regress?", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 39, no. 4 (1997), 653.

²² For an insight into how charity developed in the Church, see Michael Bourdeaux, "The Quality of Mercy: A Once-Only Opportunity" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999.

Hospital of St Alexis the Metropolitan of Moscow, and a free psychiatric service.²³ Such activities mean that the Church as an institution has a place in the sphere of social organisations that is separate from the state.

The Patriarchate was unprepared for the end of the communist regime and was ill prepared for the challenges of the post-Soviet period, including meeting the welfare and social service needs of not only Orthodox adherents, but also society at large. The limited progress the Church made in establishing mission structures and implementing welfare services has been the source of much criticism. While financial shortages have curbed the Patriarchate's creation of welfare programmes, the vast sums of money spent on the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour's construction and on Orthodox clergy's presence in the military, for instance, demonstrate that the Patriarchate's priorities lie elsewhere (see Chapter 4).

The Patriarchate's limited contribution to civil society is all the more obvious given the range of activities that other traditional religions and denominations have undertaken. Chapter 3 noted that traditional religions experienced a significant growth in the number of registered associations in the post-Soviet period. While many of these associations were bodies created to fulfill a welfare function, they were not limited to welfare initiatives. Traditional religious communities engaged in a wide range of activities at the first opportunity. In 1987 and 1988, various Protestant groups approached the state and proposed that they cooperate on charitable projects.²⁴ Like the Orthodox Church, they were not permitted to undertake charitable or evangelising projects in the Soviet period. The first Islamic educational institutes were established in the 1990s, among them the Islamic University Al Fatih and the Open University of Islamic Culture.²⁵ Publishing was also a major area of activity. A number of Buddhist

²³ Sluzhba kommunikatsii OVTsS MP, "Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' na sovremennom etape (2001)" (Web site). Accessed 8 February 2001 at http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/today_ru.htm.

²⁴ Mervyn Matthews, "Perestroika and the Rebirth of Charity" in *Soviet Social Problems*, ed. Anthony Jones, Walter D. Connor, and David E. Powell, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1991, 166.

²⁵ See Gasym Kerimov, "Islam and Muslims in Russia Since the Collapse of the Soviet Union", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 24, no. 2-3 (1996), 183.

magazines were established, among them *Put' k sebe* (*Inward Path*), which later broadened its content to consider all religious faiths,²⁶ and *Buddizm Rossii* (*Buddhism of Russia*), which featured, among other things, news about indigenous and international Buddhist organisations. Many Jewish associations, such as the Harold and Selma Light Jewish Human Rights Organisation, were concerned with combating anti-Semitism and protecting and promoting Jewish culture. Further examples of the range of activities undertaken by traditional confessions are the charitable work of Lutherans among St Petersburg's prison population and the establishment of Muslim political associations, such as the Union of Muslims of Russia and the *Nur* organisation. The activities of these traditional religious communities helped to consolidate not only religious pluralism, but also established a range of social and charitable activities that aided the institutionalisation of ideological pluralism.

The Patriarchate was highly visible in the campaign to limit the activities not only of traditional religions, including Protestant denominations active in Russia for centuries, but also of new religious movements, both indigenous and foreign. The remainder of this chapter outlines the anti-pluralist tendencies within the institutional Church.

Patriarch Aleksii's Compromise

Since his election in June 1990, Patriarch Aleksii has been wrenched by two opposing forces within the Church: traditionalists and reformists. Attempts to mediate between these two camps has largely determined the Patriarchate's responses to post-Soviet challenges. While these are particularly evident in the political sphere, these tendencies toward conservatism have less visible, though no less important, implications within Church structures. Aleksii's compromises, designed to appease traditionalists, have resulted in a weak leadership that is at the mercy of factional struggles.

The prevalence of traditionalist elements was demonstrated in one instance when

²⁶ See, for example, *Put' k sebe*, no. 1 (1997), which considers Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu and 'new age' philosophies.

Patriarch Aleksii overestimated the climate of tolerance in the Church. In November 1991, Aleksii addressed a gathering of rabbis in New York. In his speech, titled '*Vashi proroki – nashi proroki*' ('Your Prophets are Our Prophets'), Aleksii acknowledged the common heritage of Christianity and Judaism: 'The unity of Jews and Christians has a real and natural spiritual foundation for relations and positive religious processes'. He cited preeminent Orthodox hierarchs and philosophers who denounced anti-Semitism, and noted: 'Unfortunately, today, in difficult times for our society, an anti-Semitic mood has been very recently revealed. This mood is widespread among extremists and rightist chauvinistic groups, which nourish an environment of social crisis and national isolation'. He vowed that the Orthodox Church would fight this 'anti-Semitic mood' so that 'our Jewish brothers and sisters' can live in security and peace.²⁷ Ominously, in Russia, the speech was not published in the Church press, but in *Evreiskaia gazeta* (*Jewish Gazette*) and *Moskovskie novosti*.²⁸

Aleksii's speech prompted an outcry by ecclesiastical conservatives. A number of monasteries refused to commemorate the Patriarch in the litany.²⁹ There was also a reaction from laypersons, chiefly members of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods (UOB). At the UOB's third congress in mid-1992, the Patriarch was denounced for this conciliatory gesture. Prelates involved in ecumenical projects were denounced as Judeo-masons. There was no response to this from Kirill, the leader of the UOB, nor from the Patriarch. An open letter to the Patriarch, published in *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, lamented that

²⁷ Anonymous, ed., *Rech; patriarkha Aleksii II k ravvinam g. N'iu Iorka (SShA) 13 noiabria 1991 goda i eres' zhidovstvuiushchikh'*, USA: Pallada, 1992, 8-11. The speech is reproduced in this text with extensive commentary and rebuttals of its content by (anonymous) anti-Semitic editors. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt interprets '*Vashi proroki – nashi proroki*' quite differently. She claims: 'References to "our army" and "our country" [in the speech]... read more like the rhetorical nationalism of the patriarch's former communist oppressor than the reasoned argument of a spokesman for a tolerant church centred in a vast, multiethnic nation...'. Kornblatt also argues that the Patriarch's conciliatory statement that the Russians fought Hitler and so have defended the Jews 'is to confuse Christian love with patriotism' in Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, "Christianity, Antisemitism, Nationalism: Russian Orthodoxy in a Reborn Orthodox Russia" in *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society Since Gorbachev*, ed. Adele Marie Barker, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1999, 422.

²⁸ Patriarkh Moskovskii i vseia Rusi Aleksii II, "Vashi proroki - nashi proroki", *Moskovskie novosti*, 26 January 1992, 24.

²⁹ Snegina and Strel'chik, "Gde pliaska", 6.

Unfortunately, the event gives cause to conjecture that certain powers strive to make use of your name and your interests, far from always agreeing with the interests of Russia and the Russian Church. There are many more examples of this in the very recent past.

Without directly alleging a Judaic conspiracy, the signatories accept the plausibility of conjectures that unnamed forces seek to undermine Orthodoxy by influencing its leadership. The letter criticised the Patriarch's ecumenical sympathies, warned that such moves would cause a schism in the Church, and urged him to disassociate himself and the Church from the 'scandalous' speech. The letter concluded 'We beseech you to take heed of the voices of the national church!'. Among the signatories were leading figures of the nationalist wing of the Church, including representatives of the Brotherhoods, among them Konstantin Dushenov, Metropolitan Ioann's ghostwriter, and the editors of nationalist Orthodox publications, including *Pravoslavnyi Peterburg* (*Orthodox St Petersburg*) and *Sobesednik pravoslavnykh khristian* (*Interlocutor of Orthodox Christians*).³⁰

It can be argued that the backlash resulting from this gesture toward improving Russian Orthodox-Jewish relations was a turning point for Patriarch Aleksii. This incident happened early in his reign. Aleksii was renowned for his commitment to inter-denominational cooperation and was President of the Conference of European Churches, a regional ecumenical organisation. This incident also happened relatively early in conditions of religious freedom. He thus realised the limits of tolerance, and the presence of anti-Semitic and national chauvinist sympathies within the Church. He has not delivered such an overt statement of conciliation since,³¹ nor has he ignored the reactionary wing of the Church. The reaction to '*Vashi proroki – nashi proroki*' has been interpreted as the point when fundamentalists strengthened their position within the Church.³² The Brotherhoods expressed loyalty to the Patriarch at the fourth congress in early 1993. Pospelovskii notes that this allegiance was 'achieved at the expense of his

³⁰ K. Dushenov et al, "Molim Vas - Prislushaites'!", *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 18 February 1993, 3.

³¹ This point is made in Bruce Clark, *An Empire's New Clothes: The End of Russia's Liberal Dream*, London: Vintage, 1995, 89.

³² Snegina and Strel'chik, "Gde pliaska", 6.

total silence on controversial subjects and his failure to censure the extremists in the church he heads, all for the sake of avoiding an open split'.³³

The Patriarch has done little to discipline extreme nationalist forces, either within or outside the Church. He did not publicly condemn the works of Metropolitan Ioann. The chief rabbi of Moscow appealed to the Patriarch to discipline Ioann, to no avail.³⁴ There was no official denunciation of Ioann's numerous articles invoking the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or of his publications in extremist media. Aleksii did instruct Metropolitan Pitirim of the Publications Department not to sanction the publication of any more of Ioann's work in the official organs of the Moscow Patriarchate, but this was in an unofficial memorandum.³⁵ This demonstrates that the Patriarch was sufficiently aware of the tenor of Ioann's articles and of his mediums to be concerned about how his xenophobic views would affect the image of the Patriarchate. Evidently, Aleksii was not disturbed enough by Ioann's vitriol and reactionism to publicly state his opposition to Ioann's viewpoints. The Patriarch did acknowledge that Ioann did not represent the Patriarchate, but this feeble attempt to distance the Moscow Patriarchate from Ioann's xenophobia was his only gesture.³⁶ The aforementioned letter by Orthodox nationalists asked why, when Ioann was not permitted to publish in the official organs of the Patriarch, ecumenical pieces were in print.³⁷ There was no response.

