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From the Editors

Dear Reader,

IN this issue of *State, Religion and Church* we bring you four articles, each of which represents an important direction in contemporary religious studies in the post-Soviet space. First off, Daria Oreshina, Elena Prutskova, and Ivan Zabaev bring us sociological analysis of some of the first data gathered by the nationwide Russian research project known as *OrthodoxMonitor*. Their detailed examination of parish social networks indicates “that religion (Orthodoxy in our case) may be a factor which increases the social capital of Russians and strengthens their social support networks.”

With respect to post-Soviet religion, in this issue we also bring you Alexey Zygmunt’s study of violence in post-Soviet Russian Orthodox discourse, which makes for an interesting contrast with Oreshina, Prutskova’s, and Zabaev’s work in elucidating another facet of contemporary Russian Orthodox reality. Drawing on the work of the influential French thinker René Girard (1923–2015) and other important scholars in the field, Zygmunt examines a substantial amount of contemporary sources to reveal attitudes of distinct groups within Orthodoxy toward sacred violence, as shaped by the concepts of “cosmic war” and “sacrificial crisis.”

This issue also contains Elena Golovneva’s and Irina Shmidt’s exploration of the transnational story of the remarkable village of Okunevo in Western Siberia, a site located near important archaeological finds and associated with a unique multi-religious community and esoteric tourism. Making use of interviews, notes from fieldwork, and internet sources, Golovneva and Shmidt meticulously document this case of the construction of sacred space and the invention of tradition in post-Soviet Russia.

Finally, in this issue, we continue to bring you historical research regarding religion in the Soviet Union, which remains an active area of scholarly inquiry in both the post-Soviet space and in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies as conducted in Europe and North America. Specifically, Natalia Shlikhta explores the ways in which the Ukrainian Greek Catholics who were forced into unification with the

Russian Orthodox Church after the liquidation of their church in 1946 worked toward the preservation of a distinct Ukrainian and non-Soviet identity. She makes her case by applying the framework of subaltern strategies to a wide variety of primary sources.

As usual, we also bring you book reviews and a review article in order to provide you with a greater sense of the concerns that currently define the field of religious studies in Russia and the post-Soviet space.

We invite you to share any thoughts you may have on this issue with us by writing to religion@rane.ru. Submissions of manuscripts of original academic articles for consideration for publication may be sent to the same address.

*All the best,
The Editors*



DARIA ORESHINA, ELENA PRUTSKOVA, IVAN ZABAEV

The Social Capital of Russian Orthodox Christianity in the Early 21st Century: Applying Social Network Analysis

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This article examines the influence of religion on the formation of social capital in Russia. The study suggests that the active involvement of parishes in organizing social work, based on the principles of the delegation of responsibility from priests to laity, increases parochial social networks and engages more laypeople, including those who do not practice an active religious life. The data for the article comes from research projects conducted from 2011–13 at the “Sociology of Religion” Research Seminar at St. Tikhon's Orthodox University, and includes a mass survey of parishioners in 12 parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church, located in cities of various size and in various regions of Russia (the total sample size

The English version of the article is prepared within the framework of the Program of Development of Foundation of St. Tikhon's Orthodox University. The study also uses the findings of the research projects “Social Support Networks in the Orthodox Church Community,” which is supported by the Council for Grants of the President of the Russian Federation for Supporting Young Russian Scholars and Leading Scholarly Schools (Research Grant MK-4450.2012.6), “Social Work Organization in Russian Orthodox Church Parishes in the First Half of the 21st Century: Sociological Analysis,” supported by a grant from the Russian Foundation for the Humanities (Research Grant RFH 12-03-00565), and the initial results of the new nationwide research project called OrthodoxMonitor. Detailed information is available at the website of the “Sociology of Religion” Research Seminar at St. Tikhon's Orthodox University (<http://socrel.pstgu.ru>).

is 985 respondents); in-depth interviews with parishioners and priests in 15 parishes (in total, 153 interviews); and the first wave of results from the nationwide survey OrthodoxMonitor (national representative sample of 1500 respondents).

Keywords: sociology of religion, social capital, social network analysis, Russian Orthodox Church, parish community.

Introduction: Research Concepts and Methods

IN recent years the significance of social capital and social support for the improvement of quality of life and for development in various countries has been an active area of research and discussion. Hence the Better Life Index of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a project aimed at measuring the quality of life and well-being of populations according to various factors, stated:

Humans are social creatures. The frequency of our contact with others and the quality of our personal relationships are thus crucial determinants of our well-being. Studies show that time spent with friends is associated with a higher average level of positive feelings and a lower average level of negative feelings than time spent in other ways. Helping others can also make you happier. People who volunteer tend to be more satisfied with their lives than those who do not. Time spent volunteering also contributes to a healthy civil society.

The report went on, saying:

A weak social network can result in limited economic opportunities, a lack of contact with others, and eventually, feelings of isolation. Social isolation may follow family breakdown, the loss of a job, illness or financial difficulties. Once socially isolated, individuals may face greater difficulties not only reintegrating into society as a contributing member, but also fulfilling personal aspirations with respect to work, family and friends” (OECD).¹

1. The importance of social capital for individuals and communities is discussed in many studies, the most widely known being Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*, in which, after analyzing a large amount of empirical data, Putnam suggested that social capital is an important factor contributing to a higher quality of life in terms of economic prosperity and subjective well-being, happiness, health, security, etc. (Putnam 2000: 287–363).

Comparative rankings of countries according to social support networks put Russia near the bottom of the list. For example, in the OECD's index, Russia ranks 28th out of 36 countries for its Quality of Support Network indicator. Such findings raise the question of which factors might improve the Russian situation.

The concept of social capital has been used by Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, Robert Putnam, and some other authors. Bourdieu defined social capital using the concept of membership in a group:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition — or in other words, to membership in a group. (...) The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected (Bourdieu 1986).

For Coleman, social capital embodied the characteristics of a social structure — “*social* organization constitutes *social capital*, facilitating the *achievement* of goals that could not be achieved in its absence or could be achieved only at a *higher cost*” (Coleman 1990: 304). Putnam described the sources of social capital and its consequences, and posed the problem of the relationship between “bridging” social capital and “bonding” social capital (Putnam 2000).

Studies show that religion is one of the most important factors² improving the indicators of accumulation of social capital by communities. Thus Putnam, summarizing the influence of the religious factor in the performance of social capital and civic engagement in the United States, wrote: “First, religion is today, as it has traditionally been, a central fount of American *community life and health*. *Faith-based organizations* serve civic life both directly, by providing social support to their members and social services to the wider community, and indirectly, by nurturing civic skills, inculcating moral values, encouraging altruism, and fostering civic recruitment among church people” (Putnam 2000: 79). Heidi Unruh and Ronald Sider noted in this regard, “Congregations translate their social capital into social well-be-

2. In this article we consider only one of the possible sources of accumulating social capital, while not rejecting the existence and importance of other sources. See the description of other factors affecting the accumulation of social capital in Coleman 1988 and Putnam 2000: 31–183.

ing by taking collective action, by empowering the civic involvement of members, by uplifting individuals by incorporating them into the church's caring community" (Unruh and Sider 2005: 236). J. A. Schneider concluded that "faith communities became the major source of community, social and cultural capital, and empowerment" (Schneider 2006: 293). Robert Wuthnow emphasized that "besides sponsoring service programs and reminding parishioners about the value of helping the needy (...) congregations may fulfill an important community function simply by facilitating the formation of friendships and other personal ties. Such ties or 'social capital,' as it is increasingly termed, can become the means through which people in need receive care informally from others in their congregations" (Wuthnow 2004: 79–80).

Until now there have been no specific studies analyzing the problem in Russia, but a number of studies on related issues suggest that the dominant denomination in Russia — Orthodox Christianity — is not likely to contribute to improving the quality of social life and the development of civil society (Mitrokhin 2003, Filatov 2005).

In this article we would like to summarize the results of projects designed to answer the question of whether religion (Orthodoxy) influences indicators of individual involvement in social support networks in Russia. The concept of social capital is pivotal for our research.³

There are two main levels of analysis in the study of social networks. Each level makes it possible to address various research problems. The first level is represented by ego networks of parishioners — the number of people (which may include both practicing and non-practicing Orthodox, as well as representatives of other denominations) with which each person interacts directly. The second level of analysis is provided by the whole social network of a parish community. Here we may pose a question about the overall structure of social ties in the parish, about the effects that may arise from one or another configuration of social ties.

The key indicators we used for assessing the characteristics of the social networks of parishioners and parishes are represented in table 1.

3. The problem of quantifying the concept of social capital is very complex. Scholars propose distinguishing between resources and access to these resources, while stressing a great number of individual components. We can point to the methodology of the "Resource Generator" of M. Van der Gaag and T. A. Snijders as one of the most detailed ways of using the concept (Van der Gaag, Snijders 2005). In this article social capital is primarily defined as engagement in social support networks. We identify several types of resources and distinguish between two key standpoints: those of "the donor" and "the recipient."

Table 1: Operationalization of the main concepts

Concept	Indicator	Method
1 Parishioners' ego networks		
1a Social capital from a "recipient's" standpoint	Perceived size of social support network that the respondents have access to (may appeal to in case of need). <i>Question:</i> "If you get into a crisis (for example, job loss, family problems, or illness), who can you turn to for help? In your opinion, how many people are there to whom you can turn for help in a crisis?"	Survey of parishioners exiting the liturgy (filling out the questionnaire on their own)
1b Social capital from a "donor's" standpoint	Involvement in the practices of mutual assistance in three areas: labor help, financial assistance, and moral support. <i>Question:</i> "In the last 12 months, how often did you do anything from the following list for any of your relatives, friends, neighbors or acquaintances: helped someone out of your household with chores or shopping; lent money; found some time to talk to a distressed/depressed person?"	Survey of parishioners exiting the liturgy (filling out the questionnaire on their own)

2 Whole networks of parishes

2a Embeddedness in the community ⁴	Density of contacts with people of varying degrees of involvement in church life	Semi-formalized interviews with parishioners, priests, and parish transactors ⁵
2b Delegating responsibility in the social work of the parish	Position of the rector in the structure of parish ties	Semi-formalized interviews with parishioners, priests, and parish transactors

For analyzing the ego networks of parishioners belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church, this study used the results of the research project “Social Support Networks in the Orthodox Church Community,” conducted in 2012–13. A questionnaire survey of parishioners and church employees (in total 12 Orthodox parishes, 985 persons) was conducted on Sundays when parishioners were leaving the church at the end of the liturgy⁶ in parishes located in population centers of various sizes: megapolis downtown (1 parish), megapolis residential district (1 parish), a city of over 1 million residents (2 parishes), a city of over 500,000 residents (2 parishes), a city of over 200,000 residents (2 parishes), a city of over 100,000 residents (1 parish), a town of 50,000 residents (1 parish), a town under 20,000 residents (1 par-

4. We understand embeddedness as sustained interaction of a parish represented by priests, church workers, and parishioners with organizations, institutions and residents on the territory of the parish. As a rule, such relationships are formed during implementation of social projects by the parish outside of the church territory.
5. “Parish transactors” are organizations, institutions, as well as local residents and recipients of social help, with whom the parish interacts in the person of priests, church employees, and parishioners.
6. On the morning of the survey the announcement of the survey was posted on the doors and/or information boards at the entrance to the churches. After the service, the rector or clergy of the church would make an announcement about the survey to the parishioners. Questionnaires were distributed to parishioners, as they were exiting the church, by 2–5 field workers. The questionnaire was filled out by the respondent and, if possible, returned immediately. In cases in which respondents were in a hurry to leave, the questionnaires would be given to them to fill out at home with a request to bring them back the following week, but most of the questionnaires were collected on the day of the survey. Respondents who complained of poor eyesight had their answers taken down by field workers; however, the proportion of such questionnaires in the general array was small (about 15).

ish), a village (1 parish). Geographical distribution of the survey included eight Russian regions: the city of Moscow, Iaroslavl Region, Kaluga Region, Rostov Region, Samara Region, Irkutsk Region, Altai Krai, and Krasnoiarsk Krai. In order to compare our findings with results across all of Russia, we also used the data from the nationwide *OrthodoxMonitor* survey (December 2011).⁷

Our analysis of the whole networks of parishes is based on the research project “Social Work Organization in Russian Orthodox Church Parishes in the First Half of the 21st Century: Sociological Analysis.” The survey consisted of a series of in-depth interviews in 15 parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow Region, Kaluga Region, Iaroslavl Region, Samara Region, Irkutsk Region, Altai Krai, Krasnoiarsk Krai, and Khabarovsk Krai (the total number of interviews was 153). A series of questions concerning participation in various social activities of the parish (the number of participants, the regularity of participation, whether the participants were parishioners or non-parishioners, in which way those people were engaged in the activities, and so on) and with whom the parish comes into contact in the course of social work implementation (partner organizations, sponsors, people, institutions, and so on) was asked during the interview. The whole network of the parish was reconstructed by encoding interview data in GEPHI software designed for network analysis.

Social Support Networks: The Ego Network Level

The first level of analysis is provided by the ego networks of parishioners, comprising their friends and family as well as the circle of people with which each person directly interacts and communicates, and that he can ask for help in need (which may include people actively participating in church life, non-practicing people, and representatives of other denominations). Here we can raise questions about the size and composition of ego networks and the social capital rooted in these relationships.

In order to evaluate how involvement in parish life affects social capital, we will consider two aspects of social interactions. In ex-

7. The first wave of the nationwide *OrthodoxMonitor* survey (<http://socrel.pstgu.ru/en/orthodoxmonitor>, accessed on August 4, 2014) was conducted by the “Public Opinion Foundation” (FOM) from December 14 to 21, 2011. Research methodology was developed at the “Sociology of Religion” Research Seminar at St. Tikhon’s Orthodox University. The sample was representative of the urban and rural population of Russia aged 18 years and older. The sample size was 1500 respondents.

changes in social support networks, participants may act as “donors” or “recipients.”⁸ We looked at how the representatives of the surveyed parishes differed in self-assessment of their capacity to receive help from others in a difficult situation, as well as how the respondents themselves were involved in helping relationships.

In the analysis of our data that follows, first, we will consider involvement in the practice of mutual help in three areas — spending time and energy to provide services in the form of assistance with household chores, financial assistance, and moral support (table 2) — and try to estimate the strength of the social ties involved through their regularity (intensity).

Respondents were asked the question, “In the last 12 months, how often did you do anything from the following list for any of your relatives, friends, neighbors or acquaintances: helped someone out of your household with chores or shopping; lent money; found some time to talk to a distressed/depressed person?” This question was asked in the questionnaire of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) that focused on social networks (2001). We slightly expanded the list of possible answers compared with that study. The same question was also asked in the *OrthodoxMonitor* survey of December 2011 (as were our other questions), making it possible to compare our data on parish communities with the results in Russia as a whole.

8. Thus Alejandro Portes emphasizes the need to distinguish between two positions in exchange relations — the recipients (the “owners” of social capital, who have access to it and may turn to this resource if necessary), and the donors (the “sources” of social capital — the “owners” of other resources which the recipients can access by using their social ties with the donors) since the motives of donors and recipients in the exchanges mediated by social capital can vary significantly (Portes 1998: 6). Portes notes the lack of a clear distinction between the two in Coleman. Among Russian scholars studying social networks and informal economy, this distinction was used, for example, by S. Barsukova and G. Gradoselskaia. Barsukova distinguished between four types of participants in the exchange of a variety of resources (food, money, labor): radical donor, moderate donor, moderate recipient and radical recipient, depending on the intensity and degree of reciprocity (Barsukova 2005). Gradoselskaia introduced a typology of network agents, based on the distinction between four main resources: money, food, information and labor, as well as four types of participation in exchange: donors (providing transfers), consumers (receiving transfers), “exchange” (those who both provide and receive transfers) and independent agents (not participating in exchange relations) (Gradoselskaia 1999).

Table 2: “In the last 12 months, how often did you do anything from the following list for any of your relatives, friends, neighbors or acquaintances?” (column %)

	Parishes	Russia in general
... helped someone out of your household with chores or shopping		
several times a week	18	12
about once a week	16	11
2–3 times a month	12	15
about once a month	15	14
not less than 2–3 times a year	13	15
once a year	6	6
not a single time in the past year	9	20
difficult to say	11	8
Base (number of respondents)	753	1500
... lent money		
several times a week	5	2
about once a week	6	5
2–3 times a month	13	13
about once a month	17	18
not less than 2–3 times a year	25	24
once a year	15	8
not a single time in the past year	10	22
difficult to say	10	9
Base (number of respondents)	783	1500
... found some time to talk to a distressed/depressed person		
several times a week	24	12
about once a week	16	13
2–3 times a month	11	17
about once a month	15	16
not less than 2–3 times a year	3	15
once a year	2	6
not a single time in the past year	2	12
difficult to say	9	10
Base (number of respondents)	852	1500

The interviewed representatives of parishes significantly differ from the average Russians in terms of their involvement in the practices of mutual support.⁹ In general, there turned out to be a very high percentage of non-responders to the above set of questions in parish communities.

In terms of spending their time and energy (household help), the representatives of parish communities differed according to the extreme categories of response — “not a single time in the past year” and “once a week or more frequently.” The share of those who did not provide this type of assistance in the past year was 20 percent in general in Russia and 9 percent among the representatives of the Orthodox communities. A third of Orthodox respondents (33%) helped someone with housework or shopping once a week or more often, while in Russia in general this figure was 10 percent lower (23%).

Financial aid in general is provided much less frequently than moral support both in Russia as a whole and among the representatives of the studied parish communities. However, if 22 percent of Russians did not provide material assistance with money in the past 12 months, this group was much smaller among the interviewed representatives of parish communities, amounting only to 10 percent.

As far as moral support is concerned, the differences between average Russians and Orthodox parishioners were more significant: among the interviewed parish representatives 24 percent of the respondents spent some time talking to a distressed/depressed person in the past year several times a week, while in general in Russia those who engaged in this form of support several times a week over the preceding year amounted to half as many at 12 percent. Those who did not provide moral support to people close to them in the past year were practically absent among the interviewed parish respondents (2%, compared to 12% throughout Russia).

Thus, we can conclude that the ties of the representatives of parish communities are characterized by a higher level of frequency and intensity than those of Russians on average. Mutual aid and moral support is more pronounced among parish members than among the Russian population in general.

In order to determine the composition and size of the supporting ego networks in Orthodox parish communities and in Russia in general from the perspective of the recipient, we asked the following question: “If you find yourself in a crisis (for example, job loss, family problems, or illness), who can you turn to for help? In your opinion, how many people are there to whom you can turn for help in a crisis?”¹⁰

9. For determining the statistical significance of differences, we used the Mann–Whitney U test. For all three questions in this section, the differences in the intensity of involvement in the practices of mutual support were statistically significant ($p < 0.0001$).

10. The question of the size of the social support network was asked without specific prompting; respondents were asked to write the answer as a number rather than select

The number of people to which our respondents might turn in a crisis — those involved in parish communities — is noticeably wider than on average in Russia (table 3). For example, 32 percent of the representatives of parish communities have 10 or more people in their support network; in Russia on average the corresponding figure is much lower, only 18 percent. Seven percent of Russians reported that they did not have anyone at all to turn to for support, while such responses amounted only to 3 percent among the surveyed members of parish communities. The average size of a support network among the surveyed parishioners was six people, while in Russia on average this figure was only 4.6.¹¹

Table 3. In your opinion, how many people are there to whom you can turn for help in a crisis?

Social Support Network Size	Parishes (percent of respondents)	Russia in general (percent of respondents)
0 (no such people)	3	7
1	4	7
2	9	16
3	14	16
4	6	9
5	21	17
6	5	5
7	5	3
8	1	2
9	1	0
10	18	12
11 or more	14	6
Mean	6.0	4.6
Base (Number of respondents)	713	1239

from a predetermined range or list of numbers. For calculating mean values and for regression analysis we used initial quantitative assessment if the respondent's answer did not exceed "10." All responses from 11 and up were converted to the value of "11"; we also included the answer "many" in this category.

11. The differences are statistically significant. To check for the equality of means, we used the Independent Samples T-test. $T = -9.086$, $p < 0.0001$.

Although at first glance the differences between the surveyed parishioners and average Russians seem to be sufficiently significant, they may be only a consequence of a markedly differing social and demographic composition of the respondents. For example, there were significantly more women among parish respondents; the average age was slightly higher than in the all-Russian survey; among parishioners there was also a larger percentage of respondents with higher education and those who estimated the financial position of their families as more wealthy. We used linear regression in order to control for these social and demographic variables, and to calculate the “pure” impact of belonging to the parish.¹² The results of the analysis are presented in table 4.

When the main social and demographic variables were included in the model, belonging to the parish continued to be an important factor in determining the size of social support networks. However, the coefficient of determination for the model under discussion was not very high, which indicates the presence of other influencing factors not included in the model. Social and demographic characteristics and indicators of the level of religiosity explain 11 percent of variation in the sizes of social support networks. Since the scales that were used for measuring the main independent variables are characterized by different dimensionalities, we paid more attention to the standardized coefficients, which made it possible to estimate a relative contribution of each factor.

Table 4. Results of the linear regression analysis. The dependent variable is the size of the social network of support.

	Unstandardized coefficients (b)	Standardized coefficients	Significance
Intercept	2.33		0.000
Parishioners (0 – no, 1 – yes)	0.64	0.08	0.025

12. The analysis is based on the aggregate data from two studies – the nationwide *OrthodoxMonitor* survey and the data array from our survey of parishioners, “Social Support Networks in the Orthodox Church Community.” The array of the nationwide survey also included a number of practicing Orthodox Russians, but their number is not large, and we assume that important differences will not be significantly obscured by such a mixture. In addition, we included the question on frequency of attending church services as a control variable for the analysis, which should compensate for the above-mentioned feature.

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Frequency of attending church services (0 – never, 6 – once a week or more often)	0.18	0.12	0.001
Gender (0 – female, 1 – male)	0.17	0.03	0.337
Age (15 – 95)	- 0.01	- 0.07	0.010
Education (1 – incomplete secondary education, 6 – several university degrees, doctoral degree)	0.11	0.04	0.119
Employment (0 – no, 1 – yes)	0.38	0.06	0.043
Material wealth (1 – not enough money for food, 6 – well-off)	0.34	0.13	0.000
Registered marriage (0 – no, 1 – yes)	0.34	0.05	0.047
Having two or more children (0 – no, 1 – yes)	0.36	0.05	0.040
Have you helped anyone outside of your household with chores or shopping (0 – not a single time past year, 6 – several times a week)	0.08	0.06	0.044
Lent some money	0.03	0.02	0.575

Found some time to talk to a distressed/de- pressed person	0.08	0.05	0.061
R ²		0.11	

One could assume that the differences in the size of social support networks among respondents who were interviewed in parishes and during the all-Russian survey were primarily determined by the degree of their religiosity (which can be measured through a question on the frequency of attending church services). The logic here is that the more often a person goes to church, the more often he/she meets other members of the parish, and the greater the probability that they will form additional social ties, resulting in a wider perceived size of the social support network.¹³ If the frequency of attending church services were a factor sufficient for explaining the religious component of the observed differences in the sizes of the support networks, the inclusion of this factor into the model along with the factor of belonging to the parish would make one of these factors non-significant. It is noteworthy that when we simultaneously included belonging to the parish and the frequency of attending church services into the model, both of these factors were significant, indicating that these indicators represent somewhat different phenomena — neither of them fully exhausts the effect of the other. Both factors make an impact in a positive direction: the more frequently the respondents attend church services, the larger their social support networks, and even in case of frequency of attending church services being equal, the social network would be wider among the surveyed parishioners. The frequency of attending church services is, however, one of the most important factors in our model — its relative contribution is the most conspicuous (had the largest standardized coefficient).

No less important a factor in defining the size of the social support network was the material situation of the family. The more materially secure the person was (considers their family materially secure),

13. It should be noted that the relationship between the indicators of intensity of religious practices and formation of social ties may have a more complex, non-linear nature. For more detail on some of the phenomena that impede communication in an Orthodox community in particular, the attitude that can be described as “sacred individualism,” see Zabaev 2011.

the greater was their social support network. This result is noteworthy because it contradicts the intuitive idea that support from others is more important for a less well-off family — the lack of material resources should lead to a greater interdependence and more active involvement in the social network of exchange. However, we observe the opposite effect. On the one hand, this result can be explained by the fact that material wealth makes it possible to generate wider support networks — if a person has more opportunities to provide support to others, they accumulate more reciprocal obligations. On the other hand, less wealthy respondents may give a more pessimistic estimation of the size of their social support network, because their judgment is more realistic: all things being equal, they are likely to have an experience of having recourse for help to others.¹⁴

Having a job had a positive impact on the size of a social support network. A working person has the ability to turn to colleagues for help in a difficult situation.

Age, on the contrary, had a negative impact: the older the respondent was, the smaller was the size of their social support network. A particularly noticeable decrease in the size of the social network was typical for the oldest age group (70+).

Marital status showed a significant impact on the size of the social support network. Those respondents who were in a registered marriage had a wider network of social contacts that they could utilize in a difficult situation. The presence of a spouse, on the one hand, makes it possible to ask him (her) for help, if necessary; on the other hand it expands the social network available to the family through the contacts of the spouse.

The presence of children in the family also contributes to wider social support networks. This effect may be caused by the expansion of the list of social contacts due to the inclusion of families of a child's friends. It is noteworthy that it was not the number of children that "worked" the best way in the model, but the dichotomous variable, where "1" meant having two or more children in the family, and "0" indicated the presence of one child or the lack of children. This means

14. The importance of the material factor in forming certain types of social networks, in particular, "networks of survival" and "networks of development," is emphasized by I. Shteinberg: "Material inequality generates two types of networks. These are 'networks of survival,' intended for maintaining the subsistence level of all participants in network relations at the expense of egalitarian redistribution of network resources between them, and 'networks of development,' which are intended for expanded reproduction of material goods, development and strengthening of social capital for the whole network and each of its members" (Shteinberg 2010: 48).

that differences in the sizes of support networks caused by the presence of children in the family begin to manifest themselves most clearly with the appearance of the second child.¹⁵

The impact of such factors as gender and level of education was not statistically significant (however, we left them in the model as controls).

The social support network was wider among those people who themselves helped people who surrounded them. The effect is noticeable when help included personal involvement — moral/psychological support or help with housework, while the provision of material support (lending money) did not make an impact on the size of the available social network according to our data.

Thus, the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church show a higher level of social capital relative to Russia on the whole; parish communities manifest stronger mutual assistance and moral support compared to Russian social environments on average.¹⁶

Analysis of Parish Community as a Whole Network

When we speak about the social network of a parish community, we should understand that it is not a closed network: along with the parishioners of the church it includes a wide range of actors. The development of social ties within the parish, and even more so between parishioners and people from non-parish circles in the context of li-

15. When the indicator, measuring the number of children in the family — a 5-point scale from “0” (no children) to “4” (four or more children) — was used in the model, it was not significant ($p = 0.310$), while the results from other variables were very close to the model described in the article (as well as in the models with other indicators describing the number of children). Apparently, the relationship is not linear, since the coefficient becomes negative in a situation when there is one child in the family if we include dummy variables related to the number of children (for example, “presence of one child,” “presence of two or more children,” and “no children” as the reference category) into the model, which means that the perceived size of the social support network becomes even smaller after the birth of the first child; after the birth of the second child the social network expands reaching approximately the original level, and continues to slowly grow with the further increase in the number of children. This interesting effect can also be interpreted in a reverse manner: large families emerge when people feel the support of others.
16. Unfortunately, our data does not allow us to conclude whether this effect describes only Orthodox communities, or, more plausibly, whether it will also be present in the communities of other religions (the number of respondents of other religions was not sufficient for carrying out a similar statistical analysis). In order to answer this question, it is necessary to conduct additional studies aimed at a more in-depth examination of various religious communities.

turgical life, is difficult. Therefore it is logical to assume that the main mode of development of a parish social network is extra-liturgical activities and parochial social life. During the implementation of social projects, such as assistance to various categories of the needy, pastoral care of social facilities, organization of cultural and educational activities at the parish and beyond, as well as other activities outside of the parish,¹⁷ the participants in those projects (parishioners, priests, parish workers) establish contacts with many people and organizations, not necessarily Orthodox and not necessarily engaged in religious practice.