Aleksii's reluctance to denounce Ioann could be construed as tacit approval of Ioann's chauvinistic viewpoints. This was the interpretation of the Union of Councils of Soviet Jews (UCSJ). In *Xenophobia and Religious Persecution in Russia's Regions*:

³³ Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, "The Russian Orthodox Church in the Postcommunist CIS" in *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux, New York, London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995, 62.

³⁴ John B. Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church as an "Empire-Saving" Institution" in *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Michael Bourdeaux, New York, London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995, 34.

³⁵ Dushenov, "Molim Vas - Prislushaites!", 3, Pospelovsky, "The Russian Orthodox Church", 72, n.47.

³⁶ Pospelovsky, "The Russian Orthodox Church", 72, n.47.

³⁷ Dushenov, "Molim Vas - Prislushaites!", 3.

1998-1999, responsibility for growing intolerance in the Church was attributed to the Patriarch's reluctance to denounce these sentiments:

The Patriarch is accountable for the abuses documented in this report because while he has exercised authority to discipline church leaders who embarrass the church or radically depart from church policy and doctrine in other respects, he has done little to restrain Church officials who spread antisemitism.³⁸

That the UCSJ did not make this indictment until five years after the death of Ioann is testimony to the continuing strength of xenophobic forces within the Church.

The chief reason the Patriarch did not denounce national chauvinism within the Church was the fear of further schism. It is probable that Aleksii did not take a firm stance against nationalist elements out of fear that they would defect to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), the émigré church, which, spurning Patriarch Sergii and the Patriarchate for their capitulation to the communist regime in 1927, entered post-Soviet Russia as the Free Russian Orthodox Church (FROC) (see Chapter 3). The leadership of the ROCOR is more conservative than the Moscow Patriarchate and more willing to cooperate with nationalist groups. The ROCOR condemns any link between Orthodox churches and the World Council of Churches. In mid-2001, the Synod of Bishops condemned the 'heresies of ecumenism and Sergianism' and reiterated that, despite rumours to the contrary, there was no support among the leadership to reunite with Moscow.³⁹ In the early 1990s some ROCOR prelates aligned themselves with Vasil'ev's *Pamiat'* group. Dimitry Pospelovsky reports that bishop Varnava of Cannes spent much of the early 1990s residing in Moscow in Vasil'iev's flat and coordinating joint rallies of the ROCOR and *Pamiat'*. The association with *Pamiat'* and other anti-Semitic groups exaggerated a division between prelates and clergy in the ROCOR and has caused factional tensions, much as it has in the Russian Church.⁴⁰

³⁸ Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, *Antisemitism, Xenophobia and Religious Persecution in Russia's Regions: 1998-1999*, Washington: Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, 1999, 4.

³⁹ Anonymous, "Number of Parishes in Russia" (Web site). Accessed 28 June 2001 at <http://www.orthodox.net/directory/russia.htm>.

⁴⁰ See the discussion of divisions among prelates in Dimitry V. Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, Crestwood (NY): St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998, 362.

The Patriarch's fear of schism was well founded. Pospelovskii notes that Ioann expressed sympathy for the ROCOR in one interview, thereby hinting that, if Patriarch Aleksii were to put pressure on him, he would leave the Moscow Patriarchate for the schismatic church.⁴¹ As long as Aleksii did not denounce declarations of extreme nationalism by the likes of Ioann and the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, there was little cause for their supporters to leave the Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and join the FROC. Schismatic Orthodox jurisdictions were also an alternative for laity who feared the return to a symphonic order. As a result of the Soviet experience, many Orthodox adherents objected to close cooperation between the ecclesiastical and the political leadership. Chapter 4 argued that the Moscow Patriarchate has close ties with the presidential administration. This encourages support for the FROC, who denounce this cooperation with the state. While it is true that condemning national chauvinist tendencies within the Church would result in a backlash against the Church leadership, this would be no worse than the current rupture between reformist and traditionalist clergy. Moreover, the subsequent controversy would be no greater than the polemics on the Patriarchate's political bent throughout the 1990s. It is feasible that parishioners sympathetic with the reformist agenda have left the Orthodox Church as a result of its intolerance toward other denominations. The placation of extremist forces may be damaging the Church.

There have been advantages for Patriarch Aleksii in this 'right-centrist' position. Leslie McGann argues that 'factional rivalries within the church have served Patriarch Aleksii as a powerful political tool' in two ways. Firstly, he argues that the compromise between the two factions has made Aleksii seem like a moderate and compromising figure, between national chauvinists, such as Ioann, and liberals, such as Iakunin.⁴² McGann's second point is less easily substantiated. He argues that Aleksii's cooperation with the red-brown faction created an alliance which could have threatened Yeltsin's support for the Moscow Patriarchate. This aimed to put Yeltsin behind the Patriarchate's

⁴¹ See Pospelovsky, "The Russian Orthodox Church", 74, n.63.

⁴² Leslie L. McGann, "The Russian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Aleksii II and the Russian State: An Unholy Alliance?", *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1999) [Expanded Academic ASAP].

campaign for restrictive religious legislation.⁴³ Yeltsin capitulated by passing the legislation, even though no substantial changes were made following his veto. This was a result not of fear that the Church would align itself with communist and nationalist forces but rather of the predominance of these forces in the Duma. Had Yeltsin vetoed the legislation a second time, there would have been a standoff between the parliament and the President which would have further weakened his claims to be an efficacious president. At any rate, it is highly unlikely that the Patriarchate would have aligned itself with conservative forces. The memory of the Soviet experience is much too recent, and the implications if Yeltsin remained in power too unpredictable, to cause such a shift in the Church's allegiance. Contrary to McGann's claims, it is extremely unlikely that the Moscow Patriarchate will align itself with any political power if the outcome is uncertain. The Patriarchate's current position is one of mediation, though with more concessions toward the rightist faction in the Church and in politics.

Campaign for 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations'

The weakness of Patriarch Aleksii in mediating between the chief factions within the Church contrasts with his decisive and consistent campaign for more restrictive religious legislation. A central argument for a new law was that nontraditional religious bodies were threatening the moral and spiritual fabric of society, which was especially vulnerable after seven decades of militant atheism. Marat Shterin and James Richardson observe that the assertion that Russia must be protected from cults' and sects' damaging activities is a claim that mimics the rhetoric of Anti-Cult Movement (ACM) campaigns in the USA. The ACM is the organised opposition to nontraditional religious and spiritual movements. Marat and Shterin contend that the western ACM had a significant impact on debate about new religious legislation from 1994 onwards and that the Moscow Patriarchate appropriated its ideology and discourse to bolster support for restrictive legislation.⁴⁴ There is ample evidence to support this contention. The Patriarchate was primarily responsible for disseminating literature that coupled sensationalist accounts of 'brain washing' and 'mind control' with ever-popular

⁴³ McGann, "The Russian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Aleksii II and the Russian State".

conspiracy theories that created images of sects and cults as destroyers of Russian culture and tradition. The Orthodox Church published a significant amount of anti-cult literature during the 1990s. In 1997 the Missionary Department published the handbook *Novye religioznye organizatsii Rossii destruktivnogo i okkultnogo kharaktera* (*New Religious Organisations of Russia of Destructive and Occult Character*), which identified 86 'cults' active on Russian territory. These were divided into cults 'of Satanic orientation' (of which there were 15); 'from the mould of "ecological spiritualism, occultism and paganism"' (37); 'of eastern orientation' (22); 'of western orientation' (11); and 'commercial cults' (only one was identified, the American alternative medicine company Herbalife).⁴⁵ Since the 1997 law's passage, the publication of ACM literature has continued, as have conferences, roundtables and addresses by Orthodox dignitaries, clergy and laity which aim to foster vigilance in the religious sphere and rid Russia of nontraditional faiths.⁴⁶ The Church is depicted as the only way to be free of these pernicious attempts to undermine Russia's spiritual and moral recovery.

Shterin and Richardson also note that the media were an integral part of the campaign. Although ACM organisations are mainly based in Moscow and St Petersburg, the 'great success' of the ACM was that local authorities in many regions became active promoters of ACM agenda.⁴⁷ While regional media have produced the most hostile, misinformed and exaggerated stories, mainstream newspapers have also contributed to the dissemination of ACM ideology and rhetoric. The testimonies of 'survivors' or 'escapees' of cults and of families who 'lost' members to cults, either metaphorically or

⁴⁴ Marat S. Shterin and James T. Richardson, "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia: Precursors of Russia's New National Law", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 40, no. 2 (1998), 334.

⁴⁵ Missionerskii Otdel Moskovskogo Patriarkhate Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi, *Novye religioznye organizatsii Rossii destruktivnogo i okkultnogo kharaktera: Spravochnik*, Belgorod: Missionerskii Otdel Moskovskogo Patriarkhate Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi, 1997.

⁴⁶ See, for example, the supplement to the official publication *Prozrenie: Pravoslavnyi informatsionno-prosvetitel'skii zhurnal*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1999) (the theme of the edition is Religious Legislation in Russia from its Borders) and *Prozrenie: Pravoslavnyi informatsionno-prosvetitel'skii zhurnal*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1999) (the theme is Jehovah's Witnesses). For an example of a publication dedicated to a single cult: T.N. Kuznetsova, *"Tserkov' Muna": tseli i metody*, Moscow: Biblioteka Pravoslavnogo Missionera, 1997.

actually, are central to ACM campaigns. An article in the conservative weekly *Komsomolskaia pravda* describes Svetlova and her husband's conversion to the Vissarion Sect. The practices of starvation and isolation led Svetlova to desperate measures: her husband would not let her leave the Sect and so she paid assassins to kill him. The journalist who visited Svetlova in prison reported that Svetlova whispered to her as they parted,

Do you know what's happening with the law on freedom of conscience? If there were not such vampires as Vissarion perhaps Svetlov [her husband] would still be alive and I would not be in this prison. I am going to write to Patriarch Aleksii. No, better, the State Duma. Or maybe the President?⁴⁸

Here the protection of Russians from new religious movements is presented as a political issue – one worthy of the attention of the President and the parliament – as much as a religious issue. This reference to the need for a restrictive law was supplemented by testimonies elsewhere from the families of children who had been 'lured' by cults.⁴⁹ While there was a significant amount of attention devoted to the activities of these new religious movements, the Moscow Patriarchate spent much more effort campaigning against Protestant bodies.

The Moscow Patriarchate continued to maintain the necessity of this legislation after its passage. At the time of writing, the main consequences of the legislation for religious communities derive not from its legal provisions but instead from the fact that it signals to central and local authorities that they may wield increased power over religious bodies under their dominion. This, coupled with the Patriarchate's and conservative media's continued dissemination of anti-sect and anti-cult propaganda, has created conditions leaving non-Orthodox associations, particularly Protestant ones, in vulnerable positions. Moreover, their situation is determined largely by their rapport with local Orthodox priests and regional Ministry of Justice representatives. Particularly

⁴⁷ Shterin and Richardson, "Local Laws Restricting Religion in Russia", 337., Marat S. Shterin and James T. Richardson, "Effects of the Western Anti-Cult Movement on Development of Laws Concerning Religion in Post-Communist Russia", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 42, no. 2 (2000), 337.

⁴⁸ Tatyana Filippova, "Nina Svetlova Killed Husband for Love of God (*Komsomolskaia pravda*, 5 September 1997, p.2)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 45, no. 30 (1997), 15.

in Russia's regions, the relations of local authorities with religious bodies are not necessarily affected by federal legislation.⁵⁰ It is the contention of this dissertation that the social and political influence of the Patriarchate and the state's support of the campaign to restrict non-Orthodox faiths have determined the effects of the legislation, rather than any actions resulting directly from adherence to the law's provisions.

It is difficult to determine which comes first, the suspicion that popularises ACM literature and rhetoric, or ACM literature and rhetoric that fosters suspicion of the sects and cults they vilify. Orthodox bookshops stock Russian anti-cult literature (as well as anti-Semitic literature), largely written by Orthodox clergy and laity, and translations of American literature. This does not consist of reputable academic studies of new religious movements but rather works which refer to 'deprogramming' and 'brainwashing' which have largely fallen into disrepute in the west.⁵¹ This literature's perceived authority is illustrated by a court case against Jehovah's Witnesses in which the prosecution's arguments echoed Orthodox anti-cult material, and Aleksandr Dvorkin, an Orthodox layperson who has published the most influential anti-cult literature, was listed as a prosecution witness.⁵² The media have been particularly harsh on Jehovah's Witnesses; in 2000 Oleg Mironov, Russia's Human Rights Representative, wrote to the Ministry of the Press, Television, Radio and Mass Media and complained about prejudiced articles in the print media about Jehovah's Witnesses. He claimed such articles encourage suspicion, provoke discrimination and prompt unlawful restrictions on this particular community.⁵³

⁴⁹ See, for example, Anna Politkovskaya and Maria Meshchaninova, "Human Beings: Victims of Psychological Violence, (*Megopolis-Express*, no.29, 28 July 1993, p.7)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 45, no. 30 (1993), 15.

⁵⁰ I am grateful to Aleksandr Panchenko of the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences for this insight.

⁵¹ Shterin and Richardson, "Effects of the Western Anti-Cult Movement on Development of Laws Concerning Religion in Post-Communist Russia", 337. For a discussion of changing attitudes toward ACM see Anson Shupe and David G. Bromley, "The Modern Anti-Cult Movement 1971-1991: A Twenty-Year Retrospective" in *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Anson Shupe and David G. Bromley, New York: Garland, 1994.

⁵² Zolotov, Andrei. "Jehovah's Witnesses Fight Legal Bid to Remove them from Russia (9 October 1998)" (E-mail Bulletin). Accessed 1 September 2000.

It is not only the Moscow Patriarchate that promotes propaganda that discriminates against religious minorities. Orthodox clergy have significant sway in the regions and lobby local organisations and individuals to prevent the establishment and the activities of other denominations and religions. The 1997 law has legitimated Orthodox clergy's control of religious life in their towns or cities. There are frequent reports of local authorities forcing rental contracts to be broken and access denied to Protestant groups under pressure from the local Orthodox priest. There is evidence of cooperation between the Orthodox clergy and the media. Both have an interest in perpetuating suspicions against nontraditional religions and both are purveyors of ACM literature and rhetoric. In September 2000 Russian and American Pentecostal missionaries with the Chukotka Renewal Christian Centre were expelled from the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. The full text of the regional governor's expulsion decree was published in the local newspaper, *Krainy sever (Northern Region)*. On the front page of the same edition was a letter from Patriarch Aleksii appealing to Chukotka's governor to take action against Protestant missionaries who attempt to 'lure people away by the simplicity of their teaching'.⁵⁴ William van den Bercken goes so far as to suggest that the only difference between Ioann's anti-western and anti-Protestant dogma and the comments of Patriarch Aleksii and Metropolitan Kirill is the former's 'pathologically chauvinist terminology'.⁵⁵ This argument is vindicated by continued propaganda against western, particularly Protestant, faiths emanating from the Patriarchate's Publishing Department.

Criticisms of Protestant Missions

Though Orthodox religious associations constituted a clear numerical majority of those registered in the post-Soviet period, the rate of increase was much higher among

⁵³ Tatyana Titova, *Legal Victory Does Not End Registration Battle for Lipetsk Jehovah's Witnesses* (Issue 6, Article 9) (E-Mail Bulletin). Keston News Service, accessed 5 June 2000.

⁵⁴ Cited in Tatyana Titova, *Russia: Pentecostal Missionaries Expelled From Chukotka* (Issue 10, Article 20) (E-Mail Bulletin). Keston News Service, accessed 18 October 2000. For more on this case see Keston Institute, *News In Brief: Chukotka, Russia* (Issue 10, Article 21) (E-Mail Bulletin). Keston News Service, accessed 18 October 2000 and Tatyana Titova, *Russia: Why Are Protestant Missionaries So Successful In Far East?* (Issue 10, Article 21) (E-Mail Bulletin). Keston News Service. Accessed 18 October 2000.

⁵⁵ William van den Bercken, "The Russian Orthodox Church, State and Society in 1991-1993: The Rest of the Story", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1994), 165.

Protestant denominations introduced by western missionaries. The anti-Protestant tenor of the Patriarchate's campaign was a frequent theme in literature by western Protestant associations and religious workers active in Russia and Ukraine. To present a balanced assessment of the tensions between the Orthodox Church and western religious bodies, it is necessary to acknowledge the frequent criticism, leveled by Orthodox Christians as well as by some Russian and foreign Protestant bodies, that many missionaries were over-bearing, condescending and operated with complete disregard for their cultural context.⁵⁶

The opening of Russia to foreign religious workers caused great excitement among western mission agencies, which had only dreamt of taking their message to the 'Evil Empire'.⁵⁷ In early 1992 the editor of *Christianity Today*, an American evangelical magazine, enthused, 'Almost overnight the Soviet Union has moved away from an official position of atheism and hostility to become perhaps the most open mission field in the world'.⁵⁸ The arrival of western Protestant missionaries was followed by a great deal of criticism of their preconceptions of Russia and its people. Indigenous opposition to their work was sometimes violent, though for the most part it merely took the form of attempts to frustrate the missionaries' efforts. A 1992 trip down the Volga by inter-denominational Protestant missionaries, accompanied by a handful of ecumenically minded Orthodox priests, met with opposition at most ports of call. At one port they were met by groups distributing leaflets entitled *Watch Out - Protestantism*. In Ulyanovsk, local Cossacks boarded the ship and delivered a warning 'on behalf of many thousands of Orthodox people in Ulyanovsk' that the missionaries represented religious expansionism, and if they insisted on preaching they should remain on the boat to meet

⁵⁶ The damage that ignorance of Russian culture and traditions does to the evangelical cause is not lost on some western Protestants. See an appeal by Mary Raber, "The Commonwealth Challenge: Do's and Don'ts for First-Time Ministries in the Former USSR", *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1993), 1, the advice to foreign missionaries in Lawrence A. Uzzell, "Guidelines for American Missionaries in Russia" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte Jr and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999 and Anita Deyneka, "Guidelines for Foreign Missionaries in the Former Soviet Union" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte Jr and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999 and Nicastro, "Mission Volga", 225.