Scholars who have studied the effectiveness of local non-profit organizations in the United States have noted that the degree of “neighborhood embeddedness” directly affects the effectiveness of the organization: the more developed ties a local organization (human rights groups, social assistance groups, and so on) has with other organizations, the more effective is the work of the organization (Mesch and Schwirian 1996). The researchers of religious organizations (congregations, parishes) have demonstrated the relationship between the embeddedness of a parish in the local community and the effectiveness of social work performed by the parish (Unruh and Sider 2005). Thus, extra-liturgical life (in particular the practice of social assistance) in the parish fosters the preconditions for the development of a social network among the parishioners and the formation of numerous external ties of the parish community. This network, in turn, works as a precondition for more effective parochial social work.

Our study clearly demonstrates that extra-liturgical life fosters conditions for increasing the social capital of the parish, thus contributing to the expansion of parishioners’ support networks through strengthening ties both within the parish (through participation in common activities regardless of their nature, duration, consistency, etc.) and beyond. The analysis of the parish community as a whole social network will make it possible to illustrate the structure of the social ties in the parish and the configuration of the ties between the parish and the “outside world.” This approach will also raise the issue of the conditions for the development of the social network of a parish, if by development we understand the density of social ties between the parish and the outside world, the “embeddedness” of the parish in society. Figure 1 shows an example of the entire social network of an Orthodox parish.

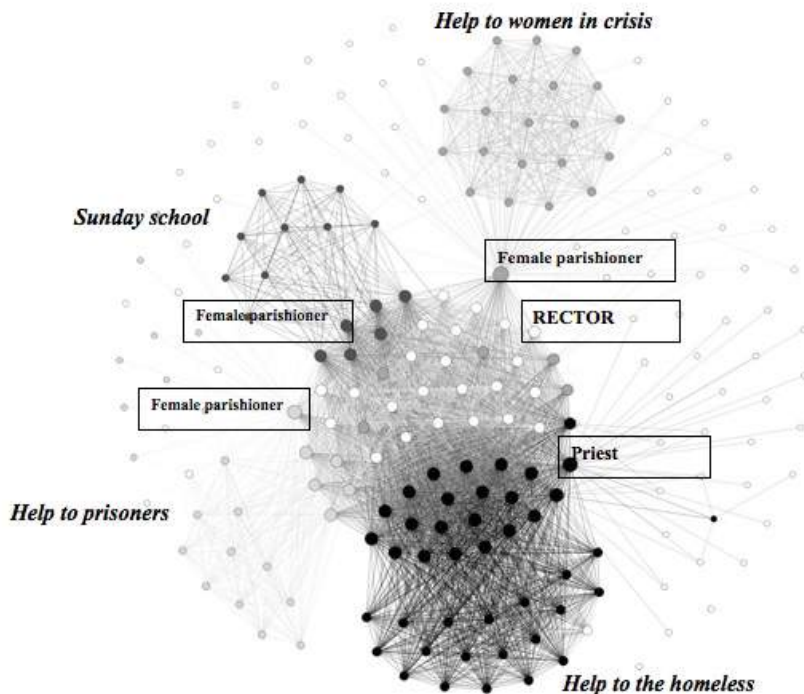
17. For more detail on the types of parish social activities, see Zabaev, Oreshina, Prutskova 2013.

Analysis of the Whole Social Network of an Orthodox Parish. Figure 1 shows the social network of a parish with well developed extra-liturgical social activities.

It is a large church in Moscow: the parish is headed by a rector and four priests; the number of parishioners in 2012 on major holidays reached over 1000 communicants (at two liturgies); on ordinary days the church had over 300 communicants (at two liturgies). Different shades of gray mark the participants in various areas of extra-liturgical activities. The sizes of the nodes represent the number of ties (the larger the unit is, the more ties this unit possesses).

This parish carries out various types of activities: there are groups of targeted assistance to those in need (feeding the homeless), engagement in inter-parochial network projects (assistance to prisoners), as well as non-profit organizations that grew out of parish initiatives (assistance to women in crisis). Along with social work of various kinds, the parish has a Sunday school, has developed mutual help between parishioners, and has targeted assistance to individual applicants.

Figure 1. Social network of an Orthodox parish community

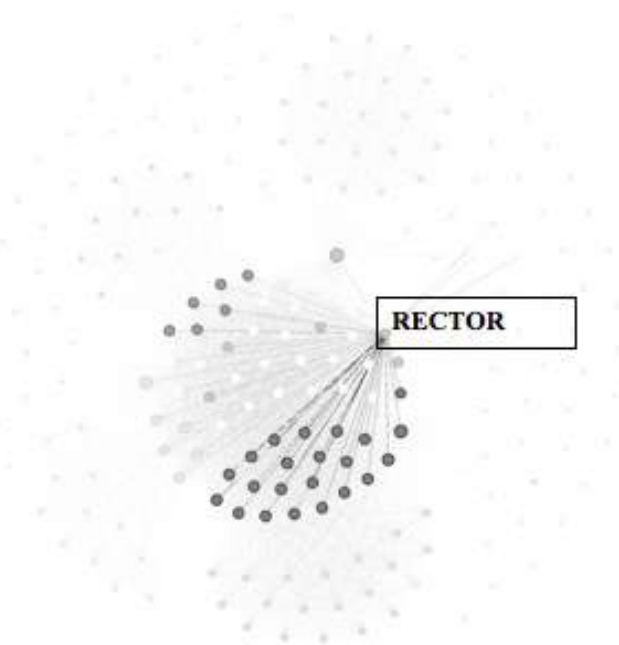


A methodological note. The entire network of the parish was constructed by encoding data from in-depth interviews with priests, parishioners and other members of extra-liturgical life of the parish using GEPHI software designed for network analysis. A number of methodological issues arise in the process of building up the whole social network of the parish, primarily the selection of the basis for constructing the network. There can be many such bases: networks of personal acquaintance (the network units know each other by sight and by name), networks of people going to confession to the priests of the church, networks of church communicants (those who regularly take communion) and “visitors” (who go to church occasionally, for example, on major church feast days), networks of sharing things, and so on. In the process of investigating this level through formalized methods, we faced a number of other methodological problems, in particular those related to the lack of a complete list of parish members, or the fact that many members know each other only by sight, which is a significant impediment to establishing complete sociometric matrices. In this regard, when we are building up a social network of a parish community, we need to understand the assumptions used for reproducing the configuration of the network. In our case, these assumptions are the following: (1) the basis for the construction of the network is participation in the extra-liturgical life of the parish — parochial social work, parish projects, and activities not associated directly with worship; (2) units of the network (nodes) are people or organizations involved in extra-liturgical activities of the parish. These nodes include parochial units (parishioners of the church — those who attend services and take communion in the church) and non-parochial units (parishioners of other churches, non-practicing Orthodox, members of other denominations, etc.) — this division has allowed us to monitor the process of linking non-parochial units to the projects and activities of the parish, and to draw conclusions on the “embeddedness” of the parish in the neighborhood community; (3) ties between the nodes are the involvement of units in a common activity regardless of whether they know each other only by sight or by name.

The social network of the parish is characterized by the following features. First, parochial social work functions by delegating responsibilities; most of the activities are coordinated by the laity; the rector does not lead any social work projects. Figure 2 shows the social network of the rector, which primarily includes the core of parish members, while the external ties of the parish are formed by the participants in the social projects. The rector (as well as other priests) does

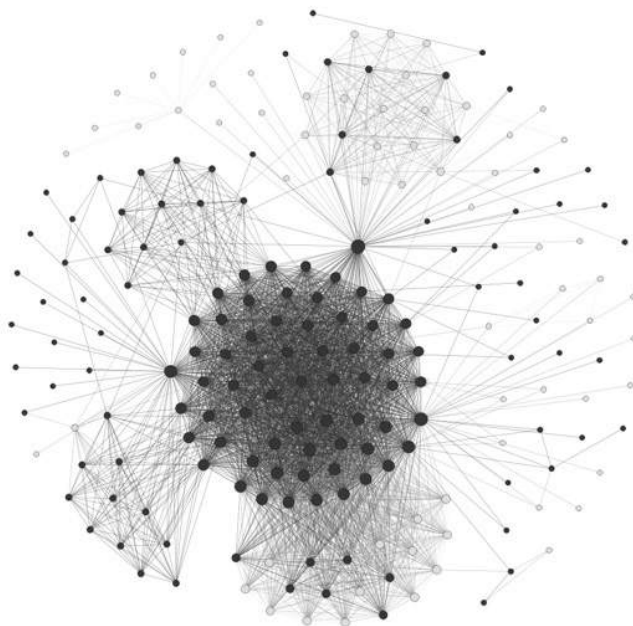
not place external ties upon himself, and he is not the sole leader, coordinator, or administrator of extra-liturgical activities.

Figure 2: Social network of an Orthodox parish community:
Rector's network



Second, the parish has a developed network of external ties because it engages non-parochial participants in the parish's activities. In the case of the crisis center for women, these participants are hired professional psychologists. In the case of assisting prisoners, non-parochial participants include parishioners from other churches. In the case of help to the homeless, the ties are represented by volunteers from among the friends and relatives of parishioners – members of the group (including non-practicing Orthodox members, representatives of other denominations, for example, Protestants, and assisting sponsoring organizations). Figure 3 shows the parochial and non-parochial participants in the social activities of the parish. The engagement of non-parochial participants takes place in the context of systematic or project-oriented social work of individual groups through mobilizing the outside contacts of parish members participating in the social work.

Figure 3: Social network of an Orthodox parish community: Connecting non-parishioners to parish participants in the process of social work¹⁸



In summary, we can once again emphasize that extra-liturgical practices and social projects not only provide increased inter-parish ties between parishioners, but also multiply external ties. The latter is achieved by engaging sponsoring and partner organizations, friends and relatives of participating parishioners, hired professionals (if necessary), parishioners of other churches, and other people in parish initiatives. This leads to the embeddedness of the parish in the neighborhood community (connection to the world “beyond the church fence”), which increases the level of social capital of the parish and generates a large number of weak ties¹⁹ that can be employed both for parish affairs and for the personal needs of the parishioners. As we can see, an important condition for the development of a parish network is delegating the extra-liturgi-

18. In the figure, black denotes parishioners, gray denotes the participants in parish activities who are not the parishioners of the church (some of them may be Orthodox, the members of other denominations, or may not identify themselves with any particular denomination).

19. Mark Granovetter argues for the importance of weak ties in Granovetter 1973.

cal activities of the parish, and the decision not to close oneself off from all contacts (including contacts with external organizations and other parishes) on the part of the rector or parish priests. The ties established in the process of parish social work in fact become a set of social relations that can be used in the interests of not only the parish as a whole, but also of its individual members. The above example of a parish network suggests that extra-liturgical activities of the Orthodox parish create preconditions for increasing the social capital of the parishioners and for the formation of support networks, the importance of which for the social welfare of citizens is confirmed by numerous studies.

Conclusion

The data presented above allow us to conclude that religion (Orthodoxy in our case) may be a factor that increases the social capital of Russians and strengthens their social support networks.

Our studies on the analysis of the whole network of a parish suggest that active involvement of parishes in organizing social work, based on the principles of delegating responsibility and executive powers from the priests to the laity, may enlarge the social network of the parish, connecting more and more laypeople to it, including people who do not practice active church life. This process of unfolding the social network of the parish, creating the potential to bring more people to the Church through parish social activities, is especially important for Russia, a country that experienced forced secularization in a very severe form, since there are very few tools for connecting a person to religion. Basic mechanisms of personal conversion barely work in Russia and similar countries, because of the lack of early religious socialization.²⁰ The absence of personal experience of contacts with the representatives of institutionalized religions minimizes the possibility of falsification/verification of the reports concerning religion emerging in the media and the public realm.

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20. For more detail see Prutskova 2013.

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ALEXEY ZYGMONT

The Problematics of Violence in Post-Soviet Russian Orthodox Discourse

Translation by anonymous

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This article analyzes a number of issues in contemporary Russian Orthodoxy from the perspective of the link between religion and violence. After a brief survey of the theoretical apparatus, it turns to the imagery of “cosmic war” in the discourse of official representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and of Orthodox nationalists; to the ways that imagery affects questions of ethics and morality; to the events of 2012 associated with the performance of Pussy Riot and the reactions to it; and to examples of symbolic and actual violence. The analysis will conclude with eschatological images of “cosmic conquest” and with what might be called the “sacrificial crisis” of Orthodox parish subculture. This article then attempts to draw links of religion and violence on the theoretical level.

Keywords: symbolic violence, religious violence, religious symbolism, Russian Orthodox Church, Orthodox nationalists, parish subculture.

RUSSIAN scholarship lacks interdisciplinary academic studies of “religion and violence,” whereas Western scholars have been working on that problematic since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Even before then, anthropologists (for example Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, Marc Bloch, Nancy Jay and Elaine Scarry), sociologists (Emile Durkheim) and philosophers (Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Georges Bataille) addressed the two phenomena (Juergensmeyer and Kitts 2011: 93–216). The American sociologists Charles Glock and Rodney Stark pioneered the new academic endeavor with studies of Christian anti-Semitism, as did Rene Girard independently with his well-known *Violence and the Sacred*, inspired by the events of May 1968 in France, and Walter Burkert in *Homo Necans* (Glock and Stark, 1966; R. Girard [Girard] 2010; Burkert 1983). Scholars such as Regina Schwartz, Hector Avalos, Jessica Stern, R. Scott Appleby, Mark Juer-

gensmeyer, Margo Kitts, Charles Selengut, Michael K. Jerryson and many others continued this work (Avalos 2005: 75–102).

The final quarter of the twentieth century was noteworthy for the escalation of violence throughout the world that was evidently linked in one way or another with religion. This includes the Islamic Revolution in Iran of 1978–79, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the so-called “troubles” of Northern Ireland, the Sarin attack in the Tokyo subway system carried out by activists of Aum Shinrikyo on March 20, 1995, and the like. How is all of this to be understood? The events of September 11, 2001 (9/11), were a turning point, evoking not only a broad public response worldwide, but also a fresh wave of journalistic, theological, philosophical and, finally, academic reflection.

This article is an effort to analyze a range of phenomena in Russian Orthodoxy in the post-Soviet period (beginning in 1991) by connecting them with the concept of violence. I will proceed as follows. I will examine the image of cosmic warfare in the discourse of official representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and of Orthodox nationalists (Verkhovsky 2007: 6–32; Verkhovsky 2003; Pain and Verkhovsky 2010: 171–210) and the ways that imagery affects questions of ethics and morality and the family and childrearing. Then I will turn to the events of 2012 associated with the performance of Pussy Riot in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the reactions to it and, after that, to examples of symbolic and personal violence. I will conclude with an analysis of eschatological images of cosmic conquest and what might be called the “sacrificial crisis” of the so-called “parish milieu” (to which I will devote a separate section) (Tarabukina 2000; Tarabukina 1998; Levkieskaya 2011: 409–24; Akhmetova 2010).

R. Scott Appleby observes that one of the modes of religious existence is “militancy,” which can be manifested in violent or non-violent forms, in martyrdom, for example, in enduring persecution or in peacemaking (Appleby 2000: 28). Every religious tradition is internally pluralistic and to a certain degree contradictory, and in itself offers resources for both strategies. Appleby calls this duality “the ambivalence of the sacred.” Therefore, recognizing that official documents of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate, henceforward, ROC MP), the discourse of Patriarchs Alexy II and Kirill and Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeev), and sermons in parish churches frequently articulate a stance of non-violence, I propose that they derive from the very same sources of religious tradition (for example, the Gospels and the works of the Holy Fathers) as the theory and practice of violence. In this article, I will focus exclusively on the second, on the phenom-

enon of violence, bearing in mind the above-mentioned ambivalence of the sacred as I proceed.

My source base is extensive and includes official documents of the ROC MP, sermons and interviews, news items, readers' comments on them, and even blogs and internet forums — in a word, materials from the public sphere and evidence from “lived religion.” Their representativeness rests on a qualitative method — I draw on them to demonstrate actual patterns of religious consciousness in which religious violence is rooted. I exclude from this survey the Christian “new religious movements” (NRM), alternative Orthodoxy (the communities of the True Orthodox Church and the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church), and Old Belief, focusing on the ROC MP and the two interconnected subcultures that interact with it: Orthodox nationalists and communities representing the parish milieu. To conceptualize this empirical material I draw on the work of Alexander Verkhovsky (including his proposed division of nationalism into ethno-cultural and civilizational), of Nikolai Mitrokhin, Alexander Agadjanian, Konstantin Kostiuk, Arina Tarabukina, Maria Akhmetova, Sergey Shtyrkova, Zhanna Kormina and others (Kostiuk 2006; Kormina and Shtyrkov 2011: 389–413).

The format of this article does not permit me to consider still other questions, such as the role of the anti-cult movement in Russia from the 1990s through the early years of the twenty-first century in shaping the structures of violence or the problem of divine violence as reflected in the polemics of the “modernist” (relatively speaking) and (unquestionably) anti-modernist groups within the Church (Agadjanian 2011: 255–76).¹ In addition, I have consciously distanced myself from the normative/legal approach, although that approach makes it possible to connect empirical material with an analysis of legislation currently in force, for example, with reference to the legal definition of religious radicalism and extremism (for example, Verkhovsky 2013: 134–58).

Religion and Violence: A Theoretical Outline

Johan Galtung, the Norwegian sociologist and mathematician and the founder of peace and conflict studies, suggests the division of vio-

1. Although its opponents, the “anti-modernists,” created the term “Orthodox modernists,” it is open to conceptualization from a scholarly perspective. For a sense of Russian Orthodox Modernity from an “anti-modernist” perspective, see Vershillo.

lence into *cultural*, *structural* (indirect) and *personal* (direct or actual) (Galtung 1969: 170). Each of these forms can call forth the others: cultural violence creates the conditions for manifestations of structural violence, as structural violence does for manifestations of personal violence. This division is linked with the particular definition of violence that Galtung provides: “Violence is here defined as the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is.” Only that which can be avoided can be called violence. For example, death from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century is not violence. However, now, when tuberculosis can easily be cured, to let a person to die of tuberculosis is violence. The frame of cultural violence encompasses those forms of culture — such as the “symbolic sphere of existence” — that can be used to legitimate violence, be they religious, ideological, linguistic, artistic, or the like (Galtung 1990: 291).

Insofar as the primary concern here is religion, below I will focus on distinguishing structural from personal (or immediate) violence. The absence of complete “composition,” that is, of a subject, an object, and a relationship or interaction between the two, distinguishes the first from the second. In addition, the first is a precondition for the second, as in cause and effect. Here is an example. On April 23, 2005, having badly beaten parishioners of the Pentecostal church “Reconciliation,” young people who identified themselves as Orthodox shouted: “We have only Orthodox Easter here in Russia,” and called the parishioners “sectarians” and “devils” (“V Kemerovskoi oblasti”). It is clear that, for them, hatred toward abstract “sectarians” preceded hatred for actual Pentecostals, and that hatred in turn preceded the act of personal violence. Alexey Perov, the pastor of the Protestant church “The Community of Christ,” whose son was badly beaten by classmates on the Day of Knowledge (September 1, the first day of school in Russia — the editors), confirmed that exaggerated references to “sectarians” and “traitors” had long circulated in their village (“Pervoklassnika”). The organizers of the pogrom that took place in the gay club *7 Free Days* and Abbot Sergii (Rybko), who approved of the pogrom afterward, also “recognized the face of the enemy”: they were “sodomites,” that is, members of the LGBT community (“Pogrom v gei-klube”).

Is it possible to say something about an act of personal violence — murder, for example — if the act “stands alone,” that is, if we do not know who is murdered and who is the murderer? I propose that actual violence in itself is meaningless and empty of substance;

it gains substance and meaning when regarded from the perspective of the structural violence that provides its context. Above, I presented three cases. Stable structures (for example, religious images of the enemy) evident in all of them make it possible to designate the aggressors as religious actors and their actions as religious violence. Violence always begins long before the “deed,” in “word and thought,” that is, in something “general” and frequently indistinct, which can and must be the subject of investigation.

According to Hector Avalos, religious violence arises from the ability of religious consciousness to generate imaginary scarce resources, including access to the divine will (for example, through Scripture), sacred space, group privileging, and salvation (Avalos 2005: 30). Scarce resources therefore should be recognized as structures of violence, in the same way as dualistic models that counterpose light and darkness, or the way religious images of the enemy (“sodomites,” “sectarians,” and the like) function in the discourse of religious communities. However, to one degree or another, structural violence is inherent in all “comprehensive doctrines,” including all religious traditions (Agadjanian 2012: 92).

At the border between structural and actual violence lies symbolic violence (Burdé [Bourdieu] and Passeron [Passeron] 2006). Its action is neither objective nor subjective: it cannot be proven, but it is taken on faith by its subject or its object, or by both simultaneously. For example, the performance that Pussy Riot carried out in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (CCS) on February 21, 2012, was an act of violence (blasphemy) to the group’s opponents, but not to its supporters. Symbolic violence represents a mediated, symbolic act; in it, the symbol (in the given instance the sacred space of the CCS), as the structural element in the system of signs, becomes the mediating link between the subject and object of violence.

There exists an opinion, set forth, for example, in Regina Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain*, that identity, *any* identity, is a fundamental structure of violence. The American scholar writes that “identity, as an act of distinguishing and separating from others, of boundary making and line drawing, is the most frequent and fundamental act of violence we commit. Violence is not only what we do to the Other. (...) Violence is the very construction of the Other (Schwartz 1994: 5). Georges Corm agrees. He emphasizes that identity functions as a “reference to the negative pole” (Korm [Corm] 2012: 60). Both have in mind mainly collective, not individual, identity. According to this model, the formation of identity, that is, *identification*, occurs when the subject establishes

boundaries by setting itself off against everything external that is other and alien. James Wellman and Kyoku Tokuno take this thesis to its logical limit, presenting identification as “conflict and tension” with “external” reality. “Conflict and tension” here become the “engine” of collective identity as a whole, and collective religious identity in particular (Wellman and Kyoko 2004: 292).

Is it possible to agree with the contention that *every* identity is formed in this way? I think that the answer is no. Sociologists distinguish between positive and negative identity, and the model outlined above describes only the latter. The Russian sociologist Lev Gudkov observes that negative identity actually functions as “self-construction from the opposite,” expressed “as the rejection of its qualities or values” (Gudkov 2004). Identity, in the form of negative identity, can be construed as a structure of violence, and with that caveat, I think it is possible to work with the concept.

The American religious studies scholar and sociologist Mark Juergensmeyer maintains that one of the key forms of the religious imaginary, together with sacrifice, is “cosmic war,” the war of the sacred order and modes of perception with profane chaos and senselessness (Juergensmeyer 2003: 149; Juergensmeyer 1994: 159). In the context of this “definition of the situation” (borrowing this term from Goffman 2000), religious identity consists of identifying “us” with the sacred, and “the Other” with the profane, thus, marking them as “the enemy.” The profane, that is the “negative pole” of religious thinking, is violence as such, which spreads like a contagious illness, a “disease” that strives to “devour” the sacred, so to speak, and is personified in the image of the cosmic enemy: the devil, dees, genies, demons and the rest of the “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12, NRSV). Thus, religious violence promotes the victory over violence as such and the felicitous separation of the sacred and the profane, as opposed to their infelicitous blending. Rene Girard also uses the metaphor of a vaccine: the lesser, sacred violence is necessary to avert the far greater, profane violence. He also hypothesizes the existence of “sacrificial crises” — particular space-time and social continuums in which such prevention becomes impossible due to the extraordinary intensity of the “infection,” the erosion of all forms of traditional and rational authority and also of certain social institutions (the institution of ritual sacrifice first among them) (Zhirar [Girard], 2010).

For religious consciousness, the essence of the “enemy” is that it is almost always a projection of the cosmic enemy onto mundane so-

cial and political realities. The “enemy” is amorphous because it represents the consequence of two divergent processes: on the one hand, it is the personification of the cosmic enemy and its association with particular communities; on the other, it results from the de-individualization and dehumanization of particular people and groups.² These processes explain why members of the LGBT community are conceived of as “demonic warriors of the Antichrist (“Novaia Ataka Sodomitov”), why there are references to representatives of the “global cabal” “who, resembling people only in appearance, in fact represent the demonic spawn of people with dead souls” (Gracheva 2010: 3–4), and even why, when L. D. Simonovich-Nikshich, the head of the Union of Orthodox Banner-Bearers (hereafter, UOB), burned a poster of the pop singer Madonna, he concluded with the words “the devil has been driven out” (Simonovich-Nikshich 2012). They demonstrate all the futility of attempts to understand how the various categories of enemy differ from one another, for example, “yids” from “masons,” because they are essentially all shades of one and the same formless enemy. Moreover, my use of the term “representative of the global cabal” is clearly only the consequence of my inadequate linguistic resources: the “enemy,” as the personification of the chaotic profane, always appears simultaneously as singular and multiple, faceless and many-faced, so that to designate “a part of the whole” is unthinkable in relation to the sphere of total violence, in which there is neither a whole nor its parts.

The Diversity of Images of “Cosmic War”

Turning now to empirical material, it is useful to bear in mind that cosmic war as a structure of violence, paradoxically, can lead to the theoretical and practical affirmation of either violence or non-violence and reconciliation. The discourse of justification or legitimation of violence is usually built on the foundation of the discourse of victimization, the perception of oneself as an object of violence. The religious community defines a situation as one of conflict, in which the community itself is subjected to violence from the “enemy” (or “enemies”) and therefore must respond with defensive or defensive-aggressive (preventative) violence.

2. That is, the deprivation of individuality and human status respectively. For an exploration of the connection between these two processes with the dynamic of violence see Zimbardo 2013.

The official position of the Moscow Patriarchate under Patriarchs Alexy II and Kirill is civilizational nationalism — an inclusive version of ethno-cultural nationalism, in which Orthodox civilization is opposed to internal and external secularism (embodied in the image of “the West”), with its heavy artillery of liberal values (Verkhovskii 2012).³ Opposition takes place on the global level as well as on the canonical territory of the ROC — in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus’. Patriarch Alexy described the state of affairs thus:

We must recognize that a well-planned, bloodless war is being conducted against our people, with the aim of destroying them. A powerful industry of corruption is at work in western nations. (...) It has led to an unprecedented demographic crisis in our land, which is resulting in the rapid degeneration and extinction of our people. (...) We must rouse the Russian people to fight for the life of their children. We are calling neither for war nor for pogroms, but summon our people to the heroic deed [*podvig*] of confessing their Christian faith in the face of militant evil (“Vystuplenie patriarkha Alekseia” 2000).

The discourse of victimization invariably goes hand in hand with a dualistic vision of the world, which to a greater or lesser degree includes an interpretation of contemporary political realities. In his book *Autocracy of the Spirit: Notes on Russian Self-Consciousness*, Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev) set forth the classic conceptualization of Orthodox ethno-cultural nationalism. The book proposes viewing world history as the opposition of “dark forces” and Holy Russia, as incarnated in an Orthodox tsar and the collective, “communal” [*sobornoi*] personality of the Russian people (Metropolitan Ioann [Snychev] 1994). This approach is characterized by a militaristic aesthetic and an army and warrior ideal (Kostiuk 2002). Mikhail Nazarov, the commentator and author of the so-called “Letter of the 500,” writes about the struggle between the forces of Christ and the Antichrist (Nazarov 1996), while the Orthodox political scientist Tatiana Gracheva refers to two “sacral world centers of opposition (...) these two imperial nuclei — one filled with the spirit of Christ, the other a concentrated incarnation of the spirit of the Antichrist” (Gracheva 2009: 8) Obviously, the idea of cosmic war pervades all these models.