⁵⁷ See, for example, the blurb on the back jacket of *Bibles for Russia*, which describes how a missionary couple could 'literally touch an "evil empire" with the good news about their Lord and Saviour...'. Alfred McCroskey, *Bibles for Russia*, New England: Morris Publishing, 1998.

with interested locals, and then leave as soon as possible.⁵⁹ Aside from obstructing the missionaries' preaching, locals interested in their message could be identified as they boarded the boat. This is undesirable to many potential converts as there is still a stigma attached to Protestantism as a cult.⁶⁰

The most common charge was that western missionaries were culturally insensitive. The most offensive manifestation of this was the assumption that Soviet anti-religious policies and atheist propaganda were successful. This attitude was epitomised by a September 1991 advertisement in *Christianity Today*, which featured an Orthodox icon depicting Jesus weeping and the headline 'Help the Soviet People Meet the Real Jesus'. The text of the advertisement, placed by the International Bible Society, read:

There was a day when the world's largest nation was called "Holy Russia". Icons of Christ still adorn its ancient churches. But the people of today's Soviet Union are emerging from seven decades of atheism. And they want to meet the real Jesus – the Christ revealed in the New Testament.⁶¹

This disregard for one thousand years of Christian tradition and also for the hardships endured by believers in the Soviet period aroused great resentment.⁶² Further, when Protestant missionaries acknowledged the harassment, incarceration and execution of clergy and laity, they often recognised the sacrifices and repression endured by Protestants, and did not extend this to Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist victims of religious persecution.

⁵⁸ Philip Yancey, "Praying With the KGB", *Christianity Today*, vol. 36, no. 1 (1992), 19.

⁵⁹ Cited in Yelizaveta Bogoslovskaya, "Ulyanovsk Cossacks Keep Christian Missionaries Under Arrest for an Hour and a Half. The Preachers Don't Lose Their Nerve, (*Chas pik*, 21 Sept. 1992, pp.1-2)", *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol. 44, no. 39 (1992), 33. See Nicastro's defence of western organisers of Mission Volga as sensitive to the needs of Orthodox participants, described as 'remarkable' (p.242), despite the fact that Nicastro cites one Mission newsletter that ends with the greeting 'Yours in conquering the heartland of Russia with the irresistible love for Jesus' (p.241) in Nicastro, "Mission Volga".

⁶⁰ Interview with Pavel Bel'kov of the Baptist Union, Moscow, 15 October 1999.

⁶¹ International Bible Society, "Advertisement", *Christianity Today*, vol. 35, no. 10 (1991), 61.

⁶² See a letter by Bob Yannes, a western convert to Eastern Orthodoxy: I am appalled by the arrogance of some Western Christians who view the former Soviet Union as a heathen land waiting to be evangelized. This is an insult to over a thousand years of Orthodox Christian influence, not to mention the dedicated Orthodox Christians who suffered mightily under the Communist yoke' in Letters to the Editor, "Orthodox Charges of Protestant Proselytism... and a Response", *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1999), 11.

Protestant missionaries were also criticised for their ignorance of Russian culture and their failure to learn Russia's language, history or traditions, both secular and religious. Lawrence Uzzell, director of the Keston Institute, noted that Protestants were particularly lackadaisical in this regard, while Mormons were very well versed in Russian culture and often fluent in the language. He attributed a large part of their success to these efforts.⁶³ An open letter from the Council of Coordination of Missions, formed by Russian evangelical Christians, to American missionaries warned of the danger of their attitudes and approach: 'in a time when the national self-consciousness of our peoples has awakened and sometimes burst into obvious nationalism, it is extremely harmful to evangelise without considering the local culture, traditions and religion'.⁶⁴ This perceived ignorance further fueled anti-western sentiment, which became increasingly palpable over the post-Soviet decade. There were complaints that some Protestant missionaries regarded Russian Orthodoxy as a pagan faith, and the Orthodox veneration of icons in churches and in private homes as icon-worship.⁶⁵

Russian Protestants complained that they could not compete with western Protestants. Tensions centred on the newcomers' fiscal advantages; they could afford new churches, for example, funded by western benefactors and believers, which drew people to their faiths.⁶⁶ Nicastro states,

There are two manifestations of the transfer or "sheep-stealing" intent: repelling one from one's church (for example, using anti-Orthodox literature) and compelling or enticing one toward the proselytising church (for example, linking material aid to religious participation as in the creation of "rice Christians").⁶⁷

⁶³ Lawrence Uzzell, *Opening Address, Keston Institute Forum Day*, Oxford: 15 November 1999.

⁶⁴ Cited in James E. Will, "Missional Ecumenism and Slavophilism in Russia", *Religion in Eastern Europe*, vol. 14, no. 5 (1994), 47.

⁶⁵ Nicastro, "Mission Volga", 229, Interview with Missionary M., Moscow, 12 October 1999. The icon has a complex role in Orthodox worship. The icon is a symbol, and the veneration shown is not toward wood or paint, but the person or persons depicted; icons are also a crucial part of the Church's teaching, as they depict key persons, places and events in the history of Christianity. For more on the significance of icons in Orthodox worship see Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 38-43.

⁶⁶ Funds from western donors enabled the construction of conspicuous Protestant churches, for instance a New Apostolic church on St Petersburg's Lenin Prospekt, completed in 1999, which dwarfs surrounding buildings.

⁶⁷ Nicastro, "Mission Volga", 225.

The single most contentious issue was proselytism.⁶⁸ The aforementioned obstruction of Mission Volga was motivated by the refusal of locals to allow evangelical preaching to Orthodox people, who, in their view, already had their faith, and the belief of some missionaries that unless there is active worship a person is a non-believer. This correlates with the tendency for Russians to self-identify as Orthodox despite limited involvement in Church life. This fundamental theological divergence is at the heart of many of the tensions between Protestants and Orthodox. It also causes tension between different Protestant denominations.

The charge was leveled that foreign missionaries ignored Russia's own Protestant traditions. The Moscow Patriarchate was not the only religious body obstructing freedom of conscience. The governing bodies of other traditional religions also campaigned against religious pluralism. There were complaints from Russian Baptists that foreign Baptists were 'stealing' their flocks. One participant in a meeting between religious leaders and Yeltsin observed that the discussion turned to restrictive religious legislation not at the initiative of representatives of the Russian Church, but when 'Vasily Logvinenko, the chairman of the Council of Churches of Evangelical Baptists, raised the topic by complaining about the competition he faced from foreign Baptist organizations'.⁶⁹ While visible, the campaign by traditional confessions was not as intense as that of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Protestant missionaries were charged with 'buying souls'. Mission workers had significantly more money than indigenous missions, including the Orthodox Church (see Chapter 3). One Orthodox hierarch stated:

⁶⁸ This issue of western Protestant proselytism in the postcommunist region, especially in Slavic countries, encouraged polemics around the world. In addition to the comments of Bob Yannes, see the comments of Michael Mansbridge-Wood, a ROCA priest in Hobart, Australia: 'The Protestant and Papal invasion does nothing but promote the confusion that is the mark of Satan's activities everywhere.... May I suggest that those Protestant and Roman Catholics who imagine themselves to be doing good work with their invasion of Russia judge themselves now lest they be judged hereafter with Communists and others who oppose Christ's Church'. Letters to the Editor, "Orthodox Charges of Protestant Proselytism...", 11.

⁶⁹ Anatoly Krasikov, "From the Annals of Spiritual Freedom: Church-State Relations in Russia", *East European Constitutional Review*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1998), 77.

If they really want to help make our people Christians, let them provide us with financial help to do the job ourselves. The West is rich in material resources at a time that we are economically poor. But we are rich in our Orthodox spiritual tradition. The Church and the Gospel have been here for over 1000 years. The Protestants must realise that and appreciate our many sufferings to maintain a Christian witness throughout the centuries, and especially during the difficult communist era!⁷⁰

Metropolitan Kirill also notes that foreign religious workers did not cooperate with the Orthodox Church to facilitate the spread of Christianity, but instead 'they have started fighting with our church, like boxers in a ring with pumped-up muscles, delivering blows'.⁷¹ Missionaries were able to offer everything from food and shelter to bibles and pens to their audiences. Given the post-Soviet economic crises, for the average Russian it was a rational use of time to spend a few hours listening to a foreign evangelical speaker in return for a bible, which could then be sold for the equivalent of one day's pay, or to attend a service with the knowledge that it would be followed by a meal, or by an English lesson.

An article in an American mission periodical appealed to evangelists to recognise the primacy of the influence of *sobornost* in Russia. The author asserted: 'Orthodox believers de-emphasize independence and self-reliance in thinking' and noted that attempts to maintain the unity of the collective can be detrimental to western mission work, especially in its apparent encouragement of 'authoritarian leadership' in the church.⁷²

The Moscow Patriarchate's response to the activities of the foreign Protestants was not a constructive one, but rather a backlash that directed energies into campaigns against the newcomers rather than countering the success of Protestants with alterations to Orthodox ministry. A final point should be made about alarmist claims of the incursion of Protestantism. The term 'invasion' is frequently employed to describe the

⁷⁰ Cited in Nicastro, "Mission Volga", 232.

⁷¹ Kyrill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Third Millennium", *Ecumenical Review*, 73.