3. A. Verkhovskii observes that “Orthodox civilization” in the interpretation of the ROC MP can include representatives of other religions so long as the Russian and the Orthodox remain hegemonic.

Until 2012, the themes of morality and ethics, of the family and child rearing were practically the only ones prompting Orthodox nationalists to appeals for violence. The theme was invariably set forth in the language of cosmic warfare, to which was added the vested interest of each Orthodox believer in preventing himself and his family from becoming victims of “dark forces,” as presented, for example, by Sodom and Gomorrah or by *iuvenal’shechiki*, that is, advocates of juvenile justice (JJ).

The image of Sodom and Gomorrah (or simply Sodom) becomes the “semantic center” of the profane, juxtaposed to Holy Russia and joining together all the “dark forces” with the tag of “sex”: homosexuals, bisexual people, transgender people, pedophiles, and also sex educators and JJ activists (Nil’sen [Nielsen] 2004). Thus, its characteristics are exactly the same as those of Holy Russia, but with a “minus” sign: it is supra-personal, that is to say, it is not reducible to the sum of its personifications; it is a *chaotic* (anti-*cosmic*) structure with indefinite boundaries that strives to destroy the Christian cosmos (Molodets 2012). Therefore, “Sodom will not pass!” — that is, the attack on LGBT-related endeavors — is the most popular “genre” of actual violence by Orthodox nationalists. Thus, for example, the brutal beating of the journalist Elena Kostiuchenko by a member of UOB (“Chto zashchishchala Elena Kostiuchenko”), the skirmish following the action “Day of Kisses 2,” timed to coincide with the State Duma’s consideration of a law to forbid “propaganda” of non-traditional sexual relations (“Gei-aktivisty”), the pogrom at the gay club *7 Free Days* noted above, and many more incidents.

In the best case, homosexuality is considered a consequence of the Fall. “The Bases of the Social Conception of the ROC” calls it the “depraved disfiguring of God-given human nature” (“Osnovy sotsial’noi kontsepsii ROC”). In the worst, homosexuality is called the “spiritual act of renouncing God in favor of subordination to Satan, with the goal of realizing his (the person’s — A. Z.) voluntary entry into the anti-church of Satan” (“Novyi mir’ izvrashchentsev”). The distinction of the “sodomite” as a form of the enemy is that he conveys the meaning of the profane like a contagious disease — he is literally “infected” with violence and carries it to the city and to the world. This aspect of the “sodomite” can also be depicted as demonic possession: LGBT-related events supposedly create the conditions for demons to move from person to person (“Novaia Ataka Sodomitov”). In the above quote, Patriarch Alexy II emphasized the very same sense of “contagion” as “corruption.” “The Bases of the Social Conception of the ROC” also remark:

The propaganda of vice inflicts particular damage on the tender souls of children and youth. (...) The church summons all believers to work together with all morally healthy forces to struggle against the dissemination of that diabolic temptation, which is capable of destroying the family and undermines the foundations of society (“Osnovy Sotsial’noi Kontseptsii”: 80–81).

K. Mikhailov rightly observes that it is in “The Bases” that the first reference to the vague notion of “homosexual propaganda” appears in an official document (Mikhailov 2013: 87–98). He thinks that this text likely influenced the first legislative project of the State Duma Deputy Alexander Chuev concerning the prohibition of “homosexual propaganda” in 2003, and the analogous initiatives that followed, culminating in the passage of the law “On the prohibition of propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors” on June 11, 2003 (“Gosduma priniala zakon”). It is worth observing that this notion also carries the above-mentioned sense of “contagion,” which thus crosses over from religious to secular discourse.

Images of cosmic warfare manifested with particular clarity in 2012, after the scandal concerning the luxurious life-style of the patriarch, and especially after the performance of Pussy Riot in the CCS on February 21, during the trial of three members of the punk rock group: Natalia Tolokonnikova, Maria Alekhina, and Ekaterina Samutsevich. The Moscow Patriarchate’s important shift to a discourse of victimization had broad public resonance.

Public opinion was divided sharply (Uzlaner 2013: 93–133). The “clerical” side repeatedly called the situation a “campaign against the church,” and an “information war,” or simply “warfare,” indicating that this *breaching of the boundary of the sacred* and *war against the sacred* might also manifest itself in the other “traditional religions” of the Russian Federation. Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin affirmed: “in my time, crimes have occurred such as the defilement of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, and of mosques, the burning of the Koran and other acts of vandalism and offenses to religious feelings. In all these cases, Russia’s traditional religious communities supported one another and showed solidarity” (“Patriarckh ne otpustit grekh Pussy Riot”). Various marginal groups actually did undertake acts of symbolic violence against the ROC. In this category belong the sawing down of a holy cross on the construction site of the Cathedral of the Holy Martyr Tatiana in Moscow; acts carried out by the activists of FEMEN (“Aktivistki FEMEN spilili krest”); and the destruction of four more cross-

es in Arkhangelsk and Cheliabinsk by “The People’s Will” (*Narodnaia volia*) movement (“V Arkhangel’ske i Cheliabinskoi oblasti”; “Otvetstvennost’ za spilivanie”). These and many other acts of violence were characterized as blasphemy, proof of the reality of war against the sacred (Chaplin 2012).

The discourse of Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeev) had an emphatically peaceful character, while the image of the “enemy” in their remarks was amorphous but completely this-worldly: “anti-clerical forces,” “organizers of provocations,” “ill-wishers” (Patriarkh Kirill 2012). The Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov expressed himself more harshly:

The attacks against the Russian Orthodox Church that we observe at present are the start of a war against the Church. It is the beginning of persecution. (...) The manifestations of that warfare are clear. Among them are the ordinary remarks and reactions of the defenders of the punk group’s blasphemous acts, that whole extremely vile assault on the Most Holy Patriarch, and the various statements in the media made on all sorts of grounds and groundlessly. All this is very clear. And the horns are showing! It is evident that the Antichrist is at work. (...) It is clear that there are two poles. Anti-Christian depravity, the destruction of the person, is at one and at the other, Christian values (...) The people who are now unfurling this Anti-Christian campaign want to replace Christian culture with Sodom and Gomorrah (Smirnov 2012).

The quotation demonstrates both the demonization of concrete social forces, and the dualistic opposition of Sodom and Gomorrah with Holy Russia. Lawyers for the security guard of the CCS, whose religious feelings were offended by Pussy Riot’s performance, elaborated that cluster of associations still more clearly, asserting that there is a “mystic component” in the group’s performance that is connected with the terrorist act of 9/11, “with Satan, who is engaged in destruction” (“Gruppe Tolokonnikovoi luchshe ponesti nakazanie”). The lawyers were also convinced that the young women should be accused of sowing religious discord. The Orthodox journalist Alexander Shchipkov called the performance in the CCS “an act of terrorism,” and wrote that “a systematic effort to discredit Orthodoxy has been unfolding since 2011” and that “a Cold War has been declared against the Russian Orthodox Church” (Shchipkov 2012: 67, 99). He characterizes the letter of June 19, 2012, which a public interest group of Orthodox believers addressed to the patriarch with a request for “interces-

sion” before the authorities on behalf of the members of Pussy Riot, as a schismatic “ultimatum,” and writes that “the letter writers have de facto declared war openly against their Primate and by extension against the entire church, inasmuch as one of the warring sides has presented the other with an ultimatum — the strong side to the weak” (Shchipkov 2012: 100). In the best case, the goal of this cold war is the dethronement of Patriarch Kirill, in the worst, the abolition of the patriarchate as an institution. The nominally Orthodox journalist Maksim Shevchenko has also employed obscure militant imagery. He has contended that Pussy Riot’s performance is “the incursion of the forward detachments of liberal-western civilization into the territory of the inner life of millions of Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Georgians and Armenians” (Shevchenko 2012).

The war against the sacred is also associated with the physical annihilation of the clergy, as the same Archpriest Dimitry has declared. Characteristically, Damir Mukhetdinov, the deputy chair of the Muslim Spiritual Board of European Russia, has also expressed that point of view — and, it is worth noting, on a website associated with the Russian Orthodox Church. He maintains: “there is a single root cause — godlessness and aggressive Satanism” (Mukhetdinov 2013). Later, Andrei Turchak, the governor of Pskov Oblast, said of the murder of the well-known preacher Fr. Pavel Adelheim, that “the murder of a clergyman is a challenge to society and an affront to the very foundations of morality, ethics and faith” (Protodiakon Kuraev 2013). This statement seems to me representative: from the perspective of religious consciousness, the murder of a clergyman actually appears to be a challenge to the sacred (in the given instance, to society), that is, to the existing order itself.

The most recent edition of Article 148 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, which establishes criminal responsibility for “offending religious feelings,” also reflects this sense of violation of the boundaries of the sacred. In it, “offending religious feeling” is equated with the desecration of sacred objects venerated by the faithful (<http://pravo.gov.ru>). Although this idea has repeatedly been criticized, legal experts from the ROC point to its presence in the Federation’s law “On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations,” and contend that the feeling is “a person’s reverential attitude toward what seems to him sacred according to his religious beliefs” (“V ROC dali kommentarii”). I think that this idea has been used to project onto secular legislation a concept of “the sacred” and “the boundaries of the sacred” that do not belong there. I have already noted earlier a

similar adoption by secular discourse of a concept from religious discourse (in connection with the notion of “homosexual propaganda”). The well-known traditionalist Geidar Dzhemal has noted this explicitly, for example.

Analogies, that is, projecting similarities onto the discourse of victimization, permits “getting to the very essence” of a situation, and, giving it a definite scale, going beyond its limits. The central analogy in “clerical” discourse became the persecution of the Church in the Soviet period and, first and foremost, the repressions of the 1920s and 1930s. Archpriest Vladimir Vigiliansky, the former head of the patriarch’s press service, compared the rhetoric of opponents of the clerical position to the rhetoric of the early twentieth century and wrote: “we are actually facing the horrors of those genuine persecutions that occurred under the Bolsheviks” (Vigilianskii 2012: 134). Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin made a comparable allusion during his meeting with students in the Communications Department of Moscow State University, when he contended that during the 1920s, the faithful should have responded to the Bolsheviks with the force of arms (“Chaplin: *nravstvennoe delo khristianina*”).

The Moscow Patriarchate’s discourse of victimization was elaborated in a justification or a legitimization of force, specifically in the idea of the *defense of objects sacred to Orthodoxy* by Cossack fighting squads (*druzhiny*) and Orthodox activists such as the Russian Orthodox movement of Ivan Otrakovsky, Holy Rus’ (Sviataia Rus). In August 2012 Otrakovsky declared: “we reserve the right to take appropriate measures when we discover individuals who carry out blasphemous acts against the sacred objects of the Russian Orthodox Church, offend the Orthodox faith and show aggression toward the clergy” (“Sviataia Rus”). Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, Archpriest Vladimir Vigiliansky and Patriarch Kirill (Patriarkh Kirill 2013) himself all supported the initiative to create Orthodox fighting squads, although Patriarch Kirill was considerably more restrained in tone than the two archpriests. Even more extravagant schemes followed, such as the creation of an “Episcopal Regiment” of guardsmen of the patriarch, which, however, remains unrealized (“Moskvu budut patrolirovat” 2012). Acts of personal violence by people associated with the fighting squads also occurred; for example, the attack on the Museum of Erotic Art on the Arbat (“Zashchitniki pravoslavnykh sviatyn”). The extraordinarily catalytic effect of the discourse of violence on the internet also bears mentioning. Here I will quote a series of radical statements by people who identify themselves as Orthodox: “We should have dragged those

whores by their hair from the cathedral and impaled the scum so that no one ever dares to mock the Orthodox faith”; “Don’t take offense if next time we break your legs. Christians are tired of being weak”; “Burn those prostitutes in a bonfire!!!!” “I hope that they’ll be convicted after all. Although it would be more merciful simply to suffocate them quietly, so they don’t suffer, because they are biotrash. And the children should be sent to a monastery” (“Koshchunnitsy”).

The idea of defense formed the basis of Orthodox Actionism (or Orthodox Activism), subsequently crystallizing as the Orthodox social movement God’s Will. Arising among Orthodox youth in reaction to the performance of Pussy Riot, Orthodox Actionism became a reflection, a mirror image, of the actions of various art groups of the 1990s and 2000s. Its leaders are Dmitrii “Enteo” Tsorionov, Dmitry Pimenov, and Andrey Kaplin.

The God’s Will movement’s activity takes both violent and non-violent forms, and is noteworthy for its popularization of symbolic violence as a separate “genre,” familiar before then only from the “banner-bearers’ auto-da-fe” of the Union of Orthodox Banner-Bearers. Based on an analysis of the actions of God’s Will and UOB, I conclude that only a few of these actions were performances that to one extent or another were oriented toward an audience and to the media; the rest, on the contrary, occurred in less public settings. The first category includes “A Prayerful Stand against the Anti-Madonna” (referring to the American singer Madonna, “Molitvennoe stoianie”) in the course of which her portrait was impaled, and the “Russian auto-da-fe” in Kuzminki (“Russkoe autodafe”), while to the second belong the burning of an effigy of Elton John (“Khorugvenosnoe autodafe”) and what the website Credo.ru, with restraint, designated a symbolic hunt for gays (“Okhota na geev”), but which the UOB, with its characteristic expressiveness, called “A Spiritual *Oprichnina*” or “Death to Fags!” (“Dukhovnaia Oprichnina”).⁴ Of the various measures undertaken by God’s Will, I focus on the “Fire of Penitence” (“Andrei Kaplin”) and “Enteo sets the Earth Afire” (“Enteo podzheg Zemliu”). The tools of the UOB are fire and cold weaponry (bows and arrows, knives, “aspen stakes”); the actionists restrict themselves to fire. All these things are used to destroy anything associated with “the enemy”: the attack is directed not only at the enemy but also at that which is abstract-

4. During the reign of Ivan the Terrible, a portion of the Muscovite tsardom designated the “oprichnina” was set aside for the personal use of the tsar. For a period of years this area was terrorized by a band of warriors, the “oprichniki,” responsible directly to the tsar. — The editors

ly profane in him, his “enemy-ness.” Before and after the burning of Madonna’s portrait, L. D. Simonovich-Nikshich declared: “we are not acting to oppose people, we are acting to oppose sin” and “she has flown to Hell. The devil has been driven out” (“Khorugvenostsy”). In the course of the action “The Fire of Penitence,” Andrey Kaplin and Dmitry Enteo sketched the masks of Pussy Riot (balaclavas) on the asphalt and then spread incendiary materials on the sketches and set them alight. It is typical that the alternative name for the action is “Andrei Kaplin and Dimitrii Enteo Burn Pussy Riot”: by the operation of sympathetic magic, the portrayal of “the enemy” and the “enemy” itself become identical. The goal of the ritual is to drive out the demon. Kaplin calls upon the members of the punk rock group to “tear off the masks and become the slaves of God Maria, Nadezhda and Ekaterina”: his action is aimed at the disappearance of the “enemy,” with the girls or without them. Enteo’s actions, according to him, invariably take place in the context of the struggle with infernal forces, that is, of cosmic war (“Aktivist Dimitrii Enteo”). Symbolic violence, in contrast to actual violence, makes it possible to act within legal limits, as L. D. Simonovich-Nikshich (“Monitoring SMI”) and Enteo point out (Enteo 2012).

Actual religious violence can be *organized* or *unorganized*: there is a difference between regular endeavors in the spirit of “Sodom Will Not Pass!” in the course of which Orthodox nationalists oppose LGBT activists, and the spontaneous assault on a draftee, a parishioner of the Orthodox Church of Mary, the Sovereign Mother of God (“Marian Center”)⁵ by Alexey Malykhin, an employee of the Military Commissariat, who shouted: “We have a different God and a different church, while there’s something wrong with what you have, so we’re going to save you” (“V moskovskom voenkomate”). It is significant that the very same structures, in particular images of “the enemy” — in this instance, “sodomite” and “sectarian” — preceded both incidents; the attack on them becomes not simply an act of defense against them, but also a *sacred duty* (Appleby 81). These two “enemies,” more than any others, are the targets of personal violence on the part of believers.

The sacred is capable not only of restraining the onslaught of the profane that threatens to “devour” it; the sacred can also carry out the forcible conversion of the profane and “devour” it in its turn. That

5. “The Orthodox Church of Mary the Sovereign Mother of God” represents a new religious movement and is not affiliated with the ROC MP. — The editors.

sense of conversion is reflected in the abovementioned incident involving Malykhin and the member of the “Marian Center.” It should be said that non-violent conversion is also possible, a response to the preaching and personal virtue of a believer. However, often “sodomites,” unlike “sectarians,” are so dehumanized that such an approach becomes inapplicable.⁶

“The Sacrificial Crisis” of the Parish Milieu

Having surveyed Orthodox nationalists’ images of cosmic war and its influence on symbolic and actual violence, I now turn to the reflection of these images in the rhetoric and practice of the parish subculture. It is very hard to conceptualize the notion of “parish milieu” (*prikhramovaia sreda*) because of the complexity of its texture. Provisionally, it is possible to define it as an ethno-confessional external subculture (that is a peripheral cultural code, in contrast to the central cultural code), which consists of a multiplicity of small communities existing on a temporary or permanent basis and united by a shared worldview, mythology (a set of “objects of faith”), a dualistic philosophy of history and a prominent eschatology, which exploits particular situations like the “sacrificial crisis” and predicts the end of the world during the life of the current generation (Tarabukina 2000; Akhmetova 2010). If the situation of Orthodox nationalists represents the normal dynamic of cosmic war, then the situation of the parish subculture differs in a number of ways. Its members share a perception of the present moment as a spatial and temporal “gap” that opened up after the assassination of the imperial family, which signified the end of old Russia and the advent of Bolshevik power (Kormina and Shtyrkov 2011: 389–413). Time does not exist in this “gap,” but instead there is an inexorable profane, which hour after hour devours the sacred, blending with it and replacing its content with its own lack of content. From the end of the 1990s, a belief in the tsar-redeemer has spread in the monarchist “wing” of the parish milieu, that is, the doctrine of the divine status of the Russian tsar, and the idea that the present moment is liminal is linked to the actual absence in Russia of a monarch as the personification of Holy Russia (Zygmunt 2012: 138–45). The renewal of the sacred cosmos is

6. “We have preached in paddy wagons, been beaten by revolutionaries in buses filled with homosexuals. (...) Now it is more important for us to work with the liberal public. Beneath the walls of the court we spoke of God to the adherents of Pussy Riot, and one activist practically fell to her knees in repentance on the spot” (“Persony”).

associated with the restoration of the monarchy by the eschatological return of the tsar-redeemer — the Tsar to Come, who will purge Russia of its enemies and drive out or kill the Antichrist (Chistov 2011; Arkhipova 2010: 1–30).

The progressive blending of the sacred and profane as “cosmic conquest” is reflected in eschatological catastrophes (elemental and ecological disasters, famine, war, the desecration of formerly sacred places, the falseness of the hierarchs of the ROC) and in the near future will be crowned with the granting of the mark of the Antichrist (Akhmetova 2010: 89). The mark of the Antichrist has become the image of absolute “infection,” the conversion to the totality of violence, which condemns a person to eternal damnation (that is, eternal violence). The acceptance of the mark is a process, facilitated by the acceptance of its analogues, not a single act. According to the words of an anonymous author from the conservative portal “Moscow — The Third Rome,” a person does not renounce Christ all at once, but instead gradually, step by step, accepting a voucher, a Russian passport, a tax identification number, an insurance policy, a bank card, a biometric passport (“Myshelovka”). Once he accepts the mark of the Antichrist, a person becomes his own enemy, de-individualized and dehumanized, dissolving himself in the gray mass of non-human beings. He “will lose his ‘ego,’” in the words of the monk Rafail (Berestov) (Rafail 2010).

All of this, the temporal-spatial “gap,” the eschatological catastrophes, the threat of the “mark” and the ever-increasing thickening of “dark forces” to their maximal personification (the Antichrist), can be designated a “sacrificial crisis” that makes normal cosmic war impossible, due to the extraordinary intensity of the violent “infection.” If supernatural forces are the motive force of eschatological progress, human beings are powerless — they can only flee or remain. And both are linked with the practice of de-socialization that is popular in the Orthodox subculture: from time to time, “church people” move to a village or sacred place, in order to “cultivate their garden” there, and/or renounce money, documents and the achievements of technical progress. For them, this ascetic self-deprivation becomes “self-purification,” preparation for the renewal of the cosmos and, at the same time, the final means of affirming their identity.

The eschatological context of human powerlessness in the face of total violence creates a structure for the *alienation* of sacred violence — that is, its renunciation in favor of superhuman, divine forces. Only Christ or the Tsar to Come is capable of defeating “the enemy” and purifying the world from “contagion”: a person can only pray, fast and wait. The op-

posite of the *alienation* of violence is its *appropriation*, according to the principle: “who, if not us?” The differences become clear if we compare the speech by Ivan Otrakovskii at the 2013 Russian March that begins “What should we do?” (Otrakovskii 2013) with the texts of Vadim Kuznetsov or Roman Sergiev (the pseudonym of Sergey Romanov), which reject violence in favor of the Tsar to Come.⁷ However, a third possibility exists — *the deferral of appropriation*. For example, “*oprichnik*”⁸ authors such as Alexander Makeev, Anatoliy Eliseev and Nikolai Kozlov postpone violence until the “sacrificial crisis” has been overcome and present the “*oprichnik*” brotherhood as an angelic host, comrades-in-arms of the Tsar to Come, who will “drown the Antichrist in his own blood” (Makeev 2002; Eliseev 2008). However, given the variations in that Orthodox subculture, dividing attitudes toward violence into “appropriation,” “alienation” and “deferred appropriation” is relative, the application of these categories of analysis providing a plausible frame to work with rather than a perfectly objective reflection of reality.

Conclusion

Here is what I conclude. Violence far exceeds the realm of physical action and can be structural, actual and symbolic. Moreover, the structures that lie behind them determine the likelihood that actual and symbolic violence will manifest themselves. I suggested that actual violence, in itself, is “naked” and empty and acquires meaning only against the background of a structure of violence, which in this case can be defined as specifically *religious*.

Judging by my material, violence in religious consciousness is a “less-er evil,” a “vaccine,” violence that is aimed at ensuring the end of violence. For that reason, it is often described as defensive or defensive-aggressive (preventative), while the “channel” of violence in the discourse

7. “God has predestined the Tsar to Come. (...) First he will bring order to the Orthodox Church [as Its head], and remove all the false, heretical and cold-blooded bishops. And they will be many, very many, with few exceptions — almost all will be removed and new, true and steadfast bishops will take their place. It should be said that along with the false and heretical bishops, all the lukewarm priests and also deceitfully ‘theologizing’ deacons will be removed (the reference is to Andrei Kuraev — A. Z.). (...) Considering all this, it can be maintained that the Antichrist will be killed and Satan bound until the Almighty decrees the Glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ. That is precisely why ‘even the Antichrist will fear the Russian Orthodox Tsar,’ knowing what awaits him” (Sergiev).

8. An “*oprichnik*” was one of the warriors associated with the “*oprichnina*” of Ivan the Terrible and responsible directly to him. See footnote 4 above. — The editors.

of every religious community runs from the discourse of victimization (positioning itself as an object of violence) to the discourse of justification or legitimation of violence (the affirmation of the possibility or necessity of answering violence with violence). Negative religious identity as the fundamental structure of violence is transformed into images of cosmic war or cosmic conquest (on the threshold of “sacrificial crisis”), which establish a link between the mundane and the other-worldly, between social and political realities and the world of the supernatural.

I have shown that for the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, Orthodox nationalists and some parish communities, “cosmic war” actually defines the present situation. However, these three elements of the Church differ on other matters. Among church leaders, the appeals of Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeev) for peace and concord, according to the principle of the ambivalence of the sacred, co-exist, for example, with the aggressive rhetoric of archpriests Vsevolod Chaplin and Dimitry Smirnov. Separate groups of Orthodox nationalists regularly “appropriate” violence both in theory and in practice, taking the “directive for struggle” as a guiding principle for action. The same is true of instances of spontaneous violence against “enemies” — “sodomites,” “sectarians” and the like. The situation of “cosmic conquest” and the “sacrificial crisis” of the parish subculture forces its representatives to “alienate” violence in favor of divine forces or “postpone” it until the conquest and crisis have been overcome, as does the ideology of the *oprichnik* brotherhoods.

Research on the subject of violence and religion can clarify the essence of phenomena associated with violence that derive from the logic of *homo religiosus*, that is, from the position of the subject rather than the object of violence. This is its distinction from legal or human rights discourse, which is formed in precisely the opposite way, originating in the fact that someone’s rights have been violated (that is, from the object and not the subject of violence). In this article, I have only contemplated approaches to the problem of violence in contemporary Russian Orthodoxy, a topic that demands further investigation.

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Religious Conversion, Utopia and Sacred Space (Okunevo Village in Western Siberia)

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This paper represents an attempt at theorizing a “sacred space” that coalesced in the last two decades in association with the village of Okunevo in Western Siberia. Using discourse analysis and the ideas of social constructivism, the authors highlight some contemporary narratives related to Okunevo. They view this “site of power” as a social product and a result of the interplay of mythological narrative, archaeological interpretation, and tourist practices. The production of myths and “invented traditions” are vital ways in which non-traditional religious communities in Okunevo remember, reactualize and articulate their religious identity. The highlighted discourses, which illustrate the social logic of the development of “sites of power” and methods of representing them, allow us to analyze this “sacred space” from a historical perspective.

Keywords: new sacred space, non-traditional religions, mythology, archeological heritage, Okunevo, Omsk region.

Introduction

THE process of religious rebirth that is unfolding in front of our eyes is leading to the appearance of “sacred sites,” sacred spaces, and the invention of new traditions. Such spaces are anthropologically important, with their own particular atmosphere and aura, the significance of which cannot ultimately be turned into goods or made an instrument of power. They are the result of the joint actions of various actors: people, rules of behavior, and artifacts (Chidester and Linenthal 1995: 439–40; Kärrholm 2007: 439–40; Kong 2006: 903–18; Sheldrake 2007: 243–58). We can say that sacred space constitutes a certain quality that is actively constructed by various actors

(scholars, devotees, government workers, esoteric practitioners, producers of mass media) in contemporary postmodern culture (Tong and Kong 2000: 29–45).

The subject of this study is such a “sacral space,” a unique local center of religious activity with its own styles of behavior and sensibility, which developed in the course of the last twenty years in the village of Okunevo in the Muromtsevsk Region of Omsk Oblast. The popularity of this place grew beyond its region many years ago, and methods of contemporary narrativization (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003: 16–17) of the “Okunevo phenomenon” are distinctive for their variety: this village is characterized as a “site of power,” as “the Bellybutton of the World,” and as “an ark,” as a place of restorative camps, and as “the Land of Five Lakes,” as well as a tourist attraction with an endless flow of eager visitors. In the words of Doreen Massey, here we have “a multitude of stories with a spatial character” (Massey 2000: 231), which makes this western Siberian village a very attractive topic for scholarly analysis.

We cannot currently say that this new sacral complex in Western Siberia has received comprehensive treatment from researchers. The existing literature on the “Okunevo phenomenon” can be divided into three categories: studies written by archaeologists and other researchers who have approached this place as an archeological object of study (Matiushchenko 1997: 85–87; Matiushchenko 2003; Matiushchenko and Plevodov 1994); a few anthropological studies (Seleznev 2014: 41–59; Selezneva 2014: 59–73); and studies that are parascientific in nature (Rechkin 2011).

An analysis of the scholarly material shows that the problem of the evolution of an Okunevo sacral universe, as well as the presence there of various discourses and practices that variously describe this new “site of power” are the most relevant, and unresearched. This circumstance has determined the basic idea and content of the current article.

The following analysis is based on data obtained in the course of field trips to the village of Okunevo in the Muromtsevsk Region of Omsk Oblast in 2006 and 2013. We analyze several unstructured interviews, and our methodology includes engaged observation and photo fixation. Our informants were for the most part young and middle-aged people who were residents and visitors of the village of Okunevo (in our personal archives we designate them as Pavel, Dmitry, Sergey and Stas). The materials for this article also include data from the analysis of internet fora that focus on the village of Okunevo.

We use Michel Foucault’s theory of discourse analysis and Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman’s theories of social constructivism (1995) as the the-

oretical foundations for our research. On the one hand, discourses serve as the logical points of departure for the development of sacred spaces, and, on the other, they are forms of their representation. The interrelationship of discourses creates a complex semantic content for individual spaces (Eade and Sallnow 1991; Dora 2011: 163–84). On the basis of these theoretical ideas we highlight some contemporary narratives that are connected to the village of Okunevo. We examine this “site of power” as a social product and as the interaction of mythology, archaeological interpretation of the site and its religious and tourism practices.

Okunevo: The “Invention of a Tradition”

The village of Okunevo is located in the Muromtsevsk Region of Omsk Oblast, 250 kilometers north of the city of Omsk. It was founded in 1770, formerly named Rezino, and was named after its first inhabitant. Okunevo is a village in the taiga that is difficult to access, and most of its inhabitants are ethnic Russians. The village has five main intersecting streets with village-type homes built in various decades of the last century.

An influx of representatives of neo-Eastern movements and numerous pilgrims at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century substantively altered the look of the village. New houses appeared in Okunevo with bright, colorful inscriptions in Sanskrit and Russian, as well as pictures of pink elephants. A Center for Natural Human Development (with consultations on astro-psychology, yoga, massage, seminars and trainings) was opened, and specialized religious literature began to be distributed.

Currently, in the village of Okunevo, which has a population of 700 to 750 people, the homes of Christians and Muslims, Krishnas, followers of Babaji and Neo-Pagans (followers of a neo-Vedic form of Christianity, whose informal leader is Stanislav Repin), stand next to one another. There are popular celebrations of four events in Okunevo — Summer Solstice, the Feast of Perun, the ten-day Hindu Navaratri festival, and celebrations organized by the Om-ist Alexander Hinevich, the leader of the “Ancient Russian Church of Old Believers-Ynglists.” Thousands of people traditionally participate in these holidays: parapsychologists, esoterics, spiritual teachers (*propovedniki*), Hindus and Neo-Pagans, and simply “interested persons.” According to the head of the administration of the Bergamak settlement, about 40,000 people visit Okunevo during the summer (Selezneva 2014: 60).

One and a half kilometers to the northwest of the village of Okunevo, on an elevated terrace on the high bank of the Tara River, on the Tatar

Ridge, there is a ritual site called Omkar, a so-called “secret gate into parallel worlds.” In this space, there are currently an octagonal Orthodox chapel (St. Michael the Archangel), a Hindu altar, a Pagan swastika, and a [sacred] grove, all within a few dozen meters of each other. Old Believers pray at Omkar in the morning, then Orthodox worshippers, followed by devotees of Krishna, who sing at noon. Representatives of various religions consider this to be a holy site, one where the “Okunevo crystal” is preserved, and a place that is connected with Great Asgard. The site is compared to Archaïm (Southern Urals), and its sacral character is often explained by appealing to data that has been obtained from archaeological research.

Dmitry (I): Archaeologists have conducted digs and found very interesting artifacts, but the research has been intentionally concealed, and only black [magic] diggers are digging there (...). There’s a version that there was a city of ancient dwellers who lived here, who as the result of either a deluge or a flood or the lowering of dry land left for India. This explains the interest of Hindus: they tried to obtain information about the digs, but weren’t given access (...) this is why all they do is meditate (...). This region is the land of Tartaria (and the Tara River), and knowledgeable people describe this region and its people as the most ancient.

These data make it possible to include the Okunevo area in the contemporary process of the “invention of tradition” and the birth of a “new mythology,” and they require interpretation of this place by archaeologists, investigation of its historical context, and clarification of the question of the degree to which archaeological data has served as a resource for the construction of this sacral complex.

“The Sacral Complex”: Archaeology of the Village of Okunevo

From 1996 to 1999, the authors of the present article were students at Omsk State University (OmGU) and participated in archaeological and ethnographic expeditions in the territory of the Muromtsevsk Region of Omsk Oblast. At that time, the village was of interest to specialists primarily as an inhabited site in the zone of an archaeological microregion. In the second half of the 1990s and beginning of the twenty-first century, Dr. Vladimir Ivanovich Matiushchenko, a historian, was in charge of the digs in this region. Under his direction, a complex of archaeological monuments located on the left bank of the Tara River in the area of the village of Okunevo was studied. Materials from different eras — from

the Neolithic to the late Middle Ages — were studied (Gerasimov, et al. 2008: 178), and ground-level and mound burial sites, settlements (stopping places, small villages, old settlements) and several sacrificial sites were discovered (Matiushchenko and Tolpeko 1995: 48–49).

Both archaeologists and curiosity seekers were particularly attracted to the composite archaeological complex located on the Tatar Ridge. It is noteworthy that no complexes of settlements were discovered here — they are located farther away and “accompany” this grandiose necropolis without infringing on its boundaries (Matiushchenko and Polevodov 1994: 9). Traces of this “accompaniment” are intensive and varied: there are abundant ceramic fragments in the spaces between the graves; vessels; sites where small bonfires were lit; “special” zones — pits of unclear designation and small ditches that probably separated the spaces of the living from the dead; and traces of some kind of above-ground wooden structures. Currently, all of these are perceived to be half-lost traces of ritual activities that were conducted at this site (Matiushchenko and Polevodov 1994: 109).

Above all, archaeologists interpret the Tatar Ridge as a historical site that came together as a place that was comfortable for the carrying out of cult activities. Evidently, as time went by and ownership of the territory on which the necropolis was located changed, this zone gradually expanded and assimilated from north to south, but it was not substantively displaced. The Tatar Ridge is the most picturesque terrain in the district. It is the endpoint for the shoreline terrace at the conjunction of the flood plains of the Tara and Irtysh Rivers, where a vista opens to all corners of the world (with the exception of the southern direction) (Matiushchenko and Polevodov: 57). Evidently, this site’s potential was noted as early as the Neolithic era, and there is a unique burial complex on the northern end of the promontory.

Ceramic fragments and stoneware are among the objects found in the spaces between the graves, and there are fragments of casting molds, crucibles, plumb bobs, bronzeware and some other material remains. They are concentrated around the graves (Matiushchenko 1997: 86). These findings cannot be interpreted as traces of ordinary “settlement” bronze casting activity because of their low numbers (Matiushchenko 1997: 89). Evidently, we are dealing here with the production of objects for the dead within their own spaces.

As a rule, archaeological discoveries rarely go beyond the boundaries of archaeological discourse and do not have any social resonance, unless their mythological interpretation finds active support. In this case, the archaeological legacy of the village of Okunevo is interpreted in pop-

ular consciousness and this legacy is appealed to by the representatives of new religious movements in the area. In our opinion, Matiushchenko, who was not only an enthusiastic researcher but also an educator, played an important role in this process. He believed that making enthusiasm for knowledge contagious to those around him, especially those interested in “the history and significance of a place,” was an important task for both scholars and well-educated people in general. He consistently conducted his campaign of cultural and historical *likbez*¹ both in the vicinity of the dig sites and in the archaeologists’ camp, irrespective of the status or nature of his audience, whose members could include young village boys, pilgrims and tourists. The differences in intellect and perception of reality forced him to resort to a certain reductiveness in the informational nature of his presentations, which does not, however, mean that he vulgarized his material to suit his audience. He never recounted myths, nor did he support the mythological leanings of his audience. However, if those who approach an examination of the significance of a particular space through the prism of sacrality and myth encounter texts that have been constructed with the use of such phrases as “unique place,” “sacral complex,” “abundance of burials from different eras,” “ritual epochs,” and so on (which a scientifically organized consciousness typically processes through specific filters), the result is an amplification of the initial axiomatic connotations of their original conceptions of the space.

Currently, the residents and guests of Okunevo substantiate the sacrality of this place by explaining that ritual objects “from all the world’s civilizations” were found on the Omkara (the Tatar Ridge), and thus all religions try to conduct their rituals precisely here, at the place “where there is a special energy and a sense of spiritual growth.”

This is where I, like every free person, discovered the channel of Ganesh’s, Shiva’s and Parvathy’s Energies (...). This was easy with the chanting of mantras (...). It’s interesting that everyone who came there — curious tourists and Orthodox believers and women who prayed at the sign of the swastika — moved easily around this place, walked out to the chapel and crossed themselves (<http://www.reyki-tselitel.org/t729-topic>, accessed April 30, 2015).

The connection of a sacral site to a specific archaeological monument occurs fairly frequently in the process of “inventing traditions” (Scythian bur-

1. This is an allusion to the early Soviet campaign to eradicate illiteracy in the USSR, which was called *likvidatsiia bezgramotnosti* (literally “the liquidation of illiteracy”) and generally referred to by the shorthand *likbez*. — The editors

ials at Ukok, Okunev sculptures in Khakassia, the Valley of the Gods in Tuva, the dolmens of the Caucasus, Archaim in the southern Urals). The typological mechanism for the formation of such centers is based on the idea of reactualization, awakening and activation of the sacral potential of archaeological objects invested with supernatural functions (Seleznev 2014: 43). Evidently, in the case of Okunevo, we are dealing with a broadly understood “anthropology of archaeology” (Seleznev 2014: 52), that is, with a mythological interpretation of the archaeological data by the residents and guests of Okunevo. This sacral complex is interesting above all as an example of a folk rather than an institutionalized “locus-based cult.”²

In the words of David Smith and Stuart Burch, legends and traditions, toponymy, historical narratives, and symbols do not necessarily have to be officially represented and reinforced on the level of everyday consciousness; often they are “invisible” to the external observer and are formed spontaneously (Smith and Burch 2012: 400–24). According to data collected by the Omsk-based researcher A. V. Seleznev, the Yurt-Bergamak area, which is forty-five kilometers from Okunevo, is currently experiencing the spontaneous birth of a new sacral complex, “an ancient Slavic temple (*kapishche*),” which local Neo-Pagans (“The Cultural Heritage and Creativity Commune”) view as a burial place of “priestesses” (*zhritsy*) with elongated skulls, and call it the Motherland of Risha, or the Motherland of the White Sages (Seleznev: 50–51). Thus, we are speaking here of the creation of one more variety of hierotopy, of a universal archetype that appears one way or the other throughout the history of culture, and in this sense is not something fundamentally new at the level of the phenomenology of religion.

The Crossroads of Religions

The authors’ interest in the village of Okunevo as a place with a presence of neo-Eastern religious currents began in 2006 through our acquaintance with Pavel, a thirty-three-year old entrepreneur from Omsk who is the anchor of a program on the local channel. It turned out that Pavel often travels to India, is an adherent of the Hindu faith, and goes to Okunevo, where he has the spiritual name of Puran, each weekend to observe religious rituals. The walls of his three-room apartment in

2. The term “locus cult” was proposed by V. B. Yashin, a religious studies specialist from Omsk. In his opinion, unlike the concept of a “local cult,” which characterizes the distribution scale of one faith or another, the category of “locus cult” implies sacralization and the imparting of unique symbolic characteristics to a specific territory or natural-geographic object (Yashin 2012: 96).

Omsk are painted with religious themes, and one room with an altar is set apart exclusively for prayer. Puran follows the teachings of Babaji and even helped the Sufi sheik Freddy Bollag with his trip to Omsk, during which Bollag purchased an apartment in the center of Omsk and a house in Okunevo, where he regularly attended Muslim services. Pavel/Puran became the main character in *Crossroads*, a documentary film about Okunevo directed by Ivan Golovnev in 2006, and served as a sort of “guide” to the “place of power” that was taking shape in front of our eyes. Pavel described his path to faith as follows:

I came to India for the third time (...). I had a question (...). Why did I have the same feelings when I read a Christian prayer and a Shaivite mantra? I came to Babaji's cave (...). And I saw a vision of Babaji (...). I mentally asked him my question (...). In response the image of Babaji split in two... Here was Babaji and there was Jesus Christ (...). Then they joined again into one image (...). There is one God and one truth (...). It's a pity that many people don't understand this (...). And there are inter-religious conflicts (...). We are all particles of one God (...). There's no reason to divide things, your God is my God (...). Various religions are only paths (...). And with time they will disappear.

Pavel's image was remarkable for another reason as well: he is the embodiment of typical “guests” from Omsk who come to Okunevo to participate in contemporary Babajist rituals; these are young or middle-aged people who are highly educated, are familiar with specialized literature, and are mobile by nature, who write blogs and are involved in entrepreneurship.

The appearance of Babajists in the Muromtsevsk Region where, according to local residents, before the 1990s, the only attractions were an old Church of the Intercession of the Virgin Mary and a mosque in the neighboring Tatar village of Chertaly, was directly related to the activities of Rasma Rozitis. Rasma is a US citizen of Latvian origin (her spiritual name is Radjani), who came to the village of Okunevo at the beginning of the 1990s from the Indian province of Hairahan at the behest of her spiritual teacher Muniraj, the handpicked successor of Babaji, who is venerated as the next mahavatar (incarnation) of the Lord Shiva himself. Her teacher told her to find a place in Siberia where civilization had supposedly first developed 300,000 years ago and where the Temple of Hanuman was located. According to legend, a certain land (presumably Siberia) was bequeathed to Hanuman, where an ancient Vedic temple was built. Her search for this sacred place led Radjani to the village of Okunevo in the Muromtsevsk

Region where, after she had conducted multi-day meditation sessions, she received “the necessary supernatural confirmations” of her teacher’s correctness. As a result of Rasma Rozitis’s activities, the village of Okunevo became the base for a community of Babajists and a Hindu temple or ashram — the only one in Russia. On Rasma Rozitis’s telling:

Archaeologists told me that a place was found in the Okunevo area that had been the site of rituals in ancient times. I stayed in a tent not far from the village and fasted and prayed for five days. On the fifth night I observed luminous manifestations. Light was floating all around me, shining beings approached me, I saw something that looked like machines woven from light, and I heard unearthly music. (<http://www.tainoe.ru/anomalia/zoni/ano-zoni-Russia.htm#Okunevo>, accessed May 2, 2015).

According to Radjani, Omsk was chosen because the name of this town correlates with the holy syllable “Om,” which has, according to mystical Indian teachings, a colossal divine energy, the purest of vibrations that penetrate the universe, and the name of the river and city of Tara (Muromtsevskaia Region, Omsk Oblast) correlates with the name of an Indian goddess.

According to the teachings of Babaji, the three basic concepts — “Truth, Simplicity, Love” — are the essence of all religions, and the goal of Babaji’s mission is the restoration of Sanatana Dharma — the Sacred Truth that has no beginning and is the foundation of all existing religions but has been distorted as a result of the degradation of humanity (<http://www.saiorg.ru/?id=1068>, accessed March 30, 2015). Various forms of spiritual practices (Vedic sacrifice, veneration of spirits, yoga, ascension to the impersonal Absolute) are regarded as possible steps in spiritual development and knowledge of God. The ultimate goal of this path is love of God and absolute, unselfish service to him. This is likely why this teaching found its devotees among representatives of various religions, who settled very near to one another.

Pronouncements of various residents and tourists about the Babajists are very loyal:

Dmitry (I): In general, we have a lot to learn from the Krishnaites, Babajists and others: there’s no criminality among them and they are very kind people.

The ones whom I had the chance to meet are very pleasant and sophisticated people. They sang bhajan devotional hymns that praised Shiva, Shakti and other venerable Indian gods. And they sang these not just at social gatherings and in the ashram services (“arati”) but

in other convenient situations. I remember waking up at dawn in a small tepee on a hill not far from the magical Lake Shaitan and hearing singing outside. And a person isn't idle, "as soon as he awakes, before doing anything else," he immediately begins to praise God. That's great. And there's another pretty picture in my memory: seven of us head toward the lake and come down from the hill single file on a trail, sunshine, the grass comes to your waist. Good smells; I walk in the back and see everyone — beautiful, in their ethnic clothes, and the one in front is playing the flute (<http://www.ark.ru/ins/zapoved/zapoved/okunevo.html>, accessed May 3, 2015).

Babajists believe that events occurred in Siberia that are described in the ancient Indian poem *The Ramayana*, and that, according to Babaji's understanding, this territory is connected to the renewal of the temple and the forthcoming salvation of Russia in the looming world catastrophe:

[T]he current era, which is marked by the degeneration of morals and the triumph of evil, is coming to an end. The world is waiting for social and natural catastrophes that will radically change the face of the Earth — the primary centers of contemporary civilization will perish, earthquakes, hurricanes and floods will destroy entire nations and continents. Only those who restructure their lives according to the cosmic laws of Truth, Simplicity, Love will be able to survive. (<http://www.saiorg.ru/?id=1068>, accessed March 30, 2015).

In Okunevo, the discourse about the special role of Siberia and eschatological ideas are also very prominent in the views of the Church of the Orthodox Old Believers/Ynglings (founded by Alexander Hinevich).³ They characterize this territory as the cradle of the ancient super-civilization Arctida, where the salvation of all of humanity begins. The global and even cosmic aspect of this myth is perceived as having been in operation here for hundreds of millennia, and on a cosmic scale. There is the notion that in ancient times a scientific-spiritual Aryan center called Asgard the Great existed in the area of Omsk, while around 100,000 years ago at the Okunevo site there was an Aryan palace (*vimanu*) in the form of a temple, at the top of which a crys-

3. Thanks to the efforts of Alexander Hinevich, their charismatic leader, the Church of the Orthodox Old Believers-Ynglings, which has been known since the 1980s, was registered in 1992, although Ynglings themselves assert that their church has existed since time immemorial and was the first religion of the "white race" and the "wise holy ancestors" of the Russian peoples.

tal was installed, “intended to be used for holography,” through which the Aryans “recorded their consciousness.” The temple was destroyed as the result of a certain catastrophe (a flood) (Seleznev 2014: 44), and the proto-Aryans abandoned this place, which led to the degradation of culture and religion. The Ynglings think that the intermixing of the proto-Aryans with the Aryans in India led to the distortion of the original teachings, which only the Ynglings preserved in their pure form.

And so, various polytheistic religions, cults and belief systems characterized by syncretism and apocalypticism are present in the village of Okunevo. Several of these are based on a significant interest in the religious ideas and mythology of the Indo-Iranian cultural complex. As a whole, the idea of this space can be expressed, in our opinion, by the metaphor of a “crossroads,” since it is based on the intersection of historical eras and religious practices.

Mythology of Place

The situation that has arisen in Okunevo presents an interesting example of the process of the “invention of tradition” and the birth of a “new mythology”; inasmuch as the homogeneity of a given place (Werblowsky 1998: 9–17) is destroyed, it increases its “capacity to absorb and reflect a multiplicity of religious discourses” (Eade and Sallnow 1991: 15).

Space and time are distinguished here by their non-linearity and their value-laden semantics. The real and mythological planes merge and constantly switch from one to the other. Space is not only constructed here (in layers, spheres, sacral centers) but also arbitrarily contracts and expands depending on who is acting, and how. In the mythological scenario, the truth is revealed to “the initiated (*posviashchennym*),” as is the capability of communicating in “the subtle realm”: the uninitiated are gradually pushed aside and begin to be regarded as dogmatics who are incapable of overcoming the limitations of the everyday world.

A divine matrix of life (...). From the first days there was an ineffable feeling that this is a special place (...). I don't know why (...). Maybe the sun shines differently here (...) or the sun's rays acquire some kind of new beneficial properties as they penetrate the air and reach the earth in this place (...). Maybe the water in the Tara is blessed (...). Maybe the earth is of a special type (...). Each step taken on this earth removes some kind of “decrepit,” negative, untrue force that we typically use to survive in that other world (...). In the world of distorted thoughts, words and actions (...). Each step gives you a different kind of force that penetrates the body's cells, en-

downing them with a new, primordial condition that corresponds to the divine matrix of life (...). After even a few days it became apparent to me that the tissues of the human body change here (...). Every day your skin, hair, tendons and bone structures were filling up with new energy and changing physically (...). How soundly I slept changed as well (...). At night my consciousness would literally fall through to new, deep levels (...). Bread brought from Moscow always remained as fresh and soft as when it was first baked (...). I kept thinking, how could I best describe what happened to me in a few words (...) I came up with nothing better than what Lao-Tse had already said: “When man is born he is tender and weak, but when death approaches he is hard and strong. All creatures and plants are tender and weak when they are born, but dry and rotten when they die. The hard and the strong is what perishes, and the tender and weak is what begins to live.”

I experienced precisely a birth into an undistorted life (...). A life that corresponds to the Creator’s design for that life and accords with the prototype of the Primordial Divine Matrix of Creation (<http://vk.com/event48086578>, accessed May 3, 2015).

Let us note that when we spoke with our informant Pavel, we were always aware of his presence in his own reality, accessible only to the “initiated.” For this reason, conversation about ordinary topics included references to utterly strange subject matter. Once the Slavic Pagan (*Vedorus*) Stas came to visit Pavel. In response to the ordinary question, “How are things?” Stas responded that everything was fine, but this morning had awoken and could not find his Adam’s apple. Pavel asked in all seriousness what had preceded this event, and Stas responded that during the night he had had a “battle in the subtle realm” with a very strong competitor. “That explains everything,” Pavel summarized. In his opinion, the loss of the Adam’s apple could be explained by Stas’s loss of strength in his battle.

Among those initiated into this tradition and who are regulated by its ethics are included persons who in ordinary life are considered to be “oddballs” and “freaks.” Such is the “blessed” Serega, a local resident of Okunevo, who is a permanent participant in Babajist rituals and, according to our informants’ testimony, many even envy his condition.

In the language of local residents and guests, entrance into Okunevo is marked by a boundary — a break that separates this sacral complex from the rest of the (mundane) world. Omsk researcher I. A. Selezneva distinguishes at least four zones within the sacral space of the village: Central Street, where the ashram of Babaji’s followers is located, as well as the temple of the followers of Krishna and the homes

of the Neo-Pagans; Omkar, the territory of the Tatar Ridge, which is the main energy center where rituals are conducted; Yar, where there is a tourist camp on the road from Omkar to the village; and Tyup, a space created by a bend in the Tara (Selezneva 2014: 60).

In local Okunevo mythology, a mythologization of personages also exists, along with the construction of a unique language (unknown languages are frequently spoken in Okunevo), and eschatological motifs. A distinctive personification of the cosmos, which is perceived as a living, animated whole (as expressed, for example, in descriptions of energy as “living” or “evil”) is realized along mythological principles.

I was alone on this strange hill [the Tatar Ridge — the authors] and it started raining (...). Well how can I describe it? How does a place of power manifest itself? You feel very acutely that you are ALIVE. Right now, in this moment. There is an inexplicable feeling of the significance of what is happening, although it would seem that nothing is happening. You feel the RESPONSE of the surrounding world to your presence here. You feel, and you are felt. I was squatting and holding on to the earth with my hands. I just wanted to suck from it with my hands... I don't know... that which is lacking. (<http://www.ark.ru/ins/zapoved/zapoved/okunevo.html>, accessed May 3, 2015).

We suggest that we can apply Roland Barthes's ideas to identify two levels of myth creation involved in the construction of sacral spaces — “myth-creation from above” and “myth-creation from below” (Barthes 1989: 46–130). Myth-creation from above, or written mythology, has an artificial, constructed character and is a component of ideology. As a rule, representatives of this form of myth-creation are mythographers who have connections and instincts that are topological for the myth. In Okunevo, Mikhail Nikolaevich Rechkin, born in the settlement of Muromtsevo in Omsk Oblast, became such a figure (*Okunevskii kovcheg*, http://rechkin.org/index/mikhail_rechkin/o-16, accessed March 13, 2015). His birthplace was close enough to Okunevo to feel the themes and problems related to the place where the myth arose. In the folk consciousness, Rechkin appears as an inspector and a littérateur, a researcher of anomalous phenomena, who “was able to describe this place and its wonders remarkably vividly and engagingly, without sleep-inducing sophistries” (Seminar v Okunevo). Rumor has it that Rechkin was even shot at from beyond the boundaries of the Okunevo lands, but he “miraculously survived,” although this incident is not mentioned in the official biography on the writer's site.

A series of publications by Rechkin appeared between 2003 and 2011, which in terms of content and informativeness are difficult to discern from one another. They are written in the same passionate myth-making register — that there is a wonderful place where people (although by no means all) can save themselves if they know how (e.g., Rechkin 2011). Thanks to the accessibility of its language, this text is accepted by a broad audience, although not an academic one or one with a critical frame of mind, and it is thus a wholly effective instrument for “myth-creation from above.” We should note that, based on our observations, representatives of religious currents in Okunevo call Rechkin’s opinions “fairytales,” but nonetheless they use them as arguments when a rational achievement of significant goals is inaccessible. Here is an example of Rechkin’s pronouncements:

Those who come here with the desire to see a wonder are often disappointed. It’s an ordinary little Siberian village. True, it’s in a picturesque spot on the steep bank of the small Tara River. It is precisely here that for many years archaeologists from Omsk have been excavating ancient burial sites and finding every possible kind of object from ancient eras. A respectable study, *The Complex of Archaeological Monuments on the Tatar Ridge near the Village of Okunevo*, has been written and published and contains such perfectly banal lines as “there was probably a cult site in this settlement.” Archaeologists are careful people. When facts are inadequate, they prefer to use words such as “probably,” and “possibly,” but an Indian holy man, Sathya Sai Baba, who was far removed both from archaeology and from the village of Okunevo, was deeply convinced that long before scientists discovered this “probable” cult site, the Great Temple of the Sublime Monkey Hanuman was erected very near here (<http://vk.com/event48086578>, accessed May 3, 2015).

To an even greater extent than the imposition of mythology from above, “myth-creation from below” testifies to the current significance of myth in the construction of sacral spaces, and is spontaneous and unpredictable in its mythologization of images, relationships and events. It is realized both in the perception of mass culture and in creative oral folk genres. In “myth-creation from below,” we can include stories (*bylichky*) — oral tales of unusual events that are relayed as absolutely authentic and for which authenticity is underscored by means of everyday details and everyday experience (Martishina 1996: 106).

At the level of popular consciousness, the village of Okunevo itself has for a long time been associated with the presence of supernatural forces: local residents often report seeing unidentified flying objects,

extraterrestrial supernatural phenomena, impenetrable bulwarks (*nepristupnye valy*), twisted trees, labyrinths, and so on. For example, it is thought that people often lose consciousness next to the “magical” Lake Shaitan, with its “various flying spheres,” and its “dead” water. It is reported that three lakes near Okunevo have an unearthly origin, are interconnected through a subterranean river, and the water in them is considered to be holy. A tree near the tiny chapel on the Tatar Ridge can fulfill wishes if touched, and so on. (<http://omsk.tulp.ru/bazy-otdyha/okunevo>, accessed March 25, 2015). Internet fora about Okunevo offer an abundance of stories such as these:

When I first came to Okunevo I hoped to see a Wonder — mysterious phenomena happen here every day. When I didn't see anything unusual, I still left with the thought that “there's something ... secret here.” This time I was “luckier.” After dinner we decided to take a walk to the ridge. As we walked along the river bank, we missed our turn and had to turn back. The sun was already setting when we reached the chapel; darkness was quickly approaching. We took several panoramic pictures, and our first portrait, of my brother's wife. When I saw the photograph, I felt uncomfortable. At first sight it looked like smoke was coming out of her head. I immediately asked her: “Were you smoking?”

“No.”