⁷² Steven R. Chapman, "Collectivism in the Russian World View and Its Implications for Christian Ministry", *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1998), 12.

influx of Protestant missionaries. Inherent in this term is the perception that this presents a threat to the established order, to the Russian Church, which historically claimed jurisdiction over Russian spirituality. A cursory glance at the number of missionaries in Russia indicates that their numbers were insignificant compared to Orthodox believers. The generous estimate of 3,000 missionaries at the height of evangelical activity among a population of some 147,200,000 leaves one missionary per 49,063 inhabitants.⁷³ This is hardly enough to secure the conversion of the masses. The Patriarchate's opposition to foreign religious activity was fueled by the ignorant and ultimately self-defeating attitudes of foreign evangelicals. The cultural insensitivity of some missionaries not only harmed the aims of their mission, but resulted in a tide of anti-American, anti-Protestant and xenophobic sentiment that ultimately led to restrictive religious legislation and to a palpable increase in Russian national chauvinism, both in official Church structures and amongst Orthodox adherents.

The Disciplining of Reformist Priests

The institutional Church limited the extent to which alternative visions of Church life and different understandings of Orthodoxy were aired. This diminished freedom of speech within Church structures; freedom of speech is fundamental to the concept of civil society. Orthodoxy is usually viewed as an inflexible, rigidly hierarchical and traditionalistic belief system. In the case of nonconformist priests' attempts to adapt Church practices to post-Soviet conditions, this understanding is excessively reductionist. In the context of the institutional Church, however, the Moscow Patriarchate is reluctant to entertain suggestions that any aspect of Church tradition be altered.

Patriarch Aleksii was quick to discipline reformist elements, as evidenced by the defrocking of Iakunin for his political involvement. At the same time that this

⁷³ These numbers are derived from Gosudarstvennyi komitet Rossiiskoi Federatsii po statistike, *Demograficheskii ezhegodnik Rossii*, Moscow: Goskomstat Rossii, 2000, 22, Pamela Meadows, "Missionaries to the Former Soviet Union and East Central Europe: the Twenty Largest Sending Agencies", *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1995), 10 and Matt Miller, "Missionaries to the Former Soviet Union and East Central Europe", *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1995), 3.

punishment was meted out against Iakunin, Metropolitan Filaret was a deputy in the Supreme Soviet of Belarus.⁷⁴ This displays a level of arbitrariness comparable to the Church's administration in the Soviet period. The Moscow Patriarchate's denunciation of Iakunin continued after his defrocking, as did Iakunin's counterattacks on the Church leadership. There is little doubt that this polemic has damaged the image of the Church. Criticisms of Iakunin have centred on what are perceived to be his continued attempts to discredit the hierarchy and widen the rift in the Church.⁷⁵

There are of course other reformist priests who have had action taken against them by the Patriarchate. Lapshin and Chistiakov are followers of Men', and are involved with the Open Orthodox University inspired by Men''s memory. Kochetkov's initiatives have been detailed elsewhere, though the controversy surrounding his preaching and his parish need further examination in the context of the Patriarch's disciplinary measures. Kochetkov, 'one of the consistent leading advocates of the spiritual regeneration of the Orthodox Church on the basis of openness and *sobornost*',⁷⁶ is well known for his evangelism and, like Men', the large number of adults that have come to the Orthodox Church through his preaching. He is heavily involved in making Orthodox theology more accessible; Kochetkov is prorector of the progressive Saint Filaret Moscow School of Advanced Orthodox and Christian Studies, which has an Open School that thoroughly educates adults on the fundamentals of their faith.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Iakunin pointed this out in his appeal to Aleksii II against his defrocking, Gleb' Yakunin, "First Open Letter to Patriarch Aleksii II", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1994), 312.

⁷⁵ One commentator, who identifies himself as a Iakunin sympathiser, denounces Iakunin's initiatives on the grounds that 'in the face of such a multitude of Orthodox churches... confused people might simply stop attending an Orthodox church and will go to the nearest Protestant sectarian group.' Vladimir Rusak, "Gleb Yakunin's Hostility Towards the Administration of the Moscow Patriarchate Leads Him Towards Strange Alliances (23 February 2000)" (Web site). Paul Steeves. Accessed 25 February 2000 at <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/>. Patriarch Aleksii claimed in his letter to the Duma that the Patriarchate had received a 'large number of letters' protesting Iakunin's political involvement. Patriarch Aleksii, "Letter to the Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Ivan Petrovich Rybkin", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1994), 317.

⁷⁶ Dmitrii Gorin, "Missioner", *Nezavisimuiia gazeta*, 10 December 1999, 12.

⁷⁷ For a biography of Kochetkov, see Gorin, "Missioner", 12.

Kochetkov was banned from ministry as a result of his reformist initiatives. In 1997 a scandal erupted when a priest, appointed by the Patriarchate to supervise Kochetkov at his parish, was committed to a psychiatric ward after a fracas at the altar. Since Kochetkov rang the ambulance, which led to the appointed priest being incarcerated, the incident was blamed on Kochetkov. Patriarch Aleksii ordered the formation of a Theological Commission, headed by Metropolitan Filaret, in response to numerous appeals to review the preaching and the publications of Kochetkov. Ominously, many members of the commission published a collection of essays condemning Kochetkov, so that, according to a frequent commentator on Church affairs, 'their prejudice was obvious to anyone who could read'.⁷⁸ In March 2001 the Commission reported that Kochetkov's teachings were 'non-Orthodox' and his publications were 'subjected to the influence of rationalism', displaying the 'charismaticism characteristic of various Protestant denominations'.⁷⁹ Alongside Iakunin, whom Aleksii denounced as 'actively working to create a schism in the Russian Orthodox Church and thereby promote division in our society',⁸⁰ Kochetkov is regarded as little more than a troublemaker by Orthodox prelates.

Just as the Patriarch did not denounce national chauvinism within the Church, for fear that there would be a backlash from conservative elements, so he also did not denounce attacks on reformist priests and their parishes. The influence of the nationalist wing of the Church, led by the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, helps account for this reaction. The charge of 'heresy of renovationism and Kochetkovism' was leveled at three priests who followed Kochetkov's example of refusing to be intimidated by the Patriarchate and deviating from its dictates. They were accused of presenting lectures on Holy Scripture, meeting with parishioners in their homes and generally having sympathy

⁷⁸ Maksim Shevchenko, "Kochetkova budut obsuzhdat' po-tserkovnomu (14 March 2001)" (Web site). Nezavisimaia gazeta online. Accessed 15 March 2001 at http://www.religion.ng.ru/printed/pravoslav/2001-03-14/4_kochetkov.html. There was controversy surrounding the attempts of conservative Orthodox media to influence the Commission, particularly on conservative Orthodox Internet sites such as strana.ru, vesti.ru and pravoslavie.ru.

⁷⁹ For the Commission's full report see Komissii, "Reziume zakliucheniia komissii po Bogoslovskim izyskaniiam sviashchennika Georgiia Kochetkova (15 November 2000)" (Web site). Nezavisimaia gazeta online, accessed 4 April 2001 at http://religion.ng.ru/pravoslav/2001-03-28/4_kochetkov.html.

⁸⁰ Patriarch Aleksii, "Letter to the Chairman of the State Duma", 317.

for the reformist agenda. In one instance, three priests wanted to adapt Orthodox ministry to Kazakh culture and practice in order to make Orthodoxy more accessible to the local population. Other Orthodox priests tore the crosses off the reformist priests and intoned an anathema against them.⁸¹ The disciplining of reformist priests can also be seen as an attempt to contain schismatic impulses. Iakunin, for instance, garnered support for the reformist agenda and then founded the Orthodox Church of Resurrection, in cooperation with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the True Orthodox Church. This drew parishioners away from the Moscow Patriarchate and toward a schismatic Orthodox jurisdiction. These reformist priests were therefore seen to pose a threat to the Church, similar to that of the Russian Orthodox Church (Outside Russia) or the new religious movements. The clergy were treated accordingly.

The argument that Russian culture, and specifically the Orthodox tradition, prevents the consolidation of civil society has been proved overly deterministic. Though in Orthodox thought conceptions of individualism and rights are subsumed to communality and authority, epitomised by the notion of *sobornost'*, there is much in the Orthodox religious tradition compatible with the concept of civil society. Such a view is also countered by the development of civil society in Church circles in the pre-revolutionary decade, religious dissent in the Soviet era, and the initiatives of reformist Orthodox clergy in the post-Soviet period. Regardless of the tensions between Orthodox theology and civil society identified at the outset of this chapter, the notion that culture excuses tendencies which undermine the development of social self-organisation and democratic society has little place in objective analysis.

Paradoxically, it was the lack of *sobornost'*, of communality, in Church life that led Aleksii to initiate the founding of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods. The Patriarch's attempts at activating the laity resulted in the formation of the UOB. This

⁸¹ Anonymous, "Anafema "Kochetkovtsam" (28 June 2000)" (Web site). Nezavisimaia gazeta online. Accessed 24 August 2000 at http://www.religion.ng.ru/facts/2000-06-28/1_anaphema.html.

vindicates Jürgen Habermas's warning that one paradox of civil society is that it allows the ideas of groups opposed to pluralism, free speech and other notions central to the concept of civil society to be publicly aired. In the Russian case, the chauvinism espoused by the Brotherhoods is a part of the banal nationalism that is reflected in public opinion (see Chapter 5). The UOB has exacerbated the divide between the reformist and traditionalist factions within the Church. The Patriarch's shift to the right is evident in his evolution away from his early gesture toward conciliation, exemplified by the speech '*Vashi proroki – nashi proroki*', and towards acceptance of the strength of conservative forces in the Church. This has resulted in concessions to the reactionary wing of the Church.