Everyone took an interest in our conversation and came to look at the photograph. When we enlarged the image and looked closely at the fog above her head, we began to panic. One can in fact observe images, even horrifying and clearly lifeless ones. At that moment everyone realized what kind of place we found ourselves in. This time in Okunevo, I kept asking myself the question: why did Rasma come here, why is it precisely in this spot, on the ridge, that she said: HERE? She must have seen and felt the energy of this place (<http://xroniki-nauki.ru/neobyasnimoe/energiya-okunevo>, accessed May 4, 2015).

According to the testimony of UFO enthusiasts and “occult tourists,” expeditions of researchers who worked in this area in the 1990s are said to have confirmed the presence of non-standard energy fields around the village of Okunevo, and to have discovered five lakes with healing waters, traces of fallen meteorites, and so on. According to their tales, many results of these studies were then classified and Okunevo was declared an energetically anomalous place.

Tourism in Okunevo as a Resource for the Appropriation of Sacral Space and Commodification of History

According to V. A. Shnirelman, if in many contemporary societies popular tourism and its worldly rituals serve as a “replacement for religiosity,” in Russia it can have the opposite effect of nurturing religiosity (Shnirelman 2015: 5). Today, the group of visitors, which can be divided into tourists (whose goal is to see a “phenomenon,” possibly to “feel” the rituals) and pilgrims (Babajists, followers of Krishna, Slavic Neo-Pagans [*Vedorusy*], Buddhists), is the most numerous group in Okunevo.⁴ Those who come as pilgrims immediately settle into the appropriate community and for a period of time adopt its rules of behavior and way of life. Tourists have the freedom to choose — they can either live in any of the communities or separately in a tent, or rent a house, and participate in any ceremony.

Stanislav Repin (a Neo-Pagan):

There are thousands of villages in the country that are not visited by anyone. If people come here for whatever reasons, that means the territory has become attractive to tourists. Many say that it would be better if this hadn't happened, that some kind of sectarians come. The truth is that we have a full cross-section of society here, from immature youth to bureaucrats, businessmen and military personnel. The guiding principle for the residents of the village of Okunevo who follow different spiritual confessions is to search for what unites us rather than what divides us. We can go to the Krishna followers for their holiday and they can come to us. My next door neighbor used his own money to build a Christian church. Normal, harmonious mutual relationships are being created (<http://rusplt.ru/society/pup-rusi-10815.html>, accessed May 4, 2015).

As an analysis of internet fora about Okunevo shows, through popular media, numerous reports about this place, as well as pictures, facts and myths have a substantial influence on the mixing of people here. The development of virtual representations of the place is becoming an important means for constructing the sacral space. Currently, practically every major tourist center has its own site on the internet, its own vir-

4. This is in spite of the fact that a survey conducted by the independent Center for Humanities, Sociological-Economic and Political Research (GEPITsentr) in 2002 confirms the reputation of the Om-ists as “conservative people who adhere to traditional values and are not susceptible to newly fashionable trends of a religious or para-religious nature” (Yashin 2000: 39).

tual image, which determines our perception of the place itself. As David Harvey observes, “Spaces that envelop and surround us in everyday life have an influence on both our direct experiences and on the ways that we interpret and understand representations” (Harvey 2011: 21). The tourists and pilgrims who come to Okunevo already have certain ideas about this place, as well as several conceptualizations that have been created through films, literature, advertising and other means of information transmission. The immutable social utopian motif of a “return to nature” also plays a large role in these conceptualizations.

We submit that the popularity of Okunevo is also connected to the so-called provincial myth, in which the status of an economically peripheral region (Omsk Oblast) is characterized by isolation from resources, the perception of megalopolis values as being deficient, and the constant draw of the center. In an ontological, spatial and semiotic sense, life in a peripheral region is distinctive for its liminality, sense of inferiority and thinness of cultural life, a sense of being located “between the megalopolis and the village.” It is not surprising that, on the one hand, marginality corresponds to a lack of power and a political vacuum, and on the other, new forms of controlling the territory are created. Under these conditions, the myth of the presence of a “place of power” nearby acquires an additional attraction for natives of Omsk and pilgrims from neighboring regions.

Dmitry (I): Somehow this idea of a “place of power” has been eroded or worn out. It is said in vain, so you almost feel uncomfortable using it. But how can you avoid it if there are places where you clearly feel something special? You can arrive there feeling completely out of sorts, with your mind all twisted, and then it feels like someone has dunked your head in the water and you see that everything is different here.

A proposal has been made to include the village of Okunevo in the list of tourist sites in the Muromtsevsk Region’s itinerary (Selezneva 2012: 163). The Omkar Shiva Dham ashram itself and the cult sites associated with it, as well as the energy center not far from the village, are regarded as a “brand.” Most of the tourist companies in Omsk and neighboring cities (Novosibirsk, Kurgan, Chelyabinsk, Ekaterinburg, etc.) offer their clients various forms of recreation in Okunevo: weekend tours, tours for various events that occur there (holidays, seminars, master classes and esoteric trainings), trips around the “places of power, and “energy flows” (Selezneva 2014: 62).

In activities of this type, the dominant discourse emphasizes the way that this territory in particular is permeated with special astral

energies, that an intensive connection to the cosmos passes through this territory, and that spending time in this place awakens hidden strengths and occult capabilities in a person. An advertisement at one of the tourist company's web sites announces:

The five lakes were "birthed by the Cosmos." They were formed as a result of the fall to Earth of the remnants of an enormous meteorite. People who lived here several centuries ago built a temple where a magical crystal was located, which became a type of energy generator that fed the lakes. The water has a strong effect on cell growth, it increases their vitality. It has rejuvenating and healthful effects. The high levels of biological activity in these places makes it possible to discover the knowledge that is hidden within you and new possibilities that you only dreamed about. What is fulfilled here is not what you expect, but what is actually needed.

Urban entrepreneurs have begun working in Omsk by putting groups together, delivering them, working as "middlemen" who transport people not only in a geographic but also a cultural space. By using existing local hierotopic motifs, or by artificially constructing them, they organize pilgrimages, sell goods with the corresponding attributes, and so on. In Okunevo itself, local entrepreneurs, having demarcated a field, offer campsites for additional payment, conduct organized excursions, sell meat for shish-kebabs (although the majority of the believers are vegetarians), as well as "drinking water whose molecular structure has been changed in a pyramid."

We revive the Fire of Striving for the Future in you and connect the spaces of the five lakes that exemplify the ancient spirit of Siberia-Asgard with the water of life! Our company in Omsk produces "Living Tara," drinking water that has had its molecular structure changed in a pyramid. We hope that thanks to the quality of "Living Tara" water, the quality of your life and health will improve. Our product is new to the market. Why did we choose the name "Living Tara?" The Tara River is a river that flows through the territory of Omsk Oblast. If we turn to the sources, we will find out more about Tara, the guardian goddess, whose name the ancient Slavs gave to the Polar Star, who helps and protects those who travel (<http://forum.ar-ear-light.ru/index.php?topic=973.0>, accessed May 3, 2015).

This makes both believers and local residents unhappy: in their opinion practices such as these disturb "the peace, the idyllic quality of the place, personal communication and joy" ("Pup Rusi"). The local residents and

members of local religious communities themselves, in addition to selling domestic products, sell firewood to the “city folks,” provide guide services through the forests and lakes, and make clay dinnerware to sell to the tourists, but at very modest prices. They are also developing the practice of “ethnocultural studios” where souvenirs with esoteric qualities (talismans, amulets [*oberegi*], etc.) are produced.

Taking our cue from what tourists themselves have to say, we can observe that the practice of pilgrimage in the village of Okunevo is based not only on personal motivation (curiosity, the desire to vacation far from town, the desire to change something in their lives, heal an ailment, etc.), but also on objective conditions: the natural setting of the place and its accessibility. Here is the testimony of a female pilgrim to the village of Okunevo:

It's been two years since I visited a place of power in Samara Oblast, near the village of “Volzhsky Utes” — Mt. Svetelka — Glade of the Forest Spirit — City of the Gods. I felt it was time to go somewhere again. I typed “place of power” into a search engine and got a long list of these through the Self-Knowledge [*Samopoznanie*] portal. As I was reading the list, I was listening to myself and trying to determine where I was being drawn to. I wasn't drawn to travel long distances, and among those nearby only the Altai beckoned to me because of fond memories of past trips to this wonderful land. I remembered that I hadn't been to the world-renowned Mt. Belukha site of power, which every self-respecting esoteric feels it a duty to visit at some point. And since I am a self-respecting esoteric, I thought, well I'll go there. But ... something ‘itched’ inside me, there was a feeling of discontent, and the main thing was that I did not feel any joy at the thought of this journey. So I returned to that list of places of power. And I saw something! At first I had my doubts, everything just seemed too simple and vulgar. The village of Okunevo in Omsk Oblast. It was right next door, just a few hours away by car (...). But when I started studying the information about this place, I understood that even the wonderful Altai, and the best resorts in the world (if someone were to offer them to me) fall way behind by comparison with what was waiting for me in this simple, picturesque little village of Okunevo in Omsk Oblast. It's not even the miracles. This is much more for the soul, the spirit. For a person who is ready to touch the most secret thing in the world — the Soul of the universe (<http://univer-u.ru/blog/pochemu-ya-edu-v-okunevo/>, accessed May 3, 2015).

It is also worth noting that some itineraries inside the “sacral space” are considered by tourists to be preferable to others. They turn out to

be ready to actually cooperate in the transformation of the horizons of social existence, thereby opening possibilities for new experiences. We find here an actualization of the practice of travel (*peremeshchenie*), or walking, which Michel de Certeau has compared to the speech act:

First, through his footsteps the pedestrian appropriates the topographic system (analogously to the way that a speaker appropriates and masters a language). Second, in the course of walking space is performed (as in a speech act acoustic language is performed acoustically). And finally, the steps tie the various places into a certain system of relations (a speech act is also always directed towards someone and actualizes specific relations between the interlocutors) (de Certeau 2008: 28).

As a rule, the statements of the Okunevo pilgrims demonstrate that special conditions, special knowledge, and the mystery itself that is present in this place are one of the natural and logical — as well as accessible — ways of getting out of the routine, out of everyday life, of expressing oneself. Undoubtedly, a mechanism of contagiousness is in operation here, and a person, even if religion is foreign to him, who submits himself to this, manifests a psychological readiness to perceive this place as sacred. The acceptance of the idea of the sacral status of a place turns out not to be an unambiguous “yes” or “no,” but rather includes a significant gradation of degrees for its realization. The simplest scheme for constructing a sacral space at the level of popular consciousness looks like this: a level of information and “familiarity” without any particular faith is a starting point that sharply increases the authenticity and meaning of a “place of power” for a person, a belief in its actual existence.

Conclusion

What is the fate of the “Okunevo phenomenon” in the perspective we have observed? As practice has shown, once they have appeared, “places of power” become cultural “assets,” “symbolic capital” (Ivakhiv 2006: 169–75), the control of which becomes the site of a serious battle between various discourses. Archaeologists and historians ask us to turn our attention to the need for painstaking protection of the territory of sites that are connected to the archaeological complex. From their viewpoint, many of these so-called “traces of the past” (*sledy-svidetel'stva*) are deposited on the surface, and for this reason tourist excursions, “holidays” and “carnivals,” and other ritual activities undertaken by representatives of various faiths bring enormous harm to this monument

of the past (Matiushchenko and Tolpeko 1995: 49). Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in Omsk Oblast⁵ (cf. Yashin 2000: 40) see a significant threat to Orthodoxy in the existence of such places because “many of our compatriots do not have solid reference points, and for this reason, today they will go to the Babajists, and tomorrow to church.”⁶ Representatives of alternatives to official religious discourses are convinced that “this place was created to unify the souls, bodies and minds of all people.” Using the growth of interest in this place, bureaucrats try to advance their region up the scale of federal significance, since the presence of such places increases the symbolic status of the region, sometimes in spite of its actual condition.⁷ Tourists, who are here by happenstance, without any local roots, try to determine its aesthetic and mystical attraction for themselves. The main point here turns out to be not the formulation of a single true idea, but the discovery of a competitive field of various images and the activation of group strategies.

The Okunevo phenomenon fully corresponds to the constructivist viewpoint of the development of religious consciousness. Unique images of the given territory are formed within the framework of each of the discourses that are present here. When collected at the level of a collective consciousness, these images create a specific “myth of place” (Shields 1991: 47, 61). They collect, classify, include or exclude. They make the space potentially *knowable* to anyone who wants to have a look at it, and they also make it possible to compare it to other, ordinary, spaces.

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5. On the connection of “Oblast Authorities and the Russian Orthodox Church,” see Yashin 2000, 28–40.
 6. From the narrative of Fr. Alexander Lemeshko, superior of the Isilkulsky Church of New Martyrs and Confessors, about his missionary activities in Okunevo at the All-Russian Scholarly-Practical Conference, “Russia and Paganism: Myths and Reality,” Omsk, March 13–15, 2013. <http://www.sofia-sfo.ru/2136>, accessed May 18, 2015.
 7. Cases of the sacralization of objects that have to do with regional history are fairly widespread in contemporary Russian reality (see for example the veneration of Ksenia of Petersburg in Leningrad Oblast, St. Nicholas Velikoretsky in Kirov Oblast, the Uriupinskaya Mother of God in Prikhoperye, the Abalaksкая Mother of God in Tiumen Oblast, etc.).

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NATALIA SHLIKHTA

“Ukrainian” as “Non-Orthodox”: How Greek Catholics Were “Reunited” with the Russian Orthodox Church, 1940s–1960s

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Drawing upon archival, published and oral sources, as well as recent studies on the correlation between religion and nationality, this article argues that the formal “reunification” of the Greek Catholics with the Russian Orthodox Church became a successful “subaltern strategy,” ensuring the survival of the Greek Catholic Church through the Soviet period. The article demonstrates that the “Church within the Church,” which came into existence because of “reunification,” for decades preserved its separate identity within the Russian Orthodox Church. The “Church within the Church” did not oppose the regime’s assimilation policy directly, yet positioned itself as Ukrainian and therefore as non-Orthodox (because non-Russian) and even as non-Soviet. This article examines these specific issues within the wider context of the survival of the Church in the Soviet state.

Keywords: Russian Orthodox Church, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Church within the Church, national Church, Communist (Soviet) regime, reunification, ecclesiastical nationalism.

Introduction

THE “Uniate problem,” which the Stalinist leadership (with the help of the Moscow Patriarchate) undertook to resolve in whatever way possible immediately upon the conclusion of the Second World War, was far from the only national challenge Moscow faced. Earlier, the existence of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in both its 1921 and 1942 incarnations, as well as of the Ukrainian Autonomous Church headed by Archbishop Alexy (Hromadsky; Russian, Gromadsky), had represented similar challenges; the latter Church based its autonomous rights on the Resolution on the Ukrainian Exarchate of 1921. The religious situation in the Ukrainian Exarchate, which had become significantly more complicated in its national aspect (chiefly during the war years), exerted considerable influence on the

official view of the “Uniate problem” as first and foremost a *national* problem. And, in turn, the perceptions of Greek Catholics as they were integrated into the Orthodox Church — and through it, paradoxically, into Soviet society — influenced the formation of their “subaltern strategy” (as defined by Sheila Fitzpatrick [Fitzpatrick] 2008: 12]), as this experience markedly strengthened the element of nationality in the process of their daily survival.

The liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), the majority of researchers agree, was the only logical option for the Stalinist leadership from the moment of the annexation of the “western territories” in 1939. Both historical tradition and the anti-Vatican orientation of the USSR’s foreign policy after the Second World War supported such a solution to the “Uniate problem.” The Greek Catholic Church’s unbreakable bond — in the eyes not only of the region’s population but also of the state leadership — with Ukrainian nationalism, its image as what Dimitry Pospielovsky called the “cradle” of Ukrainian nationalism (Pospielovsky 1984: 2:306) or, in Serhy Yekelchyk’s term, its “cornerstone” (Iekel’chyk [Yekelchyk] 2008: 95), became the main argument in favor of the final liquidation of the UGCC. The French scholar Danielle Hervieu-Léger sees religion as a “chain of memory,” that is, as a form of collective memory that protects the community from historical amnesia (Hervieu-Léger 2000). Consideration of her proposition makes clear why the struggle with “nationalistic” versions of historical memory in Galicia necessitated the liquidation of the UGCC.

Indeed, the decision to liquidate the UGCC through its “reunification” with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) also seemed completely logical and historically grounded, and evoked fewer objections and misunderstandings in the post-1943 atmosphere of state-church rapprochement than it would have in any other circumstances. The ultimate goal of the campaign for the “reunification” and “Orthodoxization” of the Greek Catholics was by no means limited to their religious assimilation. At issue was nothing less than the “formation [*vykhovannia*] of Galician citizens of *Soviet* Ukraine, an inalienable part of the Soviet Union” (Iekel’chyk [Yekelchyk] 2008: 99). Many scholars agree that the regime took for granted the equivalence of *Orthodox — Russian — Soviet*, as far as the implementation of Soviet social, national and religious policy in Western Ukraine was concerned. (See, for example, Markus 1976: 121; Bociurkiw 1972: 192–93.)

The Moscow Patriarchate, despite its own interests and aspirations, also regarded “Uniatism” (*uniia*)¹ and its liquidation primarily

1. The term *uniia* (literally “union”), translated here as Uniatism, signifies the Union of Brest (1596), a fusion of Orthodox praxis with Catholic doctrine and acknowledgment of papal supremacy, and the resulting Uniate Church (later the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church). The tsarist regime and the Russian Orthodox Church opposed

in national-political, rather than religious, terms. Even twenty years after the official liquidation of the UGCC, Archbishop of Tallinn and Estonia Alexy (Ridiger), the executive secretary of the Moscow Patriarchate, emphasized the “national-political significance” of the struggle with “Uniatism” in Western Ukraine. In an official speech given on April 23, 1966, at the celebration in Lviv of the twentieth anniversary of the Council of Lviv, he concluded his detailed review of the “church history of Southwestern Rus” from the national angle with a brief remark about the additional “religious-theological aspect” of this age-old struggle (TsDAVO, f. 4648, op. 5, d. 17, ll. 104–5).

One can only speculate as to how much the Church authorities’ own views determined this approach to the “Uniate problem” and “reunification” and to what extent it was dictated by the regime. Considerations of their own survival certainly inclined Church officials to use the terminology of official Soviet speech, which became especially important for the Church during Khrushchev’s anti-religious campaign of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Here it is necessary to set out an important methodological qualification. Usage of the term “reunification” must not be limited chronologically, for example, to the second half of the 1940s. The term is used in this article not only to signify the *fact* of “reunion” (that is, the Lviv Council of March 8–10, 1946), but also to mean the lengthy *process* of turning “former Uniates” into “Orthodox” and “Soviets.” In documents from the Council (*Soviet*) for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and later the Council (*Soviet*) for Religious Affairs, the terms “reunification” (meaning the fact of the liquidation of the UGCC) and “Orthodoxization” (the process of the requisite transformation of the religious life of those “reunited”) were not always consistently applied, but nonetheless a distinction was made. Church documentation differentiated these terms more consistently.²

The “reunited,” for their part, also used both terms. The phrase “to sign [*podpisat*] (a pledge of reunification with — translator)] Orthodoxy” and the derivative “signed [*podpisnoi*] priest were used to un-

Uniatism as a tool of Polish Catholic encroachment. The Soviets, too, perceived the Uniate Church as a threat, hence the negative connotation of “Uniate” in the Soviet era. Especially after the post-Soviet revival of the Ukrainian and other Eastern European Greek Catholic churches, the term “Uniatism” gained renewed negative attention as a bone of contention in Catholic-Orthodox relations. — Translator

2. The terms “Orthodoxization” and “Orthodox churching” were used in Church documentation after 1946 to signify the process of the “introduction of former Uniates into the fold of Orthodox church life.” See, for example, the Synodal resolution of July 8, 1947 (GARF, f. 6991, op. 2, d. 59a, ll. 57–58).

derscore the exclusively formal nature of the oath of allegiance to the Moscow Patriarchate. At the same time, the official term “reunification” was also used, especially when it was necessary to stress their own loyalty (in contrast to the “recalcitrant Uniates”) and thereby to assert their distance from the Greek Catholics. Galicians’ use of the term “reunification” was a prime example of discursive strategies that, according to Andrew Stone, “allowed religious citizens to infuse official discourse with different meanings and thereby create a space where their ‘normal’ Soviet lives could coexist with religion” (Stone 2008: 299).

All of this explains why this article’s written primary sources are by no means confined to those from the 1940s. In the early 1970s (a grand celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Lviv Council took place in 1971) the “reunification” was discussed as an *ongoing process* in both Moscow and Kyiv, and, with a quite different subtext, in Western Ukraine.

The Lviv Council resulted in the “self-liquidation” of the UGCC. The response of the Greek Catholic believers and clergy was not uniform. Some chose the path of open dissent, refusing “to return to our fathers’ holy faith and the Russian Orthodox Church,” in the formula of the Lviv Council (See Serhiichuk 2001: 109). The image of the “Uniate nationalistic anti-Soviet underground” applied for long decades to those who decided to go into the catacombs so as to maintain “the purity of the true faith” and their fidelity to the Holy See. But the majority (3,289 parishes and 1,296 priests, according to official statistics from the Council for the Affairs of the ROC [GARF, f. 6991, op. 2, d. 256, ll. 1–2]) chose a different way, a path that, despite its adherents’ arguments and justifications, members of the “catacomb” church, as well as Ukrainian national historiography, label as the path “of compromise and betrayal.”

By resisting the temptation to squeeze reality, using well-known historiographical clichés, into the convenient dichotomy of opposition-collaboration, I will be able to trace how formal “reunification” became an effective “subaltern strategy” that secured the survival of the Greek Catholic Church in the Soviet period. To investigate the survival strategies of Ukrainian Greek Catholics after the forcible liquidation of their Church I have used both written materials (unpublished and published letters, sermons, internal Church documents, and documents of the Soviet authorities) and oral sources. The latter were collected through a large-scale oral history project, “An Image of the Strength of the Spirit: The Living History of the Underground UGCC (Obraz syly dukhu: zhyva istoriia pidpillia UGKTs),” carried out by the Institute of Church History (Lviv). From 1992 to 2013, the institute’s researchers conducted approximately 2,200 interviews, which can be used for the study of

both the “catacomb” existence of Greek Catholics and the life of “reunited” eparchies in the Soviet era. For the present investigation, 50 interviews were selected, of which 17 are cited in these pages. The following criteria were applied in the selection of the interviews:

1. Age: Respondents were chosen who were old enough during the Council of Lviv to be aware of it. The oldest was born in 1906, the youngest in 1931. There are two exceptions, respondents born in 1940 and 1941, whose recollections were not used to reconstruct the situation in the 1940s.
2. The territorial principle: Respondents represent all the regions of Western Ukraine; one respondent was a Greek Catholic priest from Transcarpathia
3. Interviews given by both clergy (“reunified” and “underground”) and laity were analyzed.

To be sure, these interviews are just as subject to criticism as are all other oral history sources. But with the proper critical reading and comparison with written evidence, they nevertheless permit the reconstruction of Galicians’ perceptions of the Orthodoxy imposed upon them and their attempts to preserve their religious and national distinctiveness after 1946.

The present investigation shows that “reunification” in the territory of Western Ukraine resulted in the formation of a distinctive “Church within the Church,”³ which retained its particular religious, cultural and national features while remaining for decades a foreign body within the structure of the ROC. The members of the “Church within the Church” (believers, clergy and the episcopate) were bound closely together by the shared recognition of their distinctiveness from the ROC, their different religious and national identities and the desire to survive in a state that was not going to tolerate their otherness, regardless of their sincerity and their motives for converting to Orthodoxy.

Moreover, with the use of the concepts of Hervieu-Léger (who, in addition to the definition of religion as a form of collective memory, proposes a view of religion as a means of uniting a specific community — a *communal chain* [Hervieu-Léger 2000]), it becomes clear that at a fundamental level the choice of the “Church within the Church” was not very different from the choice of the “catacomb” UGCC. Both options were local projects for the survival of the Church and became a serious obstacle to the realization of Moscow’s assimilationist plans

3. For the original concept of a “Church within the Church,” see Markus 1989: 153, and Markus 1976: 122–23.

concerning the Western Ukrainians. And while the behavior of the “catacomb” Church embodied “provocative nationalism” (the *nationalist defiant* in Sabrina Ramet’s terminology [Ramet 1988: 18]) in almost pure form, the national element became definitive in the identity of the “Church within the Church” as well.

The problem of the interrelationship between the religious and the national, the church and nationality, and religion and nationalism has a long and complex history in the works of theologians, historians and sociologists. I shall present the observations of those researchers whose projects are important in their methodological and theoretical aspects for the question under consideration here.

First, in the Soviet state, which declared itself to be atheist and international, “[r]eligion and nationalism were compelled to withdraw into the margins of communist society where they found each other as natural allies” (Luukkanen 1994: 29). Second, in conditions of the complete “absence of other autonomous ethnic institutions, a national Church becomes a haven for national traditions and culture,” which explains the striving of “the imperial government and the imperial Church (. . .) to break up the religio-ethnic symbiosis by a variety of means” (Bociurkiw 1990: 152).

Third, the national element automatically lends significant strength to the oppositional role of a church in a Communist state. The fusion of religion and national identity turns a society or social group into an entity with great powers of resistance against the policies of any repressive regime (Ramet 1989: 4). Finally, it is the historical tradition in particular that legitimizes the possible oppositional role of each specific national church in relation to a Communist regime (Sugar 1989: 58).

Havryil Kostelnyk’s Concept of “Reunification”

Natalia Madei argues that through “reunification” with the ROC the leader of the “Initiative Group for the Reunification of the Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church,” Havryil Kostelnyk (Gavriil Kostel’nik), “strove to realize his conception of the Greek Catholic Church, adapting it to the conditions of the totalitarian regime” (Madei 2001: 11). This evaluation of Kostelnyk’s views stands alone in contemporary historiography. Yet, earlier, the first Orthodox bishop of Lviv and Ternopil’, Makary (Oksiuk), whose assignment was to assist the Initiative Group in its “politically important” undertaking, had accused Kostelnyk of “autonomist” tendencies and the desire to use “reunification” with the ROC as some sort of “nationalistic experiment,” such as, for exam-

ple, “the *polikarpovshchyna*⁴ in Volhynia and the *lypkivshchyna*⁵ (original Ukrainian terms) in Ukraine” (quoted from Lysenko 1998: 170–71).

In an official speech to the Lviv Council, entitled “On the Reasons for Reunion of the Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church,” Kostelnyk presented the main points of his understanding of “reunification.” He stressed the necessity of preserving the Church as an institution for the sake of meeting the religious needs of Western Ukrainians and described in detail his vision of religious life after “reunion.” Kostelnyk expressed his conviction that any changes in Greek Catholic rites, customs and religious practices should be introduced “so wisely and carefully, so as not to turn the people away from the Church nor stifle their religious spirit” (Kostel’nyk 1987: 21). He asserted that the “reunified” eparchies should retain their distinctive qualities as part of the ROC, clearly maintaining the differences between the “All-Russian [Vserus’ka] Church” and the “Western Ukrainian Church” (Kostel’nyk 1987: 22). Kostelnyk specifically emphasized that those who had been “reunited” should preserve their national character, opposing any attempts at Russification by Moscow. He concluded his speech with an eloquent statement: “We are in Ukraine and are Ukrainians, and no one shall take this away from us or from our Church” (Kostel’nyk 1987: 22).

Several factors shaped the firm conviction of the leader of the Initiative Group that those who were “reunified” should retain their separate identity and not merge into a single body of the Orthodox Church. The image of the ROC as a “conservative,” “traditionalist” church that was not keeping up with the demands of the time exerted significant influence on him. As early as his first meeting with Patriarch Alexy (Simansky) on December 23, 1944, Kostelnyk had put forward the following: “It is necessary to modernize the [Orthodox] religion, in the sense that in its current state one cannot present it to cultured people. It is fit for the ignorant masses” (Serhiichuk 2006: 1:290).