This chapter has provided evidence of the Moscow Patriarchate's institutional obstruction to the emergence and development of civil society. Such obstruction may be observed in all three spheres of civil society. In the first, widest sphere, that of the social and political life of the country, it is clear that Patriarch Aleksii has aligned the Church with rightist forces by allowing its appropriation by figures promoting antidemocratic ideologies. It can be argued, therefore, that, as an institution, the Orthodox Church is serving to retard the development of civil society by aligning itself with such forces. The Patriarchate's reluctance to speak against national chauvinists who exploit Orthodoxy for anti-democratic ends has led to a convergence of the Russian Church with more right-wing Orthodox jurisdictions.

Pospelovskii is an apologist for the Patriarch's reluctance to take a firm stance against attempts by rightists to appropriate Orthodoxy for anti-democratic ends. He argues that the fear of schism is justified and that the denunciation of national chauvinists could cause a backlash and the further radicalisation of the Russian Orthodox Church. He states that 'the mood today is similar to that which brought Hitler to power in 1933'.⁸² This comparison points, firstly, to the political importance of the Patriarch and, secondly, to the strength of xenophobic sentiments within the Church and support for these sentiments in wider society. Given this influence, the Patriarch could throw his

⁸² Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, 376-77.

weight behind religious, social and political forces that seek to strengthen civil society, rather than tow a middle line for fear of the defection of extremist prelates, clergy and laity. Elena Chinaeva states that 'Speculation that the church might unite with extremists has been built almost exclusively around the activities of the late Metropolitan Ioann and the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods'.⁸³ While it is true that these figures and organisations do constitute the most well known national chauvinist forces in the church, this chapter has shown that continued support for these groups by Patriarch Aleksii means that there is potential for increased extremism.

The campaign by the Moscow Patriarchate to limit the influence of nontraditional and foreign religious associations and workers is evidence of the official Church's attempts to limit civil society in the second sphere of civil society, the religious field. Despite Aleksii's background of genuine and deep-seated devotion to ecumenism',⁸⁴ his calls to protect Russia from other faiths has led many observers, including reformist priests, to regard the Moscow Patriarchate as hostile toward inter-denominational cooperation. This chapter has sought to demonstrate that this campaign was provoked by the insensitive behaviour of some mission workers. This damaged inter-confessional relations. Evidence of the Church's attempts to limit pluralism is also found in the opposition to the Catholic Pope's visit to Ukraine in 2001.

Traditional religious associations made a significant contribution to the sphere of independent social organisations that constitute civil society. Western evangelicals also played a significant role in shaping the post-Soviet religious sphere; not least because their activities have been central to debates about religious legislation. The attitude and approach of missionaries elicited a backlash among nationalist and conservative elements and encouraged support for restrictions on foreign religious activity, culminating in 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations'. The 1990 legislation 'On Freedom of Belief' characterised the tolerance and the openness of its

⁸³ Elena Chinyaeva, "Russian Orthodox Church Forges a New Role", *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 7 (1996), 19.

⁸⁴ John Arnold, "Patriarch Aleksii II: a Personal Impression", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1992), 237.

time. The subsequent explosion of the number of nontraditional religious associations and influx of western missionaries fostered an environment of resentment, with the battle lines drawn between the Moscow Patriarchate and the many faiths that sought to evangelise and proselytise. With the implementation of the 1997 law, this period drew to a close; the Russian Orthodox Church's claims to be the rightful faith of Russians was seemingly legitimated by the legislation.

The argument that strengthening Orthodoxy is the key to Russia's recovery is not popular among western commentators, who fear a return to the tripartite formula of Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationalism. There are, however, some who argue that the west is too quick to judge, and that the 1997 law needs to be contextualised. Harold J. Berman turns to Russia's Eastern Orthodox heritage to defend the legislation:

The Moscow Patriarchate respects the rights of others, including their legal rights, but it subordinates them to divine duties, and especially now to the duty to help to restore the spiritual identity of the Russian people at this time of crisis when the very soul of the Russian people is in danger of being lost. In the words of a representative of the Patriarchate, "Of course we do not want to violate international law or even our own Constitution or principles of human rights. But we hope that those legal and moral norms can be adapted to meet the acute spiritual crisis that now confronts the Russian Church".⁸⁵

Berman argues that the historical role of Orthodoxy, its preeminence in national tradition, the Soviet experience and the current climate of uncertainty must be taken into account. He argues that the west is wrong to condemn the restrictive legislation without considering these conditions and believes the answer to the crisis lies in the strengthening of Orthodoxy and in *sobornost'*. He suggests that the west considers ecumenism, understanding and cooperation in place of condemnation.⁸⁶ Given the Patriarchate's palpable hostility to the west and to ecumenism, the approach of understanding cultural differences could be used as justification for discrimination against religious minorities.

⁸⁵ Harold J. Berman, "Freedom of Religion in Russia: An Amicus Brief for the Defendant" in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux, New York: Orbis Books, 1999, 265.

⁸⁶ Berman, "Freedom of Religion in Russia", 283.

National chauvinist forces have been successful in harnessing Orthodoxy for their own ends. Devlin emphasises the weak voice of the Church leadership in relation to the growing chorus of nationalist voices invoking its authority, and paints a picture of a Patriarchate reluctant to 'take sides' because it needs the support of all sectors of society, including the radical nationalist camp.⁸⁷ This opportunist attitude ultimately serves to render the Orthodox Church more liable to invocation by national chauvinist intellectuals, politicians and laypersons, and ultimately to reduce its standing in the eyes of liberal thinkers, both religious and secular.

The third sphere of civil society, the narrowest sphere, is within Church structures. The Patriarchate's disciplining of reformist priests contrasts sharply with the treatment of traditionalist, and especially chauvinist, clergy and prelates. Aleksii is quick to denounce and castigate reformist priests but slow to react to national chauvinists and to publicise their trespasses against tolerance. Aleksii's failure to address rising nationalism within the Church is illustrative of the impotence of his leadership in the face of powerful social and political forces, which invoke Orthodoxy for their own ends.

Though defending the Patriarch's lack of opposition to extremist forces that associate themselves with the Church, Pospelovskii argues that the discipline of reformist priests is inexcusable. In an appeal to Patriarch Aleksii, he wrote: 'One's heart bleeds with each new report of persecutions against the very best, the most evangelistically active and successful pastors of the Russian Orthodox Church and against the fruits of their spiritual, educational and missionary work'.⁸⁸ The quelling of voices within Church structures discourages dialogue. One commentator pointed out how this damages initiative in the Church:

The religious activity of Father Georgi Kochetkov and the life and ministry of his parish, according to one Metropolitan, has "evoked tension within the church". It's hard to disagree with that. When someone in a crowd sighs and begins to stir, this always evokes "tension" in the hall and everyone feels awkward. That is so familiar! It has never been otherwise in

⁸⁷ Judith Devlin, *Slavophiles and Commissars: Enemies of Democracy in Modern Russia*, London: Macmillan Press, 1999, 88.

⁸⁸ Dmitrii Pospelovskii, "Raznoe", *Kontinent*, no. 96 (1998), 392.

history. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, as we know, evoked a certain "tension" in the "well-ordered" Jewish society.⁸⁹

This tension is the driving force behind the dynamics of civil society, where different interests compete for influence and for space in conditions of ideological pluralism. The Patriarchate regards the leaders of its reformist wing as troublemakers. But these different visions of contemporary Church life and mission could be welcomed as part of the freedom to debate and discuss, a freedom that the Church has only enjoyed since the demise of the USSR. Moreover, these different views serve to bring important issues to the Church elites' attention. The commentator cited above continued, 'As a result of the "tension-inducing" activity of Father Georgi... there is no-one now in the Church who can say that there is not, for instance, a problem of drawing adults to the church or of the language of the liturgy or of local conciliarity'.⁹⁰ The concept of civil society includes openness so that alternative voices are not regarded as heretical. In the Soviet period, religious dissidents were brought together by their defence of each other's right to promote a certain viewpoint, whether they agreed with this view or not. It was noted that this fostered a sphere of civil society of sorts. In the post-Soviet period, attempts to silence alternative voices again create dissenters, who are forced outside Church structures to promote initiatives that are conducive to civil society.

To return to the question with which this chapter began, namely, 'why respect culture?', Johnson concludes that it is not culture that should be respected, but 'It instead is respect for the political processes that allow individuals to arrive at considered judgements'.⁹¹ The post-Soviet society in which the Moscow Patriarchate operates provides numerous challenges for all institutions operating in it, including the Church. Take the instance when in 1996, Borisov served a requiem for those who died from AIDS. The Patriarchate ordered him 'not to make a spectacle'.⁹² Despite the fact that Russia has a legacy of subordination of the individual to the collective, this cannot be the

⁸⁹ Dmitrii Gorin, "Molchanie pastyreĭ", *Nezavisimaia gazeta - religii*, 3 November 1999, 11.

⁹⁰ Gorin, "Molchanie pastyreĭ", 11.

⁹¹ Johnson, "Why Respect Culture?", 406.