But one must look to the national sphere for the main reason that the “reunification” “à la Kostelnyk” did not at all meet the expectations of the Stalinist and patriarchal leadership. In his speech to the Lviv Council, Kostelnyk referred to the apprehensions spread among Galicians that “our unity with the Russian Orthodox Church means

4. The term *polikarpovshchyna* refers to the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which was active during the Second World War under the leadership of Polikarp (Sikor-sky), the archbishop of Kovel and Lutsk.
5. The term *lypkivshchyna* refers to the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, with Vasyly Lypkivsky (Vasil Lipkovsky) at its head, which was proclaimed in October 1921 and tolerated by the Bolshevik authorities up to 1930.

the Russification of our Western Ukrainian Church” (Kostel’nyk 1987: 22). He expressed his hope that the ROC would respect their “national principles” and “national feelings” and asserted that there was not nor could there be any equivalence between “conversion to Orthodoxy” and “conversion to Russian Orthodoxy.” Kostelnyk consistently conveyed this idea in his public speeches and writings and in private conversations with the relevant “comrades.”

Already during his trip to Moscow in December 1944, Kostelnyk had encapsulated the situation thus: “If directions are issued to Russify the Church (. . .) In this case the Orthodox Church in Western Ukraine will not succeed” (Serhiichuk 2006: 1:287). In a conversation on April 15, 1945 (virtually immediately after the mass arrests of the UGCC hierarchy) with the head of an NKGB⁶ task force, Sergey Karin, who was responsible for the “reunifying” action, Kostelnyk, skillfully playing on the regime’s fears, emphasized the issue as follows:

The most important [question] is with which Orthodox Church we are being reunited — the Ukrainian or the Russian. Consider that in our circumstances, this is a very serious problem. We are after all a Ukrainian church and we must be reunited with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; otherwise, people will think that we have become Muscovites, and the Banderites⁷ will take advantage of this circumstance in particular (Serhiichuk 2006: 1:541–42).

A paper dated August 3, 1945, identified the fear of Russification, “besides faith in the papacy, as the greatest obstacle, a complication for our plan” (Serhiichuk 2006: 2:136). Debunking these fears and simultaneously using their possible realization to bring his ideas to his intended audience, Kostelnyk explained:

I persuade priests, telling them that their anxiety is unfounded, for Ukraine is a state in which the official language is Ukrainian, all our state employees are Ukrainians, and the Ukrainian language is used in

6. *Narodnyi komissariat gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti*, or the People’s Commissariat for State Security. Russia’s secret police during 1941 and 1943–46. — The editors.

7. The Banderites (in Ukrainian *Banderivtsi*, in Russian *Banderovtsy*) were followers of the Ukrainian nationalist activist Stepan Bandera and were one faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). The Banderite faction played a significant role in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) in the 1940s, which continued to fight the Soviets into the 1950s. The Soviets also applied the term to Ukrainian nationalism in general. — Translator.

the schools, which means that in the Church, too, the same course must be followed (Serhiichuk 2006: 2:137).

Moreover, when considering the prospects of a national church, Kostelnyk did not confine himself to the “reunited” eparchies. He considered the merger with Orthodoxy, as required by the regime, to be a step with definite, positive potential. He presented this union as the restoration of Ukrainians’ religious unity, and even as the rebirth of a *Ukrainian national church*. “When the whole Ukrainian people has been joined together in a single state organism, then its Church, too, should be fused into one Church” (Serhiichuk 2001: 62). In fact, the first official communication from the Initiative Group to the Soviet government on May 28, 1945, already expressed this vision of the future.

The preservation of ritual traditions and customs and of everyday religious practices in the “reunified” parishes was an important condition of “reunification” and at the same time an obstacle on the path to possible Russification, in Kostelnyk’s view. “One cannot change sacred religious sensibilities abruptly, without re-education, which requires a certain period of time and a special approach,” Kostelnyk was already asserting in his earliest “pro-reunification” paper, dated April 18, 1945 (Serhiichuk 2006: 1:551). In a letter to Patriarch Alexy dated October 3, 1945, he stressed, “Changes in ritual must be realized slowly, over decades. Therefore, our Galician Church must still hold on to its significant distinctiveness for decades, that is to say, its autonomy in the Orthodox All-Russian Church (. . .) Orthodoxy (. . .) will be at first only an external veneer” (Serhiichuk 2006: 2:286–87).

Havryil Kostelnyk’s concept of “reunification,” especially with his emphasis on the national differences between those being “reunified” and the Moscow Patriarchate, seemed too unrealistic, considering the official understanding of “reunification” as the very prerequisite for national assimilation and the Sovietization of the region’s population. Yet the life of the “reunified” eparchies after 1946 did demonstrate their strong resistance to the authorities’ assimilation policy, which permitted them to remain a “Church within the Church” over a period of decades.

It is possible to define the self-perception of Ukrainian Greek Catholics with the help of the category “ecclesiastical nationalism,” proposed by Sabrina Ramet. “Ecclesiastical nationalism” proceeds from “a conviction that if the church is deeply rooted in the national ethos, then the national ethos, the national culture, cannot survive without the church. (. . .) [I]f the nation is identified with the religion, then the nation becomes infused with transcendent value and conversion becomes tantamount to assimilation” (Ramet 1988: 8). “[The Church and her clergy] are representatives of the people and must act in the name of the peo-

ple,” declared Kostelnyk on December 22, 1944, during his trip to Moscow (Serhiichuk 2006: 1:288). As Greek Catholic priest Petro Dutchak, born in 1926, noted, “Our Church has never been separated from the national state” (AIITs, P-1-1-385, Interview with Fr. Petro Dutchak: 25).

Rogers Brubaker designates this type of interrelation between religion and the nation as their “intertwining.” Moreover, religion “supplies myths, metaphors and symbols that are central to the discursive or iconic representation of the nation” and answers the central question “Who are we?” (Brubaker 2011: 11–12). Clearly, in such a situation both passive and open opposition to forcible “reunification” is perceived in national terms and draws strength from this identification. Moreover numerous precedents in history bear this out, as Ricarda Vulpius, for example, demonstrates (Vul’pius [Vulpius] 2011: 105–7).

The Image of the Russian Orthodox Church

The Galicians’ negative image of the ROC became a major reason that the prospects for “reunification” and “Orthodoxization” remained dubious from the very beginning, despite the devotion of a significant portion of the Greek Catholic clergy to the Eastern rite. Because of their “ecclesiastical nationalism,” Galicians could not regard the ROC other than as a *Russian* church and the willing agent of Moscow’s Russification policy.

Western Ukrainians perceived the ROC first and foremost as the “Muscovite Church,” and they plainly associated “Russian” with “foreign.” The interviews conducted for the project “An Image of the Strength of the Spirit: The Living History of the Underground UGCC” contain the following explanations for the impossibility of accepting Orthodoxy: “The Muscovite Orthodox Church is absolutely harmful for the Ukrainian people and (. . .) it always brought them great losses” (AIITs, P-1-1-304, Interview with Fr. Iosyf Kladochnyi: 29). Conversion to Orthodoxy was seen as a step toward inexorable, thorough Russification. Galicians identified the Orthodox Church completely with the regime in Moscow, whose policy regarding subject peoples, they were sure, always amounted to attempts to Russify and completely assimilate them. “The Russian Orthodox Church is the enemy of all the subjugated peoples (. . .) It went everywhere behind the soldiers, behind the enslavers, and right away planted its imperial [faith]” (AIITs, P-1-1-780, Interview with Ms. Lidiia Zelenchuk-Lopatyn’ska: 35). “Stalin built up Orthodoxy (as did Peter I) (. . .) in order to thrust his Russian Orthodox faith on our Ukraine” (AIITs, P-1-1-419, Interview with Bishop Sofron Dmyterko: 22).

The following quotation comes from an anonymous letter to the editorial staff of the *Orthodox Herald* (Pravoslavnyi vestnik), the official

organ of the Ukrainian Exarchate. Written in 1971, the letter shows that the Galicians' relationship to the *Russian Church* changed little over the course of decades after formal "reunification": "Why on earth do you so (. . .) want to whitewash, to sanctify Russian Orthodoxy, or, more precisely, Muscovite Orthodoxy, to convince us believers of its holiness and infallibility?" (TsDAVO, f. 4648, op. 5, d. 278, l. 181).

Western Ukrainians regarded the ROC not simply as an agent of Moscow's Russification policy — their association of the ROC with the regime went even deeper. The ROC was "a Bolshevik/state-run/state-owned" Church, utterly dependent on the atheistic regime (as earlier it had been on the imperial authorities) and controlled by it. The anonymous letter to the editorial staff of the *Orthodox Herald* contains an additional revealing passage: "The present situation of Russian Orthodoxy and the ROC is so sad and pitiable. The ROC (. . .) leads a wretched existence under the authority and guardianship of godless Communism and materialism, cut off and driven away from its own people" (TsDAVO, f. 4648, op. 5, d. 278, l. 183). The Russian Orthodox "Bolshevik Church" "was blatantly, famously in the service of the state apparatus" (AIITs, P-1-1-419, Interview with Bishop Sofron Dmyterko: 5; P-1-1-192, Interview with Fr. Ivan Kubai: 39).

The Greek Catholic bishop Mykhailo Sabryha (Mikhail Sabryga; born 1940), analyzing the traditions of the UGCC and the ROC from the vantage point of historical experience, and setting out their relations to the Soviet authorities and, correspondingly, the regime's relationship to the Churches, explains:

We see, when we compare our Greek Catholic Church with the Orthodox Church, that every regime has had power over the Orthodox Church, the ability to control the Church. (. . .) While the Orthodox Church has the characteristic trait of submitting to everything, the Catholic Church has its own First Hierarch. (. . .) The world persecutes what it cannot control. It hates what lies beyond its dictates (AIITs, P-1-1-321, Interview with Bishop Mykhailo Sabryha: 49).

Because the ROC was a "Bolshevik/state-run/state-owned" church, completely dependent on atheist officials and itself carrying out the orders of the godless regime, the canonicity of the ordinations of Orthodox clergy and bishops was suspect. "It was not certain, whether [an Orthodox priest] had the proper ordination. This was because the Bolsheviks "destroyed" the entire hierarchy at the start, and thereafter all [the bishops] were impostors" (AIITs, P-1-1-337, Interview with Fr. Mykola Markevych, March 17, 1993, Mykolaiv: 60).

The proximity of the ROC to the Soviet regime established an indissoluble connection not only between "Orthodox" and "Russian," but

also between “Orthodox” and “Soviet” or “Communist.” “And since [they were] Orthodox, they were Communists” (AIITs, P-1-1-687, Interview with Fr. Myron Beskyd: 6). Paradoxically, all those involved in the “reunifying” action agreed that “to be Orthodox” meant “to be Soviet,” although the reasons for that view and the very understanding of the equivalence differed considerably.

For the ROC, the link between “Orthodox” and “Soviet” became the most important element in the formation of the “correct” identity, securing the Church’s existence in the Soviet space. (For more details on the survival strategy of the ROC in the Soviet state, see Shlikhta 2011: 107–18.) For the Soviet leadership, the acknowledgment of the connection between “Orthodox” and “Soviet” was a prerequisite for the desired assimilation of Western Ukrainians. For the Galicians themselves, recognition of the link between “Orthodox” and “Soviet” signified the problematic nature of sincere conversion to Orthodoxy and, consequently, of integration into Soviet society. As did the Soviet state authorities, so too the Galicians considered “Orthodoxization” as a step toward the complete destruction of the Church in the region, toward their utter dissolution within atheistic “Russo-Soviet” society (GARF, f. 6991, op. 1c, d. 222, l. 4; TsDAVO, f. 4648, op. 1, d. 436, l. 409; Serhiichuk 2006: 1:127–30).

The rejection of the ROC was also evident in the contrast Kostelnyk highlighted further between “modernity” and “traditionalism,” and between “real faith” and “ritualism” (the “superficial piety” of the Russian Orthodox). The ROC was perceived as a church “of people of little culture,” mainly peasants, whose pastors had only a superficial theological education (GARF, f. 6991, op. 2, d. 256, l. 3; AIITs, P-1-1-294, Interview with Fr. Izydor Butkovs’kyi: 58; P-1-1-55, Interview with Anna Svirs’ka: 56). Greek Catholics were convinced that the Russian Orthodox believers did not even know the true essence of religion: “They know how to make the sign of the cross; they know nothing else” (AIITs, P-1-1-97, Interview with Fr. Mykhailo Datsyshyn: 9).

The Identity and Daily Survival of the “Church within the Church”

“Reunification” was unacceptable to the Galicians, for it meant incorporation into a Church they scornfully considered “backward” and “thoroughly compromised in the eyes of the people” through its cooperation with the godless regime; they also feared the Russian Church as an agent of Russification. Galicians rejected “reunification” because it was imposed by a regime hostile to them in both national and ideological matters, and because it served the regime’s interests. In light

of the inextricable connection between “Orthodox” and “Soviet,” the repudiation of Orthodox identity called into question Galicians’ political loyalty, in their own eyes as well as the eyes of the Soviet leaders.

Glennys Young’s proposed category of “sectarian” rather than “church” identity helps to designate more correctly the self-perception of members of the UGCC, an identity that stems from the Church’s historical heritage. In analyzing Orthodox self-perception and Orthodox believers’ relationship to the Bolshevik regime, Young clearly differentiates them from an all-encompassing “sectarian” identity. Because of the “ritualism” characteristic of the Orthodox Church, believers’ actions were typically considered more important than their inner experiences. Therefore, “it was actually easier to compartmentalize one’s attachment to Russian Orthodoxy [leaving room for other loyalties] (. . .) than one’s attachment to sectarian belief” (Young 1997: 91). In the case of the Greek Catholics, this compartmentalization did not work, and therefore it was much more difficult for them than for the Orthodox to resolve the conflict between Christian faith and loyalty to a regime of an explicitly anti-religious character. A Greek Catholic priest, Fr. Myron Beskyd (born 1925), notes that Soviet identity had a definite chance to be accepted by Western Ukrainians because of the attractiveness to many of the Soviet social project, but only in conjunction with the rejection of atheism as state ideology: “I more than once thought to myself that if Communism, the idea of Communism would strike out from its ideology its negative attitude toward religion (. . .) this antireligious ideology (. . .) then perhaps they would have won over the entire people (. . .) This is an exceptionally God-fearing people” (AIITs, P-1-1-687, Interview with Fr. Myron Beskyd: 47). In contrast to the Orthodox understanding, Galicians rejected the reconciliation of Christian and Communist loyalties as impossible, for “it is impossible to serve two gods,” especially when each one demands complete and unconditional allegiance (AIITs, P-1-1-231, Interview with Modest Radoms’kyi: 12; P-1-1-1141, Interview with Ms. Mariia Lazar: 20).

The “catacomb” church offered one of the alternatives. Those who went underground decided that, come what may, they would preserve their religious-national identity by rejecting the identities imposed on them — Orthodox and Soviet. They thereby consciously chose exclusion from Soviet society and persecution for “nationalistic anti-Soviet” activity. A clean conscience and the aura of martyrdom for the faith were in this case compensation of a sort.

The choice of the “Church within the Church” was another alternative. Outwardly declaring their Orthodox and Soviet loyalties, these

Galicians constructed a new, or, as defined by David Thompson, a temporary, *lived* identity (Thompson 2002, used with the author's kind permission), which helped to protect their true religious and national distinctiveness. This identity stood in opposition to the imposed identities and rested upon a clear distinction between "us" and "them." "They" were "Orthodox" in the ideological, national, and cultural senses Galicians imparted to that term. "We" consisted of the priests who purely formally "subscribed" to Orthodoxy, and their parishioners, who continued to attend "their own" churches, even if these churches were formally declared to be Orthodox.

Such concepts as "our," "our own," "true," "Galician" and "Ukrainian," as well as the sense of internal communal unity strengthened by external threats became the central elements in the identity of the "Church within the Church." "People went to church because it was their church. It's our church. We built it" (AIITs, P-1-1-218, Interview with Ms. Liubomyra Venhrynovych: 56). "People were saying: 'But where would we go? This is our own, our native Church. We have no other, so where would we go?'" (AIITs, P-1-1-739, Interview with Fr. Illia Ohurok: 16). The "ecclesiastical nationalism" of those who had been "reunified" showed itself in the contrast between "our" *Ukrainian* Church and "their" *Orthodox* Church. "Will the Ukrainian Church have exactly the same rights as the Orthodox Church?" asked believers in Stanislav Oblast as early as March 1945, according to an official representing the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 1638, l. 26). In "their own" Church, those who were "reunified" kept "the true faith," which was contrasted to the "superficial piety" of the Orthodox, and they continued to observe "our Galician" rites. "The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church has always been, is, and will remain a national Church, preserving our native rite, which serves outwardly as a mirror and manifestation of the true faith of our Ukrainian people" (AIITs, P-1-1-192, Interview with Fr. Ivan Kubai: 37).

The need for a more or less safe, legal "life within the Church" was an important factor in making the "Church within the Church" the most practical form of Galician religious life after the forcible liquidation of the UGCC. Believers were not very disturbed that their "own" priests, who had served in the parishes for decades before the Lviv Council, "subscribed" to Orthodoxy. What did concern them was the preservation of local religious practices. First and foremost, this involved the traditional performance of rites and the retention of popular local customs and religious holidays. The effort also entailed maintaining the accustomed appearance of churches and the clergy.

Kostelnyk, in a paper dated August 3, 1945, documented in detail all the concessions the authorities had to make in order to secure the conversion of Ukrainians to Orthodoxy:

A religious struggle with the people will be very difficult: it will be necessary to fight over every icon, over every custom, even the least of them. Even our rites and customs that go against the teaching and liturgy of the Orthodox Church (for example, the Sacred Heart of Christ), it will be necessary to do away with them only slowly. (. . .) And as for our Church customs that are in harmony with the teaching and liturgy of the Orthodox Church, it would be foolish to eradicate them, since they encourage piety among the people (Serhiichuk 2006: 2:139).

The people's conservatism ensured the preservation of the "Church within the Church" as a formal part of the ROC.

Vlad Naumescu argues that the focus on praxis — a defining characteristic of a liturgical church — facilitated the conversion of Greek Catholics to Orthodoxy for the simple reason that the ritual difference between the two churches was insignificant (Naumescu 2008: 15). But then again, precisely this emphasis on praxis excluded the possibility of thorough, genuine incorporation into the ROC. The retention of local religious practices, from the Greek Catholic tradition of the blessing of Easter cakes (*pasky*) to other customs beloved by the people, including spring songs sung at Easter (*haiivky*), May services in honor of the Virgin Mary (*maivky*), Christmas carols (*koliady*) and the veneration of the Sacred Heart of Christ, was seen as a prerequisite for "reunification." Forced changes to traditional practices would distance believers from the Orthodox Church and sow doubt whether it was right to remain within her; and this would be happening at a time when the "nationalistic," "harmful and malevolent agitation of the Uniatizers" was continuing, stated the bishops of "reunified" eparchies in a report dated March 23, 1959, to Patriarch Alexy to explain their own "passivity" in the matter of "Orthodoxization" (Krivova 2010: 2:244).

As early as 1947 Havryil Kostelnyk explained how important the viability of the "catacomb" church was for the preservation of the "reunified" eparchies as a "Church within the Church": "Strange though it may seem, our opposition group is useful to us, for the Soviet authorities work with us just as long as this opposition exists. Were it not for the opposition, the authorities would have ceased long ago to have any regard for us" (TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 24, d. 3613, l. 26). The "reunified" Church highlighted the "anti-Soviet nationalistic" activity of

the “recalcitrant Uniates” at every suitable opportunity; they skillfully contrasted it — using official clichés — to the expressly loyal “reunified” believers. Hryhorii Zakaliak, archbishop of Mukachiv (Mukachevo) and Uzhhorod, in his message on the twentieth anniversary of the “reunification,” employed official discourse and the stereotypical image of the enemy (“Uniates-nationalists”): “Orthodoxy for centuries has been the living bond, often the strongest one, that has bound together the triune Russian people. (. . .) Therefore, from a historical perspective it is clear that the enemies of Rus saw in Orthodoxy not so much a religious as a national-political force” (TsDAVO, f. 4648, op. 5, d. 17, ll. 74–75). The bishop’s ultimate objective was to defend the religious needs and local particularities of the “reunified” parishioners, whom he clearly contrasted with these enemies.

Only “our own” priests could serve in the Galicians’ “own” churches. “Give us an Orthodox priest, but only if he does not wear a beard and is always clean-shaven.” This was the promise “reunified” believers made to Archbishop Makary (Oksyuk), who wanted to appoint an Orthodox priest to their parish in 1948 (TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 5667, l. 74). The “Church within the Church” became a unique community, closed to “others” — Russian Orthodox “*popyky*.”⁸ The designation “Russian Orthodox” in this instance by no means referred only to ethnically Russian clergy. Rather, it applied to all priests “sent from the East,” including even Ukrainians from other regions of Ukraine. Documents from the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church often analyze cases of parishes refusing Orthodox priests. The rejection of an Orthodox priest was either open (the parishioners did not give him the keys to the church and did not let him into the church) or passive (the parishioners simply did not attend his services). Both tactics were quite effective, and priests assigned to these parishes did not last long if they were not willing to change, including their personal appearance, and to adapt themselves to local religious practices.

“We had to save our Church.” — “We saved what was ours.” This was how priests who “signed onto Orthodoxy” explained their choice, stressing the lack of a real alternative and pressure from the authorities. “To some degree I let myself be broken” (AII Ts, P-1-1-907, Interview with Fr. Oleksander Bodrevych-Buts: 47). Their understanding of “reunification” as a mere formality, and their own conviction that “I

8. The term *popyk*, from the Russian *pop* (a familiar term for *priest*, sometimes with a negative connotation), was a derogatory term for “priest.” — Translator.

remained the same as I was,” became the chief elements of a “signed” priest’s identity as a member of the “Church within the Church.”

The “reunified” clergy understood the task of “saving the Church” as a dual one. First, it was necessary to maintain the formal Church structure, so that the laity could legally and openly (in registered churches) satisfy their religious needs. No less vital was the need to safeguard “their own” church and “their own” parishioners “from the Russian Orthodox.” “[If] the priests had not accepted Orthodoxy, others would have come from there; they’d have sent priests from the East (. . .) People wouldn’t have gone to church,” as Fr. Mykhailo Lynda (born 1912) explained his motivation (AIITs, No. 2029, Interview with Fr. Mykhailo Lynda: 27–28). In view of the Galicians’ negative image of the ROC and the Orthodox clergy, priests unsurprisingly justified their decision in this way, by affirming the inextricable link between the appointment of an Orthodox priest to a parish and the destruction of that parish.

“Reunified” clergy claimed that they “remained the same,” that they “remained Greek Catholics,” and that they kept themselves apart from the Orthodox. “There were no Orthodox among us; all were Catholic priests at heart” (AIITs, P-1-1-907, Interview with Fr. Oleksander Bodrevych-Buts: 24). The “reunified” clergy themselves were not the only ones to sense their crucial differences from the Orthodox clergy; underground priests and the authorities in Moscow acknowledged the distinction. The “catacomb” church, despite its general negative attitude toward the “reunified” clergy, drew a sharp distinction between them and the “Russian priests of the ROC,” practically never equating the two (AIITs, P-1-1-321, Interview with Bishop Mykhailo Sabryha: 37).

While the catacomb priests mainly considered the convictions and self-perception of the “reunified” clergy, state bureaucrats, as well as inspectors from the Moscow Patriarchate, turned their attention primarily toward external characteristics. Their conclusions offered little comfort: even decades after the Lviv Council the outward appearance of the “former Uniates-nationalists” differed starkly from that of the Orthodox. An official representing the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, D. Kisliakov, made the following observation in 1959, using the terminological distinction between *Ukrainian parish priest (parokh)* and *Russian priest (pop)* to underline the differences: “I did not see a single priest of the former Uniates in a cassock, with long hair or a beard, wearing a cross on his chest or other typical signs of a “pop” (. . .) For the most part, they meticulously maintain the appearance of a Greek Catholic priest, a “parokh” (GARF, f. 6991, op. 1s, d. 538, l.

13). “Look at him: he’s clean-shaven and short-haired. He came here to strengthen Uniatism, not Orthodoxy” (from the “Old Orthodox” opposition’s critical comments to Hryhorii [Zakaliak], bishop of Drohobych and Sambir) (TsDAVO, f. 4648, op. 1, d. 429, l. 99).⁹

One readily surmises that only a bishop who was one of “our own” could administer the eparchies of Western Ukraine. Kostelnyk confirmed this in a letter to Patriarch Alexy dated October 3, 1945: “I (. . .) came to the conviction that on principle all our new Orthodox bishops definitely must be our people, from the Uniates” (Serhiichuk 2006: 2:288). “The bishops must be ours, for otherwise the clergy and believers will consider this the beginning of Russification,” explained a member of the Initiative Group (and future bishop of Drohobych and Sambir), Mykhailo Melnyk (Mikhail Melnik), in one of his regular interviews behind NKGB walls in August 1945 (Serhiichuk 2006: 2:171).

The appointment of the first hierarch to the Lviv-Ternopil’ see is especially telling. In a letter to Khrushchev written in September 1945, the leaders of the Initiative Group explained why the candidacy of Bishop Makary (Oksiiuk) would not receive support from the region’s inhabitants. Mykhailo Oksiiuk was not the first candidate considered in Moscow for this see. At first Moscow wanted to name Nikon (Petin), bishop of Donetsk and Voroshilovgrad, to the largest of the future “reunited” eparchies. In the end they rejected his candidacy “in view of his ignorance of the Ukrainian language” (as formulated in the journal of the proceedings of the Holy Synod No. 8 for April 18, 1945) (GARF, f. 6991, op. 2, d. 34a, l. 9). The Council for the Affairs of the ROC recommended the candidacy of Archpriest Oksiiuk to the patriarchal leadership mainly because he was a native of Podlachia and therefore spoke Ukrainian and understood “the specific situation in Western Ukraine” much better than did natives of Eastern Ukraine or Russia (Chumachenko 1999: 56). Even so, the Initiative Group came out against his candidacy, too:

The present Orthodox Bishop Makary can by no means replace the local Greek Catholic bishop, for although he is Ukrainian by birth, in the eyes of the people and the clergy he is foreign in his dress and external appearance and in the way he conducts divine service, and even in his Christian mentality. (. . .) The personage of Bishop Makary does not represent the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Lysenko 1998: 300).

9. “Old Orthodox (*staropravoslavnye*)” is the term originally used to designate the small groups of Orthodox who lived in Western Ukraine before 1946. They clearly distinguished themselves as the “true Orthodox” from those who had been “reunited.”

Conclusion

The campaign for the “reunification” of “former Uniates” with the Moscow Patriarchate, on which the Soviet leadership had placed such hopes, suffered a crushing defeat. And the cause must be sought even not primarily in the “defiantly nationalistic” activity of the “catacomb” church. One must seek the explanation of the “reunifying” action’s failure mainly in the everyday life of the “reunified” eparchies, that is, not at all in the striking, heroic struggle against the regime, but in what resulted from compromise and was and is regarded by many as “treason.”

The “Church within the Church” arose after the “reunification” as a result of the surprising intertwining of numerous factors: the “ecclesiastical nationalism” and traditional religious conservatism of the Galicians; the corresponding historical tradition; the thinking of those formally in charge of the “reunifying” action regarding the impossibility of effective incorporation into the ROC; as well as the staunch opposition of the “reunified” clergy and episcopate over decades to the introduction of any changes to the accustomed course of Church life. This kind of opposition proved a very successful strategy for the Greek Catholics after the violent liquidation of their Church.