⁹² Cited in Marina Latysheva, "Vatikan priobshchilsia k bor'be so SPIDom", *Segodnia*, 18 May 1998, 1.

basis of the apologists' defence of the Moscow Patriarchate's institutional obstruction to civil society. The defence of the Patriarchate's attempts to obstruct the democratic project cannot be explained by culture, but instead understood as aimed at the political purposes of gaining authority in the new Russia. The 'enormous number' of young priests influenced by fundamentalists has been noted.⁹³ This is a direct result of the Patriarch's reluctance to adopt a stronger position against national chauvinists in the Church. The analysis of the institutional Church can therefore come down to, as Johnson argues, political processes such as those that have guided the Patriarch's decisions. Thus, Michael Radu's statement that the 1997 law is 'typical' of anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant sentiment throughout the Eastern Orthodox countries reduces specific national conditions and renders peripheral the political processes that led to its passage.⁹⁴ On the contrary, the political practices and the political influence of the Moscow Patriarchate are central to understanding the Church's role in post-Soviet Russia. The cultural context within which this influence is exercised provides neither explanation nor reasons for the official Church's obstruction of civil society.

This chapter has sought to examine the Church leadership's contribution to, and obstruction of, civil society by observing the dynamics in the three spheres of civil society that determine the nature of its influence. It is now possible to conclude with an evaluation of how the unofficial tendencies, explored in Part II, and the official tendencies, analysed in Part III, compete for influence among Orthodoxy as an institution and as an assembly of believers.

⁹³ Snegina and Strel'chik, "Gde pliaska", 6.

⁹⁴ Radu, "The Burden of Eastern Orthodoxy", 285.

PART IV

Conclusion

The paradoxes of the Russian Church's post-Soviet position are multifarious: the Patriarchate's transition from suppressed to suppressor; the incongruity of the reformist and traditionalist agendas; Orthodoxy's privileged position in a secular state; the susceptibility of the authoritative Patriarchate to exploitation by anti-democratic forces. These anomalies have fostered tensions between those individuals and agencies aligned with the official Church, represented by the Patriarchate, and the unofficial Church, represented by nonconformist clergy and lay activists sympathetic to the reformist agenda. This division is primarily related to issues of religious pluralism and civil society.

This dissertation argues that the Orthodox Church has had an inconsistent influence on civil society in Russia. On the one hand, the official Church has impeded the development of civil society, while on the other, the unofficial Church has promoted concepts central to the notion of civil society. Orthodoxy's significance is established by examining the Church's official and unofficial influence in three spheres of civil society: in the social and political arenas, in the religious domain, and within Church structures.

The legislation 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' has been of primary importance for the central argument of this dissertation. Debate over its passage and provisions demonstrated divisions in the political realm, within the religious sphere, and the fissure within the Church itself. It also highlighted the powerful position of Russia's traditional church and its tangible authority outside the religious domain. The civil society paradigm has been utilised to examine the Church's influence in these spheres of civil society.

This dissertation seeks to understand how the tensions between the official and unofficial agendas have resulted in differing conceptions of the Church's post-Soviet role. More specifically, it questions how representatives of these conflicting currents comprehend the Church's contribution to concepts central to civil society in a

democratising state. This dissertation began by examining the precedents of the Church's contribution to civil society in the Russian Empire and in the USSR before Brezhnev. The extent to which the legacy of Orthodox dissent continued in the postcommunist period was questioned and the reasons for the division in the Church were examined. The radical changes in the religious sphere after the collapse of the Soviet Union were investigated. The Church's post-Soviet position has been probed by examining three spheres of civil society in an attempt to understand how the Orthodox Church's privileged position in the pluralist religious sphere is legitimated. This dissertation has inspected how these privileges are manifested. The extent to which the Patriarchate's authority has been bolstered by a xenophobic discourse in the political, social and cultural arenas has been examined. The impact this has had on Patriarch Aleksii's mediation of national chauvinism within the Church has also been explored. The leadership's silencing of dissenting voices has been identified as part of the official Church's response to ideological and religious pluralism.

This examination has found that the Moscow Patriarchate has secured a heightened influence in Russia, a secular and multi-denominational state. Interest groups, both within and outside the Patriarchate, have used this to their advantage, disregarding the costs to a frail civil society and a fragile pluralism in the religious sphere. The strength of anti-democratic forces has effectively minimised the influence of alternative visions of Orthodox life, including those of reformist elements in the Church, who wish Russian Orthodoxy to become a force for tolerance, social action and ecumenism. The appropriation of Orthodoxy for anti-democratic causes has been demonstrated by the examination of national chauvinism among prominent social, cultural and intellectual figures and the resonance these sentiments have among the population. This has resulted in the Church leadership's concessions to forces opposed to the fundamental concepts of civil society.

The implication of the Church's position for the institutionalisation of independent social-self organisation and ideological pluralism in the post-authoritarian state is salient. The freedoms of the *perestroika* years brought these issues to the

forefront of political and societal debate. The Moscow Patriarchate had the potential to become a powerful independent actor, which could contribute to the burgeoning civil society and thus to the amelioration of some of the problems faced by Soviet (and subsequently Russian) society. This dissertation suggests some reasons why the Patriarchate did not rise to this challenge.

The Church's sudden renaissance in the late Soviet period indicated that the Moscow Patriarchate would become a significant political and social actor. While many Orthodox dissidents dismissed the Patriarchate as a weakened and demoralised body, the majority of commentators – political, social and cultural – had great expectations of the Church. That Russia was a multi-denominational and secular state did little to dampen the widespread enthusiasm for the rehabilitation of the country's spiritual life, with Orthodoxy's regeneration at its core. The Church was expected to be a guiding force, not only in the religious sphere, but also in the political realm, despite the fact that the official line was that both prelates and clergy stand above the political fray. Moreover, a minority of Russia's population comprised active Orthodox believers who possessed a basic knowledge of Church canons. It thus emerged that self-identifying as an Orthodox believer was as much – if not more – a result of Orthodoxy's synonymy with Russian national identity than it was an indication of piety or adherence to the rules and practices of the Church. This ethno-religious linkage has been explored throughout the dissertation.

In the post-Soviet period, the Church has attained a prominent and privileged position. Patriarch Aleksii is a highly visible national figure. Orthodoxy's elevated position is supported by the Patriarchate's close cooperation with the state on issues that are in the realm of governance, not of faith. In the Russian context, as elsewhere, religion is not becoming less potent, as the theory of secularisation suggests. In the postcommunist period, the sudden liberation of religious communities and individual believers led to a 'new war for souls'. The freedoms guaranteed by the passage of liberal religious legislation in 1990 facilitated a religious boom, which inalterably changed the

religious sphere. The new pluralism prompted a defensive response from Russia's traditional church.

The Patriarchate's political role has significant implications for the development of civil society in post-Soviet Russia. Like the national churches in other postcommunist states, the Russian Church has the potential to have either a positive or a negative influence on the democratic project. Orthodoxy's centrality to the rhetoric of national chauvinism, which has a prime place in the political sphere, means that anti-democratic forces and movements have the potential to exploit Orthodoxy. The 1997 legislation demonstrated the Patriarchate's influence on the shape of the pluralist religious sphere. The close association between Orthodoxy and 'Russian-ness' means that the traditional Church is open to exploitation by such forces and movements.

The Church's post-Soviet path would be a concern limited to sociologists of religion if the implications of its role were confined to within Church structures or even to the religious sphere. This is not the case, however: the Moscow Patriarchate cannot be subsumed into the sphere of associations along with a host of other independent social organisations. The key signs of secularisation – the separation of church and state, in practice as well as in legislation; limits on the Church's influence outside the ecclesiastical realm; and the separation of religious from political and social concerns – are not present. Given the Church's opportunity for influence outside the religious sphere, there is the potential for the Orthodox Church as a whole to be a constructive, active participant and integrative force in Russia's transition. It also, however, has the power to provoke division and conflict.

This dissertation has examined the significant division between the official and the unofficial Church's influence. This is a continuation of the Soviet-era division, when the institutional Church pledged allegiance to the communist authorities. The Patriarchate did not defend Orthodox dissidents from the repression perpetrated by the atheist regime. Tolerance, openness and even pluralism itself were not qualities conducive to advancement in the Church hierarchy. The discrimination against believers

highlighted a chasm between the Patriarchate, tolerated by the regime, and active laity and dissident clergy, whose right to freedom of conscience, guaranteed by successive Soviet constitutions, was violated. This division continued in the post-Soviet period. Many lay activists and reformist priests promoted a vision of Orthodoxy that was inclusive and accessible. This set them apart from prelates and clergy willing to make concessions to the right wing of the Church.

The official influence of the Church was far less constructive for the democratic project. This division was demonstrated by the debate about the 1997 law. There was opposition to the Church's campaign among reformist clergy and their sympathisers among the laity. While the official church supported restrictions on many faiths, foreign and indigenous, traditional and nontraditional, reformist clergy campaigned against the legislation on the basis that it violated basic human rights, threatened inter-confessional relations and supported the Patriarchate's (illegitimate) claim to a privileged position in secular and multi-confessional Russia. The strength of the division is highlighted by the fact that reformist clergy boast large congregations, particularly in Moscow and to a lesser extent St Petersburg. A significant number of believers concur with nonconformist clergy's outlook and are prepared to ignore the official censure of these priests and their parishes. Their congregations are notably younger and more diverse than those of their fellow clergymen. They are far more likely to promote *perestroika* in the Church and to be concerned by the continuation of the Patriarchate's close links with the government. The advocates of key concepts of civil society are silenced in an attempt to 'police' the official line. This attests to the fact that civil society is far from entrenched in Church structures. The Church's campaign for a more restrictive religious law made it clear that the Church was intimately involved in politics: this very public debate was not waged over an internal or a theological issue, but rather a piece of federal legislation.

Part I established the Church's tangible authority in the social and political arenas. It determined that the concept of civil society is useful in examining the Church's presence in the 'sphere of associations' that constitutes an ideologically

pluralist society. Chapter 1 proposed three spheres of civil society in order to examine the Church's influence in the social and political arenas, in the religious domain, and within Church structures. This dissertation examined conflicting currents in Orthodox life – a frequent oversight in many western analyses of the Russian Church. The Church has a multi-tiered influence. Though often portrayed as a monolithic body, the Church should not be seen (as many western commentators see it) as characterised only by rightist tendencies. The different currents in Church life are best examined through the concept of civil society.

Part II examined Orthodoxy's contribution to civil society in the Russian Empire and the USSR. Chapter 2 observed that the Church was well positioned to contribute to the emergence of civil society in its calls for greater independence and democracy in the early twentieth century. The advent of authoritarianism cut short reformist initiatives in the Church. The refusal of Orthodox dissidents in the Soviet Union to accept the subservient position of the ecclesiastical authorities fostered the creation of a religious sphere beyond the control of the state, one in which freedom of conscience and freedom of speech were defended. Many Orthodox dissidents called for the separation of church and state to bring an end to the state's intrusion into the private realm of worship. Thus, a fundamental prerequisite of civil society was kept at the fore of religious dissent. The movement for Church reform in the early twentieth century and the activity of Orthodox dissidents during the Soviet period was evidence of the Church's contribution to civil society, which this dissertation identified as the Church's 'usable past'.

Chapter 3 examined the changes to religious legislation and the demise of atheist Marxism-Leninism, both of which facilitated dramatic changes in the religious sphere. The 'religious boom' was characterised by the liberation of religious communities, the visibility of religious bodies and the increasing diversity of religious associations, including the rise of indigenous religious movements and the influx of foreign missionaries. These developments forged ideological pluralism in the religious sphere. These religious bodies constituted the new independent social organisations that were crucial for the emergence of civil society. The Orthodox Church faced significant

challenges in the pluralist religious sphere. On the one hand, reformist Orthodox priests and lay activists made a significant contribution to civil society. The alternative vision of Orthodoxy offered by these elements in Church life aided the democratic project. On the other hand, there was a defensive response from the official Church. While the influx of new religious groups facilitated the expansion of civil society, the Patriarchate actively –and successfully – campaigned for limits on freedom and diversity in the religious domain.

Part III examined Orthodoxy's institutional obstruction to civil society and contrasted this with informal currents in Church life. Chapter 4 noted that the debates over the Church's symphonic relations with the state are not lost on the Moscow Patriarchate. The *Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*, formulated by the 2000 Jubilee Bishops' Council, emphasised the Church's separation from the state. Other provisions, however, suggested that Orthodox elites regard themselves as having a legitimate role outside the ecclesiastical realm and into that of governance. The legislation 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations' exemplified this heightened influence. Chapter 4 outlined four other instances when the Patriarchate was granted privileges over other religious bodies in a secular state.

Though the Church had competition from other evangelistic faiths, Orthodoxy remained a primary focus of national identity. Even though most Russians rarely attend church, and have limited knowledge of Orthodox canons, Orthodoxy remains an inalienable part of national identity. While the intimate link between Orthodoxy and the Russian nation is not necessarily to be deplored, it does come to the fore of some profoundly negative manifestations of national identity. Chapter 5 suggested that Orthodoxy is invoked by political, cultural and religious figures across the political spectrum. It is not surprising that it is one of the chief elements in the myths and symbols of Russian national chauvinism. Chapter 5 also noted the exploitation of Orthodoxy and suggested that the policies of the Church leadership have been shaped just as much by the political climate and popular attitudes as they have by the leadership's initiatives.

These attitudes cannot but impact on the official Church, particularly when individuals and agencies are still negotiating the post-Soviet order. Chapter 6 examined the implications of Orthodoxy's conservative leadership for civil society. One aspect of this was the Patriarchate's response to the appropriation of Orthodoxy by anti-democratic forces. The chapter argued that the compromises made by Patriarch Aleksii permitted the exploitation of Orthodoxy in the name of national chauvinism. Another theme addressed was the disciplining of reformist priests. Nonconformist clergy and laity advocated a post-Soviet role for Orthodoxy based on social action, ecumenism and tolerance. The initiatives of reformist clergy were criticised by the Church leadership, and in extreme cases, halted.

Orthodox Russia and the Protestant and Catholic west are often counterposed by western scholars. Samuel Huntington asserted that Orthodoxy and western Christianity could be one of the fault-lines in the 'Clash of Civilisations'.¹ This overlooks elements of the Orthodox world which have universalistic visions of their faith. This examination has sought to demonstrate that in the Orthodox tradition there is much that is conducive to the entrenchment of democracy, pluralism and civil society. The extent to which these tendencies are mediated is a different point altogether. By examining Russian Orthodoxy and religious pluralism through the three spheres of civil society, this dissertation contends that these impulses are repressed by the official Church but advocated by the unofficial Church.

In this way, this dissertation has offered a new understanding of civil society. Civil society is an ambiguous term which, given its relatively new application in the context of democratisation, is still developing as a concept to aid the understanding of the transformation of both political culture and societal norms in the postcommunist countries. This dissertation has utilised the concept of civil society to examine a specific social and political actor and its influence on the democratic project in three different

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (1993), 22-50.

arenas. It has argued that civil society is a useful tool to examine the postcommunist religious context. The concept of civil society facilitates the identification of the Church's influences on the dynamics of polity and society, of the religious domain, and of Church structures. The practices and processes within the three spheres of civil society at the crux of this examination have demonstrated that the Church's post-Soviet role is negotiated rather than predestined.

This dissertation has also pointed to the centrality of religion to the development of civil society in Russia. Political scientists seeking to understand the social, cultural and political transformations in the region often overlook religion. In addition, commentators have frequently reduced the Russian Church's significance in post-Soviet conditions to the influence of its conservative and xenophobic elements. This dissertation has offered a more realistic picture of the Church's role as being multi-layered. It cannot be reduced to either the Church's official or unofficial dimension. By extension, the Church can both contribute to and obstruct the democratic project. This dissertation has sought to analyse the conditions that legitimated the Patriarchate's privileged position in the pluralist religious sphere. Such an analysis is long overdue. In these ways, this dissertation has sought to overcome the inadequacies of the existing literature on Russian religious life, particularly since the watershed of the 1997 religion law.

Religion is central to the ideological pluralism at the heart of the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic state. Religious bodies, especially the national churches, cannot be subsumed into the sphere of associations that constitutes civil society along with other non-state organisations. They have a particular authority by virtue of their links with national identity and the legacy of communist repression. Religion has emerged as a guidepost in many of these societies, particularly in Orthodox Russia, Romania and Bulgaria, and in Catholic Poland. Any evaluation of issues of postcommunist national identity construction is incomplete without considering the national churches. Other issues crucial to the study of Russian Orthodoxy, politics and civil society include the project of building a national identity. This is particularly

relevant in the context of the conflict in the secessionist republic of Chechnia. The question of Russian identity in the context of the Russian Federation's large Muslim population is especially salient since the September 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre. Further research into the limits on religious pluralism in Russia's regions, where foreign religious workers are especially discriminated against, would also provide greater insight into the influence of western Protestantism on perceptions of democracy and westernisation in Russia's regions. Comparative research into Catholicism in Poland and Orthodoxy in Bulgaria and Romania would yield insights into the democratic transitions across the postcommunist region. The influence of national churches on civil society could be significantly advanced by examining the churches' social and political role through the three spheres of civil society. The influence of these national churches on legislation, as shown by the Catholic Church's preeminence in debates about abortion legislation in Poland, is of particular interest to the examination of postcommunist states. These examinations are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

This dissertation argues that the 1997 law was a culmination of pro-Orthodox attitudes among Church elites and political figures. When these attitudes are coupled with widespread negative attitudes towards non-Orthodox faiths, the new pluralism and diversity is threatened. The implications of the division in the Church and the contradictory nature of its contribution to the democratic project have been explored throughout this dissertation. The importance of the Church's role lies in Russia's status both as a fledgling democracy and as a country that is instituting religious pluralism where it has no precedent. The activities of the institutional Church threaten this precarious balance. This dissertation points to the tensions in polity and society, in the religious sphere and within Church structures which reflect very different understandings of the Church's role. The resolution of these tensions is dependent on whether there is *perestroika* within the Church, and which agenda – the unofficial or the official – is realised.

The official Church did not appropriate Orthodoxy's usable past. The efforts of the Moscow Patriarchate have been largely directed towards securing an advantageous

position in the pluralist religious sphere. The Patriarchate threatens the Church's positive contribution to civil society by its close cooperation with the state, its association with nationalist political and social forces, the perpetuation of an exclusive Orthodox Russian identity, and the leadership's concessions to the conservative wing of the Church. The Moscow Patriarchate's privilege is such that Orthodoxy can be described as a 'pseudo-state church'. The danger of such a status is demonstrated by xenophobes' discourses which wed Orthodoxy with platforms and ideologies incompatible with civil society. National chauvinism is characterised by an intolerance that violates the fundamental tenets of civil society, which require cooperation, co-existence and ideological pluralism. It undermines dialogue and the opportunity for Church reform. It even extends to undermining religious pluralism itself by promoting discrimination against religious minorities in the name of Orthodox tradition.

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