The “Church within the Church” fulfilled its role as a local project of survival, serving as a barrier to the national assimilation and Sovietization of the region’s population, the results sought by the regime. In Moscow they were never able to devise a way to counter this strategy. After all, formally those who had been “reunited” became Orthodox, and therefore, loyal citizens of the Soviet state. And they never forgot to remind Moscow of that — in order to defend their own distinctiveness.

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ALEXANDER KYRLEZHEV

**Mystical Politics as *Contradictio in Adjecto*:
Thoughts on the Margins of Aristotle
Papanikolaou's Recent Book**

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*This article is an expanded critical review of the book *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy* (2012), written by Aristotle Papanikolaou, a contemporary Orthodox theologian. The article contains analysis of key assumptions and arguments of the author of the book, who looks at the political regime of liberal democracy from the perspective of Eastern Christian ascetic theology. The position of the author of the book is considered through a possible distinction between several models of Christian political theology: a theology of “using” (the political) versus a theology of “participating” (in the political) versus a theology of anachoresis (withdrawal from the political). Papanikolaou’s interpretation of traditional asceticism as compatible with liberal democracy is criticized, as well as his overall support of a certain type of political regime, which seems arbitrary, as the author avoids any formulation of a specifically Christian political ideal as opposed to the secular philosophical foundations of contemporary statehood.*

Keywords: political theology, liberal democracy, asceticism, theosis, divine-human communion, virtue of love, individual ethics, social ethics, Orthodox culture.

Reviewed Book

Aristotle Papanikolaou (2012). *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. — 248 pages.

Contemporary Orthodox theology is not strong in the area of “political theology.” It cannot claim as its own figures such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Johann Baptist Metz, Jürgen Moltmann, or Stanley Hauerwas — Christian theologians who offer more-or-less systematic reflections on topics of “the political” and who set the corresponding theological agenda. Within the framework of Orthodox theology, politics is not typically addressed.

There are several reasons for this. First, “political theology” emerged as a distinct disciplinary realm quite recently (in the second half of the last century) — in connection with several Christian theologians’ “definitive” acknowledgement of the fact that politics had become unmoored from its past theological foundations and even its past theological connotations, having become an autonomous sphere demanding theological consideration from without. Second, until very recently the political contexts of Orthodox theology did not permit acknowledgement of “the political” as a separate object of theological thought: neither the Orthodox Russian Empire, nor the Ottoman Empire, nor the communist empire involved the presence of a separate “political sphere” outside the general structure of what was, in essence, a totalitarian authority. Third and finally, within the realm of Orthodox-oriented thought, the topic of political theology was for a rather long time farmed out to the genres of popular commentary and so-called religious philosophy, which made theology’s wresting away of the topic a distinct task that was by no means easy.

At the same time, the circumstances noted above cannot serve simply as the “justification” for the absence of modern Orthodox political theology. The reasons for this absence are deeper than historical circumstances or “contexts.” They must be sought above all in the specific character of the Orthodox theological tradition itself. Otherwise, it becomes difficult to explain why a fully “modern” political context, such as the one in which the Orthodox diaspora of the twentieth century in the West lived, did not produce a body of theological-political thought consistent with this context (again, one that was beyond the boundaries of so-called religious philosophy).¹

1. Here one can recall the lamentations of Vladimir Varshavsky, who in his book *Nezamechennoe Pokolenie* (The Unnoticed Generation), which surveyed the intellectual history (including Christian intellectual history) of the Russian émigré community in the twentieth century, noted the essential absence of Orthodox political theology

Against this comparatively recent historical backdrop, the new theological “offering” from the American Orthodox theologian Aristotle Papanikolaou is more than merely interesting and provocative. It can be said that his book, *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy*,² represents the first more-or-less systematic Orthodox work on the topic of “political theology” that contains not only the author’s views on the relevant questions, but also a survey of the corresponding “tradition.”

It is important to note that this work, strictly speaking, should not be considered “diasporic” or even narrowly confessional, insofar as Orthodoxy has a rather robust presence on the American confessional map and Papanikolaou, while elaborating upon the Orthodox approach, engages in an intellectual dialogue with “political theologians” belonging to various Christian denominations. The work’s diasporic character is found only in the fact that Papanikolaou’s position is shaped, above all, by the American political context, which is quite distant from the situation of political transition (or to put it better — political indeterminacy or incompleteness) in which theologians living in historically Orthodox countries find themselves. This aspect ought not to be ignored, insofar as every intellectual reflection, however consistent it may be, is always realized in a context and contains in itself, among other things, reactions to this context. The logic of thought, including theological thought, encounters, so to speak, the “logic of life,” and when it comes to “political life,” this encounter is all the more pertinent to the persuasiveness of the conclusions produced by the thinker.

Before turning to Papanikolaou’s main argument, a few general remarks on political theology need to be made.

Political theology is theological contemplation of the political — in the sense of both theorization of political topics from a religious point of view and substantiating religion’s relationship with concrete political forms and phenomena. In other words, we are dealing with a theology that numbers among the so-called theologies of the genitive case,³ which take the “second step” posterior to theology in the proper sense, as interpretation of doctrine. To interpret from a religious standpoint not only the natural-cosmic, but also the social-political dimension of the world is an undertaking that

consistent with this context. He was only able to cite several of the most general reflections of S. S. Verkhovsky and Fr. Alexander Schmemmann (see 154–62).

2. In the title, one reads the deliberate contrast with the self-designation of the contemporary Christian theological movement of “radical orthodoxy.” A separate, rather polemical, segment of the book is dedicated to one of the movement’s leaders, John Milbank.
3. The term “theology of the genitive case” is used to refer to applied modes of theology (theology of culture, theology of nature, etc.), but also to individual currents within Christian theology of the twentieth century (“theology of the death of God,” Moltmann’s “theology of hope,” “liberation theology,” among others). Here, the former meaning of the term is intended.

is at least possible and, from the point of view of several theologians, also necessary within Christian theology (which will be discussed herein as well).

In the current case, the most general question is the one on the religious valuation of politics or, to put it better, on the value of the political from the religious point of view. Various attempts to answer it can be made. The first point of divergence is *whether it has value or not*. For a religious life is most possible at a distance from all politics, even if it is not impossible when combined with some involvement in politics — but religious life is best realized in the mode of anachoresis, that is, “withdrawal” from the world or out of the world, which presupposes as the primary goal of religious practice the mystical (“secret,” non-public) communion “of the soul with God.” The political context for this practice is irrelevant, and, correspondingly, there is simply no such thing as Christian political action, nor, therefore, is there a political theology substantiating it. But insofar as a political context for religious life exists all the same (Christians cannot “withdraw from the world” and ought not to withdraw from it⁴), this could be called, to put a fine point on it, a unique form of parasitism, with religion living off of politics: the political is tacitly acknowledged, but it is not supposed to prevent religion from pursuing its objective.

However, this option has not been the only or the dominant one in the history of Christianity — indeed, it has been rather secondary. For the Christian church from its beginnings (or at least from the end of the brief Judeo-Christian period) has been oriented toward ministry, indeed toward a “total” mission that, speaking in modern terms, encompassed all of society and all societies (“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations” — Matthew 28:19), that is, it entailed the Christianization not only of the individual sphere, but also the social and therefore the political sphere as well. Christianization of this sort did indeed occur in a certain part of the ancient world, engendering a corresponding political theology, that is, a specific Christian understanding of both contemporary politics and of the political as such.

To return to the theoretical formulation of the question, a positive theological response to the question of the religious valuation of politics brings up, in its turn, the following point of divergence: to *use* politics or to *participate* in politics. “Using” politics connotes that politics is a sphere that ought to work for religion, as it can assist religion in the attainment of specifically religious goals. Correspondingly, politics has religious value insofar as it fulfills a religious function, even if in a

4. See the words of Jesus’s so-called pontifical prayer to the Father regarding his disciples: “I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one” (John 17:15. We have quoted the NRSV in this English translation instead of translating directly from the Russian. — The editors).

manner that is complementary in its relationship to religion itself (the Church). “Participation,” in contrast, entails something else, namely the acknowledgement that politics is one of the spheres of religious activity. Correspondingly, participation in politics ought to be predicated upon (for religious actors) certain religious ideas, norms and criteria.

There are, thus, these two religious understandings of the political — as subordinate to religion (religious goals) and as autonomous, that is, as that external medium in which religion is called upon to act through its adherents (here it is important to note: to act, so to speak, imperatively, independently of the result of this reciprocal action). In other words, these are two understandings of religion itself. In the case of “using” politics, religion (Christianity) is understood as something larger than politics and something, consequently, that can and should encompass politics in itself — throughout the entire course of sacred history (or, “the history of salvation”). In the case of “participation,” religion conversely is juxtaposed with politics, which preserves its autonomy, and thus religion itself is understood as one such autonomous sphere, out of whose space a reaction to politics should issue; that is, these are religiously grounded actions within a politics that is, in essence, non-religious.⁵

One further aspect of the topic concerns the question of whether a Christian political ideal is possible. In the case of “using” politics, yes, it is possible (and it exists, in different variants); in the case of “participation,” no, it is not possible (owing to the shared autonomy of the religious and political spheres). In this, the following should be noted: the fact that the political is transformed in the course of history changes nothing in religion’s relationship with it from the perspective of a “political ideal.” This is so because if such an ideal is present, history’s divergence from it does not destroy the ideal itself, and if an ideal is absent, political history always remains external to religion.

This theoretical detour was necessary to “position” the work under review from Papanikolaou within the space of possible political theologies. His general position is as follows: he assesses politics *positively* and views it as a sphere of religious *participation*. In this, however — it is important to highlight — the source justifying such political participation for Papanikolaou is a specific theology rooted in the Eastern *mystical-ascetic* tradition. Thus, the key “theological move” made by Papanikolaou consists in

5. Here, we are abstracting from concrete historical situations. It is clear that the autonomy of politics (above all, in relation to religion) is a modern phenomenon. At the same time, until Constantine’s “conversion” to Christianity, politics was also an external and autonomous sphere; what is more, it was precisely Christians who at that time completed a “mental” secularization of the state insisting that they could be politically loyal — while not acknowledging the religious (“Pagan”) elements and justifications of political authority.

the transfer of the fundamentally apolitical and, in essence, individualistic logic of the “mystical communion of the soul with God” into the intersubjective sphere of political life. This move, one that is hardly trivial, has as its goal substantiation of Papanikolaou’s main thesis, which states that, from the perspective of Orthodox theology, “liberal democracy” is the best modern political regime (in the present case, let us place the expression “liberal democracy” in quotation marks since Papanikolaou’s understanding of it is most general, essentially providing no specification whatsoever).

At first glance, Papanikolaou’s main thesis appears nonsensical. There is the ancient Thebaid anchorite traversing the solitary path of spiritual struggle to gain God’s extraordinary grace — and then there is the modern citizen living in a liberal-democratic society? What does the “practical metaphysics” of the Orthodox understanding of theosis have in common with the post-metaphysical conception of the liberal freedoms and rights of man?

Indeed, the *aim* of Eastern Orthodox mystical asceticism is outside the political and indifferent to it, insofar as it is oriented toward one goal: salvation of the soul of the ascetic himself/herself through “union with God.” In order to extend this individualistic aim of “deification” into the political space, Papanikolaou presents a chain of argument consisting of three links.

First, he explicates an understanding of theosis (deification) in a manner that leaves to the side the meaning of “the bestowal of grace [*oblagodatstvovanie*]”⁶ and brings to the fore the processual aspect, so to speak: divine-human communion. For his purposes, he turns this expression into a *synonym* for deification. Thus, “theosis,” instead of being the name of an event that takes place in the sphere of “practical metaphysics,” becomes above all a correlative, or relational, category denoting the significance of one of the parties involved in the “divine-human communion” — the human. Further, Papanikolaou emphasizes that divine-human communion, understood as askesis, as “spiritual action,” is above all exertion, “achievement,” that is, it demands from man purposeful activity. Put differently, “theosis” here is fundamentally divested of its quietistic connotations and does not signify passive reception of sanctifying grace; on the contrary, it presupposes an active relationship with “the Other.” Finally, the content of this activeness is elaborated upon through an understanding of asceticism as “a tradition of thinking on how to fulfill this commandment [to love God], which *is theosis*” (3). In this sense, asceticism arises from the necessity *to learn* to love — God and one’s neighbor — practicing that openness in communion that grants access to love of God. Asceticism is thus

6. That is, the making of man into a “partaker [or sharer] in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) — following the formula of “becoming by grace that which God is by nature.”

removed from the framework of the narrowly conceived “asceticism of ascetics” and presented in an expansive sense — as the path to fulfillment of the general Christian vocation “to learn how to love” (4), insofar as obtaining the virtue of love means achieving deeper communion with God (197).

This chain of argument allows Papanikolaou to construct a new understanding of “the ascetics of divine-human communion,” which affords him the opportunity to transition to political theology (more accurately, to the political theology of participation) while remaining within the framework of Orthodox discourse and, further, drawing upon its treasure trove — the Eastern mystical-ascetic tradition.

Characteristic summary statements include the following.

Insofar as this ascetics of divine-human communion is performed always in relation to the other, then politics must be reconceived as an ascetical practice. (...) Politics are the forms of practices that humans engage in when relating, in Christian language, to the stranger (197).

Insofar as politics can be construed as an engagement with the neighbor/stranger, then politics must be considered as one of the many practices within an ascetics of divine-human communion. The political community is not the antithesis of the desert, but one of the many deserts in which the Christian must combat the demons that attempt to block the learning of love. In no other field is the temptation to demonize the neighbor more compelling or more seemingly justifiable than in the field of politics; in no other space than in the political, then, is the Christian more challenged to fulfill the commandment to love (4).

The politics-as-asceticism that the Christian will perform will contribute to shaping a political space that looks something like a liberal democracy. By liberal democracy, I mean nothing more than a political space shaped by a common good that embodies the principles of equality and freedom, with the former including social and economic equalities, and the latter including religious freedom facilitated by church-state separation (198).

While recognizing that the fullness of the Christian vision is a church that exists eucharistically, the Christian attempt to embody a eucharistic mode of being in the world recognizes that the political is not the ecclesial; that how a Christian exists in the world affects the form of the political space; that the political space serves a purpose distinct from, but analogous to the eucharistic understanding of the ecclesial. The political space that structures relations in such a way that they mirror a eucharistic understanding of the eccle-

sial, especially in terms of relations that realize the inviolable uniqueness of all human beings, is a liberal democracy. Since, however, the political is not the ecclesial, that political space must structure those relations through human rights language, and, without some notion of the common good, which is revisable and debatable, the principles of freedom and equality embedded in a liberal democracy will simply implode upon themselves (199).

Papanikolaou's theological project elicits two primary questions, which are related to one another: (1) on the logical validity of the reconceptualization of Orthodox asceticism that he proposes and (2) on the logical persuasiveness of his conclusion, according to which it is liberal democracy that best corresponds to "ascetic" theology.

Beginning his argument with asceticism and how "theosis" is understood is undoubtedly a very effective and "profitable" step for an Orthodox theologian highlighting, so to speak, the "authenticity" of his thought. However, Papanikolaou removes "asceticism leading to deification" from the mystical-ascetic space proper and *identifies* it (through his understanding of the "ascetics of divine-human communion") with "relationship" [*otnoshenie*], which represents a radical shifting of accents. For Christian askesis is above all an individual religious practice, and "relationship" is only one of its aspects; moreover, this is not relationship *in general*, but specifically with a transcendent God. Ascetic openness to a deifying God does not simultaneously mean openness to any other person — to "the stranger." The ascetic withdraws into the desert precisely in order to escape the "mass of strangers" and to remain alone with God. The commandment to love one's "neighbor," of course, remains, but the ascetic path leads precisely *away from* one's neighbor (originally, the monastery was not cenobitic, that is, centered on communal living). Askesis is asocial, and therefore fundamentally apolitical.

Thus, the very identification of "the ascetics of deification" with "divine-human communion" in the broad sense represents a failure of logic. This is also evinced by the fact that Papanikolaou shoehorns into the principle of "divine-human communion," understood thusly, the most varied positions and views (regarding the relationship between church and state/society), including those of Eusebius, John Chrysostom, the Cappadocian Fathers, and then — Vladimir Solovyov and Fr. Sergius Bulgakov (see the chapter "Orthodox Political Theology through the Centuries"). Further, he critically expounds upon the "ethnotheology" of the interwar Romanian intellectual, Nichifor Crainic, and the anti-democratic tendencies observed in Orthodox churches today (in Russia, Romania, Serbia, and Greece). He ultimately comes to the following conclusion:

The logic of divine-human communion shaped the Orthodox political imagination in predominantly two ways: (1) an openness to a variety of forms of government so long as it prioritizes the Orthodox Christian faith toward a predominantly Orthodox Christian culture, seeing such permeation of Orthodoxy in the space of culture and politics as entailed in the logic of divine-human communion; and (2) an affirmation of a liberal democratic form of government, in which church-state separation is seen as a liberation for the church that allows for the free realization of the divine presence in the materiality of creation.

To this, Papanikolaou adds:

There is a consensus that no aspect of creation can be isolated from the divine presence, that is, that divine-human communion is not limited strictly to the human person, even if it relies on the response of the human person (53).

Papanikolaou's attempt to "unfurl" the ascetic understanding of theosis thus leads him to an extremely broad formulation of the question of the relationship between the divine and the human, which forfeits the evidentiary force needed to confirm his own position. For "asceticism" in and of itself does not give rise to "liberal-democratic" political theology since it can be interpreted in various ways.

Furthermore, politics — and the state in particular — are placed here in the sphere of "the materiality of creation" (or are designated an "aspect of creation"), which, to put it mildly, is debatable from both the theological and the secular point of view. If the world-universe can in fact be understood as the "material," or the "material medium," for human life, then the world-polis can be understood as a particular "structure of life," woven, of course, out of immaterial relationships and connections. The materiality inherent in it is not a structure-forming principle, but merely the *material of culture*, which by definition is immaterial. And this materiality is of human, not divine, creation.

Liberal democracy, if it works in concrete contexts, can be designated as the *political medium* in which Christians live. Papanikolaou rightly contends that, although this political medium does indeed rest upon its own secular foundations, it *can be* conceived by Christians as the topos for Christian "politics," that is, Christian political action in the paradigm of participation. However, this possibility alone is still not justification for liberal democracy as such — since other positions are also possible (and do exist), including Christian justification for various forms of authoritarianism and other non-liberal and non-democratic political regimes. The problem here is that typologically these various positions, some wholly contradictory, are in agreement since they are all options equally justified from a reli-

gious point of view, and the political theology of “participation” has no logical advantages whatsoever over the political theology of “using” politics.

We now return to the logic/context schema identified above. Papanikolaou accurately notes the fact that in postwar Orthodox — diasporic — theology (which on the whole was “on the rise”) issues of political theology were absent. He writes:

It is not exactly clear why the movement in theology identified with a “neopatristic synthesis” ignored questions related to political theology. Even though hundreds of thousands of Orthodox poured into the United States, a necessity for reconciling Orthodoxy and American democracy was never felt to be urgent as it was for Roman Catholicism. (...) The Orthodox seemed to have no problem theologically with their new democratic surroundings, both in the diaspora and in Greece (45–46).

In the present case, it is important to note not only how theological logic “works,” but also how context works. By all accounts, they work arbitrarily and independently of one another. One could dare to assert that Papanikolaou’s main thesis is shaped above all by the context in which he is absorbed, as he proceeds from a presumed need *to reconcile* his political context (the American political system) with his religious faith. His logic appears thereby “arbitrary” insofar as the corresponding argumentation is only one possible variant within the framework of Orthodox theological discourse. And the fact that leading Orthodox theologians of the past century (of Russian heritage, above all) who lived in the same American context did not concern themselves with questions of political theology must be explained by the “arbitrariness” of their theological logic. As is also the case with Papanikolaou, this logic was rooted in the ascetic “tradition” (or the liturgical one for Alexander Schmemmann), but despite this (or perhaps precisely because of it?) its exponents “had no problem theologically with their new democratic surroundings.”

At the same time, context has its impact. Liberal democracy, however widely it is defined, is a “fact” in some societies (including American society) and is not a “fact” in other societies (in the present case, “Orthodox” societies in the ethnocultural-religious sense). Context may give rise to a “logic of justification of context” — including the logic of “using” politics, as in the second case, all the more so since this logic has a long theological tradition. In this, it is important to bear in mind that the logic of “participation” is not stimulated by current political contexts in Orthodox countries, and it is therefore perceived in them, rather, as *notional*, that is, as a “logic without context.”

Thus, for example, Papanikolaou’s assertion that Christian politics ought to be determined by the Christian encounter with the “stranger” and that identity politics is idolatrous is comprehensible and is justified in the “diaspor-

ic desert.” However, this works poorly in spaces where “Orthodox culture” is dominant, where for Orthodox Christians the religiously marginal and other “culturally foreign elements,” rather than citizens as such, are “strangers.”

It comes across as ambiguous when Papanikolaou asserts that *insofar* as the eschatological character of the church requires a missionary medium, it entails a pluralism of religion and worldview in society. Papanikolaou himself indicates that, while ancient political theology (that is, the theology of “using politics,” as with Eusebius and Chrysostom), which welcomes Christianization of the political for the sake of “placing people on the path to salvation,” is paternalistic (to use modern terminology), it is not totalitarian, as it has as its goal divine-human communion, which is impossible without free participation on the human side. This means that the modern liberal understanding of freedom, which gives rise to pluralism, has parallels with “Christian antiquity.” However, this understanding is also fundamentally dissimilar since in antiquity it was a *different* freedom and a *different* pluralism. The eschatological striving for eternal salvation (most clearly expressed precisely in askesis) simply does not view “the political” as its referent. And “pluralism” in this case does not refer to the field of politics, but to the individual *will* (on the one hand, many human wills; on the other, various manifestations of will “within” the subject itself); “freedom” refers to the constancy of the subject’s fundamental decision “to be with God” (which can be called a fundamentally positive freedom). In other words, the space of salvation is located in a different dimension than the space of politics, and there is no (theo)logical connection between them.

A much stronger move by Papanikolaou is his appeal to the evangelical commandment to love. Following Papanikolaou’s logic, “simultaneity” in the ascetical and political dimensions emerges here since this commandment requires *learning* to love, and therefore practicing Christian communion with “the other.” However, the theological concept of “love” (that is, the corresponding theological virtue, alongside “faith” and “hope”) is not as fruitful within the framework of political theology as it may appear at first glance, as it gives rise to more than a few problems.

Without a doubt, not only ethics but also ontology is intoned in the evangelical commandment “to love one’s neighbor as oneself.” Love is not simply “the name of God,” but also the “dynamic structure” of the triune divine being itself (in the case of the Trinitarian interpretation of the New Testament assertion that “God is love” — 1 John 4:8), and precisely here we have the germane idea of “relational personalism.”⁷ However, the *theological* problem

7. Papanikolaou assiduously expounds upon the theology of Metropolitan John Zizioulas, on which he essentially relies, juxtaposing the Orthodox understanding of the person and the secular conception of human rights.

consists in the notion that, while the divine persons/hypostases co-subsist in the space of a common and flawless “nature,” human persons/hypostases co-exist in the conditions of “ontological discord” between a unified nature and a multitude of persons, that is, in a fallen, flawed “political” (interpersonal) space. Here, each person answers for himself and cannot directly answer for the community of persons on the whole. Correspondingly, the concept (commandment) to love is imperative above all for the individual person. This commandment is truly ascetic, insofar as it is directed toward the person, but one that is not at all political. Christian love (agapic, caritative) is an individual virtue, not a “value” within social ethics. Even in the space of intra-societal church life, love is a spiritual imperative, not an active organizational principle. Politics is above all a form for the organization of human social life that cannot be realized on the basis of maximalist appeals/imperatives. Of course, with the aid of the commandment to love, one can conceptualize and establish Christian *relationship* and *action* in the political sphere — in the paradigm of “participation” (as Papanikolaou does) — but one cannot justify any form of polity (political existence), including liberal democracy.

In other words, the theological substantiation for Christian participation in the modern liberal-democratic political “desert” does not provide logical justification for this “desert” itself. And Papanikolaou himself attests to the fact that it is indeed a “desert” when he speaks of the rejection, from a theological point of view, including the Orthodox one, of secular-philosophical substantiations and justifications of liberal democracy (with which, however, he does not want to grapple substantively, consciously limiting himself to the extremely general, if not foggy, definition of liberal democracy cited above).

If one refrains from psychologization and remains within the bounds of ascetic theology, it must be remembered that evangelical love is not an affection or even a disposition, but that “mystical energy” which “was shed abroad into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5). To put it differently, “the event of love” is something exclusive, extraordinary, related to personal existence, that is, an irruption of God into the world through the agency of a concrete person. The social and political consequences of such an “event of love” can be neither forecast nor calculated from the perspective of political order and political dynamics. In other words, “love” in the Christian sense cannot be a constitutive element of a political construction since it refers to a *different* ontological dimension of man, and from the point of view of political theory and practice it represents an “empty concept.” And the modern political principle of the separation of religion (church) and state, contrary to Papanikolaou’s opinion, points to just this.

Let us once again underscore: love in the theological sense may be the “driving force” of the political participation/action of *Christians*, since Christians can make spiritual strivings and “practice love” in the political

space even before grace-bringing divine energy “mystically” imbues these strivings of theirs and brings them to pass (furthermore, without strivings of this sort, *synergy* with a God transcendent to the world is also an impossibility). However, one must not forget that the religiously substantiated practice of this type of “participation” will always be exclusive and marginal on the scale of politics on the whole, that is, it cannot be declared the realization in the political realm of a certain “social ethics.”

Here, there is a patent contrast between the political theology of “using” and the political theology of “participating” in politics; there are also two different notions of the “common good,” to which Papanikolaou himself refers (though on the most general level and while acknowledging various interpretations — see chapter 4 of the book, “Divine-Human Communion and the Common Good”). With the theology of “using politics,” the common good is connected with the presence of elements integrating religion with political life (today, for instance, there are “traditional Christian values”). With the theology of “participation,” by contrast, political life remains fundamentally external to religion (the church), so that the common good is defined not by religious (“vertical”) goals, but by extra-religious (“horizontal-secular”) ones. But in both cases a Christian *social* ethics proves problematic. Attempts to extend traditional Christian ethics as *individual* ethics (both the ethics of askesis and the ethics of love) into the political space lead to a logical contradiction, since social ethics by definition is counterposed to the ethics of the isolated individual. To create a bridge between the two sets of ethics (individual and social) is to carry out a revolution, to create a new synthesis.

Such a synthesis — a synthesis of the Orthodox mysticism of “divine-human communion” and modern liberal democracy — does not take shape in Papanikolaou’s work. And it does not take shape because the “ethics of theosis” (if one recalls his point of departure) cannot be transformed into a social ethics that has political meaning. But, aside from this, this synthesis cannot take shape for the simple reason that Papanikolaou fundamentally refuses to polemicize with the philosophical foundations of secular social ethics, limiting himself instead to “adjusting” discrete Christian elements to fit existing political practices.

Let us once again return to the point made above: the Christian principles on which Papanikolaou relies and which he “explicates” (in dialogue with other Christian theologians) — such as the eucharistic experience of the commonality of unique persons (see chapter 2 of the book, “Eucharist or Democracy?”), the “ascetic” resistance to the sinful passions of rage, hatred and fear, the renunciation of violence, and “truth-telling” in connection with the practice of confession (see chapter 5 of the book, “Truth-Telling, Political Forgiveness, and Free Speech”) — all these principles *can* serve as ori-

entation points for Christian participation in politics (Papanikolaou's pertinent thoughts cannot be presented here in detail, and we refer to the reader to the book itself). And it is fully possible that this "will contribute to shaping a political space that looks something like a liberal democracy." However, these very same Christian principles can also be proclaimed outside of any theoretical or practical connection with liberal democracy.

It is precisely for this reason that one must pose this fundamental question: To what extent can the "theology of participation" be a full-fledged political theology to begin with? Can any attempt to adapt Christianity to a given political system be considered a Christian political theology?

Naturally, one can accept such a minimalist position within the framework of political theology as a theological "discipline." But its theoretical persuasiveness is not very great. The persuasiveness of the modern "theology of using politics" is *also* not very great, since it is also adaptive, and not strictly theological. Of course, the latter has an advantage insofar as it espouses a political ideal. However, this ideal was handed down to it from the past, and it merely attempts to "apply" it to the contemporary political situation (for instance, reconceptualizing the Byzantine idea of church-state "symphony").

A careful reading of Aristotle Papanikolaou's book prompts the thought that contemporary Orthodox political theory, so as to be persuasive, must be the result of a *clash between the church and society*, but not in separate "Orthodox contexts," rather in the general historical context of the modern (also including the so-called late modern, or postmodern). And in the present case, one cannot forego engaging in theological analysis of secular philosophical substantiations of the political modern (including liberal democracy), to which the church, in disapproval of the same, must counterpose its own, religious, vision of *the political as such*. That is, the church must advance a modern Christian political philosophy and, therefore, also a *Christian political ideal* (but not one that merely represents a version of its premodern variants).

The fact that such a political theology, which is not adaptive, has not emerged within the framework of modern Orthodox theology is apparently explained precisely by the dominance of asceticism and neopatristics within it, that is, by an orientation toward a "theological antiquity" that does not generate theological tasks connected with modern political issues. The modern is viewed not as an essential challenge, but precisely as a "context" foreign to Christianity, both in and of itself and in its philosophical foundations.

This may appear paradoxical, but Papanikolaou's book once again attests to precisely such a state of affairs for "theological matters." Papanikolaou appeals to the "ascetics of divine-human communion" that

he himself constructed as a means of groping about for *parallels* between, so to speak, fundamentally religious ideas and practices on the one hand and modern secular values and practices on the other. Hereby, he admits a logical error when, for instance, he equates “the profound” (the eucharistic theology of personhood) with “the superficial” (the secular conception of human rights — see chapter 3 of the book, “Personhood and Human Rights”). In this regard, he truly demonstrates a *non-radical* view of the political on the part of Christian orthodoxy,⁸ that is, a view that seeks above all the *reconciliation* of traditional, dominant Orthodox theology with a concrete political context.

At the same time, Papanikolaou in his book has done very serious work. As has already been said, this is a very provocative book. It could even be called groundbreaking insofar as Papanikolaou boldly moves from the Orthodox confessional space into the realm of political theology, touching upon a broad range of the corresponding issues and offering solutions to them.

It must be emphasized especially that in this review I was not able to analyze all the book’s themes or all the turns in the author’s thinking — for this, much more space would have been required. I limited myself to consideration of Papanikolaou’s main points and theses, bracketing out exposition and assessment of concrete aspects of his political theology, which is substantively very rich. I appeal to everyone who is interested in Christian political theology in general, and particularly its Orthodox version, to read this book carefully. And I am certain that, for Orthodox theologians who also dare to enter the realm of modern political theology, this book by Aristotle Papanikolaou will be a primary referent, and perhaps even a point of departure.

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8. Here, one must draw the reader’s attention to *Beyond Secular Order*, the new book by John Milbank, one of the leaders of “radical Orthodoxy,” which has a direct bearing upon political theology and warrants the most assiduous attention (despite the fact that Milbank, as he has done previously, occasionally becomes bogged down in the “genealogy of ideas” while his own — modern — position remains insufficiently articulated).

Robert Collis (2012). *The Petrine Instauration: Religion, Esotericism and Science at the Court of Peter the Great, 1689–1725*. Leiden, Boston: Brill. — 576 pages.

It goes without saying that Robert Collis's new book, *The Petrine Instauration: Religion, Esotericism and Science at the Court of Peter the Great, 1689–1725*, will prove of particular interest to the Russian reader. This is due not just to its perennially popular theme, but also to Collis's careful and attentive approach to Russian history and culture, which would be a source of pride for any Russian researcher. But why specifically "the Petrine instauration"? Not reforms, not transformation, but instauration? Collis responds to this question in the first pages of the book, but then, after a detailed explanation of his aims, only returns to it again in the final chapter, which is dedicated to the personality of Peter himself.

The interesting peculiarity of the book is that Collis does not simply present historical facts and analyze concepts, but places at the center of his narrative images and ideas of individuals whose destinies are inextricably linked with the history of Russia, and whose deeds and ideas created the specific irreproducibility of the epoch, characterised not just by the stormy development of natural sciences and techniques, but by the unique synthesis of the apparently irrecon-

cilable fields of religion, science and esotericism. Among the figures portrayed we find: Quirinus Kuhlmann, a follower of Jacob Boehme and a proselytizer of the fifth "eternal kingdom"; his supporter Conrad (Kondrat, following the familiar tradition of interpreting names "in the Russian manner") Norderman; Jacob Bruce, a merchant from the German Quarter requiring no particular introduction, described, in Collis's words as "a scientific sorcerer at the court of Peter the Great"¹; Robert Erskine, a follower of Paracelsus, a iatrochemist, chief physician of Peter I, and the first Russian court physician (transliterated into Russian as Robert Karlovich Erskin); Stefan Iavorsky, metropolitan of Ryazan' and Murom and incumbent of the Patriarchal See; and Feofan Prokopovich, archbishop of Pskov and an extraordinary and multifaceted religious thinker and philosopher. It would be possible to make this list much longer; enumerated here are only those individuals whose names are used to introduce different parts of the book. A separate part of the study is, as to be expected, devoted to

1. A title given to one of the chapters of Collis's study.

Peter himself, but in Collis's work the typical image of the tsar-innovator is seen from a different angle: Collis analyzes with care and detail not just the traditional aspects of Peter's "glorious deeds," but the role of religion and esotericism in the formation of Peter's ideas concerning scientific innovation.

Quirinus Kuhlmann, the Protestant mystic and staunch adherent of the ideas of Boehme, was known for his emotional sermons and poetic-philosophical tracts, which asserted the inevitability of the future Kingdom of God on Earth, in which a single ecumenical religion would rule and people would live as Adam and Eve did before the fall. Society would be governed by equality and justice, and the head of the church would be Christ himself. There would be no conflict, or segregation into the elite and the ordinary, the rich and the poor. The exceptionally erudite Kuhlmann, who was familiar with the compositions of Ramon Llull and Galileo, and who took great interest in the most varied branches of knowledge, even in his younger years corresponded with Athanasius Kircher and took part in academic discussions. Apart from these thinkers, Collis notes the influences of "proto-Pietist Johann Arndt and the mystical physician and alchemist Paracelsus" on Kuhlmann's ideas (p. 3).

It is understandable that such a complicated synthesis of academic, esoteric and religious ideas would be perceived ambiguously — to put it mildly — even in our far more tolerant time, and it is hardly unexpected that, upon his arrival in Moscow in 1689, Kuhlmann was confronted not just by followers and admirers — of which there were many in the German Quarter — but with opposition and malice. The ideas promulgated by Kuhlmann were met with hostility by the Orthodox hierarchy, as well as by strict Protestants. His fate, which has been presented in many works, including fiction, was never in doubt, and Kuhlmann's preaching was ended by a cruel sentence: in the same year, 1689, he and Norderman were burnt at the stake, with Kuhlmann's writings burnt as well.

Collis examines the practical activity of Bruce in detail, and compares his fate and career with the biographies of such famous scientists and mystical philosophers as Emmanuel Swedenborg, Johann Becher, and Johann Kunckel, noting their similar interests in the fields of mining, metallurgy and alchemy. Collis reminds us of the possibility that Swedenborg and Bruce were personally acquainted, and that they were able to communicate, in particular, at the Congress of Åland (1718–1719). Both figures

attended as part of their national delegations, and Swedenborg often liaised directly with the Russian group. Analyzing the religious ideas of Bruce, Collis notes that they are close to the Pietist “association of religion and science” in a great many ways (p. 3). Collis draws interesting conclusions that are based on historical facts as well as an analysis of books from Bruce’s library, a list of which is given in one of the appendices.

Another figure who was wholly representative of Peter I’s circle is Robert Erskine. This outstanding individual, who became, according to Collis, one of the tsar’s closest advisors, exercised a “significant influence on the formation of the great reformist project of the monarch” (p. 121). Collis notes that, in contrast to Bruce, Erskine did not gain a reputation as a practitioner of black magic among the populace, but his views on science and religion were in many ways similar. Even before his departure to Russia in 1704 he was seen as a respected and talented doctor and anatomist. In Erskine’s library there were a significant number of alchemical tracts, a list of which is also provided in Collis’s book. Among those whose works interested the chief physician are Hermes Trismegistus, Cornelius Agrippa, Robert Fludd, Albertus Magnus, Athanasius Kircher, Georgius

Agricola, Andreas Libavius, Ramon Llull, Marie Meurdrac, Paracelsus, Martin Ryland, Angelo Sala, Otto Tachenius, Basil Valentine and many other authors, famous and not-so-famous.

A separate section of the book is devoted to Stefan Iavorsky and Feofan Prokopovich, whom Collis describes as “Ukrainian clerics” (p. 211–356). Collis defines Iavorsky’s talents by employing the term *wordsmith*. Arriving in Moscow in 1700, Iavorsky, according to Collis, found himself in an “an extremely tense atmosphere, which, on the one hand was awash with reforming zeal, but on the other hand was seething with religious and political resentments” (p. 211–12). It was the cleric’s penmanship and oratorical flair, that attracted Peter’s attention, and Iavorsky, thanks to the support of the tsar, quickly reached the higher echelons of the church hierarchy. Iavorsky was incredibly well-educated, had accepted Orthodox-Catholic union, studied in Poland, and upon his return renounced union and became a prefect of the Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium (from 1701, Academy), where he taught rhetoric, poetics and philosophy. His interests, as is well-known, lay not just in theology and philosophy, but also in astrology; Iavorsky was profoundly acquainted with the works of the European astrologers and cited them in

his research. Furthermore, he remarked that he had transposed the signs of the Zodiac onto biblical personages; this could hardly be accepted unambiguously by the Uniates, or by the Orthodox Church. As a herald of Russia's great victories and providential role, a great orator and sharp analyst, able through symbols and signs to relate the events of his time to Biblical prophecies, Iavorsky was necessary to Peter I, whose role Iavorsky compared, in particular, to that of Moses.

Examining the views of another Ukrainian cleric, Feofan Prokopovich, Collis writes: "the so-called 'enlightened' outlook of Prokopovich actually rested on three theological and philosophical pillars: 1) Pietist Protestantism; 2) an Orthodox faith based on the writings of the Eastern Church Fathers and 3) an esoteric worldview that embraced eclectic elements of Aristotelianism, Christian Neo-Platonism and Hermeticism" (p. 272). The hermetic and, in particular, the alchemical interests of Prokopovich are clearly demonstrated by the books corresponding to this theme in his library, a list of which is provided by Collis as an appendix. In a list of 34 works we find authors such as Otto Tachenius, Cornelius Agrippa, Robert Boyle, Athanasius Kircher, Daniel Sennert, and Ole Borch. According to Collis, the figure of

Prokopovich deserves wider examination, which, among other things, should take into account the influence of mystical Orthodoxy and esotericism on the formation of the worldview and ideas of this true supporter and ideologue of Petrine reform. The personality of the archbishop of Pskov was, undoubtedly, ambivalent, and he attracted the most extreme opinions, leading to very different evaluations of his role in the spread of ideas of Enlightenment and reform: while Soviet historians viewed him in a fundamentally positive light, he has also been seen in unambiguously negative terms and accused of anti-Orthodoxy, a judgement most clearly formulated by the famous Orthodox theologian Archpriest Georges Florovsky, who wrote: "Feofan Prokopovich [...] was a dreadful man. Even in his appearance there was something ominous" (Florovsky 2009: 122).

Having presented this detailed research of the religious, scientific and esoteric views of the brightest representatives of the Petrine circle, Collis closes his book with an analysis of the personality of Peter the Great. The author considers that without taking into account the religious motives and esoteric interests of the first Russian emperor, any portrayal of him might be one-sided and one-dimensional. Moreover, Collis emphasizes that the role of reli-

gion was central in the formation of Peter's reformatory convictions. All that the great reformer achieved was compared to the actions of the biblical King David, and even the tsar's contemporaries compared his military victories to the defeat of Goliath.

But it was not just military victories and administrative innovations that provided material for reform, and it is now time to return to the question of the "Petrine instauration." Collis suggests that the reformist mission of Peter I was seen by the tsar and his circle as a return to sources of ancient knowledge, which were accessible to people before the fall; Collis writes about the deeply conscious attempt within Peter's circle "to restore academic knowledge" (p. 358). This understanding seems strange to us, but in that epoch encapsulat-

ed a more natural interweaving of elements that we now call scientific, religious and esoteric.

Collis's work will certainly not be interpreted unequivocally: clearly problems of crisis and reform, conservatism and innovation, relations of church and state, science, religion and esotericism are extremely current, and arguments are still raging in our day. However, the ideas formulated by this impartial and attentive researcher will, most probably, prove of interest to many.

Yuri Rodichenkov (Translation by Keith Walmsley)

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The resources of Saint Tikhon's Orthodox University of the Humanities have provided the basis for a number of studies devoted to various aspects of the twentieth-century history of the Russian

Orthodox Church (ROC).² One of the most important fields to attract the attention of researchers

2. See Bakonina 2014; Anashkin 2014; Efimov 2014; Kostriukov 2011.

at the university is the history of those parts of Russian Orthodoxy that inadvertently found themselves outside the borders of the Russian state during that century's cataclysms. Tatyana Ivanovna Shevchenko's monograph, which focuses on the history of the the Valaam Monastery and the Finnish Orthodox Church in the first half of the twentieth century, fits neatly into this traditional area of research.

The most valuable sources used in the research are those materials from the archive of the Valaam Monastery that reveal life there during the interwar period in all its complexity and diversity. The diaries, letters and reminiscences of the directors and monks of the monastery, which Shevchenko is the first to cite in academic research, — most notably of Fathers Superior Khariton (Dunaev) and Nestor (Kiselenkov), and monk Iuvian (Krasnopetrov), a representative of the Old Calendarists — offer unique insight into the life of a Russian Orthodox monastery that found itself on the territory of an independent Finland during the twentieth century, and the relationships of its inhabitants. To her credit, the author complements her research with materials from the State Archives of Karelia and the Russian Federation where, in the archives of the Council for the Affairs of the ROC,

there is a mass of documents relating to the Finnish Orthodox Church (FOC), assembled during the preparations for the transferal of the FOC to the jurisdiction of the ROC in the second half of the 1940s. The research has been organized chronologically and undertakes to analyze the period between the appearance of the independent Finnish state and the change in status of the Orthodox structures on its territory (1917), and the Moscow Patriarchate's abnegation of its rights to the Finnish Church (1957).

As the monograph remains at heart an academic dissertation, the first chapter is, as expected, devoted to a survey of the sources and historiographical studies pertaining to the theme of the work. The second chapter is devoted to the specifics of the situation of the Orthodox Church in Finland at the moment that the independent state was formed. The unique nature of the Finnish project within the borders of the Russian Empire, and the specific character of Orthodoxy's development in the country — conditioned, as it was, by the influence of a strong Lutheran tradition — led to an atypical situation in the country before the end of the Imperial period and were actively debated during the discussions of general state and church reforms at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even then, the influ-

ence of Lutheran norms was perceived by various representatives of Orthodoxy as a threat to a separate Orthodox identity. However, the major successes attained in resolving such problems as the participation of parishioners in the life of the Orthodox parish in Finland, and the legal definition and social significance of the parish priest, were offered by several church-state activists as a model for the whole empire. In order to understand the context of the history of Finnish Orthodoxy it is necessary to understand that Finland had a unique status within the Russian Empire: it possessed its own statehood, language and ideas of national identity, which had already been formulated by the Finnish intelligentsia around the middle of the nineteenth century.

As 1917 approached there were forty parish priests, twelve deacons, fifty-eight thousand Orthodox parishioners, and twenty-nine parishes in Finland. Of the latter, fourteen were Karelian and the rest belonged to the state, with the majority being Russian. When the empire fell there were a number of well-developed parishes in Finland in which, given the relative weakness of eparchial power and, moreover, the incorporation of the parishes into the administrative structure of the region, the parish [aka “white,” as opposed to monastic,

or “black” — the editors] clergy played a large administrative and state role. The author of the study highlights the fact that in the Grand Principality of Finland eparchial life was characterized by two tendencies — the Finnish and the Russian — the boundaries of which were decisively formed in 1917, and the Finnish tendency’s national orientation prevailed.

In the third chapter Shevchenko analyzes the normative organizational structures of the FOC and the Valaam Monastery within the context of the changing political systems of Finland and Russia. The Valaam Monastery, in which there were 426 monks, was dragged into the political upheavals. Amongst the monks there were supporters of radical reform who wished to effect a revolution in their cloisters; later some monks, having received the nickname *Nikolaevtsy* after Grand Prince Nikolai Nikolaevich, supported right-monarchist emigrant organizations, provoking the distrust of the Finnish authorities. The brotherhood of Valaam found itself in unfamiliar territory when faced with the complicated challenges of modernity, responses to which, when considered within the framework of the Orthodox tradition, were not unambiguous. Besides the imperial-monarchical problem referenced above, there arose questions surrounding the adoption of Finnish citizenship

and, subsequently, of relations with the governing higher clerical orders and of a change in church jurisdiction (i.e., its transformation into an autonomous structure of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1923). The negative attitude of a number of monks was provoked by the first Finnish bishop, Herman (Aav), whose external appearance — “in secular clothing, shaved and with closely cropped hair” — they never forgave as long as he lived. In this they were actively supported by Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), who was attempting to exert authority over the Finnish Orthodox Church. This chapter lays out in detail the political and institutional contexts of the transferral of the Finnish Church under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the correspondence regarding this question between the church hierarchy and canonists.

The fourth chapter describes the development of a conflict within the Orthodox monastic community of Finland around the question of calendar reform. The fact remains that, even as part of the Russian Empire, Finland lived according to the Gregorian calendar, and Lutheran holidays were endorsed by the state. The demand for calendar reform was conceived within the Orthodox parish system and was in general supported by the eparchial directorship in the

small country, where cohabiting Lutheran and Orthodox Christians necessarily lived according to different calendars. If the existence of the Julian calendar in Orthodox life was justified by the fact of the whole Russian Empire’s adherence to it, then with the latter’s fall and the transfer of the new states to the Gregorian calendar the rationale behind continued use of the Julian system disappeared. It was interesting that within the Russian Orthodox hierarchy there was not a defined position on the question of calendar reform, and it was the move to the new calendar among a series of local Orthodox churches that provided the basis for such a precedent. Calendar reform culminated with the problem of calculating a date for Easter, and from 1923 the Finnish Church adopted a corrected date.

If calendar reform was easily established in practice within the parishes, it provoked stormy arguments and schisms among the monks of the Valaam Monastery. As Shevchenko’s research convincingly shows, this conflict was not exclusively due to disagreements surrounding the new calendar, but included a whole range of subjects — for instance, relationships with Old Russia, the Empire and the Finnish state, reforms in Orthodoxy, and so on — and was accompanied

by a conflict with the governing figure, the father superior. From 1925 the cloisters were home to a situation that was impossible according to church ecclesiology, in which the brotherhood of the monastery “came to eat together, but prayed to God separately,” a situation that lasted for several decades.

The fifth chapter outlines the history of the Valaam Monastery in the period of the Second World War and the vicissitudes of its relationship with the ROC, which, straight after the war, attempted to include the FOC within its jurisdiction. By force of changing political conditions, however, it rejected this policy and in 1957 accepted the status quo, i.e., the FOC’s inclusion in the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It is clear that in this period canonical questions took a back seat to political aims. Thus, the transferral of Valaam’s monks to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate was effected in Moscow through an order of penance by Father Superior Khariton, and this transfer was accompanied by a ban on communion with the FOC. The transferral of the Valaam Monastery to the jurisdiction of the ROC revealed the long-term intentions of the leadership of the ROC to, in the event of unification, completely destroy specific features of the organization of Orthodox life in Finland (p. 281), while the adoption through penance

showed the hostility of the Moscow Patriarchate toward the Finnish Church in the interwar period.

After the legality of the FOC’s entry into the Constantinople Patriarchate was confirmed in 1957, the monks of Valaam were informed that they must now subordinate themselves to the FOC not just in questions of administration, but also in matters of canon and prayer. Some monks, particularly those that loved the Russian Church, were advised to move to the USSR. The monograph finishes with the unfortunate story of the natural erosion of Russian monasticism at Valaam, which had its roots, according to the observations of Archpriest Aleksandr Schmemmann, in the peasant (*muzhitskii*) tradition. Attempts by the aging monks to conserve or restore this tradition already seemed quite artificial to Schmemmann when he visited the monastery in 1975.

Shevchenko’s monograph introduces sources that are unique in character into the academic field. The author was able to impartially assemble and depict the history of the Valaam Monastery in this complicated period, which was plagued by many problematic and closely linked issues, be they legal, disciplinary, canonical, political or national. Her research perfectly conforms to the generic paradigm that has been formulated over the last two decades in

Russia within church-historical research, that is, the confessional, and possesses both the advantages and disadvantages of this genre.

Shevchenko describes in adequate detail the situations of different elements of the Orthodox population, in the first case Rus-sophone, appearing outside the boundaries of the empire after its fall. Inevitably this leads us to thoughts on the theme of the specifics of Russian national self-consciousness and the Russian relationship to Orthodoxy. As many Western researchers have underlined, Russians within the Russian Empire, being the titular nation, did not pass through complete phases in the formation of their national self-consciousness.³ After the empire's fall, they appeared, from one perspective, deprived of their own state and, from another, "guilty" in the subjugation of the unique national identities of the empire's other peoples.⁴ Russians, finding themselves to be a minority in the former outskirts of the fallen empire, were faced with the necessity of forcibly modeling their own identity. The Orthodox Rus-sophone environment became

politicized in Finland due to the number of refugees from Soviet Russia, who were representatives of very different political convictions. Thus, a powerful monarchic circle was formed around Archbishop Serafim (Luk'ianov), linked with the relatives of the tsar's family, that served as justification for the Finnish government's discharge of the archbishop, while he was allowed to maintain his Finnish citizenship and offered a life pension. The organizers of the Russian military-monarchic movement, still called *Nikolaevtsy*, were closely linked with those monks at Valaam who later formed a group of Old Calendarists.

At the same time, conflicting relationships were forming between representatives of Finnish Orthodoxy and the ideologue of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA), Antony (Khrapovitsky), who even had his own cell at Valaam. Eventually, Antony was even forbidden entry to Finland. In their letters home Valaam's Old Calendarists stressed that Russian Orthodoxy represented the true essence of Orthodoxy, often put the word Russian before Orthodox and, refusing to admit their fellow believers because of their differences with regard to the calendar, were prepared to welcome Soviet power. Shevchenko's research reveals the complex and multifaceted nature

3. For Miroslav Hroch's conceptualization of the phases of the formation of national self-consciousness among the countries of Eastern Europe, see Hroch 2012: 78–97.

4. See Kappeler 2000; Weeks 1996; Martin 2001.

of the factors in question, the absence of “clear” dividing lines between them, and the interweaving of national, church, political, economic and personal subjects.

The problems that were tearing Russian Orthodoxy apart were reflected in microcosm in Finland. We see here the opposition of monastic and parish priesthoods, the conflict between eparchial church leaders and the monasteries, and the wish to introduce a political component into church conflicts. For example, inhabitants of Valaam accused the leadership of the Finnish Church of *zhivotserkovnichestvo* (i.e., “renovationism” or adherence to the “Living Church”), and the de facto head of the Finnish Church movement, Archpriest Solntsev, tried to show that the monasteries, with their Russian inhabitants, were spreading a dangerous Bolshevik ideology and that only appropriate “Finnification” would be able to turn them into a “blessing” for the Finnish Church.

The Russophone Orthodox regularly accused their Finnish coreligionists of a lack of Orthodoxy, the authentic character of which was maintained only in the Russian church: “All deviations from the Russian church traditions that we have inherited, such as, for example, the priests not wearing cassocks, cropping their hair and shaving their beards, the wear-

ing of the wedding ring on the left hand in defiance of church sacrament, the reading of silent prayers aloud — all this does not correspond to Orthodoxy” — wrote one of the Orthodox neophytes from the Finnish circle (p. 277). It is, perhaps, worth seeing the conflict in the Orthodox community of Finland within the context of the eternal arguments between “traditionalists” and “modernists,” the dyed-in-the-wool ideologues of Orthodoxy, and, in contrast, the champions of church universalism.

If we examine Shevchenko’s thesis that the situation of the Valaam Monastery within the Finnish Orthodox Church should be viewed on a global plane as a conflict between two identities, then, in this case, there are certainly not enough materials to allow a full appreciation of the Finnish position. This position is, of course, articulated in the exposition of official church and state documents, however, original, conceptual texts from this sphere are not available. Strictly speaking, the question of what Finnish Orthodox identity was perceived to be in the first half of the twentieth century remains as open as it has always been.

Shevchenko’s introduction of texts pertaining to Russian monasticism of the twentieth century to academic study demands, it would appear, further conceptualization of the problems presented by these texts and their further

analysis, giving due consideration to the intended meanings of their authors. In the behavior of the inhabitants of Valaam we see traditionally Russian forms of religious resistance, including the characteristic genre of written denunciations with an active application of eschatological motives, anonymous attacks, a refusal of communal prayer and of full communion. Taking everything into account, the Valaam Old Calendarists had been planning opposition over a long period: the schemamonk Fr. Mikhail (Pitkevich) secretly prepared ten thousand units of consecrated bread and wine before the strife over the calendar (p. 333). Here, of course, we are not talking about a conflict with Finnish Orthodoxy, but with their monastic brothers.

Throughout the book the acrimony of the conflict within the Russian Orthodox sphere is palpable. The impression is given that Russian Orthodoxy in the 1920s and 1930s, having freed itself from the cruel system of state regulation through the Department of Orthodox Religion, was transformed into a sphere of permanent strife. The opposition between “patriarchal” and “renovationist” currents in the USSR is sufficiently well described, however the confrontation with the “right” opposition was no less sharp, to say nothing of the conflict between the Ortho-

dox Church in the USSR (ROC) and those elements that inevitably found themselves outside its borders (in the first case, the ROCA). All unarticulated questions of church and social life, deprived of legal ground for discussion and complicated by political cataclysms, rose to the surface, and, as in a microcosm, we see the reflection of these processes in the texts that appeared in the territories of the FOC.

The image in Russian culture of the monks as martyrs for the true faith, persecuted by their previous coreligionists who had reached a compromise with anti-Christian state powers, which the Old Calendarists of the Valaam Monastery had endeavored to manipulate, was unintentionally softened by the fact that neither the administration of the Finnish Church, nor the Finnish state itself, pursued the cruel victimization of heretics, as is accepted within the Russian consciousness. The monograph reveals confessional-state relationships that are surprising from the point of view of Russian history and, it seems, offer a paradigm for executive behavior that still awaits rationalization: in response to cruel opposition, the administrative bodies of the church showed maximal flexibility and patience in allowing the monastery to live according to the Old Style using the traditional date for Easter. Furthermore, among oth-

er things, they offered advice on the living arrangements of monks outside the state, and paid them a pension. At the same time, the specific self-consciousness of the representatives of Finnish Orthodoxy, who, being solidly rooted in Orthodoxy, no less solidly stood up for the Finnish character of the Orthodox structure in the country, is clearly felt. It is understood that strategic calculation in relation to the monasteries allowed the representatives of Old Russian monasticism to die peacefully, and to maintain monastic property on behalf of the Finnish Church. From the analyzed monograph we clearly see that it is impossible to speak of “pure” national constructs and any “pure” religious contents that might inhere in them; religious, confessional and jurisdictional factors were constantly present in different socio-political and national projects.

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